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Voice of Women in Byzantine Music Within the Greek Orthodox Churches in America

Rachel Nicole Brashier

Southern Illinois University Carbondale, rachelbrashier@siu.edu

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VOICE OF WOMEN IN BYZANTINE MUSIC WITHIN THE GREEK ORTHODOX
CHURCHES IN AMERICA

by

Rachel Nicole Brashier

B.M., Eastern Illinois University, 1999

A Thesis

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Master of Music Degree in Music History.

Department of Music
in the Graduate School
Southern Illinois University Carbondale
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THESIS APPROVAL

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Approved by:

Dr. Maria V. Johnson, Chair

Dr. Melissa Mackey

Dr. John C. McCall

Dr. Diane Coloton

Graduate School
Southern Illinois University Carbondale
April 9, 2012

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

RACHEL NICOLE BRASHIER, for the Master of Music degree in MUSIC HISTORY, presented on April 9, 2012, at Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

TITLE: VOICE OF WOMEN IN BYZANTINE MUSIC WITHIN THE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCHES IN AMERICA

MAJOR PROFESSOR: Dr. Maria V. Johnson

Byzantine chant, the music of the Greek Orthodox Churches in America, embeds meanings and functions as a methodological tool which constructs and teaches about the role of women within church communities. This thesis explores how as cultural group identity, belongingness, and gender identity are semiotically iconized, purified, and recursively transmitted through the liturgical music of the church, specifically hymns about women saints and *The Akathist Hymn to the Mother of God*. This work is a culmination of twelve years of ethnomusicological fieldwork conducted by the author in Midwestern Greek Orthodox churches and monasteries, using participant-observation techniques. The work outlines the basic musicological theory of Byzantine chant, describes how the portrayal of women in liturgical music provides templates for the desired behavior of females within the community, and examines how Byzantine music works as a memory aid, teaching tool, and constructor of social ideas in relationship to the roles of women.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to George Athanasopoulos, who first introduced me to the beauty of written Byzantine neumes, and tirelessly translated from Greek, explained, re-explained, and patiently corrected my attempts as I learned this music and the theology it holds. I hear him in the “echos of my ears” when I chant. May his memory be eternal.

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INTRODUCTION

During late antiquity in Byzantium, following the legalization of Christianity in 312 A.D. by the Emperor Constantine, there was a desire by church leaders to teach both biblical stories and “right belief”¹ which was achieved through the writing and performance of hymns and homilies. There were also written commentaries aimed at the mostly male scholars² of the time, but the hymns and homilies were intended to be more exciting and engaging to the listeners. In these are found both the voices and stories of women, and how they perceived what it means to be feminine within the structure of Orthodox Christianity. People of every gender, age, and status were integrated into the church in its hymns, to aid in the ability of all to relate to the stories they were hearing as they saw themselves and their experiences reflected in the hymn subjects.

Women in Greek Orthodox Churches in the United States

Women in American Orthodox Churches chant and sing in choirs, often beginning in their youth.³ This practice is paramount to the internal survival of the history of the church, as the important traditions and teachings of the church are all immortalized in her hymns. Monasteries, which are important places of access to and dissemination of hymnography, are increasing in number rapidly in America. The first North American monastery for women was established

1 Susan Ashbrook Harvey, *Song and Memory: Biblical Women in Syriac Tradition* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2010), 18-19.

2 Most scholars of the time were male, whereas the hymns and homilies were heard in mixed gender gatherings at church.

3 When most young boys become altar servers in elementary or middle school, many young girls in America begin singing in female only youth choirs in order to learn the musical services and teachings and prepare to sing in the church as adults.

in Springfield, Vermont in 1915, and there are currently at least thirty one Orthodox monastic communities of women in the United States.⁴ These female monasteries are repositories for large amounts of music suitable for chanting by their all-female choirs. Some have also begun to teach courses on how to read ancient Byzantine chant notation to girls and young women, and begun other learning programs to increase the knowledge of church music among young women. Increasingly, women congregate at women's monasteries to participate in services, especially those dedicated to the Mother of God, and also to participate in single day courses in theology that often include liturgical music. It is at these monasteries, as well as churches, that parishioners are introduced to many hymns which highlight women in the liturgical music of the church, including one of the most important, *The Akathist Hymn to the Mother of God*.

The *Akathist Hymn* is of personal significance to most individual worshipers, and is very well attended in the United States. Women in the Orthodox Church attribute much to this service. They ask for the Mother of God's intercession with her son for many things including help, salvation in their distresses, and protection for their children. Recent practice in some American churches has been for mothers to aid teachers in assisting their children in learning this hymn. The children then chant the hymn without the aid of any mature voices on one of the five Fridays of Great Lent.

During Holy Friday, the girls that follow the tomb during *The Lamentations* take their selection for this honor very seriously, dressing and behaving with more decorum than if they were asked to be in a family wedding. The *Hymn of Kassiani*, sung on Holy Tuesday evening in anticipation of Holy Wednesday morning, is a service that most parishioners in American Orthodox churches make plans to attend. They often decide which language they want to hear it in, and try to coordinate a parish to attend between jobs and schools, even if it is not the one they attend on Sunday mornings, so that the whole family can attend together. These services are just

4 This information was obtained by the author through searching directories of all the major Orthodox jurisdictions in the United States, and through phone conversations with their offices. Only those communities with more than two women monastics, canonical church approval, and a named female leader (Abbess or Gerondissa) were included.

a few of the many examples of women's involvement with Byzantine chant.

One of the claims of this thesis is that the characteristics unique to Byzantine chant allow it to effectively serve as the container for collective knowledge, retention, and transmission of ideas within the Greek Orthodox Church. It is commonly accepted that theology, history, and spirituality are conveyed through Byzantine chant. This thesis pursues other embedded meanings such as cultural group identity, belongingness, and gender identity. In addition, it will examine how Byzantine chant is a methodological tool which both constructs and teaches about the role of women in Greek Orthodox Church communities in America.

To explore these ideas, the thesis will focus on the function of Byzantine music as it relates to the role of women in the Greek Orthodox Churches in the United States. What follows outlines the fieldwork approach used in collecting, and the procedure used for analyzing, the data presented herein.

Methodology

This research is the culmination of twelve years of fieldwork conducted between 1999 and 2011 in Midwestern Greek Orthodox churches and monasteries encompassing communities in Chicago, Wisconsin, and Saint Louis. The author compiled a series of stories about people's lives and ways of knowing, as well as information concerning their beliefs and music rituals using the ethnographic and ethnomusicological techniques of participant-observation. This method, which included observing, chanting, and other participation in liturgical services, conducting interviews, and making recordings and transcriptions, enabled the author to make both "objective" and "subjective" observations based on relationships developed with "informants" in these communities.⁵ It also gave the author, as researcher, a holistic view of the church's services and music, and enabled a rich description of the ways in which women participate. The following paragraphs will detail the specific fieldwork procedures used by the

⁵ Sharon Traweek, *Beamtimes and Lifetimes: The World of High Energy Physicists* (London: Harvard University Press, 1988). 9.

author, and the semiotic analytical method used for interpreting the data.

Fieldwork Procedures

The Midwestern churches and monasteries which made up the fieldwork site belong under the omophorion of the Metropolitan of Chicago,⁶ which is a part of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. In order to obtain the data presented in this thesis, the author recorded *Akathist Hymn* services, Divine Liturgies, Vigils, Vespers, and other services, conducted formal and informal interviews with monastics, priests, chanters, and parishioners, communicated electronically with other church musicians, and completed a textual analysis of church approved English translations of hymns. These included the *Akathist Hymn* (found in Appendix C) and hymns whose subjects are women (as found in Appendix B). However, the most useful information was gathered from informal group discussions that occurred in the evenings after the services when small, impromptu gatherings inevitably formed for coffee and what the Greeks call “*parekha*,” meaning camaraderie or fellowship, but which also seem to involve the sharing of both food and memories.

Analytical Procedure

Music has long been viewed as a vehicle for learning. According to Jean Lave, the “acquisition of knowledge is not a simple matter of taking in” that which is to be learned, but “require[s] reconceptualization as [a] cultural, social product.”⁷ One purpose of chant in the Orthodox Church is to provide the cultural and social instructions. As an analytical procedure, this thesis employed the semiotic model presented by linguists Irvine and Gal, which differs from the traditional view of semiotic analysis in musicology in which symbols have concrete meanings. The linguistic model attempts to push beyond the meaning associated with symbols in

⁶ Names are not mentioned because they were not collected as a part of the study. The methodology was designed to record group responses and the identity of the participant is not relevant to the purpose of this oral history project.

⁷ Jean Lave, *Understanding Practice; Perspectives on Activity and Context* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 60.

order to infer more ideological information about the society who uses these symbols in practice (e.g., literature, music, painting).

The model of Irvine and Gal includes three categories of semiotic analysis: iconicity, erasure or purification,⁸ and recursivity.⁹ The consideration of this model was then expanded to explain how Byzantine hymns function as a mnemotechnic (memory and teaching) tools in order to create, maintain, and reinforce the template of the ideal woman within the Greek Orthodox Church communities in the United States. Iconicity was used to identify the character traits of women saints and the Mother of God which in Byzantine music act as templates for women within Greek Orthodox communities in America. Purification and Erasure were used as lenses through which to observe the social values promoted by the Greek Orthodox Church in America through hymns, and their use in attempts to erase unacceptable social values introduced into its communities. These ideals are recursively negotiated as individuals continually merge, through time, the sacred and secular realms which they jointly inhabit. Inherent contradictions in Byzantine chant, then, can be interpreted as the ways in which character traits ascribed to women are conceived of and approached in the texts of hymns about female subjects. Byzantine hymns are the ideological packages which function as conceptual maps for the promotion of communal values about women within the Greek Orthodox Church communities in America.

These analytical tools of iconicity, erasure, and recursivity, as the three parts of the Irvine and Gal semiotic model, were augmented with ideas incorporated from Bruno Latour's work, where purification is used in a similar way to erasure, and applied to the data collected from fieldwork, along with that gathered from text analysis.

Outline of Chapters

Chapter One explains the origin and cyclic nature of Byzantine chant, the music used

⁸ The concept of "purification" is used by Bruno Latour (1993) in a similar way to how "erasure" is used in the Irvine and Gal model (2000).

⁹ J.T. Irvine and S. Gal, "Language ideology and linguistic differentiation" in *Regimes of Language*, ed. P. Kroskity (Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press), 38.

in Greek Orthodox Churches in the United States. It outlines the basic musicological theory of Byzantine music, describes the sound of the eight modes, and details the central role played by text in Byzantine chant. The chapter also gives a brief account of the history of women in the music of the Orthodox Church. Known female hymnographers, dating back to the ninth century, are mentioned, and the role of women in the history of church music is described. Poetic texts referring to women saints and the Mother of God are introduced, and the role of “wailing” women in ancient Greek music and Byzantine chant is discussed.

Chapter Two continues the discussion from Chapter One concerning how the poetic text of Byzantine hymns is used to embed ideas and shared beliefs, by focusing on the texts of hymns (in the *troparion* and *kontakion* forms) whose subjects are women saints. The chapter describes traits which are allegories to nature, and defines theological roles. In addition, metaphors in hymn texts are shown to illustrate women’s virtues, voice, values, and use of power. These traits, as illustrated in the texts of hymns about women saints, provide models for Greek Orthodox women in American church communities.

The poetic Byzantine hymn texts used to describe women in chapter two are expanded in Chapter Three’s descriptions of the service of the *Akathist Hymn to the Mother of God*. This popular service centers around a lengthy hymn in the *kontakion* form, which consists of a series of greetings describing and naming the “*Theotokos*,” or Mother of God. This teaching hymn helps to establish the Mother of God as the prototype for women in Greek Orthodox Churches in America, and expounds upon her perceived role as the fulfillment of Jewish prophecies, as well as her social function as a protector.

Chapter Four draws connections between the data presented concerning the portrayal and role of women in Byzantine music of the American Greek Orthodox Churches, and its role as a musicological tool in social function. The chapter describes how Byzantine hymns’ portrayal of women engages community members and provides templates for the desired behavior of females within the community. As such, female saints serve as models of conduct to whom many women can relate, while the Mother of God (*Theotokos*) comes to function as the ultimate prototype for

women. These templates are described as purifying and iconizing the community's ideals of female behavior and gender roles, as well as recursively packaging (and continually repackaging) the theology and history of the community. The chapter discusses how Byzantine music works as a memory aid, teaching tool, and constructor of social ideas in relationship to its portrayal of women.

CHAPTER I
HISTORY OF BYZANTINE MUSIC AND WOMEN
“HOLDING HER CREATOR”

The main purpose of this chapter is to give an overview of the chronological development of Byzantine musicological theory, and to show the structure of the modes currently in use. Another objective of this chapter is to explain the general tenets of Byzantine music theory and distinguish them from the concepts in Western music theory with which they are often confused. An understanding of why texts and rotations of sounds are so fundamental to the hymns will aid in illuminating how important they are for the cultural community which uses them. The chapter also provides a brief historical overview of the development of the voice of women as heard in the Greek Orthodox Churches in America, and how women slowly and unconsciously began to identify their gender role with the poetic ideas they heard and chanted at church. In addition, it includes information about how women as hymnographers, hymn subjects, and chanters have helped to archive church history, and to teach and shape gender ideals through the Byzantine chant.

Byzantine Music Theory

The modern Byzantine music system uses scales considered to be mainly of “Oriental” origin or style, thus is not directly connected to the development of Western medieval modes. It developed within the Roman Empire, and most likely has its roots in Egypt or Syria.¹⁰ Byzantine music, or “psalms chant” as it is called by many chanters (*psaltis*), is the main liturgical vehicle

¹⁰ Tillyard, H.J.W., "The Problem of Byzantine Neumes," *American Journal of Archeology* 20, No. 1 (1916): 62-71.

of communication in the Eastern Orthodox Church. Services are entirely sung, and follow a proscribed pattern that changes with the year, season, and date. No two services will ever follow the exact same order, but there is a system of patterns dating back to this music's roots. The Eastern Orthodox Church uses eight tones (also called modes) in liturgical practice. These rotate by week along with the Hymn of the Resurrection each Sunday, but in common practice can often be mixed within a Divine Liturgy, Vespers, Orthros, Paraklesis, or Service of the Hours. These eight tones, called the "*Ochtoechos*" were arranged according to specific rules by St. John of Damascus in the 8th century. However, the melodic origin of these tones has roots in the ancient popular music of Greece and Asia Minor.¹¹

Though Byzantine notation started to be written as it is today in the 11th century, with some additional modal practices were added in the 14th century, it was not standardized into the current format until the 19th century.¹² According to church musician Stan Takis, compared to Western scales and modes, Byzantine tones, are "an entire musical system based on distinct and unique premises."¹³ Byzantine music theory is melodically based, and there are modal melodies (*automela*) which are memorized by *psaltis*. Other hymns, called *prosomia*, are then chanted to the tune of the model. Occasionally, *idiomela* are heard. These are a set of hymns with unique melodies. The meter of the music correlates to the meter of poetry: grouped patterns of accented and unaccented syllables can change slightly based on musical word painting.¹⁴

The Ochtoechos

Based upon the cultural belief that the ancients thought music not benign, and choice of mode or tone must fit with musical practice, only eight of the vast number of original *ihoi* (tones

11 N. Lungu, G. Costea, and I. Croitoru, *A Guide to the Music of the Eastern Orthodox Church*, trans. Nicholas K. Apostola (Brookline, Massachusetts: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1984).

12 Stanley J. Takis, *Beginning to Learn the Byzantine Musical System Using Western Notation and Theory*, accessed September 9, 2010, http://www.newbyz.org/byzantine_music_for_western_musicians.pdf.

13 Takis, *Beginning to Learn the Byzantine Musical System*.

14 *Ibid.*

or modes) of Byzantine music are currently in liturgical practice, which together are called the *Ochtoechos*. Byzantine modes are similar to Western scales in how they function, but sound quite different. There are four authentic tones and four plagal tones currently in use. Plagal tones are melodically related to their authentic counterparts but may differ slightly in their tonic and dominant tones.¹⁵ The ecclesiastical tones have been divided into three modal categories according to their scale or tonality: diatonic, hard or soft chromatic, and enharmonic. Each of the eight tones has a *finalis*, which is the end note, and starting point upon which the interval chain is built.¹⁶

While pitch is a fixed-note system based upon intervals, there are no keys as Western musicians understand them. The scales are based upon theoretical ladders which space the *paralagi* (solfege syllables) at the distances called for by the tone. These ladders contain, but do not recognize, whole or half steps, as they are based on microtones (pitches not found in the Western scale) which are aurally learned early in *psalmic* training. The *paralagi*, which correspond to the notes C to C' on a well-tempered keyboard instrument, are Ni, Pa, Vou, Gha, Dhi, Ke, Zo, Ni. The first four comprise the lower tetrachord (the first four notes of the major-like Do, Re, Mi, Fa), and the (last four notes of the major scale-like Sol, La Ti Do) or upper tetrachord begins on Dhi. However, the scale starts on Pa, and returns to it as a *finalis*. There is a “dominant” note within each mode, though it is not the fifth of the scale, as a Western musician might think. It defines which notes bend upon microtones, and defines the mode’s features of attraction for its neighbor tones.¹⁷ To illustrate, the convention of C5 as a static tone will be used to explain interval relationships within the tones. However, one should note that these can be shifted to any pitch; as there are no keys in Byzantine music, even a microtone can be the basis of pitch.

15 *Ibid.*

16 Tillyard, H.J.W., "The Problem of Byzantine Neumes," *American Journal of Archeology* 20, No. 1 (1916): 62-71.

17 Stanley J. Takis, *Beginning to Learn the Byzantine Musical System Using Western Notation and Theory*, accessed September 9, 2010, http://www.newbyz.org/byzantine_music_for_western_musicians.pdf.

Authentic Tones

The first four tones learned by young chanters are called the “authentic” ones.¹⁸ Ichos Alpha (First Tone) has a minor feel. It has a D final, but often starts on G and uses that pitch as its dominant. However, the B is slightly flat, between B and B-flat. This mode sometimes ends or starts on A for the purposes of text painting, thus lending a different color to the mode. This is the easiest tone for most chanters with a Western ear to execute correctly. Ichos Veeta (Second Tone) is centered on G, and is a soft chromatic scale, which means that its base note is E and it has microtunings which attract to G. F is heavily sharpened, and A is somewhat flat. It has been loosely translated into Western notation with a G major key signature and several A-flats, but this is a gross oversimplification of the sound. Ichos Gamma (Third Tone) has an enharmonic scale, which means that its tuning is like F major, and while the *finalis* is F, the *ison* (drone harmony which moves according to set rules creating overtones against the melody) bounces between F and C. Ichos Dtheta (Fourth Tone) is based on E. The main dominant note is G, but the final is E. All the other tones use a harmonic *ison* drone in fourths or fifths below the melody, creating perfect consonances. Conversely, fourth mode has very close harmony, based on thirds below the melody. Fourth Tone is very similar to First Tone, except that the pitch nearest B is slightly flat and the melody usually leaps a fifth (in either direction at the beginnings of hymns).

Plagal Tones

The four plagal tones are based upon their authentic counterparts, but have a more melancholy color and are used most often with somber texts. The word plagal comes from the same root as the words for oblique or sideways, and this is how they sound in relation to their authentic counterparts. Plagion Alpha (First Plagal Tone) is usually chanted at a higher-pitch than the others. Based on A, it is diatonic, meaning similar to a major scale, but with a slightly flat third scale degree and a natural seventh scale degree upon ascension, and a truly flat seventh

¹⁸ Hieromonk Ephraim, "The Eight Apolytikia of the Resurrection," in *The Divine Liturgies in English as Chanted on the Holy Mountain* (Florence, AZ: St. Anthony's Greek Orthodox Monastery, 2006).

scale degree in descending melodic lines. This is the most famous and easily identifiable tone to all Orthodox parishioners because the most important hymn of Pascha (Easter) called “Xristos Anesti” (or “Christ is Risen”) is in first plagal. In first plagal, the A tetrachord mimics the D tetrachord. B is natural if the phrase extends past it, otherwise it is slightly flat. Plagion Veeta (Second Plagal Tone) is perhaps the most exotic sounding to a Western-trained ear. Based on G (or sometimes D) there is frequent modulation between tetrachords. Additionally, the inner pitches of the tetrachord are pulled by the “laws of attraction” towards the outer notes of both tetrachords.¹⁹ The result is a scale which closely resembles D, E-flat, F-sharp, G, A, B-flat, C-sharp, D, with an overly flat B-flat. The third plagal tone is called Grave Tone, or *Varis*, because it ends on an unusually low note. Starting on F, and using a diatonic scale with true B-flats throughout, *Varis* ends on a low B. This mode is used for text that requires great emphasis, energy, or strength. Plagion Dtheta (Fourth Plagal Tone) is mostly a C scale, and the most widely used in all chanting. Fourth plagal tone uses a diatonic scale, and has a *finalis* of C, except for the in the two hymns types of *apolytikia* and *kontakia*, which are the two that change most in liturgical practice. An *apolytikia* is the hymn for a particular day, and *kontakia* are the hymns of the feast or fast of that calendar day. These two types of hymns are in Fourth Plagal Tone, but use F for their *finalis*, and typically sound as though they are not final, since they are used in a transitional section of the Liturgy.²⁰

The Ochtoechos is the basis upon which all Byzantine music rests, and even provides the structure for the Liturgical cycle of the Eastern Orthodox Church’s rubrics. The ability to execute vast amounts of texts in these eight tones, while also hearing their nuances, is essential to understanding how Byzantine music functions. Monastics, the traditional hymnographers of the church, are the creators of Byzantine hymns.

19 Stanley J. Takis, *Beginning to Learn the Byzantine Musical System Using Western Notation and Theory*, accessed September 9, 2010, http://www.newbyz.org/byzantine_music_for_western_musicians.pdf.

20 Takis, *Beginning to Learn the Byzantine Musical System*.

Hymnographers

Three individuals produced the majority of liturgical material still in use by the church, in terms of both prose and melodic ideas. There are three major hymnographers of the Orthodox Church: St. Romanos the Melodist, St. John the Damascene, and St. Kassia (or Kassiani), who were all monastics writing for voices of a single gender.²¹ Kassia is widely considered to be the woman who made the largest single contribution to Orthodox music, and she is the only woman whose hymns are included in ecclesiastical books. She lived in the Byzantine empire of the 9th century, during the last years of the conflict between the iconoclasts and iconodules.²² During this violent period, a large group of zealous iconoclasts were backed by the emperor in their efforts to destroy all religious images, whereas the iconodules fought to save the icons of the church. The victory of the iconodules is historically attributed to women, including St. Kassia.²³

Women Hymnographers

Born around 810 A.D., Kassia was a well-educated woman. After offending the Emperor Theophilos with her intelligent and caustic wit at his bride show, she left the city of Constantinople to found her own monastery to the west of the city in 843. It was there that she began to write hymns.²⁴ Most of her musical pieces are in *sticheron* form, which employs long verses chanted in the morning and evening offices of Orthros and Vespers. There are two types of sticheron: *idiomelon* have their own special melody not shared by other verses, and *doxastikon*

21 John Michael Boyer (presentation, Musical Heritage of the Orthodox Church Symposium, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN, October 16, 2010).

22 Antonia Tripolitis, *Kassia: The Legend, the Woman, and Her Work* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1992), xi-xix.

23 Other spellings of this hymnographers-saint's name include Kassiani, Kassiane, Cassiani, Ikasia, Eikasia, Kasia, and others. Diane Touliatos, "Kassia," in *Grove Music Online* (Oxford University Press, 2007-2010, accessed 6 November 2010); available from <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com:80/subscriber/article/grove/music/40895>.

24 St. Kassia also wrote many secular songs and poems on moral themes which were witty, often crass, sometimes funny, and usually defended women's rights. Diane Touliatos-Miles, "Kassia" in *New Historical Anthology of Music by Women*, James R. Briscoe, ed. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004), 6.

tell the stories of the lives of the saints.²⁵ St. Kassia has numerous *doxastikon* following the lives of St. Mary of Egypt, St. Chrystina, St. Eudokia, St. Agathe, St. Barbara, St. Pelagia, St. Thekla, and others. Her most famous hymn is a lament of Mary Magdalene, which is chanted for the Orthros of Holy Wednesday, sung on Holy Tuesday evening. She is also credited with writing the odes for the Tetraodion for Holy Saturday, widely appreciated for their beautiful, programmatic imagery.²⁶ Forty-nine hymns still in use by the church are attributed to Kassia, but only twenty-three of those have been proven by scholars to be genuine.²⁷

One reason for this question of authenticity is the issue of anonymity in Orthodox hymnography, a practice honored in Byzantine times especially, when hymnographers and iconographers alike were reticent to include information about themselves, for philosophical reasons. It was believed that spiritual anonymity would supercede any earth-given praise. This idea still prevails in some modern monastic communities, sometimes making it difficult for researchers to identify hymnographers.²⁸ It is known that the female monastics Thekla, Martha, Theodosia, Kouvouklisena, and Palaeologina wrote liturgical chant. However, we have musical manuscripts of certain authorship only ascribed to Kassia and one other hymnographer, known only to us as the daughter of Ioannes Kladis.²⁹

What little is known of early women hymnographers includes the following information. Thekla, Martha, and Theodosia were all 9th century abbesses whose music was initially intended for use by the women chanting in their monastic choirs. Kouvouklisena was a *domestikena*, or director and lead chanter for a female choir in a monastery who lived during the 13th century.

25 Diane Touliatos, "The Traditional Role of Greek Women in Music from Antiquity to the End of the Byzantine Empire" in *Rediscovering the Muses: Women's Musical Traditions*, Kimberly Marshall, ed., (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1993), 120-121.

26 Touliatos, "Traditional Role of Greek Women in Music," 81.

27 Antonia Tripolitis, *Kassia: The Legend, the Woman, and Her Work* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1992), xii.

28 However, it should be noted that this issue exists with male monastic hymnographers as well.

29 Diane Touliatos, "The Traditional Role of Greek Women in Music from Antiquity to the End of the Byzantine Empire" in *Rediscovering the Muses: Women's Musical Traditions*, Kimberly Marshall, ed., (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1993), 118.

Ioannes Kladis was an accomplished chanter in Constantinople.³⁰ Since his daughter's writing appears in an early 15th century manuscript alongside his work, it is supposed that she was his student. Palaeologina was a hymnographer and a monastic who lived in the 15th century and was well educated, and related to the Imperial family.³¹

Women's Voices in Orthodox Church Music

In the history of the church, women's choirs first developed in fourth through sixth century Syria to sing the doctrinal hymns, including dialogue hymns,³² while at the same time, women's choirs also became established in female monastic communities in Jerusalem and elsewhere.³³ Sung antiphonally by male and female choirs, with a refrain sung by the congregation, dialogue hymns are works of historical fiction based on a biblical story in which the main character is always a woman conversing with another character. There is always a dilemma that is resolved by the female character.³⁴

From the ninth century until now, the stories and viewpoints of women have become archived in the music of the Orthodox Church. *Troparia*, *Akathist*, and *Kontakion* hymns are those that tell of the life of a saint, in one, usually short and strophic, verse.³⁵ St. Kassia alone wrote *troparia* for St. Chrystina and the Myrrh-Bearing Women, St. Mary of Egypt, the Annunciation, St. Eudokia, St. Agathe, St. Barbara, St. Pelagia, and St. Thekla. While she wrote on other subjects, the attention she showed to "fallen women" is not seen in the work by her male contemporaries. Her text choices lead to dramatic portrayals. She is primarily concerned

³⁰ Ioannes Kladis served as the *lampadarios* (left chanter) of the Hagia Sophia during the 14th century. Ibid, 122.

³¹ Diane Touliatos, "The Traditional Role of Greek Women in Music from Antiquity to the End of the Byzantine Empire" in *Rediscovering the Muses: Women's Musical Traditions*, Kimberly Marshall, ed., (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1993), 121-123.

³² St. Ephrem was instrumental in the development and support of women's choirs in Syria. Touliatos, "Traditional Role of Greek Women in Music," 26.

³³ *Ibid.*, 31.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 26.

³⁵ See Appendix B for a listing of hymns about women saints and accompanying texts.

with imagery, and uses few words compared to other hymnographers.³⁶ Other composers, many anonymous, contributed to the large volume of hymns dedicated to the lives of female saints.³⁷ Texts in these hymns refer to women with powerfully charged images using phrases and words such as, “enlightened, possessing jubilation of spirit, striving in the midst of the arena, royal glory, nourishing, showering grace upon the world, contending against spiritual enemies, defeating demons,” and “having crushed the agitation of the enemies.”³⁸ Within the hymnography these women are given such honorific titles as “queen, beauty, rose, guardian, and fount of grace.”

St. Thekla, traveling companion of St. Paul and the first woman martyr, is referred to as being adorned with a “crown of martyrdom” and “frightening away demonic powers.” St. Olga is honored for her mind “having wings of divine understanding.” St. Xenia’s hymns speak of her “disregarding vanity for the sake of the soul’s immortality.” St. Anastasia is hymned of as a source of healing for those in “trial or adversity.” St. Barbara’s hymns use strong language to image her use of the cross as a weapon to destroy the “snares of the enemies,” while St. Catherine of Alexandria wields the “Holy Spirit’s sword,” and St. Paraskeve arms herself with the “sign of the cross.” Sts. Anaysia and Melania are referred to as “doubly-shining lamps” and a “high-powered beacon,” while St. Genevieve “overcame the animals with force to save her city,” Paris. As will be developed in the next chapter, these hymn texts, and the accompanying music which illustrates them, honor women as models who are seen as beautiful yet not vain,

36 Diane Touliatos, “The Traditional Role of Greek Women in Music from Antiquity to the End of the Byzantine Empire” in *Rediscovering the Muses: Women’s Musical Traditions*, Kimberly Marshall, ed., (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1993), xvi.

37 These include St. Olga of Kiev, St. Xenia, St. Philothea of Athens, St. Agatha of Palermo, St. Anastasia, St. Barbara of Heliopolis, St. Catherine of Alexandria, St. Elizabeth the New Martyr, St. Juliana of Nicomedia, Sts. Perpetua and Felicity, Sts. Anayisa and Melania, St. Irene of Chrysovalantou, St. Irene of Thessaloniki, St. Markella of Chios, St. Matrona of Thessalonica, St. Elizabeth the Wonderworker, St. Brigid of Kildare, St. Paraskave, and St. Genevieve.

38 Many words that act as metaphors and allegories used in quotations throughout this chapter are taken from the texts of the hymns listed in Appendix B. Please see pgs. 72-79 for full texts of these hymns and for these words in their original context.

intelligent, able to save others and above all self-empowered.³⁹

As will be seen in the third chapter, the text of the *Akathist to the Mother of God* is another important source in which the characteristics valued in women within Orthodoxy are expounded. In the Orthodox Church, Mary/Mariam the Mother of God, is called Theotokos, which literally translates “Mother of God,” and Panayia, meaning “All-Holy.” She is honored today with more liturgical devotion than any saint in the Church. The Mother of God has four feast days dedicated to her, including the first and last day of the liturgical year. Additionally, many of her icons are considered “wonder working” by the faithful, and have their own feast days.

The *Akathist Hymn* to the Mother of God, which will be discussed further in the third chapter, consists of twenty-four “oikoi” or blocks which form an acrostic of the Greek alphabet.⁴⁰ At the end of each refrain the congregants respond with either “Rejoice, O Unwedded Bride”⁴¹ or “Alleluia.” The name “*akathist*” refers to standing, as the participants stand throughout the service. This service is chanted in the evenings on the first five Fridays of Great Lent (the forty days prior to the Resurrection). The major hymn which begins “*Ti ipermacho*” or “To Thee Our Champion and Defender” alludes to the siege of Constantinople, probably in the seventh or eighth century.⁴² This *kontakion*⁴³ is sung by the entire congregation after many “salutations”

39 This topic is widely and colloquially debated in Orthodox communities, and these views are typically seen as “improvements” on the Greek goddess and Russian heroine prototypes that preceded them.

40 The first block has 18 verses, and the second 6 verses. This pattern alternates throughout the hymn. Rev. Dr. Nikon D. Patrinos, *A Dictionary of Greek Orthodoxy* (Pleasantville, NY: Hellenic Heritage Publications, 1992), 6-8.

41 Origin constructed an exegesis of the *Song of Songs*, in which the Church ecclesiologically becomes as a bride. This is a recurring theme in Orthodox hymns. Liz James, *Women, Men and Eunuchs: Gender in Byzantium* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 11.

42 The hymn is known to have been composed by a Patriarch. Most scholars believe it to be Germanos I (which would place its writing between the years 715-730), while others believe it to be Sergios, (which would place the siege in 626 A.D.) Rev. Dr. Nikon D. Patrinos, *A Dictionary of Greek Orthodoxy* (Pleasantville, NY: Hellenic Heritage Publications, 1992), 6-8.

43 *Kontakion* means “from the pole” and is a strophic hymn form that takes the form of a homily is sung at every service, usually having a unique melody. Patrinos, *A Dictionary of Greek Orthodoxy*, 226.

are intoned by the priests.⁴⁴ This hymn text lists a substantial number of character traits that the Orthodox Church believes Mary to embody, and enumerates her many titles in these salutations.

Women of Orthodox Christian belief identify themselves as striving to be as much like the Mother of God as possible. Therefore, the hymn text describing her is an important in archiving those attributes seen as desirable for females in the community. This sets up a prototype for young women to strive towards: strength, militancy, and intelligence. The *Theotokos*' theological importance is extolled as “greater than the angels, the world’s deliverance, the seat of mercy, holy place of glory, dispeller of the dark, terminator of diseases, spotless, undefiled, incorrupt, immaculate, pure, uniter of humanity, hope of the hopeless, and helper of those who fight.”

In hymns, the *Theotokos* is often referred to in military or powerful fighting language, becoming metaphorically a “citadel, fortification, protective wall, fiery chariot, anchor and harbor in war and the Empire’s fortress that never fell. There are references to her being named the defeater of legions and repelling barbarian invasions.” The Mother of God is described in the kontakion of the first Friday of Great Lent as wearing her faith as a “coat-of-mail” and “trampling hostile forces underfoot.” The most recognizable part of the *Akathist* begins by calling Mary the “Champion General and Commander” of whom the universal “I, your City” sings, and in the final stanza of ode seven is saving the “city from invaders.” It is her “protective veil” which monastics⁴⁵ and some lay women embody when they choose to wear a veil or headscarf in the church.⁴⁶

Mary’s mind is highly esteemed in phrases from hymns including “transcending the knowledge of scholars, Wisdom’s repository, and enlightening the intellect.” It is remarkable that, when the angel Gabriel appears to her, she is seen in a hymn boldly questioning the

44 *Ibid.*, 5-6.

45 Female and certain elevated male monastics wear veils, including bishops.

46 This veil is worn on top the head and looks like a simple scarf. It is also rumored in some Greek communities to be one possible genesis of the modern practice of wearing a bridal veil to symbolize purity and protection.

voracity of his assertion that he is an angel of God. The *Theotokos* is portrayed in the *Akathist Hymn* as the fulfillment of all prophecies stemming from Judaism. As such, she is referred to in terms of the temple as the “East Gate through which the Logos (word of God) has passed,”⁴⁷ and as the new “Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies,” with references to her holding the lampstand and manna in the fourth ode. She is likened to “Jacob’s ladder, Gideon’s fleece, the tablet holding the Ten Commandments, and the sea which drowned Pharaoh’s army.” Multiple verses refer to the Mother of God as she who “redeems the curse of both Adam and Eve” thereby “reopening Eden and allowing mankind to enter Paradise again.”

Aside from the beautiful imagery, one reason that so many women identify with the portrayal of the *Theotokos* in the *Akathist Hymn* is a sense of belonging to a group with like ideals. At the beginning of the third ode ⁴⁸ the text of the *Akathist* reads:

*Establish your servants who extol you, O Mother of God, for they have formed
a spiritual choir for you, the living and abundant fount; and crowns of glory
graciously in your divine glory grant to them.*⁴⁹

To choirs and chanters, and especially by women who identify with the Mother of God, this verse symbolizes all the servants standing and chanting in the church as being part of a spiritual choir honoring the *Theotokos*. This sense of a community of servants is sensed by

47 “Logos” means word in ancient Greek, but in Orthodox theology it is another name for Christ. Rev. Dr. Nicon D. Patrinos, *A Dictionary of Greek Orthodoxy*, 235.

48 There are no second odes. In any set of hymns containing odes there are numbers one through nine, but two is always missing. “The 9 odes were originally attached to the 9 Biblical canticles to which they were related by poetic allusion or textual quotation.” The first two odes were the two songs of Moses, and have become combined into one, thus why there is no second ode. Ode 3 relates to Hannah, Ode 4 to Habbakuk, Ode 5 to Isaiah, Ode 6 to Jonah, Ode 7 to the Three Children, Ode 8 finishes the story of the Three Children, and Ode 9 is the Magnificat and the Benedictus from the first chapter of Luke. Dimitri Conomos, Ph.D., *Orthodox Byzantine Music* (Boston: Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, 1996, accessed 12 November 2010); available from <http://www.goarch.org/ourfaith/ourfaith7069>.

49 Hieromonk Seraphim Dedes, transl., *The Service of the Akathist Hymn to the Most Holy Theotokos* (Pittsburgh: Clergy Syndesmos of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, 2000).

all members of the church,⁵⁰ and is keenly felt amongst the women in the community often as something “uniquely feminine”⁵¹ about being Orthodox.⁵²

The voices of women are distinctly heard in another form of hymn that sounds like ritual laments. These *Lamentations* (see Appendix A, pg. 68) come from ancient Greek history as a way that women were “empowered through their pain to address publicly issues of social importance.”⁵³ There were two kinds of ritual lament in ancient Greece, and both are defined as “shrill” cries.⁵⁴ Often sung by women, the *thrēnos* was a composed dirge for funerals, but the *gōos* occurred more often and was an “improvised, context-specific weeping”⁵⁵ performed only by women. These onomatopoeic, grief-laden sounds made their way into the liturgical life of the Orthodox Church and are ascribed primarily to the voices of women within the hymn texts. Kassia’s Mary Magdalene cries “Woe is me,”⁵⁶ while the *Lamentations for the Dormition of the Theotokos* contain many repetitions of nonsense syllables⁵⁷ on moving notes between expressions of sorrow. Even when male psaltis⁵⁸ chant the lamentary hymns found in the funeral service,

50 Men also honor the Mother of God with great piety, as evidenced by the male monastic island of Mount Athos being dedicated to her. This also leads to a great respect in the treatment of women by most Orthodox men.

51 A set of interviews conducted by the author of members of church choirs in Greek Orthodox Churches in the Chicago area in small groups, January-July 2008.

52 Dedes, *The Service of the Akathist Hymn to the Most Holy Theotokos* (Pittsburgh: Clergy Syndesmos of the Diocese of Pittsburg, 2000).

53 Nancy Sultan, “Private Speech, Public Pain: The Power of Women’s Laments in ancient Greek Poetry and Tragedy” in *Rediscovering the Muses: Women’s Musical Traditions*, Kimberly Marshall, ed., (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1993), 92.

54 Margaret Alexiou, *The Ritual Lament In Greek Tradition* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 102.

55 Nancy Sultan, “Private Speech, Public Pain: The Power of Women’s Laments in ancient Greek Poetry and Tragedy” in *Rediscovering the Muses: Women’s Musical Traditions*, Kimberly Marshall, ed., (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1993), 93.

56 *Divine Liturgies Music Project* (Florence, AZ: *St. Anthony’s Greek Orthodox Monastery*, 2010, accessed 9 November 2010); available from <http://www.stanthonysonastery.org/music/Index.html>.

57 Like a long “O,” for example.

58 Psalti is the traditional Greek title for a chanter, who is considered to be a lower level member of the clergy when tonsured. The lead chanter in charge of a particular church is titled the *Protopsalti*.

memorial service, or Bridegroom⁵⁹ services, the voices of women lamenting seem to come through to the listener as though a narrator is relaying them.

The most famous *Lamentations* (or *Engomiai*) sung for the repose of Christ on Holy Friday are much more complex. These are chanted as the faithful circle the outside of the church three times on foot following the *epitaphio*, or wooden replica of a tomb holding the cloth icon of the crucified Christ which is carried in a funeral procession.⁶⁰ The people then re-enter the church after going under the *epitaphio* and being censed and sprinkled with blessed rose water by the priests. At the head of this procession, usually following right behind the priests, walk young girls symbolizing the mourners at the tomb. These girls are dressed beautifully, often all in white, and strewing flower petals. This is the visceral action that accompanies the long stanza of lamentation whose text portrays the sounds of women mourning. A choir or group of chanters follow the girls and chant the *Lamentations*, and when possible divide by gender into two groups which chant antiphonally. When sung in English, the sound “O” is placed melismatically throughout the hymn preceding the names of Christ to help the translation fit the original, Greek melody. To complete the effect there is text which is set specifically to sound like crying. The text in Greek employs nasal vowels and the musical motive steps up in a diminished interval close to a half-step, then descends four or more notes on that nasal vowel.

In the *Engomia of Holy Friday* the voices of both the Mother of God and the *Lamentations* of women powerfully combine into one hymn. In the thirteenth verse of the first stanza, the chanter sings as though the words come from the mouth of the Mother of God. ““Woe is me!” the Virgin mourns through heartbreaking sobs. “Though art Jesus my most precious, beloved Son! Gone is my light, and the light of all the World!”” Also similar to ancient

⁵⁹ Beginning on the evening of Palm Sunday in anticipation and continuing through the evening of Holy Tuesday, Bridegroom services are chanted, usually in the evening, but as the service of Orthros for the early morning. These are connected to the central figure of the Bridegroom in the Parable of the Ten Virgins, and are lamentory in nature in that Christ is portrayed as arrested, beaten and bleeding. *Great Lent, Holy Week and Pascha* (Boston: The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, 2009, accessed 12 November 2010); available from <http://lent.goarch.org>.

⁶⁰ An epataphio is the tomb of Christ. The wooden epataphios in a parish is decorated and a cloth icon of Christ’s burial placed inside, this icon is also called an epataphio.

Greek lament, the second stanza of the *Holy Friday Lamentations* starts on a shrill, high pitch, something that doesn't happen often in liturgical music, and then descends in what should feel like wailing to the singer. The second verse of this stanza contains the text from which comes the practice of having young girls anoint the tomb with flowers: "Anxiously the women carry myrrh and spices, my Christ to lay before you." Verse twelve of the third stanza again brings the voice of the Virgin lamenting her son's death. The text reads, "O my sweetest springtime, my sweetest Son, my dear child, where has thy beauty vanished?"⁶¹ Therefore these hymns represent the voices of many women, even when they are rendered by male chanters.

Summary

As this chapter has shown, the Byzantine Chant of the Orthodox Church is experienced as musically dense and emotionally charged, and the sheer volume and presentation of psalmic repertory in liturgical music enhances how and why the sounds are received by those listening. In church history, when women spoke for women, the essence of what was being said made it possible for women to identify with and internalize. Women slowly and perhaps unconsciously began over time to identify their gender role with the poetic ideas they heard and chanted at church.

The ways in which women view themselves in relation to poetic imagery found within the hymnography of the church will obviously vary from person to person. But what is clear, is that the way in which women depict women will be different from the way in which men depict women. As Liz James writes:

Women will be depicted in certain ways and as performing certain actions. It offers a cultural construction of 'woman,' enabling us to see that a holy woman is not the same as a holy man for reasons beyond those of biological sex. What can

61 Nancy Takis, *Engomia of Holy Friday* (Williamston, MI: New Byzantium Publications, 2009, accessed 9 September 2010); available from <http://www.newbyz.org>. and Nancy Takis, *TA ETKΩMIA: The Lamentations Before the Holy Sepulchre* (Williamston, MI: New Byzantium Publications, 2003, accessed 1 November 2010); available from <http://www.newbyz.org>.

*be done is to look at the place of women in [a] society, the roles of women, and at the cultural construction 'woman,' rather than simply the individual person.*⁶²

The voice of women in the Orthodox Church has never felt the need to struggle in order to be heard. Neither is this voice very difficult to find lamenting, teaching, praising, and speaking of its own equal and unique views of the church's beliefs. There is not one service in the living liturgical practice of the Orthodox Church in which the voice of women as chanters, hymn subjects, or hymnographers is excluded. Music by and about women in the Orthodox Church calls all to tangibly continue to reach for the state closest to their creator, striving to emulate the Mother of God, who in the *Engomia of Holy Friday* is seen mystically and literally "Holding Her Creator." In sum, the Mother of God and female saints are described in the hymns of the Greek Orthodox Church using poetic imagery, allegories, and metaphors. These help to establish the models for women in the church community, an idea which will be developed in the next chapter.

62 Liz James, *Women, Men and Eunuchs: Gender in Byzantium* (New York: Routledge, 1997), xviii.

CHAPTER II
THEMES IN HYMNS PORTRAYING WOMEN SAINTS
“STRIVING IN THE MIDST OF THE ARENA”

It is in the small chapel dedicated to St. John the Forerunner that the all-night vigil will occur. The nuns at the monastery begin their preparations as people enter with their families, and light beeswax candles scented with incense, which slowly warm the space. Soon, the sunset is accompanied by tapping on a large, hollowed wooden log by one of the older nuns to call everyone to church for Vespers. The sound of chanting drifts from the small group of young nuns at the front of the church. The *Yerrondissa*, or Spiritual Mother at the monastery, alternately sits and stands to chant near the front of the church, to the left of the altar. The chanting continues as censuring by the *Yerrondissa* fills the air with a visible fog of rich, spicy incense. There are no lights lit. Only the candles suspended in front of the icons and the small taper held by the person reading shine in the night. The entire congregation chants along with the readers the prayer praising the “Godbearing” woman as “higher in honor [even] than the Cherubim and Seraphim.” As this hymn “magnifying” the Mother of God is chanted, no one moves. (Recorded by the author a women’s’ monastery in southern Wisconsin, August 14, 2006.)

This paragraph describes just one of the many evenings the author has spent during twelve years serving as a singer and chanter in Greek Orthodox Churches in the Midwestern United States. After this much time chanting, the Byzantine Liturgical Chant becomes a part of the memory. The Byzantine music of the church hymns allow their poetic text to become embedded in both the conscious and subconscious memory of individuals, and as such can

illuminate how members of the community conceptualize some shared beliefs about the personality traits, theological roles, use of power, voice and values expected of females within the community. The purpose of this chapter is to illustrate how traits and allegories are assigned to women, and used as metaphors to construct the female ideal within Greek Orthodox Church communities in the United States. The liturgical music and texts of the Orthodox Church are poetic hymns which tell the stories of the lives of saints, and can shed light on the communally held cultural beliefs of members within the church. Perhaps the most useful of these hymns, for this purpose of illustrating gender assignation of traits and allegories, are the special *troparia* and *kontakia* forms of hymns which exist for each major saint in the church.

Troparia and *kontakia* are types of hymns used in Orthodox Churches. They are thematic, linked to particular saints or feasts, and change according to the feasts of the Liturgical calendar. In Byzantine music, the *troparion* is usually a short, one stanza hymn. But, it can also be one of a series of stanzas, or can be inserted between psalm verses of a hymn. Another word used to refer to a troparion is “*apolytikion*.” This means dismissal hymn, and it is the “troparion,” or thematic hymn, used at the end of Vespers each evening. The Greek Orthodox chanters simply call it the “*apolytikion*” but other Orthodox Christian traditions in the United States, such as Slavic and Antiochian churches, refer to it as “*troparion*” or “*tropar*” referring to its form. Another use of this song form is to insert *troparia* as the stanzas of a canon. These longer works model the melody or “*irmoi*” of the mode. So, for example, the prototype of the first mode is sung, and then all stanzas of the *troparion* are sung using the new words, but to the same tune as the first of that set. Usually there are six verses broken up by short responses. Then, a change is made to the second prototypical mode and those stanzas repeated using this new tune. This process continues until all eight modes or “*irmoi*” melodies have been used. The odes are numbered one through nine, but “Ode Two” was omitted in antiquity and the number system has simply been retained without a number two hymn. The *troparion* hymn for each feast day is like a theme song of sorts, and is repeated at every service during the day.

Kontakia are the other type of thematic hymn in Eastern Christian churches in America.

In Greek, “*kontakion*” means “from the pole” because originally it referred to a leather roll of liturgical prayers that were so long that they were wound around a wooden dowel or pole to be used during the Liturgical services.⁶³ The term later began to apply to the homily, like a written-out sermon sung in verse with one or two introductory stanzas called “*proemia*” and followed by eighteen to twenty-four “*oikoi*” or strophes. When a *kontakion* is chanted, each of the stanzas and strophes are followed by the same refrain. Many examples exist of longer *kontakia* which use acrostics to create a long, hymnographic form.

In American Orthodox Churches, an abbreviated form of the *kontakion* is most often used. The longer *kontakion* form is now reserved for major feasts, such as the *Akathist* to the Mother of God during the first five Fridays of Great Lent, which will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter. It is also used in the long form in American monastic communities somewhat more regularly. In its abbreviated form, only the first stanza and strophe are sung after the sixth ode of the canon at *Orthros*, the morning service. During the Divine Liturgy and other daily services, the *kontakion* is sung in its short form following the *troparia*. However, the *kontakion* is not sung at Vespers, the service chanted at sunset. The form of the *kontakion* is attributed to Saint Romanos the Melodist, a hymnographer from Syria, who lived in the sixth century. Of the more than one thousand hymns he wrote, about eighty survive today. His are considered to be the finest early Byzantine hymns because of their diction, poetic quality, and what modern chanters have described as “inspiration.” Ancient hymns were based on meter, but Romanosian hymns broke with this tradition, and are based on accent as dictated by the syllabic structure of the text.⁶⁴ This became the new tradition that is still used today by Byzantine chanters. Tradition holds that it was to St. Romanos that the first *kontakion* was revealed.⁶⁵ One good example of this advent of text painting is the *doxasticon* of Mary Magdalene’s feast day, the Vespers

63 Rev. Dr. Nicon D. Patrinos, *A Dictionary of Greek Orthodoxy* (Pleasantville, NY: Hellenic Heritage Publications, 1992), 226.

64 Patrinos, *A Dictionary of Greek Orthodoxy*, 325.

65 Tradition holds that it was used at the Christmas Eve banquet of the Byzantine imperial palace until the end of the 12th century, and is still very popular today in American Greek communities.

of July 22. In this through-composed hymn,⁶⁶ according to chanter Nancy Takis, there is a long musical ornament on the word “stretched,” and “on the words ‘enclosed in the tomb,’ the melody extends deeply below the tonic” but “on the words ‘King of all,’ the melody climbs to the upper tonic, with ‘King’ on the highest note, whereas ‘gardener’ is back to earth on the low end.” In a terraced crescendo, she describes how “‘Shout aloud’ climbs to the top of the scale and ‘good tidings of joy’ goes even higher...[and] the word ‘ascend’ is on an ascending phrase.”⁶⁷

The text of *troparia* and *kontakia* are heard usually only once a year by most parishioners, as they are sung on the day of the saint’s feast only. However, many people also know by heart the hymn or hymns of their patron saint and those of immediate family members as well, in order to chant them during daily prayers at home. When listening to the text of the extremely poetic *troparia* and *kontakia*, there is a striking difference between the word choices used for hymns concerning male saints, than when the saint being spoken of is female. The words used to describe female saints in Eastern chant tradition are extremely strong and empowering. As Stan Takis so aptly expressed it, “Orthodox hymnody...is artistically more about the literature of the words, than the artistic significance of the music, which was created to enhance the words, both in helping to convey their meaning, but also to make them memorable by attaching them to a tune.”⁶⁸ This focus on words being paramount to musical sound led towards the text study of several hymns about female saints, and to question how the texts of the *troparia* and *kontakia* (hymns) which are chanted to commemorate female saints pedagogically characterize the feminine ideal for the community members of Orthodox Churches in the United States. To begin to answer this question it is necessary to discuss common themes found in the text of hymns with a woman saint as their subject.

⁶⁶ As opposed to the model melodies employed by stichera. Nancy Takis, e-mail interview response to the author, July 13, 2011.

⁶⁷ Nancy Takis, e-mail interview response to the author, July 13, 2011.

⁶⁸ Stan Takis, e-mail interview response to the author, July 11, 2011.

Themes

The common themes found in these hymns about women saints can be grouped into allegories to nature, theology, power, and voices and values (See Table 1). Allegories to nature were found in themes which likened female saints to a lamb, bird, fountain, lamp, flower, or tree. Theological ideals are touched upon in themes such as women having power over demons, moral virtue, asceticism, and as being sources of grace and healing. The ideas of power and strength are found in themes of bravery, striving and might, and references which are military and athletic, even referencing the gladiator. This group also includes the theme of royal allegories, denoting a different type of strength and power. And, the themes found which fall under the category of voice and values include women who take on non-traditional roles, are “loud,” are a source of pride or joy, or have value beyond physical beauty. Also in this grouping are women who show intelligence, either through references to wisdom, intelligence, learning, education or being quoted, even if the words are historical fiction.

Allegories to Nature

Some of these hymns contain themes that might be seen as somewhat traditional comparing women to plants, birds, and fountains. There was an interesting comparison of women saints to plants, not a surprising allegory in the traditional sense, referring to growth, and branching out. There are many hymns which reference flowers in relation to women saints such as St. Irene of Thessalonkia, much like the analogy of the Mother of God to a rose in the *Akathist Hymn*,⁶⁹ but in these texts multiple references to women as trees were found as well. This allegory might be a representation of protection or strength, but is certainly intriguing. In this particular case both St. Brigid of Kildare and St. Olga of Kiev are likened to trees. This is interesting because these are saints which originated in what are often thought of as the more

⁶⁹ The Akathist Hymn is a Liturgical Service lasting about two hours. It is well-known to members of the church community and occurs the first five Friday evenings of Great Lent. It refers to the Mother of God as a “never fading Rose” many times in prose.

Western culture areas of pre-Roman Catholic France and Tsarist Russia, as opposed to the saints from the Mediterranean which seem to use the “rose” or flower metaphors instead. There are analogies comparing Sts. Anastasia, Brigid, and Elizabeth the Wonderworker to fountains, and the allusion to such for St. Genevieve, patron of Paris, whose tears are said to “sprinkle and fertilize the desert of sterile hearts.” And, in a similar outreaching way to the ancient symbol of a fountain, Sts. Anaysia and Melania are likened to lamps with beams and rays. There are also some references that are avian in nature. For example St. Agatha of Palermo and St. Brigid of Kildare are referred to as birds, while St. Barbara of Heliopolis is described as a lion and a bird, and St. Olga of Kiev as having wings, another bird reference. These ancient symbols could have an expected feminine connotation, but are in no way weak, and portray favorable attributes of women. There are four hymns which offer a lamb as a metaphor for the women saints they extoll. This “lamb” comparison historically refers to Christ, thereby placing the women as direct iconic representations of Christ, something that typically occurs in Eastern Christian traditional music texts, and is obviously theologically significant.

Theological Implications

Other hymns use words that theologically position women in direct contact with God, and therefore set the precedent that woman can be important authorities to depend upon for spiritual advice. For example, grace and healing are included in five of the hymns, those of St. Anastasia, St. Brigid, St. Elizabeth the Wonderworker, St. Markella of Chios, and St. Xenia. St. Irene of Chrysovalantou, St. Mary of Egypt, and St. Thekla are all referenced in their hymns as having power over demons. These powerful statements place women directly in contact with God, a theological view which does not require an intermediary between the woman and God. If they are Christ-like they have great moral value, and if they have power over demons then they are in a state of grace with God known as “*theosis*” or “*oneness*.” The concept that an ideal woman in the Orthodox Christian tradition can become worthy enough or able to possess these qualities is an important statement for young girls growing up and hearing or chanting

these hymns and also mirrors the common Orthodox practice of even laypersons seeking spiritual advice from a “Holy Mother,” such as often occurs with the “*Yerondissa*,” the woman who is the leader of a female monastic community. St. Genevieve of Paris and St. Paraskeve the New are both mentioned for their asceticism, which aside from the obvious theological nature of a life of monasticism, the very nature of this lifestyle means that these women defied social conventions and are lauded for living a life separate from what a woman’s expected role would have been during their lifetime.

Power Embodiment

Power is another common theme that appears in various forms. The hymns to many, many women saints speak of them using royal allegories, with words like crown and reign. This honor, which denotes power of both lineage and governmental decision making, is actually accorded more often than is virtue,⁷⁰ despite the fact that few of these women was of physical royal lineage. There are other themes which were found in abundance that are far from the usual analogies for holy women. There are many references to power in the form of strength, and while references to inner strength would have been expected, the modifiers are surprisingly physical referring to “striving in the midst of the arena,” and calling women mighty. St. Thekla’s bravery in the face of “flames” is lauded in her troparion. As a woman martyr, the hymn promotes her bravery and says that she entered the fire of martyrdom with “gladness.” In yet another metaphorical reference to physical strength, in four of the hymns, to Sts. Barbara, Irene, Juliana, and Matrona, there is text comparing the women to gladiators in an arena using words such as prizes, trophy, or allusion to winning a contest. There are seven hymns of those listed in Appendix B that use military references to refer to women, and some of these are quite old. Terms such as defeating enemies, victory, conquering, winning and even arming with weapons or swords are common metaphors used to describe women saints. These militaristic

⁷⁰ Only St. Elizabeth the New Martyr and St. Elizabeth the Wonderworker are specifically referred to for their virtue in the hymn text. It is the author’s belief that this is implied for most saints and therefore the more non-traditional ideas are the ones brought forth in the hymn texts.

references suggest physical and emotional strength, as well as the hymnographers portraying these women's personas as active rather than passive.

Virtues, Voices, and Values

Other hymns' themes show multiple women exhibiting many non-traditional characteristics. These voices of women whose values were outside the norm of the time in which they lived are an interesting choice for hymn subjects, and it is enlightening that they are held up as ideal community models of behavior. Five of the hymns take poetic license and use fictional quoted speech of the woman saint who is the hymn's subject. This is something that is seen in hymns about both male and female saints, but this is interesting because Greek literature often associates rhetorical ability with learned persons. There are many other references which also show women in a light quite unlike the traditional idea of religious or holy women in most Western cultures. There is a strong reference to women being an unabashed source of pride. The use of the hymn texts calling them a source of pride, or referencing them as a source of "joy" which carries much the same meaning within the church's theological context⁷¹ is well represented. While six of the hymns directly reference this topic, all of the hymns indirectly reference it simply because enough pride was instilled in these women to accord them the honor of individual *troparia*, as opposed to the common practice of grouping them into a larger collection of saints in one hymn. Any saint who has her or his own *troparion* has been viewed by either church hierarchs or members, and often both, as an important figure in whom pride should be instilled. The hymn is then written to hold their good virtues up as an example for others to follow.

Many hymns refer to women's wisdom, intelligence, learning, and education, often calling them wise. Notably, St. Olga of Kiev is referred to as soaring on "wings of divine

⁷¹ Another way of saying in a hymn that a saint is a source of pride is to call the worshipers to "joy in it." This is a case of something intangible being lost in translation, but that still seems to be "felt" in the expression of these words by parishioners, according to informal interviews I have conducted with many community members, chanters, and clergy.

understanding.” An important theme which occurs in the hymns for St. Elizabeth the Wonderworker, St. Mary of Egypt, and St. Xenia is the description of their value beyond or outside of physical beauty. This concept of women having intrinsic value that is based in concepts that are not physical in nature could illustrate an existing cultural bias towards women cultivating their mental abilities and other non-physical virtues.

These women are models whose lives were neither based in the male-dominated world which surrounded them, nor were they based on the traditional family structure that emphasized childbearing. Perhaps the most important and surprising finding in the hymn texts was evidence of women saints who embody one or more non-traditional female roles. Eleven of the hymns referred to women as remaining unmarried by choice, living alone, defying a father or other patriarchal system, and preaching. What these hymns show is that the liturgical lesson being taught about what the feminine ideal “should be” to the community members of the Orthodox Churches in the United States shows women who are strong, intelligent, and holy, and whose voices and values show many positive and affirming expressions of femininity.

Summary

In sum, this chapter has explored the texts of *troparia* and *kontakia* which are chanted to commemorate female saints in order to better understand their pedagogical implications in their characterization of the feminine ideal for the community members of Greek Orthodox Churches in the United States. Non-traditional themes (in the Western sense) such as intelligence, learning, education, wisdom and value beyond physical beauty were found to provide striking references in hymn texts about women saints inside the Orthodox Church, which most people view as traditionally patristic in organization. However, this concept’s existence in the hymnology is important and telling because an obvious communal value amongst women of traditionally Orthodox Christian communities in America, especially Greek, is an emphasis on education for women. Women in these communities are also stereotyped as outspoken, opinionated, and strong-willed. This typically true characterization, while not necessarily

causal, is a manifestation in communally acceptable social behavior of that which is seen in the liturgical texts as referring to women who are holy, strong, intelligent, and feminine.

Whether text references in the liturgy like these have become embedded in the subconscious thought of the community, or whether because the community feels the way it does about the role of women and this is then reflected in its religious musical art is difficult or even impossible to discern. However, what is evident is that despite the Orthodox Church's outwardly evident male-oriented organizational structure, there internally exists ample evidence of a collective view of women which is empowering. This societal view of women is mirrored in the hymn texts chosen for extolling women saints, the models held up as ideal women to be emulated by female members of the Greek Orthodox Christian communities in America. These models will be seen to derive from the Marian prototype as illustrated in the *Akathist Hymn to the Mother of God* in the coming chapter

CHAPTER III
THE AKATHIST HYMN TO THE MOTHER OF GOD:
IDEAL FEMALE PROTOTYPE
“BY WHAT NAME SHALL I CALL THEE?”

It is one of the five Fridays of Great Lent, the forty days leading up to Pascha, which is the celebration of the Resurrection of Christ and the most important holy day in the church year. People enter the darkened church while the service is already in motion, and they light candles and are seated as the priest and chanter begin the opening prayers which are the same for every Liturgical event in the life of the church. Facing to the east, the people see the “royal gate” or “iconostasis” containing eight life-sized icons. Above the royal gates or “beautiful gates” is an icon of the last supper, and set in front of the gates, on a special stand for the occasion, is an extremely large icon of the “*Theotokos*” or “God-bearer.” This icon featuring the Mother of God is surrounded by smaller icons depicting scenes to be described in the hymn, each denoted by a letter of the Greek alphabet. On the floor, surrounding this large icon, are many small fragrant plants and bouquets of flowers which people have brought as gifts to “*Panayia*.” This is the endearing nickname that Greeks call the Mother of God, though it translates literally as “All-Holy.” After the priest has censed the icons on the iconostasis, representing the “church mysterious,” and the people gathered, representing the “church militant,” the creed brings the opening prayers to a close. Then the chanter begins the service of the *Akathist Hymn* with the words, “*Anixo to stoma mou, kai plirothisetai pnevmatos,*” meaning “My mouth shall I open wide, and it will

thus be with Spirit filled.”⁷² The people stand and remain standing for the rest of this “*akathist*” service. (Recorded by the author on April 8, 2010 at St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church in St. Louis, Missouri.)

This chapter will describe how the *Akathist Hymn to the Mother of God* (See Appendix C, pg. 80) is celebrated by the Greek Orthodox Churches in America. While the aim of this chapter is largely to describe the ritual as it exists currently, other questions which will be addressed include: what does this ancient hymn mean to modern participants, and does this hymn mirror and illustrate, or contradict the social structure of the community in which it resides? In its current manifestation, does this popular hymn manage to maintain its original purpose of teaching and intercessory prayer for community members, or has it also taken on new meanings for worshippers in the centuries since it has been written?

History of the *Akathist*

The *kontakion* is the form of the *Akathist Hymn*. *Kontakia* take complex scriptures, stories, and teachings of the church fathers and mothers and contract them into small, poetic chunks which are easily remembered. The *Akathist Hymn to the Theotokos* is believed to have been written around 520 A.D. by Syrian deacon, Saint Romanos the Melodist.⁷³ Credited with the origins of the *kontakion* hymn form, Saint Romanos⁷⁴ was following in the footsteps of Saint Ephrem the Syrian,⁷⁵ whose teaching hymns had helped a largely illiterate populace become educated in scripture and church teachings. Saint Romanos, who lived from 490 to 556 A.D., was born to Jewish parents and converted to Christianity as a young boy. As such, the musical traditions he would likely have drawn from can include Jewish chant and scriptures, along with

72 Hieromonk Seraphim Dedes, transl., *The Service of the Akathist Hymn to the Most Holy Theotokos* (Pittsburgh: Clergy Syndesmos of the Diocese of Pittsburg, 2000), 16-17.

73 Frederica Matthews-Green, *The Lost Gospel of Mary* (Brewster, MA: Paraclete Press, 2007), 109-110.

74 St. Romanos was born in 475 A.D.

75 St. Ephrem lived from 306-373 A.D.

the women's choirs Saint Ephrem wrote for in his native Syria. St. Romanos lived in Beirut, and later Constantinople, where tradition holds that this chanter with a poor voice fell asleep in church and the *Theotokos* appeared to him in a dream and asked him to eat a scroll. The story holds that upon waking he went to the chanter's stand and extemporaneously chanted the first *kontakion* perfectly.⁷⁶ The long *kontakia* hymns contain anywhere from eighteen to thirty verses and are named for the *kontax*, or pole around which a long parchment containing the verses was originally unwound by the chanter while the hymn was chanted. These verses are called *oikoi* which means houses in Greek. In the *Akathist Hymn*, each of the twenty-four verses begins with a letter of the Greek alphabet. Some hymns are chanted "*cathismata*" which means from a seated position, but the "*akathistos*" position of standing throughout is an honor accorded this hymn.⁷⁷ Though *kontakia* usually contain acrostics, often with the author's signature spelled out, this one is the most complicated example of all *kontakia* acrostics with each verse beginning on the next letter of the Greek alphabet. The smaller scenes surrounding the *Akathist Hymn* icon are the stories told by each verse, and labeled by the letter of the alphabet on which they begin (See Figure 1).

Order of the *Akathist*

There are eight "Odes" in the *Akathist Hymn*, each of which uses a Byzantine⁷⁸ hymn tone. Each ode contains either five or six verses, after each of which is chanted "Most Holy *Theotokos*, save us," except for the last two verses of each set which are followed by the responses "Glory to the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit" and "Both now and ever and

⁷⁶ Dr. Nicon D. Patrinos, *A Dictionary of Greek Orthodoxy* (Pleasantville, NY: Hellenic Heritage Publications, 1992), 325.

⁷⁷ G. G. Meersseman, *The Akathistos Hymn: Hymn of Praise to the Mother of God* (Fribourg, Switzerland: The University Press, 1958), 7.

⁷⁸ Byzantine music is used in Greek and Arabic Liturgical Practice, the music theory used now dates from the 5th century but was simplified in the 17th century.



Figure 1. Icon of *The Akathist Hymn to the Mother of God* (from www.orthodoxwiki.org)

to the ages of ages, Amen.”⁷⁹ The first verse of each ode is called a *heirmos*, loosely meaning model or prototype, because it sets up the melodic and rhythmic structure which the others verses follow using a modified strophic formula. The text of the odes is from a poem by Saint Joseph the Hymnographer, and is in Tone Four. Ode One is five verses long, and is followed by Odes Three⁸⁰ through Nine which have either five or six verses each. Following this the *kontakion*'s⁸¹ anthem “*Ti Ipermaxcho*” or “O Champion General” is chanted loudly by two choirs alternating verses⁸² and the congregation joining in loudly and wholeheartedly. Following this, the “Salutations” begin. On the first four Fridays of Lent only one stanza is chanted, but on the fifth Friday of Lent, all four “Salutations” stanzas are chanted. These list many poetic names for the *Theotokos*, one after each greeting. Following this, the *kontakion*'s anthem “O Champion General” is again chanted loudly by all present, but this time the shorter melody is used. Then a *kontakion* verse is read, not chanted. On the first Friday the *kontakion* of Saint Theodore of Tyro is read, but on the subsequent Fridays the text of the “Planter of Creation” is read, unless there is a major Saint's celebration on Saturday, in which case that saint's *kontakion* is substituted.⁸³ After forty “Kyrie, eleisons”⁸⁴ the prayer of Saint Basil the Great is chanted.

Following some concluding responses, the most solemn portion of the service begins. Two chanters come forward and stand before the icons of the Mother of God and Christ

79 In Greek, the responses, in phonetics are “Iperaigha Theotoke, soston imas, Doxa Patri kai Iio, Kai agio Pnevmati,” and “Kai nin kai ahe kai eis tous aionas ton aionon. Amin.”

80 There is no Ode Two. This was lost in antiquity, but the numbering system has been retained for some unknown reason.

81 While the whole form of the overall hymn is known as a *kontakion*, so is the main anthem called the “*Kontakion*.” Each Sunday and holy day has its own “*Kontakion*” referring to the shorter, main anthem and the word is used both ways by practitioners of Byzantine music.

82 This is the correct practice and is done in larger churches, in smaller churches either the chanter leads of the priest and chanter try to alternate. The practice varies.

83 As the liturgical day begins at sundown, these start on the five Fridays of Lent, but as the sun goes down it turns to Saturday, and as this is read late in the service, it is the Saturday holiday on the calendar that is followed. Every single day in the Orthodox calendar is filled with multiple commemorations, some major, some minor.

84 “Lord have mercy” is chanted 40 times in a melodic format which all chanters know, though it is not written down.

respectively, with their backs to the people. It can be two male or two female chanters, but often in American Greek Orthodox Churches, a woman stands to chant before the icon of the *Theotokos*, and a male chanter before the icon of Christ. She begins to chant a long prayer by Paul, a monk of the Monastery of Evergetis. In a “simple” or “plain” chant,⁸⁵ she begins to pray on pitch by giving the Mother of God many names: “O spotless, undefiled, incorrupt, immaculate, pure Virgin, Lady Bride of God”⁸⁶ and the prayer continues for two pages. This prayer in Greek is called by its first word, “Aspile!” The second chanter then intones a slightly shorter prayer to Christ by the monk Antiochus. The first chanter then concludes with a petition to the Mother of God to present the prayer to her son, and then the second chanter responds with the prayer of Saint Ioannikos.⁸⁷ The first chanter concludes by asking the Mother of God to keep all under her shelter. During the first Friday the Priest then reads the Gospel, otherwise the concluding prayers are quickly said, dismissal blessings given, and the service concludes very quickly, in a way that often catches first time listeners by surprise. It is as if the important work is done and then we quickly finish and conclude with “*Tin oraiotita.*” This hymn which begins⁸⁸ “Seeing the beauty” is sung reverently and slowly by all present, and many including the priest complete multiple prostrations during the entire length of the hymn. After this a quick dismissal is followed by all responding “Amin”⁸⁹ and the entire congregation comes forward one at a time to prostrate before the icon and venerate the icon of the *Akathist* before leaving. Often, this veneration of the icon takes as much time as half of the service itself.

85 These prayers do not contain a particular melody, but one is improvised by chanters who have been trained in a way that helps paint the text. However, many less well trained chanters simply memorize a formula by listening to another chanter who is well trained. Some women in America who are Greek immigrants say that they chant this prayer in a way that mimics a chanter they heard often while growing up in Greece.

86 Hieromonk Seraphim Dedes, transl., *The Service of the Akathist Hymn to the Most Holy Theotokos* (Pittsburgh: Clergy Syndesmos of the Diocese of Pittsburg, 2000), 73.

87 The text of this famous hymn is: “My hope is the Father, my refuge is the Son, my shelter is the Holy Spirit. O Holy Trinity, glory to you.”

88 In liturgical practice, hymns are referred to by the first few words in lieu of a name.

89 Hieromonk Seraphim Dedes, transl., *The Service of the Akathist Hymn to the Most Holy Theotokos* (Pittsburgh: Clergy Syndesmos of the Diocese of Pittsburg, 2000).

Akathist as a Pedagogical Tool

The theological purpose of the *Akathist Hymn* was originally to teach. The largely illiterate audience of worshippers in Romano's lifetime would have connected to his setting these scriptural stories to music. The music, the acrostic, the repeated responses, the lists, and the icon were all memory aids. These were sermon hymns, intended to have a plot. And, the reason that this one has endured is due to Romanos' ability to make it exciting for listeners. He utilized alternating choirs, dynamic shifts, and poetic imagery set to memorable tunes. This created, in keeping with Greek Orthodox theology, a total aesthetic experience of worship that is physical, spiritual, and encompasses a response that is more about action than it is emotional. The intention of these types of hymns in the minds of those who chant them is not historical accuracy. They are intended to be typological stories, and the hymnographers who "received" them and wrote them down connect themes, prophesies, and imagery that endeavor to unite the Jewish scriptural heritage to the beliefs of the Orthodox Church for listeners, by drawing parallels between the saint or story to imagery from the Hebrew scriptures.⁹⁰ One central tenet of Orthodox chant is to emphasize perception over theoretical understanding, and many young chanters are told by their teachers to stop "thinking" so much!⁹¹ The hymn is seen not as an emotional poem about the Virgin Mary, but more as an action of praise offered to her in liturgical time.⁹²

The sermon, or plot, of the *Akathist Hymn* is a sequence of greetings to the Mother of God which give her many different names, and which espouse many ideas and characteristics attached to her. She is the main character in the story, and the angel Gabriel begins by greeting her just before the Annunciation. Though it was in use since around 250 A.D., Romano's use

⁹⁰ For example, in the *Akathist Hymn* the Mother of God is likened to the seven branched lampstand, manna, and as being the new manifestation of the Ark of the Covenant, all references to the Jewish scriptures.

⁹¹ George Athanasopoulos (protopsalti of St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church, Des Plaines, IL) in numerous conversations with and impromptu music lessons given to the author, 2003-2004.

⁹² Liturgical time is a concept based on the Jewish measurement of worship time from sunset to sunset, and as such follows the sunset, not the calendar date. This means that the *Akathist* spans two days in liturgical time.

of the term *Theotokos* meaning “Mother of God” or “God-bearer” was seen during his time as a reflection on church politics in that it was a rejection of the teachings of Arius and Nestorius who had just been defeated by the third Ecumenical Council in 431.⁹³ The Eastern Orthodox Church never was involved with the theological battle that occurred in the Western Church over God’s existence as “truly man yet truly divine.” Therefore, while the use of hymns which extoll Mary fell out of use in the West as Marian devotion began to be looked on as somewhat suspect, in the East devotion to her continued unabated and the terminology was unapologetic. In fact, the terms used to describe her in the *Akathist Hymn* sound hyperbolic. Theologian and writer Frederica Matthews-Green has suggested that they are exaggerated “much like the language a lover bestows on his beloved.”⁹⁴

The plot of the *Akathist Hymn* is broken into two main parts. The first set of twelve stanzas chronicle the childhood of Christ from the Annunciation until Mary presents him at the Temple. In the first stanza, Gabriel announces to Mary that she is to be the *Theotokos* and bear the Messiah, but in the second she asks how this is possible for her, a virgin. In the third stanza, Gabriel tells her God’s “divine power” is sufficient for this paradox, so the fourth stanza sees Mary pregnant with the Messiah. Next appear the scenes of worldly connection: in the fifth stanza Mary runs to visit Elizabeth, who is carrying John the Baptist, and the child leaps in her womb. In the sixth stanza, Mary’s betrothed Joseph suspects his wife of adultery, but when she tells him of her conception “by the Holy Spirit” he replies “Alleluia.” In the seventh stanza, the shepherds appear because they have heard of Christ’s birth from the Angels and they praise Mary at length. In the eighth stanza, the Magi appear in the story. In the ninth stanza, the Magi see Christ in Mary’s arms and bring him gifts while they salute her at length. In verse ten, they return to Babylon and proclaim what they have seen. The eleventh verse is about the flight of the Holy Family into Egypt, and tells the story of the “Fall of the Idols” which is from church tradition and not the gospel story. Those who were delivered from this darkness call to the

93 Frederica Matthews-Green, *The Lost Gospel of Mary* (Brewster, MA: Paraclete Press, 2007), 117-118.

94 Matthews-Green, *The Lost Gospel of Mary*, 126.

Theotokos and compare her to the “promised land” that the Israelites of old fled to with Moses from Egypt many years before. The twelfth stanza tells of Christ being presented to Symeon at the Temple, concluding the first half of the hymn.⁹⁵

The second set of twelve stanzas is sentimental, and is set off from the first twelve by the anthem “O Champion General.” This section is a theological poem different from the first half of the set. According to G.G. Meersseman, the second set of twelve stanzas is more “lyrical rather than narrative,” and reflects meaningfully on the “mysteries” from the stories of Christ’s life as told in the four gospels. The thirteenth stanza speaks of a “new creation” from an “unseeded womb” and upon seeing this miracle; the chanter heaps adulations on Mary. In the fourteenth stanza, the “strange childbirth” transports all above the everyday and conveys our “minds to heaven.” The fifteenth stanza states that the Incarnation is for God not descending to earth, but rather enclosing himself in the womb of Mary becoming the “Logos” or “Word,”⁹⁶ and she is hailed as the proof of something difficult to believed. In stanza sixteen, the angels are amazed at these occurrences, and in verse seventeen, the “eloquent rhetors” or “learned unbelievers” are amazed. Verse eighteen sees the “Shepherd” becoming a sheep to save the universe or cosmos. The nineteenth verse is the well-known and important analogy comparing the *Theotokos* to a fortress for all who run to her, and this verse explains the reason why she is being asked for help and healing by the chanters of this hymn. Verse twenty tells how that every tribute and endless “odes” will not be enough to praise God’s goodness to humanity. Verse twenty-one compares the Virgin to a lantern which will “enlighten the intellect” of the world. Verse twenty-two states that the Messiah will “cancel the debts of all people,” and verse twenty-three praises the *Theotokos*

95 Hieromonk Seraphim Dedes, transl., *The Service of the Akathist Hymn to the Most Holy Theotokos* (Pittsburgh: Clergy Syndesmos of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, 2000), 41-51

96 The “Logos” is an important theological idea in Greek Orthodoxy, and means that Christ is the “Infinite Word” who always existed and came to the earth through Mary, not came into being through Mary...this is seen as a condescension to human beings, not as “migration through space.” Dedes, *The Service of the Akathist Hymn to the Most Holy Theotokos*, 129.

as a “living temple” who has inexplicably held that which holds the cosmos.⁹⁷ The final verse, number twenty-four, praises the *Theotokos*, and asks her to “deliver everyone” from “calamities” in life, and from the “torments of hell” after death.⁹⁸ These stanzas are each punctuated with responses called “Salutations,” each of which are followed with poetic and descriptive names for the *Theotokos*.⁹⁹

Below the surface of the story told in the *Akathist Hymn* of the Annunciation, theological poetry, greetings and naming the *Theotokos*, there are deeper meanings that worshippers have attached to the hymn through time. These are varied and differ from person to person, and are sometimes micro-collective, varying from place to place. The stories change depending upon who is telling them, but there are themes which emerge.

Mystical significance is not lost on an Orthodox audience, whose philosophical roots are in the Oriental East. For example, the number twelve is attached to Mary in much the same way that the number three is attached to the Trinity. In the *Akathist Hymn* there are twelve narrative stanzas, followed by twelve poetic stanzas, but also twelve praises made up of twelve entreaties for intercession each. There are twelve Alleluias as well, and twelve litanies, one for each stanza.¹⁰⁰ This mystical significance is seen in many references to the *Theotokos*.

Historically, this hymn is said to be chanted in order to thank the Virgin for delivering the city of Constantinople from siege in 626, and 677, and 718. Which siege it is about depends upon who you ask in an American Greek Church, but it’s always the same story: someone holds

97 Many Orthodox Churches contain this icon, of Mary holding Christ in her womb, who is holding the globe are placed behind the alter in the half dome to the east, behind the iconostasis. Two examples of these icons in Greek Orthodox Churches in the Midwestern United States are each more than two stories tall and are the focal point of view in the church.

98 From the Dedes and Meersseman translations, Hieromonk Seraphim Dedes, transl., *The Service of the Akathist Hymn to the Most Holy Theotokos* (Pittsburgh: Clergy Syndesmos of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, 2000), and G. G. Meersseman, *The Acathistos Hymn: Hymn of Praise to the Mother of God* (Fribourg, Switzerland: The University Press, 1958).

99 Dedes, *The Service of the Akathist Hymn to the Most Holy Theotokos*, 61-83.

100 Saint Ephrem of Syria began the tradition used here by Saint Romanos: that is to interrupt their explanations of doctrine with litany prayers. G. G. Meersseman, *The Acathistos Hymn: Hymn of Praise to the Mother of God* (Fribourg, Switzerland: The University Press, 1958), p. 10.

up the icon of the *Theotokos* and walks around the city walls in a procession and something environmental happens, and the siege is ended.¹⁰¹ The many names which Mary is given have been said by various worshippers and theologians over the years to refer to many specific historical events in the life of the Greek Church. However, sometimes multiple events are ascribed to the same poetic phrase, and these phrases are non-specific. What is certain is that those who chant this hymn and use it to ask for intercession, ascribe these past events as proof that the *Akathist Hymn* works as a salvic device in times of trouble. However, since different people in American churches have roots in different parts of Greece, different traditions coexist in American Greek Orthodox Churches. As people pass these stories down orally each year when the hymn is sung, many different versions of stories exist side by side, and no members of the community seem to see any conflict in this. It is taken as a “mystery” that multiple deliverances are referred to by the same phrase, even more proof in the power of this hymn’s imagery.

The beginning of the response or “Salutation”¹⁰² which punctuates the *Akathist Hymn*, “Xaire, Nimfi animfevte” occurs over and over throughout the hymn and is chanted by everyone present. Meaning roughly “Rejoice, Unwedded Bride,” this phrase is sung more than thirty six times in this one hymn, however the simple, four note tune never varies from the pitches 1, 2, 3, 1, 1, 2, leading tone, 1. In Western solfege this would be sung: do, re, mi, do, do, re, ti, do. In Byzantine music, the “paralagi” syllables would be: nee, pah, vou, nee, nee, pah, (lower) zoh, nee.

The word “Xaire” is difficult to translate into English as it means “Rejoice,” but is also used commonly as a greeting, much like “Hail,” though neither of these words encompasses

101 There were those who suggested that it be prayed for the United States after the 9-11 terrorist attacks. In another instance, a church was in danger of being flooded, and the worshippers and priest held a procession with the Akathist icon before they sandbagged, so she would “stop the waters.” Anonymous, (Greek Orthodox priest from Chicago area) in discussion with the author, September 2008.

102 They are known as “salutations” in the West, and “Xairetismi” in the East. These are synonyms and refer to hymns about the Mother of God and addressing her in a greeting of adulation over and over, using many, changing names with dogmatic significance attached to the greeting.

its total meaning. “Nimfi” is a bride, and the prefix “a-” is negating.¹⁰³ Therefore, “animfevte” means “un-bride” or “not-bride.” So the phrase means something like: “Hello there and rejoice and I am so glad, you are a bride/not-a-bride.” The connotation is that of a familiar, personal approach to the *Theotokos*, and each person present is going to collectively give this hymn to her as an offering.¹⁰⁴

Protector

The *Akathist Hymn* also sets up the *Theotokos* as a protector in social function and action. This hymn is a two way conversation to a Greek Orthodox worshipper. It is a personal appeal for healing, be this healing physical, mental, or spiritual. Just one example of this in the *Akathist Hymn* is when, just before verse sixteen, the *Theotokos* is called a “stole” or the “vesture of those stripped of confidence.” In the original Greek, the words are “stoli ton yimnon parrisais.” “Parrisia” is the ancient Greek right given to citizens to speak in the legislature, and to do so they wore a stole open at the sides.¹⁰⁵ Slaves, youths, and women were not allowed to wear a stole and therefore not allowed to speak in public. This verse on a much deeper level has come to mean that the *Theotokos* is the one who speaks for the women, children, and those in slavery of some sort. She is the “stole” for those who are oppressed and not given the right to a voice by society.

These kinds of collective meanings in the *Akathist Hymn* were expressed in various ways by many who were interviewed during this study. Each person would relate a different story describing the power of the *Theotokos* being manifested through this hymn. She was credited, especially by women, with interceding before God to save them, even beyond the major historical events mentioned earlier. Women spoken to credited community events, such as a

103 “a-kathist” means literally “Without Chair” in Greek

104 Hieromonk Seraphim Dedes, transl., *The Service of the Akathist Hymn to the Most Holy Theotokos* (Pittsburgh: Clergy Syndesmos of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, 2000).

105 G. G. Meersseman, *The Acatistos Hymn: Hymn of Praise to the Mother of God* (Fribourg, Switzerland: The University Press, 1958), 20.

village saved from famine or a church saved from a flood after the *Akathist Hymn* was chanted. There even are more stories of a personal or family nature. One man from the Chicago area told me of how his wife nearly died having their last child, and how prayers to the *Theotokos* saved them both. He never misses a *Xeritismi* service¹⁰⁶ and always brings that child with him to the service. Many mothers credit the *Theotokos* for saving their children. Many mothers of younger American military veterans say that they bring flowers to the *Akathist Hymn* services and place them at the feet of the Mother of God out of gratitude for protecting their sons. Perhaps the most striking physical example of this emphasis on intercession by the *Theotokos* is evidenced by the large volume of sweet smelling plants and bouquets of flowers brought by young married women and placed at the feet of the *Theotokos* icon in the weeks after Pascha¹⁰⁷ because they have conceived a child after seeking her assistance, or hope to do so.

Prototype

The feminine ideal in the Greek Orthodox Church is closely tied to person of Mary. She is extolled as the “New Eve,” and as a prototype not only for women, but praised as a model for the church as a whole. In a monastery the female monastics stand on the far left side of the church. By custom, most women stand on the left, and most men stand on the right. According to the leader of a women’s’ monastic community, this is so that the women can “follow after the order of Mary” and therefore stand in front of her icon, while the men follow “after the order of Christ” and stand before his icon. Since the person of Mary is the model which women worshippers are striving to attain, then the names ascribed to her as virtues in the *Akathist Hymn* take on meaning and become attributes of the feminine ideal within Greek Orthodox society. As such, women and men in the Greek Orthodox Churches in America have a unique idea of what the feminine ideal is. This ideal encourages intelligence in women, expects morally superior

106 Another name in Greek for this particular Akathist Hymn service, to the Mother of God.

107 The Greek Orthodox term for the Resurrection, called Easter in the West. Many women who are having trouble becoming pregnant pray to conceive children during the Akathist Hymn services, and as marital relations are forbidden during Great Lent, following Pascha those who conceive in the following weeks will responding with gratitude to the Theotokos for her intercessions on their behalf.

behavior of them, and supposes a fierceness that is difficult to describe, but encompasses a nature which might be described as feisty and quick-witted.

The text of the *Akathist Hymn*, like all music from the Byzantine chant tradition, cannot be completely separated from the sound. Byzantine chant is syllabic, text driven, and based in text-painting. Certain words and theological ideas in the text proscribe formulaic melodies. For example, the word “heaven” or *ouranos* in Greek is always set on three pitches, one for each syllable, which ascend in the Western equivalent of two whole steps. Another example is the word for sin, *amartion*. This word is typically set melismatically, with more notes than it syllabically requires, and is preceded by a *pfithora*, or “detour” in the melodic line changing the tone for this single word into a more somber one.¹⁰⁸ The most important example for the purpose of understanding the *Akathist Hymn* is that after the greeting “*Xaire*” usually follows the first name of the person you are greeting. Therefore, the titles described below, which all follow this greeting of “*Xaire*” are understood simultaneously as first names for the *Theotokos* and attributes.¹⁰⁹ So, as the text is described below, it should be understood that the words described are also set in a typical way which listeners have come to expect, and as word groups carry different musical connotations than they would if they stood alone.

In the text of the *Akathist Hymn*¹¹⁰ the *Theotokos* is named as the “world’s deliverance, [and] mercy seat” and is credited with dispelling the dark. These ascribe power to her and the ability to perform actions which save humans. In other instances she is hailed as “wisdom’s repository,” able to “enlighten the intellect,” and “smarter than scholars.” As if this were not enough to solidify the importance of intelligence as a feminine ideal, Mary, upon hearing the

¹⁰⁸ The Western equivalent would be something like a Handel melisma in a minor key with diminished melodic intervals, for just one word in a composition set in quarter notes in the key of G Major.

¹⁰⁹ Most first names in Greek are attributes, i.e. the common female names Elpedia and Sophia mean hope and wisdom respectively.

¹¹⁰ These translations from the Greek are according to the most widely used translation in the United States at the moment, Hieromonk Seraphim Dedes, transl., *The Service of the Akathist Hymn to the Most Holy Theotokos* (Pittsburgh: Clergy Synodesmos of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, 2000).

news from the archangel, questions Gabriel in a scene worthy of any courtroom drama.¹¹¹

Another important aspect of this hymn is how it sets forth Mary as the manifestation of changes in Judaic law. She is referred to as the “east gate, manna, seven branched lampstand, and new Ark,” all references to the temple and the Holy of Holies, which tradition relates the young child Mary as being allowed to enter and live.¹¹² In a later verse she replaces the Ten Commandments as the “tablet on which the Word was by the Father’s hand inscribed.” She also is portrayed as the New Eve or more accurately she who would right the wrongs of Eve. As such she “opened Eden” and the “trespass [was] nullified.”

She is called “Jacob’s ladder,” referring to a vision by the Jewish Patriarch, Jacob, who had a vision of a ladder ascending into heaven and angels descending on it to earth. The *Theotokos* is compared to this ladder as a vehicle through which Christ was conveyed to earth and humans are conveyed to heaven. She is considered the physical bridge between humanity and God. Within the *Akathist Hymn*, there are other allusions to famous stories from Judaic scriptures including calling the *Theotokos* the “fiery chariot,”¹¹³ and reminding listeners of the story of Elisha who did not die, like the *Theotokos* in Orthodox theology, but was instead carried to heaven on a chariot of fire. And, listeners are reminded in another verse of Gideon, who freed the Israelite people and fought against idol worship using miracles. “Gideon’s fleece” refers both to the dew which wetted Gideon’s fleece in his display of power, but also in a mysterious way to the *Theotokos* as the fleece, making the dew likened to the presence of God during the Annunciation.¹¹⁴

In the most important portion of the hymn she is sung to as the “Champion General.” These allusions to her salvific power for nations, far beyond the personal level of supplications,

111 Dedes, *The Service of the Akathist Hymn to the Most Holy Theotokos*, 43.

112 Under Judaic law, only the high priest could enter the Holy of Holies, the innermost level of the temple which held the Arc of the Covenant containing manna from the Israelites’ time wandering in the desert and the Ten Commandments.

113 II Kings 2:11

114 Judges 6:36–40

also suggest militaristic themes. Later she is called the “Empire’s fortress that never fell, citadel, fortification, and protective wall.” And, in an even later section of the hymn, she is described much like a soldier with a “coat-of-mail” made of faith, and “trampling underfoot” the “hostile forces.” She is named as capable to “save the city from invaders, repel barbarian invasions, and able to “drown...Pharaoh.” Capable of militaristic victories on the metaphysical and spiritual levels as well as the historical, she is named the “slayer of Hades,” and “demons ruination” in addition to having “defeated legions.” She is also shown in naval terms as the “harbor” and “anchor in a time of war.” What is important about these references, is that she is simultaneously seen as a champion and as a personal protector forming a “protective veil” over those asking for protection and having “healed man.”

Attendance at The Akathist

The *Akathist Hymn* is well attended, based on the approximations given by the priests and chanters. Most weekday services are sparsely attended compared to Sunday’s Divine Liturgy service in American Greek Orthodox Churches, however the *Akathist Hymn* service seems to be an exception. In a Saint Louis area church, the service is well attended for a weekday service, with perhaps a fourth of the normal Sunday crowd attending. Nearer to Chicago, most urban churches see a little less than half of the normal Sunday attendance at *Akathist Hymn* services, but some suburban churches can see a crowd equal to Sunday morning. At more rural monastic communities in northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin, often the services are packed to the point of standing room only. Many women in attendance at a women’s monastery said that to celebrate the service at least once each year at the monastery they made plans with their other women friends and took their children out of school early to bring them along as a sort of annual “mini-pilgrimage.”

Why is the *Akathist Hymn* so popular and well attended? Storytelling is an important part of Greek social culture, and the stories related by those interviewed may hold some possible answers to this question. Themes that emerged included the stories of healing in a time of

sickness, or a time when they asked the *Theotokos* to intercede on behalf of a sick spouse or child and there was a successful recovery. What seemed to be common to many stories was that those who attributed a tangible benefit in the past to occurring after their prayer at an *Akathist Hymn* or to the Mother of God were devoted to not missing an *Akathist* service as they saw attendance, participation, bringing flowers, and even their attentiveness to the service while there as an expression of gratitude and a gift back to the *Theotokos*. Another theme that emerged in interviews as to why community members would devote five Friday evenings a year to this service is rooted in tradition and inter-generational relations. As opposed to the popular culture in America, what does seem to have been retained of the Greek culture in American Greek Orthodox churches is the important link between generations. Children are traditionally named after their grandparents, and attend church with these grandparents, or godparents. Their own parents may bring them to the service, but they sit with their grandparents often even throughout teenage years and into adulthood. During the service, the grandparents teach the grandchildren not only to better understand what they are seeing and hearing, but also help them to follow the service in the book and whisper stories in their ear of how their ancestors were delivered from various travails of history by this event or other as it ties into the *Akathist Hymn*. After the *Akathist Hymn* services, many older people of both genders told stories of their grandmothers taking them to the *Akathist* Services in Greece, and how each service brought that memory back. One man stated that he could feel his grandmother, or “Yia-Yia” as he put it,¹¹⁵ standing with him in church during the *Akathist*, and that is why he came to participate in this *kontakion* service.

Women Who Chant *The Akathist*

While most chanters who lead the services in American Greek Orthodox Churches are men, owing to tradition, all are invited to participate. Increasingly, women are being invited to participate in leading chant, especially during the *Akathist Hymn*. Everyone, male chanters

¹¹⁵ “Yia-Yia” is the Greek term of endearment for Grandmother, but can also be given to older women who care for younger people, regardless of familial association.

and priests included, seems to associate this service especially with women on some level. Two chanters from the service described at the beginning of this chapter had mentioned that because of the antiphonal double choir called for in the anthem of the *Akathist Hymn* the church had installed a “psaltiri” (a chanting stand) for the use of women chanters on the other side of the altar where it traditionally is located in women’s monasteries. Unfortunately, they are having difficulty finding women who have to time to learn and be trained in to chant in the Midwest, although this is becoming a trend in some American Greek Orthodox Churches in the Eastern United States and also in California. In one church in the Chicago suburbs, however, there is a women’s chanting choir composed of young women who are being properly trained and equal the size of the men’s chanting choir. The women began by chanting at the *Akathist* services, but now they are able to chant the more traditional services antiphonally between the two choirs, and it is being very well received and even carried over into other services.

Summary

As this chapter has illustrated, the *Akathist Hymn*, while an ancient service, is alive and well, functioning in regular use and therefore constantly changing. This hymn validates femininity and extols women in a way that its Western counterparts do not. Whether the action of chanting about the *Theotokos* causes this feminine ideal of what a woman should be to become a part of the subconscious of Greek Orthodox community members, and their concept of what a female should be within the context of this community, or the community’s pre-existing ideal of feminine behavior becomes reflected in its liturgical music texts, what is evident is that despite the Orthodox Church’s outwardly male-oriented organizational structure, there internally exists ample evidence of a collective view of women seen in its ideal female prototype, the *Theotokos*, which is empowering. This societal view of women establishes the Mother of God in the *Akathist Hymn* as the ultimate archetype or prototype held up as the feminine ideal to be modeled by members of the Greek Orthodox Christian communities. How then, does Byzantine music function as the container of the feminine ideal for members of Greek Orthodox Church

communities in America? The discussion in the next chapter will attempt to answer this question through a semiotic analysis of the data presented thus far.

CHAPTER IV
ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION
“THOU WHO MAKEST THINGS THAT DIFFER TO AGREE”

Byzantine chant functions as a pedagogical tool within the church. Women saints, who are empowered, educated, and strong become models for the community through the teaching tool of music. Hymn texts which commemorate women saints show their usefulness as a musicological teaching tool in terms of the construction, purification, and iconization of the feminine ideal model within these church communities.

Devotion shown through the actions and participation in the *Akathist Hymn*, in addition to the protective qualities ascribed to the Mother of God in this service, portray the prototypical female ideal as a person who embodies respect and power in the eyes of the community. These tenets and practices translate into a model of deference and respect to be shown to women within the community, establishing this attitude as a cultural norm. Not only does Byzantine music shape the collective mind, it also creates an aesthetic of pleasurable sound in which values, and ideas of society are embedded. Beyond delivering moral ideas, music is a social institution which has normative, creative, and inspirational functions for the group.

As Bonnie Wade notes in her book *Thinking Musically*:

Music is also meaningful because it functions in some way in people's lives. Music defines, represents, symbolizes, expresses, constructs, mobilizes, incites, controls, transforms, unites, and so much more. People make music useful in those ways...Music can be made to function in multiple ways. As a mode of interaction among people, it serves a social function. Arousing public sentiment

*is a political function. Praising God is a spiritual function. Creating a...mood is an affective function.*¹¹⁶

Semiotic Model

The semiotic model introduced by linguistics Irvine and Gal can provide a structure for understanding the function of Byzantine hymns within the socio-linguistic context of these communities. The three parts of this model, iconicity, erasure (purification), and recursivity, will be applied to Byzantine hymns to examine their ideological and social implications within the living liturgical practice of the Greek Orthodox Churches in the American diaspora. Approaching music as a language, this model from linguistic studies will be applied to examine how Byzantine hymns function socially in this community.

Iconicity

Iconicity distills individual qualities of cultural beings into something homogeneous. For example, symbols in hymns, and even the names of saints when invoked in chant, have become connected to “images” which function as a way to categorize social activities and beliefs. Thus, hymns become concretized as material things in a socio-linguistic context. In this way, Byzantine hymns are icons which define what the idea of woman should be in this social group. This is illustrated by Chapter Two (see page 12), in which potent word choices in hymns evoke in the listener a complete package containing all the actions, stories and attributes of a saint. With just a few words, hymns can describe women saints who possess wisdom, power, education, voice, and strength. For example, in the *troparion* of St. Catherine of Alexandria (See Appendix B, pg. 72) she “hath silenced brilliantly the clever among the godless.”

With this simple phrase, all of those attributes spring to mind. As women self-construct and define their group attributes such as these help teach them how to comport themselves within

¹¹⁶ Bonnie C. Wade, *Thinking Musically: Experiencing Music, Expressing Culture*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 15.

the group. “Language ideology self-determines social group identity, and creates ideological boundaries between social groups which are the media to create, understand and legitimize” the ideals of the group (Anderson 2009:57). “Naming” in hymns, such as calling St. Irene of Chrysovalantou “our righteous Mother, queen, and the mighty help of all the Orthodox,” (See Appendix B, pg. 75) is also an important technique for iconizing group identity. Language choices also construct an ideology which both iconizes values within the culture, and allows them to function recursively.

Recursivity

The process of recursivity occurs when relationships within groups are viewed reflexively by individuals in terms of their outward projection in an ongoing, cyclic process of exchange. This recursivity in Byzantine chant texts which describe women saints (using ideas such as warrior or athlete) do not interpret strong action as undesirable behavior. Rather, these metaphors of strength constantly renovate the template of the ideal woman and allow the *Theotokos* prototype and the models of women saints to be continually adapted in order to remain relevant in terms of the gamut of diversity present in the social roles which women embody.

Instead of sterile discourse explaining what unites the group, and the differences between “this” group and “other” groups, hymns offer figurative descriptions which show what is meant by the ideas and actions of saints within “this” group, by offering dramatic metaphorical illustrations. Michael Jackson asserts that “metaphors coalesce social, personal, and natural aspects of being, as well as unifying ideas and practices.”¹¹⁷ As illustrated in Chapter Three (see page 31), these hymns about women are rife with allegories, parables, and parallels to everyday life which teach the new generations what is expected of them as women.

¹¹⁷ Michael Jackson, *Paths Towards a Clearing: Radical Empiricism and Ethnographic Inquiry*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1989.

Erasure or Purification

Purification is a way of erasing that which does not meet the expectation for the community's style of life, thereby normalizing social models.¹¹⁸ Bruno Latour argues that purification of nonhuman nature and human culture occurs through translation and creates mixtures of different types of beings and ideologies.¹¹⁹ As each new generation challenges the existing standards in its society, some things are kept, while others are discarded. In this cycle of acceptance and dismissal new icons appear within the social and temporal context.¹²⁰ As decisions are made concerning what is kept, thrown out, and/or reinterpreted by the group, these new ideas in turn become iconized, completing and restarting the process of this semiotic model. In this case, the institution (Greek Orthodox Church of America) intentionally promotes or asserts certain communal ideal values within the social group (through chant), but the erasure of non-conforming ideas is never completed. Instead, what actually results from the overlapping of these ideals with individuals' needs and values is an amalgam of metaphors, allegories, virtues, and values (both secular and sacred) in hymns which collectively define the ideal of woman.

Music, Memory, and Learning

Applying this semiotic model (iconicity, recursivity, and erasure or purification), the structure of chant, with its paramount importance on text, becomes a normative device, and the norms taught through hymns also function mnemotechnically, as a memory aid. Chant constantly memorializes what a woman should be in relationship to the community, and this is taught through the hymns by the establishment of detailed, descriptive templates of the *Theotokos*, and the various voices of the women saints named in these hymns. The many voices of women teaching, praising, praying, lamenting, speaking, and chanting in hymn texts provide

118 Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).

119 Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).

120 This process never fully succeeds, and purification and erasure result in an overlap which creates new things which retain something from both the object of purification and the tool used to attempt erasure, creating what Latour would term a "hybrid."

sufficient diversity to allow each American woman in a Greek Orthodox Church one or more models with whom they can self-identify and “latch” onto.¹²¹ The dialogue created between the chanter and listener not only allow women to “latch” onto these models, but also, through the mnemotechnic and pedagogical qualities of this music, provides a delivery mechanism which allows for the messages in the hymns to be quickly digested and easily retained in the listener’s mind.

The structure of Byzantine music as described in Chapter Two (see page 12) enables its function as a generative, cyclic memory tool. Just as David Sutton has proposed in his book concerning food and Greek culture, ritual activities are cyclical in order to play a role as a “mnemonic for the passing of time and seasonal cycles.”¹²² Byzantine chant contains repetitive, cyclic melodic and rhythmic structures within the *Ochtoechos* which promote the memory of ideas. Music that is heard cyclically, and repetitively, and which is taken in by listeners as meaningful, becomes absorbed or engrained into the individuals within a community in such a way that certain melodies, after many hearings, can come to imply specific ideas and events, even when the tune is heard without the text.

Summary

In sum, Byzantine chant in the Greek Orthodox Churches in the United States functions as a tool for creating and maintaining the female ideal, and teaching and translating this ideal to its communities’ members. Iconicity, erasure or purification, and recursivity, from the semiotic model of Irvine and Gal, can help elucidate the functions of Byzantine hymns in relation to the ideal woman as a concept communally held within the socio-musicological and linguistic (hymns and hymn texts) contexts of the Greek Orthodox Churches in the American diaspora. In this case, hymns iconize the female ideal through templates of women saints and the Mother of God,

121 Ethnomusicologist Tia Denora argues effectively in the fifth chapter of her book *Music in Everyday Life* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), that sound which is “latched onto” by individuals can function as a prosthetic which enables individuals to expand the limits of their physical body.

122 David E. Sutton, *Remembrance of Repasts: An Anthropology of Food and Memory* (New York: Berg, 2001), p. 28.

attempt to purify this ideal and erase unacceptable views which enter into the community, and allow its members to continually recursively negotiate and renegotiate the communal concept of the ideal woman, such as can be seen in the apparent contradictions within the metaphors and allegories in Byzantine hymns concerning women as hymn subjects. The pedagogical nature of Byzantine chant, which contains repetitive, cyclic melodic and rhythmic structures as central to its musicological theory, supports memory and retention of ideas in a generative learning model.

CONCLUSION

To talk about music is not only to discuss the aesthetic, but also to consider how music structures individuals within a social group. And, to examine how music helps teach individuals what they need to know in order to move into and within the culture and society as a member. Music is a way in which a society can put its issues into discussion between those who chant or sing, and those who participate or listen. This allows the members of a community to engage in dialogue which either challenges or supports and affirms existing cultural norms. In the case of Byzantine music, hymns concerning women both allow a woman within the community to “affirm her identity and resonate her experience.”¹²³

As a pedagogical, musical tool, the *Akathist Hymn* connects community members to historical events in the community’s past. It also allows traditions from different regions of Greece to co-exist; important in creating cohesive communities within the Greek-American diaspora. Byzantine chant in the Greek Orthodox Churches in America functions “politically, socially, spiritually and affectively” to establish the ideal woman.¹²⁴ Through historical precedent, the voice of women is clearly heard in Byzantine chant, which provides models for diverse women to “latch onto” through its portrayal of female saints,¹²⁵ and its lengthy, descriptive portrayals of the female prototype, the *Theotokos*.

Each saint represents a different combination of ethnic group, age, lifestyle, and social status, but all are linked to the idea of the *Theotokos* and vice-versa. These templates

¹²³ Maria V. Johnson. “Pouring Out the Blues: Gwen ‘Sugar Mama’ Avery’s Song of Freedom,” *Frontiers: Journal of Women’s Studies* 25, no. 1 (2004): 102.

¹²⁴ Bonnie C. Wade, *Thinking Musically: Experiencing Music, Expressing Culture*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

¹²⁵ Tia DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

teach women how to act within their community. The *Akathist Hymn* portrays femininity in a validating way, and the virtues the hymn ascribes to women in the person of the *Theotokos* become taught to and embedded in the memories of community members in American Greek Orthodox Churches. For example, Mary is exemplified as a protector as well as an activist, when she is called the “stole” of those without rights and the “voice of the voiceless” in her *Akathist Hymn* and, the Marian prototype exalts her intelligence, and considers her a bridge between the spiritual and mundane, promoting both her military and healing powers. The popularity of this service, the antiphonal nature of the hymn’s construction which often allows for women to often participate in the chanting of this service, along with the inter-generational connections associated with the *Akathist Hymn to the Mother of God* suggest that this hymn functions as a social connector for the entire community, and women in particular. It is at once the ultimate love song to a woman, showing trust, respect, deference, admiration, and even awe.

The Akathist Hymn asks the Mother of God, “By what name shall I call thee?” Though the hymn never answers this rhetorical question directly, the answer is implicit in the hymns of the Greek-American churches, which answer this question with a continuous outpouring of translations, transcriptions, and recitations of its ancient music. These allow the members of the community to conceive of the music in relevant ways, and meaningfully engage in dialogue with members of the church present and past.

In conclusion, the way in which members of Greek Orthodox Church communities in America conceive of liturgical chant is a product of its iconicity, erasure, purification, and recursivity which makes it able to remain a relevant dialogue within the culture and have the ability to convey cultural group identity, construct gender ideals, and retain meaning.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A:
TEXT FOR THE LAMENTATIONS OF HOLY FRIDAY

TA ΕΓΚΩΜΙΑ: The Lamentations Before the Holy Sepulcher¹²⁶

First Stasis

1. In a grave they laid you, yet, O Christ You are the Life, and the armies of the angels beheld amazed, giving glory that You chose to condescend.
2. How, O Life, do You die? How do You live entombed, for you slashed through all the bonds in the realm of death, and have raised the dead in Hades from their graves?
3. We, O Lord, exalt You, O Christ Jesus, our King, and we venerate your Passion and burial through which You have brought redemption from our sins.
4. You have set the measures of the earth, yet this day in a narrow tomb now dwell, Jesus, King of all, Who has raised those who were dead up from their tombs.
5. O my own Christ Jesus, You are King of the world. Why have You come down to Hades to seek the dead? Is it not to set the race of mortals free?
6. He Who is the Master of creation appears as a corpse and lies entombed in a fresh-hewn grave, though He emptied every gravesite of its dead.
7. In a grave they laid You, yet, O Christ, You are Life. By Your death You have abolished the realms of death, and upon the world have poured down streams of Life.
8. Fairer in His beauty, than all creatures on earth, He is seen now lying lifeless, His beauty gone, yet all beauty in creation springs from Him.
9. O my own sweet Jesus, Saving Light of the world, can the darkness of the grave hide Your Light within? Neither thought nor word can say what You have borne.
10. Neither Nature's reason, nor the angels, O Christ, grasp the mystery enfolding Your burial,

¹²⁶ Modern English Translation from the Greek by Nancy Takis. Takis. 2009. Engomia of Holy Friday. Newbyz.org. Nancy Takis, *TA ΕΓΚΩΜΙΑ: The Lamentations Before the Holy Sepulchre* (Williamston, MI: New Byzantium Publications, 2003, accessed 1 November 2010); available from <http://www.newbyz.org/lamentationschant.pdf>; Internet.

beyond all our understanding and all words.

11. I revere Your passion Your entombment I praise, and I magnify Your might, Loving Friend of man; they have ransomed me from passions that corrupt.
12. When Your mother saw you brought to slaughter, O Lamb, she was stabbed with painful torment' her anguished sobs called the flock to join her bitter cries of grief.
13. "Woe is me!" the Virgin mourned through heart-breaking sobs. You are, Jesus, my most precious, beloved Son! Gone is my light, and the Light of all the world!"
14. "God and Word eternal, O my Gladness and Joy! How shall I endure Your three days inside the tomb when my heart is breaking with a mother's grief?"
15. "Who will give me water, and a fountain of tears," cried the Virgin Bride of God in her deep despair, "that in grief for my sweet Jesus I might weep."

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

16. We will sing Your praises, Word and God of all things, with Your Father and your Holy Spirit
You are praised and we glorify Your divine.

Both now and forever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

17. You are known as blessed, Theotokos, most pure. With our faithful hearts we honour the burial suffered three days by your Son, Who is our God.
18. In a grave they laid You, yet, O Christ You are Life, and the armies of the angels beheld amazed, giving glory that You chose to condescend.

Second Stasis

1. Truly it is right that we magnify You Who bestows Life, Who upon the Cross with Your outspread Hands has defeated all the power of the foe.
2. Truly it is right that we magnify You, our Creator; through Your pain have we been released from pain, and from all corruption we have been set free.
3. All the earth did shake and the sun concealed itself in darkness when they set Your body into the tomb, Christ, the Saviour and the never-setting Sun.
4. "Free from pain, my Child, I alone among all women, bore you." Said Your modest Mother with humble voice. "Now Your passion brings more pain than I can bear."
5. "Torn apart am I, and my womb, O Word, is wrenched within me as Your unjust slaughter assaults my eyes," cried the Mother to her Son through bitter tears.
6. "Eyes that are so sweet, and Your lips, O Word, how shall I close them?" Joseph cried appalled, trembling in dismay. "How shall I entomb You as befits the dead?"
7. Fearfully the earth took Your body in her bosom, Saviour. Holding her Creator, she quaked in fear, and awakened those who lay dead in their tombs.

8. Stone that man has hewn now conceals the Stone of Life's Foundation; mortal men entomb God as mortal man, causing you O earth to tremble in dismay.
9. "Child of mine, behold Your belov'd disciple and Your mother." "Grant that I might hear Your sweet voice again!" Your pure Mother called through flowing tears to You.
10. Suffering in pain, you, O Word, had neither form nor beauty, but by your arising, Your beauty shines, and Your holy rays adorn all those on earth.
11. Sun and moon as one turned to darkness in their sorrow, Saviour, and like faithful servants, they wore their grief, when they wrapped themselves in blackness like a shroud.
12. Struck with fear, the sun saw Your light invisible as You lay lifeless and concealed in the grave, my Christ, and it shuddered and relinquished its own light.
13. Weeping bitter tears, Your pure Mother mourned to see You lifeless lying in the tomb, yet You are, O Word, the ineffable and everlasting God.
14. Witness to Your death, through her bitter tears Your all-pure Mother weeping, cried aloud unto You, O Christ: "Do not linger with the dead, for You are Life!"
15. Singing hymns. O Christ, all the faithful now sound forth the praises of Your crucifixion and burial for by Your entombment we are freed from death.
 Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.
16. God beyond all time, with the Word and Spirit everlasting! Strengthen every scepter, O righteous Lord, of the Orthodox against our every foe!
 Both now and forever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.
17. Life was born of you who are holy and most pure, O Virgin. Grant your church protection from all dissent and reward us with the blessing of your peace.
18. Truly it is right that we magnify You Who bestows Life, Who upon the Cross with Your outspread Hands, has defeated all the power of foe.

Third Stasis

1. Every generation offers adoration my Christ, at your entombment.
2. The Arimathean from the Cross has brought You and in the tomb has laid You.
3. Anxiously the women carry myrrh and spices, my Christ, to lay before You.
4. Come with all creation, and offer hymns of mourning to honor our Creator.
5. As women bearing myrrh did, let us in our awareness anoint as dead the Living.
6. Three-times blessed Joseph, thou shalt tend the Body of Christ, who has bestowed Life.
7. Those He fed with manna have raised their heels to spurn Him from Whom all things are given.
8. Ignorance most foolish! Those who slew the prophets have come, o Christ, to slay You.

9. Mindless as a servant he who learned the myst'ries betrayed the Depths of Wisdom.
10. He who sold the Savior, Judas the Betrayer, has sold himself as captive.
11. With help from Nicodemos, Joseph tends the Body as does befit the Master.
12. You are my sweetest Springtime, My sweetest Son, I ask You, "Where has your beauty faded?"
13. When she beheld You lifeless, O Word, Your all-pure Mother cried out in lamentation.
14. Death to Death You render, through Your divine dominion, My god, by Your own dying.
15. Foiled is the Deceiver; Redeemed is the deceived one, my God, by Your great wisdom.
16. My God and my Creator, the King of all, and God's Son, how have You borne your Passion?
17. Beholding you suspended upon the tree, the Mother cried to her Calf in anguish.
18. "My sweetest Son, most precious, the Light of mine eyes hidden! How can a tomb conceal You?
19. "My Son, I offer glory for Your supreme compassion which causes you to suffer."
20. Arise, O Lord of Mercy, and with You also raise us who linger deep in Hades.
21. "Arise, you Who bestows Life!" the Mother who has borne You through flowing tears entreats You.
22. The powers of the Heavens stood up in fear and wonder when they beheld You lifeless..
23. Early in the morning women bearing myrrh came to sprinkle You with spices. (3 times)
24. By Your Resurrection grant peace upon Your churches and to Your flock salvation.
 Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.
25. My God, Who is three Persons, Father, son, and Spirit, on all the world have mercy.
 Both now and forever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.
26. Deem your servants worthy, O Virgin, to bear witness at your Son's Resurrection.
27. Every generation offers adoration my Christ, at Your entombment.

APPENDIX B:
HYMNS OF WOMEN SAINTS IN THE ORTHODOX CHURCH

St. Agatha of Palermo¹²⁷

Troparion: Your lamb Agatha, calls out to You, O Jesus, in a loud voice: "I love You, my Bridegroom, and in seeking You I endure endure suffering. In baptism I was crucified so that I might reign in You, and I died so that I might live with You. Accept me as a pure sacrifice, for I have offered offered myself in love." Through her prayers save our souls, since You are merciful.

Kontakion: May the Church be robed today in a garment of glorious porphyry, Dyed by the pure blood of the martyr Agatha, And let us cry out: "Rejoice, pride of Catania!"

-Feast Day: February 5

St. Anastasia the Deliverer from Potions¹²⁸

Kontakion: When they that are found in trials and adversities flee unto thy church O Anastasia, they receive the august and wondrous gifts of divine grace which doth abide in thee; for at all times, O Saint of God, thou pourest forth streams of healings for the world.

Kontakion: Those in temptations and afflictions hasten to your temple, And are restored by the grace that dwells in you, For you ever pour forth healings for all the world, O great Martyr Anastasia!

Troparion: As a martyr you emulated the deeds of the martyrs, To whom you ministered, And, striving valiantly, you overcame the enemy. You are an abundant and overflowing source of grace. For all who come to you, O godly-minded Anastasia!

-Feast Day: December 22

¹²⁷ "Antiochian Orthodox Church Online Music Database." *Liturgical Resources*. 2007. Accessed March 28, 2011. <http://www.antiochian.org/liturgicalresources>.

¹²⁸ *Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America*. Accessed March 2, 2011. <http://goarch.org/chapel/saints>.

Sts. Anysia of Thessoloniki and Melania¹²⁹

Kontakion :As a doubly-shining lamp of truly mystical brightness do ye shine upon the Church like a high-towering beacon: thou with beams of martyr's glory, O Anysia; thou with rays of great ascetic deeds, O Melania. Now together ye are honoured by Christ your Bridegroom for your travails in His Name.

-Feast Day: December 30/31

St. Barbara of Heliopolis¹³⁰

Troparion: Let us praise holy Barbara who has broken the snares of the enemy. By the help of the weapon of the Cross, she has escaped as a bird and flown Godwards.

Kontakion: Great Martyr Barbara, thou didst follow Him Who is praised in Trinity, having abandoned the idols' shrines. Thou didst strive in the midst of the arena, not shrinking from the tyrants' threats. Thou didst cry out in a strong voice: I worship the Trinity, the One Divinity.

-Feast Day: December 4

St. Brigid of Kildare¹³¹

Troparion: O holy Brigid, you became sublime through your humility, and flew on the wings of your longing for God. When you arrived in the eternal City and appeared before your Divine Spouse, wearing the crown of virginity, you kept your promise to remember those who have recourse to you. You shower grace upon the world, and multiply miracles. Intercede with Christ our God that He may save our souls.

Kontakion: The holy virgin Brigid full of divine wisdom, went with joy along the way of evangelical childhood, and with the grace of God/ attained in this way the summit of virtue. She now bestows blessings upon those who come to her with faith. O holy Virgin, intercede with Christ our God that He may have mercy on our souls.

Apolytikion: Having learned of things divine by the words of Patrick, thou hast

¹²⁹ *Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America*. 2011.

¹³⁰ "Orthodox Church in America (OCA)." *Lives of the Saints*. Accessed 19 February 2011. <http://www.oca.org>.

¹³¹ "Antiochian Orthodox Church Online Music Database." 2007.

proclaimed in the West the good tidings of Christ. Wherefore, we venerate thee, O Brigid, and entreat thee to intercede with God that our souls be saved.

Kontakion: At the Church of the Oak, thou didst establish thy sacred monasteries for those that took up the Tree of life, even the Precious Cross, upon their shoulders, and by thy grace-filled life and love of learning, thou didst bear fruit a hundredfold and didst thereby nourish the faithful. O righteous Mother Brigid, intercede with Christ, the True Vine, that He save our souls.

-Feast Day: February 1

St. Catherine of Alexandria¹³²

Troparion: Let us praise the all-lauded and noble bride of Christ, the godly Catherine, the guardian of Sinai and its defense, who is also our support and succour and our help; for with the Holy Spirit's sword she hath silenced brilliantly the clever among the godless; and being crowned as a martyr, she now doth ask great mercy for us all.

-Feast Day: November 24/25

St. Elizabeth the New Martyr¹³³

Troparion: Causing meekness, humility and love to dwell in thy soul, Thou didst earnestly serve the suffering, O holy passion-bearer Princess Elizabeth; Wherefore, with faith thou didst endure sufferings and death for Christ, with the martyr Barbara. With her pray for all who honor you with love.

Kontakion: Taking up the Cross of Christ, Thou didst pass from royal glory to the glory of heaven, Praying for thine enemies, O holy martyr Princess Elizabeth; And with the martyr Barbara thou didst find everlasting joy. Therefore, pray ye in behalf of our souls.

-Feast Day: July 5

St. Elizabeth the Wonderworker¹³⁴

Apolytikion: In thee the image was preserved with exactness, O Mother; for taking up thy cross, thou didst follow Christ, and by thy deeds thou didst teach us to overlook the flesh, for it

¹³² *The Great Horologion*, (1997). Brookline, MA: Holy Transfiguration Monastery, p. 322.

¹³³ "Orthodox Church in America (OCA)." 2011.

¹³⁴ "Orthodox Church in America (OCA)." 2011.

passeth away, but to attend to the soul since it is immortal. Wherefore, O righteous Elizabeth, thy spirit rejoiceth with the Angels.

Kontakion: As a fair house of virtues and a temple of virginity, thou makest miracles pour forth abundantly as an unfailing fount of grace; and thou purgest all sickness from the body and soul, O Mother Elizabeth, for them that praise the Maker while crying out: Alleluia.

-Feast Day: April 24

St. Genevieve, patron of Paris¹³⁵

Troparion: Your abundant tears sprinkled and fertilized the desert of the sterile hearts, your prayers and your sighs produced fruit with the centuple. Request for your city, O holy Genevieve, and for those which venerate with love your holy memory.

Kontakion: For the love of the Lord, O holy Genevieve, you took of hatred the desire of rest, having clarified your spirit by the fast, because you overcame the animals with force. But by your prayers you crushed the agitation of the enemies.

-Feast Day: January 3

St. Irene of Chrysovalantou¹³⁶

Apolytikion: Not a temporal kingdom on earth didst thou obtain, but Christ, thy most comely Bridegroom, vouchsafed thee heavenly crowns, and thou reignest as a queen with Him eternally; for thou didst dedicate thyself unto Him with all thy soul, O Irene, our righteous Mother, thou boast of Chrysovalantou, and mighty help of all the Orthodox.

Kontakion: Leaving all the world behind with its impermanent glory, thou wast wedded unto Christ, the King immortal and holy, bringing Him as precious dowry thy maiden beauty and thy trophies won through abstinence over demons. O Irene, our righteous Mother, entreat thy Bridegroom to show His mercy to us.

-Feast Day: July 28

135 "Orthodox Church in America (OCA)." 2011.

136 *Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.* 2011.

St. Irene of Thessaloniki¹³⁷

Apolytikion: O Lord Jesus, unto Thee Thy lamb doth cry with a great voice: O my Bridegroom, Thee I love; and seeking Thee, I now contest, and with Thy baptism am crucified and buried. I suffer for Thy sake, that I may reign with Thee; for Thy sake I die, that I may live in Thee: accept me offered out of longing to Thee as a spotless sacrifice. Lord, save our souls through her intercessions, since Thou art great in mercy.

Kontakion: Being fair adorned before with pure and virginal beauty, thou becamest fairer still in thy brave contest, O virgin; for when thou, in thine own spilt blood, wast stained and reddened, O Irene, thou overthrewest ungodly error. Hence, thou hast received the prizes of thy good vict'ry from thy Creator's right hand.

-Feast Day: May 5

St. Juliana of Nicomedia¹³⁸

Troparion: All-blameless bride and venerable trophy-bearer, You are wedded to the Word of the immortal Father, O glorious Juliana. For having wisely disdained your mortal bridegroom, You strove beyond nature to destroy the serpent, And now you delight in the joys of your Bridegroom!

Kontakion: You were a beautiful virgin, wise Juliana, and as your soul was wounded with divine love, your body was also pierced with the wounds of martyrdom adorning you as a bride of Christ and His martyr. Now as you dwell in the heavenly bridal chamber, you pray for us all.

-Feast Day: January 2

St. Markella of Chios¹³⁹

Apolytikion: Rose of piety and sprout of Chios, we honour with canticles Saint Markella who was beheaded by her father's hand, as she guarded the commands of Christ, give strength and save from danger, us who cry unto you. Glory to Him who gave you strength, glory to Him who crowned you. Glory to Him who works through you, healings for all the faithful.

-Feast Day: July 22

¹³⁷ *Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.* 2011.

¹³⁸ "Orthodox Church in America (OCA)." 2011.

¹³⁹ *Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America.* 2011.

St. Mary of Egypt¹⁴⁰

Troparion: The image of God was truly preserved in you, O mother, For you took up the Cross and followed Christ. By so doing, you taught us to disregard the flesh, for it passes away; But to care instead for the soul, since it is immortal. Therefore your spirit, O holy Mother Mary, rejoices with the Angels.

Kontakion: Having been a sinful woman, You became through repentance a Bride of Christ. Having attained angelic life, You defeated demons with the weapon of the Cross; Therefore, O most glorious Mary you are a Bride of the Kingdom!

-Feast Days: April 1 & Fifth Sunday of Great Lent

St. Matrona of Thessalonica¹⁴¹

Kontakion: O Lord Jesus, unto You Your lamb cries with a great voice, "O my Bridegroom, You I love; and seeking You, I now contest, and with Your baptism I am crucified and buried. I suffer for Your sake, that I may reign with You; for Your sake I die, that I may live in you. Accept me, offered out of longing to You as a spotless sacrifice." Lord, save our souls through her intercessions, since You are great in mercy.

-Feast Day: March 27

St. Paraskeve the New (Parascheva, Petka)¹⁴²

Troparion: You chose a silent and solitary life; You followed Christ your Bridegroom. You took his easy yoke in your youth, Arming yourself with the sign of the Cross. You contended against spiritual enemies Through fasting, tears and labors, O glorious Paraskeva. Now you stand before Christ with the Wise Virgins: Intercede for us who honor your precious memory.

-Feast Day: October 14

Sts. Perpetua and Felicity¹⁴³

Troparion: Your lambs, Perpetua and Felicity, cry out to you, O Jesus, with great love: "O

140 *Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America*. 2011.

141 *Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America*. 2011.

142 "Orthodox Church in America (OCA)." 2011.

143 *Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America*. 2011.

our Bridegroom, we long for you in great pain, we are crucified with you, and in baptism we are buried with you. We suffer for your sake in order to reign with you. We die for you in order to live in you. Accept us as immaculate victims, since we are slain for your sake." Through their intercessions, O Merciful One, save our souls!

-Feast Day: March 7

St. Philothea of Athens¹⁴⁴

Apolytikion: The famed city of Athens doth honour Philothea, the righteous Martyr, whose relics it now revereth with joy; for while living in sobriety and holiness, she hath exchanged all earthly things for the everlasting life through great contests as a Martyr; and she entreateth the Saviour to grant His mercy unto all of us.

Kontakion: We all honour Philothea with jubilation of spirit, as this day we rev'rently worship her ven'erable relics. For she lived her whole life working kindness and mercy; and the righteous one, receiving a martyr's ending, is deemed worthy to entreat God that all be granted eternal life with the Saints.

-Feast Day: February 19

St. Olga of Kiev¹⁴⁵

Troparion: Giving your mind the wings of divine understanding, you soared above visible creation seeking God the Creator of all. When you had found Him, you received rebirth through baptism. As one who enjoys the Tree of Life, You remain eternally incorrupt, ever-glorious Olga.

Kontakion: Today let us praise God the Benefactor of all, Who glorified divinely-wise Olga, That through her prayers, He may grant our souls remission of sins.

-Feast Day: July 11

St. Thekla¹⁴⁶

Troparion: You were enlightened by the words of Paul, O Bride of God, Thekla, And your faith was confirmed by Peter, O Chosen One of God. You became the first sufferer and

144 *Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America*. 2011.

145 "Orthodox Church in America (OCA)." 2011.

146 *Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America*. 2011.

martyr among women, By entering into the flames as into a place of gladness. For when you accepted the Cross of Christ, The demonic powers were frightened away. O all-praised One, intercede before Christ God that our souls may be saved.

Kontakion: O glorious Thekla, virginity was your splendor, The crown of martyrdom your adornment and the faith you trust! You turned a burning fire into refreshing dew, And with your prayers appeased pagan fury, O First Woman Martyr!

-Feast Day: September 24

St. Xenia¹⁴⁷

Troparion: Having renounced the vanity of the earthly world, Thou didst take up the cross of a homeless life of wandering; Thou didst not fear grief, privation, nor the mockery of men, And didst know the love of Christ. Now taking sweet delight of this love in heaven, O Xenia, the blessed and divinely wise, Pray for the salvation of our souls.

Troparion: In you, O mother was carefully preserved what is according to the image. For you took up the Cross and followed Christ. By so doing, you taught us to disregard the flesh for it passes away, But to care instead for the soul since it is immortal. Therefore, O Blessed Xenia, your spirit rejoices with the Angels.

Kontakion: Having loved the poverty of Christ, You are now being satisfied at the Immortal Banquet. By the humility of the Cross, you received the power of God. Having acquired the gift of miraculous help, O Blessed Xenia, Beseech Christ God, that by repentance we may be delivered from every evil thing.

-Feast Day: January 24/February 6

147 "Orthodox Church in America (OCA)." 2011.

APPENDIX C:
THE AKATHIST HYMN AND SMALL COMPLINE

PRIEST: In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages.¹⁴⁸

PEOPLE: Amen.

PRIEST: Glory to You, our God, glory to You.

Heavenly King, Comforter, the Spirit of truth who are present everywhere and fill all things, Treasury of good things and Giver of life, come and dwell in us. Cleanse us of every stain, and save our souls, gracious Lord.

PEOPLE: Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us (3).

Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

All-holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, forgive our sins. Master, pardon our transgressions. Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities, for Your name's sake. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

PRIEST: For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the-glorry, of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages.

PEOPLE: Amen.

PEOPLE: Lord, , have mercy (12).

¹⁴⁸ *Akathist Hymn to the Mother of God and Small Compline*, trans. N. Michael Vaporis and Evie Zachariades-Holmberg (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 1992).

Come, let us worship and bow down to God, our King.

Come, let us worship and bow down to Christ, our King and God.

Come, let us worship and bow down to Christ himself, our King and our God.

Psalm 50 (51)

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your great mercy; and according to the multitude of Your compassion, blot out my transgression. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my iniquity, and my sin is ever before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done evil in Your sight, that You may be found just when You speak, and victorious when You are judged. For behold, I was born guilty, a sinner when my mother conceived me. For behold, You have loved truth; You have made known to me the secret and hidden things of Your wisdom. You shall sprinkle me with hyssop, and I shall be made clean; You shall wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the afflicted bones may rejoice. Turn Your face away from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Cast me not away from Your presence, and take not Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and establish me with Your governing Spirit. I shall teach transgressors Your ways, and the ungodly shall turn back to You. Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, the God of my salvation, my tongue shall joyfully declare Your righteousness. Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall declare Your praise. For if You had desired sacrifice, I would give it; you do not delight in burnt offerings. A sacrifice to God is a broken spirit; God will not despise a broken and a humbled heart. Do good in Your good pleasure to Sion; and let the walls of Jerusalem be built. Then You shall be pleased with a sacrifice of righteousness, with oblation and whole burnt offerings. Then they shall offer bulls on Your altar.

Psalm 69 (70)

O God, be attentive to help me. Lord, make haste to help me. Let them be ashamed and confounded who seek my life. Let them be turned back and be ashamed who desire evil against me. Let them be turned back because of their shame, who say to me, Well done! Well done! Let all those who seek You rejoice and be glad in You; and let those who love Your salvation say continually, Let God be magnified! But as for me, I am poor and needy; O God, help me! You are my help and my deliverer; Lord, do not delay.

Psalm 142 (143)

Lord, hear my prayer. In Your truth, give ear to my supplications; in Your righteousness, hear me. Enter not into judgment with Your servant, for no one living is justified in Your sight.

For the enemy has pursued my soul; he has crushed my life to the ground; he has made me dwell in darkness, like those who have long been dead, and my spirit is overwhelmed within me; my heart within me is distressed. I remembered the days of old; I meditated on all Your works; I pondered on the work of Your hands. I spread out my hands to You; my soul longs for You like a thirsty land. Lord, hear me quickly; my spirit fails. Turn not Your face away from me, lest I be like those who go down into the pit. Let me hear Your mercy in the morning, for in You I have put my trust. Lord, teach me to know the way in which I should walk, for I lift up my soul to You. Rescue me, Lord, from my enemies; to You have I fled for refuge. Teach me to do Your will, for you are my God. Your good Spirit shall lead me on a level path; Lord, for your name's sake You shall preserve my life. In your righteousness, You shall bring my soul out of trouble, and in Your mercy, You shall utterly destroy my enemies. And You shall destroy all those who afflict my soul, for I am Your servant.

Doxology

Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will to all people. We praise You, we bless You, we worship You, we glorify You, we give thanks to you for Your great glory. Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father, almighty Lord, the only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, and Holy Spirit. Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father who take away the sin of the world, have mercy upon us, You who take away the sins of the world. Receive our prayer, You who sit at the right hand of the Father, and have mercy upon us. For You only are holy, only You are Lord, Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father. Amen. Each evening we bless You, and we praise Your name forever and to the ages of ages. Lord, You have been our refuge from generation to generation. I said: Lord, have mercy upon me; heal my soul, for I have sinned against You. Lord, to You have I fled; teach me to do Your will, for You are my God. For You are the source of life, and in Your light we shall see light. Continue Your mercy to those who know You. Lord, grant to keep us this night without sin. Blessed are You, Lord, God of our fathers. Your name is praised and glorified from all ages. Amen. Let Your mercy, Lord, lighten upon us, as our trust is in You. Blessed are You, Lord, teach me Your commandments. Blessed are You, Master, teach me Your commandments. Blessed are You, Holy One, enlighten me in Your commandments. Your mercy, Lord, endures forever; turn not away from the works of Your hands. To you belongs praise, to You belongs worship, to you belongs glory, to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

The Creed

I believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all ages. Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten not created, of one essence with the Father through whom all things were made. For us and for our salvation He came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became man. He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and He suffered and was buried. On the third day He rose according to the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at

the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead. His kingdom will have no end. And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of life, who proceeds from the Father, who together with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who spoke through the prophets. In one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. I expect the resurrection of the dead. And the life of the ages to come. Amen.

It is truly worthy to bless you, the Theotokos, the ever blessed and most pure and mother of our God. More honorable than the Cherubim, and beyond compare more glorious than the Seraphim, incorruptibly you gave birth to God the Word. We magnify you, the true Theotokos.

Apolytikion. Eighth Tone

When the bodiless learned of the secret command, he came in haste to Joseph's house and said to her who knew not wedlock: He who bowed the heavens by coming down is contained wholly and unchanged in you. Seeing him take the form of a servant in your womb, I stand in awe and cry out to You: Rejoice, O Bride unwedded.

(On the 5th Friday the 1st Stasis is sung here).

Canon Ode One. Tone Four. The Eirmos

I shall open my mouth and it shall be filled with the Spirit; and I shall pour out a word to the Mother and Queen; and I shall be seen cheerfully celebrating; and rejoicing I shall sing her miracles.

Most-holy Theotokos, save us.

O animate book of Christ, sealed by the Spirit, O pure one, the great Archangel, beholding you, exclaimed: Rejoice, O vessel of joy through whom the first mother's curse shall be broken.

Most-holy Theotokos, save us.

Rejoice, Virgin Bride of God, the restoration of Adam, the mortification of Hades. Rejoice, completely unblemished 'One, the palace of the only King. Rejoice, fiery throne of the Sovereign of all.

Glory...

Rejoice, unfading rose. Rejoice, the only one who budded forth the unfading apple. Rejoice, birth-giver of the aromatic balm of the King of all. Rejoice, O Bride unwedded, the world's salvation.

Both now...

Rejoice, treasury of purity, through whom we have risen from our fall. Rejoice, O Lady, sweet-smelling lilly that sends forth its fragrant scent to the faithful. Rejoice, aromatic incense and precious oil of myrrh.

Ode Three. The Eirmos

O Theotokos, living and abundant fountain, strengthen those united in spiritual fellowship who sing hymns of praise to you. And in your divine glory, deem them worthy of crowns of glory.

Most-holy Theotokos, save us.

Rejoice, untilled land which has sprouted the divine ear of wheat. Rejoice, living table which has held the bread of life. Rejoice, O Lady, never empty font of living water.

Most-holy Theotokos, save us.

Rejoice, O heifer that gave birth to the unblemished calf for the faithful. Rejoice, O ewe that conceived the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Rejoice, O warm mercy seat, our fervent intercessor.

Glory...

Rejoice, luminous morning that alone brings Christ the Sun. Rejoice, dwelling place of light, dispeller of darkness who has diminished utterly the darkened demons.

Both now...

Rejoice, only gate that only the Logos has gone through, for in your giving birth you shattered the bars and gates of Hades. Rejoice, all-laudable, divine entrance of those who are being saved.

(On the 5th Friday the 2nd Stasis is sung here.)

Ode Four. The Eirmos.

He who sits in holy glory, on the throne of Divinity, on a swift cloud came Jesus the transcendent God, and by his undefiled hand has saved those who cry Out; Glory be to Your power, O Christ.

Most-holy Theotokos, save us.

In voices of song faithfully we rejoice all-laudable One. Rejoice, rich mountain flowing with the milk of the Spirit. Rejoice, lamp and golden jar containing the manna which sweetens the senses of the devout.

Most-holy Theotokos, save us.

Rejoice, mercy-seat of the world untainted Lady. Rejoice, raising all from earth by grace.

Rejoice bridge that truly conveys from death to life all those who sing your praises.

Most-holy Theotokos, save us.

More exalted than the heavens, rejoice, you who carded earth's foundation painlessly in your womb. Rejoice, O sea shell who dyed with your own virgin blood the divine purple robe worn by the King of angelic hosts. Glory

Lady, you truly gave birth to the divine Giver of the law who washes clean the lawlessness of all. O incomprehensible depth and ineffable height, Maiden unwedded, through whom we are deified.

Both now...

You have woven for the world a crown unwoven by human hands and we praise you saying: Rejoice, O Virgin, the fortress and citadel and protective wall and refuge of all.

Ode Five. The Eirmos.

Amazed was the universe by your divine glory. For while never experiencing marriage, you held, O Virgin, the God of all in your womb, and gave birth to an eternal Son who grants salvation to all who chant hymns of praise to you.

Most-holy Theotokos, save us.

Rejoice, for you carried in your womb the Way of life. Rejoice, Bride of God, all-blameless Maiden, who saved the world from the flood of sin. Rejoice, awe-inspiring message and report, habitation of the One who is Lord of all creation.

Most-holy Theotokos, save us.

The might and the fortress of the human race, O Undefined. Rejoice, holy place of glory, slayer of Hades, and bridal chamber of light. Rejoice, delight of the angels. Rejoice, helper of those who pray to you faithfully.

Most-holy Theotokos, save us.

Fiery chariot of God the Word and risen Son. Rejoice, Lady, living paradise, which in its center contains the tree of life, the Lord, whose sweetness gives life to those who participate with faith although subject to decay.

Glory...

Strengthened by your power, we faithfully cry out to you with faith: Rejoice, city of the Great King, about which glorious and remarkable things have been clearly declared. Rejoice, O unquarried mountain and unfathomable depth.

Both now...

Rejoice, O Undeiled dwelling of the Word, seashell that produce the divine pearl. Rejoice, O Lady, exceedingly wonderful, -who reconciles with God all those who bless you, the Theotokos, each time.

Ode Six. The Eirmos

O godly-minded people, as we perform this divine and all-honorable feast in honor of the Mother of our God, let us clap our hands and give glory to God who was born of her.

Most-holy Theotokos, save us

The spotless chamber of the Word, for all the Cause of deification, rejoice, all-undefiled the prophets' echoing prophecy. Rejoice, adornment of the Apostles.

Most-holy Theotokos, save us.

From you has dripped the refreshing dew that quenched the flame of idolatry. We therefore cry aloud to you: Rejoice, O Virgin, fleece cover with dew which Gideon foresaw.

Glory...

Behold, we cry out to you, rejoice. Become for us a harbor and haven, for we are tossed about on the sea of adversity, and of the many scandals of him who wars with us.

Both now...

O cause for joy, endow our thoughts with grace that we may cry: Rejoice, O unconsumed bush and shining cloud that overshadows without ceasing the faithful.

(On the 5th Friday, the 3rd Stasis is sung here.)

Ode Seven. The Eirmos.

The godly-minded did not adore creation but the Creator, and bravely trampling upon the threat of the fire they rejoiced chanting: Blessed are You O supremely praised, O Lord and God of our fathers.

Most-holy Theotokos, save us.

We sing hymns to you crying: Rejoice, O chariot Of the spiritual Sun. Rejoice, O true vine that cultured the ripened cluster dripping with wine, making glad the souls of all who faithfully glorify you.

Most-holy Theotokos, save us.

Rejoice, Bride of God, who carried in your womb the healer of the human race. Rejoice, O mystical rod that blossomed the flower that will never wilt. Rejoice, O Lady, through whom we are filled with joy and inherited eternal life Most-holy Theotokos, save us.

The tongue practicing oratory is unable to extol you. For you were exalted above the Seraphim, having given birth to Christ the King. Beseech him, O Lady, to rescue now from every harm those -who bow in faith before you.

Glory...

The ends of the earth extol you, and cry out to you: Rejoice, scroll on which, O pure one, the Word was inscribed by the Father's finger. Intercede with him, O Theotokos, to enroll your servants in the book of life.

Both now...

We your servants beseech you and bend the knee of our heart to you. O pure one, lend us your ear in afflictions. And your city preserve, O Theotokos, from any destruction by the enemies.

Ode Eight. The Eirmos.

The pious youth within the furnace were rescued by the offspring of the Theotokos. He who was Prefigured then has been born on earth, and is gathering the entire universe to sing: Bless the Lord, all his works, and magnify him to the ages.

Most-holy Theotokos, save us.

You received into your womb the Logos: you held in your arms the One who holds all things. With your milk You nourished him who with a nod nourishes the entire universe, O purest maiden, to whom we sing: Bless the Lord all his works, and magnify him to the ages.

Most-holy Theotokos, save us.

The great mystery of your childbirth did Moses perceive within the burning bush. The youth vividly prefigured this, standing in the midst of fire and remaining unconsumed, O undefiled and holy Virgin. We praise you therefore in hymns to the ages.

Most-holy Theotokos, save us.

We who once by deceit were left naked have put on through your pregnancy the garments of incorruption, and we who sat in the darkness of our transgressions now have seen the light. We therefore praise you in hymns to the ages.

Glory...

The dead have been given life by your power, for you gave birth to the spiritual life. They who once were speechless now are eloquent. Lepers are cleansed and diseases are exterminated. The multitude of aerial spirits are defeated, O Virgin, man's salvation.

Both now...

Through you who did bear the world's salvation we were raised up from earth to heaven. Rejoice, all-blessed shelter, strength, wall, and fortification of all who sing: Bless the Lord, all his works, and magnify him to the ages.

Ode Nine. The Eirmos.

Let every mortal born on earth with festive lamps In hand, in spirit leap for joy; and you incorporeal angelic Powers in heaven celebrate, thus honoring the sacred feast of the Mother of God, and cry out: Rejoice, all-blessed one, ever-virgin and pure Theotokos.

Most-holy Theotokos, save us.

So that we may cry rejoice to you through whom we faithful have become sharers of eternal joy, O Maiden, rescue us from temptation, from enemy invasions, and from every other scourge which is bound to follow because of the multitude of transgressions due to the sins of mortals.

Most-holy Theotokos, save us.

You were seen as our light and surety, we therefore shout to you: Rejoice, O unsetting star which leads the great Sun into the world. Rejoice, O pure one, for you opened Eden. Rejoice, fiery pillar ushering humankind to life on high.

Most-holy Theotokos, save us.

Let us stand reverently within the temple of our God and cry out: Rejoice, Mistress of the world. Rejoice, O Mary, the Lady of us all. Rejoice, only blameless and fair one among women. Rejoice, vessel which accepted the divine inexhaustible ointment Poured upon you.

Glory...

Rejoice, O ever-virgin, dove that brought forth the Lord of mercy. Rejoice, boast of every saint. Rejoice, Crown of laurel of the martyr-athletes. Rejoice, divine adornment of all righteous, and salvation for us the believers.

Both now...

Spare, O God, the sins of Your own inheritance by Overlooking all of, them now. Accept, O Christ, the fervent prayers of her who without seed conceived on earth and carried You who in Your great mercy will to take the form that was not Your own.

Kontakion

O Champion General, we your faithful inscribe to you the prize of victory as gratitude for being rescued from calamity, O Theotokos. But since you have invincible power, free us from all kinds of perils so that we may cry out to you: Rejoice, O Bride unwedded.

On the Fifth Friday, the 4 Stasis are sung here.

On the First Friday, only the First Stasis is sung.

On the Second Friday, only the Second Stasis is sung.

On the Third Friday, only the Third Stasis is sung.

On the Fourth Friday, only the Fourth Stasis is sung.

First Stasis

PRIEST: An Angel of the first rank was sent from heaven to say to the Theotokos: Rejoice! (3)
And perceiving You, O Lord, taking bodily form, he stood in awe and with his bodiless voice cried aloud to her as follows:

Rejoice, through whom joy shall shine forth;
Rejoice, through whom the curse shall vanish.
Rejoice, fallen Adam's restoration;
Rejoice, redemption of Eve's tears.
Rejoice, height that is too difficult for human thought to ascend;
Rejoice, depth that is too strenuous for Angels' eyes to perceive
Rejoice, for you are the throne of the King;
Rejoice, for you hold him Who sustains everything.
Rejoice, star that shows forth the Sun;
Rejoice, womb in which God became incarnate.
Rejoice, through whom creation is renewed;
Rejoice, through whom the Creator becomes an infant.
Rejoice, O Bride unwedded.

PEOPLE: Rejoice, O Bride unwedded.

PRIEST: The holy one, beholding herself in innocence, says to Gabriel: The incredible tidings of your voice appear difficult for my soul to accept. For how do you speak of childbirth

from a seedless conception, crying: Alleluia.

PEOPLE: Alleluia.

PRIEST: Curious to know knowledge what is knowable to no one, the Virgin cried out to the ministering angel: How is it possible for a son to be born of pure loins? Tell me. To whom the angel answered in fear, crying out:

Rejoice, initiate of ineffable counsel;
 Rejoice, faith of silent beseechers.
 Rejoice, introduction to Christ's miracles;
 Rejoice, consummation of his doctrinal articles.
 Rejoice, heavenly ladder by which God came down;
 Rejoice, bridge leading those from earth to I heaven.
 Rejoice, marvel greatly renowned among the Angels;
 Rejoice, wound bitterly lamented by demons.
 Rejoice, for you gave birth to the light ineffably;
 Rejoice, for the "how" you taught to no one.
 Rejoice, surpassing the knowledge of scholars;
 Rejoice, dawn that illumines the minds of believers.
 Rejoice, O Bride unwedded.

PEOPLE: Rejoice, O Bride unwedded.

PRIEST: The divine power of the Most High overshadowed the unwedded Maiden that she might conceive, and made her luxuriant womb appear as a luscious field for everyone who desires to reap salvation while chanting thusly: Alleluia.

PEOPLE: Alleluia.

PRIEST: The Virgin, bearing God in her womb, hastened to visit Elizabeth, whose own babe at once knowing her greeting, rejoiced and leaping up as if in song, cried out to the Theotokos:

Rejoice, branch of an unwithered shoot;
 Rejoice, land of unblemished fruit.
 Rejoice, you who cultivate the husband and who loves humankind;
 Rejoice, for you gave birth to the gardener of our life.
 Rejoice, arable land yielding an abundance of compassion;
 Rejoice, table laden an abundance of grace.
 Rejoice, for you make flourish the meadows of luxury;
 Rejoice, for you prepare a safe harbor for our souls.
 Rejoice, intercession's acceptable incense;
 Rejoice, expiation for all the world.
 Rejoice, goodwill of God to mortals;
 Rejoice, boldness of mortals before God.
 Rejoice, O Bride unwedded.

PEOPLE: Rejoice, O Bride unwedded.

PRIEST: Fraught within with confusion, brought about by doubtful thoughts, the wise Joseph

was troubled as he looked upon you the unwedded, and suspected you, O Blameless one. But when he learned of your conception by the Holy Spirit, he said: Alleluia.

PEOPLE: Alleluia.

(This is the end of the FIRST Stasis. Now turn to p. 29 where we sing "O Champion General" and continue from there on to the end of the service.)

Second Stasis

PRIEST: The shepherds heard the appearance of Christ in the flesh being glorified; and hastening as to a shepherd, they beheld him as a spotless lamb who had been pastured in the womb of Mary, to whom they sing praises saying:

Rejoice, mother of the Lamb and Shepherd;
 Rejoice, sheepfold of spiritual sheep.
 Rejoice, defense against invisible enemies;
 Rejoice, key to the doors of Paradise.
 Rejoice, for heavenly things are exulting with the earth;
 Rejoice, earthly things that are dancing with the heavenly ones.
 Rejoice, never-silent voice of the Apostles;
 Rejoice, unconquered courage of the Martyrs.
 Rejoice, faith's unshakable foundation;
 Rejoice, shining revelation of grace.
 Rejoice, through whom Hades is divested;
 Rejoice, through whom we have been vested in glory.
 Rejoice, O Bride unwedded.

PEOPLE: Rejoice, O Bride unwedded.

PRIEST: Beholding the star leading to God, the Magi followed its brightness; and holding it as a lantern, they searched for the powerful King, and reaching the Unreachable, they rejoiced and cried to him: Alleluia.

PEOPLE: Alleluia.

PRIEST: The Chaldean children in the hands of the Virgin saw him who fashioned humankind. And perceiving him to be the Lord, even though he had taken the form of a slave, they hastened to pay tribute with gifts and to greet the blessed Lady:

Rejoice, mother of an unsetting star;
 Rejoice, dawn of the mystic day.
 Rejoice, who extinguished the furnace of error;
 Rejoice, who enlighten initiates of the Trinity.
 Rejoice, deposer of the inhuman tyrant from his rule;
 Rejoice, discloser of the Lord Christ who loves humankind.
 Rejoice, redeemer from pagan religions;
 Rejoice, deliverer from the mire of sin.
 Rejoice, for you have caused the worship of fire to cease;

Rejoice, releaser from the flames of passions.
 Rejoice, guide of the faithful to chastity;
 Rejoice, gladness of all generations.
 Rejoice, O Bride unwedded.

PEOPLE: Rejoice, O Bride unwedded.

PRIEST: The Magi went to Babylon having become the God-bearing heralds. For they fulfilled Your prophecy and proclaimed You as the Christ to all, abandoning Herod as frivolous who did not know to sing: Alleluia.

PEOPLE: Alleluia.

PRIEST: Illumining in Egypt the light of truth, You dispelled the darkness of error; for her idols, O Savior, unable to endure your strength fell, while they who were delivered from them cried to the Theotokos:

Rejoice, the restoration of humankind;
 Rejoice, the downfall of demons.
 Rejoice, crusher of the delusion of error;
 Rejoice, uncoverer of the deceit of idolatry.
 Rejoice, sea that drowned the invisible Pharaoh;
 Rejoice, rock that refreshed those thirsty for life
 Rejoice, pillar of fire that guides those in darkness;
 Rejoice, protection of the world wider than a cloud.
 Rejoice, replacer of manna;
 Rejoice, minister of sacred joy.
 Rejoice, land of promises;
 Rejoice, from whom flow milk and honey.
 Rejoice, O Bride unwedded.

PEOPLE: Rejoice, O Bride unwedded.

PRIEST: Master, You were presented as a babe to Symeon on the threshold of being transported out of this present beguiling age, but also perceived by him to be perfect God; for which cause he marveled at Your ineffable wisdom, crying: Alleluia.

PEOPLE: Alleluia.

(End of the SECOND stasis. Now turn to p. 29 where we sing "O Champion General" and continue to the end of the service.)

Third Stasis

PRIEST: The new creation revealed the Creator by showing himself to us whom he created, sprouting up from an unseeded womb, while preserving it just as it was, unspoiled, so that beholding the miracle we might extol her by saying:

Rejoice, flower of incorruption;
 Rejoice, crown of chastity.
 Rejoice, illuminator of the impress of the resurrection;
 Rejoice, for the angelical life you exemplified.

Rejoice, tree with luscious fruit, by which the faithful are sustained;
 Rejoice, foliaged tree of beautiful shade beneath which many are sheltered.
 Rejoice, you who were pregnant with the guide for the wayward;
 Rejoice, you who gave birth to the redeemer of captives.
 Rejoice, by whom the righteous Judge is pacified;
 Rejoice, forgiveness of many offenders.
 Rejoice, robe of those without hope;
 Rejoice, tender love that defeats every longing;
 Rejoice, O Bride unwedded.

PEOPLE: Rejoice, O Bride unwedded.

PRIEST: Seeing the strange childbirth, let us be estranged from the mundane, transporting our mind to heaven. For this purpose the most high God appeared on earth as a lowly man, wishing to attract to heaven those who cry to Him: Alleluia.

PEOPLE: Alleluia.

PRIEST: Present below completely but in no way absent from on high was the uncircumscribable Logos. For this was divine condescension and not a change of place. He was born of a God-chosen virgin who heard this that follows:

Rejoice, uncontainable land of God;
 Rejoice, doorway of sacred mystery.
 Rejoice, unbelievable myth for the unfaithful;
 Rejoice, unequivocal boast of the faithful.
 Rejoice, all-holy vehicle of Him who rides the Cherubim;
 Rejoice, exquisite domicile of Him who mounts the Seraphim.
 Rejoice, bringer of opposites to harmony;
 Rejoice, joiner of virginity -and childbirth.
 Rejoice, through whom sin was nullified;
 Rejoice, through whom Paradise was opened.
 Rejoice, key of Christ's kingdom;
 Rejoice, the hope of eternal blessings.
 Rejoice, O Bride unwedded.

PEOPLE: Rejoice, O Bride unwedded.

PRIEST: All Angels were quite amazed by the great deed of Your incarnation. For they beheld the once inaccessible God accessible to all as- a man living among us, while hearing from everyone: Alleluia.

PEOPLE: Alleluia.

PRIEST: Eloquent rhetors we see mute as fish before you O Theotokos. For they are at a loss to explain how you had the power to give birth and yet remained a virgin. But we the faithful marveling at the mystery cry out with faith:

Rejoice, vessel of God's wisdom;
 Rejoice, storehouse of God's providence.
 Rejoice, revealer of philosophers as fools;
 Rejoice, exposor of the technologists as irrational.
 Rejoice, for the fierce debaters are made foolish;
 Rejoice, for the creators of the myths have wilted.
 Rejoice, breaker of the webs of the Athenians' logic;
 Rejoice, filler of the nets of the fishermen.

Rejoice, drawer of many from the abyss of ignorance;
 Rejoice, enlightener of many with knowledge.
 Rejoice, ship for those wishing salvation;
 Rejoice, harbor for life's navigators.
 Rejoice, O Bride unwedded.

PEOPLE: Rejoice, O Bride unwedded.

PRIEST: Wishing to save the world, the creator of all came down to it of his own will. And while being the shepherd as God, for us he appeared like us, as a man; and having called his own, like by like, as God he hears: Alleluia.

PEOPLE: Alleluia.

(End of the THIRD stasis. Now turn to p. 29 where we sing "O Champion General" and continue to the end of the service.)

Fourth Stasis

PRIEST: Theotokos and Virgin, you are the fortress for virgins and for all who run to you for refuge. O immaculate Maiden, for the Creator of heaven and earth prepared you, inhabiting your womb and instructing all to address you thus;

Rejoice, pillar of virginity;
 Rejoice, the gate of salvation.
 Rejoice, initiator of spiritual renewal;
 Rejoice, provider of godly benevolence.
 Rejoice, for through you were born again those conceived in shame;
 Rejoice, for you have admonished those whose intellects had been captured.
 Rejoice, for you abolished him who corrupts reason;
 Rejoice, for you have given birth to the savior of purity
 Rejoice, bridal chamber of seedless marriage;
 Rejoice, you who join the faithful to the Lord.
 Rejoice, beautiful nursemaid of virgins;
 Rejoice, bridesmaid of souls that are holy.
 Rejoice, O Bride unwedded.

PEOPLE: Rejoice, O Bride unwedded.

PRIEST: Unsuccessful is every hymn that attempts to pay homage to the multitude of Your mercies. For even if we offer You odes in number equal to the sands, O holy King, yet we do nothing worthy of what You have given us who cry to You: Alleluia.

PEOPLE: Alleluia.

PRIEST: We see the holy Virgin, as a light-bearing torch who brings light to those in darkness. For she lit the spiritual light, and thus leads everyone to divine knowledge, enlightening the mind with the light of dawn and is honored by such praises:

Rejoice, ray of the spiritual Sun;
 Rejoice, beam of the unsetting luster.

Rejoice, lightning completely illuminating souls;
 Rejoice, thunder that stuns the enemies.
 Rejoice, for the glowing light you make rise upon the earth;
 Rejoice, for you spring forth the flowing river.
 Rejoice, you who illustrate the image of the font;
 Rejoice, you who wash away the stain of sin.
 Rejoice, water washing consciences clean;
 Rejoice, cup that mixes great joy.
 Rejoice, sweet smelling fragrance of Christ;
 Rejoice, life of the mystical feasting.
 Rejoice, O Bride unwedded.

PEOPLE: Rejoice, O Bride unwedded.

PRIEST: Wishing to grant pardon for ancient debts, he who cancels the debts of all people came himself and dwelt among those who were estranged from his divine grace; and tearing apart the record of sin, he hears from everyone: Alleluia.

PEOPLE: Alleluia.

PRIEST: Extolling your birth-giving, we all praise you as a living temple, O Theotokos. For the Lord whose hand sustains the world, having dwelt in your womb, sanctified and glorified you, and instructed all people to cry to you:

Rejoice, tabernacle of God the Logos;
 Rejoice, holy one, holier than the holies.
 Rejoice, ark that was gilt by the Spirit;
 Rejoice, inexhaustible treasure of life.
 Rejoice, precious diadem of godly kings;
 Rejoice, honored pride of the pious priests.
 Rejoice, the Church's unshakable tower;
 Rejoice, the kingdom's unassailable fortress.
 Rejoice, through whom trophies of victory are raised;
 Rejoice, through whom enemies are defeated.
 Rejoice, healing of my body;
 Rejoice, my soul's salvation.
 Rejoice, O Bride unwedded.

PEOPLE: Rejoice, O Bride unwedded.

PRIEST: You, all-laudable Mother who gave birth to the Logos, the holiest of all who are holy (3), while accepting this offering now, deliver everyone from all calamities, and deliver from future punishment those who cry out: Alleluia.

PEOPLE: Alleluia.

Kontakion

PEOPLE: O Champion General, we your faithful inscribe to you the prize of victory as gratitude for being rescued from calamity, O Theotokos. But since you have invincible power, free us from all kinds of perils so that we may cry out to you: Rejoice, O Bride

unwedded.

(End of the FOURTH Stasis. We now say "Holy God" on p. 29, and continue to the end of the service.)

PRIEST: An angel of the first rank was sent down from heaven to -say to the Theotokos: Rejoice!
(3) And perceiving You, O Lord, taking bodily form, he stood in awe and with his bodiless voice, cried aloud to her as follows:

Rejoice, through whom joy shall shine forth;
Rejoice, through whom the curse shall vanish.
Rejoice, fallen Adam's restoration;
Rejoice, the redemption of Eve's tears.
Rejoice, height that is too difficult for human thought to ascend;
Rejoice, depth that is too strenuous for Angels' eyes to perceive.
Rejoice, for you are the throne. of the King;
Rejoice, for you hold him who sustains everything.
Rejoice, star that shows forth the Sun;
Rejoice, womb in which God became incarnate.
Rejoice, through whom creation is renewed;
Rejoice, through whom the Creator becomes an infant.
Rejoice, O Bride unwedded.

PEOPLE: Rejoice, O Bride unwedded.

PRIEST: The holy one, beholding himself in innocence, says to Gabriel: the incredible tidings of your voice appear difficult for my soul to accept. For how do you speak of childbirth from a seedless conception, crying: Alleluia.

PEOPLE: Alleluia.

PEOPLE: O Champion General, we your faithful inscribe to you the prize of victory as gratitude for being rescued from calamity, O Theotokos. But since you have invincible power, free us from all kinds of perils so that we may cry out to you: Rejoice, O Bride unwedded.

PEOPLE: Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us (3).

Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages.
Amen.

All-holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, forgive our sins. Master, pardon our transgressions. Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for your name's sake. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages.
Amen.

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

PRIEST: For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory, of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages.

PEOPLE: Amen.

The Apolytikion of the day.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy (40).

At all times and in every hour, You are worshiped and glorified in heaven and on earth, Christ our God. Long in patience, great in mercy and compassion, You love the righteous and show mercy to sinners. You call all to salvation through the promise of good things to come. Lord, receive our prayers at the present time. Direct our lives according to Your commandments. Sanctify our souls. Purify our bodies. Set our minds aright. Cleanse our thoughts and deliver us from all sorrow, evil, and distress. Surround us with Your holy angels that, guarded and guided by them, we may arrive at the unity of faith and the understanding of Your ineffable glory. For You are blessed to the ages of ages. Amen.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

More honorable than the Cherubim, and beyond compare more glorious than the Seraphim, without corruption you gave birth to God the Word. We magnify you, the true Theotokos.

people: In the name of the Lord, Father bless.

PRIEST: May God have compassion on us and bless us, reveal the glory of his face upon us and have mercy on us.

Prayer to the Theotokos

PEOPLE: Amen.

Spotless, undefiled, immaculate, unstained, pure Virgin, Lady, and Bride of God, by your wondrous conception you united God the Word with human beings and joined the fallen nature of our race to heavenly things. You are the only, hope of the hopeless, and the help of those oppressed. You are the ready protection of those who flee to you and the refuge of all Christians. Do not spurn me an accused sinner, though I have made myself completely useless by my shameful thoughts, words, and deeds and through indolence have become a slave to the pleasures of life. But as the Mother of God who loves all people, mercifully have compassion upon me a sinner and a prodigal and receive my prayer though it be offered to you by unclean lips. Entreat your Son and our Lord and Master, using your boldness as a mother, SO that he may open to me the loving mercy of his goodness, overlook my numberless transgressions, turn me to repentance, and make me an acceptable doer of his commandments. Always be near me, for

You are merciful, compassionate, and loving. Be my ardent help and protection in this present life, defending me from the assaults of adversaries, and lead me to salvation. At the hour of my death, care for my miserable soul and drive the dark faces of evil spirits far from it. On the awesome day of judgment, save me from eternal punishment and make me an inheritor of the ineffable glory of your Son, our God. May this be my lot, my Lady, all holy Theotokos, through your intercession and help, by the grace and love of your only begotten Son, our Lord and God and Savior Jesus to whom belong all glory, honor, and worship with his eternal Father, and his all holy, righteous, and life giving Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Prayer to our Lord Jesus Christ

Grant us, Master, as we depart for sleep, rest for body and soul. Protect us from the gloom of sinful sleep and from all dark pleasures of the night. Calm the impulses of passion, and quench the fiery darts of evil which are treacherously cast against us. Check the turbulence of our flesh and lull all our earthly and mundane thoughts. Grant us, O God, a watchful mind, prudent reason, a vigilant heart, and tranquil sleep, free from all evil fantasies. Raise us up at the hour of prayer, strengthen us in Your commandments, and keep unshaken within us the remembrance of Your judgments. Grant us to glorify You all night long that we may praise and bless and glorify Your all honorable and magnificent name, of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Most glorious, ever virgin, blessed Theotokos, present our prayers to your Son and our God, and plead with him, that through you he may save our souls.

My hope is the Father; my refuge, the Son; my protection, the Holy Spirit. Holy Trinity, glory to You.

My every hope I place in you, Mother of God, keep me under your protection.

PRIEST: Let us beseech the Lord our God that we may be made worthy to hear the holy Gospel. Wisdom. Arise. Let us hear the holy Gospel.

PRIEST: Peace be to all.

PEOPLE: And with your spirit.

The Gospel Reading

(The Gospel is read only on the First Friday. On the other Fridays, we proceed directly to the Dismissal.)

PRIEST: The reading is from the holy Gospel according to John. Let us be attentive.

Chapter 15:1-7:

The Lord said: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch of mine that bears no fruit, he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that

it may bear more fruit. You are already made clean by the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. If a man does not abide in me, he is cast forth as a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire and burned. if you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you.

The Dismissal

PRIEST: Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen. Lord, have mercy (3).

PRIEST: May Christ our true God, as a good, loving, and merciful God, have mercy upon -us and save us, through the intercessions of His most pure and most holy Mother; our holy God-bearing Fathers; the holy and righteous ancestors Joachim and Anna, and all the saints.

PRIEST: Let us pray for the peace of the world.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: For all devout Orthodox Christians.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: For our departed fathers and mothers, sisters and brothers.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: For those who hate us, and for those who love us.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: For those who show mercy toward us, and for those who serve us.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: For those who enjoin us in our unworthiness to pray for them.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: For the release of captives.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: For the safety of those at sea.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: For those who are lying ill.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: Let us pray also for the abundance of the fruits of the earth.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: And for the soul of every Orthodox Christian.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: Let us bless all those in public service.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: Orthodox hierarchs.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: The founders of this holy church.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: Our parents and teachers, and all our fathers and mothers, sisters and brothers who have gone before us, those who peacefully lie here, and the Orthodox everywhere.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: Let us say also for ourselves: Lord, have mercy (3).

Tone Three

PEOPLE: At the beauty of your virginity, and the resplendency of your chastity, Gabriel stood amazed and cried to you, O Theotokos: What are the appropriate words of praise to present to you? What name shall I call you by? At a loss and perplexed am I. And so as I was ordered I cry to you: rejoice, O you Who are full of grace!

PRIEST: Through the prayers of our holy fathers, Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and save us. Amen.

Rejoice, my bodily health's restoration;
Rejoice, my soul's everlasting salvation.
Rejoice, O Bride unwedded.

PEOPLE: Rejoice, O Bride unwedded.

PRIEST: You, all-laudable Mother, who gave birth to the Logos, who is holiest of all who are holy (3), while accepting this offering now, from calamities all deliver everyone, and redeem from the future torments of hell those who cry out with zeal: Alleluia.

PEOPLE: Alleluia.

Kontakion

PEOPLE: O Champion General, I your city now inscribe to you triumphant anthems as the tokens of my gratitude, being rescued from the terrors, O Theotokos. But since you have the dominion unassailable, from all kinds of perils free me so that unto you, I may cry aloud: rejoice, O Bride unwedded.

(End of the FOURTH Stasis)

(On the FIFTH Friday in Holy Lent, when the Small Compline and the Akathist Hymn are sung as written in this book, the following verses from the FIRST Stasis are sung just before the last "O Champion General.")

PRIEST: An angel of the first rank was sent down from the heavens to say to the Theotokos:
Rejoice! (3)

And perceiving, O Lord, at the sound of his bodiless voice You taking form bodily, astounded did he stand and cry out unto her such things as follow:

Rejoice, through whom is the joy to shine forth;
Rejoice, through whom is the curse to vanish.
Rejoice, restoration of Adam the fallen one;
Rejoice, the redemption of downfallen Eve's tears.
Rejoice, height that is too arduous for thoughts of humans to ascend;
Rejoice, depth that is too strenuous for Angels' eyes to apprehend.
Rejoice, for you are the throne of the King;
Rejoice, for you are holding Him who holds everything.
Rejoice, the star that shows forth the Sun;
Rejoice, the womb wherein God becomes incarnate.
Rejoice, whence comes the creation's renewal;
Rejoice, whence becomes the Creator an infant.
Rejoice, O Bride unwedded.

PEOPLE: Rejoice, O Bride unwedded.

PEOPLE: O Champion General, I your city now inscribe to you triumphant anthems as the tokens of my gratitude, being rescued from the terrors, O Theotokos. But since you have the dominion unassailable, from all kinds of perils free me so that unto you, I may cry aloud: rejoice, O Bride unwedded.

PEOPLE: Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us (3).

Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages.

Amen.

All-holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, forgive our sins. Master, pardon our transgressions. Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for your name's sake. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

PRIEST: For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages.

PEOPLE: Amen.

And The Apolytikion Of The Day.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy (40).

At all times and in every hour, You are worshiped and glorified in heaven and on earth, Christ our God. Long in patience, great in mercy and compassion, You love the righteous and show' mercy to sinners. You call all to salvation through the promise of good things to come. Lord, receive our prayers at the present time. Direct our lives according to Your commandments. Sanctify our souls. Purify our bodies. Set our minds aright. Cleanse our thoughts and deliver us from all sorrow, evil, and distress. Surround us with Your holy angels that, guarded and guided by them, we may arrive at the unity of faith and the understanding of Your ineffable glory. For You are blessed to the ages of ages. Amen.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

More honorable than the Cherubim, and beyond compare more glorious than the Seraphim, without corruption you gave birth to God the Word. We magnify you, the true Theotokos.

PEOPLE: In the name of the Lord, Father bless.

PRIEST: May God have compassion on us and bless us, reveal the glory of his face upon us and have mercy on us.

PEOPLE: Amen.

Prayer To The Theotokos

Spotless, undefiled, immaculate, unstained, pure Virgin, Lady, and Bride of God, by your wondrous conception you united God the Word with human beings and joined the fallen nature of our race to heavenly things. You are the only hope of the hopeless, and the help of those oppressed. You are the ready protection of those who flee to you and the refuge of all Christians. Do not spurn me an accused sinner, though I have made myself completely useless by my shameful thoughts, words, and deeds and through indolence have become a slave to the pleasures of life. But as the Mother of God who loves all people, mercifully have compassion upon me a sinner and a prodigal and receive my prayer though it be offered to you by unclean lips. Entreat your Son and our Lord and Master, using your boldness as a mother, so that he may open to me the loving mercy of his goodness, overlook my numberless transgressions, turn me to repentance, and make me an acceptable doer of his commandments. Always be near me, for you are merciful, compassionate, and loving. Be my ardent help and protection in this present life, defending me from the assaults of adversaries, and lead me to salvation. At the hour of my death, care for my miserable soul and drive the dark faces of evil spirits far from it. On the awesome day of judgment, save me from eternal punishment and make me an inheritor of the ineffable glory of your Son, our God. May this be my lot, my Lady, all holy Theotokos, through your intercession and help, by the grace and love of your only begotten Son, our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ; to whom belong all glory, honor, and worship, with his eternal Father, and his all holy, righteous, and life giving Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Prayer To Our Lord Jesus Christ

Grant us, Master, as we depart for sleep, rest for body and soul. Protect us from the gloom of sinful sleep and from all dark pleasures of the night. Calm the impulses of passion, and quench the fiery darts of evil which are treacherously cast against us. Check the turbulence of our flesh and lull all our earthly and mundane thoughts. Grant us, O God, a watchful mind, prudent reason, a vigilant heart, and tranquil sleep, free from all evil fantasies. Raise us up at the hour of prayer, strengthen us in Your commandments, and keep unshaken within us the remembrance of Your judgments. Grant us to glorify You all night long that we may praise and bless and glorify Your all honorable and magnificent name, of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Prayer To The Theotokos

Most glorious, ever virgin, blessed Theotokos, present our prayers to your Son and our God, and plead with Him, that through you He may save our souls.

Prayer To Our Lord Jesus Christ

My hope is the Father; my refuge, the Son; my protection, the Holy Spirit. Holy Trinity, glory to You.

Prayer To The Theotokos

My every hope I place in you, Mother of God, keep me under your protection.

PRIEST: Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen. Lord, have mercy (3).

PRIEST: May Christ our true God, as a good, loving, and merciful God, have mercy upon us and save us, through the intercessions of His most pure and most holy Mother; our holy God-bearing Fathers; the holy and righteous ancestors Joachim and Anna, and all the saints.

PRIEST: Let us pray for the peace of the world.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: For all devout Orthodox Christians.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: For our departed fathers and mothers, sisters and brothers.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: For those who hate us, and for those who love us.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: For those who show mercy toward us, and for those who serve us.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: For those who enjoin us in our unworthiness to pray for them.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: For the release of captives.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: For the safety of those at sea.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: For those who are lying ill.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: Let us pray also for the abundance of the fruits of the earth.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: And for the soul of every Orthodox Christian.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: Let us bless all devout rulers.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: Orthodox hierarchs.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: The founders of this holy church.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: Our parents and teachers, and all our fathers and mothers, sisters and brothers who have gone before us, those who peacefully lie here, and the Orthodox everywhere.

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy.

PRIEST: Let us say also for ourselves: Lord, have mercy (3).

Tone Three

PEOPLE: At the beauty of your virginity, and the resplendency of your chastity, Gabriel stood amazed and cried to you, O Theotokos: What are the appropriate words of praise to present to you? What name shall I call you by? At a loss and perplexed am I. And so as I was ordered I cry to you: rejoice, O you who are full of grace!

PRIEST: Through the prayers of our holy fathers, Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and save us. Amen.

(On Friday of the 1st Week of Holy Lent, after the 1st Stasis of the Salutations, the following Gospel is read.)

PRIEST: Let us beseech the Lord our God that we may be made worthy to hear the holy Gospel. Wisdom. Arise. Let us hear the holy Gospel.

PRIEST: Peace be to all.

PEOPLE: And with your spirit.

PRIEST: The reading is from the holy Gospel according to John. Let us be attentive.

Chapter 15:1 -7:

The Lord said: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch of mine that bears no fruit, he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already made clean by the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. If a man does not abide in me, he is cast forth as a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you.

VITA

Graduate School
Southern Illinois University

Rachel Nicole Brashier

rachelbrashier@siu.edu

Eastern Illinois University Carbondale
Bachelor of Music, Vocal Performance and Education, May 1999

Special Honors and Awards:
University Honors, Eastern Illinois University 1999

Thesis Title:
Voice of Women in Byzantine Music within the Greek Orthodox Churches in America

Major Professor: Dr. Maria V. Johnson