PSALM

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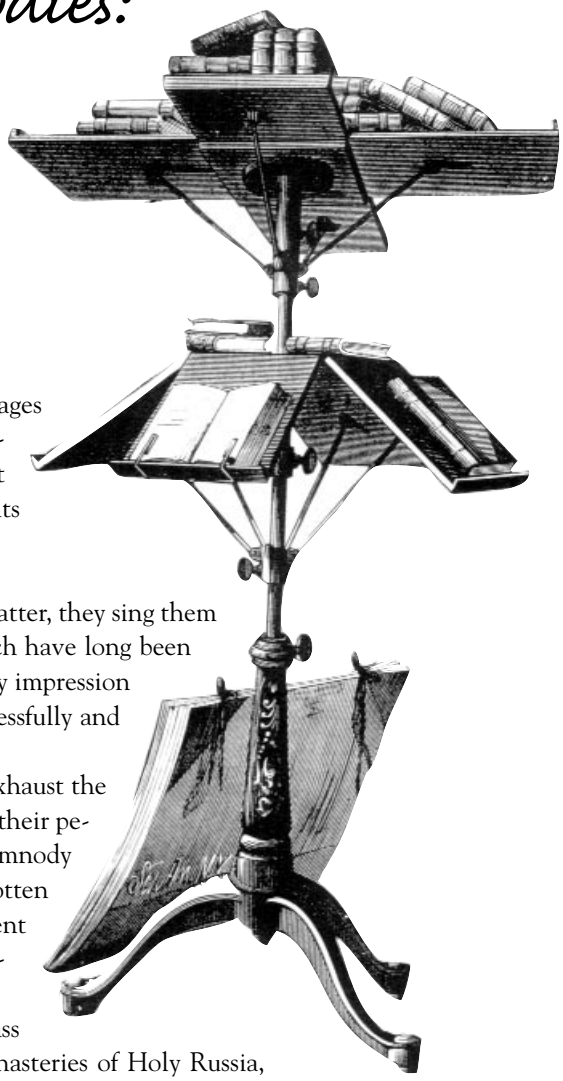
The Prosomoia (Podoben) Melodies: Forgotten Treasures of Orthodox Chant



by Johann von Gardner

translated by Isaac Lambertsen

Thick folios bound in brown leather on the *kliros* of a half-dark church . . . pages stippled with candle-wax, on which are strung out the black lines of angular Slavonic type with red headings. Let us open up one such folio—it gives off an air of dampness and incense; let us glance through it, flipping through its pages. Let us peer at the lines and drink in the atmosphere they exude.

What pearls of ecclesiastical poesy languish in them?

We hear them at every divine service—they read them on the *kliros* in a rapid patter, they sing them in a hasty recitative to the melodies of the tones of ancient or lesser chants which have long been familiar to us. For us they pass by without a trace, they slip by without leaving any impression upon our memory. At times, though, some phrase of the text which is more successfully and strikingly expressed by a melodic line will make a particularly deep impression.

But do not think that these tone-melodies which we have learned by heart exhaust the beauty and mood of these hymns. The wax-spotted pages conceal a secret within their peculiar terms—the secret of the special, profound beauty and compunction of a hymnody which—alas!—is now known only to a few. A doubly rare blossom—florid, forgotten chants, brilliantly selected by divinely wise artists of hymnography and ancient poets—melodies created by divinely inspired major masters of melodic and magnificent church hymnody.

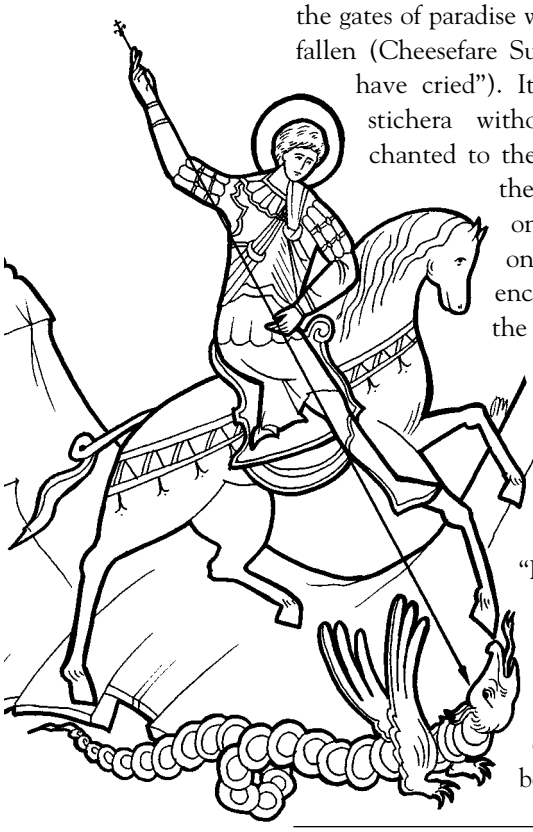
When I turn over the pages of these folios, and the angular, granular lines pass quickly before my sight, many memories form in my head. I remember the monasteries of Holy Russia,

Special Melodies Issue

where multitudes of monks assembled to sing these chants with measured voices. They sang them to melodies which were special, striking, brilliantly simple, yet at the same time brilliantly powerful.

Let us open the Lenten Triodion. The heading for one of the hymns catches our eye:

"In Tone VI: to the Special Melody 'Having placed all their hope . . .'" I remember the compunctionate melody of this sticheron, which hymns the saints who set all their hope on heaven, who by their struggles amassed there riches which cannot be stolen, and who for this have received exalted gifts: they impart healings to all men and to animals . . . The melody of this sticheron, the *prosomoion* (*podoben*), pours forth in tranquility and compunction an echo, as it were, of the everlasting peace which is in God and of a serene joy which shines forth eternally. It is dispassionate, yet not devoid of sensitivity. How marvelous are the stichera of the Feast of the Holy Annunciation, the moving conversation between the Bride of God and the Archangel, when they are chanted following the pattern of this hymn, "Having placed all their hope . . ." How the sense of humility and submission, yet at the same time of hope, is poured forth in this melody . . . It is not for naught that Adam, driven from Eden, uses this melody for his lamentation as he passes "beyond the gates of paradise," entreating the garden to pray with the noise of its leaves that the gates of paradise would again be opened to the fallen (Cheesefare Sunday, sticheron on "Lord, I have cried"). It is hard to listen to these stichera without weeping, if they are chanted to the melody "Having placed all their hope." It seems as though one were experiencing within oneself what Adam experienced when he was driven from the splendor of the face of God. Contrition, humility, a profound sorrow, yet one illumined by hope, are what one then hears in this melody.



We turn a page.

There is a new heading: "In Tone IV: To the special melody: 'As one valiant among the martyrs.'"

The humble, compunctionate melody is replaced by one that is cheerful, sure, bold. One senses in it steadfastness, the triumph of victory, a victory bought with suffering. Such a melody is used to hymn "the passion-bearer George, who is valiant among the martyrs." He kept the Faith, and for this has received a crown from God, and now has the boldness to pray in our behalf.

And here also is the prosomoion "The noble Joseph," in Tone II. Who does not know this wonderful melody of funereal lamentation over Christ, the Bestower of life, a lamentation pierced with the golden rays of the coming Resurrection? Who is not moved to compunction by its smooth, untroubled tones, like the serene, mystical three-day rest of the Savior in the tomb? Who does not shed tears when it is poured forth in church with the fragrant clouds of incense when they bear forth the winding-sheet, anointed with costly perfumes, swaying over the heads of those present in church? How brilliantly the absence of grief and despair which characterize this mystic burial are expressed. One of our bishops who is also a composer described this as "the dying rays of the evening sun [setting] in the tomb of Christ, the Bestower of life." Except on Great Friday and Saturday we never hear this melody, even though the typicon of the Church envisions it being used more frequently.

Yet another stream is poured forth into the divine services: joy—a certain haste, the threshold of jubilation, a gladsome trembling in the presence of something great. Thus, before the Nativity of Christ, they sing: "O house of Ephratha! O holy city! Glory of the prophets! Adorn the house wherein the Divine One is born!" (Tone II).

And melody succeeds melody, each providing its own nuances, its own particular spiritual perfume. One is jubilant, triumphal, clear, bright; another is also jubilant, but full of trembling, somehow mystical, not manifesting jubilation in every respect. And finally, some are serene and compunctionate, full of hope, while some are compunctionate, yet full of tears of contrition.

And not to reckon their riches is to fail to take their diversity into account . . . They succeed one another like the play of beams of light refracted within the prisms of a crystal chandelier. They instill within man's soul new feelings, and by their very melodies, as it were, pour the words of the text into his soul.

And on the pages of the Triodia, the Menaion, the Octoechos, one glimpses headings which the uninitiate finds mysterious: "To the special melody: 'Joy of the ranks of heaven . . .'"; "To the special

melody: 'O house of Ephratha . . .'"; "To the special melody: 'The pipes of the shepherds . . .'"; and many, many others . . .

Now we are in the large church of an old-fashioned, strict monastery. Vespers is in progress. They are chanting: "Lord, I have cried" to a well-known daily chant. But when the time comes to begin the stichera, the canonarch, a boy alto with a silver-toned voice, announces the prosomoion. He reads the phrases of the text. The mighty men's choir, using an unrefined harmony replete with parallel octaves and fifths, repeats the words after the canonarch. The prosomoion changes, and a new melody begins, an unfamiliar one. Within its pattern the voice of the canonarch again weaves like a silver thread, but the sense and feeling are led along a new path, new horizons are revealed.

And one is involuntarily captivated by this hymnody. One rejoices, laments, contemplates with the melody. Yet everything is so simple, lacking in artificiality, devoid of the least hint of affectation. This is how the heart understands it!

When the final words of the stichera are chanted to the prosomoion, the canonarch announces: "Glory . . . Now and ever . . ." A new, mighty wave of sounds billows forth. Quaint melodic flourishes weave and flow forth, a river of the hymnody of Holy Russia streams out—the Dogmatic Theotokion in the Great Znamenny Chant. One senses in this chant the steadfast and definite quality of the Faith that was confirmed by the Councils and suffered for—the true, apostolic, Orthodox Faith, which has established the whole world!

What beauty!

This is what it was like in the monasteries of Holy Russia, though not in all of them—only where the order of services was strictly observed both in the reading and in the chanting; only where the thread of the unbroken tradition of the Church still extended from the holy fathers, the ascetics and men of prayer of the Russian land, where there were people who knew these prosomoia thoroughly by heart and could easily chant any given text to them.

Alas, it is an increasingly rare occasion to encounter people who know all these chants by heart. Ask any contemporary choir director whether he knows what "chanting to the prosomoia" is. Or ask any priest, monk or composer of church music. One out of a hundred will tell you that he has heard such chants, and two in a thousand will be able to chant them.

Yet these are our own riches. These chants were developed by us from Greek seeds winnowed by the Southern Slavs and the Athonite fathers.

Were we to try to find notated manuscripts of all these melodies, we would do so in vain. Almost no such manuscripts exist. The majority of the melodies were transmitted mouth to mouth, together with the secret of how to chant any given text to a given prosomoion.

And those notated manuscripts which do exist are little accessible to the uninitiate.

In the thick Octoechos, Triodia and *Trezvons,* in the churches of the Old Rite, among lovers and scholars of ancient manuscripts, and on the dusty shelves of obscure libraries, the majority of such notated manuscripts are preserved. A very few of the prosomoia melodies have been translated into quadratic notation; all the rest are locked in the learned hieroglyphics of the old "hook" notation (*kriuki*—hence the term *znamenny chant;* the word *znamya* meaning "sign," referring to the "hooks" of hook notation).

It is interesting to leaf through the books supplied with "hook notation" and to examine the quaint patterns of the znamenny hooks—signs with mysterious names such as "footstools," "bright thunderbolts," "riding arrows" and "rapid arrows," "swift pigeons" and "slow pigeons." It is interesting also to examine the ancient set patterns [*popevki*], many of which have exceedingly curious names (e.g., "the enlightener," "the great trivet," "the last lift," etc.). A whole culture arises before us in all its original power.

These chants, which impart color even to the daily divine services, and which so irresistibly lead the soul into the reality of the salvific mood of the feast, have now been replaced by stereotypical "concert-pieces," with all manner of warbling, and similar compositions of a secular character, which are attractive in the brilliance of their outward affectation, creating in us a very pleasant musical mood which only the spiritually inexperienced can sometimes mistake for a spiritual state. But such a mood does not lead us to a spiritual contemplation of the saving quality of a feast. And the loss of these riches which we have forgotten, which we have often simply spurned, which are unknown even to the majority of churchly people, becomes utterly regretted. In place of these noble lilies of chant, no few foreign, alien weeds have sprouted forth on *kliros*.

What are the prosomoia? Where have they come

One is involuntarily captivated by this hymnody. One rejoices, laments, contemplates with the melody. Yet everything is so simple, lacking in artificiality, devoid of the least hint of affectation. This is how the heart understands it!

The so-called church modes have entered into our mystic theory textbooks through a fundamental Western filter, and thus to a significant degree have lost their original character, perhaps a little exotic to the European ear, of definite tonalities differing strictly from one another.

from? What is their place in the divine services? Of what are they composed? And why have they been so completely forgotten and neglected?

I must voice a reservation. I do not intend to make any revelations in this survey; I do not intend to provide any practical instruction or even to give any advice. I want simply to look a little more deeply into the essence of the prosomoia, without going into an analysis of their melodies. . . .

The liturgical books of the Church divide all hymns into three groups, according to the method of their execution and characteristics: (1) the *idiomela* (*samoglasny*), (2) the *prosomoia* (*podobny*), and (3) the *automela* (*samopodobny*). We will first try to define, more or less, what concepts are expressed by these terms. For this, we must make a short excursion into the philology of these words.

The group of hymns which are called *idiomela* in the Greek books are designated by the term *samoglasny* in the Slavonic books. This, however, is not an accurate translation. In the Greek language, the term *echos* is used to designate tone (*glas*), as the concept of tonality (mode). In exact translation, the word *echos* means "a musical tone, or sound." The word *melos,* which is the root of the second part of the term *idiomelon,* means "song, melody, chant," in general. It expresses the concept of a balanced musical construction. This is joined, as it were, to the word *idios,* which means "that which is personal, belonging to no one else, special," etc. Thus, the definition of the term *idiomelon* is more accurately shown to be "hymns having a special melody peculiar to them."

The concept of tone (*glas*) in Greek and in Slavic/Russian chant in nowise corresponds. In Russian hymnody, the term "tone" (*glas*) expresses an understanding of a certain melody, a certain selection of turns of melody which characterize a given tone. But in Greek hymnody (and in contemporary South Slavic hymnody, e.g., Serbian), the term "tone" (*glas*) expresses not only the concept of a given melodic figure, but the concept of a *particular modality or scale*—in a word, the concept not of *melos,* but of *echos*.

In our field of ecclesiastical musicology, one of the most authoritative scholars of the eight-tone chants of Southwestern Russia, Archpriest Voznesensky, once made an effort to prove that all the melodies of our chants are based on the ancient Greek modes. But his proofs are not very convincing; he almost always accepts that the various tones are based on one or another tonality. This is inescapable and understandable if one turns one's attention to the fact that the so-called church modes have entered into our music theory textbooks through a fundamental Western filter, and thus to a significant degree have lost their original character, perhaps a little exotic to the European ear, of definite tonalities differing strictly from one another. (For example, in contemporary Serbian ecclesiastical hymnody, Tone II has as its basis the normal diatonic major scale with a lowered sixth degree; Tone VI is based on an original scale of the minor mode, but when transcribing the melodies of Tone VI to our musical notation one must constantly use accidentals. At every step one encounters augmented seconds and unexpected half-tones, which impart to Tone VI an oriental character.) Because we have lost the tonal significance of the tone (*glas*), the latter has come to be understood as a certain melody which serves as a model for the singing of a hymn. (We are continually being told to "sing the hymn to the tune of" some hymn or other.) Thus, "tone" (*glas*) has come to be thought of as the equivalent of *melos,* whereas this is, in essence, incorrect.

The second group of hymns is the prosomoia. In exact translation from the Greek, the word *prosomoion* would be rendered "almost equal," "more or less equal," "more or less similar"—"resembling." Since it is this group of hymns that constitutes the subject of the present survey, we will pass over it for the time being with the intention of returning to their discussion at a later point.

The third group consists of the automela, which in Church Slavonic is rendered *samopodobny*.

We are already acquainted with the term *melos,* which forms part of the term we are now examining. There remains only to make several remarks about the word *autos,* which constitutes the first half of the word *automelon*. In meaning it is similar to the term *idios*—it is translated as *sam* or *samy* (both meaning "self")—and is used to express the concept of independence. On this basis, the word *automelon* may be translated (descriptively) thus: "a hymn which in and of itself is a pattern," "the pattern itself," i.e., that which forms a pattern (model) for another hymn. The difference between *idiomelon* and *automelon* is that an idiomelon has its own personal melody (of course, based on the tonality of a given tone [*glas*]), and does not serve as the model for other hymns, while an automelon is, as it were, a melody for itself as well as for other hymns. Thus, for example, in the Greek menaion

published in 1864, the aposticha sticheron for December 20, "O house of Ephratha . . . ," which, as is well known, serves as the pattern/model for the stichera aposticha of Little Vespers for the majority of the great feasts, has the following heading: "The Automelon of Cyprian," after which appear the words, "O house of Ephratha . . ." In the Slavonic menaion (the text of which differs from that in the Greek), this hymn is headed by the word *samopodoben,* after which the tone is designated and the texts of the hymns appear. Here it is quite obvious that *automelon* was understood by the Slavonic translator in the sense of a hymn which has its own melody (like only to itself, unique), but which serves at the same time as a model for other hymns, which is apparent from the headings of other similar stichera: "In Tone II: *Podoben* (i.e., like, similar to) 'O house of Ephratha . . .'," after which the text of the hymn follows. The Greek books have similar headings, indicating that the Greek hymnographers and the Slavonic translators had an identical understanding of the meaning of *automelon*.

Having familiarized ourselves with the terms, let us now proceed to acquaint ourselves with the group of hymns called *prosomoia,* which we must examine in connection with the automela.

In Greek ecclesiastical chant, from which we have borrowed our own practice of executing the prosomoia, the meter of the text has tremendous significance. The greater part of the hymns in the Greek original are written in verse, and in many instances (such as, for example, the troparia—especially those of the canons—and the kontakia) these verses are very simple and easy. There are some hymns which are written in prose. Of course, during translation into the Slavonic language, especially when the translator slavishly followed the word order of the Greek text, the meter was completely done away with. There are a very few rare cases, perhaps entirely coincidental, where the meter has been preserved, at least approximately.

Thus, the meter of the hymns in the Slavonic language was quite different from that in the Greek. The difference is felt not only in the distribution of the accents, but also in the number of syllables. How great the difference is may be seen by comparing a typical Greek text and its Slavonic translation.

The eye is immediately caught by the fact that the Greek text is written in verse. The number of syllables in the verses is as follows: 7—, 8—, 7—, 8—; (8—5)—(8—5), and 8, after which follows the refrain "*paidion neon . . .*" The syllables of the Slavonic text are disposed as follows: 3—, 9—, 5—, 8—; (6—4)—(7—5), and 7, after which follows the refrain, which in the Greek consists of 12 syllables, while the Slavonic has 9. A great many hymns in the Greek books are composed to the pattern of "*I parthenos simeron . . .*" ["Today the Virgin . . ."]. Naturally, in translation they are not at all similar in meter to the Slavonic "*Deva dnes' . . .*"

Of course, the characteristic of Greek hymnody which we have described to a significant degree helped their execution according to a single, well-known melody used to chant any hymn with which everyone was familiar. Truly, the text of any hymn composed according to the pattern of another precisely repeated even the number of syllables and the position of the accents, and thus also the melody of its model. And of necessity the melodic figures fit the syllables in order (both as to position and accent), in both the model and the hymn patterned after it. To illustrate this we will cite the text of the sticheron "O house of Ephratha," which is an automelon, and another sticheron parallel to it, i.e., one which is chanted following the model of "O house of Ephratha."

Automelon (αυτομελον)
Οικος του Ευφραθα
'Η πολις η αγια
Των προφητων η δοξα
Ευτρεπισον τον οικον,
'Εν ω το Θειον τικτεται.

Prosomoion (προσομοιον)
Ψαλλε προφητικως
Δαβιδ κινων την λυραν
της σης γαρ εξ οσφυος
εξ ης η Θεοτοκος
Χριστος γενναται σημερον.

(From the aposticha stichera of December 26)

In both cases, the number of syllables is 6—7—7—7—8. When we examine all the stichera patterned on "O house of Ephratha," we are convinced that in all cases the number of syllables in each

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strophe equals that of the corresponding strophe in the automelon.

The chanter who knew how to sing "O house of Ephratha" without the least difficulty was able to chant "at sight" any sticheron having the same rhythmic structure, just as we are easily able to sing new verses for songs with whose motifs we are familiar.

With idiomela the case is different. Idiomela do not have models; they are entirely *sui generis*, and therefore chanters had to learn them by heart. Judging from the fact that idiomela are mainly appointed for feasts in addition to the overwhelming majority of stichera prosomoia, one may suppose that the chant form of these stichera was distinguished by a great boldness, a richness of melodic turns of phrasing, which made them difficult to learn and to adapt to the text. At the very introduction of neumatic notation in Russia, neumes were written only for idiomelic hymns. Those hymns which were prescribed to be sung according to prosomoia were not provided with neumes; they were to be chanted from memory. The abundance of prosomoial stichera in the Greek books is explained by the fact that for the chanter it is far easier to utilize ready melodies instead of singing hymns with the aid of modal motifs, preserving and picking out the accents which each time fit the various places of the strophes of the text.

But in Slavonic (Russian) chanting, this changed entirely. It can scarcely have been easier to sing idiomela or chant to the prosomoia, to an absolutely set melody, texts distinguished by great metrical inconsistency. One had at times to apply the same melodic phrase to a strophe of seven syllables and one of three syllables. As an example I will cite the Slavonic text of the automelon "O house of Ephratha" and two other stichera chanted to its melody:

Automelon	
Дóме є҆фрáѳовъ,	5 syllables
грáде сты́й,	4
прр҃óкwвъ глáво,	5
оу҃красѝ дóмъ,	4
въ нéмже б҃жтвенный раждáется.	10
Prosomoion	
ѻ҃ чудесѐ нóваго!	7
ѻ҃ знáменїа стрáннаго!	8
кáкw мéртвость подáтъ,	6
живонóсная ѻ҃троковúца,	10
и҆ гробóмъ нынѣ покрывáется!	10
Prosomoion	
Днéсь хр҃тóсъ	3
на горѣ ѳавѡ́рстѣй,	6
а҆дáмово ѡ҆бновль	6
ѡ҆мрачúвшееся є҆стествѡ̀,	8
просвѣтúвъ бц҃ѣ родѣла.	8

The singing of a text required of a Slavic chanter a far firmer knowledge of the chant form than among the Greeks. Aside from knowledge, he had to possess a certain flair so as to execute the melodic phrasing beautifully, musically, logically. Thus, for the Slavic chanter, the automelon lost the significance of a model in the rhythmic sense and preserved for itself only the significance of a melodic model.

In his interesting works on the Kievan, Bulgarian and Greek Chants, Archpriest Voznesensky quite successfully analyzes the make-up and musical grammar of the melodies of several prosomoia, and points out those rules that were laid down for melodies for when they were applied to texts of varying length.

Even though the Great Chant reigned on the kliros, even in Russian chant the prosomoia served to make the chanter's task easier, as a result of the introduction of melodic recitative within them. This imparted great flexibility to the musical phrase as regards adaptability to the text. Even a cursory glance cast upon a page of the Octoechos noted with neumes convinces us of this. In the prosomoia cited there, the neume known as the "little foot" predominates, which indicates that the previous note is repeated. Idiomelic hymns are distinguished by a far more florid neumatic complement, which indicates a certain melodic complexity. One may assign the particular development of idiomelic melodies to the period stretching from the end of the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries, when these hymns were executed by famous masters and recorded using neumatic notation, i.e., were fixed in the chant. Here a wide field for the creative taste of the master opened up. The master was able at his pleasure to combine the motifs, provided that he preserved the general character of the tone by using motifs characteristic of that tone. In the seventeenth century, there were masters who were so skilled that they were able to chant the selfsame text to seventeen different variants. Even some of the tsars mastered the skill of chanting hymns.

Given this diversity and a certain arbitrariness in

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Special Melodies—A Living Tradition

An interview with Fr. Stephan Meholick

This interview was conducted by Alice Hughes and Anne Schoepp on May 23, 2001, in Felton, California.

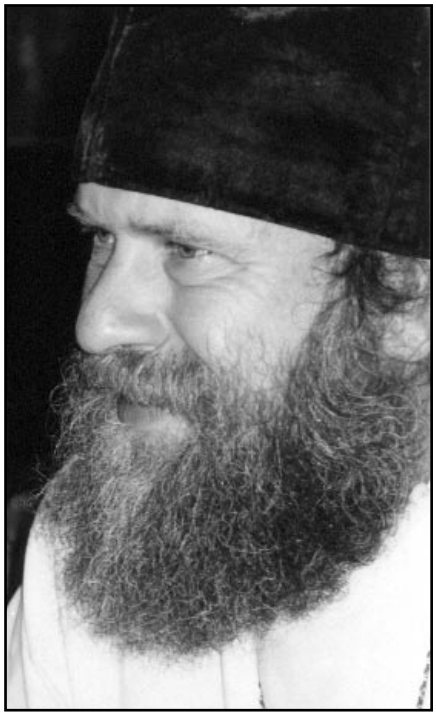
PSALM Notes: You have been working with special melodies for many years. Can you share with us why this tradition has been so important to you? How did you learn the special melodies, and from whom?

Fr. Stephan: I came from what you would call in Pennsylvania a mixed marriage. My mother's family was from Galicia, and my father's family was from Eastern Slovakia, on the other side of the Carpathians. There are about 80 or 100 kilometers between them, but for them it was a world away. There were two completely different musical traditions. In the traditions which I grew up in, it was inconceivable not to use the appointed melody. If the liturgical book said, "To the Special Melody, 'When Joseph of Arimathea,'" one could not imagine not singing it to that melody.

When I was a small child my teacher was Peter Kennis, who grew up as a laborer in a place called Chernecha Hora (which means Black or Monk's Mountain), near Mukachevo in the Carpathian Mountains. He was the parish cantor and he knew absolutely everything—Vespers, Matins, all the special services, weddings, funerals, baptisms. It was incredible, and he learned all this completely from oral tradition. Never once did I see Mr. Kennis with a sheet of notes or a book of notation. They didn't seem to exist somehow. I learned most of that on his knees, literally. It was an incredible gift.

Because I did look at notebooks and sheet music—what little there was—and could see differences, I would sometimes question how he sang something. His words to me were, "Monks teach me like this. You remember this is not a matter of right and wrong, every professor has difference. Because we get together, people sing and in every place, they have their way." He was a cantor in two parishes, six miles apart. "Christ is risen" was sung differently in each. He made no attempt to standardize it; he sang it differently depending on which parish he was in.

That is where I first learned some special melodies. My next real experience with special melodies came when I was a teenager. I went to visit my cousin Alexis, who had just returned from Moscow. He played a recording of the Dormition Vigil sung by the choir from the Joy of All Who Sorrow Cathedral in Moscow, directed by Matveyev, the famous director. I will never forget as long as I live when they sang "O marvelous wonder" at "Lord I Call," and during the burial service for the Mother of God when they sang the troparion to "Noble Joseph." I was about fourteen or fifteen, and every time I went to Cousin Alexis' house (he was a priest in Hawk Run, Pennsylvania), I made him put on that tape. It was all I wanted to hear. I had never heard anything like it, ever. I can hear it in my mind to this day. It really made a big impression on my life.



Then I went off to Pittsburgh to Duquesne University, where I was penniless and homeless, but I could chant the services. So the priest, Fr. Vitaly Sahaidakovsky, a mitered archpriest at the time, took me in; I lived with him during my second year at Duquesne. Every night we would sing; he would gather a bunch of college students together and sing. He would teach us these melodies. He was so in love with them.

I remember the first time, when school started in September, it was the melody, "O most glorious wonder" for the Praises at the Elevation of the Cross. He was teaching us in the living room late at night. We had to memorize the melody and the text. We sang it at the Vigil, and then in the Russian tradition, at the "concert" during Communion. Fr. Vitaly would receive Communion and then he would come out to the *kliros*, while the doors and curtain were closed, and sing these things for the Feast. On the one hand it was scandalous, on the other it was rather charming.

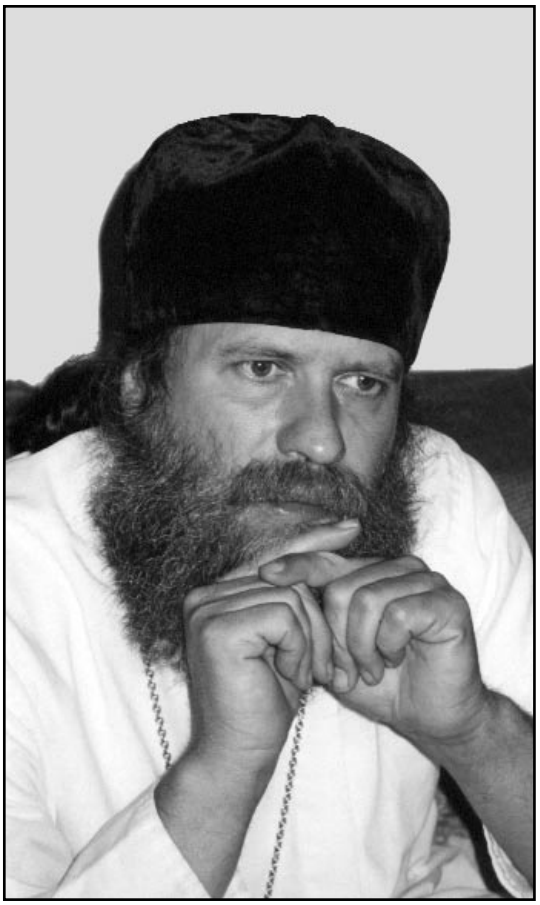
We would all sing that melody again and again. We sang it again on the bus on the way back to school. It became so much a part of our life that I'll bet some of those guys who haven't seen or heard

Why am I fascinated with special melodies? Because of my love for music and because I like things with "hooks."

Slavonic in the last twenty years still have them memorized—the words and music to most of those hymns.

The melodies were fun to learn, and there was a kind of esprit de corps among us. Learning the melodies didn't seem like work to us, because the melodies had "hooks" and they were associated with personalities. Fr. Vitaly graduated from Kremenets Seminary in Volhynia, which is near the Pochaev Lavra, one of the places where these melodies were preserved in a living tradition. His first parish was right outside Pochaev. He was such a colorful person. As a little boy he had been cell-attendant for Archbishop Theophan of Poltava, who was spiritual advisor to the Imperial Family and introduced Rasputin to them. That was a very colorful world, but at the very center of it was music.

Why am I fascinated with special melodies? Because of my love for music and because I like things with hooks. I hope this won't sound scandalous — this year, on the Sunday of the Man Born Blind, we spoke about Captain John Newton and his conversion and the song that came from his conversion ["Amazing Grace"]. After coffee hour I said, "Let's sing John Newton's song." One of the parishioners, who is a fabulous pianist, sat down at the piano, but no one had any text. There were about a hundred people there, and after about the first two measures people who had already made their way to the parking lot were coming back. The fascinating thing was that about a third of the people were new Russian immigrants, barely conversant in English, but with heart and soul and all their being they were singing with the Americans, in ten-part harmony, "Amazing Grace." And when it was done, everyone was absolutely amazed. Well, that tune has *hooks!*



I think that the special melodies have hooks. They are melodies that people remember. They stick in your mind. You hum them while you are at work or driving. The other day while we were making candles, we sang through all eight Tones and about sixteen sets of different special melodies for a visitor who was there. The candle-makers sang these in four-part harmony, without any text or music. A good number of the people who were there making candles and singing had only been in the church a year, and in the choir even less. Why were they able to do it? Because those melodies have hooks. The people love to sing and to worship, and the melodies are memorable. Surprisingly, the visitor, who was from a small, isolated mission, was depressed by this rather than impressed, because he believed that memorizing all of these Tones and melodies is unattainable. I know that it is *not* unattainable, anywhere.

Alice: So how do you get away from feeling overwhelmed?

Fr. Stephan: I don't know. Because for me it meant experience, apprenticeship.

Anne: What would you say are the main things that you gained from your apprenticeship?

Fr. Stephan: Someone who is willing to say, "No, it is not like that." The important thing is having a relationship where the mentor can be brutally honest. I remember when Fr. Vitaly was teaching me to serve as deacon. He would march up and down the living room showing me how to cense, hold the orarion, etc. He would scream at me, "No, you're too stiff, you look like a mannequin!" He was able to speak in those terms because he loved me like a father. He could be brutally honest, and I was willing to listen, because I loved him. There are so many people I see now who could benefit from having someone like that.

Once I gave a crash course in serving as a deacon to someone I didn't know very well. I didn't have much time, so I told him up front, "I don't know you that well, but I'm going to be merciless. There is nothing personal in this. We don't have much time. I'm going to do this because I know that you can be a really fine deacon." You can't do that at a seminar, because it would be shaming. Even with two people it would be shaming. You need the one-on-one, even if it is only short-term.

Alice: There are so many mission parishes all around the country where the singers aren't going to have this opportunity of sitting at the feet of a master. Can people learn these melodies from printed music?

Fr. Stephan: My emphasis on oral tradition in no way precludes printed music. I try to get my hands on every setting I can. It is always good to have the printed music in front of you. I've always appreciated that; it didn't exist when I was learning these things. But if I haven't heard a melody sung, I don't know how it goes. It would be kind of like this . . . [picking up a piece of music for the Exapostilarion for Ascension] I see "fluidly," I see the tempo marked as 82 beats per minute. I wonder, why 82 as opposed to 84? Tempos really vary depending on how hot or cold it is or how tired everyone is when they get to that point in the Vigil. I wish everything could be like "Amazing Grace" was on Sunday.

This issue is a double-edged sword, because if you set every text of the daily services, each one turns into some kind of an anthem or piece unto itself. I don't want to do that all day every day. I notice that the faithful singers who come every day really get sick of that. They love to sing, but they don't always want to be "the choir." However, if you don't set every piece, every once in a while in applying the pattern you will get a less-than-desirable result in terms of the natural pulse. Perfection is sometimes sacrificed a little bit.

The way things are sung in my parish or any other parish develops for a reason. No one ever sat down and decided that it should go that way. It develops organically out of the worship itself.

Anne: I think that tension is there no matter what melody you are setting. You always have the tension between the accurate melody and the language. You have to decide how far to go with the language or how much to stay with the original melody.

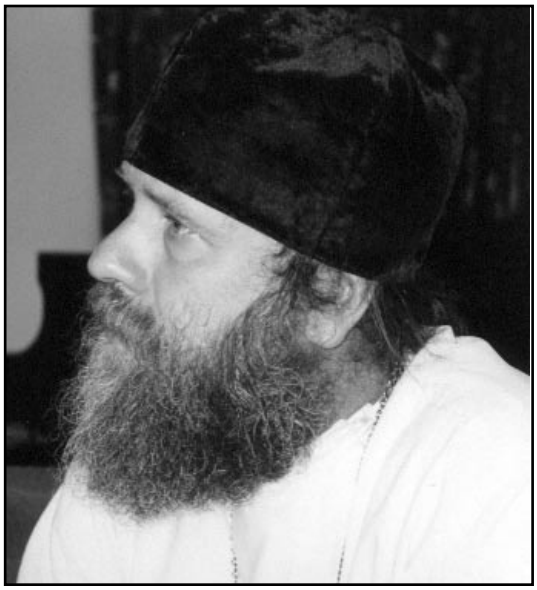
Fr. Stephan: Yes, and I notice that people develop habits in that area. I'm not the best at making those decisions. I make lots of mistakes, and some of them even deliberately, for the sake of the service going properly.

Alice: Could someone learn the melodies from printed music and then go to a master teacher to learn how to apply them? Do you think that would be a reasonable approach?

Fr. Stephan: Yes, I think all those things could work in sync.

Alice: Could recordings help in this process?

Fr. Stephan: Yes. I really think recordings are important. But I think recordings of live services are best.



When I was at St. Tikhon's we made many recordings, of folk music, of basic excerpts, highlights from Vigil, this and that. At one point we decided to make a recording of the Paschal service—in September or October! We just could not do it. I think it was a great miracle and revelation that we couldn't, because if we could have done it would have been scary. St. John of Kronstadt was so much against theater; he said that the better you are at theater, the more dangerous it is—to be able to assume at will a completely different persona and be perfect at it. He said when that gets mingled with Liturgy it spells danger, beause it is no longer charism but acting.

Alice: You don't want acting in Liturgy.

Fr. Stephan: Especially good acting, because it could be really confusing. Imagine how deceptive that would be for people, if you were to somehow conjure up something every time.

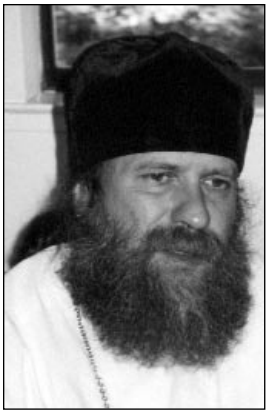
That is why I have always appreciated recordings of live services, with candles crackling and people coughing and the mistakes and false starts. There is something there that can't be gained in a performance setting. I think all types of recordings have their place, but those made for listening only probably are the least useful as teaching tools, again because each one turns into an anthem of some sort.

Fr. Ignaty Trepatchko from Jordanville did a whole teaching tape on special melodies. He was not a professional singer, just a cantor on the kliros, and his tape is very helpful. The way he does it is to sing the melody solo; then his two brothers join him and they sing it in three parts. Then they take a *prosomoion* (another verse) and they go through the same process—he sings the melody through and then the three brothers do it; and then they do a third prosomoion. As you know, it is important to see how it is applied; otherwise you come up with something weird.

Alice: So even beyond the melodies, the tradition of learning the different parts, as in a four-part setting, was taught orally.

Fr. Stephan: Yes. Since most of the special

My emphasis on oral tradition in no way precludes printed music. I try to get my hands on every setting I can.



In a village, they had not only a lifetime but dozens of lifetimes for these melodies to be learned, to be absorbed. We don't have that luxury.

melodies are done at daily services, you have to learn to harmonize and improvise with whoever is there at a given time. You cannot always count on SATB or TTBB. For example, there is a setting in the St. Vladimir's Seminary Press Holy Week book for "Joseph of Arimathea." I've noticed some people who have migrated to our parish from other parishes in the OCA apply that harmony every time we sing it. But it doesn't always work—sometimes we have to sing it with a baritone lead, a female second voice and a bass because there are only three people there. Usually that kind of "composed" harmonization isn't going to be as flexible for alternate voicings. That is just reality.

Anne: Can you say something about the different variations of the melodies, harmonizations, that exist? Are certain versions more authoritative than others, or is there a lot of variation due to local practice?

Fr. Stephan: The first authoritative source that I knew of was an appendix in the *Sputnik Psalomchika, The Singer's Companion*. But I've never heard anyone sing some of those melodies that way, and I've heard many people sing them other ways. And by the same token, I've noticed in music coming out of Russia that they are coming up with ways that are different from any I've ever heard. They might even be different from anything anyone's ever heard.

Alice: Is it possible to find an authoritative source?

Fr. Stephan: Let me give an example of "authoritative." In the Carpatho-Russian tradition around the turn of the century, a book of chant was published. It turned out that in parishes, no one sang the melodies the way they were published. It was all in the head of the person who compiled it. Now, that was three generations ago, but people look at it still to this day, because of where and when it was printed, as the authoritative manual. What made it that? The printing press. They're the ones who got it out there. In the same way that Obikhod is easily disseminated. Those four books for Vigil were printed up by the Imperial Cappella and shipped here to America in ready-made form, available for every parish.

Anne: If I were to sing something and you were to say, "That's wrong," what would be your basis for saying it's wrong? —the way you learned it from a certain local practice, or the fact that you've never heard it that way before?

Fr. Stephan: I *wouldn't* say it was wrong. Your way, even though it is not like any of the other five ways I've heard it, will become the authoritative way because that's what's going to wind up printed—because you're running the printing press.

Alice: So in terms of printing, if someone decided they wanted to publish a book of special melodies, do you think it would be useful to have them printed in two different ways: melody only and in four-part arrangement?

Fr. Stephan: Absolutely. Or if you are really ambitious, you can do what Mokranjac did in his Octoechos—what I wish my *Prostopinije* at the turn of the century had done. He gives countless variations as footnotes, listing them by region and person and so forth. None of them is "authoritative." It is just a list of different ways melodies have been sung in different times and places.

Alice: One closing question: Do you have any other thoughts on this learning and using of the melodies? How should someone start?

Fr. Stephan: I know what they are doing in Russia right now. Sometimes it doesn't even seem that appropriate, but I see and understand what they're doing because I do it all the time. That is to take these melodies and set them to common texts used at the Liturgy or Vigil so that people learn them, know them, and associate them. That way you can have the best of all worlds—you can have a nice musical setting, with no pressure, because you are learning "It is truly meet" in a nice way. It just happens to be set to the melody, "Joy of the heavenly hierarchies." I listened just recently to a tape from the Holy Sepulchre, the nuns from the Pyukhtitsky Convent in Estonia, and they sang "It is truly meet" to Tone 5, "Rejoice O Life-bearing Cross." You can think of a zillion ways to do this.

Alice: What are some of the places you've applied melodies to Liturgy?

Fr. Stephan: I'll give you an example. "We have seen the True Light" is appointed to the second Tone. So most of the year we sing in the Kievan Tone 2. During Lenten seasons we sing in Tone 2 but to the melody, "When Joseph of Arimathea." That way it is still in the tradition of being in the second Tone, and it has some connotation that we're in a particular season. But my real motive for setting it that way was that the choir would have sung it so many times that when Holy Friday comes and we sing that aposticha, they *know* that melody.

It is a part of their being. It's not going to be just something on a page, something new or something that we rehearsed for Holy Friday. It is a part of them. I've done that with lots of melodies, and usually with that in mind. This is an old Carpathian custom too—often in anticipation of feasts certain things would be sung to melodies which are characteristic of that feast. In a village, though, they had not only a lifetime but dozens of lifetimes for these melodies to be learned, to be absorbed. We don't have that luxury. ✣

Fr. Stephan Meholick is pastor of St. Nicholas Orthodox Church in San Anselmo, California.

PSALM Notes

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A Change of Pace

If you have flipped through the pages of this issue of *PSALM Notes*, you may have noticed that some of our regular columns are missing. Don't worry, they are not gone for good—just for this issue, which is entirely devoted to the topic of special melodies. When we selected Isaac Lambertsen's translation of Johann von Gardner's excellent article to lead off this issue, we realized that it was only a starting point. So in order to provide you with additional articles, information, examples, and practical tips for using special melodies, we decided to forgo our regular format.

Fr. Lawrence Margitich's article fills out and expands on the Gardner. Anne Schoepp's outline for setting special melodies is a great checklist of the process that one should go through when setting a new text to a special melody. The interview with Fr. Stephan Meholick deals with the issue of oral tradition and his experiences learning and teaching special melodies.

One conspicuous gap left in this topic is the question of where to find materials in English. This editor is aware of several projects and private compilations that are in the works, but not of anything that has been published or is readily available. Our resource editor, Walter Obleschuk, is working on such a book. We have included a partial listing from one of the appendices of that future publication that shows common special melodies, their Slavonic and Greek titles, various English translations of those titles, where to find the automelon, and common times that you will find it appointed to be sung. Although this listing is by no means comprehensive, it will give the reader a hint of where to expect to see these designations in the liturgical books of the Church.

We hope that you will find this issue helpful in understanding special melodies and their proper place within the services of the Church. In addition, we hope that we are pointing the way for you to begin to use them within your own parish communities.

—Alice Hughes, Editor-in-Chief

BOARD NOTES

"Pointed" Texts in Orthodox Liturgical Singing

by Vladimir Morosan

In the course of Orthodox divine services, a vast amount of textual material needs to be rendered musically. The need to set down in writing and transmit, at least with some degree of approximation, the melodic content of a given musical rendition formed the basis of what eventually evolved into the modern-day concept of musical notation.

The earliest notations, whether in Byzantium or Western Europe or Rus', served primarily as mnemonic devices: that is, rather than conveying "absolute" information about the height of a note or its exact rhythmic value, the notation—usually consisting of a row of symbols above the verbal text—merely reminded the singer of the movements of the voice *within an already familiar pattern* (a certain Tone or pattern melody). Without a knowledge of the pattern, however, the symbols (called "neumes") were largely meaningless, which is why scholars find it difficult or altogether impossible to transcribe the pitch and rhythmic content of early monuments of liturgical music.

The notation of liturgical texts by means of modern-day staff notation is a relatively recent phenomenon. It has some obvious advantages, in that the melody-text relationship can be transmitted with accuracy and relative precision even to a singer who is not familiar with the material. It is a labor-intensive and expensive task, however. Thus, even in countries where the Church had considerable material resources, such as pre-1917 Russia, this was accomplished for only a small percentage of texts throughout the liturgical year. For the remaining texts, chanters and choirmasters worked out a shorthand notation, called "pointing," consisting primarily of underlines (and in rarer instances, arrows or lines pointing upwards or downwards), which reminded them how to render a given text within the patterns of a given Tone. Old, well-worn service books from the "old country" are replete with such markings. Like the old manuscripts notated with staffless neumes, these markings mean nothing in and of themselves; they can only be understood within the context of a particular melody or Tone. The degree of success and accuracy depends largely on the complexity of the pattern and on the singers' familiarity and frequency of contact with it.

When chanters and choirs in America switched from the old-country languages to English, some aspects of this shorthand were carried over. Thus, one can now find old, well-worn mimeographed or photocopied sheets of English liturgical texts with underlines and arrows on them. As before, the degree to which the system succeeds has to do with how well the singers know the prototype melody: sometimes an underline means a rhythmic stop, sometimes it means an upward or downward melodic movement, sometimes it indicates a melisma or melodic turn of two or several notes.

The process of translating, editing, preparing and typesetting all the necessary liturgical texts in English has commenced relatively recently and will take some time. In recent years, however, the new technologies of computerized typography and music typesetting have offered some distinct advantages, in that it became possible to use several different type styles—plain, boldface, and italic—to give the old system of "pointing" texts some added refinement. Moreover, when this varied typography is first used within an actual musical setting, it becomes easier to extrapolate its meaning and to transfer it to stand-alone texts without musical notation.

The system used in this issue of *PSALM Notes* (see pages 13–15) uses **boldface** to indicate stressed words or syllables that are emphasized by either a melodic turn or a longer note; *italics* indicate a change of pitch on an unstressed syllable preceding a stress; and hyphens (-) or underscores (_) separated by spaces indicate how many notes of a melodic turn are given to each particular word or syllable. This system of pointing text was originated by Fr. George Johnson. Fr. George is the rector of Holy Apostles Orthodox Church, a new English mission parish of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, currently meeting in Beltsville, Maryland. He is also the founder of the St. Romanos the Melodist Society, a missionary organization that publishes Russian Orthodox chant in the English language and offers seminars in the proper performance of this music. The Society's primary publication project is *A Church Singer's Companion*, a multi-volume set of English choir music, based on the Russian chant-book entitled *Sputnik psalomshchika*. ✣

You can find out more, or reach Fr. George in the following ways:

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St. Romanos the Melodist Society web address: www.saintromanos.org

Prefeast of the Nativity – December 20
First Sticheron on the Praises

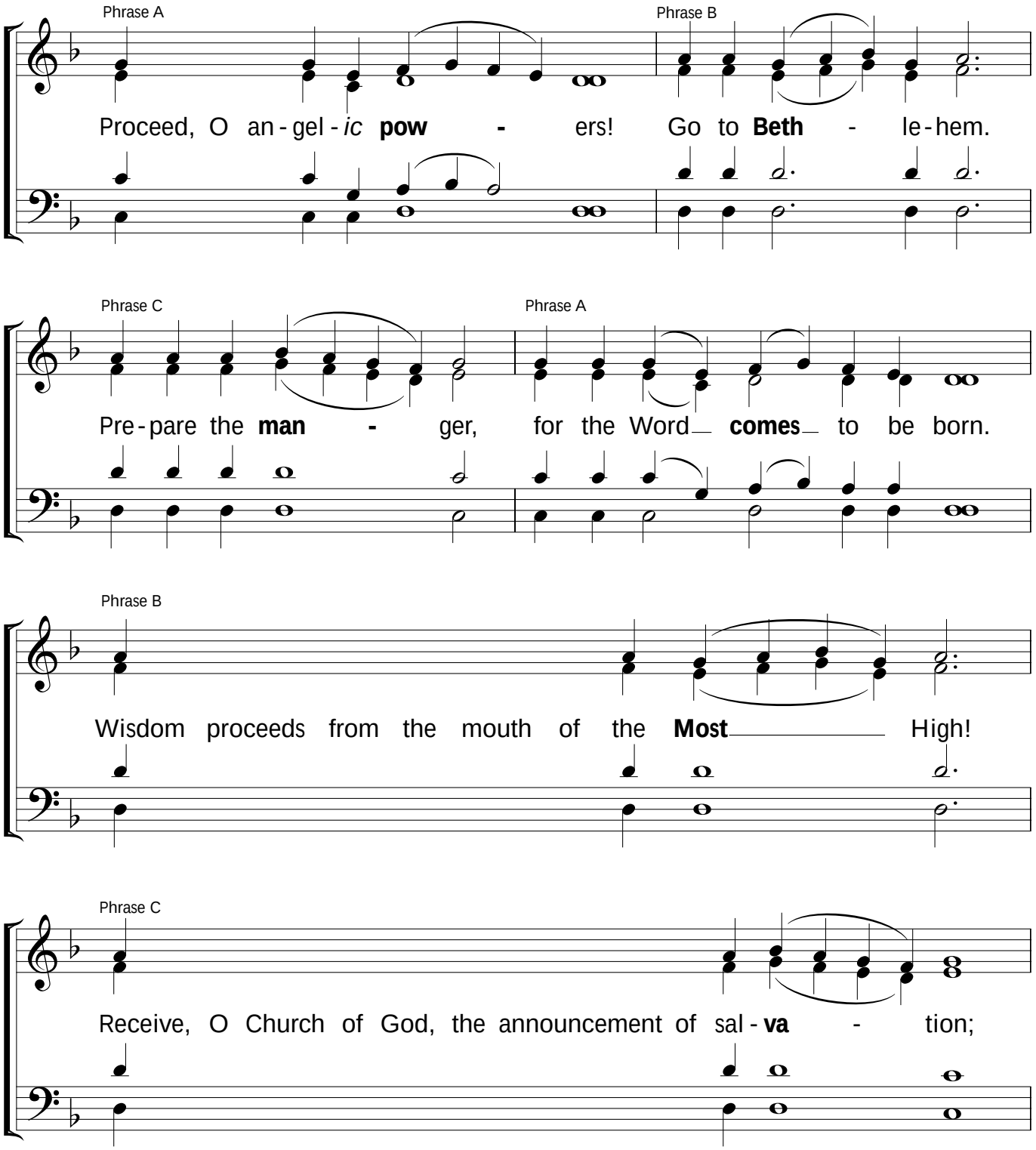
Proceed, O Angelic Powers

Original Melody (Samopodoben) – Tone 6

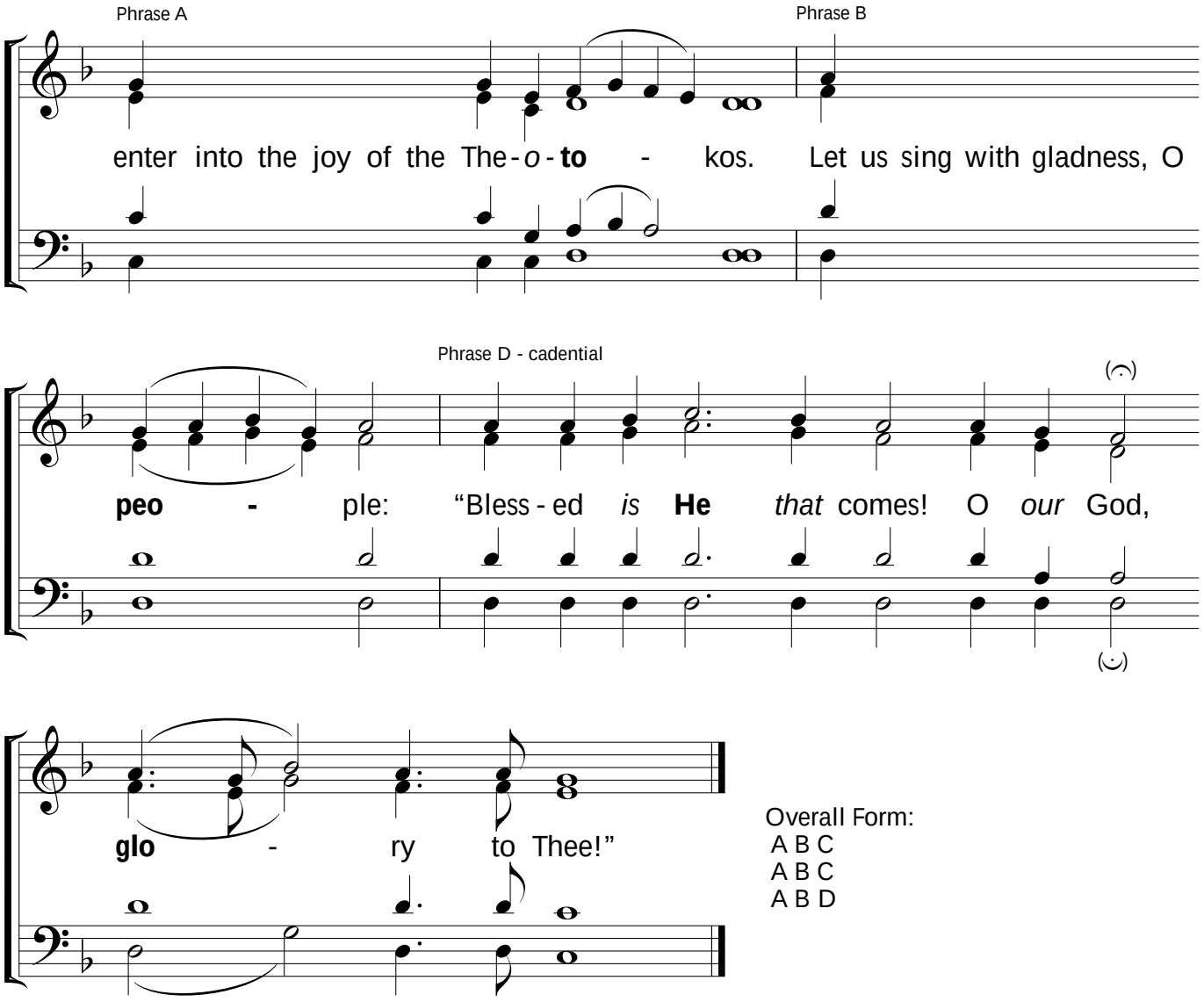
Galician Chant

Translation by Fr. David Anderson

Arranged by Fr. Stephen Meholick



Proceed, O Angelic Powers – 2



Overall Form:
A B C
A B C
A B D

Proceed, O Angelic Hosts

Translation by David Anderson

Nativity Prefeast

(A) Out of Jacob the star *a***ris** - - - es,
(B) i**llu**mining the cave!
(C) Come, let us celebrate in antici**pa** - - - tion!
(A) Let us run with *the* **Ma** - - - gi;
(B) let us assemble with the **shep** - - - herds;
(C) let us see God wrapped in **swad** - - dling clothes;
(A) let us behold the Virgin gi*ving* **milk** _ to the Lord!
(B) O **fear** - - ful sight!
(D) Christ, *the* **King** *of* **Is***ra*el, **draw** - - eth nigh!

Nativity Postfeast

(A) All *cre***a** - - - tion,
(B) celebrate the **feast** _ _ with joy!
(C) Rejoice with us, you **heav** - - - ens!
(A The *Cre***a** - tor is born
(B) from the **Vir**gin in the cave;
(C) a young **child** _ _ _ comes
(A) in *the* **full** - ness of time.
(B) Let us cry **out** _ _ to Him:
(D) "Blessed *art* **Thou**, *our* **new***born* God; **glo** - - ry to Thee!"

Theophany Prefeast: Aposticha

(A) Proceed, O ange*lic* **pow** - - - ers;
(B) advance to **Beth** - - lehem
(C) to the courses of the **Jor** - - - dan!
(A) *Come* **forth,** _ _ O John;
(B) forsake the **wil** - - derness!
(C) Prepare to rejoice, O **riv** - - - er.
(A) Let all *the* **earth** _ _ exult,
(B) for **Christ** _ _ _ comes
(D) to purify *the* **sins** *of* **Ad***am* in **His** *com*pas - sion.

(A) Come, *all* **peo**ples of the earth;
(B) let us go out in **spir** - - - it
(C) from **Beth** - - lehem
(A) with pure lips, *and* **heart** _ undefiled!
(B) Let us **come** _ _ with Christ
(C) to the **Jor** - - - dan,
(A) praising Him *with* **glad** - - - ness
(B) and **cry** - ing with faith: "Blessed *is* **He** *who* **comes**, O *our* God: **Glo** - - ry to Thee!"

Key: **Bold face** indicates stressed words or syllables that are emphasized by either a melodic turn or a longer note. *Italics* indicate a change of pitch on an unstressed syllable preceding a stress. Hyphens (-) or underscores (_) separated by spaces indicate how many notes of a melodic turn are given to each particular word or syllable.

All-Lauded Martyrs

Pentecostarion: Thursday of Thomas Week

Aposticha Martyricon, Original melody

O all-lauded Martyrs of the Lord,* (9)
Lo, the earth concealed you not; but rather
Heaven received you and the gates of
Paradise* (22)
Welcomed you and opened.* (6)
And as ye now dwell therein,* (7)
ye joyfully partake of the Tree of life. Thus,
intercede, we pray,* (17)
with the Master, even Christ the Lord,* (9)
to bestow peace* (4)
and great mercy on our souls. (7)

Pentecostarion: Saturday of Thomas Week

Aposticha

As Thou didst not violate the seals* (9)
of the tomb after Thine awesome Resurrection,
O Christ our God, so also in this wise,* (22)
though the doors were shut fast,* (6)
Thou, O life-bestowing Lord,* (7)
didst enter in amidst Thine all-famed Apostles,
filling them with joy.* (17)
And Thy Spirit, yea, the Comforter,* (9)
was vouchsafed them,* (4)
in Thy boundless mercy, Lord. (7)

Pentecostarion: Thursday after Pentecost Vespers

Aposticha

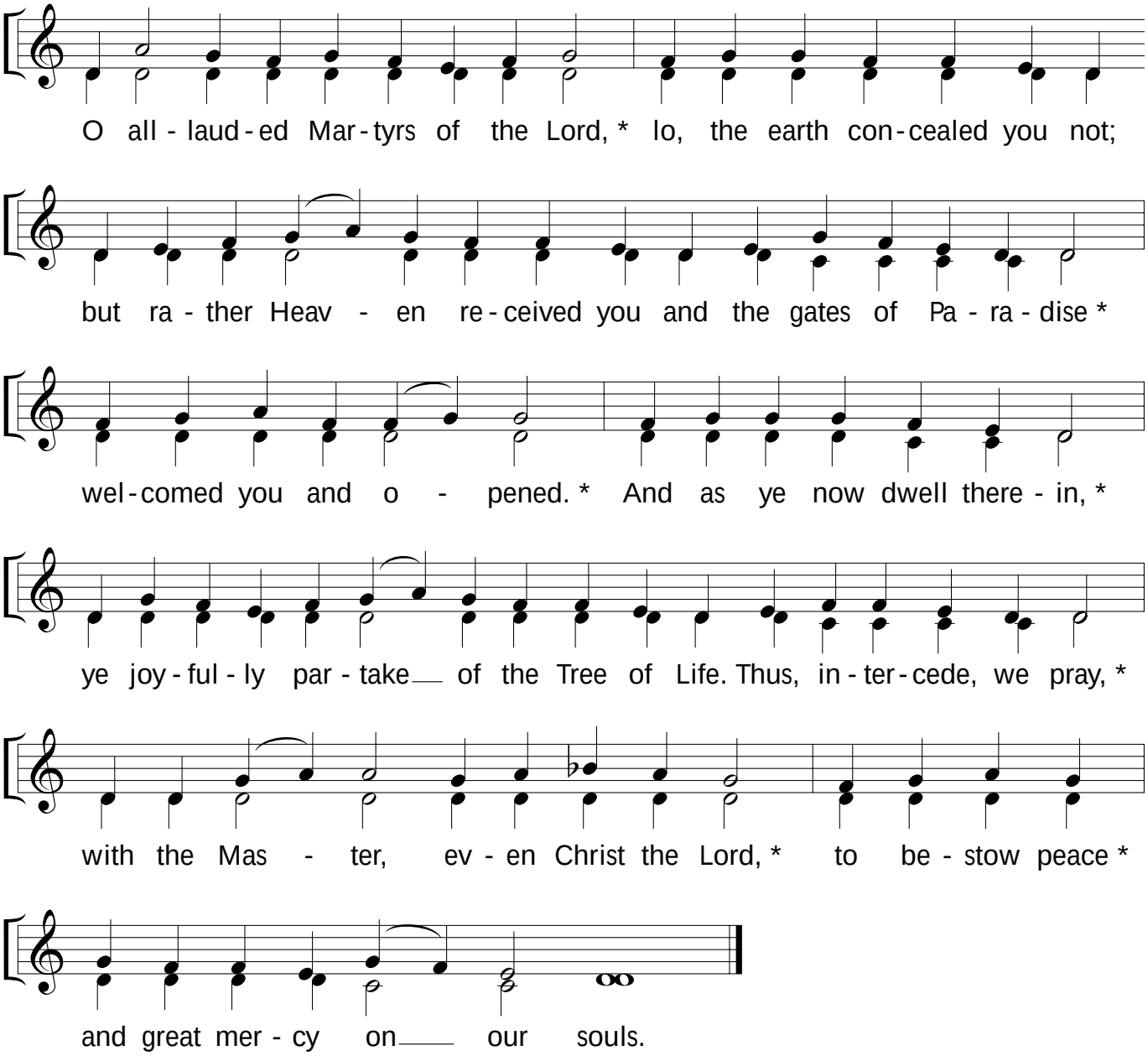
With God-inspired words let us now speak* (9)
of the Holy Spirit, who proceedeth from God the
Father and is worshipped with the Son;* (22)
by whom all is governed* (6)
and sustained and given life.* (7)
O Thou Comforter, who canst not be* (9)
comprehended,* (4)
grant Thy people endless peace. (7)

O All-Lauded Martyrs

Original Melody (Automelon) – Tone 1

Byzantine Chant

Arranged by Fr. Lawrence Margitich



Translation is from the *Pentecostarion,* published by Holy Transfiguration Monastery (Boston, 1990). The * (asterisks) indicate the phrase breaks that correspond to the phrase breaks in other texts sung to this melody.

Special Melodies in Contemporary Usage

by Fr. Lawrence Margitich

The liturgical books of the Orthodox Church—the Pentecostarion, the Menaion, the Triodion, the Octoechos, etc.—contain thousands of hymns. It would be impractical for our church singers if each individual hymn were to have its own unique melody. Instead of such an unwieldy system, what we find is that most hymns are designated to be sung to special melodies, that is, shared melodies.

Let's begin by reviewing the hymnographic system of the Orthodox Church. There are three categories into which hymns fall:

Idiomelon—Samoglasen—Unique Melody

These are hymns with their own, unique, fully-composed melodies, which do not serve as patterns or models for any other text.

For example, in Vespers for the Resurrection, Tone 3, we have a series of seven resurrectional stichera. In the older chant traditions, i.e. Byzantine or Znamenny, each one of these stichera would have its own unique melody sung in Tone 3, that is, in the scale or mode of the third Tone. The term *idiomelon*—"its own melody"—is for the most part meaningless in the current practice of singing only in Kievan Chant or Court Chapel Tones (Bahkmetev/Lvov), in which we sing the same series of patterns (melodic and harmonic) for all these stichera.

Automelon—Samopodoben—Original Melody

An automelon is a hymn which has its own unique melody, but that melody will also serve as the pattern or model—both metrically and melodically—for other texts in the same Tone and hymnographic category (i.e. troparia, stichera, exapostilaria). The designation *original melody,* which some have begun to use in English, does not exactly correspond to the Greek or Slavonic words, but it does communicate the idea.

Prosomoion—Podoben—Special Melody

This third type of liturgical text is sung to the melody of a model hymn—the automelon, samopodoben, or original melody. The majority of hymns in the Octoechos, the Menaion, etc. are designated to be sung to the melody of another hymn.

Simply put, then, the difference between idiomelon and automelon is that an idiomelon has its own unique melody and does not serve as the model for any other, whereas an automelon is a melody for itself but also serves as the model for many other texts—prosomoia.

A critical element in all of this is that in the original Greek, the automelon serves as an exact model for the prosomoion, both metrically, for the text, and melodically, for the actual melody. Therefore, once an automelon is memorized, the prosomoia for this melody are, theoretically, easily sung. One simply plugs the words in at the appointed and unvarying position in the melody. This is very convenient, elegant, and practical.

This metrical/melodic relationship found in the original Greek is a foundation for the Matins canons as well, making it possible to sing the troparia of an ode to the same melody as its irmos. For example, in the Triodion for the third Sunday of Lent, the week of the Cross, the canon to be sung at Matins has this heading: Canon of the Cross, Tone 1, Irmos, "This is the Day of Resurrection." In other words, the heading is telling the singers to sing these troparia of the Canon of the Cross in Tone 1, but to the melody of the Paschal Canon: "This is the day of resurrection." (Note: This does not mean to sing the irmoi of the Paschal Canon.)

Another example is the stichera on "Lord, I Have Cried" for St. George the Martyr (April 23). The first sticheron begins with the text, "As one valiant among the martyrs." This text is the automelon/samopodoben. The two stichera that follow are also to be sung to that tune, "As one valiant." Again, in the Greek, these two stichera texts are metrically identical to the first, so that it is easy to sing them to that special melody.

Under this system, with identical metrical and melodic structure, although there are many special melodies to learn, once they are learned they can be applied to a corresponding new text as easily as the words of "My Country 'Tis of Thee" can be applied to the tune of "God Save the Queen." In

Under this system, with identical metrical and melodic structure, . . . once [special melodies] are learned they can be applied to a corresponding new text as easily as the words of "My Country 'Tis of Thee" can be applied to the tune of "God Save the Queen."

This system of special melodies . . . provides a means for singing all the many thousands of texts that we encounter throughout the church year. Just as importantly, it serves to help the mind and heart make connections—a recalling and remembering.

this way the special melodies are meant to make things easier for us—a simple way to make it possible to sing the hundreds of hymns we encounter throughout the church year.

However, a problem arises when translating the liturgical texts from Greek to another language.

The metric and melodic relationship between the automelon and the prosomoion was lost when the translations were made into Slavonic. In Slavonic, this exact metrical relationship between the automela and their corresponding prosomoia could not be maintained. What developed in the Russian practice was a flexible system whereby certain pitches within the melodic line were repeated, as necessary, to accommodate the text. This practice of using recitative (many syllables on one note) within various melodic phrases and cadences enabled the chanters to sing all these hymns to the same basic melody.

However, this means that the chanter must be very familiar with the particulars of each automelon/original melody and how to apply it properly to new texts. Specifically, the chanter must know how the original melody was divided into phrases and repetitions, where the recitation notes can be applied, where melismas fall, etc. This makes the process more difficult than in its original design, but not impossible.

Examine the example on pages 13 & 14, "Proceed, O angelic hosts." You will see that some repeated notes in the subsequent examples have been left out or added to conform to the new text.

This same loss of the metrical relationship has also taken place in English-language translations. In the last few years, some new attempts have been made to reestablish the relationship to the original Byzantine melodies. Holy Transfiguration Monastery in Boston, Massachusetts, has been producing liturgical books with texts following metrical translations (the Pentecostarion, the Great Horologion). This has enabled chanters who know the original Greek melodies to apply them easily to English translations.

Of course, some problems do occur in this process, e.g. some forcing of sentence structure, use of words based on the syllable count rather than the exact meaning, and some awkward phrases. Now and then, however, one does get a real gem. All in all, the result is arguably not worse than the results attained when someone who is not a major musical talent chants the Slavic melodies to a non-metrical text. (Due to the difficulties inherent in all translation, neither a metric translation nor a free translation is ever ideal.)

If you examine the example of "O All-lauded Martyrs" on page 16, you will notice that the text examples from the Pentecostarion (page 15, column 2) can all be sung to the same exact notes and rhythm of the automelon. The number of syllables for each line of text is the same from text to text. [*Editor's note:* Fr. Ephrem Lash, a prominent translator in England, has also begun to publish texts that are metrically identical to their model. His translations can be found on his web site: http://www.anastasis.org.uk/]

It is important to note that some commonly used liturgical books, such as the Lenten Triodion and Festal Menaion translated by Bishop Kallistos and Mother Mary, do not always give the designation for use of a special melody. For chanters/choir directors using these translations on a regular basis, it is important to check other sources for the assignment of special melodies to the texts.

It's interesting to consider that those given the blessing of writing hymns for the new saints that God reveals to us should be using the "standard" hymnographic method for composing texts. That is to say, they start with an existing text and use it as the model (metrical and melodic) for the other texts in that hymn grouping. Naturally, one will have some idiomela for the new saint, particular hymns with their own melody; but for the canons and the stichera at "Lord, I Have Cried," the aposticha, the troparion, the praises, one would base the new hymns for the saint on an existing automelon.

Certainly this system of special melodies is convenient. It provides a means for singing all the many thousands of texts that we encounter throughout the church year. Just as importantly, it serves to help the mind and heart make connections—a recalling and remembering.

Let's return to the example from the third Sunday of Lent. When we hear the troparia of the canon at Matins sung to the melody of the Paschal Canon, we see, or rather hear, a deep connection being made between the Resurrection and the Cross.

Another example would be the automelon, "Rejoice, O Life-Giving Cross," which is sung on the Feast of the Cross in September. When we sing this on subsequent days throughout the liturgical year—the same melody sung to different words—there is a certain sense of recall that operates within us,

continued on page 25

Rules of Thumb for Setting Special Melodies

by Anne Schoepp

Like blessed Simeon, we are entrusted to carry the Divine Word; let us do so with great care. Our goal is to render a text effectively so that the meaning is conveyed clearly and without distraction, in order that the assembly may pray with the choir or chanter.

1 **Examine and know the original melody (*automelon* or *samopodoben*).**
   - a Determine the form and pattern of the melody: ABC, ABCD, ABCBCD, ABAB, etc.
   - b Provide yourself with a variety of good settings of the melody as examples of how to apply other new texts to the same melody. Start with the original melody.
   - c Determine the emphasis points, melismas, points of departure or arrival.
   - d Decide which notes are essential to the melody and which are optional—i.e. repeated notes, passing tones, pickups.
   - e Determine the basic meter of the melody—duple, triple, or irregular.
   - f Note the character of the melody: proclamatory, celebratory, mournful, etc.

2 **Examine the text.**
   - a Read the text; what is its message and character?
   - b Compare the poetic form and structure with that of the original melody. How are the phrases grouped or paired—ABAB or ABCBCD?
   - c What hymnographic group is the text from: stichera, troparia, canons?
   - d What are the operative words or phrases—e.g. "rejoice," "death," "risen," "magnify"?
   - e Where is the climax? petition? exclamation?

3 **Examine the rhythm of the text at different levels.**
   - a Determine the basic meter of the text—duple or triple.
   - b Are there irregular word groups—triple, quadruple, or even quintuple?
   - c What are the "micro" and "macro" pulses of the text? How many syllables are between these pulses? Read the text aloud several times to determine this.
   - d Watch for word emphases that may or may not be liturgically correct—i.e. a change in emphasis can change the meaning of the text.
   - e Check less familiar words with the dictionary for proper syllabification and emphasis.

4 **Set the text.**
   - a Assign textual phrases to musical phrases. Match poetic form with musical form as best you can.
   - b Fit the contour of the textual phrase to the contour of the musical phrase.
   - c Place the melodic accents on the important, descriptive, or operative words when possible.
   - d Determine which notes to cut or add.
   - e Place strong accents on the correct syllables. Read the text aloud to check this.
   - f Let the unimportant syllables flow by quickly on unaccented beats or notes.
   - g Maintain the macro pulse and flow of the text.
   - h The setting must enable us to sing complete phrases, not just words.

5 **Chanting from text**
   - a Learn the above concepts and techniques and start to apply them to all texts.
   - b Learn the melodies well so you can apply the text to the melody without hesitation or distraction.
   - c Mark the text in advance.

6 **Judgment calls**
   - a There is a balance between preserving exact forms and traditions and making the piece really work in English. Sometimes it's hard to know where the line is.
   - b Choose between local custom and perhaps the most effective or powerful setting. Will you have time to rehearse a deviation from the ordinary, or will it become an annual mistake? ✣

Commonly Sung Special Melodies

by Walter G. Obleschuk

NOTE: This is not intended to be a comprehensive listing of special melodies, but rather a listing of the most commonly prescribed melodies and examples of when they are to be sung. A comprehensive listing of special melodies, as well as charts for when they are to be sung, will appear in the Book of Special Melodies *being prepared by Mr. Obleschuk.*

"All-praised martyrs"—Tone 1
Category: Stichera
Greek: Πανευφημοι Μαρτυρες
Slavonic: **Прехва́лнїи мч҃ницы**
Alternate Name(s): **Вселехва́лнїи мч҃ницы**, "Martyrs worthy of all praise," "O all-lauded martyrs"
Original Melody: *Octoechos:* Martyrikon (third sticheron) of the Aposticha from Wednesday Evening Vespers (Tone 1)
Uses: January 7—"Lord I call" stichera (St. John the Baptist)
January 30—Vespers Aposticha stichera (Three Hierarchs)
March 26—"Lord I call" stichera (Archangel Gabriel)
Fifth Sunday of Lent Evening Vespers—"Lord I call" stichera 1 & 2
Thomas Sunday—Praises stichera

"Joy of heavenly hierarchies"—Tone 1
Category: Stichera
Greek: Των ουρανιων ταγματων
Slavonic: **Нб҃ныхъ чинѡ́въ**
Alternate Name(s): "O purest Virgin, joy of the heavenly hierarchies," "Of the arrays of heaven"
Original Melody: *Octoechos:* Theotokion of the Aposticha from Sunday Evening Vespers (Tone 1)
Uses: September 25—Vespers Aposticha (St. Sergius)
September 26—"Lord I call" stichera (St. John the Theologian)
November 8—Praises stichera (Bodiless Powers)
November 21—Praises stichera (Entrance of the Theotokos)
December 26–31—"Lord I call" stichera (Sunday after Nativity)
December 6—Praises stichera 3–6 (St. Nicholas)
December 27—Vespers Aposticha (St. Stephen)
March 25—Praises stichera (Annunciation)
Second Sunday of Lent—Praises stichera
Ascension—Praises stichera

"O marvelous wonder"—Tone 1
Category: Stichera
Greek: Ὢ του παραδοξου θαυματος
Slavonic: **О҆ дн҃евное чⷣдо**
Original Melody: *Menaion:* First sticheron on "Lord I Call" on August 15 (Dormition)
Uses: September 8—Praises stichera (Nativity of the Theotokos)
October 1—"Lord I call" stichera 1–4 (Protection of the Theotokos)
November 21—"Lord I call" stichera 1–3 (Entrance of the Theotokos)
January 2/July 19—"Lord I call" stichera (St. Seraphim of Sarov)
August 15—"Lord I call" stichera (Dormition)

"Down from the Tree"—Tone 2
Category: Stichera
Greek: Ὅτε εκ του ξυλου
Slavonic: **Ѳгда́ ѿ дре́ва**
Alternate Name(s): "Joseph of Arimathea took You down from the Tree," "When he took Thee"
Original Melody: *Triodion:* First Sticheron of the Holy Friday Vespers Aposticha
Uses: December 6—"Lord I call" stichera 1–4 (St. Nicholas)
April 23—Praises stichera (St. George)
Forgiveness Sunday Evening—"Lord I call" stichera
Holy Friday Vespers—Aposticha

"Today the Virgin"—Tone 3
Category: Kontakia
Greek: Ἡ Παρθενος σημερον
Slavonic: **Дв҃а дне́сь**
Alternate Name(s): "On this day the Virgin"
Original Melody: *Menaion:* Kontakion on December 25 (Nativity of Christ)
Uses: Kontakion of the Resurrection in Tone 3
September 7—Kontakion (Pre-feast of the Nativity of the Theotokos)
October 1—Kontakion (Protection of the Theotokos)
December 6—Kontakion (St. Nicholas)
December 24—Kontakion (Pre-feast of the Nativity)
December 25—Kontakion (Nativity)
December 27—Kontakion (St. Stephen)
June 24—Kontakion (Nativity of St. John the Baptist)
Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee—Second Kontakion
Sunday of the Prodigal Son—Kontakion
Fifth Sunday of Lent—Kontakion (St. Mary of Egypt)
Fourth Sunday of Pascha—Kontakion (Paralytic)

"As one noble among martyrs"—Tone 4
Category: Stichera
Greek: Ὡς γενναιον εν μαρτυσιν
Slavonic: **Ꙗ҆́ко до́блѧ**
Alternate Name(s): "As (one) glorious among martyrs," "As one valiant"
Original Melody: *Menaion:* First sticheron from "Lord I Call" on April 23 (St. George)
Uses: October 1—"Lord I call" stichera 5–8 (Protection of the Theotokos)
November 8—"Lord I call" stichera 1–4 (Bodiless Powers)

November 21—"Lord I call" stichera 6–8 (Entrance of the Theotokos)
December 27—"Lord I call" stichera
January 30—"Lord I call" stichera 1–4 (Three Hierarchs)
April 23—"Lord I call" stichera (St. George)
July 5—Praises (St. Sergius)
July 15—"Lord I call" stichera (St. Vladimir)
August 15—Praises stichera (Dormition)
Forgiveness Sunday Vespers—Aposticha Theotokion
Third Sunday of Lent—Praises stichera
Fifth Saturday of Lent—Praises stichera
Midfeast—Praises stichera

"Rejoice, life-bearing Cross"—Tone 5

Category: Stichera
Greek: Χαιροις
Slavonic: Ра́дуйся [живоно́сный Кре́сте]
Original Melody: *Menaion:* First Sticheron of the Aposticha from September 14 (Exaltation of the Cross)
Uses: September 14—Vespers Aposticha (Exaltation of the Cross)
November 21—Vespers Aposticha (Entrance of the Theotokos)
December 6—Vespers Aposticha (St. Nicholas)
December 18–23—Praises stichera (Sunday before Nativity)
December 24—"Lord I call" stichera (Pre-feast of the Nativity of Christ)
January 1—Praises stichera (Circumcision of Christ)
January 2/July 19—Vespers Aposticha (St. Seraphim of Sarov)
January 30—Praises stichera (Three Hierarchs)
Third Sunday of Lent—"Lord I call" stichera (Cross)

"Having set all your hope"—Tone 6

Category: Stichera
Greek: ῾Όλην αποθεμενοι
Slavonic: Вся́ ѿложи́вше
Alternate Name(s): "Háving set aside"
Original Melody: *Menaion:* First Sticheron from "Lord I Call" on November 1 (Holy Unmercenaries Cosmas and Damian)
Uses: September 14—"Lord I call" stichera (Exaltation of the Cross)
October 11–17—Praises stichera (Sunday of the Fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council)
November 1—"Lord I Call" (Holy Unmercenaries Cosmas and Damian)
December 18–24—"Lord I call" stichera (Sunday before Nativity)
March 25—"Lord I call" stichera (Annunciation)
July 13–19—Praises stichera (Sunday of the Fathers of the First Six Ecumenical Councils)
Sunday of the Last Judgment—"Lord I call" stichera
Sunday of the Expulsion from Paradise—"Lord I call" stichera
First Sunday of Lent—"Lord I call" stichera
Fifth Friday Evening Vespers—"Lord I call" stichera (Theotokos)
Fifth Sunday of Lent—"Lord I call" stichera (St. Mary of Egypt)
Seventh Sunday of Pascha—"Lord I call" stichera (Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council)

"Most glorious wonder"—Tone 8

Category: Stichera
Greek: ᾿Ω του παραδοξου θαυματος
Slavonic: О пре́сла́внаго чудесе́
Alternate Name(s): "O most awesome wonder," "O marvelous wonder" (not to be confused with Tone 1: "O marvelous wonder")
Original Melody: *Menaion:* First Sticheron of the Praises on September 14 (Exaltation of the Cross)
Uses: September 14—Praises stichera (Exaltation of the Cross)
September 26—Praises stichera (St. John the Theologian)
October 1—Praises stichera (Protection of the Theotokos)
June 24—Praises stichera (Nativity of St. John the Baptist)
August 29—Praises stichera (Beheading of St. John the Baptist)
Fourth Sunday of Lent—"Lord I call" stichera (St. John Climacus)

"Hearken, O women"—no Tone (Slavic practice)

Category: Exapostilaria
Greek: Γυναικες ακουτισθητε
Slavonic: Жены оу҃слы́шите
Original Melody: *Pentecostarion:* Sunday of the Myrrhbearers
Uses: September 14—Second Exapostilarion (Exaltation of the Cross)
September 26—Second and Third Exapostilaria (St. John the Theologian)
October 1 (Protection of the Theotokos)
November 21 (Entrance of the Theotokos)
December 6 (St. Nicholas)
December 11–17—After "Glory" and after "Now and ever" (Second Sunday before Nativity)
January 2/July 19 (St. Seraphim of Sarov)
March 25—Second Exapostilarion (Annunciation)
June 24 (Nativity of St. John the Baptist)
June 29 (Ss. Peter and Paul)
July 5 (St. Sergius)
July 13–19 (Sunday of the Fathers of the First Six Ecumenical Councils)
July 15 (St. Vladimir)
Sunday of the Prodigal Son
Sunday of the Last Judgment—After "Glory"
Sunday of the Expulsion from Paradise—After "Glory"
Fourth Sunday of Lent
Fifth Saturday of Lent
Third Sunday of Pascha (Myrrhbearers)
Fourth Sunday of Pascha (Paralytic)
Fifth Sunday of Pascha—Both
Sixth Sunday of Pascha—after "Now and ever"
Seventh Sunday of Pascha—First (Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council) ✠

Given this diversity and a certain arbitrariness in the melodies of the idiomelic hymns, the prosomoia obviously became a sort of cantus firmus of hymnody, which was not subjected to acute changes, and which was transmitted by rote, by oral tradition.

The Prosomoia Melodies

continued from page 6

the melodies of the idiomelic hymns, the prosomoia obviously became a sort of *cantus firmus* of hymnody, which was not subjected to acute changes, and which was transmitted by rote, by oral tradition.

In the seventeenth century, a displacement took place in church hymnody. New chant forms were imported from southern Russia, and gradually the flourishing Great Chant was supplanted by the daily, or Lesser Chant. The melodies of the latter were distinguished by great simplicity, an ease of adaptability to the text as a result of the predomination of sight reading. These melodies (which Archpriest Voznesensky maintained are closely connected with the prosomoia) turned out to be easier to adapt to a text than the melodies of the prosomoia; they demanded of the chanter less time to learn and less effort to apply. It is thought that it is from this time that the gradual supplanting of the prosomoia may have begun.

All prosomoia may be divided into three groups, according to the type of hymns chanted "to the prosomoia." These groups are the following:

1 the stichera group;
2 the troparia group (which comprises troparia, sessional hymns and kontakia); and
3 the exapostilaria group.

The latter group, however, stands completely apart. As a rule, exapostilaria are not assigned a tone number. Thus, these hymns are *sui generis* par excellence.

Apparently, the stichera group enjoys the greatest stability, for the practice of chanting stichera to the prosomoion has been preserved in places even to this day. The second group spread to a far lesser degree, but even it, as a rare exception, is still alive in certain places. As regards the third group—the photogogica/exapostilaria—it has completely disappeared from practice. The photogogica are now read, the remaining exceptions being only the photogogica of Pascha ("Having fallen asleep in the flesh") and for certain days of Passion Week ("I behold Thy bridal chamber"; "The wise thief").

Judging from several facts, the sessional hymns, kontakia, and in several cases the troparia also, were read; only their concluding phrases were chanted. The stichera, primarily comprising the didactic material of the divine services, were chanted with great care.

In a hook-neumed Octoechos used as a teaching manual, for each tone only the endings are supplied for the resurrectional troparia; these are chanted according to the pattern of "God is the Lord" (i.e., the final verse is an automelon in relation to the troparion). The same is true for the Alleluia, the prokeimenon, and "Holy is the Lord our God!" Even in our days, very few sessional hymns or kontakia are chanted. The latter are usually read.

We chant the stichera and troparia groups according to different chant systems, although one cannot make a sharp differentiation in this regard. The stichera group is chanted exclusively according to the Lesser Znamenny or Kievan Chants, while at the same time the Greek Chant predominates in the troparia group, and in certain instances the Bulgarian Chant also appears.

The latter two chants are of Southwest Russian derivation, and judging from the many prosomoia cited in the Irmologia of that period, written in quadratic notation, they received a certain diffusion. Yet the practice of chanting the sessional hymns scarcely extended to parish churches, judging from the fact that the troparion and sessional hymn prosomoia were known until recent times in only a very few places. It is thought that this might explain the absence of these prosomoia in books provided with quadratic or hook notation, while the stichera prosomoia are quite frequently encountered.

In view of the fact that the melody of a prosomoion (strictly speaking, the automelon) must be well known to every chanter, in the capacity of prosomoion (automelon) it was customary to select a hymn which is either frequently repeated throughout the annual cycle of the divine services (e.g., the prosomoion "Joy of the ranks of heaven"—a Theotokion from Tone I, Monday Vespers; "Thy tomb, O Savior"—a sessional hymn for Tone I, Sunday Vespers, etc.; the resurrectional troparia also serve as model hymns), or hymns which, because of their exclusive use (the stichera of great saints, hymns of major feast days) were well known to everyone. (Even now, who is not familiar, for example, with "Today the Virgin," the kontakion for the Nativity of Christ?) Nearly half of all prosomoia are to be found in the Octoechos—consequently they are continually at hand, continually called to mind, repeated.

Our notated music book (the *Octoechos of Notated Hymns*, published by the Synod), which in its own way provides us with the *cantus receptus*, the *cantus firmus*, has significantly fewer prosomoia than those mentioned in the liturgical books, and provides prosomoia only from the stichera group.

Prosomoia indicated in the Church books

(as listed by Johann von Gardner)

Tone I

Stichera Group

1 "Joy of the ranks of heaven"
2 "O all-praised martyrs"
3 "Thee, the cloud of light"
4 "Of old, by Moses"
5 "O wondrous miracle"

Troparia Group

1 "When the stone had been sealed"
2 "The choir of angels"
3 "Despair"
4 "Thy tomb, O Savior"

Of all of these prosomoia, only 1, 2 and 5 of the stichera group are given in the Octoechos, provided with quadratic notation.

Tone II

Stichera Group

1 "When from the Tree"
2 "All things shall I pass by"
3 "What hath appeared"
4 "The things I have done"
5 "Our enlightener"
6 "O great mystery"
7 "O house of Ephratha"
8 "Let Him be crucified"
9 "With what wreaths of praise"
10 "The divinely called martyr"
11 "Good things past understanding"

Troparia Group

1 "Of compassionate lovingkindness"
2 "To Thine all-pure image"
3 "All-blessed art thou"
4 "The noble Joseph"
5 "The life-creating"
6 "The doors of lovingkindness"
7 "She who is unfailing in supplications"
8 "Thou who hast given wisdom past"
9 "Having risen from the dead"
10 "The stone of the tomb"
11 "When the myrrh-bearing women"
12 "The steadfast"
13 "Seeking the highest"

In the notated Octoechos, only 1 and 7 of the stichera group appear.

Tone III

Stichera Group

1 "The valiant martyrs"
2 "Great are the martyrs"
3 "Great is the Cross"
4 "Come, ye all"
5 "They placed the thirty pieces of silver"
6 "Great is the wonder"
7 "Revealed in the form of the Cross"

Troparia Group

1 "Today the Virgin"
2 "Of the divine Faith"
3 "Awed by the beauty of thy virginity"
4 "Let those in heaven be glad"

In the notated Octoechos, only 3 of the stichera group appears.

Tone IV

Stichera Group

1 "As one valiant among the martyrs"
2 "Thou hast given a sign"
3 "The reason-endowed adamant"
4 "With tears I desired"
5 "Called from on high"
6 "Having mounted the Cross, O Lord"

Troparia Group

1 "Thou hast appeared today"
2 "Go thou quickly before"
3 "Joseph marveled"
4 "Having willingly ascended the Cross"

In the notated Octoechos, only 1, 2, 4 and 5 of the stichera group appear.

Tone V

Stichera Group

1 "O venerable father"
2 "O Lord, in the time of Moses"
3 "Rejoice, O boast of fasters"
4 "The gracious"
5 "Rejoice"

Troparia Group

1 "The Word who is equally without beginning"
2 "The cup of torment"
3 "She who is more holy than the cherubim"
4 "Today shineth forth"
5 "Strange"

In the notated Octoechos, only 5 of the stichera group appears.

Tone VI

Stichera Group

1 "Having set aside all"
2 "At the right hand of the Savior"
3 "On the third day"
4 "O Lord, to the sepulcher"
5 "The despairing"
6 "Go forth, ye angelic hosts"

Troparia Group

1 "O Lord, have mercy on us"
2 "O Lord, standing before"
3 "O hope of the world"
4 "The angelic hosts"

In the notated Octoechos, only 1, 3 and 5 of the stichera group appear.

Tone VII

Stichera Group

1 "No longer hindered"
2 "Today keepeth vigil"
3 "Beneath thy shelter"
4 "Having despised"

Troparia Group

1 "As one having"
2 "O Lord, we are"
3 "O Thou who for my sake"
4 "Brighter than fire"
5 "The Fruit of thy womb"

In the notated Octoechos, only 1 of the stichera group appears.

Tone VIII

Stichera Group

1 "He who in the Eden of paradise"
2 "O all-glorious wonder"
3 "What shall we call you"
4 "The incalculable"
5 "The all-glorious"
6 "O Lord, even at the tribunal"
7 "O Theotokos"
8 "The glorious and all-pure"
9 "Thy martyrs, O Lord"
10 "The martyrs of the Lord"

Troparia Group

1 "The Wisdom and Word"
2 "As the firstfruits of nature"
3 "Thou didst arise from the dead"
4 "Of the shepherds' pipe"
5 "To thee, the chosen leader"
6 "That which was mystically commanded"
7 "The unshakable foundation"

In the notated Octoechos, only 2, 3 and 6 of the stichera group appear.

Altogether, there are "only" about one hundred different stichera and troparia prosomoia, not including the photogogica. Nearly ninety percent of these musical riches have been forgotten and lost!

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But were all of these prosomoia indeed used of old among the Slavs in their chanting? In the absence of definite information, we can provide no precise answer to this question. However, on the basis of the fact that not all of the prosomoia used now are indicated in the ancient chant books, we may propose that it is possible that only a part of the prosomoia indicated in the liturgical books were in use on the kliros. In the few books of chant which have survived from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, we find all of about thirty whose melodies are fixed with hook notation.

One cannot pass over in silence the fact that we sometimes use different hymns for automela. This has developed because the automelon is often identified only by its first word, whereas many stichera, sometimes for one and the same feast, begin with the same word. For example, for the Tone V prosomoion "Rejoice," the notated books published by the Most Holy Synod give the September 14 sticheron "Rejoice, O Life-bearing Cross, invincible victory of piety" as the automelon, while in the hook-notated octoechos used as a singers' manual, to which we have had occasion to refer above, another sticheron is given as the automelon, viz., "Rejoice, O Life-bearing Cross, beauteous garden of the Church," which is the second sticheron for the Cross, taken from the "Lord, I have cried" stichera of the third Sunday of Great Lent. In the Uniate *Great Ecclesiastical Anthology,* in addition to the above title, this prosomoion is given a second designation: "Rejoice, boast of fasters." Just as the third sticheron for the third Sunday of the Great Fast is the sticheron for the Exaltation of the Cross which is well-known to us ("Rejoice, . . . invincible victory of piety"), a similar sticheron is included in the anthology under the prosomoion "Rejoice, boast of fasters." But in the same anthology the latter sticheron is designated an automelon. It is likewise designated in the Festal Menaion published in Sarajevo; yet several pages earlier, in the service for September 13, where this sticheron is also to be found heading the aposticha stichera, it is called a prosomoion, though without any indication of the model hymn (automelon), as follows: "Tone V: Prosomoion," after which follows the text of the sticheron itself. In this case one should understand that this sticheron is a model, though for once there is no indication as to which hymn it should be chanted to.

Concluding this survey of the prosomoia, let us again make some remarks upon terminology.

In contemporary practice, the term *prosomoion* is usually applied to a model sticheron, i.e., to an automelon. They say: "Prosomoion: 'O house of Ephratha,'" "sung to the prosomoion" (i.e., "in accordance with the melody of a prosomoion"). Yet this is an error. A prosomoion is not a hymn which serves as a model, but is rather a hymn which is chanted *like* another one which serves as the model for the former. Rather than saying, "sung to the prosomoion," it would be more correct to say, "sung *like* the prosomoion." The hymn we refer to as "Joy of the ranks of heaven" is not a prosomoion, but rather an automelon. But any other hymn (e.g., the stichera of Tuesday evening during Pentecost Week) is a prosomoion of "Joy of the ranks of heaven."

Now, when the florid Great Chant forms, which were used to sing the idiomela stichera, have long since passed into the realm of the obsolete, and the chanting of stichera and troparia is conducted according to the Lesser Chant forms, the restoration of the practice of the chanting of prosomoia is greatly to be desired. The daily chant forms, which are quite easy to apply to the texts, have a major drawback: they are too clichéd and cannot provide nuances for the various moods of the hymns. Prosomoia (or, more correctly, automela) compensate completely for this shortcoming. Each automelon has its own innate character and coloration, even though its melody moves within the boundaries of the same tone. It is not without reason that the Church's typicon, even in the times of St. John of Damascus, established various prosomoia for various cases. The hymnographers took this into account when they wrote their hymns for the commemorations of the saints or for the feasts. In the first section of this work, I showed how much diversity these expressive melodies brought to the divine services.

The purpose of the stichera and other hymns is to direct the thoughts and sensibility of the faithful who pay attention to what is being sung and read in church. From of old the Church has enlisted music as an ancillary means to this end. Yet not instrumental music, which is unable to express concrete, completely conscious concepts and images, but a music which is suited to the oral expression of certain ideas. In church singing, sound and word are in-

separable. In connection with the fact that various thoughts were to be enunciated, various senses expressed, the melodies were varied, and later, as necessity required, were applied to one or another text. The words acquired great expressiveness, and the melodies acquired a great conceptual concreteness.

The need for this has always been felt in the Church, and it is especially felt now, when we are experiencing a mass departure from Church life and from the Church's perception of the feasts.

True, the chanting of prosomoia stichera requires greater effort than chanting them using the daily chant forms. Here one needs considerable skill successfully to divide the texts according to the model melody. This is attained solely by practice. Monks in those monasteries where the chanting of prosomoia has been preserved easily chant any given text dictated to them by the canonarch.

Of course, there are definite rules to follow in applying the melody to the texts. But these rules have still not been investigated, and the knowledge of them would greatly facilitate the chanting of the prosomoia. In Greek chant, as we have seen, there is no need for this. There, everyone who knows the notes of the automelon can easily apply them to any other hymn which shares a similar structure. The matter is quite different among the Slavs.

One must direct considerable attention to this interesting phenomenon in the liturgical chant of our Church. The question of the prosomoia is touched upon in our literature only in passing, and the musical grammar of the prosomoia has not been completely deciphered.

Unfortunately, the limitations of this survey do not in any way permit us to treat, in any but the most superficial way, the question of melodics, which, in practical terms, is of incomparably great interest. This has not even figured in my task . . .

A more detailed study of the archaeology of the prosomoia, the comparison of their melodics and rhythms in the chant forms of the Slavic Orthodox Churches, will doubtless serve to establish a genetic bond with this hymnody and will show the degree of their mutual influence. It will reveal to us anew the beauties of the riches of these chant forms which we have forgotten. ✣

Originally published as a separate booklet in Warsaw, Poland, by the Synodal Press [of the Orthodox Church of Poland], in 1930. Translated from the Russian by Reader Isaac E. Lambertsen. *Translation reprinted from* Living Orthodoxy, *Vol. XIX #2 (#110), March–April 1998.*

Contemporary Usage *continued from page 18*

always pointing us back to the Cross. (Naturally, this assumes that the liturgical life of the parish is such that these musical/aural connections are actually going to be made by the faithful in church.)

But perhaps some will say that this is all too esoteric and unrelated to the common parishioner in the nave. Can anyone really learn all these melodies? Are people really going to connect all the lines, dots and meanings together?

These hymns, sung within the cycle of services, were what marked the days and months and years of our fathers and mothers in the Faith. The Divine Services and their hymns are a work of unsurpassed genius; they are divinely inspired and capable of feeding our souls; they inspire us and motivate us. As church singers we can either be overwhelmed by the sheer volume of what there is to learn, or we can be humbled by the liturgical and musical treasures that we have been given and work to uncover and rediscover them for ourselves, one melody at a time.

We talk about the treasures of the Orthodox Faith and of the liturgical life of the Church all the time. But I fear that the treasures are something that we are unfamiliar with; they are not ours because they are unfamiliar. Once we get on with making the liturgical treasure of the special melodies our own by learning them and using them, we will be surprised to see what else is in the treasure chest. ✣

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