

THE *PROSOMOIA* MELODIES:

FORGOTTEN TREASURES OF ORTHODOX CHANT

by Johann von Gardner

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 *kliros* in a rapid patter, they sing them in a hasty recitative to the melodies of the tones of daily 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, 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*, 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 marvellous 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 which 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*" (in Russian: "na podoben") 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 (*kriuky*—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 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 simply 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, and I consider that my objective is achieved if I more or less successfully answer the questions posed at the beginning of the preceding chapter.

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 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. (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 are 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 constitute 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 an 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 *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 *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 20th, “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 serving 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 texts of the hymns 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 (**See Appendix**).

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”.

<i>Automelon</i>	<i>Prosomoion</i>	<i>Number of syllables</i>
Οἶκος τοῦ Εὐφραθᾶ	Ψάλλε προφητηκῶς	6
Ἡ πόλις ἡ ἁγία	Δαυίδ κινῶν τὴν λύραν	7
Τῶν προφητῶν ἡ δόξα	Τῆς σῆς γὰρ ἐξ ὀσφύος	7
Εὐτρέπισον τὸν οἶκον	Ἐξ ἧς ἡ Θεοτόκος	7
Ἐν ᾧ τὸ θεῖον τίκτεται.	Χριστὸς γεννᾶται σήμερον.	8

(From the aposticha stichera of December 26th)

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 is each 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

ДѠМЕ ѸФРАѠВЪ,	5 syllables
ГРАДЕ СВЯТЫИ,	4
ПРОРОКѠВЪ СЛѠВО.	5
ѠУКРАСИ ДѠМЪ,	4
ВЪ НЕМЪЖЕ БОЖЕСТВЕННЫИ РАЖДАЕТСѠ.	10

Prosomoion

Д	7
Д	8
Д	6
Д	10
Д	10

Prosomoion

ДНЕСЬ ХРИСТОСЪ	3
НА ГОРѢ ДАВОРЦѢИ	6
АДАМОВО ПРЕМѢНИВЪ	7
ѠЧЕРИВНЕСЕ ѸСТЕСТВО	8
ПРОСВѢТИВЪ БОГОСОДѢЛА.	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 which were laid down for melodies for when they were applied to texts of varying length.

Even though the Great Chant reigned on 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. Idiomatic hymns are distinguished by a far more florid neumatic complement, which indicates a certain melodic complexity. One may assign the particular development of idiomatic melodies to the period stretching from the end of the 15th to the 17th 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 17th 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 the melodies of the idiomatic 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 17th 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 predominance 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 began.

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)

- 3) The exapostilaria (or *photogogica*) 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 noble 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 prokimenon, 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 feastdays) 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 books (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.

The following are the prosomoia indicated in the Church books [*Editor’s note: This listing represents the prosomoia which Prof. Gardner encountered in his research, and does not represent the current status of known prosomoia melodies*]:

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 marvelled"
- 4) "Having willingly ascended the Cross"

In the notated Octoechos, only 1, 2, 4 and 5 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 photogoga. Nearly 90% of these musical riches have been forgotten and lost!

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 *kliros*. In the few books of chant which have survived from the 12th and 13th 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 14th 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 13th, 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 latter. Rather than saying “Sung to the prosomoion”, it would be more correct to say “Sung *like* the prosomoia.” 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 province of tradition, 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 inseparable. 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, the program of which I outlined at the beginning of the second section of my work.

A more detailed study of the archæology 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.

Translated from the Russian by the reader Isaac E. Lambertsen. Originally published as a separate booklet in Warsaw, Poland, by the Synodal Press [of the Orthodox Church of Poland], in 1930. Copyright © 1995. All rights reserved by the translator. Edited by Nikita Simmons for the Yahoo Podoben Study Group, 2003, with permission from Isaac Lambersten.

**APPENDIX
(SEE PAGE 7)**