

Byzantine Music Course

March 19, 2020

Agenda

- Matins Service Structure
- Pascha Katavasia in Mode 1
- Pascha Lauds Idiomela, Mode pl. 1

Matins Service Structure

Matins is a morning service. The Greek word, Ὁρθρος [Orthros], means the darkest part of the morning, just before dawn.

Matins used to begin about 3-4 am and lasted several hours. Attached to it would be the *Midnight Office*, a service containing, among other things, a complete sung canon.

Today, the *Midnight Office* is rarely performed, and the Matins Canon is also rarely performed. There are no longer Kathisma Psalm readings, at least outside of monasteries. This shortened the service drastically.

Matins Cycles

The Matins service contains several cycles that revolve throughout the year. These cycles are reset at Pascha.

Modal Cycle: Each week is ruled by one of the 8 Modes (in order from Mode 1 to Plagal 4th). Mode 1 Vespers is sung on Holy Saturday and, skipping Thomas Sunday, begins Mode 2 on Myrrh-bearer's Sunday. The cycle is again interrupted by Pentecost. The cycle continues until the next Holy Week. The cycle of 8 Modes is known as the *Octoechos*, and its hymns are found in a book called the *Paracletike*.

Eothinon Cycle: These rotate around 11 Gospel readings that take place mid-Matins. They are vignettes of Christ's appearances after His Resurrection. Why 11? That's how many Apostles there were just after the Resurrection. These hymns are located at the end of the *Paracletike*.

The liturgical events that are dominated by the Eothinon cycle are the Gospel Reading, Exaposteilaria hymns, and the Eothinon Doxasticon at the very end of Matins before the Great Doxology.

Matins Cycles

Menaion Cycle: This changes everyday. The *Menaion* is a collection of 12 books that contain the hymns that change everyday: Immovable feasts, Saints' days, Ecclesiastical Events (such as the consecration of an important church), etc.

Each book is named for the month of the year it represents.

The *Menaion* also contains a recited section called the *Synaxarion*, which tells us which Saints we are celebrating on a particular day, what happened on that day (even records earthquakes and miracles of Saints and Angels). The *Menaion Synaxarion* is read at every Matins except Pascha.

Hymns from the *Menaion* are very often inserted into the Apolytikia, Kathismata, Kontakia, and Lauds Stichera of Matins.

Matins Cycles

Triodion Cycle: The *Triodion* is a book that is brought out on Saturday before the Publican and Pharisee and signals the coming of Great Lent. The book contains the liturgical hymns and readings for the Lenten period and Holy Week. These hymns are added to the regular Modal and Menaion cycles. At the final Doxasticon, the hymn from the Triodion replaces the Eothinon.

Pentecostarion Cycle: The *Pentecostarion* is brought out at the Matins of Pascha and substitutes for the Paracletike book from the day of Pascha to All-Saints. The Triodion is put away. This book contains all the hymns and readings for Pascha and the weeks following. The book blends in hymns and Synaxaria from the Menaion.

Katavasia Cycle: The Katavasias come near the middle of the Matins and are seasonal. They often tell the listener that a feast day is coming up. They also change during the weeks of the Triodion.

In order to have a Matins identical to the one we will sing on Sunday, it would take 15 years for all the cycles to align in the same order.

Matins Structure

Matins Ordinary

Like most of our Church services, Matins begins with the *Trisagion Prayers*:

- Holy God... Glory... Most Holy Trinity... Glory... Our Father...

These are followed by the *Royal Prayers*:

- O Lord, save Your people... Glory... You who were lifted... Both now... O awesome and unshamable Protection...

A short litany where we sing *Lord have mercy (3)*, followed by the Priest invoking the presence of the Holy Trinity.

We then read the *Six Psalms (Hexapsalmos)* consisting of:

- Psalms 3, 37, 62,
- Glory. Alleluia (3), Lord have mercy (3), Glory.,
- Psalms 89, 102, and 142.
- Glory. Alleluia (3).

Then we sing the responses, Lord have mercy, to the *Great Litany*.

Matins Structure

Apolytikia, Kathismata & Evlogetaria

The following sets of hymns and readings make up the general structure of today's Sunday Matins:

God is Lord, (Ps. 118:26-27) with verses followed by the *Apolytikia* of the day. *God is Lord* is sung in the Mode of the 1st Apolytikion. Apolytikion means "dismissal" and is introduced at the end of Vespers the night before. At Vespers, it is sung right after St. Symeon's Prayer, "Lord, now let Your servant depart in peace...".

Kathismata. Taken mainly from the Paracletike and the Menaion. Kathisma means "seated" because the congregation can sit down during their singing. During Pentecostarion, 1 hymn is substituted. Normal Sundays have 2 sets of 3 Kathisma hymns, Feast days have 3 sets.

Evlogetaria. These hymns are sung on most Sundays and commemorate the Myrrh-bearing women at the tomb. They are sung in Plagal 1st. Evlogetaria means "benedictions," and each hymn begins with "Blessed are You, O Lord, teach me Your statutes."

Matins Structure

Hypakoe, Anavathmoi & Prokeimenon

Hypakoe: A small litany follows the Evlogetaria, then this short verse is read. Hypakoe means “obedience,” referring to the obedience shown to the angel by the Myrrh-bears.

Anavathmoi: These are 3 sets of 3 of short hymns written by St. Theodore the Studite (759-826), based on Psalms 119-133 (the Eighteenth Kathisma). The 3 sets are called Antiphons. The final hymn of each Antiphon concerns the divinity of the Holy Spirit. Plagal 4th is the only Mode to have 4 Antiphons instead of 3. Anavathmoi means “hymns of ascent,” because during their singing, the choir would ascend onto their respective tiers where they would stand.

Prokeimenon: It means “preamble.” It may have introduced the Gospel reading at one point, but now introduces the Kontakia.

Matins Structure

Kontakion, Oikos & Synaxarion

Kontakion and Oikos: (pronounced ee-kos) The Kontakion is a sung poem whose poetic form was invented by St. Roman the Melodist (5th or 6th C.). It used to consist of an introductory hymn, called the *Kontakion*, followed by a series of up to 32 *Oikoi*. Both Kontakion and Oikoi end in a phrase called the *colophon*, which is chanted by the reading Cantor and repeated by the other Cantors.

Roman's *Acathist Hymn* is the only complete Kontakion still in use.

Today, at Matins, a Reader reads the Kontakion and chants the colophon and the other Cantors repeat it. The same is done with the colophon of the Oikos. Some services contain 2 sets of Kontakia/Oikoi.

Synaxarion: This is read immediately after the Oikos. It contains the relevant historical events in the life of the Church, Saints days, etc. The Synaxarion is to be found in the Menaia books. During both the Triodion and Pentecostarion periods, Synaxaria from those books immediately following the ones from the Menaion.

Matins Structure

Katavasia & Gospel

Katavasia: These are the Heirmoi (model verse) to a canon. They consist of 9 hymns called *odes*, but the 2nd one is skipped. The 9th ode appears later in Matins, so we literally have 7 odes that are sung at this point. The katavasia are seasonal, in that they tell of an upcoming feast. They change frequently during Lent as well.

The Katavasia are based on the 9 biblical odes. These can be found at the back of the Psalter.

Gospel: The Katavasia introduce the Gospel reading which is part of the Eothinon cycle. On a normal Sunday, one of the 11 Eothinon Gospel passages is read. The reading has a preamble: *Let everything that breathes praise the Lord*, which is sung 3 times.

At the end of the Gospel, on a normal Sunday, the Reader recites this:

Having beheld the Resurrection of Christ, let us worship the holy Lord Jesus, the only sinless one. Your Cross, O Christ, we venerate, and Your holy Resurrection we praise and glorify. For You are our God; apart from You we know no other; we call upon Your name. Come, all faithful, let us venerate the holy Resurrection of Christ; for behold, through the Cross, joy has come to the whole world. Ever blessing the Lord, let us praise His Resurrection; for having endured the Cross for us, He destroyed death by death.

Matins Structure

Psalm 50 & Post-Gospel Verses

Psalm 50: On any normal Sunday, the Cantors alternate as they chant the verses of Psalm 50, either in Mode 2, or the Mode of the week. As they chant, the congregation comes up the center aisle to venerate the Gospel book, indicating their repentance (the subject of the Psalm) and their belief in the Resurrection. At Matins on any other day of the week, Psalm 50 is read, not chanted.

On all Sundays and on weekdays when there is a Gospel reading, there are attached to Psalm 50 the following verses, sung in Mode 2. On weekdays, the final verse is substituted by one from the Menaion.

Glory.

At the intercession of the Apostles, O Lord of mercy, blot out my many offences.

Both now.

At the intercession of the Theotokos, O Lord of mercy, blot out my many offences.

Verse: Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your great mercy; and according to the abundance of Your compassion, blot out my transgression.

Jesus, having risen from the grave as He foretold, has granted us eternal life and great mercy.

Matins Structure

Great Intercessory

Great Intercessory: The Priest or Deacon then chants the Great Intercessory, which begins:

O God, save your people and bless your inheritance. Look upon your world with mercy and compassion. Raise the Orthodox Christians in glory, and send down upon us your rich mercies, through the intercessions of our most pure Lady the Theotokos and ever-Virgin Mary, the power of the precious and life giving Cross, the protection of the honorable, bodiless Powers of heaven...

After this, the Cantors chant *Lord have mercy* 12 times and the Priest finishes with:

Through the mercy, compassion, and love of mankind of your only-begotten Son, with whom you are blessed, together with your all-holy, good and life-giving Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages.

The Great Intercessory is only done (on other days of the week) when there is a Gospel reading.

The Deacon then invites us to praise the Theotokos, saying:

Let us honor and magnify in song the Theotokos and the Mother of the light.

Matins Structure

Megalynaria

Megalynaria: On a normal Sunday we sing the verses to the *Magnificat*, or *Song of Mary*, followed by a refrain sung in the Mode of the Katavasias,

Greater in honor than the Cherubim, and in glory greater beyond compare than the Seraphim. You without corruption gave birth to God the Logos and are truly Theotokos, you do we magnify.

On major feast days, this is substituted by the ninth ode of the canon for the feast with appropriate verses interspersing them:

For Pascha

O my soul, magnify Him who willingly suffered, was buried, and arose from the grave on the third day.

*Be illumined, illumined, O New Jerusalem; * for the glory of the Lord has arisen over you. * Dance now for joy, O Zion, and exult. * And you be merry, O pure Theotokos, * at the arising of the One you bore.*

This section completes with the singing of the Ode ix Katavasia.

Matins Structure

Exaposteilaria

Exaposteilaria: These hymns come from the Greek “hymns of being sent forth.” They go along the 11-week Eothinon cycle and refer back to the topic of the Gospel reading.

On a normal Sunday, the Eothinon Exaposteilarion is sung in Mode 2 to the prosomion melody *On the mountain*; however, several prosomia exist to frame other hymns that occur along with the Eothinon.

Other hymns from the daily Menaion cycle can be included, as well as Exaposteilaria from the Triodion and Pentecostarion. During Pascha, the regular Eothinon Exaposteilaria are substituted by the ones from the Pentecostarion.

The Paraclitike ascribes the creation of these hymns to the Emperor Constantine VII.

A complete set of recordings for these hymns and the Eothina can be found on the GOA website at <https://www.goarch.org/-/the-11-resurrectional-matins-eothina-exapostilaria-theotokia-and-doxastica>

Matins Structure

Lauds

Lauds: The Greek word is Αἶνοι means “praises;” we use the Latin word, which means the same thing.

These are a series of hymns that, on a normal Sunday, praise the Resurrection of Christ and follow the Octoechos Modal cycle; therefore, there are 8 of these hymns. The Lauds can also contain hymns from the Menaion, Triodion and Pentecostarion.

The set begins with the Psalm (150) verses sung in the Mode of the week, in Sticheraric style:

Let everything that breathes praise the Lord. Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest. It is fitting to sing a hymn to You, O God.

Praise Him, all you His angels; praise Him, all you His hosts. It is fitting to sing a hymn to You, O God.

Matins Structure

Lauds, cont.

The Lauds *stichera* (hymns interspersed by a psalm verse) begin; rightly, there should be 8 verses in all.

Mode 3.

Praise Him for His mighty acts; praise Him according to the abundance of His greatness.

O come, all you nations. Know the power of the awe-inspiring mystery. For Christ our Savior, the Logos who was in the beginning, voluntarily for us was crucified and buried, and He rose from the dead to save the universe. Let us worship Him.

Matins Structure

Lauds Doxasticon & Doxology

Lauds concludes with a *Doxasticon* (a hymn preceded by *Glory to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit*.) The Doxasticon on a normal Sunday follows the Eothinon cycle of 11 Gospels and are set in all of the 8 Modes. The Plagals are repeated, skipping Grave, to create 11 hymns. The creation of these hymns is attributed to the Emperor Leo the Wise (reigned 886-912).

Following the Doxasticon, on a normal Sunday is the *Both now and ever...* hymn, which is usually,

You are supremely blessed, O Virgin Theotokos. For through Him who from you became incarnate was Hades taken prisoner, and Adam has been summoned back; the curse has been neutralized, and Eve has been liberated; death has been put to death, and we have been brought to life. Therefore extolling we cry out: O Christ our God, You are blessed, for so was Your good pleasure. Glory to You!

Although it is properly sung in Mode 2, some chant it in the Mode of the Doxasticon.

The *Great Doxology* transitions us from Matins to the Divine Liturgy. While it is sung, the Priest and Deacon actually finish the Matins service.

Assignment

Practice and review everything you have learned to this point and attempt to piece together how they fit within the Matins service.

Keep learning the Katavasia and Stichera for Pascha.

See you on Thursday, March 26, 2020.