

## Liturgico-musical Glossary<sup>1</sup>

**Afterfeast:** Period between a great feast and its *apodosis*.

**Akathist:** A lengthy hymn consisting of 13 sung *kontakia*, each followed by an *ikos*. Most such kontakia conclude with “Alleluia”, which is repeated three times by the choir before the ikos is sung. Each line of the ikos typically begins with the same word (usually, “rejoice”). The most well-known *Akathist* is that to the Theotokos, which is sung (in the Slav tradition) at Matins on the 5th Saturday of Great Lent.

**Alleluia:** A short series of Psalm verses chanted by the reader interspersed with a threefold “Alleluia” sung by the choir. Serves as a *prokeimenon* before a Gospel reading.

**Analogion:** A wooden stand with a slanted top used for holding liturgical books, sheet music, or icons.

**Antiphon:** 1. Any piece of choral music performed antiphonally (back-and-forth) between two choirs, two soloists, or any combination of performing forces.

2. Series of Psalm verses sung antiphonally. The Divine Liturgy features three antiphons after the opening Great Litany. In the Slav tradition, these antiphons are usually Psalm 102, Psalm 145 (followed by the *Hymn of Emperor Justinian*), and the *Beatitudes*.

**Apodosis:** The leavetaking of a feast. (Plural: *apodoses*)

**Apolytikion:** See *troparion*.

**Aposticha:** Hymns followed by Psalm verses, sung near the end of Vespers (always) and Matins (on ordinary days, when the Doxology is read rather than sung).

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<sup>1</sup>This is an evolving document that is regularly updated, with reference to *The Festal Menaion* (Mother Mary and Kallistos Ware, trans.) and *The Order of the Divine Services According to the Usage of the Russian Orthodox Church* (Peter Fekula and Matthew Williams, eds.).

**Artoklasia:** See *Blessing of the Loaves*.

**Beatitudes:** Typically the Third Antiphon at the Divine Liturgy. Sourced from Matthew 5:3-12, preceded by the verse “In Thy kingdom remember us, O Lord, when Thou comest in Thy kingdom.” In the full order, troparia from one or more Matins canons are often appointed to be interpolated between verses of the Beatitudes. This practice is rare in parish churches.

**Biblical Ode:** One of 9 scriptural passages upon which the *irmoi* of canons are based.

1. The Song of Moses (Ex. 15:1-19)
2. The Song of Moses in Deuteronomy (Duet. 32:1-43)
3. The Song of Anna (1 Kg. 2:1-10)
4. The Prayer of Habbakuk (Hab. 3:2-19)
5. The Prayer of Isaiah (Isaiah 26:9-20)
6. The Prayer of Jonah (Jonah 2:3-10)
7. The Song of the Three Holy Children (Daniel 3:26-56 [LXX])
8. The Song of the Three Holy Children (“Benedicite”) (Daniel 3:57-88[LXX])
9. The Magnificat and the Prayer of Zacharias (Luke 1:68-79)

**Blessing of Bread:** See *Blessing of the Loaves*.

**Blessing of the Loaves:** A ceremony at the end of Great Vespers when a Litya has been served. Also called the *artoklasia*.

**Bow from the waist:** See *reverence*.

**Bow to the ground:** See *prostration*.

**Canon:** The liturgical centerpiece of Matins; also appointed in other services, including Compline, the Sunday Midnight Office, funerals, panikhidas, various molebens, as well as in private prayers such as the prayers in preparation for Holy Communion. An extended hymn with a varying number of sections called “canticles” or “songs” (usually there are 8,<sup>2</sup> but occasionally 9, and some canons have only 2 or 3).

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<sup>2</sup> Outside of Great Lent, an 8-canticle canon does not have a 2nd canticle, due to the extremely stern, dire tone of the related biblical ode (Deut. 32:1-43).

Each canticle is based on a *biblical ode* and begins with a sung *irmos* (or *heirmos*), which relates the content of the biblical ode with the theme of the canon. The irmos is followed by a number of *troparia*, each preceded by a short refrain relevant to the subject of the canon. For example, the refrain for canons to the Theotokos is “Most Holy Theotokos, save us,” while those to the Savior use the refrain, “Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee.”

**Chasoslav:** See *Horologion*.

**Choral concerto:** See *paraliturgical music*.

**Compline:** The final service of the *calendar day*.

**Dismissal:** The dialogue between the priest and the choir that concludes any service.

**Divine Liturgy:** The Eucharistic service. There are three major forms:

1. Of St. John Chrysostom:
2. Of St. Basil the Great:
3. Of the Presanctified Gifts: See *Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts*.

**Dogmatic Theotokion:** A single-stanza hymn on the theme of the Incarnation and the role of the Theotokos in it. Sung at Saturday-evening Vespers as the last *sticheron* on “Lord, I Call.” Also sung in the same liturgical position on Friday-evening Vespers, and when the given commemoration is of Doxology, Polyeleos or Vigil rank.

**Doxology:** An exclamation or hymn that gives glory to the Holy Trinity.

1. *Great Doxology* — Sung near the end of Matins. One of the most ancient Orthodox hymns.
2. *Small Doxology* — Read near the end of Matins; same text as the Great Doxology.
3. *Doxologies at the ends of Litanies and series of stichera* — Chanted “straight”. The final *sticheron* is often interpolated between the first half (“Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit...”) and the second (“Now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.”).

**Epiphon:** A refrain or interpolated Psalm verse that occurs *before* a hymn. Also see *hypophon*.

**Exapostilarion:** A short hymn after the Matins canon, frequently on the theme of Christ as the Light of the world. Usually read, but may be sung. Also known as the *Photogogicon*, *Svietilen*, or *Hymn of Light*.

**Forefeast:** Short preparatory period before a Great Feast.

**Gradual:** See *prokeimenon*.

**Great prokeimenon:** See *prokeimenon*.

**Heirmos:** See *irmos*.

**Horologion:** A service book for the choir and reader that contains the fixed portions of the daily services, as well as frequently-used canons, prayers and other material. Many also include reference material such as Kathisma tables and a *Menologion*.

**Hymn of Emperor Justinian:** See *Only-begotten Son*.

**Hymn of Light:** See *exapostilarion*.

**Hypophon:** A refrain or interpolated Psalm verse that occurs *after* a hymn. Also see *epiphon*.

**Iconostas:** The icon-covered screen separating the altar from the nave. Entry is through doors in the north and south, as well as the central Royal Doors.

**Ikos:** (pl. *ikoï*) A hymn, usually read or “chanted straight” (rather than sung) following the *kontakion* after ode 6 of a *canon*.

**Irmos:** (pl. *irmosi* or *irmoi*) From the Greek for “link” or “chain”. In a canon, a hymn that links the text of the given biblical ode with the theme of the canon. Sung by the choir in the appointed tone for the canon.

**Katavasia:** An *irmos* sung after the troparia of a given ode of a canon. May be a simple repeat of the same *irmos* sung at the beginning of the ode, or a different *irmos* altogether (often from the canon of an upcoming feast), depending on the rubrics for the given service. From the Greek for “to descend/go down”, a reference to the ancient practice of both choirs coming down to the center of the temple to sing the katavasia together.

**Kathisma:** One of 20 sections into which the Orthodox Psalter is divided. (Plural: *Kathismata*)

**Kliros:** The area of the temple reserved for the choir. Traditionally located slightly west of the *iconostas*, on the right side (or the right and left, if there are two choirs).

**Kondak:** See *Kontakion*.

**Kontakion:** 1. In the contemporary use, a kontakion (pl. *kontakia*) is a single-stanza hymn similar to a *troparion*. Kontakia are found after the sixth ode of *canons*, and are sung at the Divine Liturgy after the appointed *troparia*, as well as in other services such as the Hours, Compline (Small and Great) and during Akathists.

2. Originally, the kontakion was a lengthy musical sermon consisting of up to 24 hymns: the first hymn, also known as a kontakion, set the musical and metrical pattern for the remaining hymns, known as *ikoi* (sing. *ikos*).

**Lauds:** See *Praises*.

**Leavetaking:** See *apodosis*.

### **Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts:**

**Litya:** Also *Lity* or *Litia*. From the Greek *lith* (supplication, fervent prayer).

1. A service of entreaty sometimes performed in the narthex or west end of the nave during Great Vespers.

2. A short memorial service for the departed, often sung at the grave or after the Dismissal of the Divine Liturgy.

**Magnification:** In the Slav tradition, a Matins hymn consisting of Psalm verses interspersed with verses in honor of a feast or saint. Sometimes called a *Megalynarion*.

**Matins:** The longest and most complex Orthodox service.

**Megalynarion:** 1. In the Greek use, refers to the 9th irmos of a canon, together with its preceding magnification verse.

2. In the Slav use, may also refer to the *Magnification* hymn sung at Matins after the *Polyeleos*.

**Menologion:** A list of saints and feasts for every day of the year.

**Moleben:** A service of prayer, supplication and/or thanksgiving that may include a canon and/or a Cross-procession.

**Nave:** The area of the temple west of the *iconostas*, where the faithful stand.

**Nocturns:**

**Only-begotten Son:** Otherwise known as the *Hymn of Emperor Justinian*.

**Panikhida:** A memorial service for the departed. Typically served on the evening before a funeral and burial service, and on the anniversary of repose.

**Paraliturgical music:** Music outside the eight-tone system with text from Orthodox hymnography or Holy Scripture. May be performed in a concert, or (in many parishes) during clergy Communion.

**Paraments:** Liturgical textiles not worn on the body (e.g., the curtain behind the Royal Doors). Also see *vestments*.

**Photogogicon:** See *exapostilarion*.

**Polyeleos:** A hymn appointed to be sung at certain Matins services. The text comes from Psalms 134-5. The term *Polyeleos* means “many

mercies”, as mercy is mentioned many times in these Psalms. It also means “oil-abounding”; oil is symbolic of divine grace and mercy.

**Praises:** Psalms 148-150, sung with interpolated hymns near the end of Matins. In the west, *Lauds*.

**Prokeimenon:** Plural: *prokeimena*.

1. A short series of Psalm verses chanted antiphonally before a Scripture reading. The *Alleluia* before a Gospel reading is a type of Prokeimenon.

2. A *great prokeimenon* serves the same purpose but includes more verses and is often sung to a special festal melody.

**Prostration:** A liturgical gesture in which one makes the Sign of the Cross, drops to both knees, touches one’s forehead to the floor, and returns to a standing position. Sometimes called a *great bow* or a *bow to the ground*. Also see *reverence*.

**Reader’s service:** A form of a service arranged to be conducted without a priest. May be used for domestic prayer and in circumstances when a priest is unavailable.

**Reverence:** A gesture in which one makes the Sign of the Cross and bows forward from the waist, extending the right hand toward the floor. Also called a *bow from the waist*. Also see *prostration*.

**Stavrotheotokion:** A hymn on the topic of the Mother of God standing by the Cross of Christ.

**Sticheron:** Plural: *stichera/stikhiri*. Technically, a single-stanza hymn. Usually used when referring to hymns sung at “Lord, I Call”, during a Litya at Vespers, and during the Matins Praises. In Greek, *stichos*.

**Stichos:** See *sticheron*.

**Svietilen:** See *exapostilarion*.

**Theotokion:** A hymn about, or addressed to, the Mother of God. Typically the last hymn in a series of *stichera*. Also see *Dogmatic Theotokion* and *Stavrotheotokion*.

**Theotokos:** The Mother of God, the Virgin Mary.

**Thrice-holy Hymn:** See *Trisagion*.

**Trisagion:** “Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.” Sung or read during most divine services and rules of prayer. Also called the *Thrice-holy Hymn*.

**Troparion:** Plural: *troparia*.

1. A one-stanza hymn sung at the end of Vespers (its first appearance in the liturgical day), after “God is the Lord” at Matins, and after the Little Entrance of the Divine Liturgy (and also in several other circumstances). Also called the *apolytikion*.

2. Hymns read after each *irmos* of a *canon*

**Typikon:** (Plural: *Typika*) The book containing the rubrics and liturgical directives for each service. There are multiple *Typika*, hence the differences between Slavic and Byzantine liturgical practices.

**Ustav:** The Slavonic term for *Typicon*.

**Vespers:** The first service of the liturgical day.

1. Daily Vespers
2. Small Vespers
3. Great Vespers

**Vestments:** Liturgical clothing worn by clergy. Also see *paraments*.

**Zadostoinik:** A hymn appointed to be sung instead of “It is truly meet” at the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom or “In thee rejoices all creation” at the Liturgy of St. Basil the Great.