

6 *The Liturgy after the Victory of the Icons*

The Liturgy in the early seventh century still preserved its early simplicity of structure, although to the actions and prayers which made up the primary core of the rite secondary elements had already been added. When evidence for the text of the Liturgy first emerges in the Codex Barberini of the late eighth or early ninth century it is clear that subsequent developments have begun the process by which the primary elements became increasingly surrounded, and to some extent obscured, by additions to the service.

The eighth century was a turning-point in the development of Byzantine worship. It witnessed the controversy over the veneration of icons, whose vindication opened the way for the formulation of a scheme of church decoration which linked the sacred building and its iconography closely with the celebration of the Liturgy. The Liturgy itself came to be understood as a kind of icon, and it was in this period that the foundation of its subsequent interpretation was laid by the *Ecclesiastical History* of Germanos, Patriarch of Constantinople (died 733), one of our chief sources of information for the Liturgy in the eighth and ninth centuries.

The Iconoclastic Controversy

We have seen that the Byzantine tradition of religious art drew upon both the naturalistic Hellenistic tradition, and that of Mesopotamia, with its fully-frontal representation of holy persons in such a way as to emphasize their presence to the beholder. This technique had been increasingly used in Byzantine religious art in the sixth and seventh centuries, not only in the decoration of churches, but in the making of portable icons, kept and venerated at home. The earliest portable icons to have survived, from the late sixth or early seventh centuries, are remarkably similar to those produced after the theology of icons had been fully worked out in the course of the iconoclastic controversy.

Such images came to be honoured by lighting candles in front of them and burning incense before them, in the same way as Christians in the fourth century had venerated the image of Constantine.

The veneration of icons had no doubt sometimes been exaggerated in popular religious devotion but the attack launched against icons in the early eighth century was directed against any use of images in a religious context. It began in Asia Minor, and found powerful imperial patronage in Leo III, who had been commander of the army in Asia before becoming Emperor in 717. In 726 the famous icon of Christ over the Chalke Gate of the imperial palace in Constantinople was destroyed. Popular disturbances resulted, and the government took action against the defenders of the images. Persecution continued under Leo's successor, Constantine V (741–75).

From Syria St John of Damascus defended the making and veneration of icons. Denying the charge of idolatry, he distinguished clearly between the worship due to God and the veneration paid to images of Christ and the saints. The second commandment had to be understood in the light of the circumstances in which it was framed. Even in Judaism representations of living creatures were allowed. For Christians the incarnation of the Son of God was the primary justification for making representations: if God had taken human flesh, then the incarnate Lord could be represented pictorially.

The iconoclasts argued that the only permissible figure of the humanity of Christ was the bread and wine of the Eucharist. They pointed out that the Fathers of the Church had left behind no prayer for the hallowing images. Painted representations implied heresy: either the painter confuses the manhood with the Godhead, and so falls into monophysitism; or he represents the manhood alone, and so like Nestorius separates it from the divinity. Iconoclast doctrine was embodied in the decisions of the Council of Hieria in 754. Meanwhile images were removed from churches, and the use of portable icons banned. Only symbolic art might be used in decorating churches, and the cross became a frequent feature of iconoclast art. There was no objection to the representation of animals or birds, of plants or trees.

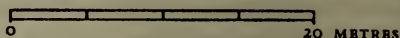
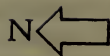
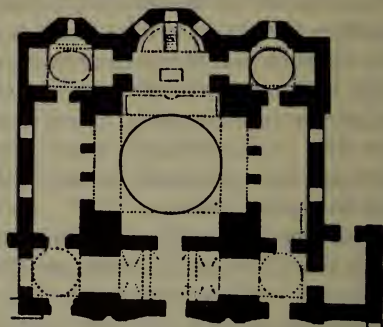
Opposition to iconoclasm was centred in the monastic communities. The controversy evoked fierce passions, and there were extremists on both sides. Persecution of iconodules continued until Leo IV's accession in 775. Under his widow Irene a

moderate iconodule Tarasius became patriarch, and in 787 the Seventh Ecumenical Council of Nicaea met and drew up a definition of Orthodox belief about icons and their veneration, based on the teaching of St John of Damascus. The Council repudiated the iconoclasts' claim that the consecrated elements in the Eucharist were the only permissible icon of Christ: they are no icon, but the very reality of his Body and Blood, identical with him in essence. It affirmed that the veneration given to icons is distinct from the worship due to God, and is paid rather to their prototypes, for the image is identical with its prototype according to its meaning, even though it differs from it according to its essence. Images, whether painted on wood or made of mosaic or fresco, can rightly be honoured with candles and incense, and a hierarchy is to be discerned among them: the icon of Christ comes first, then that of his Mother. Next come images of the angels who have appeared in embodied form, and then those of apostles, martyrs and other saints.

Iconoclasm revived in the early part of the ninth century, and it was not until 843 that Theodora, widow of the last iconoclast Emperor Theophilus, working with the moderate iconodule Patriarch Methodius, reaffirmed the decisions of the Council of 787. The controversy had so integrated the veneration of icons into Orthodox practice, and so closely linked its justification with the doctrine of the incarnation, that the final restoration of the icons came to be celebrated on the first Sunday of Lent as the Victory of Orthodoxy. At the beginning of the controversy the defenders of icons emphasized their educational and evangelical value: images represent pictorially what the Scriptures describe in words. By the end of the controversy there was far greater stress on their sacramental character as making present to the worshipper what they represented. Icons had come to be seen as a means of grace, enabling the worshipper to stand in faith before the person depicted and to converse with him or her.

Church Design and Decoration in the Ninth Century

Three basic principles of church decoration governed the development of iconography after the victory of the icons. The image must first be made so as to make clear its identity of meaning with its prototype: persons and events must be clearly recognizable. Not only were they depicted in accordance with fixed rules, but they were identified by a title. This enabled the worshipper to



The church of the Dormition at Nicaea, early eighth century, showing the plan and section of an early cross-domed church.

relate to the image, which had further to be represented frontally, so that there could be a real meeting between the image and its prototype, and the beholder. The worshipper really stood before Christ, his Mother and the saints: he was present at the nativity, the crucifixion, the resurrection and the ascension. Finally, each image had to occupy its proper place in the hierarchical order of things: first Christ, then his Mother, then the angels and saints in their due order of precedence.

The pattern of church decoration that embodied these principles was, from the ninth century onwards, normally applied to a church designed as a cross within a square, surmounted by a central cupola. The variety of shapes which had been used in previous centuries gave way to the shape which embodied as completely as possible the Byzantine concept of the church

building as itself a symbolic space, and which provided the best possible framework for the hierarchical arrangement of the images it needed to contain. From this time on it is less than adequate to speak of church decoration, for the mosaics or frescoes applied to the building formed an integral part of the sacred space into which the worshipper entered for the celebration of the sacred mysteries. Church building, church decoration and the Liturgy coalesced into a complex of symbols, in which the divine mystery of God's saving love was made present in order that the worshipper might be caught up into it and participate in the worship and life of heaven.

The first church of which we have a description in the immediate post-iconoclastic period is the New Church, built in the imperial palace in Constantinople by the Emperor Basil I, and dedicated in honour of the Mother of God. It was perhaps cautious in its use of images, for it made use only of individual figures, not of representations of events: icons had been defended first of all as a means of communication with persons. Preaching at its consecration in 881 Patriarch Photius said:

In the dome there is a figure of a man, representing Christ, made of small coloured stones. You could say that he is looking down over the world, and considering its order and its government, so strikingly has the artist expressed, in shape and colour, the Creator's providence for us. In the cross-shaped sections around the dome of the cupola a large number of angels is depicted, who crowd around their Lord to serve him. From the apse which rises from the sanctuary there shines forth the figure of the Virgin, who spreads out her immaculate hands for us, and bestows on the Emperor good fortune and victory over his enemies. The apostles and martyrs, and the prophets and patriarchs, adorn the temple, which is filled with their images.

Worshippers, entering such a church, entered an image of the universe. In the dome, symbolizing heaven, from which light streamed down, they saw Christ Pantocrator, ruling the universe he had created and redeemed. In the highest vaults around the dome they saw the heavenly hosts of angels. In the conch of the apse, the next highest space, they saw the Mother of God, symbol of the Church. From the upper parts of the walls, in their due order, the saints confronted them. They themselves, though still on earth, in the lowest part of the church, yet knew and could see

that here and now they had fellowship with the saints and angels, and dared even to claim their part in the life of the glorified Christ, in whom they could hope to share in the hidden yet mysteriously revealed life of the Holy Trinity. For they had entered a church which was not only a visual proclamation of the gospel, but an icon of that salvation which it made available for their appropriation.

The Liturgy in the Ninth Century

This is the earliest period for which we have definite knowledge of the text of the Liturgy in the Byzantine Church. The Codex Barberini dates from about AD 800, and contains the prayers used by the celebrant at the different services of the Church. So far as the Liturgy is concerned, this euchologion contains the prayers that make up the rite of St Basil, which is explicitly ascribed to him, and which is given first. At this time it was still the Liturgy most frequently used. The prayers of a second rite are given, except where they are identical with those of the first rite. They make up what came to be known as the Liturgy of St John Chrysostom, although in the Codex only some of the prayers are explicitly ascribed to him. In both rites there is a considerable number of prayers and formulae which certainly do not go back to the late fourth and early fifth centuries, though as we have seen it is possible that the earliest stratum in each rite owes its present form to its respective traditional author. The deacon's prayers are not included in the rite, although they are sometimes indicated, and there is only a minimum of rubrical direction. The euchologion gives the skeleton of the rite, which must be clothed and animated from other sources of information. The chief of these is the commentary on the Liturgy written by Germanos I, Patriarch of Constantinople 715–30, called *Ecclesiastical History and Mystical Contemplation*. Its popularity as an interpretation of the Liturgy caused it to be added to as time went on, to match developments in the rite itself. Consequently the *Ecclesiastical History* in its different recensions is a valuable witness to the shape of the Liturgy at several stages in its growth.

The Codex Barberini shows that several developments had taken place since the seventh century, which are of considerable importance for the shape of the Liturgy. Additions had been made to the rite which tended to obscure the clear structure it still had in the time of Maximus, and some of these were to develop

still further in the next few centuries. Three of the most significant additions had been made at the beginning of the Liturgy.

The Prothesis

The first was, strictly speaking, less an addition to the service itself than one to the preliminary preparation of the elements. We have seen how in the East the people deposited their offerings of bread and wine on their way into church, and how, at the Great Church at any rate, they did so at the *skeuophylakion*, detached from the church itself. From these sufficient was set aside for the Liturgy. No mention is made of what to begin with was a purely practical action until the early eighth century, when Germanos shows that it had acquired symbolic significance. The bread of the prothesis was taken and pierced by a liturgical spear. This may have been done in silence in Germanos' time. But by the time of the *Codex Barberini* the prayer of oblation in the present rite of the prothesis had been added in the rite of St Basil, to be said by the priest in the *skeuophylakion* while he puts the bread onto the paten.

In the middle of the ninth century the first elaboration of this part of the rite had taken place. The version of Germanos' explanation translated by Anastasius the Librarian in 869-70 contained an additional paragraph describing a more complex prothesis rite than that of Germanos himself:

The priest receives the *prosphora* on a paten from the deacon or subdeacon, takes the lance and cleans it, then makes the sign of the cross on the *prosphora* with it and says 'He was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and as a sheep before his shearer is dumb.' When he has said this he puts the *prosphora* on the holy paten and pointing to it says: 'So he opened not his mouth: in his humility his judgement was taken away, his generation who can tell? For his life is removed from the earth.' Having said this he takes the holy chalice and the deacon, pouring into it wine and water, says: 'There came out of his side water and blood, and he who saw it bears witness and his witness is true.' And after this putting the holy chalice on the holy table he points to the sacrificial lamb represented by the bread, and the blood shed represented by the wine, looks intently at them and says: 'There are three that bear witness, the Spirit and the water and the blood, and the three are one. Now and always

and for ever.' Then he takes the censer and when he has censed them he says the prayer of the prothesis.

The significance of the bread and the incision made in it in the original version of the *Ecclesiastical History*, in which Germanos refers to Isaiah 53.7 and John 19.34 without indicating whether or not they were spoken, has given rise a century later to liturgical formulae making that significance explicit. The development of the prothesis has meant that it is now performed by the priest, and has ceased to be part of the deacon's liturgy.

It has often been said that this formal preparation of the gifts must have been performed originally just before they were brought in at the Great Entrance. This supposition has been made partly because other rites have an offertory prayer at that point – the Byzantine prayer of prothesis is found in the Liturgy of St James in connection with the Great Entrance – and partly because Germanos speaks of the *proskomidia* at that moment in his explanation of the Liturgy as well as at the beginning. But it is equally likely that the prayer of prothesis was borrowed from the Byzantine rite by the Liturgy of St James and that Germanos speaks of the *proskomidia* just before the Great Entrance because originally the preliminary prothesis concerned only the bread, while the mixing of the chalice was done just before the deacons brought in the gifts. The likelihood is that the prothesis rite did not exist at all until some time between Maximus and Germanos, and that when it appeared it was as the ritualized form of the preliminary preparation of the bread in the *skeuophylakion*: it was never transferred to that position from elsewhere in the Liturgy.

The prayer of oblation which soon came to be recited at it anticipates the function of the anaphora by asking God to accept the gifts at the heavenly altar before the Liturgy has even begun. Its introduction must have both reflected and reinforced the tendency to think of the gifts as somehow already holy by the time the Liturgy begins. What began as a simple, even if significant, ceremony, was destined to flourish exceedingly in the coming centuries.

The Antiphons

The second significant addition made to the rite by the end of the eighth century were the three antiphons. Germanos mentions

them at the beginning of the century. The three accompanying prayers provided in the Codex Barberini are found in the Liturgy today.

The antiphons were psalms or portions of psalms chanted with a refrain between verses. In the ninth and tenth centuries they were usually Psalms 91 (92), 92 (93) and 94 (95). In Constantinople the usual refrains were: 'At the prayers of the Mother of God, Saviour, save us'; 'Alleluia'; and 'Only-begotten Son', a composition attributed to Justinian. The latter was sometimes transferred to the second antiphon if the third was provided with a special refrain for a festival.

The origin of this addition to the Liturgy seems to have been the custom of singing three antiphons as a separate short service in the course of the processions which took place on certain occasions before the Liturgy, when the patriarch went formally from the Great Church to the church where the Liturgy was to be celebrated. Certainly in the tenth century these processional antiphons were considered the equivalent of the usual three at the beginning of the Liturgy, and when the procession arrived at the stational church the Liturgy began with the Trisagion. The custom no doubt antedates the tenth century.

There was already, as we have seen, an entry chant at the beginning of the Liturgy, consisting of a psalm with a refrain, or troparion, which at one time was the Trisagion. To this single entry psalm were added, some time between the early seventh and early eighth centuries, two further psalms, in order to make normal practice conform to the special practice of the stational processions. The nearest suitable psalms in the psalter seem to have been added to the existing entry psalm. This was usually Psalm 94 (95), suited by reason of the verse 'Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving'. Psalm 93 (94) was too blood-thirsty, and was passed over in favour of 91 (92) and 92 (93).

The troparion, 'Only-begotten Son', was probably already attached to Psalm 94 (95) when it stood by itself as the entrance psalm as the refrain for most Sundays. It had presumably at some stage displaced the Trisagion, which nevertheless kept a place in the Liturgy, shorn of the psalm it had once accompanied, only its manner of execution hinting at its former function.

It is not clear whether the prayers of the antiphons were recited out loud or silently. Perhaps they were at one time said out loud, preceded by the deacon's invitation, 'Let us pray to the Lord'. The so-called Lesser Litany, which from the tenth century was

said before the second and third antiphons, may in origin be simply an amplification of this bidding, designed to accompany the prayer once it came to be said silently.

The three antiphons were not regarded as a fixed part of the Liturgy for several centuries. They could be omitted when there was a procession to a stational church, whether or not antiphons were sung during it; and up to the twelfth century in Constantinople the patriarch made his entry only during the third antiphon. But their introduction had important consequences, for it meant that the service no longer began with the entry of the clergy, let alone with that of the people. By this time, it seems, they gathered in the church before the Liturgy began. It was only the clergy who entered formally, and that only after the service had begun. While it is true that in the large and well-staffed churches of the capital the bishop made his entrance only during the third antiphon, Germanos early in the eighth century could already refer at this point to the entry of the Gospel. The book of Gospels had for centuries been carried in the entry procession. But now it is coming to be regarded as the chief feature of the entry.

In churches which were not provided with separate external skeuophylakia the entry was still further changed in its form and significance. In the post-iconoclastic period churches were commonly built with two side apses flanking the larger sanctuary apse. The northern came to be used for the prothesis, and was so called, the southern for the storage of vestments, books, and other liturgical equipment. In such churches the preparation of the bread and wine, now required to be done by a priest, was no doubt, in its simplest form, performed during the first two antiphons. The entry of the clergy with the Gospels became simply a procession from the chapel of the prothesis to the sanctuary, passing through the church. The real entrance of Maximus' time was becoming the so-called 'Little Entrance' of the Byzantine Liturgy in its final form. This transformation had begun by the ninth century, if not in the city itself, at any rate in the provinces. The entry prayer thus came to be attached to the entry into the sanctuary instead of the entry into the church. Perhaps the prayer of the entry in Codex Barberini's second rite, which alone survived into the present Orthodox Liturgy, reflects this situation, since its reference to the entry of the angels better fits the entry of the clergy into the sanctuary than that of people into the church.

The Great Litany

At some time during the ninth century it became the custom to recite the synapte, or litany, after the entry and before the Trisagion. Its original position was after the readings and homily, and the dismissal of the catechumens – the place where the great intercession, or prayers of the faithful, had always been. So firmly for a while did it make its home after the entry that in the tenth century it was sometimes referred to as the synapte of the Trisagion, and the prayer of the Trisagion was said silently by the priest while the deacon was chanting the petitions of the litany. The synapte did not lose its original place, however: it continued to be recited, in full or in an abridged form, in its old position. Placed after the entry, the synapte further complicated the beginning of the service, and separated the Trisagion from the entry to which it had once belonged.

The Readings

In the seventh century the Byzantine rite still had three readings, from the Old and New Testaments and the Gospels. By Germanos' time the Old Testament reading had disappeared. It left behind the psalm which had been sung between the first two readings. It came to be called the *prokeimenon*, a term which in the usage of Constantinople referred to a psalm verse sung before a psalm itself, whose final clause only was repeated after each verse of the psalm as a refrain. For centuries all or a large part of the psalm was so sung: it was only much later that the psalmody here, as in other places, suffered drastic reduction.

The Litany of Fervent Supplication

In the Codex Barberini the readings are followed by a litany called *ektene*, from the adjective meaning fervent or insistent and applied here to intercession or supplication. The litany of fervent supplication differs from the synapte in several respects. Its petitions are addressed to God himself, and are not requests for the people's prayers. Its opening petitions contain three verbs of asking, and the response, for most of the petitions, is a triple *Kyrie eleison*.

In the ninth century and later this litany varied a good deal in its content and in the detail of its structure. It seems to have

begun by the deacon indicating to the people the response: 'Let us say Kyrie eleison', and then urging them to pray in the right spirit: 'With all our soul and with all our mind let us say'. The petitions forming the core of the litany had an emphatically penitential character, as did the priest's prayer. The original final petition, 'Have mercy on us O God according to your great mercy' was based on Psalm 51 (50): to it the people responded with a variable number of Kyrie eleisons, sometimes specified as nine or twelve. The response to the other petitions was a single Kyrie eleison, and it was the final response that gave the litany its name.

Its origin is to be sought in the penitential processions of supplication, or rogations, which were held in the capital on the anniversaries of natural or other disasters from which Constantinople suffered. Each time the procession halted the deacon recited the *ektene*, or 'great Kyrie eleison'. On certain occasions the station included scripture readings, and it was after the Gospel that the *ektene* was used. It was no doubt in imitation of this practice that the *ektene* was introduced into the Liturgy, at about the same time as the *synapte* was moved to its new position after the entry. The Codex Barberini shows that it was introduced before the end of the eighth century.

The effect of this addition was to obscure the structure of the rite at this point. The prayers of the faithful, offered in the petitions of the *synapte*, had earlier always followed the dismissal of the catechumens, since they were not considered capable of praying with the faithful, having not yet received the Spirit in baptism. By the eighth century the dismissal of the catechumens was a meaningless survival, and no one saw any incongruity in inserting prayers offered by the faithful before it.

The Prayers of the Faithful

The Codex Barberini contains two prayers, called the prayers of the faithful, said after the dismissal of the catechumens. The first is said 'after the eileton (corporal) has been unfolded'. The prayers for the two rites are those found in the modern Liturgy.

The prayers given for the Liturgy of St Basil have little to do with the faithful. They are prayers of the clergy and for the clergy, and both are prayers of preparation for the celebration of the Eucharist. They have no connection with the original prayers of the faithful, and reflect a later stage in the understanding of the

role of the clergy in the service and their relationship with the laity.

The prayers given for the second rite are also concerned with the clergy, the first exclusively so, the second partly with them, partly with the laity. They reflect the tendency, which had been growing since the fourth century, of distinguishing the clergy from the laity not only physically, in the arrangements of the church, but spiritually. The clergy were closer to the altar not only because their place was in the sanctuary, but because of the ministry committed to them at their ordination. In all these prayers the 'we' refers to the clergy alone – a complete contrast with the older prayers in the Liturgy in which the 'we' is spoken by the bishop as the tongue of the whole people of God. The people have now become 'those who pray with us', and whose prayers are offered to God by the clergy. There could hardly be a greater contrast with Chrysostom's insistence that the prayers of the faithful – in the original sense of that term – were one of the moments in the Eucharist when there is no distinction between clergy and laity.

Behind this development lay the comparison commonly made from the fourth century onwards between the ministry of the Church of the New Covenant with that of the Church of the Old. Only the High Priest in the old dispensation was able to enter the holy of holies, to offer sacrifices of propitiation for the people. The implications of this view for the Christian priesthood were reinforced from the end of the fifth century by the teaching of Dionysius the Areopagite. For him the whole universe is hierarchically organized. Beneath the celestial hierarchy is the ecclesiastical, each of whose orders mediates to those below the illumination which comes from God, enabling those below to be purified and illuminated, and so gradually to ascend to the knowledge and contemplation of God. Dionysius' ideas had wide currency, and strengthened the earlier tendency to make of the clergy a distinct class, set apart from the rest of the Church, and possessing a mediatorial role between the laity and God.

In the celebration of the Liturgy this process was both reflected and strengthened by the spreading custom of reciting most of the prayers of the service inaudibly. Justinian's attempt to combat its establishment in Constantinople failed, and by the end of the eighth century it was well established. The Codex Barberini indicates that certain of the prayers are to be read 'mystically' by the priest. They include most of the anaphora

after the *Sanctus*, though not, it seems, the first part of the prayer. Some prayers not so marked would certainly have been said silently as well. Prayers such as prayers of the faithful, which are purely clerical devotions, were never intended to be said out loud. It is impossible to be certain which prayers were still recited audibly in the ninth century. The rubric 'out loud' which precedes the final doxology of all the prayers in the *Codex Barberini* does not necessarily imply that the prayers themselves were said silently. It is found, for example, before the doxology of the Lord's Prayer, which was sung by the people. It may simply indicate that the doxology was to be sung in a more solemn manner. In the anaphora those parts which are said 'mystically' conclude with a final phrase chanted 'out loud' which leads into the people's response.

In more recent Orthodox practice the two prayers of the faithful are accompanied by two short litanies. Before the twelfth century the second was a more or less complete version of the synapte. It tended to be shortened because the whole synapte was now recited earlier on. In some churches a few of the petitions of the synapte still form part of the second litany. Underlying this rather puzzling form is the original great synapte, the real prayers of the faithful. Their former presence is indicated by the introduction to the first of the two existing short litanies: 'Let us who are believers . . . in peace pray to the Lord', with which the prayers of the faithful began in the Clementine Liturgy. In the old Constantinopolitan tradition the one litany was accompanied by two prayers, one recited silently by the priest while the deacon sang the biddings, the other said by him out loud as the concluding prayer of the litany. In the first the priest asked for grace to be able to offer to God the prayers of the people, in the second he invoked God's blessing on them and asked for their worthy participation in the mysteries about to be celebrated. The litany was perhaps divided into two when the original function of the two prayers was no longer understood, and when both had come to be recited inaudibly.

The Great Entrance

The *Codex Barberini* provides a prayer to be said by the priest for himself while the Cherubic Hymn is being sung. It is given only for the Liturgy of St Basil, though it may well have been used in the second rite, and its text is close to that of the modern rite. One

variant is of interest. The prayer speaks of Christ as the one who 'offers and is offered, sanctifies and is sanctified'. The text which eventually prevailed out of a number of alternatives read: 'who offers and is offered, receives and is distributed'. In the twelfth century a theological controversy centred on these words. If Christ is the person of the Trinity who offers the Eucharist, can he be said also to receive it? Two councils held in Constantinople in 1156 and 1157 decided that the eucharistic sacrifice was offered by Christ to the Holy Trinity, to the Father and to the Holy Spirit as well as to himself. The prayer of the Cherubic Hymn is another private prayer of the priest of the kind called 'apologies', and is the only one in the Liturgy couched in the first person singular – something quite foreign to the classical liturgical tradition of the Church. That, and its address to Christ, mark it as a comparatively late composition. Its content is in essence similar to that of the prayers of the faithful and the prayer of the proskomidia, which is the original Byzantine prayer of preparation for the celebration of the mysteries.

It was several centuries before the prayer acquired its present place in the complex of actions and prayers accompanying the bringing in of the gifts and their placing on the altar. Meanwhile its precise position varied. So long as the bishop or priest took no part in the procession, it could be said, as the Codex Barberini implies, while the procession was coming in. It eventually settled down before the entrance of the mysteries and was begun when the choir began the Cherubic Hymn.

Early in the eighth century Germanos mentions the proskomidia immediately before the entry of the gifts. As we have seen, it is unlikely that he is referring to more than the immediate preparation of the chalice. Like the prothesis before the Liturgy began, concerned with the preparation of the bread, it took place in the skeuophylakion at the Great Church. The gifts were brought in by the deacons, escorted by candles, incense and liturgical fans. The bishop received them in the sanctuary, set them on the altar, and when he had covered them with a veil, censed them. He then said the prayer of the proskomidia.

The Kiss of Peace and the Creed

In the ninth century, and for some time after, the kiss of peace was still exchanged by the whole congregation after the completion of the Great Entrance. No doubt the ancient custom was

maintained of exchanging the kiss within certain groups, clergy with clergy, men with men, women with women. The orderly character of the ceremony emerges clearly from a tenth-century description in the *De Ceremoniis* of the Emperor's part in the exchange on an occasion when he participated formally in the Liturgy:

The sovereigns go out again (from the imperial box, or metatorion) for the kiss of peace, and the Patriarch stands within the chancel on the right side of the sanctuary, towards the metatorion, and the sovereigns, standing outside the chancel, give the kiss first of all to the Patriarch, then after him to the syncellos and all the metropolitans and archbishops, and to the protopope of the Great Church, and to the dignitaries of the Patriarch. All those who give the kiss of peace to the Emperors the referendarius leads up by the hand. Then the Emperors give the kiss of peace to the Patriarch again, then going down a little from the chancel they give the kiss of peace to all those of the senate, all of whom the master of ceremonies leads up by the hand. And after greeting the Patriarch the sovereigns depart for the metatorion (cf. Taft, *op. cit.*, p. 396).

The kiss of peace was still a significant part of the service.

When it had been concluded the deacon proclaimed 'The doors, the doors'. In the Codex Barberini it is no doubt a relic of the time when the doors of the church were closed after the dismissal of the catechumens. We have seen that this was still done in the early seventh century. The doors should of course have been closed before the entry of the mysteries, though one set of doors would have had to be opened for the procession so long as it came from outside the church itself. But a final warning may have been felt to be in place before the anaphora began. There is a similar duplication in the Clementine Liturgy of the warning to catechumens to depart. But in fact at any rate by the tenth century, and perhaps earlier, the command at this point in the service was understood to refer to the doors of the sanctuary, which were closed after the kiss of peace. A tenth-century text of the Liturgy directs the deacon to mount the ambo at the end of the anaphora and call for them to be opened again.

The same source, the Codex Pyromalus, shows that the creed was at the time still sung by the whole congregation. The Codex Barberini too indicates that the people sang other parts of the service, including the Cherubic Hymn, the Sanctus and the

Lord's Prayer, and that they made the responses to the various greetings and exhortations.

The Anaphora

The creed finished, the anaphora began. Although the Codex Barberini could be taken to imply that the first part of the prayer was still recited audibly, it is practically certain that by the end of the eighth century the whole prayer was said silently, punctuated by certain phrases chanted out loud.

But if the people could not hear the greater part of the prayer, they could still see what was going on in the sanctuary. The description of the kiss of peace in the *De Ceremoniis* shows that there was no solid barrier between the sanctuary and the nave: the Emperor and the patriarch could exchange the kiss across the low chancel barrier. The custom of concealing the sanctuary during the anaphora by means of a curtain first appeared in the eleventh century in monastic circles. The chancel barrier was designed to provide a defined space for the clergy and to prevent access to the sanctuary by the laity: it was not intended to prevent the people seeing the altar and what went on at it. Whatever may have been the case elsewhere, in Constantinople the people could still participate visually in the offering of the gifts.

After the anaphora the bishop gave a blessing, as in the modern rite – no longer Chrysostom's 'Peace be with you all' – and there followed a litany accompanied by a prayer said silently by the bishop. The litany is only indicated in the Codex Barberini, but was no doubt not very different from that in the modern rite. The accompanying prayers are those of the present Liturgy. The Clementine Liturgy contained a litany at this point, concluded by a prayer said by the bishop, and it may be that the Byzantine rite also included it well before the end of the eighth century, even though the Codex Barberini is the first positive evidence for its existence.

The present form includes the 'angel of peace' biddings. The earliest form of this sequence is found in the fourth-century *Apostolic Constitutions*, where it occurs in the Eucharist after the prayers for the catechumens just before their dismissal. A similar sequence is found in the same source at the end of the final litany of morning and evening prayer. From their position it seems these petitions were considered suitable for those about to leave the church and resume their life in the world. They all, but especially

the catechumens who have not yet been fortified by the grace of the Holy Spirit in baptism, need the support and guidance of their guardian angel in their struggle against the angel of darkness and evil spirits. They may have belonged originally to the dismissal of the catechumens: that is certainly the context in which Chrysostom mentions them. But they were obviously appropriate to the faithful too, and soon became part of their prayer at the end of the morning and evening services. They are to be found there in Vespers and Orthros in the Byzantine rite.

In the fully-developed Byzantine Liturgy they occur twice: in the litany after the Great Entrance, and in that before the Lord's Prayer after the anaphora, where alone the Codex Barberini mentions them. It is rather surprising it mentions them at all, since it does not normally indicate the presence of a litany at other points where we know one existed: it is a euchologion, not a complete text of the rite. Perhaps it indicates a recent introduction of these petitions into the litany at this point. The petitions for the acceptance of the gifts offered are certainly far older here.

It may be that the 'angel of peace' petitions found their way into this litany from the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts. That service consists essentially of Vespers followed by Communion from the reserved sacrament. The final litany of Vespers including these petitions is sung immediately before the Lord's Prayer, said in preparation for Communion. Perhaps by a process of assimilation they were added to the existing litany before that prayer in the Liturgy itself.

In the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts the same litany is preceded by the Great Entrance, in which the consecrated bread and a chalice of unconsecrated wine are brought in and set on the altar. It was perhaps this juxtaposition that led ultimately to the introduction of this litany after the Great Entrance in the present rites of St John Chrysostom and St Basil. It is not possible to say whether this happened before or after the introduction of the 'angel of peace' biddings into the litany after the anaphora. The fact that the Codex Barberini does not mention it is not decisive, given its lack of reference to most litanies. It is perhaps more likely that the petitions were first added to the existing litany after the anaphora some time before the ninth century, and that the litany after the Great Entrance was added later.

The Lord's Prayer was then said, followed by the greeting 'Peace be with you', and the deacon's command 'Let us bow our heads to the Lord'. The prayers supplied for the blessing

traditionally given at this point are those of the present rite. The prayer in the second rite is to be said 'mystically', the doxology of both is to be said 'out loud'.

A prayer, in essence that of the present rite, was said by the priest in preparation for the elevation of the consecrated bread – another prayer of priestly devotion – and when the deacon had called the people to order by his cry 'Let us attend', the priest lifted up the consecrated bread above the paten, saying: 'Holy things for holy people'. This gesture had been mentioned by Maximus the Confessor, and seems to have been a natural development from the fifth-century gesture of the celebrant raising his hands at this point as an appeal for attention. The people made their traditional reply: 'One is holy, one is Lord, Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father.'

The Codex Barberini directs the priest to take portions from the consecrated bread and put them in the chalices. This presupposes a large number of communicants. As he does so he says, 'For the fullness of the Holy Spirit', a formula first found in an eighth-century translation into Armenian of the Liturgy of St John Chrysostom. There is no mention of the *zeon* in the Codex. It seems that it was not performed everywhere, and there are manuscripts of the Liturgy up to the fourteenth century which do not contain it.

We do not know precisely when and where the custom began of putting the bread into the chalice and giving communion with a spoon. The Council in Trullo of 692 forbade the use of any kind of receptacle for receiving Communion, and affirmed that the hands of a living man, made in the image and likeness of God, are the only appropriate receptacle for the sacrament of the Body of Christ. The spoon seems to have been introduced some time during the eighth century, and its use gradually spread. The practice was criticized by Western writers in the ninth century. After it had become general for the laity, the clergy continued to receive Communion in the traditional way.

During Communion a psalm was sung. The Codex Barberini provides a blessing immediately after Communion, 'O God save your people and bless your heritage', which is the sign for 'Let our mouths be filled with your praise' to be sung. A litany follows, probably much like the present one, while the priest says silently the prayer proper to each Liturgy, found in the present rite, though said there after the Communion of the clergy. A similar litany, followed by a prayer said out loud, is found in the

Clementine Liturgy; and some such form had no doubt been part of the Byzantine rite for some time.

When it was finished the deacon dismissed the people with 'Let us go forth in peace', and they replied 'In the name of the Lord'. The clergy processed out to the skeuophylakion as they had always done. Just beyond the ambo the bishop stopped to give the final blessing by saying the prayer behind the ambo. For the Liturgy of St Basil the Codex Barberini gives a prayer virtually identical with that now used in both Liturgies. A different prayer is given for the second rite. The present prayer was originally used on ordinary days. For festivals special 'prayers behind the ambo' were provided. Some forty different such prayers have survived: they fell into disuse in favour of a single fixed prayer only in the fourteenth century.

Back in the skeuophylakion there was, from the eighth century, a final prayer to be said, one for each rite.

Between the early seventh and early ninth centuries several important developments took place in the Liturgy at Constantinople, which make the period a turning-point in the history of Byzantine eucharistic worship. The prothesis appeared as the ritualized preparation of the elements before the beginning of the public service. To the beginning of that service were added the antiphons; and the synapte, or litany, was introduced after the entry and before the Trisagion. The ektene, or litany of fervent supplication, was inserted after the Gospel. These served to obscure the basic structure of the rite which had hitherto survived unencumbered.

Some of the most important prayers of the service, notably the anaphora, had already come to be recited inaudibly. This marked the beginning of the process whereby the people were gradually excluded from direct participation in the central action of the Eucharist. It began, too, the process whereby the Liturgy came to be divided into two: one part – the original core of the service – celebrated by the clergy in the sanctuary, inaudibly and later on invisibly; the other, led by the deacon, conducted simultaneously in the nave.

The growing clericalization of the service gave rise to an increasing number of prayers of devotion for the clergy, so encumbering still further the structure of the rite with secondary texts.

At the same time the tradition of interpreting the different moments of the rite symbolically provided the worshipper with a

wealth of meanings he could attach to a service in whose central action he took less and less part.

The *Ecclesiastical History* of Germanos of Constantinople

One of the most widely used commentaries on the Liturgy was the *Ecclesiastical History*. In its original form it is now generally held to have been written by Germanos I, Patriarch of Constantinople from 715 to 730. A Latin version was sent to Charles the Bald by the Roman Anastasius the Librarian, who spent some time in Constantinople 869–70. The text he translated had already been added to, and in the following centuries still more additions and alterations were made to the *History*, in order to keep pace with developments in the Liturgy itself. It was sometimes copied with the text of the Liturgy, and in the sixteenth century a version of the work was printed alongside the first printed text of the three Liturgies: St John Chrysostom, St Basil, and the Liturgy of the Presanctified. It was regarded for many centuries as almost the official explanation of the rite.

The full title of Germanos' commentary is significant: *The Ecclesiastical History and Mystical Contemplation*. The latter part links the work with the approach of Maximus the Confessor and Dionysius the Areopagite, both of whom were concerned primarily with the contemplation of the eternal realities of which the Liturgy and its component parts were the symbols. Writing within the Alexandrian theological tradition they gave less prominence to the saving events in the life of Jesus Christ. Germanos is not without concern for this aspect of the meaning of the Liturgy. But he gives greater prominence to the contemplation of the events of salvation history – the 'historia', which also means contemplation, of the way in which God made himself known in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, and which enables the worshipper to participate in the salvation which those events brought about. With the Alexandrian approach, already well established in the Byzantine tradition, Germanos united the concern with historical events and with the full humanity of Jesus of the Antiochene tradition.

Both aspects are apparent in his interpretation of the church building. 'The church is an earthly heaven in which the super-celestial God dwells and walks about'. But it also 'represents the crucifixion, burial and resurrection of Christ'. The apse

represents both the cave of the nativity and the sepulchre. The holy table symbolizes both the place where the body of Christ was laid: it is also the throne of God, and the table of the Last Supper. The ciborium over the altar is there 'to represent concisely the crucifixion, burial and resurrection of Christ'. But if the altar represents the tomb of Christ, it also 'is and is called the heavenly and spiritual altar, where the earthly and material priests who always assist and serve the Lord represent the spiritual, serving and hierarchical powers of the immaterial and celestial Power'. The fulfilment of salvation history is symbolized too: for the bema – the sanctuary – and in particular the bishop's throne with the benches of the clergy point to the second coming of Christ to sit on his throne of judgement. Outside the sanctuary, the ambo in the middle of the nave stands for the stone rolled away from the entrance to the sepulchre, and so proclaims the resurrection.

Posture too has its meaning. Prayer is made towards the east because 'the comprehensible sun of righteousness, Christ our God, appeared on earth in those regions of the east where the perceptible sun rises'. The prohibition of kneeling on Sundays and throughout Eastertide is a sign 'that our fall has been corrected through the resurrection of Christ on the third day'.

Interpreting vesture, Germanos again combines Alexandrian and Antiochene approaches. The stole worn by the priests 'indicates the stole of the flesh of Christ dyed by his undefiled blood on the cross'. The unbelted phelonion of the priests show that 'even Christ thus went to the crucifixion carrying his cross'. At the same time 'the presbyters resemble the seraphic powers, covered, as if by wings, with stoles'. The oraria of the deacons, too, are the wings of the angelic powers of whom their wearers are the images. But the embroidery on the arms and sides of their robes represents the bonds with which Christ was bound, and the blood which flowed from his side. Germanos quotes from Isidore of Pelusium when he comes to the bishop's omophorion, which represents the lost sheep brought home on the Lord's shoulder.

When Germanos comes to explain the Liturgy itself it is the historical approach which predominates, though the earlier tradition of interpretation is not excluded. Nor does Germanos attempt to attach symbolic significance to the whole Liturgy. Once he reaches the anaphora, he speaks of the content and meaning of the prayer, and of the participation of the Church on earth in the worship of the Church in heaven.

Of the bread of offering Germanos says that 'it signifies the

superabundant riches of the goodness of our God, because the Son of God became man and gave himself as an offering and oblation in ransom and atonement for the life and salvation of the world'. The prosphora stands for the bread which came down from heaven; and the piece cut out by the spear symbolizes the passion and death of Christ, which are also represented by the chalice, symbol of the blood and water which flowed from his pierced side. At the same time the bread and chalice are the memorial of the Last Supper. We have already seen how by the ninth century this interpretation had given rise, in the expanded version used by Anastasius, to the earliest rite of the prothesis, in which the actions are intended to be symbolic from the beginning, and set forth the passion and death of the Lord.

The representation of the history of salvation begins with the antiphons, which stand for the prophecies foretelling the coming of the Son of God in the incarnation. That coming itself is signified by the entrance of the Gospel: and the Good Shepherd who took the lost sheep of human nature upon himself – symbolized by the bishop's stole – is worshipped by the angelic host, whose 'Glory to God in the highest' is represented by the verse of the entry psalm, 94 (95).6, 'Come, let us worship and fall down before him'. The Trisagion too, sung to the Trinity, is the likeness of the angelic song at the birth of Christ.

Germanos is not entirely logical in his interpretation. For immediately after the incarnation, 'the ascent of the bishop to the throne and his blessing the people signifies that the Son of God, having completed the economy of salvation, raised his hands and blessed his holy disciples, saying to them: "Peace I leave with you"'. When the bishop sits, he represents the exaltation of the human nature assumed by God the Son, and the Father's acceptance of Christ's self-offering.

With the prokeimenon we are back to the prophecies of Christ's coming, while the censer, presumably used during the 'Alleluia' psalm, 'demonstrates the humanity of Christ, and the fire, his divinity. The sweetsmelling smoke reveals the fragrance of the Holy Spirit which precedes.' Anastasius had a more fanciful account in which the censer represents the sanctified womb of the Virgin, and the coal Christ.

The Gospel is again the coming of God in the incarnation. The bishop's blessing after it indicates the second coming of Christ, which the position of the bishop's fingers shows will be in 6,500 years.

When Germanos comments on the Great Entrance, it is partly in terms of the passion of Christ, following Theodore of Mopsuestia, though applying passion symbolism in greater detail. So he sees in the eileton, or corporal, a symbol of the winding-sheet prepared for the body of Christ; in the paten, or discos, the hands of Joseph and Nicodemus who buried him; and in the discos cover the cloth which covered his face in the tomb. The large veil, or aer, which was put over all the vessels on the altar, signifies the stone rolled over the entrance to the sepulchre. The place of Calvary is symbolized by the final preparation of the gifts in the skeuophylakion. Germanos here refers to the tradition that Christ was crucified on the spot where Adam was buried, and draws on patristic typology in pointing to the sacrifice of Abraham as a figure of the sacrifice of Christ.

This passion symbolism is combined with an explanation of the Great Entrance in the terms of the Cherubic Hymn, which, as we have seen, is to be understood as referring not simply to the Entrance itself, but to the whole celebration of the mysteries to which it leads. Of the procession and hymn Germanos says this:

By means of the procession of the deacons and the representation of the fans, which are in the likeness of the seraphim, the Cherubic Hymn signifies the entrance of all the saints and righteous ahead of the cherubic powers and the angelic hosts, who run invisibly in advance of the great king, Christ, who is proceeding to the mystical sacrifice, borne aloft by material hands. Together with them comes the Holy Spirit in the unbloody and reasonable sacrifice. The Spirit is seen spiritually in the fire, incense, smoke, and fragrant air: for the fire points to his divinity, and the fragrant smoke to his coming invisibly and filling us with good fragrance through the mystical, living, and unbloody service and sacrifice of burnt-offering. In addition, the spiritual powers and choirs of angels, who have seen his dispensation fulfilled through the cross and death of Christ, the victory over death which has taken place, the descent into hell and the resurrection on the third day, with us exclaim the Alleluia.

It is also in imitation of the burial of Christ, when Joseph took down the body from the cross, wrapped it in clean linen, anointed it with spices and ointment, carried it with Nicodemus, and placed it in a new tomb hewn out of a rock. The altar is an image of the holy tomb, and the divine table is the

sepulchre in which, of course, the undefiled and all-holy body was placed.

Once the gifts are placed on the altar and covered with the aer, Germanos' application of historical symbolism is almost at an end. The rest of the Liturgy is understood as the image of the worship of heaven, into which the worshipper on earth is introduced. The transition is made in this passage:

Thus Christ is crucified, life is buried, the tomb is secured, the stone is sealed. In the company of the angelic powers, the priest approaches, standing no longer as on earth, but attending at the heavenly altar, before the altar of the throne of God, and he contemplates the great, ineffable, and unsearchable mystery of God.

Only the resurrection remains to be proclaimed, and that is done by the dialogue which introduces the anaphora, and the removal of the aer. The priest then leads everyone to the heavenly Jerusalem by his exhortation 'Let us lift up our hearts', and himself 'goes with confidence to the throne of the grace of God and, with a true heart and in certainty of faith, speaks with God'. 'Contemplating the heavenly liturgy', he 'is initiated even into the splendour of the life-giving Trinity'. The fans and the deacons are images of the seraphim and cherubim, 'for in this way earthly things imitate the heavenly, transcendent, the spiritual order of things'.

The remainder of the commentary consists of a description and explanation of the content of the anaphora, and of the Lord's Prayer. There is no further need for symbolism, for the celebration of the mysteries themselves is the realization of the redemption Christians have already received by grace. At the end of his account of the anaphora, and leading into his explanation of the Lord's Prayer, Germanos writes:

Thereby having come into the unity of faith and communion of the Spirit through the dispensation of the one who died for us and is sitting at the right hand of the Father, we are no longer on earth but standing by the royal throne of God in heaven, where Christ is, just as he himself says: 'Righteous Father, sanctify in your name those whom you gave me, so that where I am, they may be with me' (cf. John 17). Therefore, receiving adoption and becoming co-heirs with Christ through his grace, and not through works, we have the spirit of the Son of God.

Contemplating his power and grace, the priest calls out, saying 'Abba, heavenly Father, make us worthy to say boldly and without condemnation'. . . .

The *Ecclesiastical History* of Germanos brings into the Byzantine tradition of liturgical interpretation, hitherto largely Alexandrian in its inspiration, the historical approach of the Antiochene school. It does so as part of the reaction against iconoclasm. Defenders of the icons based their argument on the orthodox doctrine of the incarnation: if God truly became fully human in Jesus Christ, then the incarnate Christ can be depicted pictorially. If part of the background to iconoclasm was the excessive insistence on the part of the monophysites on the divinity of Christ, to the detriment of his complete humanity, part of the orthodox reaction was to emphasize the historical, bodily nature of the incarnate Son. Germanos was one of the earliest defenders of icons and one of the first victims of the iconoclasts: he was deposed by the iconoclast Emperor Leo III. It is not surprising then that his exposition of the Liturgy should not only treat it in the traditional manner as an image of heavenly realities, but should draw upon the Antiochene tradition of Theodore of Mopsuestia in order to expound at least the first part of the rite as a representation of the earthly life of Christ.

It is important to notice that Germanos' commentary is not completely dominated by either or both of these approaches. He also expounds the essential significance of the Liturgy as a sacramental celebration in which the memorial of Christ's self-giving is made, and the reality of the future Kingdom, already inaugurated, is anticipated. Future commentators would not be so disciplined in their use of Antiochene historical symbolism. Yet Germanos anticipated their approach by the way he applied the principle of symbolic interpretation to details of the church and the service, so introducing a new dimension into the tradition of liturgical exposition. The *Ecclesiastical History* can be considered the first fully Byzantine commentary on the Liturgy.

7 *The Byzantine Liturgy in the Eleventh Century*

The Liturgy that has been described so far has been that of the Great Church in Constantinople, which as the rite of the capital can appropriately be called Byzantine, from the old name of the city. But it would be more proper now to speak of the Orthodox Liturgy. For by the eleventh century the Church of the Eastern Empire was not only distinct from that of the West, but was increasingly becoming separated from it by political, cultural and doctrinal differences which were sometimes brought into sharp focus by liturgical differences. At the same time the Byzantine Church was, on the one hand, becoming a Church increasingly ruled by tradition, and on the other, expanding into new territories largely outside the bounds of the shrinking Empire. The worship of the Church was becoming more and more uniform, with the rites of the Great Church displacing all other local rites within the Empire, and spreading to the new Churches founded among the Slav peoples.

Local differences still remained. But in the eleventh century Nicholas, Bishop of Andida in Pamphylia, was at pains to point out that the usages of his church conformed to those of the Great Church. Even in the ancient patriarchates, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem, their traditional Liturgies were being influenced by that of Constantinople, whose prestige had steadily grown since the Muslim conquests of the seventh century, and the consequent decline of those Churches. By the end of the twelfth century the Byzantine canon lawyer and titular Patriarch of Antioch Theodore Balsamon gave it as his opinion that only the rite of Constantinople should be used by those who considered themselves Orthodox. The Byzantine Liturgy had become, to all intents and purposes, the Orthodox Liturgy.

It had certainly been received as such by the Slav Churches. Indeed it was the impression produced by the Liturgy in the Great Church on the emissaries of Vladimir, Prince of Kiev, which persuaded him to accept Christianity in its Byzantine form. The Russian *Primary Chronicle* relates how Vladimir sent

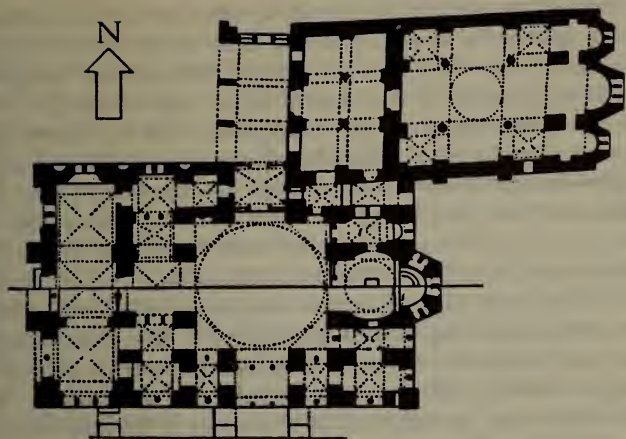
some of his people to investigate the various religions of the world. They were not attracted to the Muslims in Bulgaria, nor impressed by the Latin worship of the Germans or Romans. But when they were taken to the Liturgy in the Great Church 'We knew not whether we were in heaven or on earth, for surely there is no such splendour or beauty anywhere upon earth. We cannot describe it to you: only this we know, that God dwells there among men, and that their service surpasses the worship of all other places. For we cannot forget that beauty.' For them Germanos' words were true: 'The church is an earthly heaven in which the supercelestial God dwells and walks about.' Vladimir was baptized in 988.

By the time of the conversion of the Slavs the Liturgy of the Great Church was well on its way to attaining its final form. But some developments were still to take place; and the eleventh century saw a number of them, constituting the penultimate stage of its growth. At the same time the decoration of the churches in which it was celebrated was being elaborated, providing the rite with a setting which closely corresponded with the developing tradition of liturgical interpretation.

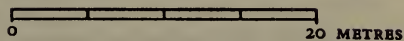
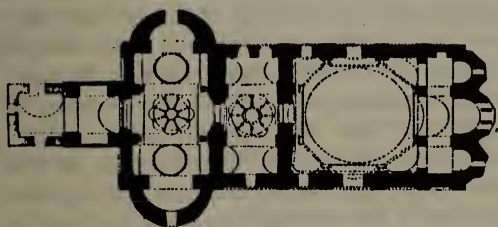
The Church and its Decoration

By the eleventh century the characteristic church, found wherever Christianity had been spread from Constantinople, was of the cross-in-square kind. The central cupola over the nave might be flanked by smaller, lateral cupolas, and the sanctuary apse was accompanied at the east end by smaller apses to north and south. But by this time the restrained iconographic decoration of the ninth century had been somewhat elaborated. Three eleventh-century churches have survived with enough of their mosaic decoration to enable a good impression of the expanded scheme of this period to be formed. The monastery church of Hosios Lukas and the church of Daphne in Greece, and the church of the New Monastery on Chios, all represent a basically similar pattern of iconography.

The typical eleventh-century church was divided into three iconographic zones. The upper zone, consisting of the cupolas, high vaults, and semi-dome of the apse, represented heaven. It contained the images of Christ, the Virgin, and angels. The main cupola might contain one of three representations: the Christ Pantocrator, the ascension, or Pentecost. From the central medal-



Plan of the katholikon of the monastery of Hosios Lukas, c. 1020, with the church of the Theotokos, c. 1040, in Greece.



Plan of the katholikon, the principal church, of the New Monastery at Chios, 1042-1056.

lion containing the image angels, apostles or prophets radiated like the spokes of a wheel, facing each other across the space enclosed by the dome. The Christ Pantocrator became the predominant image in the central dome, superseding the older, more narrative image of the ascension. The representation of Pentecost might appear in another dome, or where there was only a single dome, in the vault above the sanctuary. The Christ Pantocrator also appeared in the narthex, above the main entrance into the church, together with the image of the Virgin and the representation of Christ as Immanuel.

The semi-dome of the apse was the place of the Mother of God, shown either standing or sitting enthroned. She was represented alone, against a gold background. Adoring angels were placed on the upper walls of the sanctuary, or on the vault above. Sometimes Christ was represented in the apse, as he had often been before the iconoclastic controversy. His image survived there in the later period in churches without domes, in which the apse was the highest symbolic space. Side apses, normal in the post-iconoclast period, generally contained images of John the Baptist, or of Joachim and Anna, representing the preparation for Christ's coming.

The second zone consisted of the upper parts of the vaults and the squinches or pendentives immediately below the cupolas. Here was represented the cycles of the great festivals, increasing in number as time went on. The full cycle included, by the eleventh century, the twelve feasts of the Annunciation, the Nativity, the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, the Baptism, the Transfiguration, the Raising of Lazarus, the Entry into Jerusalem, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, or Harrowing of Hell, the Ascension, Pentecost, and the Falling Asleep of the Virgin. These were not at this time understood so much as historical scenes from the life of Jesus as images of the liturgical festivals. In the tenth and eleventh centuries they were not all necessarily represented in any particular church.

Such representations made present the different facets of the one mystery of Christ, his incarnation, passion and resurrection. Their presence did indeed make the church a representation of the crucifixion, burial and resurrection of Christ, as Germanos had stated it to be. The church itself was an active commemoration of the mighty works of God which were commemorated in the anaphora, and understood to be symbolized by the different parts of the Liturgy. The effectiveness of the scenes was

enhanced by placing them where possible in the curved pendentives of the central cupola. By this means Mary and Gabriel actually faced each other across real space, the new-born Christ was flanked by angels and other figures in the scene, and John the Baptist and the angels really stand on either side of Jesus in the Jordan. Not all the festival icons could be fitted into such ideal spaces: some had to be placed on flat surfaces. Where the pendentives of the cupola were small, they were often occupied by images of the four evangelists instead.

The third and lowest zone was reserved for individual saints, arranged in hierarchical order. In or near the sanctuary came the patriarchs of the Old Testament and the hierarchs and teachers of the Church. In the central part of the nave were the various groups of martyrs; and in the western part of the nave the holy monks. Holy women and canonized emperors were often in the narthex. The saints were usually depicted standing, in such a way as to emphasize that they and the worshippers belonged to the same community. But they could also be shown as half figures, or busts, placed in the smaller spaces of the building such as lunettes or low shallow niches. Busts normally appeared in medallions on arches, spandrels and narrow strips of wall. The selection of saints represented depended to some extent on local preference.

These iconographic developments linked the eleventh-century church still more closely than its ninth-century predecessor to the Liturgy celebrated in it. Still heaven on earth and the communion of saints, it was now also the representation of the saving work of God in Christ by which earth was reunited with heaven, the material universe transfigured, and mankind restored to the paradise from which by sin it had fallen. Its correspondence with the Liturgy which made present, in its whole and in its parts, the saving mystery of Christ, could not fail to be clear to the worshipper.

'The Concealment of the Mysteries'

We have seen that at Constantinople at any rate until the eleventh century the congregation in the nave could see into the sanctuary. Contrary to a widespread assumption, the sanctuary in Constantinople was not screened from view by curtains, nor was the altar hidden by curtains drawn between the pillars of the ciborium. Representations of Byzantine sanctuaries and altars up to the eleventh century in frescoes and miniatures show them open

to view. Some churches had in any case only a low chancel barrier without taller columns between which curtains could have been hung. In churches which had such columns, carrying an architrave, any images which might be associated with the chancel barriers were placed on top of the architrave, not between the columns. All the earlier Byzantine commentators on the Liturgy presuppose that the people can see what they describe and explain.

It is true that in other parts of the Church the sanctuary had long been concealed from the people during the anaphora. But the first clear reference to this custom so far as Constantinople is concerned appears in the *Protheoria*, a mid-eleventh-century interpretation of the Liturgy, which speaks of the closing of the doors of the chancel screen and the drawing of a curtain after the Great Entrance. The writer speaks of this as a monastic custom, and it was probably in monastic churches that it began in the latter part of the eleventh century.

Behind it lay the view that the laity ought not to see the accomplishment of the mysteries. Nicetas Stethatos, a monk of the monastery of Stoudios in the capital, wrote towards the end of the century:

Know that the place of the laity in the assembly of the faithful during the anaphora is far from the divine altar. The interior of the sanctuary is reserved to the priests, deacons and subdeacons; the area outside near the sanctuary to the monks and other ranks of our hierarchy; behind them and the platform, to the laity . . . How then from such a distance can the laymen, to whom it is not allowed, contemplate the mysteries of God accomplished with trembling by his priests?

The 'unsanctified glance' of the laity might not fall on the sacred mysteries; 'for the contemplation and vision of these mysteries are consecrated by God and the apostles only to the priests who offer' (*Letter 8 of Nicetas Stethatos*).

Distance alone in the Great Church and other large churches ensured that the people could not see what was being done in the sanctuary. But in smaller churches a curtain ensured that they should not overstep the bounds of a liturgical piety which now still further deprived the laity of any active part in the celebration of the Liturgy. For two centuries or more the most important prayers of the service had been inaudible to the people: soon the actions of the clergy were to be invisible as well.

Developments in the Rite

Few major developments affecting the order of the service remain to be recorded after the ninth century. But developments were taking place in the eleventh century, which if they had not yet reached the capital, were later to influence the Liturgy of the Great Church. They concerned chiefly the prothesis and the so-called enarxis, the preliminary service of antiphons.

The Prothesis

The ceremonial of the preliminary preparation of the bread and wine had changed little since the ninth century. A description of the prothesis was written by an unknown eleventh-century patriarch of Constantinople for the benefit of Bishop Paul of Gallipoli; it differs little from the ninth-century version of Germanos' commentary translated by Anastasius the Librarian. The only difference of note is that by the eleventh century only a portion of the prosphora is offered: the deacon or priest cuts out a piece from the prosphora with the spear and puts it on the paten. In the Great Church this was still done by the deacon: elsewhere priests were taking over the deacon's traditional function of preparing the gifts.

The patriarch's account made no mention of incense. The interpolated version of the *Ecclesiastical History* refers to incense, and so do other sources, of the tenth and eleventh centuries. An Arab version of the Liturgy of St John Chrysostom, perhaps of the tenth century, provides for the paten veil to be put on while the priest says: 'The Lord is king and has put on glorious apparel.' He puts on the veil over the chalice, saying: 'The Lord has put on his apparel and girded himself with strength.' Then he covers both with the large veil and says: 'He has made the round world so sure that it cannot be moved: his might has covered the heavens with a veil and the earth is filled with his praise.' He finishes the psalm and censes the gifts three times.

The prothesis began, and continued, as a preliminary rite in which the people took no part. But one development which began towards the end of the eleventh century linked it with popular piety in a way which has continued to the present. Towards the end of the century several prosphorae came to be used, quite apart from their necessity when there were large numbers of communicants. Nicholas Grammaticus, Patriarch of

Constantinople 1084–1111 prescribed the use of four, one representing the Lord, another the Mother of God, a third the archangels and all the angelic orders, and a fourth the Forerunner, John the Baptist, the apostles, prophets, holy bishops, and all the saints. Further *prosphorae* might be offered for the living and the departed. From all these particles were cut out and placed on the paten.

The laity brought *prosphorae* to church in commemoration of those for whom they wished prayer to be offered. Some have thought this to be a new custom in the eleventh century; more probably it was the continuation of the early Christian custom whereby the people brought the bread and wine for the Eucharist to church. But whether new or old, the custom became an integral part of popular eucharistic devotion, and one of the few ways in which they could participate actively in the celebration of the Liturgy. The *typikon* drawn up by the Empress Irene for a monastery she had founded well illustrates the importance of these commemorations for laypeople:

Concerning how many loaves are to be offered at each Liturgy and on whose behalf: each day at the holy Liturgy seven loaves are to be offered, one the Lord's, another for our Lady full of grace and the Mother of God, another for the saint of the day, another for the remission and forgiveness of sins of my most mighty Emperor (her husband Alexios Comnenos) and myself, another for the monks who have died, another for our departed parents and other relations, and another for our children who are alive and for our families and relatives.

The commemorations were made by means of particles taken from each *prosphora*, and the names were inscribed in the diptychs of the living and the departed.

The Enarxis

The Liturgy in Constantinople still began with the antiphons, and the Great Litany was sung after the entry of the Gospel, or Little Entrance, and before the Trisagion. Elsewhere, however, it was sung before the antiphons, in its present place. Sometimes it was sung there only, sometimes it continued to be sung, perhaps somewhat shortened, before the Trisagion as well. Only from the thirteenth century was it used exclusively in its present position, so fixing the old prayer of the faithful at the beginning of the

Liturgy of the Catechumens, as the first part of the rite came to be called.

By the eleventh century the antiphons were sung in their present form. But outside Constantinople the Typika were sometimes sung as an alternative introduction. They entered in time the rite of the Great Church and in some churches entirely supplanted the antiphons. They consist of Psalms 103, 146 followed by the troparion 'Only-begotten Son', and the Beatitudes. Followed outside the Liturgy by the creed, a prayer of absolution, the Lord's Prayer, a variable kontakion, the forty-fold Kyrie eleison, Psalm 33 and a dismissal they constitute a separate office, found in the Horologion after Sext or None.

The office of the Typika, or typical psalms, in its full form was the Palestinian monastic equivalent of the Liturgy of the Presanctified. First found in the ninth century, it was a form for receiving Communion from the reserved sacrament on days when the Liturgy was not celebrated. When the monasteries of Constantinople adopted the daily office used in Palestine, as prescribed in the Typikon of St Sabas, they adopted with it the use of the Typika. In the famous monastery of Stoudios in the capital it was sung after the Liturgy on days when work did not permit the celebration of the lesser hours. It was no longer used as a communion office: instead the antidoron was distributed at its conclusion. When the lesser hours were sung, the Typika were sung after None.

In the twelfth century the monks of the Evergetis monastery in the capital regularly used the two psalms and the Beatitudes from the Typika instead of the older antiphons. During the distribution of the antidoron after the prayer behind the ambo they sang Psalm 33 (34), the former communion psalm of the Typika. They still used the entry verse of the old third antiphon, Psalm 95, 'O come let us worship and fall down before Christ'. When the office of the Typika first appeared, in the ninth century, the Beatitudes had their own refrain, 'Remember us, Lord, when you come into your kingdom' (Luke 23.42). At the Evergetis monastery special troparia were used instead. The Typika were used on most days when the full Liturgy was celebrated.

In the fourteenth century the *Diataxis* of Philotheos, an Athonite monk who later became Patriarch of Constantinople, prescribed the Typika for every celebration of the Liturgy. This was presumably the custom prevailing at the time on the Holy Mountain. In other places the antiphons were still used. Psalm 33

(34), 'I will always give thanks to the Lord', became a normal part of the Liturgy, preceded by the verse 'Blessed be the name of the Lord henceforth and for ever' (Psalm 113.2), which was part of the office of the Typika in the Horologion, though not part of the ninth-century communion office. The function of the prayer behind the ambo as the final prayer of the Liturgy was thus obscured.

The secondary character of both the prothesis and the enarxis continued to be shown by the fact that they were presided over by a priest even at a Liturgy celebrated by a bishop.

The Conclusion of the Rite

In the eleventh century the prayer behind the ambo was still the concluding prayer of the Liturgy. What Nicholas of Andida says about it is of great interest, since he shows that the laity were by no means all reconciled to the practice of inaudible recitation of the major prayers of the service.

The prayer behind the ambo is the seal of all prayers and their recapitulation, worthy of the first and most honoured of epilogues. For the holy Liturgy is celebrated principally for those who have offered and for those on whose behalf they have offered: but also for the rest this one prayer makes it up. For some of those who stand outside the sanctuary are often thrown into doubt and confusion, saying: 'What is the point, and what is the sense or force of the prayers whispered by the bishop?'. And they want to know what these are, too. Therefore the holy fathers devised the form of this prayer as the recapitulation of everything that is asked for in the prayers, teaching those who wanted to know the cloth from the hem of the garment.

After the prayer behind the ambo the antidoron is distributed. It consisted of the remains of the prosphorae from which the portion representing Christ and the commemorative particles had been cut out. It was blessed, but not consecrated. As its name suggests, it was distributed as a substitute for Communion, which by this time few laypeople received frequently. Its precise origin is not clear: it served as a way of disposing of the prosphorae, and as break-fast for those who had fasted before Communion. As a substitute for Communion it gradually attracted to itself devotional practices properly linked with

receiving the sacrament itself: in some churches it was received fasting, and at least in Romanian came to be called itself *anafora*.

The *Protheoria* of Nicholas of Andida

If little else had changed in the Liturgy since the ninth century, its interpretation underwent a development in the mid-eleventh-century *Protheoria*. Written by Nicholas, Bishop of Andida in Pamphylia, between 1054 and 1067, it was apparently rewritten by his successor Theodore, who tidied up his predecessor's work without making any significant changes in it.

But the *Protheoria* itself does make a significant change in the way the Liturgy is presented for the worshipper's contemplation. It was written by a bishop for his clergy, who were no doubt meant to pass on its understanding to their congregations. In this it differs from the *Ecclesiastical History*, written for laypeople, and Maximus' *Mystagogia*, written for monks. Both of these commentaries continued to be copied and read, so that a variety of approaches to participation in the Liturgy coexisted at the same time. Nicholas seems to have been dissatisfied with the approach of Germanos. He refers his readers to the *History* for an interpretation of the church and of the clergy's vestments. But he considers it unsatisfactory to confine the symbolism of the Liturgy to the passion, death and resurrection of Christ, as Germanos had on the whole done. For Nicholas the Liturgy is also a representation of the birth and early life of Christ, as he makes clear at the beginning of the *Protheoria*:

Many who exercise the office of a priest know and confess that those things which are accomplished in the holy Liturgy are a type of the Saviour's passion, and of the burial and resurrection of Christ our God. But I do not know why they are, as I think, unaware that they also represent the whole of his saving coming and economy for us from the beginning: his conception, birth and the thirty years of his life; also the work of his Forerunner, and his manifestation at his baptism; then the calling of the apostles, and the three years in which he performed miracles, which were the cause of envy and the cross. For that is not called a body which has a head but lacks feet and hands and other members. But that it was a perfect body which was offered in sacrifice listen to Christ himself saying 'Take, eat, this is my body'. The story of someone's life

and activity cannot be told unless from the beginning are related those things which accompanied his birth, those which happened during the course of his life, and those which belong to its end.

Defending his intention of showing how the Liturgy represents the whole life of Christ Nicholas refers to the icons, which also depict the various stages of his life from its beginning to its end:

But there is a third confirmation of what has been said above, which has been handed down to the holy churches of God in a good and pious way together with the sacred Liturgy. What is it? It is the erection of the holy images by means of colours. For in them are related for the pious to see all the mysteries of the incarnation of Christ, from the coming of the archangel Gabriel to the Virgin to the Lord's ascension into heaven and his second coming.

The comparison is apt: for Nicholas goes on to depict the Liturgy as a series of images, representing in order the life and work of Christ. But he makes it clear from the beginning that the symbolic significance of the Liturgy is not always simple. For if it is true that 'every believer ought to know that the whole rite of the holy Liturgy represents the whole economy of the saving condescension for our sake of our true God and saviour Jesus Christ . . . by means of the mysteries accomplished in it', it is also true that 'one of those things which are accomplished in the Liturgy is to be understood as referring to two or three of the things which took place then'.

Explaining the prothesis, Nicholas sees in the prosphora from which the portion to be consecrated is cut a symbol of Mary, from whom the Word took flesh. The deacon who cuts it out is a figure of Gabriel. The place of the prothesis represents Bethlehem, and also Nazareth and Capernaum. In sum it represents the thirty years of Christ's life before his baptism. While the prepared gifts wait in the prothesis, the priest who begins the *enarxis* symbolizes John the Baptist and his ministry, preparing the way for Christ. The antiphons he calls prophetic readings. The troparion 'Only-begotten Son' 'is eminently adapted to the symbols of Christ's birth: for he who is born is the only-begotten Son and Word of the eternal Father, who vouchsafed for our salvation to be incarnate of the holy Mother of God, his godhead remaining unchanged and unconfused'. His consubstantiality with the

Father and the Holy Spirit is indicated by the singing of the Trisagion, which, following Byzantine tradition, Nicholas understands to be sung to the Trinity.

The entry of the bishop into the sanctuary during the third antiphon 'indicates the appearance and manifestation of Christ our God at the Jordan'. Nicholas refers to the black marble stripes laid at regular intervals in the floor of the Great Church, which were apparently called rivers. The priest yielding the presidency of the service to the bishop at this point illustrates the words of the Baptist: 'He must increase and I must decrease'. The ascent of the bishop to his throne signifies the passage from the Law and the Old Covenant to the beginning of divine grace: the *prokeimenon* is so called because it comes before all the symbols of the new grace.' The reading of their Acts and Epistles points to the calling of the apostles.

Nicholas is sensitive to the possible criticism that the Acts and Epistles were written after the passion of Christ, whereas in his interpretation their reading is made to signify things that took place earlier. His defence reveals his understanding of liturgical symbolism:

But he who says this should know that neither enigma, symbol nor parable is able to preserve an exact similarity with what it represents; neither can they preserve the likeness of, much less identify with, persons, times and sequences. But they represent these things as being the image of the prototype.

The symbol, in other words, need have no close relationship with what it symbolizes. This helps to explain why a good deal of Nicholas' interpretation seems artificial and forced. The Liturgy is made to fit into a preconceived pattern of interpretation which does not arise out of the rite itself.

The Gospel represents the words of Christ. It is preceded by the 'Alleluia', during which the church is censed. Commenting on the chant, Nicholas takes up the traditional theme of the unity of the Church's worship with that of the angels. But he quickly moves on to apply his basic principle of interpretation to the censuring, which 'symbolizes the grace of the Holy Spirit given to the disciples when he sent them out to heal every sickness and every disease in Israel'. The prayers and supplications which follow the Gospel represent the three years' teaching ministry of Christ.

The Great Entrance procession represents the Lord's journey

from Bethany to Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. The real significance of the Cherubic Hymn is not lost in the midst of Nicholas' interpretation: 'The Cherubic Hymn which is sung admonishes everyone from now on and until the end of the Liturgy to pay great attention with their mind and to put away worldly and earthly care, as those who are about to receive the great king in communion.' But then he continues with a passage which well shows the somewhat fanciful lengths to which the tradition of symbolic interpretation led in the *Protheoria*:

The placing of the holy things on the holy table represents now the upper room made ready, and a little later the lifting up of the cross. Finally it represents the burial, the resurrection, and the ascension. In order not to define the hour and time and place of each one of the things which took place then, the blessed fathers, lest other transfers and more altars should be needed, and the mystery of the economy be made foolish because of them . . . set up a roof over the holy table. The enclosed and circumscribed holy floor between the four columns of the ciborium they separated off as representing the whole earth. By this the prophetic word was fulfilled which said: 'who wrought salvation in the midst of the earth' (Psalm 74.12). For since all confess that Jerusalem is situated in the middle of the earth, in which city the Lord endured all his passion, betrayal, judgement, and those things which preceded and followed the cross: since the holy table is seen to occupy the space between heaven and earth, and is situated in the midst of the columns and of the fans which surround it, it is naturally said to be under heaven: and so whether in India or the British Isles it indicates that salvation has been wrought in the midst of the earth by those things that are accomplished on it. But for him who says, not every church has a ciborium with its base and columns, it is enough for the semicircle of the bema (the apse) to be constituted in every church: whose curve represents the hemisphere of heaven, having in its midst, opposite, the holy table.

When he speaks of the dialogue before the anaphora, Nicholas' comments are revealing. He gives the deacon's initial exhortation as: 'Let us stand aright, let us stand with fear, let us pay attention to the holy anaphora.' The final clause in fact reads in the text of the Liturgy: 'Let us attend, that we may offer in peace the holy oblation.' The original in each case is 'anaphora'. But Nicholas understands the word, not in its technical Christian sense of

sacrificial offering, but in its non-theological sense of reference to:

What is the anaphora? It means looking to the prototypes of the mysteries being performed. The name 'anaphora' is indicative of this and resembles its meaning: and therefore trembling and weeping we stand soberly and constantly as though we now saw the God-man suffering for us, so that in peace and without the distraction of earthly thoughts offering and relating these things we may be made worthy to see his holy resurrection, and be filled with the joy which comes from it: and especially those who receive the Body as the holiness of the place requires, for these suffer with him and being buried with him rise again with him.

Nicholas recognizes the sacramental reality of Communion and urges those who can to receive it every day. But he assumes that the active offering of the Eucharist is done by the priests, not as the mouthpiece of the people, but as their own proper action. The people only pay attention: their participation is by seeing the drama of Christ's life enacted in the symbols of the Liturgy.

Even the details of that drama are represented. The closing of the sanctuary doors and the drawing of the curtain, with the placing of the aer over the gifts on the altar, signify the night on which Jesus was betrayed, and the night trial: the removal of the aer, the drawing back of the curtain and opening of the doors signify the morning on which he was led away and handed over to Pilate. Even the precise wording of the narrative of institution in the anaphora is significant: of the bread the Lord said: 'Take, eat', of the cup he said: 'Drink of this all of you'. That is because Judas did not eat the bread but kept it and showed it to the Jews: he could not conceal any of the wine. That was why the phrase, 'For I will not reveal the mystery to your enemies', was added to the chant 'At your mystical supper'. The fans, shaped like cherubim and waved by deacons throughout the anaphora, represent the heavenly powers present with the Lord, especially in his final agony.

The central events of the death and resurrection of Christ are attached to details. The elevation of the bread at 'Holy things for holy people' signifies the lifting up of Christ on the cross, his death and his resurrection. The removal of the gifts after Communion from the altar to the prothesis represents the ascension, and their final censing the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Nicholas wrote within the tradition to whose formation all the writers we have so far looked at contributed. From Dionysius he took his concept of the ministry and of its function of initiating the faithful into an understanding of the mysteries. From Maximus he inherited his understanding of the church building as sacred space. He referred to the *History*, which he set out not to duplicate but to supplement. In practice he did more than supplement; for unlike Germanos he concentrated almost entirely on interpreting the Liturgy in terms of the historical life of Christ. He makes passing reference to the Old Testament types of the Eucharist in the patristic tradition, and to the Liturgy as reflecting the worship of heaven. But he was concerned above all to present the Liturgy to his clergy, and through them to the people, as a series of images portraying the life of Christ for their visual contemplation. There is little or no organic connection between the symbol and the reality symbolized: the liturgical rite is arbitrarily fitting into a preconceived pattern of interpretation in an over-elaborate and highly artificial way.

Nicholas' treatise, rewritten by Theodore, enjoyed considerable influence. It was put into verse by Michael Psellos some time between 1063 and 1067, perhaps for the edification of his imperial pupil, the future Michael VII. Parts of it were incorporated into the explanation of the church and the Liturgy sometimes attributed to a Patriarch Sophronius of Jerusalem, which also drew on the *History*. The *Protheoria* continued to be copied up to the fifteenth century, in both Nicholas' and Theodore's versions.

8 *The Completion of the Liturgy*

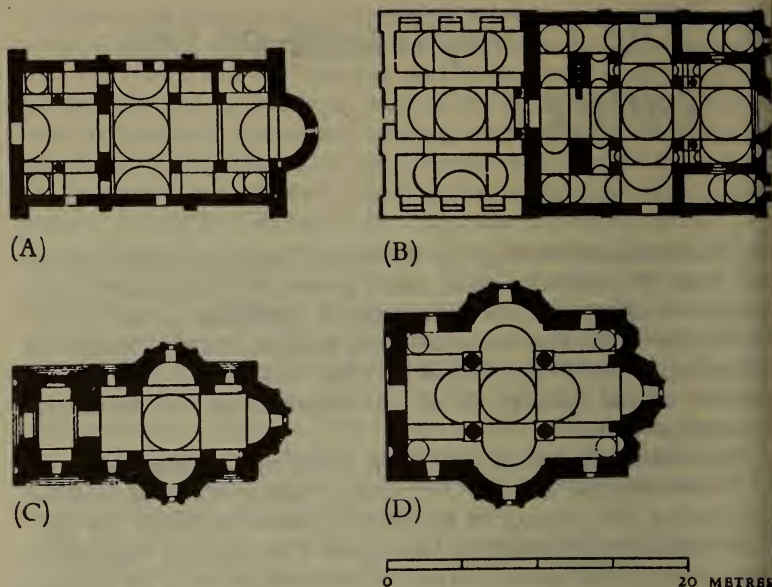
By the fourteenth century the Orthodox Liturgy had reached the full term of its development, and a process of consolidation was under way. Local variations in practice continued to exist in the Orthodox world. But the widespread influence of the *Diataxis* of Philotheos helped to establish a basic uniformity in the celebration of the Liturgy in all the churches of the Byzantine commonwealth.

Philotheos was a monk of Mount Athos who became Patriarch of Constantinople in 1354. Two rival Typika, or sets of rules for celebrating the services of the Church, were in use in the city. The traditional Typikon of the Great Church was that which originated in the ninth century in the monastery of St John of Stoudios. But by the twelfth century the Typikon of the monastery of St Sabas near Jerusalem was gradually gaining ground, not least because it gave more detailed instructions for the celebration of the services.

While still on the Holy Mountain Philotheos drew up two *Diataxeis*, one regulating the priest's and deacon's part in Matins, Vespers and the Liturgy, and one giving detailed directions for the celebration of the Liturgy. It established the text of the rites as well as the ceremonial to be observed. Its widespread use brought a uniform order into the Liturgy, particularly in the performance of the prothesis, which had the largest number of variations. It was introduced into the Great Church when Philotheos became Patriarch, and quickly spread to the Slav as well as the Greek Churches. Its rubrics were incorporated into the first printed service books in the sixteenth century.

The Setting of the Liturgy

By the fourteenth century the cross-in-square planned church was still widely found, but now alongside other designs. The Greek cross shape returned, and basilican-style churches were built too. Each part of the Orthodox world evolved its own



Ground plans of fourteenth-century churches (Yugoslavia). A. Staro Nagoricane, 1313; B. Gracanica, 1321; C. Krusevac, c. 1380; D. Ravanica, 1375-7.

characteristic variants on the basic themes, and a good many churches of the twelfth to fifteenth centuries have survived to enable us to study the setting in which the Liturgy was, and continues to be, celebrated. Many still have some or all of their decoration. The domed nave and the three apses at the east end continued to be normal.

In later Byzantine churches the sanctuary never projected into the nave. The chancel barrier ran below the arch separating the nave from the sanctuary apse, and usually continued north and south to screen the prothesis and the diakonikon. These usually communicated with the sanctuary within the screen through arches, as well as with the nave through doors. The prothesis was now an essential part of the building, and those churches which had formerly had separate skeuophylakia were provided with the two side rooms, often built onto the original church. By the fourteenth century the Great Church itself had been provided with an internal prothesis. The existence of three separate spaces

at least meant that the two entrances, with the Gospels and the prepared gifts, were processions from one place to another. In time the development of the iconostasis with three doors made it possible, in churches with only a single apse, for the prothesis to be a side table within the sanctuary itself, so that the processions began where they finished, and became purely ceremonial movements deprived of all practical significance.

The Development of the Iconostasis

It was only in the fourteenth century that the sanctuary came to be completely shut off from the sight of the congregation by a solid screen. The low chancel barrier, surmounted by columns carrying an architrave, which continued to be the means of distinguishing nave from sanctuary up to the thirteenth century, can still sometimes be seen behind the later fully-fledged screen.

Images had been associated with the chancel barrier from an early time. Representations of Christ, Mary, angels and saints had been carved on the architrave or placed on top of it. By the ninth century it had become customary to display certain icons for veneration near the chancel barrier: in front of it or behind it, on special stands; attached to its doors or columns, or to the upper part of the ciborium; or on top of the architrave. The latter arrangement can still be seen in the Byzantine-style cathedral of Torcello, near Venice, dating from the late eleventh or twelfth century. Two icons particularly associated with the sanctuary in one or other of these positions were the Christ Pantocrator and the Virgin shown in an attitude of supplication for mankind. Also popular was the deesis: Christ Pantocrator with the Virgin and John the Baptist in supplication on either side. With these or instead of them on the architrave might be apostles, saints and angels, or representations of some of the great festivals. Symeon of Thessalonike in his fifteenth-century commentary on the church and the Liturgy seems to presuppose the deesis with angels, apostles and saints represented on top of the architrave.

Most churches still had the typical Byzantine chancel barrier at the beginning of the fifteenth century. But it was in process of being transformed into what is now regarded as the typical Orthodox iconostasis. The icons of Christ and the Mother of God had only a short distance to move in order to occupy their now traditional places in the screen, to south and north respectively of the holy doors. The annunciation, often to be found in the

spandrels of the arch above the chancel barrier, came down to occupy the upper panels, or the whole, of the doors themselves. The deesis remained above the architrave, and so did the great festivals, expanded to form a complete series and placed above the deesis, to which further saints were added, all turned towards the central figure of Christ in supplication. As the iconostasis, or templon as it was often called, grew, further rows of prophets and patriarchs were placed above the festival icons. At its highest point of development the iconostasis completely filled the archway of the apse, totally cutting off the sanctuary from the nave. It is generally held that this form was developed in Russia and spread thence to Mount Athos, and on to the Greek and other Slav churches.

The effect of this development was to complete the process by which the people were cut off both from hearing the central prayers and seeing the central actions of the Liturgy. These became the exclusive preserve of the clergy, who alone by virtue of their ordination could hear, see and touch the mysteries which were too holy for the laity to approach, and which they only rarely received in communion. Popular eucharistic devotion was focused on the icons which they could venerate and before which they could pray, and on those parts of the service which they could hear or see. These too they might well be taught to regard as a series of icons, in which they could contemplate the saving life and work of Christ.

The Decoration of the Church

By the fourteenth century the middle Byzantine scheme of church decoration had developed considerably. It was perhaps inevitable that the somewhat austere scheme worked out in the period immediately after the victory of the icons should have undergone amplification. The expansion that took place was encouraged by developments both in architecture and in the medium of decoration. Middle Byzantine decoration was executed in mosaic, and confined to certain areas of the church. The lower walls were usually faced with marble. By the fourteenth century mosaic had almost entirely been replaced by the cheaper medium of fresco painting. Figured marble and mosaic gave way to plastered interiors entirely covered with painting. The restricted cycle of themes used in the tenth and eleventh centuries was extended to provide the subject-matter needed to fill the

whole building. The revival of the basilican plan meant that there were long stretches of wall to be filled. The hierarchical, sacramental arrangement of middle Byzantine mosaics could not be reproduced successfully in such churches. Narrative sequences, such as had been used before iconoclasm, began to appear again.

Not only had church decoration greatly expanded, incorporating new themes: it had also been considerably influenced by the Liturgy and its interpretation, and by the calendar which regulated the Church's year. The basic themes of the earlier period remained, but they were now set in a rich variety of narrative sequences which took little notice of the division of the church into different spaces with distinct functions, but spread throughout the building.

The apse almost invariably contained the image of the Mother of God. It was understood to be linked with the Liturgy celebrated in the sanctuary below. Through Mary the Word became flesh and was manifest in the world: through the Liturgy Christ's incarnation and appearing were set forth for the Church to contemplate. Below was represented the communion of the apostles, of which the earliest example dates from the eleventh century in Kiev. There in Hagia Sophia Christ is depicted twice, on either side of an altar covered by a ciborium. On one side apostles come to receive the bread, on the other the cup. This is one of the new themes of iconography, which departs from the strict rules of iconodule theology, for it does not represent a historical scene: Christ gives Communion to the apostles in the way in which the bishop distributes the sacrament to the faithful. But the scene reflects admirably the teaching of the commentaries, in which the Liturgy celebrated on earth is both an image of the Last Supper, and a representation of the worship of heaven, and the bishop is the figure of Christ. The Communion of the apostles combines historical, liturgical and spiritual realities in one image.

Beneath the Communion of the apostles come representations of the liturgists, that is, of bishops in their liturgical vestments. St Basil and St John Chrysostom naturally occupy the chief place, often with St Gregory the Great, the traditional author of the Liturgy of the Presanctified. They might be escorted by deacons such as Stephen or Laurence. Sometimes they face the actual altar, sometimes one is depicted in the centre of the apse wall. Carrying liturgical texts, the holy bishops of the past are as it

were heavenly concelebrants with those who stand at the earthly altar.

On the walls of the sanctuary, between the apse and the nave, there were often representations of the Old Testament types of the Eucharist, such as we have seen in the church of San Vitale in Ravenna: the sacrifice of Abel – referred to in the prayer of the proskomidia in the Liturgy of St Basil; Melchisedech bringing bread and wine; the sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham; and the hospitality of Abraham. The latter has a eucharistic as well as a trinitarian significance: the table around which the three angels are sitting is often shown as an altar, on which rests a chalice, or dish, containing a lamb. Participation in the Eucharist takes the worshipper into the heart of the Trinity, whose very nature is self-giving love.

Liturgical themes were particularly in evidence in the decoration of the prothesis. In the semi-dome of the apse St John the Baptist is often depicted, in accordance with Nicholas of Andida's interpretation of the rite of the prothesis as symbolizing the incarnation and its prophetic foretelling. Passion symbolism was prominent. Christ might be shown as a child on a paten, a bishop piercing his side with a spear, illustrating Germanos' interpretation of the proskomidia in the version of Anastasius. Sometimes Christ is shown dead and prepared for burial. But he might also be shown as a child, without the passion symbolism, and then Nicholas' birth symbolism is to the fore.

The Christ Pantocrator still looked down from the central dome, unless in a basilican church without a dome his image had been moved to the next holiest place, the semi-dome of the apse. But by now it had become usual to place round the lower edge of the dome, or round the drum supporting it, a representation of the heavenly Liturgy. Like the Communion of the apostles, out of which it may have developed, this scene broke away from strict iconodule theology. It takes the form of the Great Entrance procession, transposed into heavenly terms, in which angelic priests and deacons, carrying lights, fans and liturgical instruments, move towards an altar. That the Great Entrance could be used as a shorthand symbol for the whole Liturgy shows how prominent a part it had come to occupy both in the rite itself and in Byzantine liturgical piety. Sometimes the procession is shown leaving one altar, the prothesis, and moving to another. Sometimes Christ is shown, robed as a bishop, waiting for the procession to arrive at the altar. He might be depicted, in

addition, standing at the prothesis, having sent the procession on its way.

The cycle of major festivals depicting the major events in the life of Christ continued to appear on the upper parts of the walls and vaults of the church. They were now supplemented by other scenes, not strictly festivals, such as Christ among the doctors and the unbelief of Thomas, which might be commemorated on a particular day. Just as the commemoration of the incarnate life of Christ had become more detailed in the symbolic interpretation of the Liturgy, so iconography included more and more scenes illustrating the same basic mystery.

By the fourteenth century other cycles had been added to the decoration of the church. They were of a narrative kind, and had no particular connection with the principal cycle of Christ's life. They might be found in different parts of the church. The life of the Virgin might be in its aisles and side-chambers, or in the narthex. The dormition however was usually on the west wall of the nave. This cycle corresponds in part with the commemoration of the Mother of God in the calendar, and with such semi-liturgical devotions to her as the Akathistos hymn.

Another secondary cycle often found in the aisles and narthex, as well as sometimes in the nave, represents the teaching and miracles of Christ. Cabasilas, in his commentary on the Liturgy, emphasizes that it is primarily the commemoration of the passion, death and resurrection of Christ, not of his miracles. The passion itself was sometimes represented in a detailed sequence of scenes, apart from the image of the crucifixion in the festival sequence.

To the representations of individual saints, which continued to adorn the lower parts of the nave walls in hierarchical order were now added cycles showing the life of a particular saint, perhaps the saint in whose honour the church was dedicated, or one or more of those held in high esteem in the locality, or in the Church at large.

From the thirteenth century it was customary to depict the seven ecumenical councils, in the narthex or side-chambers, or in the porch. By now they were all the object of celebrations included in the calendar, that of the seventh council being celebrated on the first Sunday of Lent as the Feast of Orthodoxy, the Church's victory over all the heresies. Their inclusion in the decoration of churches reflected the controversy with the Western Church over the precise number of councils to be reckoned

ecumenical, and their place near the entrance served to emphasize the church as the pillar and ground of right belief about the incarnation of Christ to which the whole building bore witness.

One further representation which appeared in the fourteenth century was the Last Judgement. This too is linked with the calendar, in which the second Sunday before Lent was the Sunday of the Last Judgement. In the Liturgy it links up with the commemoration of the dead in the proskomidia, and is a reminder of the prayers which ask that those who communicate may do so not for judgement or condemnation but for salvation of soul and body. The representation was sometimes in the narthex, sometimes in one of the side chapels used for the commemoration of the dead or for funerals. At Voroneţ in Romania it occupies the whole of the exterior of the west wall of one of the five famous painted churches.

The connection between the extended scheme of decoration of the fourteenth century and the calendar is explicit in the representation of the calendar often found in the narthex, in which scenes depicting the main feasts in each month are arranged in order round the walls.

The expanded iconography of the fourteenth century, while it included the elements of the classical middle Byzantine scheme, contained a good deal of narrative material less closely related to the original principles of iconic representation. In addition it embraced scenes in which historical and non-historical elements were confused, invisible realities being depicted in terms of their earthly images. Perhaps this was natural enough in a century in which Gregory Palamas defended the hesychast monks of Mount Athos, and affirmed that in the Liturgy it was possible to see Christ visibly with the eye of faith:

This house of God here is a true symbol of that tomb . . . For behind the curtain it has the room in which the body of Christ will be laid and there too the holy altar. Whoever therefore hastens to draw near to the divine mystery and the place where it is, and who perseveres to the end . . . will without doubt see the Lord with his spiritual, yes, I say, even with his physical eyes. Whoever sees the mystical meal with faith, and the bread of life which is offered there, sees under the outward forms the divine Word himself, who for us became flesh and dwells in us as in a temple.

The Liturgy in the Fourteenth Century

The *Diataxis* of Philotheos shows that the Liturgy in the mid-fourteenth century had, in all save a few details, acquired the form in which it is celebrated today. Such development as had occurred since the eleventh century had taken place in the proskomidia, and in the private devotions of the clergy. By now the Liturgy of St John Chrysostom had become the normal rite, by a process which seems to have begun in the twelfth century. The rite of St Basil came eventually to be used on only ten occasions in the year. From the worshipper's point of view it made little difference, since those prayers which differ in the two rites were recited silently, and only the hymn sung after the commemoration of the Mother of God in the anaphora was both different and audible. Here we can notice briefly the main developments which brought the Liturgy to its final form.

The Preparation of the Clergy

From the eleventh century onwards various devotions for the clergy to say on entering the church appear in the euchologia, the collections of prayers needed by the priest in the course of the different services. They increased in number and diversity as time went on. Later, perhaps not before the fourteenth century, prayers were provided to be said before the icons of the Christ Pantocrator and the Mother of God in the iconostasis, and on entering the sanctuary. The washing of hands, which by this time had been transferred in a presbyteral Liturgy from its old place after the Great Entrance to the preliminary rites of the service, was also accompanied by prayers and psalms. These devotions, in which there was a good deal of variety, may not to begin with have been obligatory. They were in essence formalizations of natural clerical devotion: but their inclusion in the text of the Liturgy heightened its increasingly clerical flavour.

Prayers accompanying the vesting of the clergy appeared first in the thirteenth century, and soon a prayer was provided for each item of vesture. The originally secular dress of the clergy had, since its abandonment by the laity from the sixth century in favour of newer styles, become distinctively ecclesiastical: the *linea* became the *stikharion*, or alb; the *paenula* became the *phelonion*, or chasuble, and from the eleventh century was decorated with many crosses, and called the *polystavrion*. In the

later Byzantine period the clergy adopted further items of secular dress. Patriarchs took to wearing the imperial sakkos – not unlike the western dalmatic in appearance – and epimanikia, or cuffs. Their use spread to senior bishops, and after the fall of Constantinople to all bishops. The cuffs were adopted by priests, and eventually by deacons too. By a similar process the imperial mitre became the normal head-dress of the bishops in church. The Orthodox Church preserved something of the outward panoply of the Byzantine Empire after its political disappearance, and in the vested bishop the appearance of the Byzantine Emperor lived on. The vesting prayers reflected the symbolic significance which had come to be attached to each article of liturgical clothing.

The Prothesis, or Proskomidia

The proskomidia in the *Diataxis* is almost identical with the present form. One difference of interest is that the deacon too cuts out particles, in commemoration of himself, and any of the living and departed he wishes to pray for, and places them on the paten, 'as the priest does'. It is the last remnant of the original role of the deacon in the preparation of the gifts.

By now the birth-symbolism of Nicholas of Andida has given rise to an appropriate action. When the preparation of the paten is complete, a star-shaped frame is put over it to support the covering veil. The priest censens it and says as he puts it in place: 'And the star came and stood over where the young child was'. In text as in interpretation, the proskomidia now symbolizes both passion and death, and birth.

Philotheos prescribes the censuring of the altar and sanctuary, and of the nave, once the preparation of the gifts is over. The first mention of such preliminary censuring by the deacon as a regular part of the Liturgy occurs in the thirteenth century, though it was occasionally done much earlier, and was mentioned by Dionysius the Areopagite as part of the Syrian rite at the end of the fifth century. As he censens the altar the deacon says the troparion 'In the grave with the body . . .', a text attracted to this point of the service by the symbolic association of the altar with the tomb of Christ.

The Little Entrance

By the fourteenth century the book of the Gospels had come to be kept on the altar. The Little Entrance, now so called, was therefore a purely symbolic procession, for it began where it was to end, in the sanctuary. Only at an episcopal Liturgy did something of its origin as the entrance of the bishop into the church remain.

The chant sung at the entrance, 'O come, let us worship and fall down before Christ', is the remains of the old third antiphon, which also served to cover the entry. From the eleventh century its original refrain, 'Only-begotten Son' had been transferred to the second antiphon, and the present refrains were used. At the same time additional troparia began to be sung, enabling other aspects of the feast or additional commemorations to be included. Two or three were sung in the twelfth century, three in the thirteenth. After the fourteenth century the number increased still further.

The Readings

Germanos had spoken of incense after his comment on the Alleluia, without saying anything about its use. In origin it was no doubt used to reverence the Gospel-book, understood as a symbol of Christ the living Word of God. By the eleventh century the altar was sometimes censed as well as the book, and the censuring gradually expanded, taking in the clergy, the sanctuary and the prothesis, and eventually the iconostasis and the congregation. It was originally performed during the Alleluia and the psalm to which it was the refrain. But its expansion, and the devotions prescribed for the deacon before the reading of the Gospel, left insufficient time for it then. So it came to be begun during the first reading. Philotheos says it may be done at either point. Performed during the reading, it tended to transfer attention from one of the primary elements in the service to a secondary.

The Great Entrance

Several developments had taken place since the eleventh century which deserve to be noticed.

First, priests now regularly take part in the procession. No

doubt when there were no deacons, or only one, priests had of necessity to help bring in the gifts and other necessities. But as early as the tenth century priests sometimes carried them in even when a deacon was present. In time all the clergy, with the exception of the bishop, took part even when they had nothing to carry: though the number of accessories connected with the Entrance ensured that at least some of them had something to bring in. Fans, spear, spoon, paten and chalice veils, and the aer, were all carried in the procession, in addition to the bread on the paten and the chalice of wine and water. Perhaps it was the great solemnity with which the Entrance was performed that attracted into the procession all available clergy, so in part at any rate depriving the deacons of one of their traditional functions.

By its splendour and solemnity the procession of the Great Entrance so dominated the Liturgy that it is entirely understandable that in iconography it could stand for the whole Liturgy. Despite the warning of Patriarch Euthymius, popular devotions at the Entrance continued to verge on the excessive, and Nicholas Cabasilas found it necessary to emphasize that the gifts were not yet consecrated. People prostrated themselves to reverence the gifts, and asked the prayers of the clergy. They lay down in front of the procession, so that the clergy had to step over them; and they sought to be touched by the sacred vessels.

Second, commemorations were made during the procession. Philotheos prescribes one general commemoration: 'May the Lord God remember all of us in his kingdom.' It was made quietly, without interrupting the Cherubic Hymn. The priest made it in response to the people's request for his prayers, which was one of the ways in which they could associate themselves with the Liturgy. He might repeat it several times as he moved through the church. It was an informal commemoration to begin with, exactly similar to the commemoration of each other which the clergy made as they entered the sanctuary.

The earliest reference to the custom dates from the twelfth or thirteenth century. By the middle of the fourteenth century the Emperor and the patriarch were commemorated when they took part in the service. But these commemorations were also made silently on other occasions, and so were those of other individuals or orders as they came to be added. By the fifteenth century the general commemoration was coming to be made out loud, at first after the Great Entrance, together with that of any important persons present at the Liturgy. Only later did commemorations

made out loud multiply, so as to interrupt the singing of the Cherubicon and divide it into two.

A third development concerned the deposition of the gifts on the altar. It seems that originally whoever had carried in the paten and chalice put them on the altar. By the thirteenth century the priest was beginning to take them from the deacon, when the latter brought them in, and set them on the altar. At an episcopal Liturgy the bishop did so. It was another instance of liturgical functions passing from a lower to a higher order in the hierarchy.

By the fourteenth century, too, the interpretation of this necessary act as symbolizing the burial of Christ had given rise to an appropriate text. Philotheos directs the priest to say the troparion 'Noble Joseph'. This was originally sung in the procession with the epitaphios representing the burial of Christ, which was added in the fourteenth century to the end of Matins on Holy Saturday. It was apparently from here that it passed into the Liturgy. Later other troparia were added to it, relating to different aspects of Christ's death, burial and resurrection, and drawn from the offices of Good Friday, Holy Saturday and Eastertide.

A large number of other formulae came to be added to the Great Entrance at various points, including Psalm 51, the creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Trisagion, to mention but a few. They did not all find a permanent place, and were all, like most of the additions to the text of the service at this stage, purely clerical devotions which in no way affected the public rite.

The Anaphora and Communion

Among the issues hotly debated between Orthodox and Latin Catholics was the precise moment of consecration in the Eucharist. The Western tradition had for centuries associated it with the narrative, and later more narrowly with the precise words, of institution. The Eastern had come more and more to link it with the invocation of the Holy Spirit. Since the matter became one of contention, each side had tended to become more intransigent. The Orthodox view led to greater liturgical emphasis on the epiclesis. Philotheos directs the deacon to bow his head slightly and to point to the paten with his stole, saying: 'Bless, master, the holy bread'. The priest makes the sign of the cross over the bread as he says: 'And make this bread the precious Body of your Christ'. When the chalice has been similarly blessed, the deacon

says 'Amen, Amen', and makes three reverences. In some churches a devotional invocation of the Spirit, used in Lent at the Third Hour, came to be said by the clergy before the liturgical epiclesis.

The Communion of the clergy was prescribed in detail by Philotheos, and included various devotions. The *Diataxis* recognizes that there might be no lay communicants at all. However much frequent Communion might have been held out as an ideal, the laity had for long communicated no more than once or twice a year, and in time reception of Communion became a matter for congratulation even in monastic circles.

The Interpretation of the Liturgy

The Byzantine tradition of liturgical exposition culminated in two writers, each of whom finally tied up one of the two threads of which that tradition was woven. In his great *Commentary on the Divine Liturgy* the fourteenth-century lay theologian Nicholas Cabasilas retains the interpretation of the rite, stemming from the Antiochene school, as a symbolic representation of the historic life of Jesus Christ. Unlike Nicholas of Andida, he applies the principle with discretion and moderation, insisting on the primary significance of the prayers, readings and actions which make up the service. Above all he is clear as to the essentially sacramental nature of the commemoration of Christ in the Eucharist, and of the centrality of Communion to the meaning of the Liturgy. There is little doubt that Cabasilas' *Commentary* embodies a deliberate reaction against the exaggerated use of symbolism in Nicholas of Andida's work.

In the following century Symeon, a monk who became Archbishop of Thessalonike in 1416/17 and died in 1429, wrote two treatises. An earlier *Interpretation of the Church and the Liturgy* was followed by *On the Holy Liturgy*. Though he had apparently read Cabasilas' work, he was little influenced by it. He regarded himself as one of the last of the disciples of Dionysius the Areopagite, and wrote from within the Alexandrian tradition represented by Maximus the Confessor.

Cabasilas' *Commentary on the Divine Liturgy*

Little is known of the author of what is perhaps the greatest of all the Byzantine expositions of the Liturgy, which can still be read

with considerable profit. He enjoyed a reputation for both theological learning and holiness of life, and his portrait was painted in the church of the Protaton in Karyes on Mount Athos. He wrote too a treatise on *The Life in Christ*, in which he roots the mystical life of Christians firmly in the sacramental rites of the Church. His *Commentary on the Liturgy* presupposes the fully-developed rite much as Philotheos describes it.

Cabasilas' firm grasp of the basic meaning of the Liturgy emerges at the very beginning:

The essential act in the celebration of the holy mysteries in the transformation of the elements into the divine Body and Blood; its aim is the sanctification of the faithful, who through these mysteries receive the remission of their sins and the inheritance of the Kingdom of heaven. As a preparation for, and contribution to, this act and for this purpose, we have prayers, psalms, and readings from the holy Scripture: in short, all the sacred acts and forms which are said and done before and after the consecration of the elements.

By their actual content, 'all these things, which make the souls of both priest and people better and more divine, make them fit for the reception and preservation of the holy mysteries'. But

there is another way in which these forms, like all the ceremonies of the holy sacrifice, sanctify us. It consists in this, that in them Christ and the deeds he accomplished and the sufferings he endured for our sakes are represented. Indeed, it is the whole scheme of the work of redemption which is signified in the psalms and readings, as in all the actions of the priest throughout the Liturgy: the first ceremonies of the service represent the beginnings of this work, the next, the sequel, and the last, its results. Thus those who are present at these ceremonies have before their eyes all these divine things.

But Cabasilas is quite clear that the essential commemoration of Christ is sacramental and real, not symbolic:

The consecration of the elements – the sacrifice itself – commemorates the death, resurrection, and ascension of the Saviour, since it transforms these precious gifts into the very Body of the Lord, that body which was the central figure in all these mysteries, which was crucified, which rose from the dead, which ascended into heaven.

So he underlines the fundamental importance of the anaphora and the consecration of the gifts, which earlier commentators, concentrating on their symbolic interpretations, had tended to pass over, or at best to reduce to the same level of symbolic significance as the rest of the service.

At the same time Cabasilas defends the legitimacy of adding symbolic significance to the natural and primary function of the different parts of the rite:

Even if one maintains that the readings and psalms serve another purpose – for they were introduced in order to dispose us to virtue and to cause God to look favourably on us – that does not mean that the same ceremonies cannot at once urge us to virtue and illustrate the scheme of Christ's redemptive work. Robes fulfil their function as clothes and cover the body; but sometimes by their style they indicate the profession, rank and dignity of the wearer. The same is true of these liturgical matters. Because the holy Scriptures contain divinely inspired words and praises of God, and because they incite to virtue, they sanctify those who read or chant them. But because of the selection which has been made, and the order in which the passages have been arranged, they have another function: they signify the coming of Christ and his work. Not only the chants and readings, but the very actions themselves have this part to play. Each has its own immediate purpose and usefulness. But at the same time each symbolizes some part of the works of Christ, his deeds or his sufferings. For example, we have the bringing of the Gospel to the altar, then the bringing of the offerings. Each is done for a purpose, the one that the Gospel may be read, the other that the sacrifice may be performed. Besides this, however, one represents the appearance and the other the manifestation of the Saviour; the first, obscure and imperfect, at the beginning of his life, the second, the perfect and supreme manifestation. There are even certain ceremonies which fulfil no practical purpose, but have only a figurative meaning.

This symbolic presentation of God's plan of salvation enables us to contemplate his love and mercy, and so be moved to renew our faith, devotion and love. The Liturgy is meant to affect us not only at the level of conscious thought: it is meant to appeal also to our emotions, so that we can respond to God's love with our whole being. The worshipper is invited to see, as well as to think

about, the love of God revealed in Jesus Christ, and through contemplation of it to be sanctified. But contemplation as a means of sanctification is subordinate to the reception of the mysteries:

Filled with these ideas, and with their memory fresh within us, we participate in the holy mysteries. In this way, adding sanctification to sanctification, that of the sacred rite to that of contemplation, we are changed from glory to glory, that is to say, from the lesser to that which is greatest of all.

Commenting on the *proskomidia*, Cabasilas explains that there is a preliminary preparation of the gifts because Christ was offered to God from the very beginning of his life, although he was sacrificed only at its close. The removal of the portion to be consecrated from the first *prosphora* indicates that Christ was separated from the mass of humankind to be a sacrifice. He combines the older passion-symbolism of the *proskomidia* with the more recent birth-symbolism, teaching that what is done to represent the passion is a prophetic dramatization of Christ's sufferings and death, which had been foretold in the Old Testament. Christ was born in order to die.

Cabasilas stresses that the bread remains bread so long as it is in the prothesis: he was concerned to discourage the popular view that the gifts were already the objects of veneration. He sums up the meaning of the *proskomidia* in this way:

The words and actions performed over the bread which signify the death of the Lord are only a description and a symbol. The bread therefore remains bread and has received no more than a capacity to be offered to God. That is why it typifies the Lord's body in his early years, for, as we have already pointed out, he himself was an offering from his birth onwards. This is why the priest relates, and represents over the bread, the miracles accomplished in him when he was but new born and still lying in the manger.

These include the placing of the *asteriskos* and the veiling of the gifts. He concludes: 'Thus the power of the incarnate God was veiled up to the time of his miracles and witness from heaven. But those who know say of him: "The Lord has reigned, clothed in beauty", and the other passages which imply his divinity'.

A short treatise on Christian prayer, and a lengthy exposition of the meaning of peace – incorporating the basic teaching of the Eastern Christian tradition on the need to acquire stillness,

hesychia – preface Cabasilas' explanation of the first part of the service. The three antiphons, taken from the prophetic writings, represent the time before John the Baptist, and are prophetic testimonies to the coming of Christ and his achievements. This time comes to an end with the raising of the Gospel-book at the Little Entrance, which symbolizes the manifestation of Christ to the multitudes. The union of heaven and earth, effected by the incarnation, is reflected in the prayer of the Little Entrance, and in the Trisagion. The Church on earth sings the song of the angels, for now angels and men form one Church, a single choir, since Christ was of both heaven and earth.

The scripture readings, apart from their practical purpose, represent the manifestation of the Saviour soon after his showing, when he 'mingled with the crowd and made himself known not only by his own words, but also by that which he taught to his apostles in sending them to the lost sheep of the house of Israel'. The Gospel is read after the Epistle, although historically it should be the other way round, 'because that which our Lord himself said constitutes a more perfect manifestation than the words of the apostles'.

Commenting on the Great Entrance, Cabasilas again insists on the practical as well as the symbolic significance of the procession:

The priest . . . comes to the altar of the prothesis, takes the offerings, and reverently holding them head-high, departs. Carrying them thus, he goes to the altar, after walking in slow and solemn procession through the nave of the church. The faithful chant during the procession, kneeling down reverently and devoutly, and praying that they may be remembered when the offering is made. The priest goes on, surrounded by candles and incense, until he comes to the altar. This is done, no doubt, for practical reasons; it was necessary to bring the offerings which are to be sacrificed to the altar and set them down there, and to do this with all reverence and devotion . . . Also this ceremony signifies the last manifestation of Christ, which aroused the hatred of the Jews, when he embarked on the journey from his native country to Jerusalem, where he was to be sacrificed: then he rode into the holy city on the back of an ass, escorted by a cheering crowd.

He goes on to describe how the people must prostrate themselves, and ask for the prayers of the priest: for intercession at the

Eucharist is particularly efficacious. Cabasilas' language here is reminiscent of that of Cyril of Jerusalem, and shows how the latter's view of the Eucharist as a propitiatory sacrifice had become an integral part of the Orthodox tradition. His warning to the faithful not to confuse the Great Entrance in the ordinary Liturgy with that in the Liturgy of the Presanctified, when alone devotion to the gifts as consecrated is justified, testifies to the persistence of popular devotion at this point from the time of Theodore of Mopsuestia onward, deriving perhaps less from a confusion between the two Liturgies than from the perceived implications of the splendour with which the transfer of the gifts had been attended since that time, and which the development of the *proskomidia* had only served to reinforce.

Cabasilas' comments on the exclamation, 'The doors! The doors!', is of some interest in illustrating the curious development of liturgical practice and symbolism at this point. Originally a command to close the doors of the church, it came to be understood as an injunction to close those of the sanctuary. But by the fourteenth century these were open during the saying of the creed. So Cabasilas relates it to our need to open our mouths and ears in the wisdom we have learnt through our faith in God.

The commentary on the anaphora is theological: for its function is to change the gifts into the Body and Blood of the Lord, and so to effect the commemoration of his passion, death and resurrection. Here symbolism gives way to reality. The most important parts of the prayer are the institution narrative and the *epiclesis*. Following the tradition which goes back to Cyril of Jerusalem, Cabasilas sees the whole rite accomplished once the words of the *epiclesis* have been prayed:

When these words have been said, the whole sacred rite is accomplished, the offerings are consecrated, the sacrifice complete, the divine oblation, slain for the salvation of the world, lies upon the altar. For it is no longer the bread, which until now has represented the Lord's Body, nor is it a simple offering, bearing the likeness of the true offering, carrying as if engraved on it the symbols of the Saviour's passion: it is the true victim, the most holy Body of the Lord, which really suffered the outrages, insults, and blows, which was crucified and slain, which under Pontius Pilate bore such splendid witness; that body which was mocked, scourged, spat upon, and which tasted gall. In like manner the wine has become the

Blood which flowed from that body. It is that Body and Blood formed by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, which was buried, which rose again on the third day, which ascended into heaven and sits down at the right hand of the Father.

After a lengthy defence of the Orthodox theology of consecration, and an exposition of the nature of the eucharistic sacrifice, Cabasilas completes his explanation of the Liturgy. The only further detail to which he attaches symbolic significance is the zeon: the hot water put into the chalice before Communion symbolizes the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Church, which 'comes about when the sacrifice has been offered and the holy offerings have reached their perfection; it will be completed in those who communicate worthily'.

Symeon of Thessalonike

In order to take part in the Liturgy fully, according to Symeon, it is necessary to understand the meaning of what is done in the course of its celebration. For it is made up of symbols which contain a hidden reality – Symeon adopts Dionysius' understanding of a symbol. But properly understood liturgical symbols reveal two different orders of reality. First and foremost they set before the worshipper the whole saving economy of God in Christ: his voluntary humiliation in his incarnation, passion and death; and his resurrection and glorification. The Liturgy at the same time fulfils the Old Testament prefigurations of Christ, and anticipates the ultimate reality of the heavenly Kingdom.

But contemplation of the liturgical rites also gives access to a spiritual reality, which is Christ, considered less in his incarnate economy than as the eternal Word of God. As the human spirit is purified it receives from God the gift of illumination, which enables it to ascend from the material symbols to the spiritual reality they contain. It thus advances in understanding towards the perfect knowledge of the mysteries which is the goal of the Christian life. Symeon views this progress in the same hierarchical way as Dionysius: each of the heavenly and earthly orders mediates knowledge of the mysteries to those below it. But he differs from the Areopagite in setting contemplation of the mysteries firmly within the historic economy of redemption.

In his work *On the Church and the Liturgy* Symeon claims only to be following the holy fathers, from whom he has derived his

interpretation. His remarks reveal the extent to which tradition had come to dominate Byzantine and Orthodox thought and practice. Symeon's work is the final consolidation of the tradition of liturgical interpretation, and reflects the assumption that the Liturgy had always been as it was in the fifteenth century:

For we have not added anything new to what has been handed on, nor have we changed what we have received. But we have preserved them, as we do the symbol of faith. We celebrate the Liturgy as it has been given to us by the Saviour and the apostles and the fathers. And as the Lord celebrated with his disciples, and broke the bread and gave it to them and likewise the chalice, so the church does, the bishop celebrating with the priests, or the priest with other priests. The successor of the apostles, I mean the holy Dionysius, witnesses to this, teaching how to celebrate, as we do. And Basil and Chrysostom, who taught divine things, expounding more largely the order of the mystagogy, handed it down to be performed as our church performs it, and their prayers in the Liturgy testify, teaching the first and second entries, and the rest of the holy rite.

Symeon first deals with the church building, for which by this time a developed rite of consecration existed:

The church, although it is composed of material things, has grace from on high: for it is consecrated by the mystical prayers of the bishop, and anointed with sacred oil, and is wholly the dwelling of God. Not everyone can go everywhere in it: some parts are for the priests, some for the laity.

The division of the church into two – nave and sanctuary – or three, if the narthex is included, has multiple meaning:

The fact that it has two parts, sanctuary and nave, represents Christ, who is both God and man, the one invisible, the other visible. Similarly it represents man, who is both soul and body. But especially it signifies the mystery of the Trinity, which is inaccessible in its essence, but known in its providence and powers. In particular it represents the visible world and the invisible, and also the visible world only: the heavens by the holy sanctuary, things on earth by the holy nave. From another point of view the whole of the church can be seen as threefold: the parts in front of the nave, the nave, and the sanctuary. This signifies the Trinity, and the heavenly orders arranged in

threes; and the pious people divided into three, I mean, the priests, the perfect believers, and the penitents. But the pattern of the holy church also teaches the things on earth and in heaven, and those above the heavens: the narthex, what is on the earth; the nave, the things in heaven; the holy sanctuary, what is above the heavens.

The chancel barrier signifies the distinction between sensible and spiritual realities, and the sanctuary curtain represents the heavenly tabernacle of God. The stone altar points us to Christ as the rock: its under-cover represents the grave clothes, the rich top cover symbolizes his glory. The incense represents the fragrant grace of the Holy Spirit, the lighted candles the illumination given by the Spirit. The ambo symbolizes the stone rolled over the entrance to the tomb. All the adornments of the church represent the beauty of creation: the lights imitate the stars, the corona (of lights) the firmament.

When he comes to the clergy, Symeon follows Dionysius in understanding their different orders as representing the angelic orders in heaven. To this he adds a detailed symbolic interpretation of their vestments, giving also the prayer formula which was said when they were put on. The priests are an image of the first choir of angels, the deacons, readers and chanters represent the middle choir. The bishop is the image of Christ himself, and is the source of all illumination in the church. Symeon explains in his work *On the Holy Liturgy* that his vestments consist of seven items, corresponding to the seven gifts of the Spirit. At this time it was still only senior bishops who wore the imperial sakkos: others still wore the polystavrion, the phelonion covered with crosses. The priest wears five items, corresponding to the five senses, and the five powers of the soul, which the priest sanctifies by his sacramental ministry. The deacon has only two items to put on. The prayer formulae Symeon cites are those of the present Liturgy.

In his *Interpretation of the Church and the Liturgy* Symeon does not speak of the proskomidia. At the end of the work he apologizes for this omission, saying that since the fathers had already written about it there was no need for him to do so. In fact the prothesis as interpreted by Nicholas of Andida and Cabasilas did not fit in well with Symeon's basic scheme, taken from Maximus the Confessor, in whose time there was no proskomidia. But he does include it in *On the Holy Liturgy*, where he

presupposes the same form as Cabasilas, and ascribes to it a similar twofold symbolic meaning, reconciling birth- and passion-symbolism in the same way: the latter is prophetic of what will be accomplished later.

Symeon sees in the use of leavened bread a symbol of the perfect humanity of Christ. The leaven represents his human soul, the salt his spirit. The water represents baptism. After attacking both Latins and Armenians, he goes on to describe the cutting out of the commemorative particles. They are not consecrated in the Liturgy, but are only gifts and sacrifices. But because they are so close on the paten to the Lamb which is consecrated, they bring sanctification to those for whom they are offered. Put into the chalice, they effect a kind of spiritual communion, which can bring profit or condemnation to the soul of the person concerned, depending on his spiritual condition.

Describing the final stages of the *proskomidia*, Symeon attacks the practice of deacons also offering particles, which Philotheos had allowed; they can do so only through the priests. In Thessalonike he had put a stop to this practice, still current on Mount Athos. His objection stems from his hierarchical view of the ministry, in which the inferior orders can do nothing without the permission of their superior.

Coming to the Liturgy itself, Symeon comments on an episcopal celebration, in which the original structure of the rite is less obscured than in a presbyteral Liturgy. Ready vested in the sanctuary the bishop 'having put on the sacred vestments signifies the holy incarnation'. When he descends from his throne in the apse, 'he is an image of the condescension of the Word of God to us'. 'Going to the doors of the holy church, he shows forth his coming on earth and manifestation, and his descent to death and Hades. This is what his going to the west means. The holy Liturgy begins when the bishop gives the sign, for nothing can be done without him. The priests who are saying the prayers within (the sanctuary) typify the heavenly orders.'

Meanwhile the antiphons are being sung. Since the psalms represent the prophets who foretold the coming of Christ, they symbolize the incarnation and the work of the incarnate Word for us. The bishop remains in the nave, accompanied by the deacons who 'not only represent the apostles, but the angels, who were ministering to him in his mysteries'.

When the priests within the sanctuary have finished the

prayers, and have come out, they represent the coming down of the holy angels at the resurrection and ascension of Christ. Then the bishop, bowing his head together with the priests, prays that the angels might enter with them and celebrate with them. In bowing his head and raising it he manifests the resurrection of the Lord. The deacon too proclaims this, raising the Gospel-book, announcing the resurrection of the Saviour and exclaiming in a loud voice: 'Wisdom! Stand upright', witnessing to the resurrection in word and deed. After this there is at once the image of the ascension: candles going before, deacons leading the way in pairs, the holy Gospel-book being held, the bishop himself being supported by deacons, the other priests following after.

Since the nave represents earth, and the sanctuary heaven, the bishop's entry into the sanctuary visibly signifies Christ's exaltation.

The censuring of the altar that follows represents the coming of the Spirit, which completes the revelation of the Trinity. Appropriately therefore the Trisagion is now sung, both by those in the sanctuary and those in the nave: for through the incarnation of Christ 'there has come to be one church of angels and men'. Going to his throne the bishop 'witnesses to Christ's sitting at the right hand of the Father', while his blessing with the trikirion (the triple candlestick) 'confirms for us the sanctification which comes from the Trinity'.

The reading of the apostolic words signifies the mission of the apostles to the Gentiles, while that of the Gospel 'manifests the proclamation of the gospel in all the world which was made by the disciples'. After that comes the end, the time of the consummation, represented by the dismissal of the catechumens. The final coming of Christ is symbolized by the Great Entrance, whose proper splendour Symeon emphasizes:

After this the escorting and entrance of the venerable gifts takes place with splendour, readers, deacons and priests with the holy vessels going before and following, because this represents the final coming of Christ, as we have said, when he will come with glory. Wherefore the omophorion with the cross on it comes in front, which displays the sign of Jesus about to appear from heaven, and represents Jesus himself. With it come the other deacons, signifying the angelic orders. Then come those who bear the holy gifts, followed by all the

others, and those who carry the holy epitaphios on their heads, depicting Jesus naked and dead.

At this time the epitaphios, now used only in Holy Week, served as the aer to cover all the vessels on the altar. Its iconography expressed the interpretation of the deposition of the gifts as symbolic of the burial of Christ. The prayer which the priests make as they go through the church, in response to the people's requests for prayer, shows that when the end comes our inheritance is none other than the Kingdom of God – 'May the Lord God remember you in his Kingdom.'

Popular devotion at the Great Entrance found a more willing protagonist in Symeon than it had in Cabasilas. He holds that veneration of the gifts is perfectly justified, since they are already images of the Body and Blood of Christ, comparable to, though greater than, icons. They are, as St Basil called them, antitypes of the Body and Blood of Christ, and have already been offered to become the Body and Blood. Symeon reckons worse than iconoclasts those who criticize such veneration as idolatry. He encourages the veneration even of holy vessels which are empty, 'for they all partake of sanctification, the holy gifts being offered in sacrifice in them'. Perhaps Symeon was deliberately trying to correct what he considered Cabasilas' mistaken caution. But his use of the word antitype is significant, for in the anaphora of St Basil it is used of the consecrated gifts. Symeon here reflects the view by now deeply ingrained in Orthodox eucharistic piety, that a certain holiness attaches to the bread and wine from the time of their preparation in the prothesis. This is in fact implied by the prayers said during the proskomidia, and by the ceremonial surrounding both that rite and the Great Entrance. The function of the anaphora as the prayer which offers the gifts to God and so prays for their consecration had come to be anticipated in their preliminary preparation. To justify what had become unquestionable traditional practice a distinction had to be drawn between offering the gifts – in the proskomidia – and offering them in sacrifice – in the anaphora. Symeon provided a theological justification for an attitude which Cabasilas, the better liturgical theologian, saw could not be defended without detracting from the essential meaning and centrality of the eucharistic prayer.

Following Maximus the Confessor, Symeon has now exhausted the possibility of attaching events in the history of

salvation to particular parts of the Liturgy: there is nothing to be added after the second coming. But half of the service has yet to take place. Maximus, as we have seen, comments only on the kiss of peace, the creed, the Sanctus, and the Lord's Prayer. Symeon now adopts the alternative scheme of interpretation of Germanos and Nicholas of Andida, which fits awkwardly with that of Maximus, since it entails a return to earlier stages in the life of Christ. So the covering of the gifts on the altar after the Great Entrance indicates that Jesus was not recognized by all at the beginning, and that the incarnation did not detract from his divinity. He is in fact always incomprehensible and infinite, and is only known in so far as he reveals himself.

At the same time much of what follows is an expression of present and anticipated spiritual realities. The kiss of peace is given 'because we have been united by the right confession of the Trinity and the incarnation of one of the Trinity, and this confession has united us with the angels'. It also reminds us that we must love one another, because Christ offered himself in sacrifice because of love, and that all will be friends in the age to come. To that age too the Sanctus points, for then 'we shall give equal praise with the angels and be united with them'.

Symeon offers a concise description of the content of the anaphora after the Sanctus, and stresses the reality of the presence of the Body and Blood of Christ, and so of 'living delight and infinite joy and the Kingdom of heaven' set forth on the holy table for everyone. This present reality has yet to be consummated, however, and the Lord's Prayer 'is a sign of our future union with God in the Holy Spirit through the only-begotten Son, when we shall be sons of God through adoption and grace'. But he reverts to another tradition when he says that the elevation of the bread represents the elevation of Jesus on the cross, and that in the bread the bishop contemplates Jesus crucified. The breaking of the bread has already signified what Jesus did at the Last Supper: and the adding of hot water to the chalice shows that the body of Jesus remained life-giving even after death. After Communion, which points to our indissoluble union with Jesus in the age to come, the censuring of the gifts and their transfer to the prothesis symbolizes the ascension of the Lord, and the proclamation of the gospel in all the world.

The antidoron is received by those who have not communicated. It is not the Communion of the Body of Christ, but it is sanctified, having been signed with the lance and received the

holy words, and so is properly called the antidoron, 'because it gives the gift of God's grace'.

Symeon brought together in his interpretation of the Liturgy all the strands which he found in earlier expressions of Byzantine liturgical exposition. Those strands, as we have seen, belonged to two main traditions of interpretation, which might seem to be alternative rather than complementary. But the Byzantine mind was capable of combining them into a complex, if not always consistent, pattern of liturgical exposition, which became after Symeon's synthesis part of the unquestioned heritage of the Orthodox Christian tradition.

9 *Epilogue*

Nicholas Cabasilas and Symeon of Thessalonike commented on a Liturgy whose development had in all essentials come to an end. Since their day the Liturgy has changed little. Celebrated by all Orthodox Christians in the same way, with only minor variations in practice, each Church using its own liturgical language, it is one of the bonds which unites the autocephalous Orthodox Churches into one family. With the other services of the Church, it is the expression in prayer and worship of the faith which they hold in common, and which is the other main bond holding them together. Just as the tradition of faith, set forth by the Fathers of the fourth to eighth centuries, is held to be the authoritative expression of Orthodox belief, so the liturgical tradition, which in its main lines and much of its content was laid down in the same period, is considered the enduring expression of Orthodox worship.

The inherent conservatism which increasingly characterized the Byzantine Church from the eighth century onwards was inherited in full measure by the Slav Churches founded from Constantinople. It was reinforced by external circumstances. From the time of the Arab Muslim conquest of the territory of the ancient Patriarchates of Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem in the early seventh century, the Orthodox Churches found themselves increasingly under non-Christian rule. By the time Constantinople fell to the Turks in 1453, the Eastern Roman Empire consisted of little more than the city itself. Most of south-east Europe was already within the Ottoman Empire, and by the end of the fifteenth century only the two Romanian principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia maintained a precarious independence, before finally becoming tributary to the Sublime Porte in Istanbul. Only in Muscovite Russia did the Orthodox Church live in a Christian state, which had itself only recently succeeded in freeing itself from two centuries of Tatar domination.

Such historical circumstances laid upon the Orthodox Churches a twofold responsibility. Bearers of the Christian tradition to their peoples, they became the bearers of their peoples' sense of national identity under often oppressive rule.

Where the Church could do little but worship in church buildings, the Liturgy became the expression of more than Christian religious devotion. The need to preserve national as well as Christian tradition tended to foster a still stronger conservatism in all aspects of church life. Modern history has done little to change the situation for most Orthodox Christians. The Orthodox Church in Russia had not had time to profit from its new-found freedom from imperial control and from the restoration of the patriarchate in 1917 before it fell under the rule of an officially atheist state. Most of the Churches of south-east Europe had less than a century of freedom from Ottoman rule before they too found themselves after the Second World War obliged to live within the restrictions imposed by officially Marxist states. Only in Greece does a major Orthodox Church live in an officially Orthodox Christian country. The growing Orthodox Churches in the West are for the most part still closely related to their mother Churches in traditionally Orthodox countries. Drawing their membership largely from Orthodox from those countries living in diaspora, with some local converts to Orthodoxy, they are often under quite strong pressure to conserve and pass on the national Orthodox culture from which they originate.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the Orthodox Churches have so far experienced nothing resembling the so-called liturgical movement which has so affected contemporary worship in the Western Churches. That movement springs from several different sources in the modern development of Western Christianity. The study of the history of Western Christian worship has led to the realization that the forms of service which by the present century had become traditional, and the way in which they were celebrated, had been influenced by trends similar to those we have seen at work in the development of the Orthodox Liturgy. Some of the basic principles of early Christian worship, and in particular of eucharistic worship, had been overlaid and obscured by later developments. At the same time the study of the New Testament and of the doctrine of the Church has led to the recovery of an understanding of the Church as a believing, worshipping and witnessing community, rather than as a clericalized institution providing religious activities for a relatively passive laity. So the celebration of the Eucharist has come to be seen as the characteristic action of the Christian community, celebrated by the whole people of God exercising the royal priesthood conferred on it by God in baptism. From this cele-

bration flows the active witness and service of the Christian community in the life of the world – what an Orthodox writer has called ‘the Liturgy after the Liturgy’.

These perceptions, which underlie the renewal of liturgical worship in the Western Christian traditions, are certainly not lacking within the Orthodox Church. In particular Alexander Schmemmann articulated them forcefully in his book *Introduction to Liturgical Theology*. There he points critically to those developments in the Byzantine Liturgy which made it less and less a celebration of the whole Church, and increasingly a clericalized act for the satisfaction of individual Christian religious needs. He is critical, too, of the tradition of symbolic interpretation of the Liturgy, which obscured the essentially sacramental character of the Eucharist. Schmemmann’s analysis of the development of the Liturgy is based on the same perceptions which have inspired the liturgical movement in Western Churches. But the Orthodox Churches live for the most part in circumstances so different from those of Western Christians that there is no present possibility of, nor indeed any desire for, a reform of Orthodox worship similar to the Western movement of renewal.

That does not mean that no changes at all are taking place in the celebration of the Liturgy in the Orthodox Churches. In the Soviet Union and in other places, not least in the diaspora, many Orthodox receive Communion more frequently now than for many centuries. In Greek practice the litanies between the Gospel and the Great Entrance are normally omitted. In parish churches in Greece the Liturgy is normally celebrated with the royal doors open all the time, while some churches there, and many Greek churches in the United States of America, now have a much more open form of iconostasis. Some degree of visibility has been restored to the Liturgy for those in the nave. Some priests say at least part of the anaphora audibly, with perhaps one or two of the other prayers traditionally said ‘mystically’. In some places, too, the people join in singing some parts of the service: the Trisagion, the creed, the Lord’s Prayer, and perhaps some other chants. The tradition of symbolic interpretation of the Liturgy in terms of the historic life of Christ has not been formally abandoned, and as we have seen it is embodied to a certain extent in the text of the rite itself. But although it survives in a number of modern books on the Liturgy, it does so in a rather fragmented and attenuated form, and seems to have lost the vitality it once had. Such changes, however, do not amount to a

liturgical movement in the Western sense, and Western Christians generally perceive the Orthodox Liturgy as a traditional, conservative expression of eucharistic worship.

For some Western Christians that is one of the attractive characteristics of the Liturgy, as of Orthodoxy as a whole. Many religious people are inclined to be conservative, at least in the practice of their religion. The rapid process of change in ways of worship in Western Churches has not been welcomed with enthusiasm by all church members. The liturgical movement, as we saw in the first chapter, has encouraged emphasis to be laid on certain aspects of eucharistic worship. But there are others which have been neglected or even discouraged, whose importance is perhaps greater than contemporary Western liturgical fashion allows. Its conservative quality apart, there are several aspects of the Orthodox Liturgy from which Western Christians might usefully learn. Some of them are inevitably characteristics of all Orthodox worship, and not only of the Eucharist.

To begin with, there is the Orthodox understanding of the church building as itself sacramental. In Western tradition too churches are consecrated and set apart. But contemporary Western emphasis is on the Church as a holy community rather than on the church building as a holy place, and this influences the kind of building provided for worship. Yet these two emphases need not be mutually exclusive, and it can be a great help to prayerful worship to enter a place clearly understood and seen to be sacred space, enabling worshippers more easily to realize the presence of God and the communion of saints. This need be no escape from the world outside, but should be a reminder that the whole world of time and space is to be transfigured by God's grace into his Kingdom. The reality of that Kingdom is anticipated and experienced in the Eucharist, celebrated in the consecrated space of the church.

In the Orthodox Church icons are an integral part of that sacred space. Through them Christ, the Blessed Virgin Mary, the saints, and the whole economy of salvation are made visibly and sacramentally present to worshippers. The part icons can play in worship and prayer has begun to be appreciated among Western Christians, and one or two icons can quite often be found in churches. But the importance of icons and of the visual element in worship has still to be fully explored in the Western Churches. The Orthodox understanding of icons belongs in principle to the whole Church, for it was set forth by the Seventh Ecumenical

Council. But that Council was never fully understood or accepted in the West, and there is still much in the Orthodox tradition of iconography from which Western Christians can learn.

The use of the sense of sight in Orthodox worship is only one aspect of the way in which the Liturgy and other services draw the whole person into the prayer of the Church. All the senses and the entire body are involved. In front of the icons people light candles. The invariable use of incense at all services appeals to their sense of smell. Through their hearing music makes its appeal to them, for services are always sung or chanted, never read with the speaking voice. Icons, vestments and vessels may be touched and kissed; worshippers may be anointed or given blessed bread or other food to eat. They use their bodies in worship as they cross themselves at different moments in services, and bow or even prostrate themselves at appropriate moments. From this involvement of the whole person and all the senses Western Christians have much to learn. The Churches influenced by the Reformation have been traditionally suspicious of using the body or anything material in worship. They have separated spirit from matter, and in their emphasis on the word have appealed largely to the understanding and the intellect in worship. Recent reforms in the worship of all Western Churches have given renewed prominence to the verbal and intellectual content of services, while minimizing traditional aspects of liturgical worship and its setting which appealed to aspects of the human person other than the rational understanding. The conscious, reasoning mind must be involved in worship. But so must the senses and the emotions, and all that lies beneath the reasoning surface of human beings, for worship should draw into its Godward movement, and penetrate with God's sanctifying grace, the whole person.

Each whole person worships in relationship with other persons. It is the people of God which celebrates the Eucharist, and not a gathering of individuals unrelated to each other. But it is important that the relationship of the individual person to the community should be rightly conceived. There is an interesting, and perhaps important, difference in the way Orthodox and Western congregations behave in church in this respect. In reaction to the individualism which is held to have characterized much Western Christianity in recent centuries, Western Churches are concerned to emphasize the corporate nature of the Church and its worship. There is perhaps a danger of so stressing

its corporateness that individual persons are forced into an excessive conformity. Orthodox Christians have sometimes pointed out how regimented Western worshippers are, lined up in the rigid rows imposed by pewed, or chaired, churches. They are constrained by custom all to do the same thing at the same time. Such outward regimentation has not prevented inward individualism. But neither has the greater freedom given to Orthodox worshippers by the absence of pews or rows of chairs necessarily undermined a sense of worshipping as a community. At the same time the open space of the nave in an Orthodox church gives worshippers freedom to stand, kneel or prostrate themselves where they like, and to move about the church at appropriate times to venerate icons and light candles. Within a tradition which broadly prescribes how all present in church should behave, there is a degree of personal freedom surprising to Western worshippers. Perhaps this reflects a more balanced view of the relationship of individual Christians within the community than has so far been achieved in the Western Churches. The Church is neither a collection of individuals unrelated to each other, nor a collective in which the individual person is subordinated to the whole. It is a community of persons, sustaining each in their life in Christ, and sustained by all through their varied contributions. Perhaps the Orthodox Church, which has not experienced the individualism of Western European society and has therefore not known any reaction to it, can help the Western Churches to achieve the right balance between the two.

Christian community in the Church is both expressed and built up by sharing in Holy Communion at the Eucharist. There is a striking contrast between Orthodox and Western approaches to receiving Communion. It is now very unusual for Western Christians entitled to do so not to communicate at any celebration of the Eucharist they attend. They may even communicate twice in one day, if for some good reason they take part in two celebrations. The liturgical movement in the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches, and the Parish Communion movement in the latter, have created a situation in which almost everyone receives Communion as a matter of course at the Sunday Eucharist. It is still unusual for many Orthodox Christians to communicate more than a few times in the year. In the serious preparation they traditionally undertake for Communion they resemble those reformed Churches in which Communion is also infrequent rather than contemporary Anglicans and Roman Catholics.

Occasional voices ask whether the return to general communion, where that has happened in the Western Churches, is all gain. It is true that it is a return to early Christian practice. But it is also true that the Church is not in the same situation as early Christians: there is a greater diversity in degrees of commitment now than then. Among Anglicans Archbishop Michael Ramsey, writing some years ago in the context of a Church of England where the Parish Communion was rapidly becoming the typical Sunday service, drew attention to the risk of people receiving Holy Communion too lightly. Serious preparation for Communion has largely disappeared, together with fasting for any appreciable time before receiving. The rest of the service itself is generally held to be sufficient preparation for its climax. But St Paul's caution about the danger of eating and drinking at the Eucharist 'without discerning the body' (1 Cor. 11.29) remains – whatever interpretation may be given to that phrase. It cannot be necessarily helpful either to the Church as a whole or to its individual members that so little should be required in preparation for Communion. For participation in the Eucharist is not only the sacrament of Christians' fellowship with one another in the Body of Christ, but also and above all the sacrament of Christians' communion with the holy God. The care with which Orthodox receive the holy mysteries of Christ's Body and Blood should at least raise a question for Western Christians about a general Communion which may have become too easy.

That raises the issue of participation in worship. At most celebrations of the Liturgy only a few Orthodox receive Communion, and most, if not all, of the service is sung by the clergy and the choir or chanters. To contemporary Western Christians that means that Orthodox worshippers do not really participate in the Liturgy: they are passive spectators of a clericalized rite. That is perhaps a superficial assessment, based on the assumption that participation must always be active. But the opposite of active need not be passive: it can be contemplative. There is a participation in worship which is contemplative rather than active, of the kind appropriate in the Anglican tradition at a cathedral sung Evensong. There is a contemplative quality about the Liturgy and other Orthodox services from which Western Christians may have something to learn. Contemporary Western worship is sometimes so active that it can seem busy and be distracting. Liturgical prayer is punctuated by directions to sit, stand or kneel. The flow of the service is interrupted by announcements of

page, hymn and eucharistic prayer numbers. The goal intended is full congregational participation. But the result can sometimes be restless and unprayerful. Revised services provide for silence to be kept at certain moments, but it is more often indicated than prayerfully used. It may be that in a busy, activist world Christians need worship which is not busy and activist. Perhaps something of the contemplative quality of Orthodox worship could impart to Western worship a dimension it has either never had, or is in danger of losing.

For members of all Western Churches, entering an Orthodox church and taking part in the celebration of the Liturgy is an experience different from any they can have in their own tradition. It is an experience of a form of Christian worship shaped, like their own, within a particular historical and cultural setting. It is no less Christian worship. Many Christians are coming to realize that each of the different traditions within the Church of Christ has something to contribute to the whole Body, and needs what others can give. The Orthodox Church holds fast to the primacy of worship in the Christian life, and that itself is a necessary witness. It would be surprising if Western Christians could find nothing from which to learn in the way in which Orthodox Christians worship, and in particular in the heart of the Church's prayer, the Liturgy.

'Life of Christ' Symbolism in the Liturgy: Comparative Table

	Prothesis	Enarxis	First Entrance	Ascent to Throne	Epistle	Gospel
Theodore of Mopsuestia						
Maximus the Confessor			First coming of Christ in the flesh, Passion and Resurrection	The Ascension of Christ	Instruction in the Christian life	The end of the world and the Second Coming of Christ in the world
Germanos	The sacrifice of Christ: Passion and Death	Prophetic foretelling of the Incarnation	Coming of the Son of God into the world	Completion of salvation and Ascension	Prokeimenon and Alleluia = Prophecies of the coming of Christ	Revelation of God by Christ: Bishop blessing Gospel Second
Nicholas of Andida	The Virgin Birth and hidden life of Christ before his baptism	Prophetic foretelling of the Incarnation and the ministry of John the Baptist	Manifestation of Christ at his Baptism in the Jordan	Passage from the Law and the Old Covenant to the beginning of divine grace	The calling of the Apostles	The teaching of Christ
Nicholas Cabasilas	The Incarnation and early years of Christ; his Passion and Death foreshadowed	Prophetic witness to the coming of Christ: the time before the Baptist	Manifestation of Christ to the crowds at his Baptism		Manifestation of Christ in his teaching to the Apostles	Manifestation of Christ teaching crowds
Symeon of Thessalonike	The Incarnation of Christ; his Passion and Death foreshadowed	The Incarnation and the work of the incarnate Word	The Resurrection and Ascension of Christ The coming of the Spirit	Christ's sitting at the right hand of the Father	Mission of the Apostles to the Gentiles	Proclamation of the Gospel to all the world

missal of humens	Great Entrance	Placing of gifts on holy table	Anaphora	Elevation	After Communion
	Christ led away to his Passion	Christ laid in the tomb	The Resurrection of Christ from the dead		
of those to the bridal of Christ	Revelation of the mystery of salvation hidden in God		Our future union with the spiritual powers of heaven	The union of all the faithful with God in the age to come	
	Christ proceeding to his mystical sacrifice	The burial of Christ in the tomb	The Resurrection of Christ		
	The Lord's journey to Jerusalem on Palm Sunday	The upper room made ready	The Last Supper	Christ's Crucifixion, Death and Resurrection	The Ascension of Christ and the coming of the Spirit
	Christ's journey to Jerusalem and his entry on Palm Sunday		Christ's Death, Resurrection, and Ascension	The Zeon = The coming of the Holy Spirit	
the world tion	The final coming of Christ			The elevation of Christ on the Cross	The Ascension of the Lord and the proclamation of the Gospel in all the world

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List of Illustrations

- page 21: Dura-Europos (Salhiyeh), Christian community house, soon after 200. Isometric view (Paul Lampl, fig. 1 in R. Krautheimer, *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture*, Penguin, fourth edn 1986; adapted from J. W. Crowfoot, *Early Churches in Palestine*, London 1941, fig. 1).
- page 30: Rome, Lateran basilica as in 320. Isometric reconstruction (fig. 11 in Krautheimer, op. cit.; based on P. Waddy in R. Krautheimer and S. Corbett, *Rivista di Archeologia Cristiana* XLIII (1967), 144, fig. 111).
- page 69: Constantinople, church of Ss. Sergios and Bacchos, c.536. Plan (T. F. Mathews, *The Early Churches of Constantinople: Architecture and Liturgy*, Pennsylvania State University Press 1971, p. 44).
- page 70: Constantinople, Hagia Eirene, begun 532. Section and plan (Mathews, op. cit., p. 82).
- page 71: Constantinople, Hagia Sophia, dedicated 537. Plan (Mathews, op. cit., p. 92).
- page 106: Nicaea, church of the Dormition, early eighth century. Section and plan (O. Wulff, *Altchristliche und Byzantinische Kunst*, Berlin 1914-24, fig. 283; reproduced as fig. 253 in Krautheimer, op. cit.).
- page 131: (top): Hosios Lukas, catholicon, c.1020. Plan (fig. 297 in Krautheimer, op. cit., revised from E. Stikas, *To oikodomikon chronikon tis monis Osiou Louka Phokidos*, Athens 1970, fig. 67).
- page 131: (bottom): New monastery at Chios, catholicon, 1042-56. Plan (A. K. Orlandos, *Monuments byzantins de Chios*, Athens 1930, plate 10; reproduced as fig. 296 in Krautheimer, op. cit.).
- page 146: Yugoslavia, fourteenth-century churches. Plans (A, C, D: A. Deroko, *Monumental and Decorative Architecture in Medieval Serbia*, Belgrade 1953, figs. 267, 356, 371; B: B. Korac, reproduced as fig. 394 in Krautheimer, op. cit.).

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Index

- aer (veil) 126–7, 169
ambo 49; prayer behind 89, 122, 138
anaphora 8; Apostolic Constitutions 42–4; St Basil 55–6; St John Chrysostom 56–7; silent recitation 86–7; Nicholas of Andida's understanding 142–3; = antidoron 139
'angel of peace' biddings 119–20
antidoron 138–9, 170
antiphons 110–12
Apostolic Constitutions 38–45
apse *see* sanctuary; decoration 4, 31, 74–5, 107, 132, 149
Arianism 27–8
atrium 47–8, 72

Balsamon, Theodore 129
Barberini Codex 108
basilica 29–30, 47–9

Cabasilas, Nicholas 158; commentary 158–64
Cherubic Hymn 83–4
church houses 21–2
Chrysostom, John 47; interpretation of Eucharist 61–6
church building, symbolic interpretation Maximus 96–7; Germanos 123–4; Nicholas of Andida 133; Symeon of Thessalonike 165–6
Clementine Liturgy *see* Apostolic Constitutions
Clement of Rome 14–15
Communion 36, 44, 59–60, 88–9; decline in lay 37; consequences 60–1; more frequent 178
consecration, theology 19, 35, 157–8
creed 84–6
Cyril of Jerusalem, Mystagogical Catecheses 33–8

decoration, church *see* iconography
Didascalia Apostolorum 20
Dionysius the Areopagite 90–4
diptychs 57–9
dismissals 39, 51, 81
dome 73; decoration 3, 107, 130–1, 150–1
doxologies, trinitarian 28
Dura Europos 21–2

Ecclesiastical History *see* Germanos
eileton (corporal) 64, 126
ektene 113–14
elevation 121
Enarxis 136–8; *see also* antiphons
entry chant 77
entry into church 76–7; prayer 77
epiclesis 34–5, 43, 157–8
epitaphios 169
Eutychius, Patriarch of Constantinople 82

Germanos, Patriarch of Constantinople 108, 123–8
Great Entrance 7–8; origins 20–1, 52–4; development 81–3; prayer 116–7; interpretation: Germanos 126; Nicholas of

Index

Great Entrance – *cont.*

Andida 141–2; Nicholas

Cabasilas 162–3; Symeon of

Thessalonike 168–9

great litany *see* synapte

Hagia Sofia 71–74

hierarchy, development 32–3

‘holy things for holy people’ 44,

59, 87, 121

iconoclasm 103–5

iconography: origins 22–4;

imperial influence 30–2;

church decoration 75–6, 105–8,

130–3, 148–52

iconostasis 3, 147–8

icons, veneration 24, 103–4

incense 5, 117, 126, 155, 177

intercession 18, 34–5; *see also*

prayers of the faithful

Isidore of Pelusium 64

John of Damascus 104

John the Divine 16–17

Justin Martyr, First Apology 18–

19

kiss of peace 17, 40, 52, 84, 98,

117–18

Last Supper 13

lavabo 40–1, 54, 83, 93, 153

litany of fervent supplication *see*

ektene

Little Entrance 6, 112, 155

liturgical centres 29

Lord’s prayer 44, 59, 87, 98,

120, 127–8, 170

Maximus the Confessor 67–8,

90; Mystagogia 94–101

Narsai, Liturgical Homilies 87

narthex 48, 72; decoration 151–2

nave 48, 72; decoration 30, 74–5,

107–8, 130–3, 148, 150–1

Nicaea, Council 27–8

Nicholas of Andida 129;

Protheoria 139–44

Nicholas Cabasilas *see* Cabasilas

omophorion 64, 124

Origen, teaching on mystery 24–5

Paul of Samosata 22

Philotheos, Diataxis 145

portrait art 23–4

prayers of the faithful 39–40, 51,

81, 114–6; *see also* intercession

prophora,

commemorative 135–6

prothesis: place 4, 112; rite 5,

109–10, 117, 135–6, 154, 167;

decoration 4, 132, 150

prayer behind the ambo *see* ambo

prokeimenon 113, 125

proskomidia *see* prothesis; =

anaphora 55

Protheoria *see* Nicholas of

Andida

sanctuary 3–4, 29–30, 49, 70–1,

72–3, 130, 132, 142, 146–7

Schmemmann, Alexander 175

scripture readings 39, 50, 80, 113

sermon 18, 39, 50–1, 80–1

skeuophylakion 52, 81

spoon, communion 121

symbolic interpretation 10–11:

origins 17, 24–5; criticism 175;

Chrysostom 61–6;

Dionysios 90–4; Maximus 94–

101; Germanos 123–8;

Nicholas of Andida 139–44;

Nicholas Cabasilas 158–64;

Symeon of Thessalonike 164–

71

Symeon of Thessalonike 158;
commentaries 164-71
synapte 113, 116, 136

thanksgiving (eucharistia) 19
Trisagion 77-9

Typika (typical psalms) 137-8

vestments 32-3, 153-4

zeon 87-8, 164