

The Church Orders

Church Orders, common in the first five centuries, were mutually interrelated documents often circulated in collections and in which material tended to appear in the same order, but perhaps, further elaborated according to need.¹ Bradshaw has referred to them as ‘living literature’.² The earliest, the *Didache*, the *Didascalia* and the *Apostolic Church Order*, covered matters of Christian life as a whole; liturgical directions were almost tangential to the whole exercise. Later came an increasing tendency to prescribe practice while disguising this prescription as description. Material no longer relevant was progressively omitted, and works like the *Apostolic Tradition* became more popular because they provided the beginnings of liturgical rubrics and canon law; they in their turn ceased to be of importance when councils and synods produced collections of canons.³ When we examine these documents then, we should be aware that they are probably not describing current practice, but reflect what is perceived as the best practice. We must also note that different versions of texts may well indicate adaptation to the concrete situation of a particular local church.⁴

The Didache

The latest tentative attempt at dating this very early work places it around 110–120 CE, most probably originating in Syria/Palestine.⁵ The only references to daily prayer are to the Lord’s Prayer said three times daily in *Didache* 8.3, there is no mention of prayer at night but the three times daily is in line with Clement of Alexandria and Origen.⁶

¹ Paul Bradshaw, ch. 4; *The Search*, op. cit., pp. 73–97.

² Paul Bradshaw and B. Spinks (eds). *Liturgy in Dialogue* (London: 1994), pp. 138–53.

³ Bradshaw, *The Search*, pp. 93–7.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

⁵ Kurt Niederwimmer, *The Didache* (Minneapolis: Fortress *Hermeneia* series, 1998), pp. 52–4.

⁶ Bradshaw, *Daily Prayer*, op. cit., p. 26; *The Search*, p. 175.

The Didascalia

Originally composed in Greek, this work was probably compiled in Syria in the first half of the third century, perhaps around 230.⁷ Again it is largely concerned with practical Christian living and good order.⁸ In chapter 11 we read that ‘It is required of a man to pray diligently at all times’.⁹ Chapter 13 exhorts people to regular church attendance, seemingly referring to the Sunday Eucharist, but a comparison is made with pagans worshipping daily, which might suggest that there were poorly attended Christian daily services.¹⁰

The image of light conquering darkness is found in the chapter on the Resurrection of the dead (20); martyrdom is to be crowned by being raised up in glorious light. Also the light of resurrection is compared with that of creation, a light shining where there was darkness. Eschatological light is also promised to those who remain faithful.¹¹ All this might provide justification for night vigil services.

Chapter 21 refers to the Paschal vigil: ‘You shall assemble together and watch and keep vigil all night with prayers and intercessions, and with the reading of the Prophets, and with the Gospel and with the Psalms, . . . until the third hour in the night after the Sabbath; And then break your fasts.’¹² This Paschal vigil commemorates the Lord’s passion and three days in the tomb, and heedless Christians are reminded that they have seen a great light; a similar passage concluded: ‘[you] have long since believed and been baptized in Him: and a great light has dawned upon you’.¹³

The Good Friday fast is a fasting of repentance rather than a preparation for baptism. The lengthy section treating of the Friday to Saturday fast concludes:

Therefore the fast of the Friday and Saturday is especially required of you. And also the vigil and watching of the Saturday, and the reading of the Scriptures, and Psalms, and prayers and intercession for those who have sinned, and the expectation and hope of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus, until the third hour in the night after the Sabbath. And then offer your

⁷F.X. Funk (ed.), *Didascalia et Apostolorum Constitutiones Apostolicae* (Paderborn: 1906); Sebastian Brock and Michael Vasey (eds), *The Liturgical Portions of the Didascalia* (Grove Liturgical Study 29, Bramcote: 1982), p. 5; Bradshaw, *The Search*, pp. 78–80.

⁸A. Vööbus, *The Didascalia Apostolorum in Syriae*, 2 vols (CSCO 175, 176, 179, 180, Louvain: 1979).

⁹Vööbus, vol. II, p. 127.

¹⁰Vööbus, vol. II, p. 136; Brock and Vasey, op. cit., pp. 17–18.

¹¹Vööbus, vol. II, p. 175, line 25–176, line 7.

¹²Ibid., vol. II, p. 199, lines 3–7.

¹³Ibid., vol. II, p. 196, lines 1–15.

oblations. And after this eat and enjoy yourselves, and rejoice and be glad, because the earnest of our resurrection, Christ, is risen.¹⁴

There is some discussion of the symbolism of the seven days of the week, regarding both creation and resurrection/new creation; and the eschatological eternal day: ‘A day thus is to be revealed when the sun will stand indeed in its midcourse, . . . For he said: *Behold, I make the first things as the last, and the last as the first.*’¹⁵

We conclude that those who compiled *Didascalia* may have known a custom of praying three times daily, and a Paschal vigil to which all should come. Finally it witnesses to a strong imagery of darkness and light, leading to the *eschaton* in which all is light.

The Apostolic Constitutions

Probably originating in Syria and originally composed in Greek, Bradshaw dates this work to about 375–380 CE.¹⁶ Books 1–6 are a re-working of the *Didascalia*, while book 7 is a version of the *Didache*. Book 8 elaborates the *Apostolic Tradition*, adding more liturgical material.

Since Funk edited the text, W. Jardine Grisbrooke has produced an English edition of the liturgical material.¹⁷ Book 5 envisages a Paschal vigil lasting until the early hours of Easter Sunday morning, at which catechumens are to be baptized:

On the sabbath, keep awake from evening until cockcrow, as it begins to dawn towards the first day of the week, and, assembled in church, keep vigil, praying and entreating God, and reading the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms until cockcrow; then, having baptised your catechumens. ¹⁸

There is an inconsistency in the material grouped by Grisbrooke under the heading of ‘The Divine Office’. *Didache*’s requirement of the Lord’s Prayer three times daily is found here.¹⁹ There is also (in book 8.34) a call for prayer six times a day: namely, in the morning, at the Third Hour, the Sixth Hour, the

¹⁴Ibid., vol. II, pp. 199, line 22–200, line 1.

¹⁵Ibid., vol. II, p. 234, lines 8–11.

¹⁶Bradshaw, *The Search*, p. 84.

¹⁷Funk, op. cit.; W. Jardine Grisbrooke, *The Liturgical Portions of the Apostolic Constitutions: A Text for Students* (Bramcote: Alcuin/GROW Liturgical Study 13–14, 1990). References to latter source.

¹⁸5.19; *ibid.*, p. 48.

¹⁹8.24.2; *ibid.*, pp. 52–3.

Ninth Hour, in the evening, and at cockcrow; a rationale being given for each of these times; the order appears to be referring only to private prayer.²⁰

More detailed legislation for public prayer twice a day, morning and evening, is found in book 2.59:

In your teaching, o bishop, command and exhort the people to come constantly to church, morning and evening every day, . . . assemble yourselves together every day, morning and evening, singing and praying in the house of the Lord, saying in the morning the sixty-second psalm, and in the evening the one hundred and fortieth.²¹

This is one of the earliest indications of a twice-daily gathering for prayer, distinct from the *private* custom of praying three, or even six, times a day. There is nothing similar in the earlier documents.

The same passage provides an interesting sentence about Sunday commemoration of the resurrection; ‘we offer three prayers in thankful memory of him who rose on the third day; we read from the prophets, we proclaim the Gospel, we offer the sacrifice, and we receive the gift of the holy food’. Some commentators think that the three prayers might be the cathedral Sunday resurrection vigil.²² The ‘prayers’ could be psalms or canticles, and ‘the prophets’ might be the Old Testament canticles, as we find in several later orders for the cathedral Sunday vigil. The order of Gospel, sacrifice, and participation in holy food might well indicate the Sunday Eucharist; however, earlier in Book 2 there is a fuller description of the eucharistic liturgy of the word which mentions an epistle or Acts reading not found here.²³ This passage may refer to a Sunday resurrection vigil.

After chapter 8.34 has prescribed prayers at selected times of the day, morning to evening, there follow the chapters that describe evening and morning offices in greater detail, and in that order, evening first and then morning.²⁴ Here we have a mismatch between the two systems that shows clearly how these documents, as ‘living literature’, continued to grow, change and evolve even down to the fourth century. The document resists attempts to harmonize the different strata, and may well be telling only part of the story. With these cautions in mind, we turn to examine its forms of evening and Morning Prayer.

²⁰ 8.34; *ibid.*, pp. 52–3.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 53–4.

²² *Ibid.*, 2.59.4, and p. 54, n. 5; Taft, *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West*, p. 53.

²³ Book 2, see e.g., Grisbrooke, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

²⁴ 8.35.1–8.38.5; in *ibid.*, pp. 58–61. J.M. Joncas, ‘Daily Prayer in the Apostolic Constitutions’, *EL*, 107 (1993) 113–35, 116, notes the different systems of reckoning the day.

Evening Prayer

The bishop is to gather the people for prayer in the evening, ‘and after the recitation of the psalm at the lighting of the lamps, the deacon shall bid prayers’.²⁵ This sentence gives all the structural information available; the bishop presides over an evening assembly, and after the psalm at the lighting of lamps, there are prayers. There is no mention of which psalm is sung at the lighting of the lamps, though book 2.59 calls for psalm 140 to be sung in the evening, as we have seen. Contrary to what Grisbrooke and others have suggested, we cannot link the two passages together too readily.²⁶ Book 2 does not explicitly associate psalm 140 with lamp-lighting; besides, the psalm is a prayer for acceptance of the evening sacrifice and protection in the night that makes no mention of lights.

The lack of explicit mention in book 8.35 of psalm 140, only of the ‘psalm at the lighting of the lamps’, may indicate that the document is attempting to standardize variant practices. If we pose the hypothetical question, ‘Which psalms should we use in the evening and morning?’ Book 2.59 answers, *at least* psalm 62 in the morning and psalm 140 in the evening. Book 8.35 answers the different question, ‘At what point of the service do we pray at evening prayer?’ with ‘after the recitation of the psalm at the lighting of the lamps’. Both answers could establish a basis for common practice.

This argument follows Bradshaw’s principles for interpreting early Christian liturgical evidence.²⁷ Church Orders are not always what they seem; for example, an authoritative-sounding statement may not always be genuinely authoritative. We should beware of a too facile assumption that everything that needs to be said is here, for usually only controverted practices are mentioned. This supports the present author’s hypothesis of an attempt to standardize differing customs. On the other hand, Bradshaw also reminds us that the ‘Constantinian revolution’ intensified existing trends as well as initiating new ones.²⁸ Constantinian practice may be embedded in these almost contradictory, and certainly rather diffuse sets of liturgical directives.

We can say that psalm 140 was among those used in the evening, and after the final psalm at the lighting of the lamps, there were prayers.²⁹ Book 8 gives more detail of the prayers to follow the lamp-lighting ceremony. Book 8.36 summarizes a litany that is recognizably similar to that known in the Byzantine liturgy as the *aitesis*. The deacon is to pray for an ‘angel of peace’, for ‘a

²⁵ 8.35.2; Grisbrooke, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

²⁶ 8.35.1–2; *ibid.*, p. 58, n. 1.

²⁷ Bradshaw, *The Search*, ch. 1, pp. 14–20.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 212.

²⁹ Joncas, *op. cit.*, 128 comes to a similar conclusion.

Christian end', 'for an evening and a night of peace and free from sin', and ends with mutual commendation of those present to God through Christ. This litany is eminently suited to evening prayer, connecting evening and night with a Christian's end, that is, death; and the angel of peace petitions may be seen as prayers for protection in the night. Of other petitions that preceded this, no details are given and an almost exactly similar passage is found in the description of Morning Prayer with the addition, in the reference to the *aitesis*, of a prayer that God be merciful and gracious.³⁰

A prayer over the catechumens at the Eucharist in book 8.6³¹ appears to be the original form of the *aitesis*, that, at this time of crisis, they will be protected against the powers of darkness. The *aitesis*, as a suitable prayer for catechumens, goes on to cover the passage from the liturgy to life. Its suitability at this point of Evening and Morning Prayer may be readily appreciated.

The bishop's concluding prayer follows the litany,³² in it he prays to God

who created the day for works of light and [the] night for rest, given our weakness: for 'the day is yours, the night also is yours: you have fashioned the light and the sun': Do you now O Lord... favourably accept this our evening thanksgiving. You who have led us through the length of the day, and brought us to the beginnings of the night, guard us through your Christ, grant us a peaceful evening and a night free from sin and from evil dreams,

The psalm quoted, 73, is not known as an evening prayer, but exhorts the Lord to remember his covenant (v. 20), and: 'Arise, O God, and defend your cause!' (v. 22). The prayer is for the acceptance of the evening thanksgiving, and the time is clearly the beginning of the night, so it is a time to pray for a peaceful evening and a sinless night. Finally the bishop prays that God will cause his face to shine on his servants, and bless those enlightened with the light of knowledge by Christ who has revealed God to the world. The evening light imagery is quite clear; the light of Christ enlightens God's people with knowledge of him that they may depart fearlessly into the night.

Morning Prayer

In this office the 'morning psalm' has often been taken to be psalm 62; but, recalling the mismatch between books 2 and 8, it could just as easily refer to some other psalm as *the* morning psalm. Psalm 62 is really more suited to the

³⁰ Full text in Grisbrooke, op. cit., pp. 58–60.

³¹ 8.6.8ff.; *ibid.*, pp. 22–3.

³² 8.37.2ff.; *ibid.*, pp. 58–9.

time before the full light of day, and the phrase does not exclude there being other psalms or canticles as well, of which one might be selected to celebrate the rising sun as symbol of the light of the risen Jesus Christ.³³

The litanies following the 'morning psalm' are similar to those at Vespers. The bishop's Morning Prayer prays to God:

who gives the sun to govern the day, and the moon and the stars to govern the night; do you yourself look down upon us with kindly eyes, and receive our morning thanksgivings, and have mercy upon us, for we have not spread out our hands to another God: ... but you [alone], the eternal and unending, who have granted us being through Christ ... Make us worthy also of eternal life through him ...³⁴

This prayer acknowledges God as author of the day, and implores new creation in Christ. The prayer over the people asks that they be preserved in 'godliness and righteousness' and be judged worthy of eternal life.³⁵ These prayers treat morning as representing the morning of creation, and as the pre-existent Christ was instrumental in creation, so is he prayed to as the means by which his people enter upon new and eternal life.

The order of the offices in book 8 (evening first and then morning) may well be significant. At the beginning of the night there is an assembly for prayer, perhaps with ceremonial lighting of the lamps, a psalm or psalms are used, and prayer is made that the light of God will illumine the darkness. Then in the morning, after the psalmody, and, specifically after the 'morning psalm', prayer is made to the giver of life that he may lead his people into eternal life, symbolized by the new day.

Book 8.34 gives a rationale for morning and evening prayer.³⁶ 'In the morning, we pray because light has been sent to chase away the night; in the evening that we may rest from the labours of the day, while at cockcrow, we may once more prepare for a new day in which the works of light may be performed.' While the passage seems mainly concerned with private prayer, nothing in it is at odds with the character of the evening and Morning Prayers of the following chapters. Book 2 provides no rationale for the services, and mentions psalms 140 and 62 without implying that these were the only psalms sung at those services. A rationale is provided for what seems to be the resurrection vigil (see above). Finally, book 7 provides an appendix of morning and evening hymns, the former of which is an early version of the Great

³³ Joncas, op. cit., 121 comes to a similar conclusion.

³⁴ 8.38.4ff.; Grisbrooke, op. cit., p. 60.

³⁵ 8.39.3ff.; *ibid.*, p. 61.

³⁶ 8.34.7; *ibid.*, pp. 53–7.

Doxology or *Gloria in Excelsis*, frequently found in Morning Prayer services throughout the East (and also in medieval Milan).

Even if book 2 and book 8 are probably from different sources, and the hymns in book 7 from yet another, it is possible that at least some places had established services of daily evening and Morning Prayer prior to the late fourth century. These were services that celebrated the victory of light over darkness.

The Apostolic Tradition (AT)

The case for Roman origin of this well-known document relies largely on Hippolytus being the author, which is doubtful. If he were not, then the dating of c.215 CE falls as well. Even if it does not represent Roman liturgical practice in the early third century, it was, however, influential in places other than Italy, for example upon *Apostolic Constitutions*, the Syrian *Testamentum Domini* and the Egyptian *Canons of Hippolytus*.³⁷

The source of chapter 41, *De tempore quo oportet orare*,³⁸ is a Sahidic Coptic manuscript of 1006.³⁹ Hanssens dated the translation to around 700.⁴⁰ The chapter has recently been studied by L. Edward Phillips. We will summarize his conclusions here.⁴¹ Phillips noted that there is a different rationale for the Hours of prayer from *Apostolic Constitutions*, and he concludes that the longer horarium of the Sahidic text is a substantial witness to the earlier text.

The faithful are called upon to wash upon rising and pray – But if there is an assembly for prayer and instruction, go and pray there – so the First Hour is instructional. The chapter continues with Third, Sixth and Ninth Hours; because at the third Christ was nailed to the cross (Mark 15.25), at the Sixth darkness covered the earth (Mark 12.33), and at the ninth Christ died (Mark 15.34). However, in an additional warrant for the Hours of prayer, the Third has an interesting reference to the Temple sacrifices. There is in fact a large concentration of biblical imagery in the description of the Third Hour prayer.

At the Sixth Hour, the theme of darkness covering the earth gives a penitential emphasis, whereas the Third and Ninth Hours have a theme of

³⁷ Bradshaw, *The Search*, pp. 89–91; P. E. Bradshaw, Maxwell E. Johnson and J. Edwards Phillips (eds), *The Apostolic Tradition: A Commentary (Hermeneia, Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002)*, pp. 6–11.

³⁸ B. Botte, OSB (ed.), *La Tradition Apostolique de Saint Hippolyte* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1963), pp. 88–97.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. xxi.

⁴⁰ G. Cuming, *Hippolytus: A Text for Students* (Bramcote: Grove Liturgical Study 8, 1976), p. 6.

⁴¹ 'Daily Prayer in the Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus', *Journal of Theological Studies* ns, **40**, 1989, 389–400. See also Bradshaw et al., *op. cit.*, pp. 194–215.

thanksgiving. The service at the Ninth Hour is to be one of intense prayer and blessing of God. Christ's death is associated with the new day that commences with the evening: the piercing of Christ's side brings light, the darkness of the Sixth Hour is lifted, and at Christ's falling asleep there is a new day, a type of the resurrection. As at the Third Hour, evocative images are piled up: God's faithfulness, Christ's sacrifice, light, and new day beginning at evening and leading to resurrection day. Phillips shows how the Third and Ninth Hours are associated with the morning and evening sacrifices of the Temple.

One cannot stress too much the images of light and the new day that are associated with the Ninth Hour here. These references are taken up in the *Canons of Hippolytus* and the *Testamentum Domini* (see below), neither of which quotes the next short sentence, 'Ora etiam antequam corpus cubile requiescat' ('Also the hour before which the body rests in bed'). This short statement is very different from the more elaborate warrant for the Third, Ninth and even the Sixth Hours. Phillips thus argues that the Third, Sixth and Ninth Hours are the morning, noon and evening prayers, providing something similar to the Alexandrine pattern known to Clement and Origen.

Paul Bradshaw argued for a similar pattern of thrice-daily prayer with prayer at midnight, and no distinction in importance between the various Hours of prayer, and accepts much of what Phillips suggests.⁴² Phillips however, also noted the greater stress on thanksgiving at the Third and Ninth Hours, and the larger number of biblical images as warrants for these times of prayer. The compiler of AT also has a long passage in which he promotes the practice of rising in the night for prayer. There are even indications that washing on rising in the night might well be associated with baptism, and there is a clear concern for watchfulness, illustrated by the parable of the wise and foolish bridesmaids: 'Behold the bridegroom comes, go out and meet him.'⁴³ What is not clear is whether any of these times of prayer, with the exception of the occasional assembly for instruction, was in any sense a communal exercise.

It is possible that prayer at cockcrow might be a later addition to the document, so Phillips and Bradshaw suggest four times of prayer: morning, noon, evening, and the night – in some regions Morning Prayer was near dawn, in others, such as Alexandria and wherever AT originated, it may have been at the Third Hour. The evening prayer was offered at sunset in some places, and at the Ninth Hour in others. The conflation of the different traditions leads to the emerging pattern of morning, Third, Sixth and Ninth Hours, evening, and in the night. But all of this could refer to private prayer alone, to the devotional practices of individuals. Did the cathedral offices of morning and evening prayer come into existence only in the fourth century, and if so, why do they

⁴² Bradshaw, *Daily Prayer*, *op. cit.*, ch. 3; *The Search*, pp. 175–6.

⁴³ Botte, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

not reflect Bradshaw's suggested ancient pattern of prayer *four* times daily? For our purposes we might note the literal translation of the Sahidic of 41.9: 'Because of this, you also, when you go to sleep, shall begin another day and make the type of the resurrection.' Recent comment on this obscure passage certainly recognizes a connection between times of prayer and death and resurrection typology.⁴⁴

Church Orders tend to deal only with disputed matters. For example, AT has no description of a normal Sunday act of worship. Much that must have been done communally remains unknown to us, and as far as documentary sources go, probably always will. Bearing this caveat in mind, there is one other place in AT where worship at a particular time of day is stipulated; at an evening communal meal, found only in the Ethiopic version, which is the latest but fullest version of the complete order.⁴⁵ Botte and Chadwick argued for the genuineness of this section, while allowing for changes in the order of meal lamp-lighting.⁴⁶

The passage begins with the account of an evening assembly, into which the deacon brings a lamp, and the bishop prays in thanksgiving, for the Lord has 'revealed to us the inextinguishable light', also acknowledging the beginning of the night, in which however 'we do not lack the light of evening', so we may give praise and glory to God. The next part is confused, but psalms are to be sung, and there is a requirement for the deacon, at the thanksgiving cup, to say a psalm with Alleluia written in it. The instructions concerning the meal now follow, in spite of a prior direction in chapter 25, 'They shall rise, then, after supper and pray; and the boys and the virgins shall say psalms.'⁴⁷ The light ritual is extremely simple, just a thanksgiving prayer at the utilitarian act of bringing in a lamp, but symbolizing the inextinguishable light of Christ. The prayer is a fitting beginning of the service/meal that follows.

Secondly, the psalms 'in which "Alleluia" is written'⁴⁸ could refer to the Hallel, psalms 112, 113, 114, 115, 116 and 117. The Septuagint also provides the heading 'Alleluia' for psalms 104–6, 110, 111, and 118, 134, 135, and 145–50, which would give a far wider selection than might otherwise be apparent. Was the so-called Egyptian Hallel already an established use by the third century of the Common Era? It was certainly the usage of the Temple before its destruction, a use connected with the slaughter of the Paschal Lamb, and with

⁴⁴ Bradshaw et al., op. cit., pp. 198, 209.

⁴⁵ Cuming, op. cit., p. 6; Bradshaw et al., pp. 156–60.

⁴⁶ Bradshaw, 'Other Acts of Worship', in Geoffrey Cuming (ed.), *Essays on Hippolytus* (Bramcote: Grove Liturgical Study 15, 1978), pp. 61–3 and *Daily Prayer*, pp. 55–7.

⁴⁷ Cuming, op. cit., pp. 23–4.

⁴⁸ Cuming, op. cit., p. 24. We must exercise caution here, this part of the text may be a later addition, but Tertullian witnesses to a not dissimilar practice, Bradshaw et al., op. cit., pp. 158–9.

the Passover *seder*.⁴⁹ In fact in the Temple the same group of psalms was repeated if necessary to cover the ritual butchery.⁵⁰ This accords with what we have seen of the rationale for prayer at the Ninth Hour, the sacrificial flowing of blood and water. Another possibility is a fifth cup of wine at Passover, with which is connected psalm 135, 'The Great Hallel', seemingly an optional practice, and that as late as Saadia Gaon (928–942).⁵¹ We conclude that the Egyptian Hallel may be intended because of its association with sacrifice.

The compiler of this part of AT could have known a supper practice that closely reflected the themes of prayer mentioned for the Ninth Hour: sacrifice, new light, new day, etc. How often the supper was celebrated is not known, but even at an early date there may have been some kind of regular evening observance by some at least of the clergy and faithful.

The Testamentum Domini

This work is a much expanded version of AT of which the original Greek text is now lost. The Syriac version first published by Rahmani is the most used, but significantly different readings in the Ethiopic and Arabic versions may depend upon a lost Coptic original. Most scholars believe that it dates from fifth-century Syria.⁵² A recent partial edition by Grant Sperry-White argues for a late-fourth-century date because of internal evidence. He also narrows down the place of origin to Asia Minor because of resemblance to Basil's round of offices in 'urban monasteries', parallels with a fourth-century pseudo-Athanasian work from Cappadocia, and the prominent place accorded to widows.⁵³

Testamentum Domini describes the daily services of an ascetic minority within a larger community. First there is an account of rising and washing before prayer in book II.24⁵⁴ (AT 41). We then find: 'Let all be anxious to pray at the third hour, with mourning and labour, whether at the church or in the house . . . For this is the hour of the fixing of the Only-begotten to the Cross.' This is an expansion of AT explicitly indicating a church service at the Third

⁴⁹ Lawrence A. Hoffman, *The Canonization of the Synagogue Service* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1979), pp. 118–19.

⁵⁰ *Mishnah, Pesahim*, 5.7, Herbert Danby (ed.), (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933), p. 142.

⁵¹ Hoffman, op. cit., pp. 120, 5.

⁵² Bradshaw, *The Search*, pp. 86–7.

⁵³ G. Sperry-White, *The Testamentum Domini: A Text for Students, with Introduction, Translation, and Notes* (Bramcote: Alcuin/Grow Liturgical Study 19, 1991), p. 6; hereafter Sperry-White.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 31, 38–9.

Hour. The passage on the Sixth Hour is derived from AT, as is that on the Ninth, which takes up AT's imagery even more explicitly: 'But also at the ninth hour let the prayer be prolonged... For at this hour life was opened to believers, and blood and water poured out from our Lord's side.' The stress on the hymn of praise and the sacrificial and redemptive overtones suit the theory that this is the evening service. However, the *Testamentum* has divided AT's Ninth Hour in two, so that the next sentence might be interpreted as referring to another service: 'But at evening, when it is the beginning of another day, he has caused us to give praise, showing an image of the Resurrection.'⁵⁵ Next comes provision for midnight prayer in honour of the resurrection, and dawn is the time when the risen Christ praised the Father while psalms were sung. Evening prayer is seen to begin the new day, and is an image of the resurrection, midnight prayer commemorates the resurrection itself, and dawn prayer praises God in the risen Christ.⁵⁶

The remaining references are scattered through book I;⁵⁷ in I.22 we find an instruction addressed to a bishop to pray at the First Hour of the night, midnight 'and early twilight when the star of dawn riseth. Then also in the morning, and the third, sixth and ninth [hours, and the] twelfth hour at the lamp [lighting].'⁵⁸ I.26 envisages a service with the bishop at early dawn that finishes at sunrise.⁵⁹ The first part of the tri-part prayer refers to the morning, praises God as creator who has 'promised us immortal light', and is 'begetter of light, principle of life, giver of knowledge'. The third part of the prayer refers to God who calms storms that we might walk according to his commandments.

A rubric, 'Let them sing four psalms and hymns of praise: one by Moses and of Solomon and of the other prophets', might well refer to the Old Testament canticles such as the Exodus Song of the Sea. Next there is to be the 'hymn of praise', a prayer that begins with the words: 'O Lord, Father, giver of light' which praises God who has 'made us remove material darkness, and have bestowed immaterial light upon us'. The people's response to this, 'We praise you, we bless you, we confess you, O Lord, and we supplicate you our God', seems to echo the *Gloria in Excelsis*.

These texts are strongly reminiscent of ones that refer to baptism. For example, in II.7, an exorcism speaks of the enlightening of one bound and fixed in darkness.⁶⁰ This connection of baptism and the morning celebration of the

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 39 and n.

⁵⁶ For context: J. Cooper and A.J. Maclean (eds), *The Testament of Our Lord* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1902), pp. 136–7.

⁵⁷ Sperry-White, p. 31.

⁵⁸ Cooper and Maclean, op. cit., p. 68 – not reproduced in Sperry-White (p. 31).

⁵⁹ Sperry-White, pp. 32–5.

⁶⁰ Ibid., pp. 25–9.

resurrection may be intentional. Finally, the Morning Prayers turn to the praise of God as 'ray of light, lamp which never goes out, the un-eclipsed sun, [not] resting, but always giving light among his holy ones'. This Morning Prayer closes with a brief intercessory passage, and a description of a liturgy of the word with instructions.⁶¹ It appears that the Morning Office is to be followed by the Eucharist with instruction and preaching.⁶²

A baptismal thrust is also found in the account of the Presbyters' daily praise.⁶³ Again tri-part, the first prays to God 'who enlightened our hearts and nullified the darkness of our mind... who brought error to an end'. In the second, God is praised for Christ 'who set us free from the servitude of slavery', and it is again completed by intercession. A rubric at the end reads: 'At midnight let the sons of priestly service, and those of the people who are more mature give praise by themselves. For also in that hour our Lord praised his Father as he rose.' Finally those who faithfully watch and pray are addressed as 'Sons of light'. It looks as if a night vigil could be expected of the more devout, but otherwise, there is still the Morning Prayer which is a way of declaring before God one's status as baptized and thus a son of light, not of that darkness that is daily overcome. We may conclude that for *Testamentum Domini*, participation in the daily morning worship was a natural corollary of being baptized – it was the way in which one's baptism was daily renewed.

The Epitome or Constitutions of the Holy Apostles through Hippolytus

This appears to be a series of extracts from *Apostolic Constitutions*, also influenced by AT.⁶⁴ It calls for prayer in the morning (*ορθρον*), third, sixth, and ninth hours, and at cockcrow. Thanks are given at evening for the completed day so as to enter upon the night; and cockcrow announces the new day in which the works of light may be done.⁶⁵ It is not clear whether this text refers only to private prayer.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 35.

⁶² See Coneybeare and Maclean, *Rituale Armenorum* (Oxford: 1905), for probable order of morning service, op. cit., p. 164.

⁶³ Sperry-White, pp. 37–8.

⁶⁴ Bradshaw, *The Search*, p. 86.

⁶⁵ Funk, op. cit., vol. II, p. 88, xxiv.1: p. 89, xxiv, 6–7.

The Canons of Hippolytus

This is a collection of thirty-six canons and a sermon in Arabic. It is now believed to be the earliest derivative from AT, and thought to be of Egyptian origin c.336–40. One of very few sources we have for Egyptian church practice at this date, it is related to AT, and is part of the complex history of the Church Orders.⁶⁶ In Bradshaw's convenient text the relevant canon, 21, may be found on page 26.⁶⁷

The canon concerns a daily assembly of clergy and people in church at cockcrow, involving prayer, psalms and reading of scripture.⁶⁸ Cockcrow seems to be abnormally early for lay people; this assembly may relate to the instruction in AT, or it might be an imitation of monastic practice. However we should recognize that a daily assembly for prayer at cockcrow is either the norm, or a norm to be encouraged, at least somewhere in Egypt.

Conclusions from the Church Orders

Apostolic Constitutions alone clearly describes common prayer at least twice daily, though *Apostolic Tradition* may indeed witness to such a pattern, and the *Testamentum Domini* appears to suggest a pattern of prayer at evening, at night, and in the morning. The *Epitome* and the *Canons of Hippolytus* know of prayer at cockcrow. This is not much, but the following points are important:

- 1 The imagery of darkness and light in all of these is reminiscent of the Paschal vigil and looking eschatologically for the eternal light.
- 2 *Apostolic Constitutions* 8 witnesses to the evening to morning order in its description of the services, although another order is found elsewhere. *Testamentum Domini* sees evening as beginning the new day.
- 3 At Vespers in *Apostolic Constitutions* prayer is for light and to be free of sin, so as to enter upon the night enlightened by Christ. For *Apostolic Tradition* the Ninth Hour is a time of 'illumination', and it celebrates the light at the beginning of an evening meal. The *Testamentum* presents an image of the resurrection at sundown and has a strong baptismal theme. For the latter document the Ninth Hour is also the hour of Christ's sacrifice, the time of redemption.

⁶⁶ See Bradshaw, *The Search*, pp. 83–4.

⁶⁷ *The Canons of Hippolytus* (Bramcote: Alcuin/GROW Liturgical Study 2, 1987). Critical text ed. R. Coquin, *PO* 31.2 (1966), pp. 386–9.

⁶⁸ *PO* 31, 386–7, as recommended by 1 Tim. 4.13.

- 4 The morning office in *Apostolic Constitutions* awaits the new light of day and gives thanks for that light, looking to the eternal light symbolizing new creation. The new creation and the eternal light are strongly linked to baptismal themes in the *Testamentum's* understanding of Morning Prayer, the time when the risen Christ praises the Father.
- 5 *Apostolic Constitutions* knows a Sunday vigil, *Apostolic Tradition* values a night watch, and appears to understand sleeping and rising as types of death and resurrection. *Testamentum* thinks of midnight as the hour of resurrection, and associates themes of light with prayer and watching at night. The night prayer commemorates baptismal liberation from slavery to sin, so as to become sons of light.
- 6 The *Epitome* and the *Canons of Hippolytus* mention prayer at cockcrow, that is, before it is fully light and well before sunrise.
- 7 Although some of the references may be to private prayer, the rationale remains the same in all cases. Evening and Morning Prayer, or evening prayer, prayer at night/before light, and Morning Prayer in that order, all have to do with the light of Christ overcoming the darkness of sin and death. This nocturnal celebration also appears to have baptismal associations.

A Brief Summary of Historical Developments and Geographical Locations

North and North-West from Palestine

The major early church centres that we encounter in the Church Orders and patristic sources are places like Rome, Alexandria and Antioch. The destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE, and its reduction to the entirely Roman colony city of *Aelia Capitolina* by the Emperor Hadrian,¹ meant that it had no discernable effect on liturgical development until after 325. From the time of Constantine onwards, the city became an important, even pre-eminent, place of pilgrimage, and developed a liturgical style that pilgrims took note of and then tried to reproduce when they returned home.² In spite of invasions by the Persians in 614 and the Arabs in 638, together with a destructive earthquake in 746, and resultant curtailment of the liturgical pattern, there was an extremely influential development of liturgical poetry, mostly associated with the monasteries.

Interest in Jerusalem's liturgy has meant that one of the most important sources for it, a Lectionary, is in Armenian.³ Armenia was one of the first nations to embrace Christianity, with the conversion of King Tiridates by Gregory the Illuminator in 301. The next year Gregory was consecrated bishop by Archbishop Leontius of Caesarea in Cappadocia.⁴ In spite of attempts to subject the Armenian church to Constantinople when Caesarea declined, the Armenians remained strongly independent while remaining in communion with other churches down to the Council of Chalcedon, the teachings of that council only being rejected by an Armenian synod in 506.⁵

Upon the destruction of the old Armenian kingdom, a new state was established in Cilicia, and the church there entered into communion with the

¹ John Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels* (3rd edn, Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1999), p. 7.

² See 'Historicization of Liturgical Time', in John F. Baldovin SJ, *The Urban Character of Christian Worship* (OCA 228, Rome: 1987), pp. 102-4.

³ *Le Lectionnaire de Jérusalem en Arménie*, ed. C. Renoux, in *PD* 35 Fasc. 3 (Turnhout Bofors 1989).

⁴ M. Ormanian, *The Church of Armenia* (London: Mowbray, 1912, rev. 1955), p. 11.

⁵ R. Roberson, *The Eastern Christian Churches* (Rome: Pontifical Oriental Institute, 1990), p. 6.

Roman Catholic crusaders in the twelfth century. When this union ended because of renewed Arab onslaughts, some relics of Western practice remained in the Armenian liturgy. A small Armenian Catholic church has existed since the eighteenth century.⁶

Besides the later Latin influences, there are considerable resemblances to the rites of Constantinople, however this seems to have been a parallel development as the original liturgical tradition of both appears to have been derived from Caesarea in Cappadocia, the Metropolitan see that originally included Byzantium in its province.⁷ We have little direct evidence for the liturgical forms in use in Cappadocia; but Syrian, and later, Jerusalem influences appear to have been operative, and we may be reasonably confident that Cappadocia was a main channel through which liturgical and theological ideas passed into Armenia.

Of all the Eastern liturgical traditions, the Byzantine is the best known in the West, and the most widespread in any case. Constantinople was founded by Constantine in 324. It was built upon the site of Byzantium, a Greek colony city of no great importance but strategically well placed.⁸ The growing civil importance of Constantinople led to its being recognized as second only to Rome ecclesiastically by the Council of Constantinople of 381.⁹

The areas of the Patriarchate eventually included Cappadocia, Asia Minor, Cyprus, the Balkans, part of the Crimea, and even parts of southern Italy and Sicily, as well as Greece itself. Missionary expansion outside the Empire eventually encompassed Bulgars, Serbs, Romanians, and from 988, the people known as Rus' (modern Russians, Ukrainians and Belorussians).¹⁰ A tendency to elect Greeks as Patriarchs of Antioch and Alexandria, and to abandon the ancient Syrian rites in order to demonstrate orthodoxy, led to the further spread of the Byzantine tradition (now much influenced by Palestinian monasticism) in the Middle East¹¹ and Georgia.

This liturgical tradition, and especially the 'chanted office', developed in the cathedral of Hagia Sophia (Holy Wisdom), inaugurated in 360. The present building dates from the Emperor Justinian who had it rebuilt in 537 as the domed basilica that still stands.¹² It was converted into a mosque in 1453, and

⁶ Ibid., pp. 90–91.

⁷ A. Fortescue, *The Lesser Eastern Churches* (London: Catholic Truth Society, 1913), p. 441.

⁸ *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* 1, p. 508.

⁹ Ibid., p. 520.

¹⁰ A good account of the expansion may be found in J.M. Hussey, *The Orthodox Church in the Byzantine Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986).

¹¹ See e.g., Archdale A. King, *The Rites of Eastern Christendom II* (London: Burns & Oates, 1947), p. 90.

¹² *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* 2, pp. 892–3.

has been a museum since the time of Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk). The rites of daily prayer of Hagia Sophia were to be largely replaced by a predominantly monastic office of Palestinian provenance. A number of studies have described the process by which this took place and will be summarized in the relevant chapter.¹³

The Syrian Orthodox church of Antioch separated from the Byzantine and Roman churches after the Council of Chalcedon in 451. At one time a widespread church it is now very reduced in its heartlands of Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Southern Turkey. There are, however, sizeable numbers in India, mostly in Kerala. There are corresponding groups of Catholics using the same liturgical tradition, and a more Latinized variant is found among the Maronite Catholics of Lebanon.¹⁴ As well as the closely related Syrian and Maronite rites, there was an important variant, the rite or use of Tikrit (or Tagrit) associated with the see of the Mafrian¹⁵ in Mesopotamia (modern Iraq).¹⁶

South to Egypt and Ethiopia

The Coptic church of Alexandria, the indigenous church of Egypt, has a long history, the beginnings of which are very obscure.¹⁷ The foundation of the Egyptian church is traditionally ascribed to St Mark. The community was at first predominantly Greek in language and culture. It was also concerned for education, and the Catechetical School at Alexandria is famous for the teaching of Clement and Origen. Egypt was the first cradle of Christian monasticism. Antony, born about 251, took up eremitical life when aged about 20, and continued in this life until his death, reputedly at the age of 105, in 356.¹⁸ Antony and his younger contemporary, Pachom (born c.292) the first founder of community monastic life,¹⁹ were both native Egyptians, in modern terms Copts, a name which derives from a corruption of the Greek *αιγυπτιος*,

¹³ See e.g., A. Schmemmann, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology* (London: Faith Press, 1966), pp. 116ff.; M. Arranz, 'Les grandes étapes', op. cit.; and Robert F. Taft, *The Byzantine Rite: A Short History* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992), pp. 52–66.

¹⁴ For further details see Roberson, op. cit., and C.P. Mathew and M.M. Thomas, *The Indian Churches of Saint Thomas* (Delhi: ISPCK, 1967), pp. 38–9.

¹⁵ The Mafrian led the Syrian non-Chalcedonians in the Persian Empire (c.7th – c.14th cent.). The post later became a titular dignity – Fortescue, op. cit., pp. 328–9, 340.

¹⁶ See also Taft, *The Liturgy of the Hours*, pp. 239–47.

¹⁷ Barbara Watterson, *Coptic Egypt* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1988), p. 24.

¹⁸ Most information on Antony comes from the biography of him by St Athanasius (328–373); Watterson, op. cit., pp. 56–61.

¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 61ff.

which in Arabic, after 640, became *qibt*, 'copt'.²⁰ The church numbers around 4,000,000 believers.²¹ Since the eighteenth/nineteenth centuries, there has also been a small Coptic Catholic church.

In the early fourth century, or thereabouts, two shipwrecked Egyptian boys became attached to the court of the Ethiopian king. They grew influential, and propagated their own Christian beliefs. Eventually, one of them, Frumentius, was made bishop by Athanasius. Frumentius was known in Ethiopia as Abba Selama (Father of Peace), a title held by all his successors until the middle of the twentieth century. Frumentius' successors were invariably Egyptians, as were any other bishops in the country, until 1929. The church became independent of the Coptic patriarchate only in 1957.²² Distance, both geographical and cultural, ensured that although Ethiopian liturgical practices may have originated in Egypt, they developed an indigenous style. There are some 16,000,000 Ethiopian Orthodox, and about 120,000 members of the Ethiopian Catholic church, which has been operating since the last century.²³

Developments Further East

Christians existed in the Persian Empire (modern Iraq and Iran) from about the mid second century.²⁴ The church in Persia suffered much persecution, but developed fine theological schools at Nisibis and Edessa, and in the fourth century produced the great St Ephrem (+373). The church became independent of Antioch under its own 'Katholikos' at the synod of Markabta in 424. In 431 the Council of Ephesus condemned the christological teachings of Nestorius, and in a reaction hostile to the council, and probably influenced by anti-Roman imperial feelings, Nestorian influenced teachings were made official at a synod at Beth Lapat in 484.²⁵

Speaking Syriac/Aramaean, East Syrian Christians tended to be more generally Semitic in their thought forms, but their church spread across Asia, even to China, in the seventh–ninth centuries. After the Mongol invasions of the thirteenth century the church was largely confined to the Mesopotamian

²⁰ Ibid., p. ix. The term exclusively applied to Christian Egyptians by the sixteenth century.

²¹ Roberson, op. cit., pp. 10–11.

²² Colin Battell, 'The Ethiopians', in H. Hill (ed.) *Light from the East* (Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 1988), pp. 62–81, 63–4.

²³ Roberson, op. cit., pp. 11–13, 93–4.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 1.

²⁵ Ibid.; and Donald Attwater, *The Christian Churches of the East, vol. I* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1961), pp. 188–9.

highlands and parts of western Iran.²⁶ There was also a long-standing connection between the Katholikos of the East and Malabar, in the south-west of India.²⁷ As a consequence, South Indian Christians also used the East Syrian rites in Syriac. The subsequent history of the Church of the East is very complex.²⁸ Suffice to say that the majority of those now following this liturgical tradition are in communion with Rome, some 3,000,000 somewhat Latinized Syro-Malabar Catholics, in India, and around half a million not so Latinized Chaldeans in Iraq and Iran.²⁹ The continuing Church of the East numbers about half a million, very few in India.³⁰

The Western Roman Empire and Its Successors

We will see that Eastern forms of daily prayer appear to share a common theology rooted in both the cathedral and monastic forms of office. When we turn to the Western offices we find what appear to be very different rites which, with their heavy emphasis on reciting the Psalter and other scriptures, appear to be of a predominantly monastic, meditative and edificatory style. This perception of the offices has deeply affected the expectations that Roman Catholics, Anglicans and other Western Christians have. We shall be examining these traditions to see if they originally had much more in common with the forms of the East.

The rite of the Church of Rome was by no means the most important in the Western Europe of late antiquity.³¹ As time passed however, it largely replaced other ancient rites, such as those of Gaul and the Celtic regions, nearly extinguished the Old Spanish tradition, and threatened the integrity of the rite of Milan. Allowing for quite wide regional variants, the daily offices of medieval Western Europe's cathedrals and parish churches followed a basically common pattern that had developed from the monastic offices celebrated in the Roman basilicas. Alongside that, however, we find a development of the same pattern, as adapted by St Benedict, which became the *Breviarium Monasticum* of the Benedictine and Cistercian monks.

²⁶ Useful background in H. Hill, 'The Assyrians: The Church of the East', in Hill, op. cit., pp. 100–121.

²⁷ See L.W. Brown, *The Indian Christians of St Thomas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956), pp. 45, 59.

²⁸ An excellent short summary is that of Roberson, op. cit., pp. 2–4; see also Attwater, op. cit., pp. 190–192, 199–203; and Hill, op. cit., pp. 113–21.

²⁹ Roberson, pp. 86–90.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 4.

³¹ See e.g., discussion in Martin Connell, *Church and Worship in Fifth-Century Rome* (Alcuin/GROW 52, 2002), pp. 3–4.

These two related traditions of daily prayer continued substantially unchanged until modern times.³² The Roman rite of daily prayer underwent two radical changes in the twentieth century. Pope Pius X's reform of the Roman Breviary in 1911 introduced far-reaching changes which destroyed many ancient features or rendered them opaque. The second Vatican Council decreed further radical changes that tended to make the shape of all the services much the same as each other.³³ The shape of the Benedictine office remained much closer to the ideas outlined in St Benedict's Rule until after Vatican II. Since Vatican II, monasteries have endeavoured to develop an office more suited to new understandings of monastic life and there is now considerable local variation.

The ancient, pre-Visigothic liturgy of Iberia (modern Spain and Portugal), the Old Spanish or Mozarabic rite, had probably attained its developed form by the time of the Moorish invasions of 711–56. As the Christians reconquered the Moorish occupied areas the older rite was suppressed in favour of the Roman, surviving only in a few exempted parishes in Toledo. From these parishes came the resources for a revised rite with printed books under the aegis of Cardinal Ximenez de Cisneros, and edited by Canon Alfonso Ortiz in 1500 and 1502. Cisneros also endowed a chapel in Toledo Cathedral for the performance of the old rite. The eucharistic rite is being much more widely used today, but this chapel is probably the only place where any of the daily office is now regularly celebrated in public. Some festal and Holy Week services of the Breviary are celebrated in a very few other cathedrals.

The rite of Milan has had a continuous history since the time of Ambrose, and probably from before then. Ambrose (+397) was consecrated on 7 December 374, eight days after his baptism.³⁴ He is the dominant figure of late-fourth-century Milan, but to what extent he was the originator of the city's liturgical tradition is problematic. He was clear that he did not wish to differ from Roman practice, but in this he may well have been referring only to essential matters of doctrinal orthodoxy; for the rest, he defends local customs.³⁵

Scholars have disputed the origins of the Milanese rites,³⁶ but late-fourth-century Milan was a cosmopolitan city. North African and Spanish influences are possible, but the strongest were probably Gallican. After 774, the city was part of the Carolingian Empire, and the Milanese rite came under especial

pressure, only just escaping complete abolition. The surviving manuscripts show signs of having been reformed in a Franco-Roman direction.³⁷

Later reforms aimed at better observance of the rite. The great counter-Reformation Archbishop Charles Borromeo (1560–84) vindicated the primacy of the Sunday office and resisted attempts to change to the Roman rite.³⁸ Since Vatican II there has been much talk of abolishing the rite, but so far such a move has been strongly resisted.³⁹ A new Missal was promulgated in Advent 1976, and the first volume of a new Breviary emerged the following year.⁴⁰

We have only a few accounts of the forms of daily prayer used in Gaul and the regions under Gallican influence. There is no documentary evidence. As will be mentioned later, we may hypothesize that Gallican offices had a similar shape to those of Spain and Milan. The same also appears to hold good for the only evidence of the offices we have from a Celtic source, *The Antiphonary of Bangor*. This single source allows us only to speculate that Celtic liturgical practice was probably similar to that of Gaul and Spain, and like that of the former, was progressively replaced by Roman practice from an early date.

³² A. Baumstark, *Comparative Liturgy* (London: Mowbray, 1958), p. 115.

³³ *Documents of Vatican II*, pp. 164–5, #87–#92.

³⁴ Archdale A. King, *The Liturgies of the Primatial Sees* (London: Longmans, 1957), pp. 288–90.

³⁵ Cesare Alzati, *Ambrosianum Mysterium*, 2 vols (Alcuin/GROW, 44, 1999 & 2000), I, pp. 16ff.

³⁶ Achille M. Triacca, 'La Liturgia Ambrosiana', in S. Marsili et al. (eds), *La Liturgia; Panorama Storico Generale* (Casale: Marietti, 1978), pp. 88–110, p. 91.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 101–2.

³⁸ See King, *op. cit.*, pp. 309–11.

³⁹ Alzati, *op. cit.*, vol. II, ch. 7.

⁴⁰ Triacca., *op. cit.*, pp. 107–8.

From Jerusalem and the Palestinian Monastic Traditions to Modern Orthodoxy*

The Evidence of Egeria

The most valuable witness to early liturgical practice in Jerusalem is the Spanish pilgrim Egeria, whose pilgrimage there must have occupied much of the period between 381 and 384.¹ From northern Spain or south-west France, she appears to have been some kind of nun, and her descriptions were written for the edification of her sisters. Egeria passed over common practices that were known to her correspondents, and dwelt upon those that were novel, or peculiar to the Holy City.

Egeria's main account of the daily prayer is found in chapters 24ff.² It is well known and widely accessible, so in what follows we will simply draw out salient features. Egeria first describes an early vigil office that starts before cock-crow and continues until daybreak. This is the province of the *monazontes* and *parthenae*, groups of ascetics living a kind of monastic life in the city.³ Described as the 'singing of the refrains to the hymns, psalms and antiphons', we may identify this as an office simply composed of psalms and/or responsorial canticles, interspersed with prayers.

At dawn the morning office proper began with the 'Morning Hymns', and the bishop now entered the church with the rest of the clergy. The bishop went into the cave of the Holy Sepulchre, prayed for all, blessed the catechumens and blessed the faithful. The morning psalms were probably selected for their suitability to the hour, hence the distinctive name, whereas the psalms and canticles used before dawn are not said to be especially suited to a particular hour. We may distinguish the daily vigil of psalms and prayers celebrated by the ascetics, the more fervent laity and some appointed clergy, from the

* This chapter was unable to take into account S.S. Froyshov's 2003 Sorbonne thesis on the Sinai Georgian Horologion.

¹ Wilkinson, op. cit., pp. 35–44. For critical edn of Latin: see Pierre Maraval (ed.), *Égérie, Journal du Voyage* (Paris: SC 296, Cerf, 1952).

² Wilkinson, op. cit., pp. 142 ff.

³ See J. Mateos, 'La vigile cathédrale chez Egérie', *OCP*, 27 (1961), 281–312, 283.

popular, and more ceremonial, celebration led by the bishop himself which must have covered the period between dawn and sunrise.⁴

Besides services at midday and at 3, there was *Lychnicon* at four o'clock:

All the people congregate once more in the Anastasis, and the lamps and candles are all lit, which makes it very bright. The fire is brought not from outside, but from the cave – that is from inside the railing – where a lamp is always burning night and day. For some time they have the Lucernare psalms and antiphons; then they send for the bishop who enters and sits in the chief seat. The presbyters also come and sit in their places, and the hymns and antiphons go on.⁵

The bishop does not seem to preside at the actual light ceremony, but is present for at least part of the series of evening psalms. The bishop's entry, further psalmody, and the prayer, may well be the central core of an office that has been lengthened by a series of psalms *preceded* by the *lucernarium*.

Egeria's description stresses that the light is taken from that which burnt in the cave of the sepulchre, not from outside. In either case the symbolism would be the same, the light represents the risen Christ amongst his people at the onset of night, and Jerusalem's possession of the sepulchre of Christ permits a graphic realization of this not possible elsewhere. Most importantly, the ceremony appears to be a daily event of a popular nature, and the connection between light ceremonies in the evening and the ceremonies associated with Easter, would establish even more definitely the nature of evening prayer as a vigil at sunset.

No indication is given as to which psalms are used, but it is possible that those named as 'Morning Hymns' or '*lucernare* psalms' were selected for their suitability to the time of day. Those sung before dawn are not qualified by any adjective of this kind. Egeria also describes a daily procession that followed Vespers: 'Then singing hymns, they take the bishop from the Anastasis to the Cross, and everyone goes with him. On arrival he says one prayer and blesses the catechumens, then another and blesses the faithful.' This is repeated behind the cross.⁶ This procession may have influenced many other liturgical traditions, becoming the appendix that often *followed* the concluding formulae.

This round of prayer; a daily, pre-dawn vigil, followed by a 'cathedral' Morning Prayer and a service of similar nature in the evening; together with some lesser services during the day as well, was the weekday worship experienced by Egeria. On Sundays the bishop came to church at cockcrow,

⁴ Ibid., 284–6.

⁵ Wilkinson, op. cit., pp. 143 ff.

⁶ Ibid, p. 144.

and all then entered the basilica.⁷ Before this however, while the people waited they again sang 'hymns and antiphons' with prayers, a semi-formal 'monastic vigil' preceding the cathedral vigil proper.⁸

The main vigil in the basilica comprised the ceremonial entry of the bishop, three psalms or canticles, each followed by a prayer, then a general commemoration; the church was incensed and the bishop read the gospel account of the passion and resurrection.⁹ A procession followed and after the usual individual blessings, the bishop retired to his house. Some people returned home, while others continued to keep vigil until daybreak.¹⁰ This weekly commemoration would recall the myrrh-bearing women's visit to the tomb before it was light, their perfumes evoked by the abundant use of incense. The procession to the cross, that is, to the site of Golgotha, added a graphic reminder of the victory of the cross over sin and death.¹¹

This order was followed throughout the year, except on certain special days. Egeria goes on to say: 'the psalms and antiphons they use are always appropriate, whether at night, or in the early morning, at the day prayers at midday or at three o'clock, or at Lucernare. Everything is suitable, appropriate, and relevant to what is being done'.¹² Does this exclude the Psalter in course altogether? Even the psalms at night would appear to be 'suitable, appropriate and relevant'. Was this vigil then a cathedral style of office of selected psalms rather than the Psalter gone through in order?¹³ In fact a hard and fast division between cathedral and monastic styles at such an early date may be questionable. It seems that elements of cathedral and monastic practice are to be found alongside each other in Jerusalem at the time of Egeria, and the although the cockcrow vigil may have used a less structured psalmody than Matins and Vespers, it may not yet have been a rigidly current Psalter.

✓ Can any very firm distinction can in fact be maintained between cathedral and monastic offices? Paul Bradshaw noted the existence of conservative, monastic-type communities which continued to use a selective approach to the

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Mateos, 'La vigile', 299.

⁹ 24.10 in Wilkinson, op. cit., pp. 144–5: 'At the beginning of the reading the whole assembly groans and laments at all the Lord underwent for us, and the way they weep would move even the hardest heart to tears.'

¹⁰ 24.9–12, in *ibid.*

¹¹ Mateos, 'La vigile', 291–2. He cites as a parallel, the commemoration of the cross in the old Roman Breviary after Vespers and Lauds in Eastertide (see e.g., *Breviarium Romanum*, Pars Verna (Tournai: Desclée 1894), p. 165).

¹² 25.5; Wilkinson, p. 146.

¹³ Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, pp. 54–5.

Psalter, especially at morning and evening.¹⁴ Recitation of the entire Psalter may not, at this time, have been important to the concept of daily prayer.

Egeria leaves one in no doubt that the 'sanctification of the night' was of considerable importance to the Jerusalem liturgy of this period. On weekdays the ascetics and others rose at an early hour (whilst still dark) in order to pray together, and this daily pre-dawn vigil became, on Sundays, an almost all-night affair. Similarly, the evening *lucernarium*, though begun rather early, is clearly a service celebrating the light that flows from Christ's sepulchre to brighten the church.¹⁵

Egeria describes other night vigils, the existence of which only goes to show how much of the Jerusalem liturgy was carried out during the hours of darkness, for example, the additional Friday vigil in Lent, the Holy week services and the vigil of Pentecost.¹⁶ It is clear that a major concern of the daily services in late-fourth-century Jerusalem was to proclaim the victory of light over darkness, of life over death, by praying before dawn and sunrise, or after sunset.

Early Monastic Evidence

From roughly the same period as Egeria, there are interesting accounts of monastic life in Palestine and Egypt left by John Cassian. He and his companion Germanus were living monastic life near Bethlehem in about 382–3. They then moved on to Egypt, and Cassian's *Institutes* were written over thirty years later for new monastic communities founded by him in the area of Marseilles. His account of monastic prayer in Palestine, very detailed but often difficult to interpret, is outlined by Taft.¹⁷

Seeing in the Last Supper, Christ's sacrifice as the true evening sacrifice, the sacrifice offered 'at the end of the ages', Cassian clearly conceived of the end of the day as symbolizing death, and its beginning as re-commencing life in Christ. The liturgical day begins at Vespers, so that the end of one day begins the process that leads to the new day.

Cassian's account of the morning office is involved with the long disputed question of the origins of the office of Prime (covered in detail by Taft).¹⁸ In

¹⁴ Paul Bradshaw, 'Cathedral vs. Monastery: The Only Alternatives for the Liturgy of the Hours?', in J. Neil Alexander (ed.), *Time and Community* (Washington, DC: Pastoral Press, 1990), pp. 123–36, 132.

¹⁵ 24.4; Wilkinson, op. cit., p. 143.

¹⁶ 29.1, *ibid.*, p. 150; 30–38, pp. 151–7; 43, pp. 159–61.

¹⁷ Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, pp. 76–7, and see *Institutes* III.1 (*PL* 49, 111–12).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 97–100, 191–209.

Bethlehem the night vigil appears to have finished with psalms 148–50, which was part of the morning office – the office that we now identify as Prime came later on. In Gaul there was a pause between the night office and the morning office which included psalms 148–50.¹⁹ The pattern of a night vigil followed by the morning office without a break is, of course, what we have seen in Egeria. On Fridays the nocturnal office lasted nearly all night, and comprised three antiphons, three responsorial psalms and three lessons, perhaps repeated several times.²⁰

A reference to psalm 140 as justifying evening prayer may indicate its use,²¹ and the Eleventh Hour is called that of the *lucernarium*.²² Cassian further emphasizes night vigils. On some days vigils started in the evening and were prolonged into the night (see above). As with Egeria, these offices are hybrids, composed of monastic and cathedral elements, and neither has completely absorbed the other.²³

An otherwise important source for the Jerusalem liturgy, the Georgian Lectionary,²⁴ is not directly helpful for the offices. This document knew of extended vigils at Vespers, and at midnight on the eves of great feasts, for example, Christmas.²⁵ We simply note that the feast starts at Vespers and the vigil continues through the night. Matins on such feasts finished fairly rapidly after a gospel reading.²⁶ There are three Vespers readings in Holy Week,²⁷ as in the present Byzantine rite for eves of feasts, and a Gospel as well.

The next dateable evidence from Palestine is the account of the visit of the Abbas John and Sophronius to Abba Nilus of Sinai, attributed to the late sixth, early seventh centuries.²⁸ Nilus' visitors were shocked at his omissions; at Vespers there were none of the usual troparia with psalm 140, nor with 'O gladsome light', nor with the prayer 'Vouchsafe, O Lord'. Nilus replied that many of the things his visitors missed required clergy, and such were not

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 100, interpreting *Institutes* III.3–4 (*PL* 49, 125–32).

²⁰ *Institutes* III.4, III.8 (*PL* 49, 128, 140).

²¹ *Institutes* III.3, *PL* 49, 123–5.

²² 'post haec nona, ad extremum undecima, in qua lucernalis [or lucernaris] hora signatur'. *Institutes* III.3, *PL* 49, 126.

²³ See e.g., Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, pp. 79–80 and Bradshaw, op. cit., pp. 99–100.

²⁴ M. Tarnichsvili (ed.), *Le Grand Lectionnaire de l'Église de Jérusalem (V^e–VIII^e siècles)* (*CSCO* 188, Louvain: 1959–60), 4 fascicles.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, Tomus 10, 9ff.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 13.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 85–90.

²⁸ A. Longo, 'Il testo integrale della <<Narrazione degli abati Giovanni e Sofronio>> attraverso le <<Hermeneiai>> di Nicone' in *Rivista degli Studi Bizantini e Neoellenici*, ns 23 (XII–XIII) (1965–6), 233–67. Also N. Uspensky, *Evening Worship of the Orthodox Church* (Crestwood: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985), pp. 59–61.

normally available in his monasteries, so they kept only the people's parts, and also, usually just biblical material. The only non-biblical pieces were 'O gladsome light', the *Gloria in Excelsis*, the Creed and the numerous *Kyrie eleisons*.²⁹

On the psalms, the account says:

When we came to Vespers, the elder began by singing 'Glory to the Father' and so forth; then we said 'Blessed is the man' and 'Lord I call' without troparia; he then took Φως ἰλαρόν and 'Vouchsafe, O Lord'; after this we began to say the prayer of St Simeon and the rest.³⁰

The first psalm referred to appears to be psalm 1, and may well indicate the group of psalms 1–8, still appointed for modern Byzantine Vespers on Saturday night. In fact the whole service looks very like a skeletal form of the modern office.

The Saturday night vigil began after supper. The Psalter was divided into three lengthy sections of fifty psalms each.³¹ The psalms were preceded by the *hexapsalmos*. It is not said which six psalms but the modern six seems likely: psalms 3, 37, 62, 87, 102 and 142.³² After the psalms came the nine biblical canticles of the modern Byzantine canon, psalms 148–50, the *Gloria in Excelsis* and other features, again showing this to be an ancestor of the present Eastern Orthodox morning office of *orthros*.

This austere monastic office employed the entire Psalter at a weekly vigil, and a large amount of psalmody at other times. Although monastic, it retained cathedral elements, but little or none of the poetry found elsewhere at this date. The general shape is recognizably similar to that described by Egeria, though at Vespers the *lucernarium* (Φως ἰλαρόν) has moved after the psalmody. A vigil of psalms and readings still precedes the morning office. Prayers and other elements requiring a priest, are replaced by the Lord's Prayer at each *stasis*.³³ This simplification of the Jerusalem hybrid rite for desert monasteries could, no doubt, largely be committed to memory.³⁴

²⁹ Longo, op. cit., 251–2. See also M. Arranz, 'Les grandes étapes de la liturgie Byzantine', in *Liturgie de l'église particulière et liturgie de l'église universelle* (= Conférences Saint-Serge 22, Rome: Edizioni Liturgiche, 1976), p. 48.

³⁰ As translated in Uspensky, op. cit., p. 67.

³¹ J. Mateos, 'La psalmodie variable dans l'office Byzantin', *Acta Philosophica et Theologica II* (Rome: Societas Academica Dacoromana, 1964), pp. 327–39, 337.

³² Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, p. 199.

³³ Ibid. A *stasis* here is the group of fifty psalms, in modern use it is a third of a *kathisma* (= session), three psalms or the equivalent.

³⁴ Uspensky, op. cit., p. 66.

The Palestinian *Horologia*

The next important piece of evidence for the Palestinian monastic office is a ninth-century Sinai manuscript, Gr. 863.³⁵ With this we can couple a manuscript Syriac *Horologion* of the twelfth century,³⁶ which latter starts with *orthros*. The first is a *horologion* (book of hours) for weekdays, and declares that it is according to the rule of the lavra of St Sabas. It provides psalms 1–8, exactly as they are arranged in modern use (i.e., in three *staseis*: 1–3, 4–6, 7–8). Then follow the First, Third, Sixth and Ninth Hours, communion from the reserved sacrament, and Vespers.

The Syriac document begins Vespers with the Trisagion and the invitatory verse 'O come that we may worship and bow down before, Christ the King.' Then the incipit of psalm 102,³⁷ which appears to be a misreading for psalm 103 which begins in the same way. The incipit of psalm 140 may indicate the group of psalms 140, 141, 129, and 116, at the end of which there is a doxology and a *Theotokion*, a poetic stanza. Φως ἰλαρόν is itself followed by a troparion and *Theotokion*,³⁸ these are not found in the *textus receptus*, but, as we have seen, were perceived as missing by Abba Nilus' visitors.³⁹ There is no sign of the prayer 'Vouchsafe, O Lord' (see below) which might simply be presumed, but troparia for each night of the week are provided, followed by the *Nunc Dimittis*.⁴⁰ The troparia reflect devotions for each day of the week: for example, Wednesday and Friday commemorate the cross. The Sunday troparion and *Theotokion* commemorate the resurrection. None of the texts of these troparia appears in a similar place in the present *Paraklitiki*⁴¹ (or book of the eight tones for each day of the week). These troparia clearly see the liturgical day as commencing the evening before, as do similar texts of the current Byzantine rite.

In both documents Vespers largely comprises a series of psalms. The first, 103, is the daily first psalm of the present-day order. In the St Sabbas book, after psalm 103 are read psalms 119–33 in three *staseis*.⁴² The Syriac document does not mention the *kathisma*, or indeed any current Psalter, possibly the

³⁵ J. Mateos, 'Un horologion inédit de Saint-Sabas', *Studi e Testi 233* (Rome, Vatican, 1964), 47–76.

³⁶ M. Black (ed.), *A Christian Palestinian Syriac Horologion (Berlin MS Or. Oct. 1019)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Texts and Studies I, 1954), p. 3; hereafter Black.

³⁷ Black, op. cit.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 85.

³⁹ Longo, op. cit., 353, line 37.

⁴⁰ Black, pp. 85–6.

⁴¹ Παρακλητική (Αθήναι: εκδοσεις Φως, 1991)

⁴² Mateos, 'Un horologion', 56.

relevant portion of the Psalter was inserted after psalm 103, perhaps indicating that other portions than psalms 119–33 might be used.

In the modern Orthodox office, psalms 119–33 are appointed for Vespers daily through some six to seven months of the year, and in the rest of the year they are used only at Friday Vespers.⁴³ On Saturday night the psalmody is always psalms 1–8 (as above), and on Sunday night there is no recital of the Psalter in course at all. The division of the Psalter into *kathismata* is found in a seventh-century *Kanonarion*, and in a ninth-century Jerusalem Psalter,⁴⁴ and appears to have first been used by non-monastic churches in Jerusalem.

The St Sabbas Horologion also provides the normal fixed psalms of Palestinian Vespers. After these psalms and the hymn Φωσ ‘ιλαρόν, there are Alleluia chants with verses for each evening of the week.⁴⁵ If this Horologion treats the gradual psalms as fixed psalmody, then the Alleluia verses allow for some daily variety. The final sections of this evening office are the prayer καταξίωσον, the *Nunc Dimittis* and the Trisagion. These all seem to have a Palestinian origin. The first of these elements, a prayer/hymn, ‘Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this evening without sin’ is very close to the present form. An earlier, shorter, version is found in the *Apostolic Constitutions*,⁴⁶ and appears to be taken for granted in the visit of John and Sophronius to Nilos (see above).⁴⁷ Poetic material and prayers were omitted by Nilos as priestly, and while this text is not scriptural, it appears to be regarded as roughly on the same level as Φωσ ‘ιλαρόν.⁴⁸

The St Sabbas Horologion passes directly from ‘Vouchsafe, O Lord’ to the *Nunc Dimittis*, as in the *Apostolic Constitutions*,⁴⁹ though this document also adds the Trisagion as the final element in the service. This means that there is no *Aposticha*, the processional psalm which Mateos supposes is a remnant of the procession to the cross mentioned by Egeria.⁵⁰ The normal weekday *aposticha* psalm nowadays is 122: ‘To you have I lifted up my eyes, you who

⁴³ Mateos, ‘La psalmodie variable’, 327–31, and table of psalms in *Psaltir’ na Slavyanskom i Russkom yazykach* (Rome: Vatican Polyglot Press, 1950), pp. 418–40.

⁴⁴ Arranz (ed.); Uspensky, op. cit., p. 108.

⁴⁵ Mateos, ‘Un Horologion’, 57–8. these are not in the modern office.

⁴⁶ Grisbrooke, *The Liturgical Portions*, p. 57: ‘Children, praise the Lord: praise the name of the Lord. We praise you, we hymn you, we bless you on account of your great glory, O Lord [our] King, the Father of Christ, the Immaculate Lamb, who takes away the sin of the world. To you belongs praise, to you belong hymn[s], to you belongs glory, to the God and Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen. Lord now let your servant depart in peace . . .’

⁴⁷ Longo, op. cit., 233, lines 7–8.

⁴⁸ Helmut Leeb (*Die Gesänge in Gemeindegottesdienst von Jerusalem (vom 5. bis 8. Jahrhundert)* (Vienna = Wiener Beiträge zur Theologie 28, 1979), pp. 176–81.

⁴⁹ See Grisbrooke, op. cit.

⁵⁰ Mateos, ‘Un Horologion’, 75–6.

dwell in the heavens.’ On Saturday evenings it is 92: ‘The Lord is King, with majesty enrobed.’ The absence of any text of this kind from the St Sabas Horologion may suggest that monastic use did not provide for processions. The Syriac service finishes with three brief troparia asking the prayers of the saints, similar to those that now conclude Fast day Vespers when there is no Presanctified Liturgy,⁵¹ then 40 *Kyrie eleisons*, 15 prostrations and a final prayer.⁵²

The Scriptures at Palestinian Vespers

Described by Cassian as known throughout the world at *duodecima* or Vespers,⁵³ psalm 103 concludes the day and verses 1–18 praise God in his creation; then the psalm becomes vesperal:

Thou hast made the moon to mark the seasons; the sun knows the time for its setting. Thou makest darkness, and it is night, . . .

The psalm then reflects on the greatness of the God whose spirit fills the earth, and praises his glory. One can well see how this psalm commended itself to early liturgists, the parallel to creation from a formless void in Genesis should also spring to mind. The end of the day is at the same time a new beginning.

In contemporary use the longest recitation of psalmody is on the long winter nights and in Lent, when three *kathismata* are read at *orthros*, the *kathisma* at weekday Vespers being always psalms 119–33. In addition the Psalter should be read twice a week in Lent, so as well as three *kathismata* at *orthros*, there is frequently one at each of the Minor Hours as well.⁵⁴ One theory is that psalms 119–33 are connected with the liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts.⁵⁵ There is no clear reason why these psalms should be connected with communion from the reserved sacrament, and in the St Sabas Horologion, communion *precedes* Vespers with the gradual psalms.⁵⁶ While the Constantinopolitan monastic Typikon of Evergetis spread the Psalter over a three-week period in summer, and weekly only in the winter, but twice a

⁵¹ See *Horologion* (Rome, 1937), pp. 231–2.

⁵² Black, pp. 86–7.

⁵³ Sermon 136.1, quoted by Bradshaw, *Daily Prayer*, p. 119 and n. 45.

⁵⁴ Mateos, ‘La psalmodie variable’, 328–30.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 330–1.

⁵⁶ Mateos, ‘Un Horologion’, 64–8.

week in Lent, it only used psalms 119–33 at Lenten Vespers when there was *no* Presanctified.⁵⁷

The St Sabbas Horologion appears to exhibit a rite of Vespers at which the normal daily psalms were the gradual psalms plus the evening psalms of the cathedral tradition, 140, etc. Most of the Psalter was reserved for the nocturnal vigil before dawn, a vigil which sometimes may have included the whole Psalter, as did that Abba Nilos.

Egeria's description of Vespers has significant evening psalmody prior to the bishop's entry and further psalmody after it. Possibly psalms 119–34 comprised the regular Vespers psalmody of the ascetics, and then the bishop entered for the evening psalms (140, etc.). This is, of course, only a hypothesis in view of the little documentary information that we have.^{57a}

The gradual psalms may have been selected because of their association with pilgrimage to Jerusalem. They also, however, suit the time of day: for example, psalm 119 prays for protection at the hour of distress; psalm 120.4 speaks of God as protector of his people who 'sleeps not nor slumbers'. Psalm 129 'Out of the depths' is obviously vespereal, being recited again later with psalms 140 and 141; psalm 130 is a psalm of trust. Psalm 132 is a prayer for unity, and psalm 133 a prayer at night-time. These last two form a suitable conclusion to this prayer, expressing trust in the God who is with his people in times of danger.

If the gradual psalms express trust in the living God to whom the evening sacrifice of praise is offered, then it is natural that psalm 140 with its reference to that evening sacrifice should follow here. The usual evening psalm grouping associated with this Palestinian tradition, psalms 140, 141, 129 and 116, differs from Syrian use in employing psalm 129 instead of psalm 118.105–17. The Syrian choice may have been influenced by a reference to light,⁵⁸ whereas Palestine knew the hymn Φως ἱλαρόν, and was thus free to use psalm 129 instead, with its references to Jerusalem and to waiting for the light. Psalm 141 takes up the theme of protection: 'You are my refuge, all I have left in the land of the living.' The development of this group of four psalms may have resulted from elaboration of the incense rite, psalm 140 alone being too short to cover the actions. The St Sabas Horologion still has no place for the poetic *stichera* intercalated at a later date.⁵⁹

The Alleluia verses after the evening hymn in the ancient Horologion⁶⁰ begin with verses from psalm 92 for Sunday: 'The Lord is king, with majesty

⁵⁷ Mateos, 'La psalmodie variable', 331–3.

^{57a} But see note on Froyshov on page 49.

⁵⁸ P.E. Gemayel, 'La structure des Vêpres Maronites', *Orient Syrien*, 9 (1964), 105–34, 116.

⁵⁹ Mateos, 'Un Horologion', 70.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 57–8.

enrobed; the Lord has robed himself with might, he has girded himself with power . . . ' (Saturday evening *prokeimenon* of modern Byzantine Vespers).⁶¹ On weekdays the verses are from psalms 54 (Monday), 4 (Tuesday), the *Magnificat* on Wednesday, psalm 85 (Thursday), and 88 (Friday). Psalm 92 is well suited to begin Sunday. Psalm 54 is a prayer for help by one praying at 'Evening, morning and at noon' (v. 18); 4 is a prayer at the onset of night – 'I lie down in peace and sleep comes at once' (v. 9); and so on. The verses are appropriate to the evening themes of confident prayer to the God who gives help and strength to his people and guides them through the night. The verses are also similar to the standard weeknight *prokeimena* of modern Byzantine Vespers, which were derived from the old Constantinopolitan office to be described below.

The Early Prayer and Hymn Texts

Evidence for non-scriptural poetry at this early stage is not strong, and Palestinian monastic use appears to have known only Φως ἱλαρόν and καταξωσον at Vespers. Φως ἱλαρόν was known to St Basil (+ 379),⁶² but this Horologion provides the first complete, if variant, text.⁶³ The earliest witness to the present text is the fifth-century Georgian lectionary.⁶⁴ The following is a translation from a modern liturgical book:

O Jesus Christ, thou gentle light of the holy Glory of the immortal, heavenly, holy, blessed Father:
Now that we have come to the setting of the sun and behold the evening light, We sing in praise to God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Thou art worthy at all times to be praised by holy voices, O Son of God, giver of life, therefore the world gives thee glory.⁶⁵

The lamp-lighting reveals the glory of God who is praised at the onset of darkness. The hymn is a climax reached through alternating thanksgiving for the day and supplication for continuing protection. After the climax little is left but to conclude and round off this prayer that commences the night.

⁶¹ *Horologion*, p. 227.

⁶² Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, p. 38. Also, Antonia Tripolitis, 'Φως ἱλαρόν – Ancient Hymn and Modern Enigma', *Vigiliae Christianae*, 24 (1970), 189–96; she suggests a late 2nd/early 3rd cent. date.

⁶³ Discussed by Mateos, 'Un Horologion', 70–74.

⁶⁴ Taft, 'Phos Hilaron', in Alexander P. Kazhdan (ed.), *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 1668–9. *Le Grand Lectionnaire* . . . op. cit., p. 109, Easter Eve Vespers.

⁶⁵ *Vespers and Matins* (Oxford: Diocese of Sourozh, 2001), p. 19.

In modern Byzantine books the text beginning *καταξίωσον* is entitled simply ‘prayer’.⁶⁶ In monasteries it is usually read by the superior,⁶⁷ and in parishes by the reader. In all these cases it is treated as a prayer. By contrast, the Typikon of Saint Sabas, still the basic guide to the service in the Slav churches, requires the prayer to be said by the people;⁶⁸ a use preserved today by Ukrainian and Carpatho-Russian Catholics,⁶⁹ and in Russian churches on Sundays and Feasts.⁷⁰ It would appear then that the piece was originally a hymn.⁷¹ A modern version of the text is as follows:

Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this evening without sin.
Blessed art thou, O Lord, God of our fathers, and praised and glorified is thy Name, forever. Amen.
Let thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us, even as we have set our hope on thee.
Blessed art thou, O Lord, teach me thy statutes.
Blessed art thou, O Master, make me to understand thy statutes.
Blessed art Thou, O Holy One, enlighten me by thy statutes.
Thy mercy, O Lord, endures for ever; O despise not the work of thy hands.
To thee belongs praise, to thee belongs song, to thee belongs glory, to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and for ever and to the ages of ages. Amen.⁷²

Clearly a prayer for protection at evening, the developed refrain from psalm 118 introduces another element; prayer to keep God’s laws and commands with understanding, a theme found elsewhere: for example, Spain.

The Syriac document provides only a single, final prayer, which may have been read even in the absence of a priest:

We bless thee, O gracious Lord, that thou hast granted us the passing of the day in peace, and hast brought us to evening with praise; and that thou hast deemed us worthy to behold the light of evening. Receive our praises, and free us from all the troubles of the Evil One, and destroy every snare he sets for us. Grant us this night acceptable peace, without suffering or distress or disturbance, that we may pass it peaceably and watchfully. Let us arise, O Lord, to praise and prayer, which is worthy of you at all times. Let us

⁶⁶ *Horologion*, p. 229.

⁶⁷ See Fr Ephrem (Lash), *The Office of Vespers* (Manchester: St Andrew’s Press, 2000), n. 12, p. 25.

⁶⁸ PG 29, CCCXXXVIII – *Και ο λαος : Καταξίωσον, Κύριε.*

⁶⁹ E.g., *Chasoslov* – Book of Hours (Zhovkva, Ukraine: 1910), p. 180.

⁷⁰ See musical settings in e.g., *Obikhod Tserkovnogo Penia* (Moscow: Sretensky Monastery, 1997), pp. 53–7.

⁷¹ R. Taft, ‘The Byzantine Office in the *Prayerbook* of New Skete: Evaluation of a Proposed Reform’, *OCP*, 48 (1982), 336–70, 347.

⁷² *Vespers and Matins*, op. cit., pp. 26–7.

glorify thy holy name, with the Father, who is without beginning and unsearchable, and with thy living Spirit, for ever and ever.⁷³

This prayer ends the day, even though Compline follows. The traditional evening themes of light and repose at night are there, but the prayer also looks forward to the coming day – it is not just an end, but preparation for a new beginning.

Palestinian Matins

The St Sabbas Horologion is unfortunately incomplete and gives us no information about Matins. The order of *Matins/orthros* in the Syriac document⁷⁴ has the Trisagion followed by the same invitational as at present: namely, the words of Luke 2.14, ‘Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth peace; among men of good will’ three times, together with psalm 50.15; ‘O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall show forth thy praise.’ The six psalms then follow, divided into two groups of three by the Gloria and Alleluia. This group of psalms 3, 37, 62, 87, 102 and 142 is paralleled by the ancient Byzantine use of psalms 3, 62 and 133⁷⁵ to begin *orthros*, and the Armenian use of psalms 3, 87, 102 and 142.⁷⁶

In modern Byzantine use the six psalms are followed by a litany, and then ‘The Lord is God’, verses from psalm 117 mentioned in the account of the visit to Abba Nilos as something that the visitors find lacking.⁷⁷ Mateos concluded that the more primitive weekday form at this point was the group of verses from the canticle of Isaiah 26.9–20, with the response Alleluia, nowadays used on Lenten and other fasting weekdays.⁷⁸ The Syriac document does not mention the Alleluia and verses from Isaiah 36, nor ‘The Lord is God’. Nor does it mention psalm 50 or the Psalter in course that should precede it, instead the document goes directly to the nine canticles, and then to the office of Prime, the First Hour.⁷⁹

Abba Nilos’ visitors again remarked on the absence of poetic material at the reading of the Psalter and when the biblical canticles were sung.⁸⁰ It may be

⁷³ Black, p. 87.

⁷⁴ Black, pp. 73–4.

⁷⁵ See e.g., M. Arranz, ‘Les prières presbytérales des matines byzantines’, *OCP*, 37 (1971), 406–36, 409.

⁷⁶ Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, p. 221.

⁷⁷ Longo, op. cit., 253, line 38.

⁷⁸ J. Mateos, ‘Quelques problèmes de l’orthros byzantin’, *Proche Orient Chrétien*, 11 (1961), 17–35, 201–20; 27–9.

⁷⁹ Black, op. cit. 74.

⁸⁰ Longo: ‘Il testo integrale’, 253, lines 38–40.

that in urban monasteries, and in the Palestinian cathedral office, such poetic material had already found a place. After this began the morning part of the office, probably with psalm 50, then the canticles, and the praise psalms (148–50); the Great Doxology and prayer brought the whole office to an end;⁸¹ this is structurally identical to the present Byzantine office.

Psalms and Other Scriptural Elements of Matins

The original opening psalm of the six may have been 3 on its own, seen as the psalm that began the monastic midnight vigil.⁸² ‘I lay down and slept, – I wake again, for the Lord sustains me’ could equally apply to night and to the period before dawn, and the emphasis on the defeat of enemies suits the psalm’s resurrection theme. The psalm is well suited to a vigil, be it celebrated just before dawn or at an even earlier hour, as we may see in verse 7: ‘On my bed I remember you. On you I muse through the night.’

The middle psalm of the first group, 37, a penitential lament, seems intended to make up the number three, as it comes numerically between 3 and 62 and Psalter order is usually observed scrupulously. It is a psalm of penance well suited to a vigil before light.

Of the second group, psalms 87, 102 and 142; psalm 87 is another lament and verses 7ff. with their emphasis on being laid in ‘the depths of the tomb, on places that are dark, in the depths’ would appear to have influenced its selection. Psalm 102 sings of life delivered from the grave and the joy of being crowned with God’s love and compassion, for ‘The Lord has set his sway in heaven and his kingdom is ruling over all’ (v. 19). If death and darkness dominate in psalm 87, then in psalm 102 God’s power over all things is proved, and it is then not entirely unnatural for the last of the trio, psalm 142, to be the penitential prayer of one who seeks salvation from the God who rules over creation. This group shows a consistent rationale, moving from helplessness to an awareness of God’s power. Sunrise still lies ahead, but the Morning Prayer has begun and the power of God is able to overthrow darkness, and to save and forgive sinners.

Verses 9a b, 9d–10, 11c–d, and 15 of Isaiah 26 now follow, with the refrain ‘Alleluia’ (the whole of this canticle is one of the nine odes that follow later in the service):

My spirit seeks thee early in the morning, O God: for thy commandments are a light upon the earth.

⁸¹ Mateos, ‘Quelques problèmes’, 31–5.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 24–6.

Learn righteousness: ye that dwell on earth.

- The wrath of God shall fall upon a disobedient people: and fire shall now devour the enemy.
Bring more evils upon them, O Lord: bring more evils upon them that are glorious on earth.⁸³

Although not mentioned in many of the earliest sources, this unit appears to be of the Palestinian monastic tradition, and not of the Constantinopolitan cathedral office, even though one of the prayers of that office (see below) quotes the canticle.⁸⁴ Clearly the verses are selected for the time of night – a night enlightened by God’s commands that judge the earth, shedding light where the darkness of sin still reigns.

The now more commonly used ‘The Lord is God’, is made up of verses 1, 10, 17, 22–3 of psalm 117:

The Lord is God and has appeared unto us: blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord.
O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endures for ever.
All the nations compassed me about: but in the name of the Lord have I driven them back.
I will not die, but live: and declare the works of the Lord.
The stone which the builders rejected, the same has become the head of the corner: this is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes!⁸⁵

The resurrectional verses may indicate that this unit is of festal origin.⁸⁶ It is accompanied by proper troparia, and those of Sundays always sing of the resurrection. In the context of an early morning vigil office while still dark these psalm verses express strongly the theme of life overcoming death in Christ’s resurrection. Possible antiquity is shown by references in the Georgian *Iadgari* which appears to reflect seventh-century practice in Jerusalem.⁸⁷

When we turn to the canticles, those provided in the Syriac document are those of Exodus 15, 1 Samuel 2 (the canticle of Hannah), Habakkuk 3, Isaiah 26.9–19, Jonah 2, Daniel 3.52ff., Daniel 3.57ff., Luke 1.46ff. (*Magnificat*), and Luke 1.68ff (*Benedictus*). These are the canticles appointed for the modern

⁸³ *Vespers and Matins*, op. cit., pp. 69–70.

⁸⁴ Arranz ‘Les prières’, op. cit., 414.

⁸⁵ *Vespers and Matins*, op. cit., pp. 68–9.

⁸⁶ Mateos, ‘Quelques problèmes’, 203.

⁸⁷ Peter Jeffrey, ‘The Sunday Office of Seventh-Century Jerusalem in the Georgian Chantbook (*Iadgari*): A Preliminary Report’, *SL*, 21 (1991), 52–71; 64.

Byzantine *orthros*, except that the last two are now grouped into a single ode, and Deuteronomy 32.1–43 is inserted after Exodus.⁸⁸

The account of the visit to Nilus of Sinai appears to infer that all nine odes or canticles were used, with pauses for prayer (Our Father and *Kyrie eleison*) after the third and sixth.⁸⁹ While part of the text may be later than the rest of the narrative,⁹⁰ it is possible that from an early stage it was common in Palestine to use all nine canticles at the same service, at least on Sunday. Weekdays may well have used a selected canticle or canticles.

The canticles have associations with the Paschal vigil, especially the first, the Exodus Song of the Sea, and the second of the two Daniel canticles, ode 8 in the modern reckoning. Both are a part of readings listed for the Paschal vigil of the oldest Jerusalem lectionaries.⁹¹ Both passages have been widely employed as morning canticles, and Baumstark thought them the earliest non-psalmic canticles used in Christian worship.⁹²

The present arrangement of three groups of three canticles reveals the following pattern: the Exodus Song of the Sea is followed by the Deuteronomy hymn to God who destroys evil, and the song of Hannah which is also about victory through God's power. The second trio comprises Habakkuk 3, a prayer that God's power be known, Isaiah 26.9ff., a yearning in the night for God to raise the dead, and Jonah 2, his prayer for release from the belly of the great fish (a symbol of the tomb), thus a prayer for divine redemption. The final trio is made up of the two Daniel 3 canticles, hymns of praise sung in the midst of danger and possible suffering; and then the *Magnificat* and *Benedictus* dwelling upon the experience of God's goodness. The first trio says that God is powerful and destroys his enemies, the second prays that therefore he will save his people, and the third rejoices in the experience of God's saving power.

The use of all nine together appears to be a Palestinian custom, and may not always have been the norm. On the weekdays of Lent it was customary to use only three canticles each day, hence the term *Triodion* for the liturgical book which covers the fasting season. At the present time, the canon is normally a series of eight poetic odes, made up of a number of poetic pieces called troparia.

In some places the scriptural odes are still used in Lent, together with a poetic canon, in a quite complicated arrangement which results in a canticle

⁸⁸ See e.g. *Horologion*, pp. 94–9.

⁸⁹ Longo, 252. James Mearns, *The Canticles of the Christian Church Eastern and Western in Early and Medieval Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1914), pp. 7–8, thought the reference was to the nine found in Greek Psalters since 1000, and also in four manuscripts, the oldest being the fifth-century Egyptian Codex Alexandrinus, 9–10.

⁹⁰ Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, p. 199.

⁹¹ Gabriel Bertonière, *The Historical Development of the Easter Vigil and Related Services in the Greek Church* (OCA 193, Rome: 1972), pp. 8–18 and chart A–2 (after page 307).

⁹² *Comparative Liturgy*, op. cit., pp. 37–8.

for each day, and daily use of *Benedicite* and the two Lukan canticles.⁹³ As to the original arrangement of these morning canticles, Mateos proposed that older tradition was to use three canticles on Sunday and one on each day of the week.⁹⁴ In a recent study Byron D. Stuhlman has suggested a daily fixed canticle (*Benedicite*) plus a variable one, with the *Magnificat*/*Benedictus* added later to make up the unit of three. The daily use of *Benedicite* would fit with such other traditions as that of Constantinople (see below).⁹⁵ We may interpret the canticles as the transition from the monastic vigil to the morning office proper, the first ode becoming a variable, and the Daniel canticles a daily start to the morning office, one or both of the Lukan canticles making a 'third' ode.

We may then suggest the following stages of development:

- 1 The Jerusalem Paschal vigil has readings from Exodus and Daniel which introduce canticles.
- 2 The Sunday resurrection vigil of three chants most likely included the canticles of Exodus 15 and Daniel 3.
- 3 The second Daniel 3 canticle, the *Benedicite*, a hymn to God's glory by all creation, is used daily.
- 4 Somewhat later the resurrection vigil becomes nine canticles developing the themes noted above, and adding the New Testament as well.
- 5 On weekdays one of the Sunday canticles is added to the *Benedicite*.
- 6 To develop into the sacred number three, the present ninth ode is also added on weekdays.
- 7 In the later medieval development of the poetic canons, the weekday canticles retain their three ode form in Lent, alongside the later eight ode poetic form on other days.

The Poetic and Euchological Evidence

Neither the Alleluia responsory after the six psalms nor the triadic troparia that now accompany it make any mention of fasting or penance, hence Mateos' conclusion that this piece was not originally confined to Lent.⁹⁶ The

⁹³ For details see *The Lenten Triodion*, op. cit., 75–7.

⁹⁴ Mateos, 'Quelques problèmes', 31–2.

⁹⁵ Byron D. Stuhlman, 'The Morning Offices of the Byzantine Rite: Mateos Revisited', *SL*, 19 (1989), 162–78.

⁹⁶ Mateos, 'Quelques problèmes', 27–8 & n 32: Evergetis prescribed Alleluia for all but the most important days. A twelfth-century typikon edited by M. Arranz [*Le Typicon du Monastère de Saint-Sauveur à Messine* (OCA 185, Rome: 1969)] expects Alleluia on Ferias and 'The Lord is God' on Sundays and Feasts, e.g., p. xxxvi.

triadic troparia also appear to be part of this Palestinian structure, and often exhibit a very simple, and probably primitive form, they also suit the hour, e.g.:

Rising from sleep, we fall before you in adoration, O Mighty Lord, singing you the hymn the angels offer you ...⁹⁷

The eschatological theme of watching for Christ the coming judge is well expressed in another that Mateos thinks primitive:

Suddenly the judge will come and all our works will be uncovered! Let us shake off laziness, and filled with awe, let us sing our God the song the angels sing: Holy, ...⁹⁸

Originally undifferentiated troparia were later grouped into the octonal system, and other compositions helped make up the full sets now in the liturgical books.⁹⁹

By the time that the Palestinian office had become that of the Constantinopolitan monasteries, poetic material had become more pervasive. The extremely austere office described in the account of the visit dates from the time immediately prior to the Persian invasions of Palestine in 614. After that crisis there was a great monastic revival, particularly centred on the monastery of St Sabas, and characterized by the creation of a vast body of liturgical poetry. This material was attractive to monastic reformers such as Theodore of Studium (d. 826), for it was all ammunition against heretics.¹⁰⁰

The poetic compositions have almost entirely displaced the scriptural odes of the canon, though the first troparion, the irmos, of each poetic ode usually contains a reference to the canticle it has replaced.¹⁰¹ For example:

In Babylon, the Children, sons of Abraham, once trampled upon the flame of the fiery furnace, and they sang the song of praise: 'O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou'.¹⁰²

⁹⁷ Tone 1, number 1, *A Prayerbook*, p. 71.

⁹⁸ Tone 3, number 3, *ibid.*, p. 72.

⁹⁹ Mateos, 'Quelques problèmes', 28 and n. 33.

¹⁰⁰ Taft, 'The *Synaxarion* of Evergetis in the History of Byzantine Liturgy', in Margaret Mullett and Anthony Kirby (eds), *The Theotokos Evergetis and eleventh-century monasticism* (Belfast: Belfast Byzantine Texts and Translations, 6.1, 1994), pp. 274–93; p. 287.

¹⁰¹ Mother Mary and Archimandrite Kallistos Ware, *The Festal Menaion* (London: Faber & Faber, 1969), pp. 546, 552–3.

¹⁰² Replaces first canticle from Daniel 3, first canon for Transfiguration, *ibid.*, p. 489.

Except in certain more penitential canons, such as that composed by St Andrew of Crete, the second ode, Deuteronomy 32, is omitted, hence the odes are numbered 1, 3, 4, etc.

In the modern Byzantine office the praise psalms are immediately preceded by the Exaposteilarion, or in Lent by the Photogokikon, neither of which are mentioned in the Palestinian sources discussed. The Lenten texts call for Christ to send (εξαποστειλον) his light, while the Sunday texts dwell on the resurrection gospel.¹⁰³ (Other texts have little or no connection with morning light.) Those of the Lenten weekdays identified as the oldest (in the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 8th tones) are well suited to the time of day and not at all Lenten; they greet the sunrise that represents the risen Christ who shines his light on his people. That for Monday in tone 1 reads: 'O Christ who makest light to shine, cleanse my soul from every sin, ...'¹⁰⁴

The last major piece of Matins was the Great Doxology, the *Gloria in Excelsis*, originally a Sunday and festal piece.¹⁰⁵ Ferial use was to employ only *kataxioson* in its morning version, the full Doxology only being used on days when the Eucharist followed.¹⁰⁶ This ecclesiastical canticle, often included with the scriptural ones,¹⁰⁷ was widely used in the Eastern churches to conclude the morning office, and the night office at Milan (see below).

Conclusions on the Palestinian Offices

It is now possible to summarize the schemes of the Palestinian monastic offices later taken over by and fused with the old rite of Constantinople. These services do contain classical cathedral elements, and this is consonant with what we saw of the offices at the time of Egeria – in Palestine, monastic influences never seem to have been far away from the cathedral services.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, pp. 218–19 – Sunday texts composed by the 10th cent. Constantine VIII Porphyrogenitos.

¹⁰⁴ *Lenten Triodion*, *op. cit.*, pp. 662–3.

¹⁰⁵ Mateos, 'Quelques problèmes', 32–4.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, also Taft, 'The Byzantine Office in the *Prayerbook* of New Skete', *OCP*, 48 (1982), 336–70, 354.

¹⁰⁷ E.g., Codex Alexandrinus (see J. Mearns, *The Canticles of the Christian Church ...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 9ff.; and in eighth-century Ms Turin Bib. Naz. Bv 11 30 (a Jerusalem source, see J.M. Martin Patino, 'El Breviario Mozarabe de Ortiz, su valor Documental para la Historia del Oficio Catedralicio Hispanico', *Miscellanea 40 Comillas* (1963), 207–97, p. 229.

Vespers

Introductory

Trisagion
Psalm 103

Psalmody

Psalms (119–33)

Lucernarium

The Evening Psalms (140, 141, 129 and 116) (with poetic verses)
Hail Gladdening Light
(Alleluia/*Prokeimenon*)
Kataxioson

Conclusion

(Psalm at procession)
Nunc Dimittis

(Poetry)
Trisagion – *Kyrie eleison*

Material in brackets does not appear to be part of the more austere monastic observances, and it is not at all clear how euchological material was included in the urban monasteries and cathedrals. On the other hand, the service has a clear structure and progression. From the opening psalm's reflection on creation to end the day, the service passes to the gradual psalms with their expression of joy at the prospect of entering into God's house. The evening psalms and the hymn of light form the core of the office and establish the theme of the presence of Christ the light, the coming Christ, clothed in splendour (psalm 92); it is then natural to pass to prayer for protection in the coming night, chant the *Nunc Dimittis* and draw to a close.

Simplified versions of the schemes of Matins produced by Mateos¹⁰⁸ and repeated, with variations, by Stuhlman,¹⁰⁹ are the basis for that given on pages 72–4, which allows us to discern the features of the modern office that have clear Palestinian origins.

¹⁰⁸ Mateos, 'Quelques problèmes', 23, 202.

¹⁰⁹ Op. cit., 174–8.

The old Constantinopolitan office will be discussed further in chapter 7. We should note certain points that remain unclear. For Mateos, psalm 50 begins the morning office,¹¹⁰ but although it appears in many ancient offices, it is not explicitly found in the Palestinian sources. The Armenian is the closest to the above scheme, and places that psalm just before the praise psalms, 148–50, which appears to fit in with Byzantine arrangements that require psalm 50 after the sixth ode of the canon, that is, before the last three, the morning canticles *par excellence*.¹¹¹ The cathedral vigil also remains unclear, but it looks as though the present office has both Constantinople and Palestinian elements.

General Conclusions**I With regard to structure:**

- 1 In the Palestinian tradition, psalmody is particularly associated with night time.
- 2 Psalm 103 passes from reflecting on the end of the day to entering upon the night as a time for activity as well as rest. The possible daily use of the gradual psalms suggests an eschatological pilgrimage motif, as well as utilizing psalms that suit the end of the day – in other words the journey does not end with the night.
- 3 Similarly, the hymn Φως 'λαρόν greets the light of evening as earnest of a new day; an interpretation taken up by some of the *prokeimena* that follow, especially 'The Lord reigns'.
- 4 At night, the six psalms, especially the set 87, 102 and 142 appear to indicate a passage from darkness to new light. The Lenten Alleluia verses from Isaiah 26, 'My soul yearns for you in the night' reinforce this idea, made more obvious in the 'God is the Lord' verses from psalm 117.
- 5 There is a strong paschal emphasis in the canticles which lead into the hymns of light at sunrise, and the praise psalms.

II Egeria describes the offices starting with the pre-dawn vigil, but we also find:

Cassian sees Vespers as beginning the daily round, the end of the day presages a new day. The night is more a time for watchful prayer than for rest.

¹¹⁰ Mateos, 'Quelques problèmes', 31.

¹¹¹ Jeffrey, 'The Sunday Office', op. cit., 74. Also Arranz, *Le Typicon du Monastère du Saint Sauveur à Messine*, op. cit., p. xxxvii, psalm 50 followed the 6th ode on ordinary days.

- 2 Vespers are described first in the account of the visit to Nilus of Sinai, and overnight vigils start after supper, to sanctify the night.
- 3 Although several documents provide the Matins to Vespers order as their basic framework, poetic texts, e.g., in the Horologion edited by Matthew Black, reflect the devotional themes of a particular day as starting the previous night at Vespers.

III The prayer tradition is not well developed but we can point out that:

The prayer 'Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this night without sin' also looks to active obedience to God's laws as much as praying for protection at night.

- 2 Morning troparia of presumed Palestinian origin pray that rising from sleep, we watch for the coming Judge and celebrate the hour of praise.
- 3 The prayer in Black's Syrian Horologion that completes Vespers, moves from ending the day, through watching at night, to waiting expectantly to greet the glory of God in the new day.

The celebration of the Paschal mystery is obvious in the light-filled Vespers described by Egeria, and the texts mentioned all bear witness to this. The passage from night to morning recalls Christ's rising in the night, to appear to his people in the full light of day as the true sun of justice, and the hope of resurrection light for all.

The Minor Day Hours

Both the St Sabas and Syriac Horologia provide services for the Minor Hours during the day. The latter being very close to those of the contemporary liturgical books. They are schematized on pages 72–4.

The Syriac document also provides *mesoria*, services to come in between each of the hours. These draw some of their psalms from those of the hours in the St Sabas Horologion. *Mesoria* are provided in modern liturgical books and have the same psalms as in the Syriac document.¹¹² The modern Typicon expects them to be used only in fasting seasons other than Lent, and they are very rarely used anywhere today, so we will not study them at any greater depth.

¹¹²See *Horologion*, pp. 143ff.

The Bible at the Hours

The psalms selected for the Hours in the Syriac MS are all found in the St Sabas document and are those in the modern-day arrangement of Minor Hours in the Byzantine rite. At the First Hour the early morning time is established, for example: 'In the morning I prepare a sacrifice for thee' (5). At the Third, 'Good and upright is the Lord; therefore he instructs sinners in the way' (24) is a good example of prayer for guidance and forgiveness through the day. Among the psalms of the Sixth Hour, 'He who dwells in the shelter of the most High' (90) is a prayer for rest and refreshment in the middle of the day. At the Ninth Hour, 'How lovely is your dwelling place' (83) and other psalms bring us to the end of the day finding refuge in God's house.

These texts which make up most of the services are simply a progression through the day. The selected verses however, found in both the ancient sources and in the modern books, such as those beginning 'Order my steps in thy word' (from psalms 118 and 70) at the First Hour, are chosen more for that time – this prayer concluding that we might 'sing of thy glory and honour all the day long'. The Third Hour uses verses of psalm 50 (Especially 'Take not thy Holy Spirit from me') with prayer for the Holy Spirit. The Sixth Hour has been much more varied as to which psalm verses accompany prayer commemorating the crucifixion; and the Ninth Hour, commemorating Jesus death on the cross, has used psalm 22 in the St Sabas 'The Lord is my shepherd' and psalm 118¹⁷⁰ 'Deliver me according to thy word' in the Syrian and modern books.

The Prayer and Hymns of the Hours

The modern service has a series of troparia, now only used in Lent, which clearly establish a particular theology of the time of day:

- In the morning hear my voice ...
- O Lord who at the Third Hour did send the Holy Spirit
- Thou who at the sixth day and hour did nail to the cross the sin that Adam committed in paradise ..
- Thou who at the Ninth Hour did taste death on the cross for our salvation ...

These hymns are found in the Syriac document and a form of that of the Third Hour is found in St Sabas.¹¹³

¹¹³Black, 51, line 10.

The themes seem less fixed in St Sabas, though a version of the prayer to Christ the true light that closes the modern First Hour is found there:¹¹⁴

O Christ the true light who enlightens everyone who comes into the world; let the light of thy countenance be marked upon us, that in it we may see light ineffable ...¹¹⁵

A closing prayer at the Third Hour in the Syriac document is much more explicit in praying for the Spirit than the contemporary prayer of St Mardarius:

O God of grace, who hast compassion on us every hour, by the comfort of the Holy Spirit; we bless Thee that thou hast saved us this hour, in which thou didst pour forth abundantly upon thy pure disciples the grace of the Holy Spirit ...¹¹⁶

However, the prayer at the Sixth Hour in the same source is very general, while the modern one speaks of the power of the cross to destroy sin.¹¹⁷ Similarly, the Syriac document's prayer of the Ninth Hour is to pass the time worthily,¹¹⁸ while the modern prayer dwells on Christ's hanging upon the cross.¹¹⁹

There is then a certain fluidity in the themes that are found at the Day Hours; it is not possible historically, to tie them down to a simple scheme of Christ's condemnation/coming of the Holy Spirit, crucifixion and death. As we shall see, this is true across a wide range of services for the Day Hours, and this contrasts with the more clearly developed and common themes of the major offices of Vespers and Vigils/Matins.

Matins/*orthros*

Ferial

I – Night Office

a) **Invitatory:**

Psalms 3, 37, 62 & 87, 102 & 142

Isaiah 26 canticle

b) **Nocturnal Psalmody:**

1st section – Troparion – Reading

2nd section – Troparion – Reading

Sunday

I – Night Office

a) **Invitatory:**

Psalms 3, 37, 62 and 87, 102, 142

Psalm 117 & Theos Kyrios

b) **Nocturnal Psalmody:**

1st section – Troparion – Reading

2nd section – Troparion – Reading

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 49.

¹¹⁵ *Horologion*.

¹¹⁶ Black, p. 78.

¹¹⁷ *Horologion*, pp. 174–5.

¹¹⁸ Black, p. 84.

¹¹⁹ *Horologion*, pp. 211–12.

3rd section – Troparion – Reading

Variable canticle (?)

II – Morning Office

Benedicite

[*Magnificat* and *Benedictus* later]

Psalm 50 (?)

Photogogikon

Psalms 148–50

Kataxioson or *Gloria in*

Excelsis + Kataxioson

Intercessory material

Concluding prayers

St Sabas

First Hour

Opening prayers & Come let us worship

Verse 'The night having passed

Psalms 5, 45, 66, 69, 89, 91, 100, 112

Alleluia with verses from psalm 142

Prayer: '(Christ) the true light'

Troparia for the day of the week

Psalm 118.133–5 & 70.8

Trisagion, Creed, Lord's Prayer

Third Hour

(Opening prayers)

Psalms 16, 24, 42, 50, 142, 144, 150

Alleluia (psalm 50)

O Lord who at the 3rd Hour

3rd section, replaced by psalm 118 (see below)

II – Resurrection Vigil

Gospel and other material

Psalm 50 (?)

3 then 9 canticles

III – Morning Office

[Psalm 50 transposed earlier]

Exaposteilarion

Psalms 148 50

Gloria, Kataxioson, Trisagion

Intercessory material

Concluding prayers

Syriac Horologion

Come let us worship

Psalms 5, 89, 100

'Christ the true light'

In the morning ... (Ps. 5.1),

Theotokion

Psalm 118.133–5 & 70.8

Trisagion & Prostration

'O Lord God of hosts'

Opening prayers

Psalms 16, 24, 50

O Lord who at the 3rd Hour, Psalm 50.10–11

Troparia for day

Troparia & 'Thou who didst send

Psalm 67.19–21

Trisagion etc. & Prayer

Sixth Hour

(Opening prayers)

Psalms 53, 54, 68, 69, 90, 145

Alleluia (Psalm 55)

O thou who at the 6th Hour

Troparia for day

Psalm 78.8–9

Trisagion . . .

Ninth Hour

(Opening prayers)

Psalms 83, 84, 85 and Dan. 3.26–56

Alleluia (psalm 22)

O thou who at the 9th Hour

Troparia for day

Dan. 3.34–5

Trisagion . . .¹²⁰

Opening prayers

Psalms 53, 54, 90

O thou who at the 6th Hour /

Psalm 54

Troparia & 'Speedily may thy mercies reach us'

Opening prayers

Psalms 83, 84, 85

O thou who at the 9th Hour

Troparia & "Deliver us not"

Trisagion etc. & Prayer¹²¹

CHAPTER 6

The Jerusalem Pattern of Prayer in Cappadocia and Armenia

The Evidence for the Cappadocian Offices

Robert Taft has discussed the evidence for a Cappadocian cathedral rite in the writings of Basil the Great, his brother Gregory of Nyssa, and the latter's account of their sister Macrina's death in 379. From this he extracts a hypothetical structure:

Lucernarium with *Phôs hilaron*

Psalm 140

Lessons with homily

Intercessions with 'Angel of Peace' petitions¹

If Taft's skeleton service of Vespers is correct, then what may have developed in Cappadocia would have been similar to the Palestinian tradition:

Continuous monastic psalmody

Light ritual with hymn of light

Psalm 140 with incense (implied by mention of repentance)

Intercessory prayer

Preparatory recitation of the Psalter leads to the Light ritual and a Thanksgiving for light at the end of the day. The service then passes on to prayer for forgiveness, probably involving psalm 140 and purificatory use of incense, and the day finishes with prayers, including the angel of peace petitions, i.e., prayers for protection through the night.

Some of the earliest testimonies to *Φως ἰλαρόν* are from this region. Pagans used acclamations such as 'Hail, good light!' or 'Hail, friendly light!', and Clement of Alexandria suggested greeting God with 'Hail, Light!'. Jewish Sabbath meal practices could also be influential here.² In the account of the death of St Macrina we find the words: 'but the chant of the singers called to the thanksgiving for the light and she (Macrina) sent me off to church'. Many

¹²⁰ Mateos, 'Un Horologion', 48–54.

¹²¹ Black, pp. 74–84.

¹ PG 46, 981ff.; Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, pp. 36–41.

² Winkler, 'Über die Kathedralvesper', 60–61.

scholars think that the hymn is the thanksgiving for light mentioned in this account.³ The pagan phrases seem to be echoed in the wording of the hymn, and it is probably fair to say that the rite emerged in a mix of cultures that placed a good deal of emphasis on the coming of the evening light.

Basil also gives us a rationale for offices at morning, the Third, Sixth and Ninth Hours, in the evening, at the beginning of the night, midnight and so back to dawn.⁴ The rationale of Vespers is a time of thanksgiving for the day, with confession for failures, and there is a brief quote from psalm 4.5: 'The things you say in your hearts, be sorry for on your beds'.⁵

If there is little Cappadocian evidence for vespers, then there is even less for the morning offices, but some for vigils. In the *Longer Rules* Basil gives a double justification for the morning office. First that the day may be consecrated to God, and prayer made before any work, and secondly, having already justified prayer in the night, Basil speaks of rising to anticipate the dawn, citing psalm 118.148 'My eyes watch through the night to ponder your promise'. Since both descriptions apply to the time just before dawn they must refer to the same service.⁶

The treatise *de Virginitate*, of a writer close to the Cappadocians, has a longer exposition of Morning Prayer.⁷ The text speaks of rising at midnight with a verse from psalm 118, then psalm 50 and psalmody interspersed with prayer for forgiveness. At dawn psalm 62 is said; then at daybreak the *Benedicite*, the *Gloria in Excelsis*, '... and the rest', which might well include psalms 148–50. This appears to be a classic pre-dawn monastic vigil, followed by a morning office of broadly cathedral shape. There may have been more psalmody between psalm 62 and the *Benedicite*, as there could be quite a long gap between dawn and daybreak. This is again similar to the Palestinian pattern of a monastic vigil combined with cathedral-style praise at the beginning of the new day.

The *Longer Rules* mention prayer at bedtime, with the classical Compline psalm, 90; and also a midnight office, so as to pray like Paul and Silas (Acts 16.25). This prayer is also justified by reference to psalm 118.62 'At midnight I will rise and thank you'⁸ – a common justification for prayer at this time, and the psalm comes to be associated with the midnight office in the Byzantine tradition.⁹

³ PG 46, 985; Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, pp. 36–8.

⁴ PG 31, 1013ff.; and see Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, pp. 85–6.

⁵ Ibid., 86 – Gk text, PG 31, 1013 and J. Mateos, 'L'office monastique à la fin du IV^e siècle: Antioche, Palestine, Cappadoce', *Oriens Christianus*, 47 (1963), 53–88, 75.

⁶ Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, p. 86.

⁷ Translation in ibid., p. 88.

⁸ Mateos, 'L'office monastique', 78.

⁹ *Horologion*, op. cit., 13–30.

The cathedral vigil that Basil commended to the clergy of Neocaesarea (Letter 207) appears to have included:

<i>Vigil</i>	Isaiah 26.9ff. Psalm 118 Antiphonal and responsorial psalmody with prayers Readings (?)
<i>Matins</i>	Psalm 50 Hymns and Canticles Intercessions ¹⁰

Isaiah 26.9 'My soul yearns for Thee in the night',¹¹ possibly derived from the Palestinian monastic vigil, is quoted. A reference to 'reinforcing the study of the scriptural passages'¹² is the probable reason for concluding that there were readings. The morning part of the office starts with the 'psalm of confession',¹³ the normal beginning of the morning office that would more generally be attended by the laity;¹⁴ the rest of the outline of the office relying on the presumptions outlined above.

This very tentative reconstruction indicates a vigil that commenced with the Isaiah canticle, and then psalm 118 served as an extended meditation on the law of the Lord. This would lead to a further meditative use of psalmody, scripture and prayer – a classical vigil of waiting in prayer upon the word of God. Hearing the word prepares for the 'psalm of confession' at daybreak, and then, in the presence of the risen Lord represented by the rising sun, God's redeemed people sing confident praise to him in union with all creation as the day proper begins.

The Armenian Vespers

The following schema of Armenian Vespers is drawn from Taft,¹⁵ Coneybeare and Maclean,¹⁶ and Raes.¹⁷ Texts will largely be drawn from Coneybeare and Maclean.

¹⁰ Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, pp. 40–41.

¹¹ Mateos, 'L'office monastique', 80 (e).

¹² Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, p. 39 and Greek text, Mateos, 'L'office monastique', 80 (h).

¹³ 'της ξομολογησως ψαλμον', Mateos, 'L'office monastique', 81 (n).

¹⁴ Ibid., 84–5.

¹⁵ Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 223–4.

¹⁶ *Rituale Armenorum*, ed. F.C. Coneybeare and A.J. Maclean (Oxford, 1905), pp. 443–88 – Vespers, 477–82; hereafter Coneybeare and Maclean.

¹⁷ A. Raes, *Introductio in Liturgiam Orientalem* (Rome: PIO, 1947), op. cit., pp. 191–4, 202–205.

<i>Introductory</i>	Lord's Prayer
	Psalm 54.17–18
	Psalm 85
<i>Lucernarium</i>	Psalms 139–41
	Prayer for blessing of light
	Hymn of Light ('Hail Gladdening Light' on Sunday)
	Evening Proclamation/ <i>kataxioson</i>
	'Let my prayer come before you like incense'
	Litany (incl. Angel of Peace)
	Prayer
<i>Appendix</i>	Prayer of Inclination
	Trisagion w. prayers
	Psalm 120
	Prayer for those in need
	[Lent: Prayer of Manasseh and proclamation, Prayer for repentance]
	Dismissal psalms 90, 122, 53 and prayer
	[Sunday, psalms 133, 137 and 53 and prayer]
	Proclamation of the Cross
	'At church door', psalm 121, prayer
	Return, psalm 99, prayer
Final Invocation and Lord's Prayer	

While there is no recitation of the Psalter in course, the core of the service is similar to Palestinian monastic Vespers: psalms 140–1 with 'Hail Gladdening Light'.¹⁸ Gabriele Winkler proposed the following original scheme:

Psalm 54
Light ritual: prayer, hymn and thanksgiving
Psalm 140
Intercession¹⁹

This is based on the commentary on the Armenian offices attributed to Catholicos Yovhannes Ojneç'i (fl. early 8th cent.),²⁰ who states that his predecessor Nerses introduced psalm 85²¹ at the beginning of the service.

¹⁸ The author attended an Armenian vespers at which this core was entirely omitted and the censuring done during the Trisagion; St Sarkis, London, 28 November 2001.

¹⁹ Winkler, 'Über die Kathedralvesper', 78–80.

²⁰ Called 'John of Odsun' in Coneybeare and Maclean, p. 448. The commentary may owe much to Step'anos Siwnec'i, information for which I am indebted to Fr Daniel Findikyan, of the Armenian seminary of St Nersess, New York.

²¹ Coneybeare and Maclean, pp. 448–501, p. 497.

Between the two Catholicoi named Nerses was Movses (574–604), who famously made disparaging remarks about Constantinopolitan liturgical practices, which makes borrowings from there unlikely.²² May it be that the use of psalm 85 was a Cappadocian practice which also influenced Byzantine usage? Perhaps Catholicos Nerses wished to introduce the monastic psalmody to Vespers in Armenia, and with it, the introductory psalm 85. If such were indeed the case, then either the psalmody in course at Vespers was rejected and the introductory psalm retained, or the recitation of the Psalter in course soon died out.

The Armenian *lucernarium* psalms are a singular grouping of psalms 139, 140 and 141. The commentary of Yovhannes interprets psalm 139 as a prayer for God to save his suffering people from their sins. The psalm prays for delivery from persecutors, like psalm 54 at the beginning. This fits with Yovhannes' interpretation of Vespers as commemorating him who descended into the tomb so as to grant us life.²³ There is nothing specifically vespereal about this psalm, but neither is there about psalm 141. The idea of evening as the hour of Christ's descent into the tomb may well be behind the choice of both of these psalms; perhaps as a later addition to psalm 140, chosen because of its reference to the evening offering, but itself a prayer for rescue from danger,

From the trap they have laid for me keep me safe: keep me from the snares
of those who do evil. (v. 9)

The prayer for rescue is further emphasized by Yovhannes' citation of psalm 141.8: 'Bring my soul out of this prison and then I shall praise your name'.

Prison serves as a metaphor for this life, so the prayer looks forward to release in the future; it is not just a particular evening that is being celebrated, but the whole of life looking toward the *eschaton*.²⁴ There is no mention of incensation in the rubrics.

After a prayer, the hymn of light and the evening proclamation, there follow the first two verses of psalm 140, though the second, 'Let my prayer come before you like incense', is said to be used only on Fridays.²⁵ This doublet of psalm 140 following the hymn of light is in the account of the visit to Nilus of Sinai.²⁶ This weakens any argument for Byzantine influence, instead arguing

²² See R. Taft, 'Water into Wine: The Twice-Mixed Chalice in the Byzantine Eucharist', *Le Muséon*, 100 (1987), 323–42, 329.

²³ Coneybeare and Maclean, p. 493.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 494.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Longo, *op. cit.*, 253, lines 37–8.

Palestinian provenance.²⁷ As we saw above, Cappadocian Vespers may actually have been quite close in shape to Winkler's supposed old Armenian pattern: Light ritual, psalm 140 and prayer. If this was the cathedral order, at least in outline, then the monks may have put their psalmody before it, where we now find psalms 139–41. Possibly these psalms, emphasizing death and the tomb, and hence a prelude to the central light theme of ancient vesperal services, replaced the monastic psalmody. This gives a pattern of thanksgiving for light, prayer of evening offering, prayer for the church, and prayer for protection in the night.

The psalms are followed by a lamp-lighting prayer:

Blessed Lord, who dwellest on high, and praised is the glory of thy majesty; who establishedst the luminaries on high, and sentest forth light from heaven over all the world of mankind. Thou madest the sun to give light by day, and the moon and the stars to give light by night, and the light of the candle. Thou art light laudable, holy and primal light. From thee doth the darkness flee. And do thou, Christ, send forth thy living light into our hearts. And let us with one accord say, Blessed is the name of thy holy glory. And to thee we sing a hymn of praise and glory to Father and Son.²⁸

This prayer clearly expresses the ideas of thankfulness and grateful hope with which the evening light could be greeted as a sign of the risen Christ, who overcomes the darkness and bestows light and life upon his people. Yovhannes, having spoken of the descent into the tomb, now speaks of the material light as a symbol of the light that leads to everlasting life.²⁹ The prayer can stand on its own as a prayer of thanksgiving for the light, it does not require the psalms before it in order to be intelligible as a liturgical unit. It does however lead naturally into the lamp-lighting hymn, which on Sunday (i.e., Saturday night)³⁰ is 'Hail Gladdening Light'.

The hymn of light is followed by a prayer that sums up Vespers as the hour of thanksgiving for the day past, and prays that we may share in the angelic praise:

We are all come hither at eventide; and uplifting our hands, we glorify thee, Lord our God. Who hast vouchsafed unto us to pass the day in peace, and attain to the hour of evening . . .³¹

²⁷ Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, p. 224.

²⁸ Translation from Coneybeare and Maclean, p. 477.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 494.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 478, n. a; Kosrow Andsevatzi says explicitly: 'we sing it (the hymn) the eve of each Sunday'.

³¹ *Ibid.*

The presence of phrases similar to those in the (probably) Palestinian *kataxioson* may be clues to the prayer's ancestry.

The next unit is intercessory prayer; there is a litany which prays for the church, for civil needs, for preservation in peace and a quiet night, and also appears to require the 'Angel of Peace' petitions. It concludes with a prayer that commends the evening sacrifice in the following terms:

Hear our voices, O Lord our God: accept our prayers and the lifting up of our hands and the words of our prayers; hallowing our evening sacrifice of fragrance, and making it ready for thy approval . . .³²

These opening words so take up the theme of psalm 140 that the prayer could almost be called a psalm collect, the rest of the prayer is a general one for grace and mercy. There then follows a blessing:

Thee we worship and adore, O Lord our God. We thank thee for granting that in peace we should pass the length of day. Grant us, Lord, we pray thee, to pass this evening and the night which lies before us without sin and without stumbling. That we may stand firm and abide in faith, in hope, . . . We entreat for the peace of the whole world, and also for the establishing of thy holy church . . . To the end that, receiving from thee all we ask, we may for ever send up on high meet and fitting hymns of glory³³

This blessing looks forward to both the night of repose, and at the same time stands firm in the keeping of God's commands, a frequently found petition at Vespers. These petitions and those for the church imply a time of day when work has ended but the time for sleep is not yet come. The prayers also look beyond this moment to the future that lies with the God who is worshipped in songs of praise – in other words, it can be said to look forward to the coming day.

The remainder of the office appears to have originated as a devotional appendix to the office. First the Trisagion is followed by brief invocations, and then psalm 120 'I lift up my eyes to the mountains: from where shall come my help'.³⁴ The reference to the Lord's guarding of his people is most appropriate to the evening hour. The psalm prayer requests that God might 'accept the supplications of thy servants in this evening hour' and for mercy on the afflicted, travellers, etc.³⁵ The prayer attributed to King Mannasseh and its

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Coneybeare and Maclean, p. 480. refers to psalm 121 but clearly intends 'I lift up my eyes', also cited by Raes (*Introductio*, op. cit., p. 193), so the reference in Taft (*Liturgy of the Hours*, p. 223) to psalm 121 must be a misprint.

³⁵ Coneybeare and Maclean, *ibid.*

prayer or ‘proclamation’ are penitential elements omitted outside of Lent.³⁶ The psalms of dismissal given by Coneybeare as 90, 122, and 53³⁷ convey once again the classical themes of the last prayer of the day, protection from evils that threaten, while looking forward to the heavenly rest. Yovhannes expands further and brings in psalm 122, especially the opening words, ‘To you have I lifted up my eyes’. He sees this as a prayer that this night may be without sin so that in the morning the sacrifice may be offered.³⁸ Psalm 53 is also a cry for God’s help. On Sundays (i.e., Saturday night) psalms 133, 137 and 53 are used instead; 133 is frequently found beginning night vigils, 137 is a thanksgiving for God’s protection, ‘You stretch out your hand and save me’.³⁹

The ‘Proclamation of the Cross’⁴⁰ involves a prayer for defence, seemingly a procession to the church door with psalm 121 ‘I rejoiced when I heard them say, let us go to God’s house’, and prayers which make particular mention of Christ’s resurrection,⁴¹ followed by a return procession singing psalm 99 ‘Cry out with joy to the Lord’ and concluded by the prayer:

Let us praise the Lord God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath made us worthy to live in the place of his glorifying, and to sing spiritual hymns. Almighty Lord our God, quicken and have mercy.⁴²

Yovhannes made it clear that Vespers finished with the Trisagion and the ‘psalm of repose’,⁴³ which, as Raes says, without doubt refers to psalm 90, and after this the people ask the priest to pray for each individual briefly.⁴⁴ First found in a fifteenth-century codex, the final procession is similar to the Byzantine festal *litia*.

Coneybeare prints a blessing before a meal after Vespers, and then ‘The Hour of Peace’ and ‘The Hour of Rest’.⁴⁵ The Hour of Peace commences with part of psalm 33 ‘I will bless the Lord at all times’, then a ‘canon’ of six psalms (the first three of which, 4, 6 and 12, are found in modern Byzantine Great Compline), plus plenty of material suitable for late night prayer. The second uses various psalms and canticles, including large sections of psalm 118 (see the

³⁶ Raes, op. cit., p. 193

³⁷ Coneybeare and Maclean, p. 481 (numbering altered to LXX).

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Coneybeare and Maclean, *ibid.*; Raes, p. 193.

⁴⁰ Coneybeare and Maclean, *ibid.*

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 482: ‘Thy holy wondrous and victorious Resurrection we do laud’.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 497.

⁴⁴ Raes, op. cit., p. 193.

⁴⁵ Coneybeare and Maclean, pp. 482–8.

modern Byzantine midnight office for weekdays). These may be related to the Byzantine monastic offices of Great Compline and Midnight. Yovhannes does not mention these additional services in the eighth century; while another commentator, Khosrov, in the tenth century, describes them and knows no distinction between them.⁴⁶ We may conclude that the ancient Armenian ‘Compline’ was the conclusion of Vespers, rather than a separate office. Of the additional material, the oldest stratum appears to be psalms 120 and 90, and a rite of saying ‘goodnight’ – natural enough additions to Vespers in a ‘cathedral’ or urban monastic setting; they focus on protection through the night in preparation for God’s new day.

The Armenian Night and Morning Offices

At present the Armenians celebrate the night and morning offices together, often daily.⁴⁷ Gabriele Winkler has studied the night office in depth.⁴⁸ The Morning Office is outlined by Taft,⁴⁹ and a translation of both offices is found in Coneybeare and Maclean.⁵⁰ From these sources a schema can be created:

The Night Office

Opening

Doxology and Lord’s Prayer

Invitatory

Psalm 50.17 and Doxology
Psalms 3, 87, 102 and 142
Hymn, brief supplication, and hymn(s)
Prayer

Psalmody

‘Canon’ of psalmody and Canticle
Hymnody
Intercessions and Prayers

⁴⁶ Ibid., pp. 502–7, esp. p. 506.

⁴⁷ Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, p. 224.

⁴⁸ G. Winkler, ‘The Armenian Night Office I’, *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies* 1 (1984), 93–112 and ‘The Armenian Night Office II’, *Révue des études arméniennes*, n.s. 17 (1983), 471–551, hereafter *Night Office I* and *Night Office II*, respectively. (Particular thanks to Professor R.W. Thomson of Oxford University for a copy of the former article.)

⁴⁹ *Liturgy of the Hours*, 222–3.

⁵⁰ Coneybeare and Maclean, pp. 447–64.

The Morning Office*Opening*

Psalm 89.14–17 and Doxology

Canticles

Daniel 3 canticles and anthems

Biddings

Magnificat, Benedictus, Nunc Dimittis

Litany and collect

[*Cathedral Vigil – Sunday*

psalms 112.1–3/43.26, 24/145.10,

1 Gospel and Anthem, Biddings]

Psalm 50 and Anthem

Biddings

Psalms 148–50 and Anthem

Gloria in Excelsis

Kataxioson

Anthem of Resurrection

Intercessions: Litany and collect

Angel of Peace, petitions and collect

Prayer of Blessing

Trisagion

Devotional Appendix

Bidding

Responsory

Gospel of healing and Anthem

Bidding and Blessing

The opening doxology⁵¹ and Lord's Prayer are not mentioned by Coneybeare and Maclean, who pass directly to the twice repeated 'Lord, if thou wilt open my lips, my mouth shall sing thy praises'.⁵² A Trinitarian doxology follows, 'Blessed be the consubstantial and unitary holy Trinity, indivisible Father and Son and Holy Spirit, now and ever'.⁵³ The first, Christological, doxology may have been the original beginning, leading directly to the *psalmodia currens*. Psalms 50.17 and 3 may have been in place by the late fifth century, with the addition of two more psalms and the insertion of the Trinitarian doxology between then and the late seventh century.⁵⁴

⁵¹ *Night Office I*, 94.

⁵² Coneybeare and Maclean, p. 447.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Night Office I*, 106.

The group of invitatory psalms bears close similarity to the Byzantine/Sabaite six psalms described above (chapter 4). Most of the rest of the night part of the office is the psalmody in course and the canticle(s). Refrains to the canticles eventually became poetic troparia, and these troparia followed each canticle on Sundays and feasts by late 6th/early 7th centuries, were used daily by the late 7th/early 8th, and from the 12th/13th centuries poetic material has taken over almost completely.⁵⁵ The oldest troparia in the Armenian offices are thought to be those associated with the canticles, and with psalm 50 and the praise psalms (148–50) at Morning Prayer.⁵⁶

Coneybeare and Maclean conclude the night office with a Christological doxology: 'Blessed be our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, Amen.' This may actually be intended to begin the morning office,⁵⁷ rather than conclude the night vigil; the two have followed one another without a break for centuries.

In the morning office proper we find several elements of probably primitive origin; the canticles of Daniel 3, psalm 50, the praise psalms (148–50), the Great Doxology and the intercessory material. It may be that a three canticle vigil (reinforced by troparia and a suitable Gospel reading)⁵⁸ followed the night psalmody on Sundays, and lead into the dawn praise of the resurrection. The three canticles may well have been Daniel 3 in two parts (vv. 26–45 and vv. 52–88) plus Exodus 15.⁵⁹ The early shape would then be:

Night: Psalm 3, *Psalmodia currens*

Vigil: 3 Canticles with troparia, Gospel

Morning: Psalm 50 and Troparion, Psalms 148–50 and Troparia;
Great Doxology

At a later stage the desire for daily canticles with the night psalmody causes Exodus 15 to migrate and other canticles to be added. To make up a trio *Magnificat* is added to the two halves of the *Benedicite*⁶⁰ (*Benedictus* and *Nunc Dimittis* being added after the 13th century).⁶¹ The early commentator, Movses K'ertolahayr (fl. 640s), graphically describes the *Benedicite* as the song of those

⁵⁵ *Night Office II*, 508–35, 548–50.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 535.

⁵⁷ See *Night Office I*, 100.

⁵⁸ Coneybeare and Maclean, pp. 493ff.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 500.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 505, the latter probably still new in the 7th cent.

⁶¹ This possible progression is outlined by Winkler, *Night Office II*, 548–50. The *Benedictus* and *Nunc Dimittis* are not mentioned by Yovhannes Ojneç'i: Coneybeare and Maclean, pp. 489–90.

in prison, being followed by the praise of the redeemed.⁶² There is indeed a progression in this structure, from night watch, through resurrection vigil, to morning praise of the risen Lord, and it is very similar to ancient Jerusalem.

Armenian use of Scripture at Nocturns and Matins

Psalms 3 is common to the different systems in Armenia, old Constantinople and Palestine and was also known in the West Syrian tradition of Tikrit.⁶³ The second triad (discussed in the previous chapter) may perhaps have been imported from Palestine.⁶⁴ The greater part of the nocturnal section is a vigil of current psalmody, and the only service in the Armenian daily office that has a recitation of the psalms in course: 'the Armenians restricted the meditative recitation of the psalms to the night office, thus keeping the original features of the cathedral offices of (morning) and (evening) intact'.⁶⁵ Yovhannes spoke of the importance of keeping vigil in expectation of Christ's second coming,⁶⁶ and Khosrov stressed the seriousness with which this psalmody must be taken.⁶⁷

For the *psalmodia currens* the Armenians divided the Psalter into eight 'canons':

Canon 1: Psalms 1–17	Canon 2: Psalms 18–35
Canon 3: Psalms 36–54	Canon 4: Psalms 55–71
Canon 5: Psalms 72–88	Canon 6: Psalms 89–105
Canon 7: Psalms 106–18	Canon 8: Psalms 119–47

Each canon was followed by an Old Testament canticle: Exodus 15, Deuteronomy 32 (in two sections), the canticle of Anna, Isaiah 26 ('My soul yearns for thee in the night'), Isaiah 38 (the prayer of Hezekiah), Isaiah 42 ('Sing to the Lord a new song') together with Jonah 2, and Habakkuk 3. In modern usage only the last section of each canon survives, and the canticles have been replaced by hymns.⁶⁸

⁶² Charles Renoux, 'Les commentaires liturgiques arméniens', in A.M. Triacca and A. Pistoia *Mystagogie: pensée liturgique d'aujourd'hui et liturgie ancienne* (Rome: Edizioni Liturgiche, 1993), pp. 277–308, p. 291.

⁶³ Mateos, 'Les matines chaldéennes, maronites et syriennes', *OCP*, 26 (1960), 51–73.

⁶⁴ *Night Office I*, 105.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 94.

⁶⁶ Coneybeare and Maclean, p. 496.

⁶⁷ *Night Office II*, 498, 503.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 475–6.

The daily vigil was originally made up simply of the psalms, but the Sunday vigil brought the canticles into the regular offices, from where they passed into the daily vigil, perhaps as specifically paschal elements to add to the Psalter in course.⁶⁹ With the disintegration of the Armenian resurrection vigil of Sundays, the canticles were not only attached to the psalms but increased in number,⁷⁰ but the Armenians do keep elements of the Sunday vigil in the daily office. The daily vigil of the seventh–eighth centuries, as explained by Winkler, covered the second half of the night, and was already a combination of monastic vigil, cathedral vigil and morning office.⁷¹ It is then unwise to try and make too great a distinction between these offices.

The canticles mentioned have been met before, with the addition of those from Isaiah 38 and 42. The first, the prayer of Hezekiah (Isaiah 38.10–20), 'I said, in the noontide of my days, I must depart', is made by the king when he recovers from mortal sickness, thus, returning to life, and so an appropriate vigil canticle. Isaiah 42.10–13 and 45.8 is combined with Jonah 2, and is a song of the powerful God who goes out against his enemies, the words of 45.8 seem to be the bridge to the Jonah canticle: 'Shower, O heavens, from above, and let the skies rain down righteousness', perhaps as an assurance of God's power that hears Jonah crying out even from 'the belly of Sheol' (2.2). Then follow the Daniel canticles and their troparia. The three New Testament canticles, while later additions to the structure, are commented on by Yovhannes, who saw the *Benedicite* as prefiguring salvation, while the *Magnificat* stands for salvation made present.⁷²

Some general biddings are followed by more remnants of the Sunday vigil.⁷³ These include a series of verses from psalms 112 (vv. 1–3 'From the rising of the sun to its setting praised be the name of the Lord!'), 43 (vv. 26 and 24, 'Awake, O Lord, why do you sleep? Arise, do not reject us for ever'), and 145 (vv. 10 and 1, 'The Lord will reign for ever'), together with a Gospel reading and anthem, and further biddings. The psalm verses are clearly chosen to celebrate the resurrection in mind and Peter Jeffrey suggests that they reflect the three psalms of the vigil mentioned by Egeria.⁷⁴ The Gospel citations given by

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 486, see also Baumstark, *Comparative Liturgy*, op. cit., pp. 36–7. However, C. Renoux, 'A propos de G. Winkler, "The Armenian Night Office II" dans *Révue des études Arméniennes* n. t. XVII (1983), p. 471–551' in *Révue des études Arméniennes*, 18 (1984), 593–8, questions Winkler's assumption that the Easter Vigil of the Armenian Lectionary had canticles in the later sense.

⁷⁰ *Night Office II*, 488–90.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 494–5, Winkler cites the 7th/8th century Zenob Glak, who mentions Daniel 3 as a canticle of the *night* office, *ibid.*, 496, n. 125.

⁷² Coneybeare and Maclean, p. 489.

⁷³ Placed here by Taft (see *Liturgy of the Hours*, p. 222), Coneybeare and Maclean refer to the unit only in part at p. 461.

⁷⁴ 'The Sunday Office of Seventh-Century Jerusalem', op. cit., 65–7.

Coneybeare and Maclean⁷⁵ relate the empty tomb and the 'myrrh-bearing women'. The anthem that follows the Gospel, 'Rejoicing with great joy, because of the glad tidings of our Lord's resurrection' is entitled 'Gospel of the Balm-bearers'.⁷⁶

Prayer and Hymn Texts at the Night and Morning Office

The poetic material of the night office is late, hymns are attributed to the twelfth-century Nerses Shnorhali. The intercessions possibly date from the period of John Mandakuni in the late fifth century. The latter may once have concluded the office.⁷⁷ The text of the prayers attributed to Mandakuni is given by Coneybeare and Maclean, they are clearly to be said on rising from sleep to praise God, 'Aroused all from the repose of sleep', to keep prayerful vigil in the night; 'Let us, in fear and trembling, stand in prayer before him, and give thanks to him in this hour of the night', asking forgiveness of sin; 'With faith let us ask of him forgiveness and remission of our trespasses', with a view to having a place in the coming kingdom; 'And may we become worthy of the eternal and heavenly tents'.⁷⁸ A further prayer is given by Coneybeare and Maclean at this point:

Unto thee do we render thanks, Lord our God, who hast vouchsafed us the repose of peaceful sleep; and awakening us, hast caused us to rise betimes for adoration ...⁷⁹

It also introduces the early morning vigil; whilst the one that follows, 'Look down, O Lord' prays 'that we, having served thee, our Lord, in a godly and worthy manner during this life, may at last attain to thy everlasting kingdom of heaven'.⁸⁰ This latter prayer could equally end the day.

Each canon of the Psalter was followed by a unit of prayer, and each of these comprised a litany, a prayer and a prayer of inclination.⁸¹ The litanies are quite general in their petitions, though a concern with forgiveness and remission of sins is found, and there is some emphasis on preparing for judgement. This last

⁷⁵ Coneybeare and Maclean, p. 455. Matthew 28.1-20; Mark 15.42-16.8; Luke 23.50-24.12; John 19.38-20.18.

⁷⁶ Coneybeare and MacLean, p. 455.

⁷⁷ *Night Office I*, 108.

⁷⁸ Coneybeare and Maclean, pp. 447-8.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 448.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 449.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 449-52.

theme is exemplified by such petitions as: 'That we may in no wise be found among the rejected in the day of reckoning'⁸² and 'That we may stand pure and blameless before the dread tribunal of Christ'.⁸³ These petitions, and those for protection and forgiveness, are what one might expect of a vigil that waits in hope for the coming of the Just Judge.

Following the first litany is a midnight prayer:

Howbeit thou hast now aroused us and opened our mouths to set forth the praises ... Accept even now our prayers, ever to rise betimes to this same service of thy worship, ...⁸⁴

And again, after the litany of the third Proclamation: 'Vouchsafe unto us, O Lord, reverently ever and always to rise betimes for thy service'.⁸⁵ The fourth is perhaps the fullest expression of the theology of the night office:

We thank thee, Lord our God, who hast aroused us from the repose of sleep through the grace of thy mercy. Awaken our minds through righteousness unto thee, Lord our God; that our eyes may behold thy salvation. May thy Godhead come and dwell with us, and may thy mercy become a shelter and a safeguard over thy ministers. And make us thy servants worthy, by day and by night, and in every hour, to meditate ever in the love of thy commandments, and with thanksgiving to glorify Father, Son and Holy Spirit.⁸⁶

The prayers over the people are similar, praying to stand firm in the divine commandments,⁸⁷ and to be awake and ready for the hour of dawn which would by now be breaking; e.g.:

Power that quickenest, well-spring of immortality, thou art Christ God our Saviour; who hast vouchsafed to us in this midnight to arise and make acknowledgement unto thee as touching thy judgements and righteousness. Now therefore, we pray thee, Lord our God, make us to be awake and ready in the hour of dawn together with thy saints;⁸⁸

These prayers are likely to be amongst the oldest elements of the night office, and they appear to presume a vigil begun in the night, and prolonged until

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 449, Proclamation of first canon.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 450, Proclamation of second canon.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 449.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 451.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 452.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 449-50, First Proclamation.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 452, Fourth Proclamation.

dawn and the morning office. Thus the fusion of night and morning offices took place at an early date amongst the Armenians.

After the Daniel canticle in the morning part of the office comes another 'Proclamation':

Having come all of us into the holy catholic and apostolic church, let us pray to the only-begotten Son of God, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who descended in glory of the Father into the midst of the furnace, and saved the three children from the Chaldeans. But may we become worthy to keep his commandments; to receive the crown of light and life in ourselves, . . . May the Lord almighty quicken us and have mercy.⁸⁹

The idea of being saved from life-threatening danger, coupled with the prayer for the 'crown of light and life' makes this a prayer that sums up much of the theology of Morning Prayer as reflecting a weekly, or even daily, paschal experience.

The primitive core of the Armenian morning office is psalm 50, the *Miserere*, and the praise psalms (148–50), with the Great Doxology.⁹⁰ Here we clearly have the archaic structure of cathedral Morning Prayer.⁹¹ Psalm 50 has a troparion, and a bidding follows:

We do adore thee, O Lord our God, who have passed through the length of the night; and we are come betimes to the place of acknowledgement, and do offer up our Morning Prayer . . . to thee we give thanks, who hast made us worthy to pass the night in peace and reach the hour of dawn . . .⁹²

This is another excellent example of a Morning Prayer that indicates the time of day marked out by prayer. The bidding links the penitence of psalm 50 to the outpouring of praise in psalms 148–50 and the Great Doxology. This latter is followed by a version of the prayer *kataxioson*:

. . . O Lord, make this day to be worthy in peace; and keep us without sin. Blessed art thou, Lord God of our Fathers, praised and glorified is thy holy name unto eternity, Amen.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 453. An alternative for Lent includes the words: 'Quench the flame of the furnace of our transgressions; deliver us from the everlasting fire.'

⁹⁰ Yovhannes' commentary links the cosmic praise of the *Benedicite* to the recognition of how far we fall short of God's goodness in the *Miserere*, and then, as redeemed, sing his praise in psalms 148–50, and with the angels in the Great Doxology, Coneybeare and Maclean, p. 490.

⁹¹ G. Winkler, 'New Study of the Early Development of the Office' *Worship*, 56 (1982) 27–35.

⁹² Coneybeare and Maclean, p. 455.

Blessed Lord, teach me thy statutes (three times) . . . From thee, Lord, floweth the fountain of life; and by the light of thy countenance we behold the light⁹³

There are troparia with the praise psalms, an anthem of the resurrection and a final ascription of praise:

O praise, o ye creatures, the creator of all things, Lord, of Lords, King of magnify him, for he is kind and his mercy endureth for ever.⁹⁴

Other prayers are more general while yet others focus on seasonal themes. A Lenten prayer of repentance at dawn is followed by a collect:

We thank thee, Lord our God, who with thy dawning light hast gladdened all thy creatures, yea, and with the ideal light of thy commandments hast illuminated all who have believed in thee . . .⁹⁵

We note the use of the image of light and illumination at the dawn of the new day, nicely balancing the light theme at Vespers. The collect sums up what Yovhannes says of the morning hour as looking forward to the resurrection of all in the coming of Christ, the true Sun of Justice.⁹⁶

A prayer of Blessing, or Inclination, follows which expresses the idea that each day is a foretaste of the eternal day; the gift of the Holy Spirit being given to form God's people into his dwelling-place, as they prepare to leave church and embark upon the business of the day. This part of the service concludes with the Trisagion.⁹⁷

The remaining complex material is another devotional appendix.⁹⁸ Most of the texts are not relevant to Morning Prayer so they will not be examined. Coneybeare and Maclean make no mention of a 'Gospel of Healing' with anthem,⁹⁹ but do provide a text that sums up the connection of morning light with resurrection praise:

Unto thy all-powerful and wondrous resurrection Christ our God, do the hosts of angels offer homage. For thou alone hast immortality and dwellest in light unapproachable. And we thy creatures made of dust in lowly awe

⁹³ Ibid., p. 456.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 453.

⁹⁵ Ibid., pp. 459–60.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 492.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid., pp. 461–4; Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, pp. 222–3.

⁹⁹ Coneybeare and Maclean, pp. 462–3.

do thee homage, and glorify thy wondrous and victorious resurrection. And to thee with the heavenly hosts we offer praise and glory, with Father and Holy Spirit, now and ever.¹⁰⁰

Conclusions

- The Armenian offices display a similar shape to that presumed in Cappadocia, perhaps also relating to Jerusalem.
- 2 The group of psalms 139-41 prays for a saving from sin and danger, and is seen as representing Christ's descent into the tomb.
 - 3 The lamp-lighting prayer speaks of the light from which darkness flees, gives thanks for the day so that the night may be spent in praise and not just rest, and the prayer of blessing prays for the establishing of the church and looks to the new day.
 - 4 The nocturnal recitation of the Psalter was a watching for Christ's coming according to the commentaries, we pray that we may watch and look to the eternal day. The canticles keep a paschal reference running throughout.
 - 5 If Vespers prayed for deliverance from the grave, then at the night to morning office, the Lord is looked for to come again, that we may behold salvation, and so praise the risen Lord and saviour in the morning.
 - 6 The *Benedicite* and *Magnificat* are interpreted respectively as prefiguring salvation and recognizing the presence of that salvation. Prayers give thanks for being led from darkness to the light of the true sun Jesus Christ.
 - 7 There is once again to be a night to morning dynamic, which culminates in celebrating the new day as prefiguring the eternal day, this is dramatically depicted by some commentators who suggest e.g., that morning birdsong signifies the resurrection of mankind from the tomb.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 464.

¹⁰¹ E.g., Yovhannes Ojnec'i, see Renoux, 'Les commentaires', op. cit., 293.

Vespers and Matins in pre-Crusades Constantinople and Later Developments

The Synthesis of the Offices in Constantinople

A number of studies have described the process by which the Byzantine daily service of cathedral type was eventually replaced by one of Palestinian monastic provenance, so it is only necessary to summarize the process here.¹ The process was in three stages.² For the first stage, that of the daily cycle, we have only fragmentary evidence of two different forms seemingly indigenous to Constantinople, that of the church of Hagia Sophia, and that of the 'sleepless' monks (see below) on the other. The second stage, following on the revival of Palestinian monastic life after the Persian invasion of 614, saw a considerable increase in the use of poetry in the monastic offices. The great Greek hymnographers were most active in the next century: Andrew of Crete (+ 720), John Damascene (+ 780), Cosmas of Maium (787).³ The monastic reformer, Theodore, moved to the capital in c.798 and revived the former 'sleepless' monastery of Stoudion.⁴ He imported monks from the Palestinian monastery of St Sabas, who brought with them their growing *corpus* of hymnody. The Palestinian or Sabaite offices were grafted onto the litanies and prayers of the existing office of the Great Church, thus establishing what became the modern Byzantine office. In due course, the Sabaite *typika* were taken to Kievan Rus' and Muscovy. The third stage saw the formation of the monthly cycles and need not concern us here, as we are dealing with the overall shape of the offices and their function in the sanctification of time.

¹ See e.g., A. Schmemmann, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology* (London: Faith Press, 1966), especially ch. 4, pp. 116ff.; M. Arranz, 'Les grandes étapes', op. cit.; and Robert F. Taft, *The Byzantine Rite: A Short History* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992), especially ch. 5, pp. 52-66.

² Arranz, 'Les grandes étapes', 45-6.

³ Ibid., 53-4.

⁴ *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, pp. 2044-5; Taft, *The Byzantine Rite*, p. 52, n. 4 and Gilbert Dagron, 'Les moines et la ville: la monachisme à Constantinople jusqu'au concile de Chalcedoine (451)', *Travaux et Mémoires*, 4 (1970), 229-76, 236, n. 46. The Studite reform is conveniently summarized in Thomas Pott, *La réforme liturgique byzantine* (Roma: Edizioni Liturgiche, 2000), pp. 99-129.

The Office of the ‘Sleepless’ Monks

The monastery of the *Akoimetoï*, or ‘sleepless ones’, was reputedly founded in 405. The office was conceived as uninterrupted praise of God, carried out by three choirs of monks in turn, each doing an eight-hour shift of duty. At its height, the monastery itself had several hundred monks. Mentioned by Anthony of Novgorod (1200),⁵ they had declined after the Iconoclast crisis of the eighth/ninth centuries, and are not mentioned after the sack of Constantinople in 1204.⁶

Each hour of the office was more or less structurally identical, but with proper psalms and prayers. A Greek text was edited for publication by Fountoulis in 1977, and Fr Denis Guillaume’s French translation will be used for our explanation of this office.⁷

The basic shape common to all the offices is as follows:

- Invariable initial prayers
- 2 Psalm or psalms
- 3 ‘Trisagion prayers’⁸
- 4 [Creed at First Hour only]
- 5 *Kathisma*⁹ in one of the eight tones
- 6 *Kyrie eleison* (15 times, 60 at First Hour)
- 7 ‘O God, cleanse me a sinner’ (15 or 60 times)
- 8 Concluding Prayer

There is no indication of the Psalter in course, but the source is a *Horologion*, perhaps intended to be used with a Psalter. The fixed psalms selected for each office convey the theological meaning of each hour. For example: the First Hour¹⁰ has three psalms: 69, ‘O God make haste to my rescue’; 8, ‘How great is your name, O Lord our God’ and 50, ‘Have mercy on me, God, in your kindness’, seemingly chosen with the morning in mind.

At the First Hour of the Night psalm 74 prayed to God as judge, at the Second ‘The Lord is my light and my help’ (psalm 26), and at the Third, confidence in God is expressed (psalm 55). Drawing closer to dawn, at the

⁵D. Guillaume, *Horologe des Veilleurs: Les 24 Heures des Acémètes* (Rome: Diaconie Apostolique, 1990), p. 9.

⁶*Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, p. 46.

⁷Guillaume, op. cit., p. 9, n. 5.

⁸I.e., the set of prayers including the Trisagion (‘Holy God, Holy and strong’), the prayer ‘All-Holy Trinity have mercy’, and the Lord’s Prayer.

⁹I.e., ‘session’ = a poetic stanza.

¹⁰Guillaume, op. cit., pp. 11–18.

Ninth Hour, we proclaim ‘God’s love in the morning’ (psalm 91), while at the Eleventh Hour God is praised for coming to rule the earth (psalm 95). The night ends with psalm 56 expressing readiness to give morning praise to the God who ‘rises above the heavens’.¹¹

From the need for light at evening, the service progresses through prayers for confidence, renewal and protection, to the growing expression of a resurrection faith, finally issuing in praise of the Creator at sunrise. The Day Hours express Paschal joy at the beginning of the day, progress through prayer for guidance as the day wears on, and finally at sunset give thanks, and ask for mercy and forgiveness once more. Once again, the night is never merely for rest, but to be turned into day, and thus a powerful symbol of God in Christ conquering sin and death.

Some of the concluding prayers at night support this interpretation. That of the First Hour of the Night,¹² ‘Lord our God, Father of the true light’, prays for light of the heart after the light of day, and that of the Second¹³ speaks of the day turning to night. As day approaches, for example, at the Tenth Hour, the prayer is ‘We bless Thee, O Christ, Word of very God, Light of Light without beginning’,¹⁴ speaking of the light of creation. The prayer of the Twelfth Hour of the Night,¹⁵ ‘Lord my God, in you I place my trust’, prays to God who is both day and night, and who chases away the darkness of sin.

The office of the ‘sleepless’ reflected the same concern as the name implied; to, as it were, deny victory to the darkness of sin/night by means of this act of praise, going on all night as well as all day.

The Asmatiki Akolouthia

The ancient office of Hagia Sophia was known as the ‘chanted/sung office’, the *asmatiki akolouthia*, a term employed, for example, by the fifteenth-century liturgical commentator, St Symeon of Thessaloniki (+ 1429). Symeon spoke of the *sung* office, to distinguish it from the Palestinian monastic office, much of which was monotoned by a single voice. He understood the singing of the psalms of the office to be the ancient tradition, and he devotes a large part of *de Sacra Precatione*¹⁶ to describing and defending the office, by then largely confined to Thessaloniki, which did not survive the Turkish conquest of that city in 1430.

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 54–94.

¹² Ibid., p. 56.

¹³ Ibid., p. 59.

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 86–7.

¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 90–94.

¹⁶ *PG* 155, 624ff, especially chapter 345.

In addition to Vespers and Matins, *hesperinos* and *orthros*; there was a special Lenten service, *tritoekti* ('Tersext') which replaced the eucharistic liturgy on weekdays; a midnight office, a vigil called *pannychis*; and, according to Arranz, the Third, Sixth and Ninth Day Hours.¹⁷ Many of the prayers and rubrics of this office have survived in *euchologia* (priests' service books) and have been incorporated, not always happily, into the Palestinian monastic office, and thus form part of the modern Orthodox daily service. The offices were formed of 'antiphons' of the Psalter, interspersed with litanies and prayers; there was a restrained use of ecclesiastical poetry. We shall mainly concentrate on Vespers and Matins, little will be said of the Day Hours, but the midnight office and the *pannychis* will be examined more closely. The prayers have been edited by Miguel Arranz,¹⁸ following upon the work of Mateos,¹⁹ and also that of the musicologist Oliver Strunk on the antiphons and their role.²⁰ We also note the work of Priestmonk Nilo Borgia in the 1920s,²¹ and the more recent work of Alexander Lingas.²² From these various sources it is possible to construct schemata for the services of Vespers and Matins:

<p>Vespers Introduction (in Narthex) Blessed is the kingdom . . . Great Synapte Prayer 1 Antiphon I – Psalm 85 Prayer 2 – 2nd Antiphon</p>	<p>Matins Introduction (in Narthex) Blessed is the kingdom . . . Prayer 1 Antiphon 1 – psalms 3, 62, 133 Prayer 2 – 2nd Antiphon</p>
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¹⁷Arranz, 'Les grandes étapes', 50.

¹⁸(Underlining will signify the abbreviations to be used henceforth) 'Les prières sacerdotales des vêpres byzantines' *OCP*, 37 (1971), 85–124; 'Les prières prebytérales des matines byzantines' *OCP*, 37 (1971), 404–36 & *OCP*, 38 (1972), 64–115; 'Les prières presbytérales des Petites Heures dans l'ancien Euchologe byzantin' *OCP*, 39 (1973), 29–82; 'Les prières presbytérales de la 'Pannychis' de l'ancien Euchologe byzantin et la 'Panikhida' des défunts' *OCP*, 40 (1974), 314–43 & *OCP*, 41 (1975), 119–39; 'Les prières presbytérales de la Tritoekti de l'ancien Euchologe byzantin' *OCP*, 43 (1977), 70–93 & 335–54; 'L'office de l'Asmatikos Hesperinos ('vêpres chantées') de l'ancien Euchologe byzantin' *OCP*, 44 (1978), 107–30 & 391–419; 'L'office de l'Asmatikos Orthros ('matines chantées') de l'ancien Euchologe byzantin' *OCP*, 47 (1981), 122–57. See also his *Kak molilis' Bogu drevnie bizantiitsy* (Leningrad Theological Academy, 1979).

¹⁹J. Mateos, 'La Psalmodie' and 'Quelques problèmes', op. cit.; and 'La synaxe monastique des vêpres byzantines' *OCP*, 36 (1970), 248–72.

²⁰Oliver Strunk, 'The Byzantine Office at Hagia Sophia' in *DOP*, 9/10 (1955–6), 177–202, reprinted in his *Essays on Music in the Byzantine World* (New York: Norton, 1977), pp. 112–42. We cite the later edition.

²¹N. Borgia, ΩΡΟΛΟΓΙΟΝ: 'Diurno' delle Chiese di Rito Bizantino (*Orientalia Christiana* xvi 2, Rome: PIO, 1929), see reconstruction of Asmatikos Hesperinos, pp. 232–53.

²²E.g., 'Festal Cathedral Vespers in Late Byzantium' in *OCP*, 63 (1997), 421–48.

<p>Prayer 3 – 3rd Antiphon Prayer 4 – 4th Antiphon Prayer V – 5th Antiphon Prayer 5 – 6th Antiphon Prayer 6 – 7th Antiphon Prayer 8 – 8th Antiphon and <i>Kekragarion</i> (psalm 140) (Entry into Nave) Central Part of Office (in Nave) Introit</p>	<p>Prayer 3 – 3rd Antiphon Prayer 4 – 4th Antiphon Prayer 5 – 5th Antiphon Prayer 6 – 6th Antiphon Prayer 7 – 7th Antiphon Prayer 8 – 8th Antiphon and <i>Benedicite</i> (Entry into Nave) Office in the Nave Prayer 10, psalm 50 and Hymns of day*</p>
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Prokeimenon

Ektene/*Great Kyrie eleison*
 Prayer IX and psalm 114
 Prayer X and psalm 115
 Prayer XI and psalm 116
 Litany and Prayer for
 Catechumens (XII)
 2 Litanies and Prayers of Faithful
 (XIII, XIV)
Aitesis and Prayer 7
 Inclination Prayer (9)

Processional appendix

Litany, prayer (XVIII) and
 Inclination (XIX) – Sacristy
 Prayer (XX) and Inclination
 (XXI) in Baptistry
 Last Dismissal Prayer (XXII)

Prayer 11 and psalms 148–50

Benedictus

Great Doxology (feasts)
 Trisagion and entry into Sanctuary
 on feasts
Office in Sanctuary

Prokeimenon

Prayer 9 and Gospel
 Litany and Prayer for
 Catechumens (XII)

2 Litanies and Prayers of Faithful
 (XIII, XIV)

Aitesis and Prayer 12

Inclination Prayer 13
 Dismissal

[NB The weekday service did not enter the sanctuary and the litanies appear to have been taken in the Nave.]

Hymns of the day following psalm 50 appear to sometimes include the *Kontakion*,²³ a lengthy poem of many stanzas.

²³Arranz, *Kak molilis' Bogu*, op. cit., pp. 277ff.

These services were conceived as a progress or procession. This is obvious in the description of Anthony of Novgorod (1200):

When they sing Lauds at Hagia Sophia, they sing first in the narthex before the royal doors; then they enter and sing in the middle of the church; then the gates of Paradise are opened and they sing a third time before the altar.²⁴

The similarity of structure between the two services is more apparent than real, and only holds for the chanting of the antiphons of psalmody in the narthex. The central core of Vespers, taken in the nave, with its three 'little antiphons' of selected psalms, contrasts with the central core of Matins, with its three rather different elements: psalm 50, the Praise psalms and the Great Doxology. Another difference is that part of the morning office is in the sanctuary, at least on Sundays and Feasts; while the evening office has a processional appendix, only found in certain manuscripts²⁵ and not included in Borgia's reconstruction.²⁶ There is also a similarity of structure with the developed eucharistic rite in which the public service opens with a service of three antiphons and prayers and then, after the entry with the Gospel book, moves into the celebration of the Word. This parallelism is most obvious in Vespers.

Like the office by Egeria, the services begin with lengthy psalmody, mainly attended by monks, nuns and some devout laity.²⁷ This may be an 'urban monastic' characteristic, and would probably last in Constantinople as long as monks took an active part in the offices of the Great Church.²⁸

After the psalmody in the narthex, the major ceremonial moment of the entry from narthex to nave began the central part of the service, as described by St Symeon.²⁹ The eighth antiphon, psalm 140 with refrains, accompanied the entrance.³⁰ At some point prayer 8 was said, still the prayer of the entrance in the modern Vespers, and with lights and incense the clergy led the congregation into church, where at the ambo, on a Saturday night, hymns of the resurrection were sung.³¹ The refrains of the psalm were often based loosely on the psalm

²⁴ Translation from Strunk, op. cit., 112, perhaps implying that this form of office was forgotten in Russia.

²⁵ Arranz, 'Asmatikos Hesperinos', 117.

²⁶ Nor in a recent reconstruction celebrated liturgically in the chapel of St Peter's College, Oxford (26 May 2001), arranged by Dr Alexander Lingas (now of the University of Arizona).

²⁷ Borgia, marginal notes, op. cit., pp. 236ff. and Uspensky, *Evening Worship*, op. cit., pp. 27–57 & 109–10.

²⁸ Suggested by Arranz, 'Asmatikos Hesperinos', 410.

²⁹ In *PG* 155, 629, 631.

³⁰ Strunk, op. cit., 134.

³¹ Summarised in Arranz, 'Asmatikos Hesperinos', 411.

itself; for example, 'Let my prayer come before you, o Saviour of the world'.³² There is no reference to incense in the psalm refrains,³³ it is more a sign of eschatological glory than of propitiatory sacrifice.³⁴ Symeon saw incense at the entry into the Holy of Holies with the risen Lord Jesus as our being made holy by him who brings about our salvation, a clear baptismal symbol.

After the entry on Saturday was the *prokeimenon* from psalm 92, 'The Lord is King with majesty enrobed'.³⁵ The evening *prokeimena* remain today as survivals of the 'chanted office', found more or less as they are now in the tenth-century Hagios-Stavros 40 *Typikon*.³⁶ Unlike those of the Liturgy, the weekday *prokeimena* do not necessarily precede readings, and, unlike those used at Matins, which are festal or proper to the tone of the week, they are rarely replaced except in Lent. The *prokeimenon* was followed by a litany known as the *ektene*. This is probably a late addition to the offices.³⁷

The central core of 'chanted Vespers' were three 'little antiphons' with prayers.³⁸ First, four verses of psalm 114 with the refrain 'By the prayers of the Mother of God, O Saviour save us'. Secondly, psalm 115 with the refrain '● Son of God, risen from the dead, save us who sing to you',³⁹ together with the hymn, '● Only-begotten son and Word of the Father'; and thirdly, psalm 116 with Trisagion as refrain.⁴⁰ It is the opinion of some scholars that festal readings would have taken place at this point.⁴¹

The remainder of the central core was largely intercessory. A litany and prayer for the catechumens (XII), two litanies of the faithful (as in the eucharistic Liturgy) with prayers (XIII and XIV), the *aitesis* with a prayer still used (7), and the final prayer over the people, also still used (9). Prayer XIII again gives thanks for protection through the day, and, now that we

³² Wednesday of 2nd week, Strunk, op. cit., 141.

³³ The Liturgy of the Presanctified preserves an incensation during verses 1–4a, with verse 2 as a response, see Janeras, 'La partie vespérale de la Liturgie byzantine des Présanctifiés', *OCP*, 30 (1964), 193–222, 207–9.

³⁴ Winkler, 'Über die Kathedralvesper', op. cit., 73.

³⁵ 'Asmatikos Hesperinos', 411 – A *prokeimenon* is a responsorial psalm chant. A refrain is intoned and repeated, after a verse the refrain is repeated, and after the cantor has intoned the first, the singers sing the second half of the refrain. Few *prokeimena* now have more than one verse.

³⁶ Mateos, 'Le Typikon', 178–81.

³⁷ Stefano Parenti, 'L'Ektenē della Liturgia di Crisostomo nell'Eucologio St. Peterburg Gr.226 (X secolo)' in E. Carr, S. Parenti, A-A. Thiermayer and E. Velkovska (eds), *ΕΥΛΟΓΗΜΑ: Studies in Honor of Robert Taft, SJ* (Studia Anselmiana 110, Rome: 1993), 295–318.

³⁸ Borgia, op. cit., pp. 243–5.

³⁹ Arranz, 'Asmatikos Hesperinos', 412.

⁴⁰ 'Asmatikos Hesperinos', *ibid.*

⁴¹ Personal communication from Archimandrite Ephrem (Lash), May 2001.

have been led to the light of evening, for protection from the passions of the flesh.⁴²

The Proclamation of Scripture

The Psalter in course may have originated amongst the sleepless monks.⁴³ The first antiphon at Vespers comprised only psalm 85, and at Matins, psalms 3, 62 and 133,⁴⁴ but for the current psalmody the Psalter was divided into 68 antiphons of roughly equal length, each comprising one to six psalms. The even numbered antiphons were provided with short refrains, the odd numbered with the response 'Alleluia'.⁴⁵ A typical complement might be six variable antiphons, preceded and followed by fixed antiphons, making eight in all. A 10th-century *typikon*⁴⁶ directs the number of antiphons to be sung at Matins and Vespers at certain seasons, so that the number of psalms was lessened in the evenings and increased in the mornings after the summer solstice. At the autumn equinox the number of antiphons was almost equal. In other words the greater burden of psalmody was in the morning on the shortest winter days, and at evening on long summer evenings.⁴⁷ This remarkably logical arrangement appears to have been unique to Constantinople.

This system might demand 24 antiphons per day, suggesting a reading of the Psalter twice a week with no strict attachment of antiphons to specific days. (Psalms recited elsewhere in the offices are omitted from the antiphons.) Saturday and Sunday were exceptions; the antiphons of the former were seven canticles, and the latter, psalm 118.⁴⁸ The canticles were a unique arrangement:

The Exodus 15 Song of the Sea
2 Deuteronomy 32

⁴²Text in J. Duncan (ed.), *Euchologe de la Grande Eglise (MS Coislin 213)* (Rome: PIO, 1978), pp. 86–7; hereafter Duncan. French translation in Arranz, 'Asmatikos Hesperinos', 124.

⁴³Diane Touliafos-Banker, 'The "Chanted" Vespers Service', *Κληρονομία*, 8 (Thessaloniki: Moni Vlatadon) (1976), 107–18, 115.

⁴⁴Strunk, op. cit., 120–21.

⁴⁵Ibid. 122. Citing MS Athens 2061 of 14th/early 15th cent., giving music for psalms and canticles.

⁴⁶J. Mateos (ed.), *Le Typicon de la Grande Église (Ms Sainte Croix n. 40, X^e siècle)* (OCA 165–6. Rome: 1962–3) (H-S 40).

⁴⁷Op. cit., 129. See also Arranz, 'Asmatikos Hesperinos', 406, for table of the antiphons in H–S 40.

⁴⁸Strunk, op. cit., 131. The present *typikon* requires psalm 118 to follow the normal *kathismata* (2 & 3) on certain Sundays (see e.g., *The Liturgikon* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America, 1989, pp. 140–41).

3 Habakkuk 3

4 Isaiah 26.9ff. + Jonah 2

5 Hannah (1 Sam. 2) + *Magnificat*

6 Prayer of Hezekiah (Isaiah 38.10ff.) + Manasseh

7 First canticle from Daniel 3⁴⁹

The short refrains alternating with Alleluia, such as 'Save us, O Lord' or 'Remember me, O Lord',⁵⁰ often have no connection with the psalms that they accompany. Being easily remembered, they would help keep the interest of those who did not know the Psalter by heart.⁵¹ Later arrangements standardized the number of antiphons at morning and evening and paid no concern to the length of time over which the Psalter was recited.⁵² It also became customary to reduce the number of antiphons at Vespers when there were to be readings: for example, on feasts and Lent weekdays.⁵³

The Vespers *prokeimena* may represent a very ancient use of a psalm selected for its suitability to the time of day. For example, the *prokeimenon* for Saturday night, from psalm 92, 'The Lord is king, and has put on glorious apparel',⁵⁴ is well suited to the celebration of Sunday as an anticipated entry into the Lord's kingdom.

As in Egeria's Jerusalem, the Byzantine cathedral Vespers had two series of psalms interspersed with prayers, and interrupted by an entry with incensation. The three 'little antiphons' (psalms 114, 115 and 116) may witness to a more primitive trio of psalms and prayers following psalm 140. It is probably not accidental that the three are drawn from the *Hallel*, which, it seems likely, were the psalms intended to accompany the solemn evening meal in *Apostolic Tradition* (see chapter 3 above). The cathedral part of Vespers took place in the nave, while the preceding part, predominantly of the urban monastics was in the narthex. The three psalms: 'I loved because the Lord will hear the voice of my supplication', 'I believed, therefore I spoke' and 'Praise the Lord, all you nations', may be said to express trust in the God who delivers his people.⁵⁵

⁴⁹So Schneider, outlined in Strunk, op. cit., 132.

⁵⁰Strunk, *ibid.*, 140.

⁵¹The Palestinian absence of refrains may indicate use of whole Psalter by heart: see my 'The Use of the Psalter by Early Monastic Communities', *Studia Patristica*, 26 (1993), 88–94.

⁵²Athens Ms 2061, see Arranz, 'Asmatikos Hesperinos', 393–9 and *Kak molilis' Bogu*, op. cit., 276–83.

⁵³Arranz, 'Asmatikos Hesperinos', 399.

⁵⁴*Vespers and Matins*. (Oxford: St. Stephens Press, 2001), p. 21.

⁵⁵Uspensky (op. cit., pp. 54–5) suggested that the three little antiphons were originally psalms 140, 141 and 129, which seems unlikely.

The Witness of Prayer

The numbering of the prayers in the schema (pp. 96–7 above) is derived from Arranz.⁵⁶ Prayers with Arabic numerals are found in the *present* liturgical books, they also indicate the order in which they are used. Prayers 1 to 7 are now recited quietly by the priest during the recitation of the opening psalm, 103;⁵⁷ number 8 is said at the entrance, before ‘Hail Gladsome light’, and number 9 is still a prayer of inclination, said towards the end of the service. The prayers with Roman numerals are those only found in older *euchologia*.⁵⁸

The first prayer is a psalm prayer that accompanied the fixed first antiphon, Psalm 85. The prayer is really a catena of psalm verses:⁵⁹

O Lord, compassionate and merciful, long-suffering and of great mercy (v. 15), give ear to our prayer, and attend to the voice of our supplication (v. 6). Work upon us a sign for good (v. 17a). Guide us in thy way, that we may walk in thy truth. Make glad our hearts, that we may fear thy holy Name (v. 11); ...⁶⁰

The end of the day is a time to experience God’s gracious, saving power, and to pray to him with confidence for continued guidance as night falls.

The next six prayers (including V) are quite general, and would have suited any group of psalms. Prayer 5 (of the sixth antiphon) is more obviously vespereal:

Visit us in thy goodness, and grant that, for the remainder of the present day, by thy grace we may avoid the manifold snares of the evil one, and preserve our life unassailed, ...⁶¹

Forgiveness and guidance are the themes of this prayer. Prayer 6 (of the seventh antiphon) is also a general evening prayer, giving thanks for gifts received, especially the pledge of the future kingdom, and

that we may complete what remains of this day without reproach before thy holy glory, and hymn thee, our God, who alone art good, ...⁶²

⁵⁶ Arranz, ‘Les prières sacerdotales’, 117–18.

⁵⁷ An eighth prayer, V, is found in some recensions; e.g. *Liturgikon, siest Sluzhebnik* (Rome: Vatican Polyglot Press, 1952), pp. 14–15.

⁵⁸ E.g. Barberini, 336, S. Parenti and E. Velkovska (eds), *L’Eucologio Barbarini gr. 336* (Rome: C.L.V., 1995), and Coislin, Duncan, op. cit., above, 8th and 11th cents. respectively.

⁵⁹ Arranz, ‘Les prières sacerdotales’, 89.

⁶⁰ *Vespers and Matins*, p. 6.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 9.

⁶² Ibid., p. 10.

The prayers may then be general but several pray that God will grant us grace to face the night in confidence and trust.

The prayer of the entrance quotes psalm 140 and other scriptural passages:⁶³

In the evening, in the morning and at noonday we praise thee, we bless thee, we give thanks to thee, Master of all and loving Lord: Direct our prayer in thy sight as incense (v. 2a), and incline not our hearts to words or thoughts of wickedness (v. 4); but deliver us from all who seek after our souls (v. 9). For to thee Lord, O Lord, we lift up our eyes and in thee have we put our hope (vv. 8a, 8b). Put us not to shame, O our God. For to thee belongs all glory, honour and worship⁶⁴

In this prayer incense primarily symbolizes prayer in which we petition for delivery from danger as we place our hope on God.

Prayer IX at the first little antiphon is a prayer for the end of the day that has survived at Sunday evening Vespers of Pentecost, following the first of the so-called kneeling prayers:

Blessed art thou, O Lord, Master Almighty, who hast lightened the day with the light of the sun and hast illuminated the night with flashes of fire, who hast vouchsafed us to pass through the length of the day and to draw near to the beginning of the night; ... Grant us also that the present evening with the coming night and all the days of life may be perfect, holy, peaceful ...⁶⁵

We pray for the Lord’s continued compassion and guidance, not simply to complete the day, but to let the evening and night begin the rest of life.

Vespers on the *evening* of Pentecost Sunday begin Monday. This accords with canon 20 of the Council of Nicaea, which decreed that prayer on Sundays and in Paschaltide be offered standing. In other words, the first service of a liturgical day is Vespers, and this is made abundantly clear by the striking change in atmosphere when kneeling is resumed after the Vespers entrance on Pentecost evening, as decreed by canon 90 of the Quinisext council of 691.

The prayer that accompanies the second little antiphon quotes two classic evening psalms:

O Lord, Lord, who deliverest us from every arrow that flieth by day (Ps 90.5), deliver us also from everything that walketh in darkness (Ps 90.6). Receive the lifting up of our hands as an evening sacrifice (Ps 140.2).

⁶³ See Arranz, ‘Les prières sacerdotales’, 98–9.

⁶⁴ *Vespers and Matins*, pp. 17–18.

⁶⁵ *Liturgikon*, p. 410. The kneeling prayers are not found in the earliest sources, such as HS 40, and may have come into ‘chanted vespers’ from elsewhere, see M. Arranz, ‘Les prières de la Gonyklisia ou Génuflexion’, *OCP*, 48 (1982), 92–123.

Vouchsafe us also to pass without reproach the course of the night untempted of evil things, ...⁶⁶

The prayer of the third little antiphon, psalm 116,⁶⁷ is much longer in the modern liturgical books than in the sources. It is a prayer that praises the glory of God:

O God, ... who hast vouchsafed us also to stand at this hour before thine unapproachable glory, that we might hymn and praise thy wonders: Be gracious to us, thine unworthy servants, and grant us grace that ... we may offer thee the thrice-holy glorification ... Remember, O Lord our infirmity, and destroy us not ... that, fleeing from the darkness of sin, we may walk in the day of righteousness...⁶⁸

Arranz emphasizes the vespereal themes of the antiphons: sunset, advancing night, divine protection, etc.,⁶⁹ and might have added 'and looking forward in eschatological hope'.

The progression towards darkness is characteristic of prayer 7, which in the 'chanted office' accompanied the more personal *aiteisis* litany. We pray to God who lives in light unapproachable, who has divided light from darkness and brought his people together to offer evening praise, that he will accept the evening offering of incense.⁷⁰ It closely parallels that of *Apostolic Constitutions* 8 (37) (see above), as Uspensky demonstrates.⁷¹ Both prayers petition for a peaceful and sinless night, and for salvation. Prayer 7 continues:

that, enlightened by meditation on thy commandments, we may rise up in joyfulness of soul to glorify thy goodness ...⁷²

We note that the confident hope that all shall rise again, argues powerfully in favour of the vigil nature of Vespers.

Prayer XIV prays that God, who lives in inaccessible light and has called us to evening praise, may

protect us from the darkness of sin, illumine the eyes of our souls, so that remaining always in thy fear, and walking in thy light, we may contemplate thy marvels, and glorify thee in all things ...⁷³

⁶⁶ *Liturgikon*, p. 414.

⁶⁷ Arranz, 'Les prières de la Gonyklisia', 105.

⁶⁸ *Liturgikon*, pp. 417–19.

⁶⁹ Arranz, 'Asmatikos Hesperinos', 417.

⁷⁰ *Vespers and Matins*, pp. 11–12.

⁷¹ Uspensky, pp. 25–6.

⁷² *Vespers and Matins*, *ibid.*

⁷³ Duncan, p. 87; Arranz, 'Asmatikos Hesperinos', 124–5.

The prayer over the people, number 9, used in the modern office, is a night prayer of blessing:

Guard them at all times, both during this present evening and in the approaching night,⁷⁴

Borgia inserts a dismissal prayer which recapitulates some of the themes,⁷⁵ and closes the office with 'Go forth in peace',⁷⁶ as does St Symeon.⁷⁷

A *lucernarium* ceremony?

Throughout Lent the contemporary office has a series of Vespers readings from Genesis and Proverbs, each preceded by a *prokeimenon*. When the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts is celebrated, after the second *prokeimenon*, the celebrant turns to the people with a lighted candle and the thurible, exclaiming 'The light of Christ illumineth all'⁷⁸ and the people prostrate. This ceremony recalls Egeria's account of light being brought out from the Holy Sepulchre, represented by the sanctuary. Janeras thinks that it is possible to detect a primitive order of reading, light acclamation/*lucernarium*, and the Lenten form of psalm 140.⁷⁹ The earliest Constantinopolitan Vespers may have commenced in darkness,⁸⁰ and after the light ceremony there followed the evening psalm. This rite may have been preceded in Lent by the readings of catechumenal instruction,⁸¹ prolonged until the time of the lamp-lighting, according to a commentary of Chrysostom quoted by Uspensky.⁸² With the disappearance of the catechumenate and the growth of the antiphons of the distributed psalter in the narthex, the readings and the light

⁷⁴ *Vespers and Matins*, p. 30.

⁷⁵ Borgia, 250–51, the source is a Grottafferata MS not mentioned by other authors.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 251: ΠΡΟΕΛΘΕΤΕ ΕΝ ΕΙΡΗΝΗ (sic), also Arranz, 'Asmatikos Hesperinos', 125, and Duncan, *op. cit.*, 88.

⁷⁷ *PG* 155, 636 and Uspensky, *op. cit.*, pp. 50–51.

⁷⁸ *Liturgikon*, 346 7.

⁷⁹ V. Janeras, 'La partie vespérale de la liturgie byzantine des Présanctifiés', *OCP*, 30 (1964), 193–222.

⁸⁰ Uspensky, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 130–32. The present system is found in HS 40 (see Mateos, *Le Typicon*, II, *op. cit.*) and see G. Winkler, 'Der Geschichtliche Hintergrund der Präsanctifikatenvesper', in *Oriens Christianus*, 56 (1972), 184–206, 192–3, quoting Chrysostom in *PG* 54, 597.

⁸² Uspensky, p. 132. Commenting on the Presanctified in St Symeon (*PG* 155, 653), Arranz says that no lamps were lit before the prophetic readings, 'La Liturgie de Présanctifiés de l'ancien Euchologe byzantin', in *OCP*, 47 (1981), 332–88, 371.

ceremony were displaced. The ceremony appears to have been part of the ancient cathedral rite.⁸³

The Processional Appendix to Vespers

As in many other places, Constantinople's 'chanted Vespers' acquired a processional coda. Some traditions, including the modern Byzantine, extend this procession, or at least its material, from feasts to every day, and duplicate it at the end of Matins. The old rite of Hagia Sophia, by contrast, appears to have had this procession only on certain days at Vespers. As a result, some of the oldest manuscripts make no mention of the prayers that appear to have accompanied the procession, and St Symeon did not refer to it in his commentary.

The prayers appear to be quite late additions to the service.⁸⁴ The first prays that God, the giver of all good things, will regard the lowliness of his people, that they may serve him as sanctified vessels,⁸⁵ and that he may be for his people, the guide to go with them on their way in hope of the eternal kingdom.⁸⁶ Although said in the sacristy, the *skeuophylakion*, the prayer is vaguely baptismal. The next station was at the Great Baptistery on the opposite side to the sacristy.⁸⁷ Here was said a prayer of thanks for admission into the company of the saints in light. This was clearly a prayer that takes up the baptismal theme of passage from darkness and death to the light of God's face, in hope of the resurrection life. There was a further prayer of inclination that the baptized might remain faithful to the grace given, and that they be illumined with the knowledge of God's truth.⁸⁸ Clearly the idea of baptism as a passage from darkness to light, from death to life, remained an important aspect of evening worship as late as the eleventh century. This baptismal aspect of Vespers is also emphasized by Uspensky.⁸⁹

⁸³ Janeras, op. cit., 221–2. Winkler, op. cit., 199–206, felt that Antiochian Vespers centred on the 'Light of Christ' and psalm 140, and that there was neither light ritual nor incensation in 11th cent. Constantinople.

⁸⁴ 11th century sources, see Arranz, 'Asmatikos Hesperinos', 125–9.

⁸⁵ Duncan, p. 89.

⁸⁶ Arranz, 'Asmatikos Hesperinos', 126; Duncan, p. 89.

⁸⁷ Arranz, 'Asmatikos Hesperinos', 127, n. 55.

⁸⁸ Duncan, p. 90.

⁸⁹ Uspensky, 50–54.

The 'Chanted Matins' of Hagia Sophia

The opening part of the 'chanted Matins' also took place in the narthex. After a blessing came the fixed first antiphon of psalms 3, 62 and 133, preceded by a prayer. Then came the antiphons of the Psalter for the day with prayers. The final antiphon was the *Benedicite* from Daniel 3, a very commonly found morning canticle, where the whole of creation is called to give praise to God. Creation thus rejoicing in the new creation brought about by Christ's resurrection.

The Sunday Psalter was evidently psalm 118.⁹⁰ Symeon sees the assembly in the narthex before the closed royal doors (i.e., the central doors of the church), as betokening the exclusion of sinners from the ancient paradise.⁹¹ The priest carried out an initial incensation during the first section of the Psalter, entering the nave by a side door and returning with a cross. When the last few verses of psalm 118 were reached, the doors having been completely opened at verse 170, 'Let my pleading come before you; save me by your promise'. An introit was sung and the remaining verses of the psalm were sung in the nave. During this entry, the cross, with three lighted candles upon it, was taken to stand upon the ambo. The psalm was followed immediately by *Benedicite*. Symeon speaks of the power of the cross to open the doors to heaven and reveal the Triune God.⁹²

The Central Part of Matins

According to Symeon, the *synaxarion* (a reading on the sufferings of Christ, or the life of a saint) was read at this point.⁹³ This was probably a medieval monastic addition. The *ektene* followed, and then psalm 50 with a refrain.

The *Benedicite* and psalm 50 are frequently found elements in early forms of Morning Prayer, though their position relative to one another can vary, in modern Byzantine use psalm 50 precedes the canticle. As already mentioned, the scriptural canticles without *Benedicite* were sung as the Saturday psalmody.⁹⁴ We may then conclude that the *Benedicite* was one of the elements that began the morning part of the office,⁹⁵ probably as a reminder of

⁹⁰ PG 155, 636–7, see Arranz, 'Les prières des matines', 103. The reading of Psalm 118 was divided into the same three parts (vv. 1–72, 73–131, 132–76) as in contemporary use.

⁹¹ PG 155, 636: 'παλαι παραδεισον'. also 641–5.

⁹² Ibid., 640.

⁹³ Ibid., 645.

⁹⁴ Strunk, op. cit., 134–5.

⁹⁵ A possible survival in the modern office may be the incensation at ode 8 (replacing *Benedicite*) and the *Magnificat*, perhaps to prepare to enter the Nave, as at Vespers.

the Paschal vigil where it has a major role.⁹⁶ The somewhat abrupt juxtaposition of a song of cosmic praise followed by a prayer of penance (psalm 50) might conceivably be explained by the fact that the creation gives praise first, and human beings are moved to repentance so that they too might sing God's praises.

If the core of 'chanted Vespers' was the little antiphons and prayer, then that of 'chanted Matins' was psalms 50 and 148–50, with prayer, then the *Benedictus*⁹⁷ and the Great Doxology which, as today,⁹⁸ concluded with the solemn singing of the Trisagion, and, on Sundays, one of two resurrection troparia.⁹⁹ Meanwhile the clergy went in procession from the ambo in the nave to the sanctuary.¹⁰⁰ As Anthony of Novgorod said: 'then the gates of Paradise are opened and they sing a third time before the altar'.¹⁰¹ A powerful sense of movement is one of the most striking features of this Constantinopolitan rite, but the weekday office was concluded in the nave.

The Office in the Sanctuary included the Sunday resurrection gospel, which in many places was inserted between the night and morning parts of the office, as in contemporary Byzantine practice. The resurrection gospel has also been placed after the reading of the Psalter (Egeria), after the ninth ode of the canon, after the Lauds psalms (148–50), or after the Great Doxology.¹⁰²

The remainder of 'chanted Matins' comprised the same group of litanies as at Vespers; for the catechumens, two for the faithful, and the *aïtesis*, all accompanied by appropriate prayers; an inclination prayer and the dismissal. The service ended with a dismissal and later devotional or processional elements.

The Psalms and Other Scriptures of the Morning

The psalms that began the office clearly indicated the hour of celebration. We have already commented on psalms 3 and 62 in chapter 4, and psalm 133 with its call to 'Lift up your hands to the holy place and bless the Lord through the night' surely urges and inspires prayer at this pre-dawn vigil.

Though we need not comment further on the 'distributed Psalter', the Sunday use of psalm 118 is of interest. This psalm was traditionally recited at

⁹⁶ See e.g., Bertonnière, op. cit., 186.

⁹⁷ Mentioned by St Symeon, *PG* 155, 648.

⁹⁸ See *Horologion*, p. 127.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 133.

¹⁰⁰ *PG* 155, 649; Arranz 'Les prières des matines', 105.

¹⁰¹ Strunk, op. cit., 112.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 215.

night/early morning in the Christian East. In the modern Orthodox Matins it is appointed for Saturdays and for Sundays in Lent¹⁰³ (also daily, Monday to Friday, at the midnight office).¹⁰⁴ This highly didactic wisdom psalm appears to have had no defined liturgical use in Judaism, but has been widely used by Christians. In modern use the psalmody in course is followed on Sunday by the *Evlogitaria* of the Resurrection, named from the refrain from psalm 118 sung between these verses that sing of the myrrh-bearing women coming to the tomb of Christ, 'Blessed art Thou, O Lord, teach me thy statutes'.¹⁰⁵ During this a general incensation of the church is made.

The incense rite may be associated with the psalm being the Sunday psalmody of the cathedral rite.¹⁰⁶ We may see the verses as extending psalm 118's theme of obedience to God's will, to Christ's total obedience to death, so leading us to his transforming resurrection. The same idea may be operative in the modern office's further use of *Evlogitaria* in services celebrated for the departed.¹⁰⁷ The use of this psalm on Saturday may have been influenced by its use at services for the departed; Saturday, especially Holy Saturday, being seen as the day commemorating Christ in the tomb. This recalls the theme of death being overcome by life that we believe is constitutive of prayer in the night. Again, on Holy Saturday the 176 verses of the psalm are intercalated with the verses known in Greek as the *εγκωμια* or *Θρηνοι*. The poetry is late, but the theme of the descent to the place of the dead is, of course, much older.¹⁰⁸

The canticle *Benedicite* and the praise psalms have been discussed elsewhere, so we pass directly to the Sunday gospel readings, which, since at least the tenth century, are a series of eleven resurrection accounts, read in rotation, and referred to in Greek as the 'dawn gospels'.¹⁰⁹ They are virtually identical with, and in the same order as, those in HS 40.¹¹⁰ In 'chanted Matins' the Gospel was the climax of the service, making clear the progress of the service from darkness to light, from death to resurrection. The Gospel is preceded by one of eight *prokeimena* in the tone of the week. They are also in

¹⁰³ *Festal Menaion*, op. cit., 533–4. Psalm 118 is now often replaced by *polyeleos* (see below) or omitted.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 74.

¹⁰⁵ *εὐλογητός εἶ, Κύριε, διδάξον με τὰ δίκαιωματα σου*6.

¹⁰⁶ Diane H. Touliatos-Banker, *The Byzantine Amomos Chant of the 14th and 15th Centuries* (Analecta Vlatadon 46, Thessaloniki: Patriarchal Institute for Patristic Studies, 1984), p. 54.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 88–90.

¹⁰⁸ See Sebastia Janeras, *Le Vendredi-Saint dans la tradition liturgique Byzantine* (Studia Anselmiana 99, Rome: 1988), pp. 395–402.

¹⁰⁹ E.g., ΠΑΡΑΚΛΗΤΙΚΗ, op. cit., 30, 'ΕΘΘΙΝΟΝ Α'.

¹¹⁰ *Typicon de la Grande Église*, II, op. cit., pp. 172–5, and see table in Hapgood, *Service Book* . . . (Englewood, NJ: 1975), op. cit., xxiii.

HS 40,¹¹¹ and may contribute to our understanding of the theology of Matins.

The first (psalm 11) is 'I myself will arise, says the Lord'. The second is from psalm 7, 'My God awake, you will give judgement'. Numbers three, 'Proclaim to the nations, God is King' (psalm 95), and four, 'Stand up and come to our help' (psalm 43), renew a strongly eschatological theme. Psalm 9.33, 'Arise then, Lord, lift up your hand!' is the fifth, and similar to the seventh, also from psalm 9. The sixth (psalm 79), 'O Lord rouse up your might, O Lord come to our help' is more a prayer for divine vindication. The eighth (psalm 145), 'The Lord will reign for ever, Sion's God from age to age', serves as an expression of faith in the risen Lord. The psalm texts are chosen to celebrate the resurrection as both a present and an eschatological reality in the lives of those present, and form a fitting prelude to the resurrection gospel.

The Prayers of Matins

That the office began before dawn is stated all the more forcibly not only by the prayer of the first antiphon, but also by the prayers accompanying the antiphons of the Psalter. The prayers have survived into the modern office as the first eight of a group of twelve said quietly by the priest during the reading of the *hexapsalmos*.¹¹² The designation *εωθινον* (early in the morning) is found before the prayers in some MSS.¹¹³

The prayer of the invitatory psalms (1) is an excellent example of early Morning Prayer:

We thank thee, O Lord our God, who hast raised us from our beds and hast put into our mouths a word of praise, that we may venerate and call upon thy holy name...¹¹⁴

The prayers of the antiphons extend the theme of praying to God through the small hours. The second begins:

From the night our spirit rises early towards thee, our God, for thy commandments are a light upon the earth...¹¹⁵

¹¹¹ Mateos, *Le Typicon*, 170–73.

¹¹² Psalms 3, 37, 62, 87, 102 and 142, see chapter 4.

¹¹³ E.g., *Coislin 213*, Duncan, pp. 96ff. (Goar, *Ευχολογιον sive Rituale Graecorum*, ed. J Goar (Paris: 1647; repr. Graz: 1960), 39–45).

¹¹⁴ *Vespers and Matins*, p. 52.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 53. Quoting the canticle of Isaiah 26.9ff.

This becomes a prayer for church, state and all people. Prayer 3:

From the night our spirit rises early towards thee, our God; for thy commandments are a light . . . Enlighten the eyes of our understanding, lest we sleep for ever in our sins unto death. Drive away all darkness from our hearts. Favour us with the Sun of Righteousness and preserve our life without injury, . . . Grant us to see the dawn and the day with joyfulness, that we may raise our Morning Prayers to thee.¹¹⁶

The prayers move from a simple statement that we have risen from our beds, through general prayer for both church and world, to more specific needs. Sleep, darkness and death are connected with sin; while the light to be shed by the sun of righteousness will bring us into the glorious light of God's new day.

Prayer 4 continues the themes, God calling the light to shine out of the darkness, but sleep bringing refreshment. Prayers 5 and 6 are similar, and prayer 7 again states that those praying have been raised from their beds, and continues:

Give us grace in the opening of our mouth, and according to our strength accept our thanksgiving; and teach us thy statutes.¹¹⁷

It concludes by asking forgiveness of sins in preparation for the approaching dawn, symbol of the coming Christ. This is the celebration of the baptismal new life in Christ renewed every day in his faithful people, who may thus pray for protection and guidance in the coming day.

The prayer at the canticle *Benedicite* so sums up the morning themes that it is worth quoting in full:

O Lord our God, who hast banished from us the sluggishness of sleep and hast convened us together by a holy calling, that we may lift up our hands even in the night, and acknowledge before thee thy righteous judgements: Accept our prayers, petitions, thanksgivings and night-time worship; and grant us, O God, faith unashamed, steadfast hope and sincere love. Bless our coming in and going out, our deeds and works, our words and thoughts; And grant us to arrive at the beginning of the day, praising, singing and blessing the goodness of thine ineffable kindness.¹¹⁸

While the prayer accompanies the canticle it only cites psalm 133, more suited to the beginning of the office. The mention of 'our coming in and going out' may have attracted the prayer to the entry, but equally it may have been

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 58–9.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

composed for the beginning of a night to morning vigil office.¹¹⁹ Whatever its provenance, it explicitly reflects the vigil marking the passage from darkness to light; from sleep that stands for death, to waking praise that stands for life in God who makes all things new.

Psalm 50 was accompanied by Prayer 10, which is a true psalm prayer and thus a prayer of penance:

O Lord our God, who hast granted unto men pardon through repentance and has set for us the repentance of the prophet David as an example of the acknowledgement of sin and of confession which is unto forgiveness: Do thou thyself, O Master, have mercy on us according to thy great mercy, . . . But inasmuch as thou art good and lovest mankind, graciously vouchsafe that even until our uttermost breath, we may offer unto thee the sacrifice of righteousness and an oblation upon thy holy altar.¹²⁰

Repentance leads to the offering of a new sacrifice of praise to God, and the prayer well expresses the ancient idea of the morning as a time to be forgiven so as to give praise.¹²¹

Psalms 148–50 were preceded by the current prayer 11:

O God, our God, who hast brought into being by thy will all the powers endowed with speech and reason, we pray thee and supplicate thee: Receive our praise, which together with all thy creatures we offer according to our strength, and reward us with the rich gifts of thy goodness. . .¹²²

This prayer commenced the morning praise, that is, psalms 148–50 and the *Benedictus* together with the Great Doxology on Sundays and feasts.¹²³ We note that, being brought into creation as rational creatures, we give thanks with the rest of creation for this ‘re-making’.

The troparia of the Great Doxology on entry to the sanctuary are probably of great antiquity:

To-day is salvation come into the world. Let us sing praise unto him who rose from the grave, the Author of our life: For in that by death he hath destroyed Death, he hath given unto us the victory and great mercy.¹²⁴

¹¹⁹ Arranz, ‘Les prières des matines’, 424–5.

¹²⁰ *Vespers and Matins*, pp. 62–3.

¹²¹ See also Arranz, ‘Les prières des matines’, 427.

¹²² *Vespers and Matins*, pp. 62–3.

¹²³ Arranz, ‘Les prières des matines’, 429.

¹²⁴ Tr. Hapgood, *Service Book*, op. cit., 35.

When thou hadst risen again from the tomb, and hadst burst the bonds of hell, thou didst loose the condemnation of death, O Lord, redeeming all men from the snares of the enemy. . .¹²⁵

The texts are for Sunday but well express the resurrection character of all morning offices.

The first prayer of the faithful (XIII) was clearly matinal:

Lord, Lord, yours is the day and yours is the night, you have formed the light and the sun, . . . deliver us from darkness and the shadow of death, . . .¹²⁶

The twelfth prayer, of the *aïtesis* litany, is now the last of those said during the six psalms:

We praise thee, we hymn thee, we bless thee, we give thanks unto thee, O God of our fathers, that thou hast brought us in safety through the shades of night and hast shown unto us once again the light of day . . . Illumine our hearts with the true sun of thy righteousness; . . . that walking uprightly as in the day, in the way of thy commandments, we may attain unto life eternal, . . . and may graciously be vouchsafed to come unto the fruition of the light unapproachable.¹²⁷

Inappropriate in its present position, this text sums up Morning Prayer,¹²⁸ giving thanks for protection through the possible threats of the night, and praying for the gift of new light, also asking God’s guidance through the day, whilst yet looking beyond it to the eternal day of God’s unending light. The dynamic that began the evening before at Vespers has been reinforced and brought to its climax in the full light of another new day, God’s gift to his people.

The final prayer, 13, is still the prayer of inclination in the present rite and corresponds to prayers in the *Apostolic Constitutions*.¹²⁹ It is not a particularly matinal prayer, except in so far as it prays to God the Lord of all creation – very much a morning theme:

O holy Lord, who dwellest in the highest, who regardest the humble, and with thine all-seeing eye dost behold all creation, to thee have we bowed . . .¹³⁰

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 103, II 3–7.

¹²⁷ *Vespers and Matins*, pp. 64–5.

¹²⁸ Also Arranz’ opinion, ‘Les prières des matines’, 435.

¹²⁹ See chapter 3 above.

¹³⁰ *Vespers and Matins*, pp. 89–90.

The Other Services of the Constantinopolitan Cathedral Office

It was formerly thought that the daily office of Hagia Sophia comprised only Vespers and Matins, together with the *tritoekti* in place of the Divine Liturgy in Lent.¹³¹ However the cathedral office did also possess Minor Hours of Midnight, Terce, Sext and None.¹³² Somewhat different from the modern monastic forms, these each comprised three antiphons with presbyteral prayers, a dismissal prayer, and one of inclination. The daily round (in e.g., Barbarini 336 of the eighth century) comprised Vespers, Midnight office, Matins, First, Third, Sixth and Ninth Hours. In addition there was *tritoekti* in Lent and the *pannychis* (a popular night vigil) for particular occasions, when it probably replaced the Midnight office.

The Midnight office, like the Day Hours, had five prayers,¹³³ which are clearly intended for the middle of the night. The first, for example, quotes psalm 118.62: 'At midnight I will rise and thank you for your just decrees', and prays for fidelity at the coming day of judgement. The concluding prayer over the people sums up the office neatly, praying that we may reach the dawn prayers enlightened by the true light of the knowledge of God's will. In these prayers vigil is kept as an eschatological sign, protection from the powers of darkness is sought, and there is an awareness of the creative power of God which only appears to be dormant at night, and prayer that we may reach the dawn of true enlightenment.

The prayers of the *pannychis*¹³⁴ are found in many old *euchologia*.¹³⁵ They are not seasonal and reflect an antique spirituality more concerned with celebrating the hours of the day and the night than of seasons or annual commemorations.¹³⁶ Arranz' reconstruction of this office has the following shape:¹³⁷

Psalm 90 and entrance into church
 Three prayers with litanies, interspersed with
 Three antiphons comprising psalms 119, 120 and 121
 Psalm 50 (perhaps part of 3rd antiphon)
 [*Prokeimenon* and Gospel in some sources]
 Final Prayer and Inclination Prayer
 Repeated *Kyrie eleison*, with or without *ektene*

¹³¹ Mateos, *Le Typicon*, xxiv, and Arranz, 'Tritoekti', op. cit., esp. 335–6, 353–4.

¹³² Arranz, 'Les prières presbytérales', 30. Prime appears in some later mss; *ibid.*, 38.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 31–4, *L'eucologio*, 61–4.

¹³⁴ Arranz, 'Pannychis', 330 9. In HS 40 (Mateos, *Le Typikon*) after Vespers on 17 days.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 325–40, *L'eucologio*, 133–7.

¹³⁶ Arranz, 'Pannychis', 137.

¹³⁷ See Arranz, 'Pannychis', 336, and 341–3.

Kontakia are also mentioned in some sources, and canons would seem to be the latest additions.¹³⁸ The service appears to have been a genuinely popular 'cathedral' observance.

Psalm 90 is a prayer for protection.¹³⁹ The psalms of the antiphons, 119, 120 and 121 are three of the 'gradual' or pilgrimage psalms. The general theme is joy in going to worship God in his holy place. *Pannychis* for the first week of Lent and the first half of Holy Week in the Dresden document had a fixed *prokeimenon* (psalm 28, 'The Lord will give strength to his people') and a Gospel reading from Luke 21.8 ff.: 'Watch out that you are not deceived'.

The antiphon prayers are suited to the hour.¹⁴⁰ The first asks for the continuation of divine light to illumine the people. In the second, God is the light that replaces that of the day. The third also stresses immaterial light and concludes with a petition for delivery from the darkness of sin so as to behold the light of God's face. Clearly this vigil of prayer turns the darkness of the night into a time to spiritually perceive the true light. The concluding prayer prays to the Father of light for delivery from the darkness of sin, so as to be illumined instead by the divine light of God's only son, the true sun of justice, who lights the way for those who keep vigil. Attributed to St Germanus I of Constantinople (+ 733), the prayers soberly and concisely sum up the ideal of the vigil.¹⁴¹ The *pannychis*, with poetic elements from the Sabaite Matins such as canons and *kontakia*, later became the basis of the funeral and memorial services; the latter known to Russians as the *panikhida*.¹⁴²

The Day Hours had the same structure of three antiphons with prayers, prayer of dismissal and prayer of inclination (The First Hour is supplied with only two prayers in Barberini 336, for cleansing and for guidance on the way of truth).¹⁴³ The Third Hour clearly commemorates the sending of the Spirit,¹⁴⁴ while the Sixth recalls Christ's cross and Peter praying at the Sixth Hour (Acts 10.9).¹⁴⁵ The Ninth Hour speaks of Peter and John going to the Temple at the ninth hour (Acts 3.1), and of remaining constant and watchful in prayer.¹⁴⁶ We should note that these services do not always reflect the themes of the Spirit/betrayal, crucifixion and the death on the cross, characteristic of the Palestinian monastic hours used today.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 342.

¹³⁹ Also at midday, see Sixth Hour in *Horologion*, pp. 169–70.

¹⁴⁰ For details and texts see Arranz, 'Pannychis', 316–24, & *L'eucologio*, *ibid.*

¹⁴¹ See, Arranz, 'Pannychis', 321–2.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 314–15.

¹⁴³ *L'Eucologio Barbarini*, 77–8.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 78–81, especially 1st & 2nd prayers.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 81–4.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 84–7.

Excursus A: The Later Development of the Byzantine Vigil

While the older service came to be replaced by the present, largely Palestinian, hybrid office, there was a continuing tradition of Vespers and Matins being services that sanctify the night. These themes are particularly prominent in the All-Night Vigil, *agrypnia* or *vsenoshchnoe bdenie*.

The origins of the present vigil may best be traced back to that of Nilus of Sinai (see chapter 4 above). The Studite *typikon* did not have this kind of *agrypnia* or vigil, but Vespers were followed by Compline, *mesonyktikon* (midnight office) and *orthros*, all served separately.¹⁴⁷ As the *typikon* of St Sabas became more popular, it replaced Studite practice with that of the *agrypnia*, still celebrated in full in the monasteries of the Holy Mountain (Athos); where Vespers, Matins and Liturgy one after another can still last for some twelve to fifteen hours.¹⁴⁸

N.D. Uspensky wrote an important study of the vigil, first published in Russian and edited, with comments, by Miguel Arranz.¹⁴⁹ According to the *typicon* the vigil should start just after sunset and finish at sunrise. Not surprisingly modern use, in both parishes and most monasteries, is to abridge it quite radically, in Russia to between two and three hours. The earliest sources of the modern form date from the twelfth/thirteenth centuries,¹⁵⁰ and many elements foreign to the ‘chanted office’ found their way in to this vigil.¹⁵¹

The group of psalms 134–5 (sometimes replaced by psalm 118) known as the *polyeleos*, now precedes the gradual hymns and Gospel. In some uses, psalm 136 ‘By the waters of Babylon’ is added on the three Sundays that immediately precede Lent.¹⁵² It does not seem possible to simply identify this part of the service (*pace* Taft and Mateos) with the vigil described by Egeria.¹⁵³

Uspensky’s summary of the Palestinian *agrypnia*¹⁵⁴ shows it to have been the same shape as Vespers and Matins today, the bread and wine blessed at the end of Vespers serving for light sustenance between the services and during which

¹⁴⁷ Robert E. Taft, ‘Mount Athos: A Late Chapter in the History of the Byzantine Rite’, *DOP*, 42 (1988), 179–194, 186.

¹⁴⁸ Archimandrite Ephrem (Lash), Review of Taft’s *Liturgy of the Hours...*, *Sobornost*, 11 (1989), 102–5, 103.

¹⁴⁹ *OCP*, 42 (1976), 117–55, 402–25; *St Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly*, 24 (1980), 83–113, 169–95.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 107.

¹⁵¹ *PG* 99, 1705, and see Taft, ‘Evergetis in the History of Byzantine Liturgy’ in Mullet and Kirby, op. cit., *The Theotokos Evergetis and Eleventh Century Byzantine Monasticism*, 288, fn 37; and Taft, ‘Mount Athos’, op. cit., 182–4.

¹⁵² Mateos, ‘Quelques problèmes’, 205, n. 12; *Festal Menaion*, 556.

¹⁵³ Taft, *The Liturgy of the Hours*, pp. 288–9; Mateos, ‘Quelques problèmes’, 205.

¹⁵⁴ Arranz, ‘N. D. Uspensky’, 176–8.

there was reading. At the end there was a short break and all returned later for the Eucharist. In Russia, by the sixteenth/seventeenth centuries the vigil was starting much later, perhaps midnight.¹⁵⁵ More was sung than nowadays and the Vespers entrance was very solemn, all available clergy taking part, possibly a continuing tradition of the ‘chanted service’. At Matins the *polyeleos* was accompanied by great solemnity, and the canon continued to have scriptural verses as well as troparia. Another relic of the ‘chanted Matins’ was an entry into the sanctuary before the Great Doxology, and there seems to have been a second Gospel reading in this, the original Constantinopolitan position.

The 1682 *Typikon of Jerusalem* shortened the vigil to six–seven hours in winter, four–five in summer. Eventually city churches had the vigil at dusk on Saturday, and villages, early on Sunday morning; by now, the ‘all-night vigil’ lasted no more than three hours. The Russians had, however, transformed the monastic vigil into a popular office,¹⁵⁶ and in spite of Nikon’s reforms¹⁵⁷ and later decadence, it remains a way of devoting at least a part of the night to prayerful vigil. A vigil that was enlightened by faith in the resurrection that overcomes the powers of death and darkness.

Excursus B: The Poetic Canons

The latter part of the modern Byzantine Matins is dominated by the canon, originally the set of nine scriptural canticles or odes (see chapter 4). The refrains of the canticles grew into troparia, of which the first, the *eirmos*, usually reflected the theme of the scriptural canticle. The poetic odes largely replaced the scriptural ones except for *Magnificat*, except in Lent.¹⁵⁸ The second ode, the long canticle of Deuteronomy, tended to be dropped altogether, hence most poetic canons have only eight odes.

St Andrew of Crete (c.660–740) is credited with being the main creator of the canon as a genre,¹⁵⁹ and his most famous composition, the Great Canon of Penance, is sung at Matins of the Fifth Thursday of Lent. This long work is worthy of at least cursory examination, as one of the earliest canons it still

¹⁵⁵ What follows summarizes Arranz, ‘N. D. Uspensky’, pp. 178–93.

¹⁵⁶ Moscow’s Epiphany Cathedral has ‘All-Night Vigil’ on Saturday and Vespers and Matins daily at 5 p.m.; V.A. Sudarikov and S.V. Chapnin, *Pravoslavnaya Moskva* (Moscow: Brotherhood of St Tikhon, 1993), p. 16.

¹⁵⁷ Cyril Korolevsky described an Old Believer vigil of Vespers and Matins from midnight to about 5 a.m.; ‘Chez les Starovères de Bucovine’ in *Stoudion*, IV (1927), 123–37. A modern Old Believer Vigil attended by the author in August 2002 lasted from 4 to 9 p.m. (Pokrov Cathedral at the Rogozhsky Cemetery in Moscow).

¹⁵⁸ See rubrics in *Lenten Triodion*, pp. 75–9.

¹⁵⁹ *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, pp. 92–3.

reflects the older use of the canticles; and Andrew did compose an ode for the Deuteronomy canticle.¹⁶⁰

The first *eirmos* refers to God as Helper and Protector, alluding to the Exodus 15 canticle. The troparia reflect on Adam and Eve and the sinner's helplessness. The second *eirmos* quotes the first words of the biblical ode 'Attend, O heaven', and continues to catalogue sinfulness, referring to Cain and Abel, and Noah. The fourth *eirmos* recalls the first verse of the Habakkuk 3 canticle, 'Lord, I have heard of your fame', and meditates on Jacob and Job. The fifth directly quotes the canticle of Isaiah 26.9–20, 'From the night I seek thee early', and the first troparion continues:

In night have I passed all my life: For the night of sin has covered me with darkness and thick mist. But make me, Saviour, a son of the day.

The sixth canticle, Jonah 2, is a type of the resurrection, reflected by the *eirmos*:

With my whole heart I cried to the all-compassionate God: and he heard me from the lowest depths of hell, and brought my life out of corruption.

In the seventh ode from Daniel 3, the *eirmos* addresses God 'O God of our fathers'. The troparia recall the confessions of Old Testament fathers such as David, Solomon and Manasseh. Ode 8, the Song of the Three Children, uses the refrain in the *eirmos*:

let everything that hath breath and all creation praise Him, bless Him, and exalt Him above all for ever.

The poetry reflects a universality that well suits the *Benedicite*, a song of all creation to God. The final ode, *Magnificat* and *Benedictus*, is introduced by the *eirmos*:

Conception without seed; nativity past understanding, from a Mother who never knew a man; childbearing undefiled . .

Then is recalled how the Old Testament has led to the New; as the light of day advances, examples of sin and forgiveness from the New Testament are adduced.

The canon moves from Genesis, through the patriarchs, kings and prophets to the New Testament. The interconnecting themes would argue that the use of the whole nine odes was normal practice at this date. The dynamic from creation to new creation, from old beginnings to new hope, nicely mirrors the

¹⁶⁰Trans. in *Lenten Triodion*, pp. 378–415.

themes we have seen so often in Matins, and indeed in the whole overnight movement of prayer from evening to morning.

Conclusions

I *From the office of the 'sleepless' monks*

The hours of night as celebrated by these monks followed a progression reflected in the psalms. At the First Hour, God is the judge (psalm 74), at the Second the Lord is said to be 'my light' (psalm 26), and so on until we reach morning praise (psalm 56).

- 2 Several prayers of the office reflect this theme as well, praying for light at the onset of night at the First Hour; and at the Tenth, that new light is perceived coming to fruition. This progression of night to day and back again is a constant anamnesis of the Christian life entered at baptism.

II *The 'chanted Vespers'*

The structures of the evening and morning offices express their theological meaning.

- 2 As in Egeria, Vespers has two major section of psalmody divided by an entry.
- 3 The light brought from within the sanctuary in the Presanctified Liturgy, clearly symbolizes the Christ who lives beyond the tomb.
- 4 Psalm 140 is associated with the movement from narthex to nave, and the incense and procession represent eschatological glory.
- 5 The *prokeimena*, especially on Saturday, also look to the new day; for example, 'The Lord is King'.
- 6 The texts of the processional appendix of Vespers speak of movement from darkness to light.
- 7 Evening prayers often speak of guidance in the way as well as protection for the night. They look beyond mere repose.
- 8 Other prayers, for example, at the little antiphons, often reflect the idea of night opening up to life.

III *The 'chanted Matins'*

The progression from narthex, to nave, to sanctuary (on Sundays and feasts) dramatically emphasized the movement of the office from darkness to light.

- 2 The vigil before the sunrise was begun with the appropriate psalms 3, 62 and 133, and continued as a waiting for the light until the *Benedicite*.

- 3 The incensation and entry into church, led by a cross with three candles, was the passage from darkness to light, from exclusion from the old paradise to inclusion in the new.
- 4 The central core of the morning office, psalm 50 praying for forgiveness, with the meditative *kontakion*, and then the praise psalms leading to the Great Doxology, were the praise of the new day.
- 5 Finally the service in the sanctuary on Sundays proclaimed the resurrection.
- 6 The prayers of the pre-dawn vigil speak of being 'raised from the bed', watching so as to behold the dawn because we are the sons of light not of darkness.
- 7 After the processional entry at *Benedicite*, the prayers stressed the praise of God, and one of the final prayers looks for illumination by the true sun of righteousness. We move from the sunrise to contemplate the eschatological sun.
- 8 Antony of Novgorod's mention of the doors of paradise opening at the Matins entrance is reflected in Simeon of Thessalonica's seeing the service in the narthex as representing the exclusion from paradise.
- 9 The doors of paradise are opened by the cross as entry to the true paradise, paving the way for the Sunday celebration of the resurrection as both a present and an eschatological reality.

IV *From other sources*

The *pannychis* is another example of prayer at night as an eschatological sign, an affirmation that night/death is to be denied victory.

- 2 The poetic canons also reflect the night to morning dynamic, the triadic structure of the nine odes moves from confession of sin, through hope of new life, to the new light of Christ who redeems his people.
- 3 Other prayers continue these themes of redeeming the time, rather than simply recalling past events, such as the passion and death of Christ. This is an office that sanctifies the whole of life by the Paschal mystery.