

The Use of English

- Three main considerations in setting English translations to melodic lines.
 - If the Greek melody is a model that is to be followed, the texts must be metered to match closely the meter of the Greek syllable accents.
 - If the text is not to be metered to the Greek text, a melody line is created that will follow the rubrics of Byzantine chant, so that the melody will serve the text in an ideal way.
 - The English translation must be theologically, dogmatically, and grammatically correct, expressed in a poetic style fitting for worship, and must be flowing and easily understood.

- Four kinds of composed hymns
 - **Automelon:** A hymn that has its melody used as a model for other hymns. Chanters memorize the automela. Its title is listed above the text of the hymn that follows it, so they know which melody.
 - **Prosomion:** Prosomia are the hymns that follow the automela melodies. Their texts must be written to the same meter as the model's text.
 - **Idiomelon:** A hymn with a unique melody that is not used as a model.
 - **Freely composed:** Hymns do not have models and are not designated as idiomela are composed by using an unmetered text and following rubrics of the mode to form the melody.

- Challenges of Translating to English
 - The Greek hymns were composed centuries ago and were handed down from antiquity. English hymns have to be constructed now.
 - Much study is required to understand why the Greek hymnographers had such a precise system of composing rubrics that left *nothing* to chance.
 - The English translator must be a scholar, a theologian, a poet, an experienced chanter with a thorough knowledge of Byzantine theory, a gifted writer and grammarian, willing to use multiple English text translations and compare them to the Greek, use a dictionary and thesaurus and spend hours trying many combinations of words to find the correct meter and a comprehensible flow.

English Text and Byzantine Chant: Some Problems, Issues, & Concerns

- Cultural, traditional, and historical gap between English and Byzantine chant
- Micro-tuning or tempered scale?
- Western notation or Byzantine notation?
- The Sound of Music

Practically Speaking in the U.S. Today

- We use English, in some cases more often than Greek.
- Majority of choir members and directors do not read Byzantine notation.
- Most choir members have been brought up in Western music traditions.

Reality

Check

Resulting Realities

- Untrained and uneducated people at the chanter stand
- Inconsistent quality of musical material
- Perpetuation of poor translations and bad melodic lines
- Bad starts to sound good, wrong starts to sound right; both become accepted, and eventually become the norm

Nancy's Personal Problems

- Helping people unlearn bad practices
- Persuading choirs and clergy that it is easier to learn new melodic lines which fit the text, rather than awkwardly sticking English words into existing Greek melodic lines
- Creating or finding English translations to fit model melodies
- Teaching basic Byzantine theory so people can improvise if necessary

Problems Going Between Greek and English

- Relatively speaking, English is a simple language.
- Discrepancy between length of Greek text and corresponding English translation
- Common English on the whole has fewer syllables than Latin or Greek based words
- Many English translation have awkward phrasing and awkward word choices
- Musical phrases and text phrases must match each other

Conclusions

- There is a difference between reading Byzantine notation and composing Byzantine chant.
- We need hymnographers trained in Byzantine theory and composition to create our English translations.
- A Western style of Byzantine chant is evolving.
- We need translators to develop theologically accurate, linguistically poetic, and understandable English texts.
- Develop training for musicians so they can learn the services and hymns and have a basic understanding of the services and modes.

Sez who?

So what?

Some Experts in the Field

(Present company excluded.)

- Jessica Suchy-Pilalis, PhD
- Papa Ephraim, St. Anthony Monastery, Arizona
 - Categorized and cataloged texts and melodic patterns of thousands of Byzantine melodies
- Father Seraphim Dedes
 - Translates and meters hymns and organizes Orthros and liturgy services
- Richard Barrett, PhD
 - Seminarian who is well-versed in Byzantine theory

Composing a Chant Melody

- Byzantine music is extremely precise and mathematical.
- In Byzantine melodic lines nothing is left to chance.
- We have a tendency to concentrate on preserving melodic lines created by the system rather than preserving the system which created the melodic lines.

Vespers and Orthros Quiz

- What hymn is found in all three services?
- How many books does it take to do Vespers or Orthros?
- How many special hymns do we sing during liturgies?
- How many special hymns do we sing during Vespers and Orthros?
- How do we know which tone to use for Theos Kyrios, Kyrie Ekekraxa and the Ainoi
- What tone should the doxology be?
- How many doxologies are there?
- Who has no idea what I am talking about?

Vespers and Orthros: Resurrectional and Festal

- Sunday Liturgies and corresponding Vespers and Orthros are Resurrection services. Festal hymns may be added.
- Weekday and Festal Liturgies and corresponding Vespers and Orthros have their own sets of hymns and do not reference the Resurrectional hymns.