

What Could Icons of the Mother of God Really Have to Do with Interdenominational and Interreligious Wars?

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I was perplexed as a graduate of Harvard Divinity School when I first took in my hands the Old Printed Russian Orthodox Menologies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in the library of Pontifical Institute of Oriental Studies, which were bought and delivered to this Vatican library by Jesuits about 1917. Even though I was familiar as a laywoman with the Russian Orthodox liturgical services related to the Icon of the Mother of God, I found the red lines under the names of the services in Church Slavonic that are not read for Orthodox laics now, which dedicated these services to the victories over representatives of other denominations and faiths. “What could icons of the Mother of God really have to do with Interdenominational and Interreligious Wars?” – thought I.

The celebrations dedicated to the icons are definitely a treat for Orthodox crowds, who usually skip almost all the liturgical services, only arriving near their end, when the parts of the services dedicated to the icons take place, to pray for personal needs, desperately trying to get a piece of God’s grace. Essentially it is the very truth spiritually about the icon, but it is on the one hand. On the other hand, the Orthodox Church authorities used icons regarding war affairs, and the icons of the *Theotokos* became involved in such wars historically many times; why did the authorities do this over and over throughout the centuries?

The first idea, which comes to mind: are the authorities trying to put the responsibility and hope on God and His Mother for the decisions, especially for the decisions, which they have taken during military affairs, and therefore to protect themselves in this way? Such things can happen even in a monastery when monks of the monastery cannot come to a common solution and agreement. For example, according to the eyewitnesses’ account, such thing happened with the icon in one cenobite monastery of Athos, which started to have the role of the monastic superior.¹ To get to the common solution among cenobites in the time of unavoidable trouble and necessity is not easy at all, as each of them is accustomed to living quite independently by himself and have his own opinion how to deal with the things around him, and also the monks are not accustomed to speaking to each other. Does not something similar happen in a society where everyone is self-

¹ A.V. Роров (Попов А. В., «Введение», *Православные Русские Акафисты*, Moscow, Издательство Московской Патриархии Русской Православной церкви, 2013, 24 – 31.

sustaining with his household, where he or she is accustomed to being quite a demanding master with the dependent family and house staff and avoids speaking with anybody outside the family and household people? To resort to icons and prayers with them may mean reaching the inner reconciliation with other people by obtaining humility through prayer with the icon: to gain the sense that not everything depends on one's own will and actions in this world, and then be humbled to act emphatically and together. If the kingdom divides within itself, this kingdom will not withstand the alien enemy (Mark 3: 24 – 25, Matthew 12:22 – 28). The practice of praying and asking before the icons for help arises as a defense against inner war among people living together and sharing the same customs, which may expose these people to destruction by alien enemies, who have completely different customs and ways of behavior. This is the long-standing ecclesiastical practice with icons. A. V. Popov described at his book on *Akathistoi*² how the icon of *Theotokos* was carried around on the walls of Constantinople, while the town had to withstand three differently believing enemies at once. It was saved, and the first *Akathistos* was written and sung as a thanksgiving by people standing before the icon. The *Akathistos* hymn was dedicated to the *Theotokos* at that time, and not to her particular icon but notice please that the icon existed first, and not the service to the Mother of God, which was already depicted on the icon. The honor was given to the depiction-icon only because of its prototype – the Virgin Mary, the *Theotokos*. Rus' borrowed this custom of prayers before the icons of the *Theotokos* and used it also before battles, not only the battles with the people of other faiths but also between the princely states, who all were Orthodox Christians and who shared the same language. The icon *Theotokos of Signs* was especially glorified after one of such fratricidal battles. And it may be considered as another proof for the argument that the invocation before the icon is needed to overcome inner animosity within the society, but better to do it peacefully, without battles. Both *Theotokos of Vladimir*, and then *Theotokos of Kazan*' served exactly for the prayers in Rus' and Russia during the divisions of the society, when part of the society readily supported out-of-state enemies.

The image of the big Mother is an amazing depiction – everybody can recollect the time when he or she was very little, and his or her mother seemed to be very big and to associate this image of the big mother with familiar feelings from childhood. The image of the Big Mother was used during World War II by Soviet authorities in the famous propaganda placard «Родина-Мать

² See about this *Wikipedia in Russian*. Accessed February 1, 2016, https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Битва_новгородцев_с_суздальцами

зовёт!» (“Motherland-Mother Calls!” [to become a volunteer in the Soviet army and fight]).³ The woman depicted on the poster was not God’s Mother, even though the poster used the features of icons such as a straight gaze at the beholder and frontally depicted face, and the mother even wears red clothes which recall the garment of *Theotokos* in Orthodoxy. Still, it influenced people somehow, even without concomitant official prayers. Let’s return to the images and icons of the Mother of God.

First of all, one should be aware that in the Orthodox tradition, the icons displaying the new, unusual iconographies appear first. They are proved or disproved as wonder-working during the extensive period of many personal prayers. Only later, when the Church has evidence that the individual prayers before the particular icon have actually helped people numerous times, and the icon has become established as miracle-working, the ecclesiastical services, such as canons, liturgical services, and *akathistai* are written for the services before the already glorified icon.⁴

I would like to point out in this presentation two very famous iconographies, whose Feasts of “*Javlenija*” (*Apparitions*) and “*Sretenija*” (*Hyppapantai* or *Meetings*) are dedicated to the victories over other denominations in Russian Orthodox Christianity. Yes, Russian Orthodoxy improved the Feast related to wonder-working icons, and the Russian Orthodox feasts are dedicated not directly to the icons but the events of their apparitions and meetings with them.⁵ The first is the icon of “*Vladimirskaya* Mother of God” or using its Western name “Our Lady of Vladimir,” and the second is “*Kazanskaya* Mother of God” or in Western Catholicism: “Our Lady of Kazan’.” The Roman Catholic Church appropriated both of the Orthodox icons for its use,

³ This poster was designed by Iraklij Moiseevich Toidze; see Википедия: Свободная Энциклопедия (Wikipedia in Russian). Accessed February 1, 2016, https://Родина_мать_зовёт!

⁴ Чугреева, Н.Н., «Казанская икона Божией Матери», *Православная Энциклопедия*, Moscow, Научное издательство «Большая Российская Энциклопедия», 2012, v.29, 197-247. Electronic version. Accessed January 31, 2016, <http://www.pravenc.ru/text/1320206.html> Вахрина, В. И. and Щенникова, Л. А., «Владимирская икона Божией Матери». *Православная Энциклопедия*, Moscow, Научное издательство «Большая Российская Энциклопедия», 2005, v. 9, 8 – 38. Electronic version. Accessed January 31, 2016, <http://www.pravenc.ru/text/154962.html>

⁵ Russian State Library, fund 304.I, Church Slavonic Manuscript n. 680, *Minei-Chetii, August, XVI cent.*, f. 348r - 349, «*Мес. Тогоже, в 26, на память св. Мученик Андреяна и Наталии повесть полезна от древняго писания сложена, являющи преславнаго бывшего чудеси о иконе пресв. Владычица наша Богородица и Приснодевы Мария, еже нарицается Владимирьская, како прииде от Владимира в благолюбимый град Москву, и избави нас и град наш Москву и вся грады и страны христианьскыя от безбожнаго и зловернаго царя Темиръ-Аксака*». Accessed January 31, 2016, <http://old.stsl.ru/manuscripts/medium.php?col=1&manuscript=680> Russian State Library, fund IV, n. 148, *Service Menology, September-October*, year 1666, f. 146. Accessed January 31, 2016, <http://old.stsl.ru/manuscripts/oldprint?page=7>

retaining in the name of “Mother of God of Kazan’” the name of the town Kazan’, where the icon appeared originally,⁶ and changing the name of “Mother of God of Vladimir” into “Our Lady of *Tenderness*,” also repainting Mary’s darkened red garments to blue. I have seen printed books containing Catholic litanies in Italian dedicated to each of them in the Vatican bookshop, adjoining the Papal Basilica of Saint Peter. If the meaning of the Kazan’ icon is a pretty mono-semantic ‘abridged’ type of “*Hodegetria*” (which means ([She Who Is] Showing the Way), “Our Lady of Vladimir” became poly-semantic during the story of its so-called ‘conversions’ to different denominations.

The icon of Vladimir received three different names, because different Greek Orthodox, Russian Orthodox, and Catholic denominations approached its significance differently. While Greeks gave to the icon the name of *Ἐλεούσα*, which basically means “[*She Who Is*] *Showing Mercy*”, the Slavonic tradition gave it the name of neuter gender “*Oumilenie*”, which basically means *κατάνυξις* in Greek⁷ and very roughly “*Compunction*” in English.⁸ *Κατάνυξις* is feminine in Greek and appears to be a complicated term of Orthodox mysticism and asceticism, which each patristic author interprets differently because of a highly personal approach to God. The Greek *Κατάνυξις* and Old Church Slavonic “*Oumilenie*” are linked to each other as expressions of “*Pity*.” The Medieval Eastern Greek *κατάνυξις* has little apparent connection with the Western Catholic Italian name of the same icon as “*Tenerezza*” or “*Tenderness*” in English, and it is quite ironic because tenderness can be used for smoothing abuse, which is the opposite of pity or any compassion. “*Oumilenie*” under the Western Christian influence of Italian “*Tenerezza*” changed its meaning around the beginning of the 18th century into *tender emotion, deep feeling or affection*,⁹ so now few believers understand the original meaning of “*Oumilenie*,” which often occurs in everyday Orthodox prayers, preserved since medieval times.

⁶ Russian State Library, fund 304.I, Church Slavonic Manuscript n.659, *Collection of Ecclesiastic Services*, f.2, In the 8th of November, «Повесть о явлении чудотворной иконы пресвятыя Владычица наша Богородица и Приснодевы Мария в Казани. Списано смиренным Ермогеном митрополитом казанским и астраханским в лето 7102 (1594).» Accessed January 31, 2016,

<http://old.stsl.ru/manuscripts/book.php?manuscript=659&col=1&Submit=%CE%F2%EA%F0%FB%F2%FC>

⁷ See *Lexicon Linguae Palaeoslovenicae, Slovník Jazyka Staroslověnského, in four volumes*, Prague, Nakl. Československé akademie věd, 1966-1977, 338, 640; Срезневский, И. И., *Словарь Древнерусского языка*. Moscow, Книга, 1989. v.2, part 2, col 1205; v. 3, part 2, col.1205.

⁸ G.W.H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford, 2004), 713.

⁹ See for example: *Толковый словарь русского языка С. Ожегова*. Accessed January 31, 2016, http://slovoonline.ru/slovar_ojegov/b-20/id-55767/umilenie.html

On the one hand, if “*Tenderness*” connects at all with the original meaning of “*Oumilenie*,” it is probably only in the sense of “meekness,” which a monk might attain as a result of *κατάνυξις* after practicing the psychosomatic Jesus Prayer, and it is an outer expression of such contemplation. On the other hand, patristic writers such as Nicetas Stethatos consider *pity* as a pre-condition for *κατάνυξις*,¹⁰ and one of the secrets to the fruitfulness of asceticism and practice of the psychosomatic Jesus Prayer. On the one hand, a variant of the Jesus Prayer as a heartbeat- and breath-controlling contemplative prayer, which was translated into Church Slavonic and spread among early manuscripts of the Holy Trinity-Saint Sergius Lavra,¹¹ stands behind all three characteristic names of the *Bogoroditza*¹² *Vladimirskaya*. The monks, whose hand-painted or wrote the icons of *κατάνυξις*, seemingly practiced the psychosomatic Jesus Prayer according to Gregory of Sinai, for example, Mitropolit Piotr, to whose hand is traditionally ascribed the icon “*Piotrovskaya Mother of God*.”¹³ This could also be an explanation of the words in the normative Russian Orthodox document *Bolshakovsky Podilnik* of the 16th century, which defines miracle-working icons as the icons “for which miracles were recorded” or which “appeared as a result of a Vision.” The practicing of the psychosomatic Jesus Prayer can unexpectedly invoke such visions, which Greek priests advise us to ignore, but, seemingly, Russian Orthodoxy was inclined to make use of these effects. The medieval Russian tradition of omitting the names of iconographers on the

¹⁰ Dayton, H. *Katanuxis as a Way of Healing in Symeon the New Theologian and Nicetas Stethatos and in their Medieval Church Slavonic Translations (in STSL). Excerpta ex Dissertatione ad Doctoratum*. Rome, Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 2014, 34-5.

¹¹ Russian State Library, fund 304.I, Manuscript in Church Slavonic n.13, *Lapsaik*, the end of the 14th century (according to the font), f. 158-160. «О томъ, како подобаеть седети в безмолвии. Две главы (1-я и 3-я) Григория Синаита, скончавшагося в 1342 году.» Accessed January 31, 2016,

<http://old.stsl.ru/manuscripts/book.php?manuscript=13&col=1&Submit=%CE%F2%EA%F0%FB%F2%FC>

One can take a guess even from this reference that actually the practicing of the psychosomatic Jesus Prayer was related with indwelling of God into a human being in the conscious of Rus’ Orthodox monks. It can be not a pure coincedense that these two things are here together. Ibid., Manuscript in Church Slavonic n. 186, the 16th cent., *Григория Синаита Сочинения*. f. 119r – 126, «О безмлъвии главизны, глава 1. О еже како подобает седети в безмлъвии.» Accessed January 31, 2016,

<http://old.stsl.ru/manuscripts/book.php?manuscript=186&col=1&Submit=%CE%F2%EA%F0%FB%F2%FC>

Please notice that Russian Orthodoxy practiced not the version of the Jesus Prayer by Gregory Palamas but the variant by Gregory of Sinai. The version by Gregory Sinaite is so far the only version of the Jesus prayer in the archive of Holy Trinity – St. Sergius Lavra, according to its archive of Church Slavonic manuscripts online.

Most probably, prof. N. K. Holleyzovsky is right. Gregory Palamas became highly unpopular in Rus’ because the head of this Church was the friend of the opponent of Gregory Palamas. See: Голейзовский Н.К., «Послание о Рае» и Русско-Византийские отношения в середине XIV века». Accessed February 1, 2016, http://www.ais-aica.ru/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3567:poslanie-o-rae-i-russko-vizantijskie-otnosheniya-v-seredine-xiv-veka&catid=342&Itemid=191

¹² One, Who gives the birth to God – the Church Slavonic text (my translation).

¹³ Вахрина В. И. and Щенникова, Л. А., «Владимирская икона Божией Матери». Ibid.

reverse of the icons also has to do with the contemplative practice, the inspiration by the Holy Spirit, to Whose works the icons are ascribed. An iconographer plays here the role of midwife or obstetrician, who only helps to deliver the icon as a baby. About this tradition, the inscriptions on the reverse of icons record phrases like “This icon painted itself...”¹⁴ or legendary stories, of how miraculous icons painted themselves.¹⁵ After practicing the Jesus Prayer, the iconographer can reach a stuporous or exalted state while painting his icons. That is exactly what is needed to bring other people to the state of religious ecstasy through visions during or after tearful prayers with the icons, after which miracles can take place, according to *Bolshakovsky Podlinik*. Thus the wonder-working icons themselves already may have the possibility to engender happenings of unexpected things without any ecclesiastical services. Still, the services aim only to reinforce the effects already produced by the icons. The practice of the psychosomatic Jesus Prayer also stands behind the textual and musical arrangements of the services dedicated to the appearances and meetings of the icons.

While speaking about the services to the icons, the important thing to say is that the musical arrangement of the services to the icons is not only older than the texts of the services, dedicated to apparitions and meetings of the icons, but even older than the idea of writing such services. The new services already use a prepared palette of Slavic ecclesiastical tunes, the so-called “*popevki*.” *Popevki* is the original Slavic tunes, which correspond to the eight tones of psalms in Western Christian Gregorian chanting. They are “younger” than the icon “*Vladimirskaya Mother of God*” and “older” than services dedicated to the meetings of this icon and then the icon “*Kazanskaya Mother of God*” – one can see the manuscripts containing them, even on-line, on the old site of

¹⁴ *Русская икона XV-XX веков: Russian icons of the 15th-20th centuries: из коллекции Игоря Возякова*. М.; СПб., Музей «Дом иконы», 2009, 330, n.184: Icon with Selected Saints before the Icon of Resurrection, inscription on reverse “It painted itself in 1831”; 331, n.189, Icon with Dormition of Theotokos (of Kievo-Pecherskaya Lavra) 1846, inscription on reverse: “This holy icon is painted (by itself) by iconographer Sava Semenov Stepanov from Posad Mitkovka: year 1846).” I have spoken about this phenomenon with professor Jon Levenson during his office hours in 2007. He was fascinated by the information, and quoted our conversation during his guest lecture at Chicago Divinity School, referring to an anonymous iconographer. and told that is what the Jews missed speaking about the prohibition of making sacred images. See: Abraham and Absoluteness of God. Lecture by Jon D. Levinson. Accessed December 20, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JVw-Sv6rpkw>

¹⁵ А.Н. Муравьев, *Письма с Востока в 1849-1850, part 1* (Moscow – St. Petersburg, 1851), 260. Миссия Афона остается прежней. Русская Православная церковь. Официальный сайт Московского Патриархата (official site of the Moscow Patriarchate). Accessed December 10, 2015 <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/1213222.html> Серафим Святогорец. *Письма святогорца к друзьям своим о Святой горе Афонской* (Moscow – St. Petersburg, 1850), p.148.

Holy-Trinity-Saint Serge Lavra, the main collection of the Lavra (fund 304.I).¹⁶ The services dedicated to the icons used the *pop-evki* as almost non-stop psalm-like chanting (or *psalmodika*) during the services. The sound combinations, also based on the contemplative prayer experiences, may invoke binaural frequencies in the hemispheres of the human brain, which have become possible to record using electroencephalograms since around the middle of the 20th century. Meditations or contemplative prayers always are connected with such striking neuro-acoustic effects: even the Dalai Lama himself participates in neuro-acoustic meditation-related diagnostics and experimental music by Dr. Jeffrey Thompson. His CD one can obtain in “Borders” bookshops. The connection between contemplation and brain-entrainment sound compositions cannot be a pure accident. The psychosomatic Jesus Prayer according to Gregory of Sinai is the Contemplative prayer too and may produce similar effects, especially when the monks, practicing the Jesus Prayer, are located in two different stalls to the left and the right of the Russian Orthodox altar and are chanting at the same time. This is exactly the arrangement needed for the appearance of binaural frequencies in the brains of lay people, with strikingly unpredictable effects, especially after taking the Orthodox Christian Eucharist, containing wine. It is advised now that the binaural music should not be listened to either under the influence of wine or drugs because the effects can be so unpredictable, but... that is what the Rus’ Orthodox Church most probably used silently over the centuries, before scholarly research, to influence its flock. Please listen at least to the chants by the Valaam monastery in order to get a sense of what their influence could be. I hope that somebody will research the effect of this music upon the brains of different people with encephalography, but I guess that this research might already have a place secretly in the Russian Federation, with the purpose of attracting many people to the Russian Orthodox Church and to control them. What suggests this idea is that Russian clinics and hospitals already widely use CDs with the musical compositions of Monroe Institute (Virginia, USA), which can invoke binaural frequencies. So perhaps this phenomenon is already influencing the population of the RF.

¹⁶Russian State Library, fund 304.I, Church Slavonic Manuscript n. 20, *Okmoux (Óktōichos)*, the end of the 14th cent. or beginning of the 15th cent. Accessed January 31, 2016, [http://old.stsl.ru/manuscripts/book.php?manuscript=20&col=1&Submit=%CE%F2%EA%F0%FB%F2%FC](http://old.stsl.ru/manuscripts/book.php?manuscript=20&col=1&Submit=%CE%F2%EA%F0%FB%F2%FC;); Russian State Library, fund 304.I, Church Slavonic Manuscript n. 21, *Okmoux (Óktōichos)*, the end of the 14th cent. or beginning of the 15th cent.; Church Slavonic Manuscript n. 368, *Okmoux (Óktōichos)*, 1497. Accessed January 31, 2016, <http://old.stsl.ru/manuscripts/book.php?col=1&manuscript=021>

Rus' became the territory where the religious ecstatic was used by Eastern and Western mystics: Sufi and Jesuits, who worked with the military forces which attempted to conquer the territories united under Rus'. The Middle East has its own traditional meditative music of Sufi but... such music is the heritage of a specialized religious sphere, which is not ordinarily known for mundane use there; moreover, the Sufi are often treated with suspicion by Sunni Islam for their ecstatic practices. Exactly these half-proscribed wandering Sufi unsystematically converted the Turkic nomads, who attacked Rus'. Catholics know such religious ecstatic too, which takes the form of female ecstasy with visions. For example, the extreme ecstasy, which entailed rolling on the floor, of quite hysterical so-called women-witnesses, who followed the founder of the Jesuit order, Ignatius Loyola, definitely invoked suspicion among certain offices of the Holy See. The organ music of the central Jesuit Chiesa di Gesu in Rome is quite impressive, but the problem is: how does it apply to the spiritual character of the Rus' population? The patriarch and martyr Hermogen (supposedly the author of the service related to "Kazanskaya Mother of God")¹⁷ complained that he could not stand Latin chanting,¹⁸ and succeeded after all in gathering Rus' home guards of the middle-class Orthodox people. To win the crowds over to its side, the Rus' government, by necessity, officially had to permit ecstatic services centered around the icons of the Mary precisely (not around the Virgin Mary). At the same time, Catholics and Muslims always treated such ecstatic religious services with suspicion and never gave legal permission for them. The Tsar of all Rus' Ivan the Terrible did so, and dedicated the services related to Orthodox icons to the victories over "infidels."

The services are ecstatic, also according to their texts. The centerpieces of such liturgical works are canons especially written for particular icons; the first of them is written by an unknown monk Ignatius, as the inscriptions in Church Slavonic manuscripts witness. So far, I have not found any Greek source from which this canon could be translated, despite my efforts to discover one using Vatican resources while I was a student of *Pontificio Istituto Orientale*. So I am inclined to think now that this "joyful canon to *Hodegetria*, creation of the hieromonk Ignatius" is quite possibly an early original Church Slavonic text. The texts of the canons for a celebration of events

¹⁷ Поздеева, И.В. and Турилов, А.А., « 'Тетрати..., напечатаны в Казани' (к истории и предистории казанской типографии XVI в.)» *Древняя Русь. Вопросы Мединистики*. 2001. 2(4), 37-49; 4(6), 13-28.

¹⁸ Russian State Library, fund 304.II, Church Slavonic manuscript n.10, *Новый Летописец (New Chronograph)*, the 17th cent. (not earlier than 1630). Accessed January 31, 2016, <http://old.stsl.ru/manuscripts/dopolnitelnoe-sobranie-biblioteki-troitse-sergievoi-lavry/010>

related to *Vladimirskaya* and *Kazanskaya* icons are different. Still, they have almost identical *heirmoi*, the beginning lines of each of nine songs of the canons, and melodico-rhythmic models of the *troparions*, related to a particular spiritual song of the Old Testament.¹⁹ The canons to the icons follow the verbal structure of the spiritual songs of the Old Testament, which crashes all the mundane logical connections between *idosoi* (images) of the canon and follows the “logic of senses,” quickly changing the imagery and epithets. The authors of canons change the images so quickly in the chain of images to express between the lines the subtle spiritual essence, which is impossible to express by words, as Popov said.²⁰ One can see that the structure the texts of canons

¹⁹ According to A.V. Popov (А.В. Попов, «Введение», *Православные Русские Акафисты*, Moscow, Издательство Московской Патриархии Русской Православной церкви, 2013, 7, 12. –, they are the following:

The First *Heirmos* – ‘Thanksgiving song of Moses, which was sung by Jews after the miraculous crossing of the Red Sea’ (Ex. 15; 1 – 19);

The Second *Heirmos* – ‘Accusatory song of Moses’ (Deut. 32: 1 – 44);

The Third *Heirmos* – ‘Thanksgiving song of Anna, the mother of the prophet Samuel’ (1Kings 2: 1-10);

The Fourth *Heirmos* – ‘Inspired song of the prophet Habakkuk’ (Hab. 3: 1-20):

The Fifth *Heirmos* – ‘Prophetic song on the fruits of salvation at the coming of Christ by the prophet Isaiah’ (Is. 26: 9 – 21);

The Sixth *Heirmos* – ‘Thanksgiving song of Jonah, who remained three days in the belly of a whale, and sang after his miraculous rescue’ (Jonah 2: 3 – 10);

The Seventh *Heirmos* – ‘Song of the Three Pious Youths sung in the fiery furnace’ (Dan. 26 – 45).

The Eighth *Heirmos* – ‘Song of the Three Pious Youths sung in the fiery furnace’ (Dan. 52 – 90).

The Ninth *Heirmos* – ‘Song of the All-Holly Virgin Mary’ (Lk. 1: 46 – 55).

A. V. Popov did not actually go too far into the research of the meaning of this sequence of Biblical spirit-inspired songs, and of the question: why the Songs of Zacharias (Lk. 1: 68 – 79) and Symeon (Lk. 2: 29 – 32).? He says only that the songs included into the canon reflect ‘the moods and hopes’ of God’s chosen people during a very long period of time (Ibid., p. 11), which sounds to me as “some general words”, while this topic could be actually a matter of much more lengthy separate research. Nevertheless the book of Popov was on *Akathistai* and not on Canons.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 21 – 22: «Всякий образ неизбежно ограничен и не может стать формой для безграничного. Следовательно, духовные предметы, явления и лица, входящие в сферу безграничного, не могут быть охвачены тем или другим образом внешнего мира в его обособленности. Необъятный духовный образ может быть воссоздан, прояснен и осмыслен лишь комплексом многих земных образов. Только в своей совокупности при правильном, основанном на единстве внутреннего чувства взаимодействии и отношении земных образов может быть воссоздан образ из духовной выси, из надземного мира.» (“Every image is inevitably limited and cannot become the form for the unlimited. Therefore, spiritual objects, appearances and personalities, which are the elements of the sphere of the unlimited, cannot be covered by one or another image of the outer world in its isolation. The unbounded spiritual image can be re-constructed, clarified and comprehended only by the complex of many earthly images. The image of the spiritual height, from the over-earthly world can be reconstructed by these means only in its totality and during the right interaction and relation of the earthly images, based on the unity of the inner sense.” – My translation).

Ibid., 22: «В псалмодике, вследствие невозможности полного воплощения предметов и явлений духовно безграничного в образе, образы внешне отрешены от внутреннего содержания и имеют лишь служебное значение символов, намеков и указаний на воспеваемые предметы.» (“In *psalmodika*, because it is impossible to incarnate the objects and events of the spiritually-unlimited in an image, the outer images are

and *akathistoi* to the icons promotes the appearance of an ecstatic condition among laypeople and women, in particular, demolishing their sense of reality.²¹ Let's say more about the specific of such liturgical texts related to the icons.

aloof from the inner meaning and have only the auxiliary significance of symbols, allusions, indications to the glorified objects".)

Ibid., 22: «В псалмодике для вереницы образов как цепи символов и намеков не может быть поставлено как необходимое требование внешнее единство их между собой; здесь нужно только, чтобы была соблюдена согласованность их на основе изображаемого душевного состояния, нужно, чтобы вереница образов, потрясая душу, производила начаток того душевного строя, который поднимает и уносит мысль и чувство человека в сферу бесконечно высокого.» (“In *psalmodika* there cannot be imposed, as an unavoidable requirement, on the row of images and the chain of symbols any outer unity between them. Only one thing is needed: to maintain their [of images] coordination on the grounds of the depicted state of the soul. It is necessary that the row of images, while shaking the soul, produced the beginning of that order of the soul, which elevates and carries away the mind and the feelings of a human to the infinitely high.” – My translation.)

²¹ It is definitely the ecstatic of the Old Testament times origin, according to Ibid., 14 – 15, where A.V. Popov quotes the book of A. Olesnitsky (А. Олесницкий. *Рифм и метр ветхозаветной поэзии*, 406): «Для древнееврейских поэтов, - говорит профессор А.Олесницкий, - мир ценен только по тем внутренним чувствам, какие он будит в душе, возносящейся над ним к Вечному, и потому поэзия начинает здесь всегда с сердечных движений и следит их ход до конца; над всем царит здесь свобода духовного и внутреннего над плотским и наружным, и, по мере того как представления вызывают друг друга, изображение спешит за ними вслед и быстро перосится от одного к другому; вещи здесь озаряются мгновенным светом, предстают воображению на один миг и тотчас же уступают место другим. Это возбужденное внутреннее чувство приобретает здесь потрясающую выразительность, и песнь превращается в грозную бурю, внезапно раздражающуюся блеском молнии и ливнем. Но при этом ни ни один образ не вырабатывается сам для себя; напротив, внутреннее чувство толко для выражения самого себя переходит от предмета к предмету, как бы постоянно опасаясь оставить без выражения какой-либо свой оттенок, и часто содержащаяся в глаголе метафора совсем уже не та, какой следовало бы ожидать по связи её с существительным. Так, воды Ефрата здесь могут обратиться вдруг в ассирийского царя, заливающего по горло Иудею; сам царь уже не царь – его человеческий образ уже исчез и сократился в один атрибут жестокости и терзает добычу, как хищный зверь, или атрибут дикой лёгкости и быстроты – и несётся орлом из-за Иордана.» (“Prof. A. Olesnitsky says, ‘For ancient Jewish poets, the world is valuable only because of those inner feelings, which it wakes up in the soul, which raptures over it to the Eternal, and because of this the poetry begins here always from the movements of the heart and watches the way of these movements until the end. The freedom of the inner and spiritual rules over the fleshly and outer. And in the course of the process, during which the conceptions invoke each other, the depiction hurries after them and quickly is carried from one conception to another conception, and here the things are suddenly lightened up by instantaneous/momentary light, present [themselves] to the imagination for a very short time, and at once yield [their] place to other things. This excited inner feeling assumes tremendous expressiveness, and the song turns into a terrible tempest, which is suddenly exasperating with the brightness of lightning and rainstorm. But during this [process] no image is elaborated for the image itself; on the contrary, the inner feeling switches from one object to another only for the expression of itself [of the inner feeling], as though it fears to leave unexpressed any of its nuances, and often the metaphor which the verb contains is not that which one might expect according to its connection to the subject-noun. Thus, here the waters of Euphrates can turn into an Assyrian king, pounding Judaea up to the neck; the king himself is already not a king – his human image has disappeared already and shrunk into one attribute of brutality and tortures its prey, as a beast of prey, or into the attribute of wild ease and swiftness – and flies as an eagle from beyond Jordan.’”- My translation).

The most valuable research in this subject appeared not long before the Bolshevik revolution in Russia in 1903, remarkably in Kazan', and belongs to the professor of Kazan' Spiritual Academy A. V. Popov, whom I have already quoted in the footnotes. The Moscow Patriarchate re-published the book «Православные Русские Акафисты» (“Russian Orthodox *Akathistai*”) by A. V. Popov in 2013.²² The book contains an introduction which speaks about the peculiarities of the structure, genre, language, syntax, etc. of such psalm-like liturgical texts related to the icons: *troparia*, *sticheroi* canons and *akathistai*, and calls them *psalmodica*, deriving their origin from Old Testament poetry. Apart from several quotations from the works of Russian researchers in Old Testament literature, A.V. Popov gives the following list of characteristic particularities to this kind of literature, which looks like a compilation of his extracts from the works of Olesnitsky²³:

а) употребление *аллитерации*, то есть подбора одинаковых звуков в стихе;

б) употребление созвучных слов: соединение, например, глагола с существительным того же корня, чем усиливается смысл известных слов и выражений, отмечается важное и существенное в предложении;

в) употребление рифмованной речи, преимущественно в суффиксах;

г) *парономазия*, то есть поэтическая фигура, где сходство или различие мысли выражается в сходных звуках;

д) игра слов, или поэтическая фигура, где соединяются между собой слова, сходные по звуку, но различные по значению, чем оттеняется противоречие между звуком и значением слова;

е) употребление акростихов, или алфавитное расположение песни, когда в каждой букве еврейского алфавита соответствует стих, или два, или группа стихов, например

²² Попов, А.В., *Православные Русские Акафисты*, Moscow, Издательство Московской Патриархии Русской Православной церкви, 2013. Accessed January 31, 2016, https://vk.com/doc94834997_260759123?hash=598151587208d2d305&dl=828f0793bbc95a29f6
The first edition – Попов, А.В., *Православные Русские Акафисты*, Kazan', Издательство Казанской Духовной Академии, 1903 – is also available on line. Accessed January 31, 2016, <http://books.e-heritage.ru/book/10074158>

²³ Олесницкий, А. А., *Рифм и метр ветхозаветной поэзии*. Киев, Издательство Киевской Духовной Академии, 1872, Accessed January 31, 2016, http://bible-spbda.info/e-books/ee-books/olesnickiy_a.a.-rifm_i_metr_vethozavetnoy_poezii.pdf

восемь стихов (см. Пс. 118), то есть строфа, причём, (с.17) с этим внешним разделением гармонирует и внутреннее расположение содержания;

ж) повторение некоторых основных стихов в продолжении песни, причем, строфы имеют или одинаковое начало (см. Пс. 61), или одинаковое содержание (см. Пс.106);

з) так называемый *parallelismus membrorum* – параллелизм членов, нечто вроде ритма мыслей, симметричное построение предложений, симметричное построение предложений, когда поэтическая мысль достигает своего выражения не в одном предложении, а распадается на две или более одна другой соответствующие равномерные части, причем вторая половина: 1) выражает ту же мысль, что и первая, но с другой стороны, например, с отрицательной, отмечая другие свойства и действия предмета (параллелизм синонимический), или содержит мысль, противоположную мысли первой половины (параллелизм антитетический), 3) или продолжает, пополняет мысль первой половины, обосновывает её выяснением причин и следствий, уясняет посредством сравнения (параллелизм синтетический). (См. Олесницкий Рифм и метр ветхозаветной поэзии. С.559-560, 581).²⁴

²⁴ a) the usage of *alliteration*, c.e. of selection of the similar sounds in a poem;

b) the usage of words consonant to each other: for example, the joining of the noun with the verb of the same root; by which the meaning of known words and expressions is reinforced, and the most important and substantial are marked in the sentence;

c) the usage of rhymed speech, in suffixes predominantly;

d) *paronomasia*, c. e. a poetical figure, where the similarity or difference of concepts is expressed in similar sounds;

e) the play of words, or a poetical figure, where the words, which are similar in sound but different in meaning, are connected to each other, and by this the contradiction between the sound and the meaning of the word becomes more apparent;

f) the usage of acrostics, or alphabetic arrangement of the song, when, for example, the eight poems (see Ps. 118), c. e. strophe, correspond to every letter of Jewish alphabet, and with this formal separation the inner arrangement of the content is in harmony;

g) the repetition of some basic/principal poems throughout the song, while the strophes have identical beginning (see Ps. 61) or identical content (see Ps. 106);

h) the so-called *parallelismus membrorum* – the parallelism of members, something like rhythm of concepts, a symmetrical construction of sentences, when the poetic mind reaches its expression not in one sentence but falls into two or more uniform parts, wherein the second part: 1) expresses the same idea, like the first part but from another aspect, for example from a negative standpoint, noticing other properties and activities of the subject (synonymic parallelism), 2) or contains a concept, which is opposite that of the first half (antithetic parallelism), 3) or continues, supplements the mind of the first half, substantiates it by clarifying the reasons and consequences, makes it clear by means of a comparison (synthetic parallelism), (see Olesnitsky. *Rhyme and Meter of Old Testament Poetry*, p.559-560).” (My translation).

What strikes in this description of the language: it reminds one too strongly another description of the same time made by the Russian military physician K. Kazansky in his book on Sufism, which was published only two years later – the description of the peculiarity of language by Sufi mystics.²⁵ Another similarity strikes one in this book: the description of the relations between a Sufi murid and his Sufi preceptor²⁶ recalls the description of the relations between Symeon the *Eulabes* and Symeon the New Theologian,²⁷ one of the authors, whose works are most common in at the archive of Church Slavonic Medieval manuscripts in the Holy Trinity-St. Sergius Lavra.²⁸ While reading and comparing these texts, one may suspect that during the Mongolian Yoke and afterward Russian Orthodoxy at least partly consciously intended to replace one ascetic and mystic practice by another: Sufi by Christian Orthodox.

The text of the services, as well as the music and icons, were written by Orthodox monks, who practiced the psychosomatic Jesus Prayer. The numerous Church Slavonic manuscripts from the Holy Trinity Lavra attest that the monks of this Lavra practiced a version of the Jesus Prayer and that the Lavra became the great monastic workshop for writing the texts of musical tunes of *psalmodica* and the original texts of Church Slavonic canons dedicated to icons as well. The Jesus Prayer served as the core for the creation of the icons, and of the music and liturgical texts used for the services with icons which reinforced their ecstatic effects upon people.²⁹ Russian Orthodoxy created and legalized these great attractions for crowds, including converted Turkic populations, who thirsted for ecstatic services because they already were subjected to the influence of Sufi; thus, the population of so-called Turkic Kryashens appeared in Rus'. Kryashens remained Christian Orthodox despite Catholic Polish-Lithuanian occupation, supported by a certain kind of Slavic people, who received their education in European Catholic and Jesuit schools, where they learned how to argue while preaching in order to attract believers. However, the Western Catholic

²⁵ Казанскій, К., «Гл. 1. Понятіе о мистикѣ, ея происхождение изъ разсѣяннаго возбужденія. Опредѣленіе мистики М. Нордау. Искусственная мистика.» Суфизмъ с точки зренія современной психопатологии. Самаркандъ, Типографія «Трудъ», 1905, 12.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 71-100.

²⁷ Nicéas Stéthatos. Vie de Syméon le Nouveau Théologien (949-1022). Roma, Pont. Institutum Orientium Studiorum, 1928, 6-33.

²⁸ See the Church Slavonic translations in the archive of the Holy Trinity – St. Sergius Lavra on-line. For example: accessed February 1, 2016, <http://old.stsl.ru/manuscripts/index.php?col=1&gotomanuscript=176>

²⁹ Although it seems to be a very truthful guess to me, it still needs laboratory proofs, involving the use of expensive medical apparatus, strictly speaking. I would like to conduct this research but it is a question of who will pay for it. Nevertheless, it would be very beneficial research.

way of presentation of religious services and Aristotelian logic were not always congenial to Eastern populations, accustomed to the mystical theology and Eastern ecstatic services, which promised them healing of addictions resulting from wars. These ecstatic services, in the background of which stood the Eastern contemplative practice, proved more effective in practice for the needs of Eastern people, rather than sophisticated Western services. The brain-entrainment compositions, with which nowadays Russian clinics reasonably effectively help rid people of substance abuse, existed long before the twentieth-century researches by Nazi and Monroe, having been created intuitively. However, the Orthodox services are only later tools for reinforcing the influence of icons upon people, and the images of the Virgin Mary do not contain any particular signs of Orthodoxy; therefore they can be used by many Christian denominations in new services written for these icons. This is especially true about icons, made under the influence of the Jesus Prayer if we consider the fact that not only Orthodox believers but the people of many Christian denominations now practice the psychosomatic Jesus Prayer around the world, including Catholics and Anglicans.³⁰

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³⁰ The Jesus prayer is in particular practiced by Jesuits, such as, for example, by those, who are gathered around Pontifical Institute of Oriental Studies, Centro Aletti. Late Cardinal Thomas Spidlik, who made spiritual exercises for Pope John Paul the Second and his Curia, definitely practiced the Jesus Prayer and his former student Fr. Richard Cemus – too, and moreover, they wrote their publications about the Jesus Prayer. (*Modlitba Ježíšova — modlitba srdce*, Velehrad 1996. T. Špidlík e M. Tenace, R.Cemus : *La preghiera nel cristianesimo orientale*: in M. Piantelli, a cura di, *Le preghiere del mondo. Un'antologia delle più belle invocazioni a Dio, dai popoli privi di scrittura fino ai nostri giorni*, Cinisello Balsamo 1998, s. 383–420.). So-called “Jesuits of Anglicans”, the members of the Society of Saint John the Evangelist, or Cowley Monastic order, practices the Jesus Prayer too, as I witnessed in Cambridge (MA , USA). The superior of this monastery Br. Jeffrey Tristram definitely practices the Jesus Prayer.

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