

GRAMMENOS KARANOS

POETIC AND MUSICAL IMAGERY IN KALOPHONIC HEIRMOI TO THE THEOTOKOS

The liturgical books of the Orthodox Church are replete with hymns to the Mother of God called *theotokia* (s. *theotokion*)¹. These hymns often contain vivid poetic images, many of which are direct quotes or paraphrases from psalmic verses or the prophetic literature of the Old Testament and are used to propound Christian dogma on the Theotokos. Such images are particularly profuse in theotokia that come from the hymnographic genre of *kanon*, which borrows extensively in thematology and language from the Old Testament and especially the biblical canticles². In the post-Byzantine period several Greek composers set a great number of theotokia in the musical genre of *kalophonic heirmos* (pl. *kalophonic heirmoi*)³, which also has a close connection to the *kanon*. The genre's para-liturgical nature allows great room for expressiveness through expansion and embellishment of the melodic formulae, frequent interruptions of the stepwise melodic motion, and an extensive use of text-painting. This paper discusses the poetic imagery and points out the techniques used to achieve the musical text-painting in kalophonic heirmoi to the Theotokos by composers of the 17th and 18th centuries with examples drawn primarily from Petros the Peloponnesian's *Every nature of heavenly beings*.

Within the corpus of kalophonic heirmoi, hymns that praise and magnify the Theotokos or plead for her intercessions hold a prominent place. The reverence of Orthodox Christians and especially clergy and monks, whose ranks include many hymnographers and composers, for the person of the Mother of God is well-known. This has had a direct impact on virtually all ecclesiastical services, in which, not only are theotokia very common, but also entire series of hymns, such as the stichera of Vespers, odes of *kanons*, the set of dismissal hymns in Vespers and Orthros, etc., are usually concluded with theotokia following the verse "Both now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen"⁴. Moreover, a special type of book was created in the 17th century that contains

1 See Ψαριανού, Διονυσίου, *Ἡ Θεοτόκος ἐν τῇ ὀρθοδόξῳ ὑμνωδίᾳ*, Ἀθῆναι 1968, p. 6.

2 For an extensive discussion of the *kanon*, see Wellesz, Egon, *A History of Byzantine Music and Hymnography*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1961, pp. 198-228.

3 For a detailed study of the genre, see Καρανός, Γραμμένου, *Τὸ Καλοφωνικὸν Εἰρμολόγιον*, Διδακτορική Διατριβή, Ἑθνικὸ καὶ Καποδιστριακὸ Πανεπιστήμιο Ἀθηνῶν, Ἀθῆναι 2011 (forthcoming).

4 See, for instance, *Παρακλητική, ἥτοι Ὀκτώηχος ἡ Μεγάλη*, Ἔκδοσις Ἀποστολικῆς Διακονίας τῆς Ἐκκλησίας τῆς Ἑλλάδος, Ἀθῆναι 1994 (henceforth *Παρακλητική*). There is one or more theotokia in almost every page of the book.

exclusively theotokia and has appropriately been called *Theotokarion*. The first Theotokarion, compiled by the Athonite monk Agapios Landos the Cretan, was published in Venice in 1643⁵ and contains kanons by one or more anonymous hymnographers in all eight modes. In 1796 another Theotokarion, compiled by St Nicodemos the Hagiorite and titled *Crown of the Ever-Virgin*⁶, was published also in Venice. This book contains sixty-two kanons by various hymnographers, which are, for the most part, arranged in the order of the eight modes and the seven days of the week. This Theotokarion has been incorporated into the rotating weekly liturgical cycle, so that the daily kanon to the Theotokos for the mode of the week can be chanted or read during the Compline Service. In current Greek practice, this is true especially of the Great Compline served during Great Lent⁷, but also in the private devotions of the faithful⁸. In the 20th century two new Theotokaria were composed. One of them was published in 1905 in Athens⁹ and contains new hymns of various types, such as kanons, idiomela, poems consisting of fifteen-syllable iambic verses, etc., all of them written by Saint Nectarios of Aegina¹⁰ who later set several of them to music¹¹.

5 *Θεοτοκάριον, ωραιότατον και χαρμόσυνον, Συγγραφὲν παρὰ Ἀγαπίου Μοναχοῦ μετὰ πλείστης ἐπιμελείας ἐκ τῶν τοῦ ἁγίου ὄρους βιβλίων, Καὶ τανῶν νεωστὶ τυπωθέν τε καὶ διορθωθέν ὑπ' αὐτοῦ εἰς δόξαν τῆς ἀειπαρθένου κόρης καὶ θεομήτορος, Παρὰ Ἰωάννη Βίκτωρι τῷ Σαβίῳνι, Ἐνετίσιν 1643.* This Theotokarion was published another nine times, most recently in 2002. See *Θεοτοκάριον καλόν, ωραιότατον και χαρμόσυνον, Τὸ πρὶν ἐπιμελλῶς (sic) συγγραφὲν ἐκ τῶν τοῦ ἁγίου Ὁρους βιβλίων παρ' Ἀγαπίου Μοναχοῦ τοῦ Κρητός, καὶ τανῶν μετατυπωθέν τε καὶ διορθωθέν εἰς δόξαν αὐτῆς τῆς Αἰειπαρθένου Κόρης καὶ Θεομήτορος, παρὰ τοῦ Ἀρχιμανδρίτου Δοσιθέου τοῦ καὶ Ἠγουμένου τῆς κατ' Εὐρυτανίαν Ἱερᾶς καὶ Σεβασμίας Σταυροπηγιακῆς Μονῆς Παναγίας Τατάρνης, Ἐκδόσις τῆς αὐτῆς Ἱερᾶς Μονῆς, Τατάρνα 2002, p. 11.*

6 *Στέφανος τῆς Αἰειπαρθένου, ἦτοι Θεοτοκάριον, [...] παρὰ Νικοδήμου Μοναχοῦ τοῦ Ναξίου [...], Ἐνετίσιν 1796.*

7 See *Τυπικὸν τῆς τοῦ Χριστοῦ Μεγάλης Ἐκκλησίας, Ὅμοιον καθ' ὅλα πρὸς τὴν ἐν Κωνσταντινουπόλει ἐγκεκριμένην ἔκδοσιν ἣτις δις ἐξεδόθη ὑπὸ Κωνσταντίνου πρωτοψάλτου μὲ πολλὰς προσθήκας καὶ ἐπιδιορθώσεις ὑπὸ τοῦ πρωτοψάλτου Γεωργίου Βιολάκη, ἐργασθέντος μετὰ δύο ἀλλεπαλλήλων ἐπιτροπῶν, ἐπὶ τούτῳ Πατριαρχικῇ διαταγῇ ὀρισθεισῶν, Ἐκδόσεις Βασίλειος Δ. Σαλίβερος, Ἀθῆναι χ.χ., p. 333, footnote 17.*

8 See *Θεοτοκάριον [...] παρ' Ἀγαπίου Μοναχοῦ τοῦ Κρητός, Τατάρνα 2002, p. 15.*

9 *Θεοτοκάριον, ἦτοι προσευχητάριον μικρόν, περιέχον ᾠδὰς καὶ ὕμνους πρὸς τὴν ὑπεραγίαν Δέσποιναν ἡμῶν Θεοτόκον καὶ Αἰειάρθενον Μαρίαν, ὑπὸ τοῦ μητροπολίτου Πενταπόλεως Νεκταρίου, Διευθυντοῦ τῆς ἐκκλησιαστικῆς Ῥιζαρείου Σχολῆς, Ἀθῆναι 1905.*

10 For detailed accounts of St Nectarios's life and works, see Chondropoulos, Sotos, *Saint Nektarios, The Saint of Our Century*, Kainourgia Ge Publications, Athens 1997, and Cavarinos, Constantine, *St Nektarios of Aegina*, Modern Orthodox Saints 7, Institute for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, Belmont 1981. See also Strongylis, P.M.K. (AKA Cleopas), *Saint Nektarios of Pentapolis' Life and Works: A Historical-Critical Study*, Master's Thesis, Durham University, Durham 1994 (available online at <http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/5140>).

11 For an examination of the compositional activity of St Nectarios, see Χαλδαϊάκη, Ἀχλλέως, *Ὁ ἅγιος Νεκτάριος καὶ ἡ ἀγάπη του γιὰ τὴν ποίηση καὶ τὴν μουσική. Εἰσαγωγικὸ σχεδιάσμα στὴν ποιητικὴ-μουσικὴ διάσταση τοῦ ἔργου τοῦ ἁγίου Νεκταρίου*, Ἐκδόσεις Ἀρμός, Ἀθῆναι 1998.