

Transposed and Thriving: Bible Reception in the Prophetologion: With the Addition of an Early Arabic Witness (Sinai Arabic 588) in the Appendix

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1 Introduction

An intriguing feature of the early Church is its endeavor to merge worlds.¹ From his location within this world, Jesus exclaims: “My kingdom is not of this world ... [but] from another place” (John 18:36 NIV). And this merger of heavenly and earthly realities was not the only one envisioned by the early Church. Through direct citations and thematic parallels, the gospel authors bring the narrative about Jesus into the worlds of the prophets and the message of the prophets into the world of Jesus. This double movement is exemplified in John 8:56–57, where Jesus not only fulfills the prophecies of the Scriptures, but where the prophets are described as participating in the event itself: “Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad” (John 8:56–57 NIV). Contemporary Jews in contrast are described as trapped in time, a constituent of this world. They answer rhetorically: “You are not yet fifty years old, and You have seen Abraham?” Indeed, Christ was timeless and in him the words of the prophets were brought into another reality.

These mergers of worlds were enabled by texts through their transposition into new contexts. It continued to fascinate and trigger the search for parallels, an approach commonly labeled (or reduced to) a “Christocentric reading” of Old Testament texts. Despite the importance of the Jewish Scriptures for these and other purposes, the Old Testament was seemingly never awarded a particularly prominent position in the Byzantine liturgy, but was read mainly on Vespers before major feasts and during Lent. The historical whereabouts of

1 I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Professor Sysse Engberg for all her comments, corrections, and explanations relating to the Prophetologion in the current paper. I also wish to thank the editors of the present volume, Dr. Grant White, Archimandrite Jean Mansour, Sally Adel, and the participants at the Patristic and Biblical seminars in Uppsala for their comments on the draft version of this paper. The present article was composed with support from the Swedish Research Council (2017–01630).

Old Testament readings in the Eucharistic liturgy is obscure and contested. The main question of this paper is not why or whether they disappeared, but rather why some texts were selected and thereby allowed to thrive in the Byzantine liturgy whereas others were disregarded. Texts are complicated in the sense that they are more than the intentions of their authors yet subjugated to the anticipations and prejudices of their readers. At the same time, they can enable a meeting with “the Other” that challenges the reader to reevaluate their prejudices or give the ones they have a deeper meaning. In addition, it seems that some texts were more apt for reception and survival in new contexts than others.²

Throughout history, liturgical texts have had the advantage of reaching and thereby effecting a wide audience. Despite the increased interest in liturgical biblical texts as a key to understanding early and Byzantine Christianity, they are still understudied compared to continuous renditions of biblical texts. This is unfortunate since the laity, including women and children, mostly encountered the Bible in liturgical contexts. That is, the form in which the Bible was most often used, is also the form most often neglected in scholarship.³

The present paper focuses on the Old Testament renderings included in the liturgical book known as the Prophetologion. After a brief historical overview, I first discuss the selection of continuous readings in this book and then elaborate on interpretative aspects of the selected texts. The overarching question addresses the fact that some biblical passages were selected against others, as stated above, and research on the Prophetologion will be scrutinized

2 For how discussions on texts are applied in biblical studies, see for instance, Michael A. Satlow, “Reading without History,” in *Reading Other Peoples’ Texts: Social Identity and the Reception of Authoritative Traditions*, ed. Ken Brown, Alison L. Joseph, and Brennan Breed (London: T & T Clark, 2020), 50–67, here 50–55; Ken Brown and Brennan Breed, “Social Identity and Scriptural Interpretation: An Introduction,” in *Reading Other Peoples’ Texts: Social Identity and the Reception of Authoritative Traditions*, ed. Ken Brown, Alison L. Joseph, and Brennan Breed (London: T & T Clark, 2020), 1–32, here 14–17. For an intriguing discussion on how to understand the survival of texts, see Brennan Breed, “What Can a Text Do? Reception History as an Ethology of the Biblical Text,” in *Reception History and Biblical Studies: Theory and Practice*, ed. Emma England and William John Lyon (London: T & T Clark, 2015), 95–110. See also the discussion below.

3 On the participation of the laity in liturgy, see Robert Taft, *Through Their Own Eyes: Liturgy as the Byzantines Saw It* (Berkeley: InterOrthodox Press, 2006). Taft focuses on early sources and notes that there is a certain decline in laity’s participation in liturgy when the liturgy is confined within the walls of the church building. In any event, it is reasonable to assume that texts used in liturgy, even those on vigils, continued to affect people to a considerable extent. For other means in which biblical texts were transmitted, see the discussion below. For a discussion on the general use of the Bible in the Early Church, see Paul F. Bradshaw, “The Use of the Bible in Liturgy: Some Historical Perspectives,” *Studia Liturgica* 22 (1992): 35–52.

with an eye to potential answers. As such, my analysis deals with the complex dialectical interaction between tradition, hermeneutics, and the nature of texts. Finally, I offer a basic description of a hitherto largely un-studied Arabic Prophetologion (Ms Sinai Arabic 588) in the appendix. Though this is not the place for a thorough investigation of this almost completely unexplored copy, I add it here to make parts of the rich and important Arabic heritage available to a broader public. By doing so, I hope to add to our knowledge of the development of the Prophetologion in general as well as to the liturgical life of Arabic-speaking Christians, who adhered to the Byzantine rite under Islamic rule.

2 Prophetologion

A Prophetologion is a collection of mostly Old Testament readings cantillated during Byzantine feast days, i.e., those relating to Nativity, Epiphany, Lent, and Pentecost (cf. the Triodion and the Pentecostarion), as well as a number of other feasts, where major events and saints are commemorated (cf. the Menaion).

The Prophetologion seems to originate from Constantinople. It is unclear both why the Prophetologion developed and why it was later absorbed into other liturgical books, though in both cases, practicality likely played its part.⁴ The most debated aspect of the Prophetologion is its connection to the presumed Old Testament readings in the divine liturgy of the Early Church. As Christianity was born in a Jewish context, it is assumed that early Christians continued to read from the Jewish Scriptures following a pre-rabbinic praxis hinted at, for instance, in Luke 4:16–21, where Jesus reads from the scroll of Isaiah. In the first centuries, the reading of the prophets was seemingly an integral part of the divine liturgy, as the often-cited passage from Justin Martyr (d. 165 CE) indicates:

4 The origin of the Prophetologion has been discussed by Carsten Høeg and Günther Zuntz, and further discussed by Sysse G. Engberg, who mentions performance of the lessons and the wish to create uniformity as possible reasons for its appearance. In short, few churches and monasteries owned all biblical texts and even if they did it was impractical to search for the relevant passages in continuous renditions and thus practical to collect such passages into a separate book. In addition, the Prophetologion contains, besides the Old Testament lections, *troparia* and *prokeimena* sung in connections to the readings, and it seems reasonable to assume that they were performed by the same person(s). Sysse G. Engberg, "The Greek Old Testament Lectionary as a Liturgical Book," *Cahiers de l'Institut du Moyen-Age Grec et Latin* 54 (1987): 39–48.

And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits ... then ... bread and wine and water are brought.⁵

From this and similar statements, scholars have assumed that there was a widespread practice in the Early Church of reading one lection from the Prophets, one from the Epistles, and one from Gospels (“the triple-lection theory”), which disappeared somewhere between the fifth and the eighth centuries. According to Robert Taft, the Prophetologion emerged around the seventh and eighth centuries “after the Old Testament lection had been eliminated from the Constantinopolitan Eucharist in the 7th C.”⁶ In an article published in 2006, Sysse Gudrun Engberg points out what she perceives as a paradox in Taft’s statement: why would an Old Testament liturgical book develop right after the practice of reading the Old Testament had been dissolved? Were the Old Testament Eucharistic readings transferred to the feast days, she asks, or were they just abolished and supplanted by a new selection of readings? Or, were there always two systems in use, one of which later disappeared? To Engberg, the uncertain relation between these two liturgical practices puts in doubt the assumption that there originally was a Eucharistic Old Testament reading in the Constantinopolitan rite. She notes, “[t]he triple-lection theory is mainly based on the assumption that a universal common Urform of the eucharist liturgy later diversified.”⁷ The opposite, she claims, is nevertheless more likely: “the diversity of the early, local rites, known from the comments of Church

5 Justin Martyr, *1 Apol.* 67 (ET: ANF 1185).

6 Robert Taft, “Prophetologion,” in *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, 3 vols., ed. Alexandr Kazhdan et al. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 3:1737.

7 Sysse G. Engberg, “The Prophetologion and the Triple-Lecture Theory: The Genesis of a Liturgical Book,” *Bollettino della Badia greca di Grottaferrata* Terza, serie 3 (2006): 67–92, here 70; Sysse G. Engberg, “The Needle and the Haystack: Searching for Evidence of the Eucharistic Old Testament Lection in the Constantinopolitan Rite,” *Bollettino della Badia greca di Grottaferrata* Terza, serie 13 (2016): 47–60, esp. 47. As a point of comparison, one could mention that it took a while before readings are structured around a calendar in the rabbinic tradition and that in Jewish worship the practice of feast readings precedes that of weekday readings. See Michael Graves, “The Public Reading of Scripture in Early Judaism,” *JETS* 50.3 (2007): 467–487, here 472–473. Eventually, the practice of reading through the Torah on an annual basis prevailed—yet until the twelfth century, a three-years cycle was still used at some places. See Graves, “Public Reading,” 473–474. Due to the development of a cantillation system, the general decline of the knowledge of Hebrew, and the length of the readings, only professionals could read Scriptures in the rabbinic tradition, see Graves, “Public Reading,” 476.

fathers and Byzantine historians, underwent an increasing standardization.”⁸ Thus, Engberg does not question the presence of Old Testament readings during the Eucharistic liturgy as such, only that such practice was the one used in Constantinople.⁹

The question of Eucharistic readings of the Old Testament does not shed direct light on the provenance of the practice of reading from the Jewish Scriptures at certain vigils, although such practice was or became standardized in the eighth century, when prophetologia begin to appear. It seems reasonable to assume that the Lenten readings had ancient roots expanding “a primitive Paschal vigil” and that this practice in turn affected the structure of other feast days.¹⁰ Engberg, who together with her predecessors Carsten Høeg and Günther Zuntz edited the Greek Prophetologion,¹¹ notes that the biblical passages selected in prophetologia are highly uniform and that the selection of feasts is relatively stable, observations confirmed by the contents of the early Arabic prophetologion manuscript described below. In sharp contrast, the chronological arrangements of the texts vary greatly, she states.¹²

8 Engberg, “Triple-Lection Theory,” 71.

9 Engberg, “Triple-Lection Theory,” 71; cf. Engberg, “The Needle and the Haystack,” 53–54. Taft responded to Engberg’s argument in an article published in 2011, where he denounced any adherence to the idea of an Urtext and at the same time provided new proofs of liturgical notations in Old Testament texts. See Robert F. Taft, “Were There Once Old Testament Readings in the Byzantine Divine Liturgy? Apropos of an Article by Sysse Gudrun Engberg,” *Bollettino della Badia Greca di Grottaferrata* Terza, serie 8 (2011): 271–311. Engberg responded in the article from 2016 by noting that such notations only confirmed what she labels the *prophetologion repertory*, i.e., Old Testament readings used in prophetologia (here on the eves of Epiphany and Easter) and that they add nothing to the question on Eucharistic use, which Taft also admits. In addition, it is hard to tell when such notations were added to the margins of extant bible manuscripts, see Engberg, “The Needle and the Haystack,” 52–53.

10 James Miller, “The Prophetologion: The Old Testament of Byzantine Christianity?,” in *The Old Testament in Byzantium*, ed. Paul Magdalino and Robert Nelson (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection Trustees for Harvard University, 2010), 55–76, here 71–72.

11 Carsten Høeg, Günther Zuntz, and Sysse G. Engberg, eds. *Prophetologium*, vol. 1 of *Monumenta Musicae Byzantinae: Lectionaria*, 2 vols. (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1939–1981).

12 Engberg, “The Greek Old Testament,” 42–43. At date, more than 200 Greek manuscripts dated from the ninth to the seventeenth centuries have been discovered. The bulk is dated between the eleventh and the thirteenth centuries (see Engberg, “The Greek Old Testament,” 41). Similarly, Arabic prophetologia appear from the tenth/eleventh to seventeenth centuries. Finally, it is of interest to note that the manuscripts containing prophetologia exhibit the same ekphonic cantillation system as New Testament lectionaries and seem therefore to have been chanted in the same way. See Engberg, “The Greek Old Testament,” 44–46.

As pointed out by James Miller, knowledge of the Old Testament was not reduced to texts.¹³ The narratives circulated orally, and people encountered biblical material on icons, in homilies, in hymns, in theological and apologetic tracts, through rewritings of biblical material, etc. Yet, as written texts, only parts of the Old Testament material were conveyed to the public during liturgy. Were these passages consciously selected on thematic grounds or even out of a primary exegetical principle? Or does the selection of this material reflect a “canon within the canon” which had already narrowed down the corpus? While these alternatives are surely interrelated and no firm answer can be provided, it may be valuable to take a look at other communities’ use of Scripture for parallels.

3 Not All Equal

In connection to Lent, passages from a few selected books are read more or less continuously so that the narrative structure of the biblical text is conveyed “in its own right” (as opposed to topical criteria, which governs most of the selection). With some exceptions, Isaiah, Genesis, and Proverbs are read in continuous form until the Holy Week begins. The readings are then exchanged for Ezekiel, Exodus, and Job, which are read on Monday to Wednesday (thus, only a few chapters from these books are read). In addition to continuous readings, one could mention that Jonah is read in its entirety on Saturday of Great and Holy Week, and longer passages from Daniel sporadically appear on various feast days. Psalms are read on a daily basis throughout the year in monasteries (cf. Psalters) and in the Prophetologion passages from Psalms are inserted before readings during Lent (*prokeimena*).

It is interesting to note that there are clear parallels between the books listed above and books often referenced in the New Testament, i.e., Psalms, Isaiah, Genesis, Exodus, and Proverbs. In contrast, Job, Daniel, Jonah, and Ezekiel are not quoted or alluded to often in the New Testament. Yet, according to Sidnie Crawford, the list of books which appear to have been regarded as authoritative in the Qumran material and thereby indicative of a long life as sacred texts, includes exactly these books: the Pentateuch, the Prophets, the Psalms,

13 Miller, “The Prophetologion,” 72–76. The most thorough attempt to present the use of the Old Testament in the Eastern Orthodox Church from different perspectives is to my knowledge Eugen J. Pentiu, *The Old Testament in Eastern Christian Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

Proverbs, Job and Daniel.¹⁴ Miller notes that books used in the Prophetologion indeed reflect those commonly used in Patristic times as well.¹⁵ This observation is strengthened by “post-Patristic” traditions: among Arabic speaking communities (i.e., Christians representing the Patriarchates of Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, and the Church of the East), the Gospels, the Epistles, and the Psalms are reproduced much more often than any other biblical book. Whereas several biblical books are found only scarcely or not at all in Arabic until the sixteenth century, the Pentateuch, the Prophets, Job, Proverbs, and Daniel are well represented in pre-modern times.¹⁶

The parallels listed above are interesting from the point of user value of specific biblical books, a topic to which we will return below, but it also raises questions about Jewish-Christian interactions. Michael Graves notes that “[m]ost of what we find in the early rabbinic tradition would fit best in comparison with the development of Christian worship in the patristic period, from the second to the fifth centuries.”¹⁷ Indeed, Daniel Stöckl Ben Ezra has shown that the “Fast of the Seventh Month” celebrated by Christians in Rome “developed both in contact with and competition to the contemporary Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur” (facilitated by passages such as Rom 14:5–6; Acts 27:9).¹⁸ As Stöckl Ben Ezra points out, Jewish-Christian interactions likely took place in connection to festivals.¹⁹ In many cases, however, dependence (in either direction) is difficult to pin down. Since both Jews and Christians used biblical readings in liturgy, one may also assume that they encountered similar dilemmas and therefore came up with similar solutions. Below, a few parallels are highlighted.

In his article “The Public Reading of Scripture in Early Judaism,” Graves describes the role of Scripture in Jewish liturgy. One text collection—the Torah—is given prominence (spatially and ritually) and additional readings are arranged around this center. The prophets are read only selectively to close the Torah reading (*haftarah*). Most of the *haftaroth* are selected to correspond

14 Sidney White Crawford, *Rewriting Scripture in Second Temple Times* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans: 2008), 9.

15 Miller, “The Prophetologion,” 72–73.

16 Miriam L. Hjälms, “1.1.10 The Arabic Canon,” in *The Textual History of the Bible*, vol. 2A, ed. Frank Feder and Matthias Henze (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 280–298.

17 Graves, “Public Reading,” 486.

18 Daniel Stöckl Ben Ezra, “Whose Fast Is It? The Ember Day of September and Yom Kippur,” in *The Ways That Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Adam H. Becker and Annette Yoshiko Reed, TSAJ 95 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 259–282, here 279.

19 Stöckl Ben Ezra, “Whose Fast Is It?” 261.

to their Torah portion in one way or the other.²⁰ In the Babylonian rite, the focus is on thematic parallels (the *haftarah* could thereby be taken from any biblical book) whereas in the Palestinian rite, the selection is governed by “a messianic peroration, which summed up the reading of Torah with an eschatological hope” and therefore mainly selected from Isaiah chapters 40–66 and minor prophets.²¹ In the Prophetologion, we find a somewhat similar structure. The Christ-event itself (cf. the role of the Torah) is often presupposed in the liturgical feast and passages from Old Testament texts are selected to confirm major points in the relevant episode in Christ’s life but on other occasions, biblical passages are typically selected thematically. Just as in the Palestinian tradition, and in the New Testament, chapters 40–66 are the most frequently referenced parts of Isaiah in topical selections of the Prophetologion.

It is interesting to note that “homiletic midrashim,” which appear to have originated from liturgical readings, contain what Graves calls “mini-lessons” in which typically a passage from the *Ktuvim*, i.e., the Writings (the *pticha*), is connected to the relevant Torah passage. The Torah sermon then ends with a reading from the Prophets (the *chatima*), likewise connected to the Torah passage. Thus, the midrashim weave together the three parts of the Bible to foster a holistic view of Scripture.²² The continuous readings in the Prophetologion reflect a similar structure: readings (divided over two services) include readings from the Prophets, the Pentateuch, and the Writings. It seems reasonable to assume that the selection of a book from each of the three collections reflects the same principle as that in rabbinic Judaism, namely that “the Scripture speaks with one voice.” As noted by Eugen Pentiuć, this tripartite structure may also be Christologically motivated (cf. Luke 24:44, where Jesus is described as the fulfillment of the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms),²³ probably likewise to promote a holistic understanding of Scripture.

Just as Jonah is given a prominent position in the Prophetologion, the book is read during Yom Kippur in the Jewish liturgy. Psalms are read in connection to all Jewish services, and as noted above, in *prokeimena* introducing readings in the Byzantine liturgy.²⁴

20 Graves, “Public Reading,” 474.

21 Graves, “Public Reading,” 475.

22 Cf. Graves, “Public Reading,” 483–484.

23 Pentiuć, *Old Testament*, 226.

24 Cf. *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*, s.v. “Biblical Literature in Liturgy,” <https://www.britannica.com/topic/biblical-literature/Biblical-literature-in-liturgy>.

Finally, Graves points out that as a means of turning scriptural readings into a liturgical event, Jewish prayers were inserted both before and after scriptural readings.²⁵ *Troparia* and *prokeimena* may have served a similar purpose.

Next to the parallels discussed above are a couple of notable differences. Most strikingly, “the five scrolls” (Esther, Ruth, Song of Songs, Lamentations, and Ecclesiastes) are on thematic grounds selected for Jewish holidays. This is notable, since these are among the few books *not* read in the Byzantine liturgy. These books are normally regarded as late biblical books, and some of the books’ final inclusion in the canon may seem puzzling given their seemingly unorthodox content. In contrast, the ones selected for readings in the Prophetologion were most likely authoritative (i.e., often reproduced) already in pre-Christian times. There are exceptions, such as the additions to Daniel and Baruch, yet it is likely that they were thought of as natural parts of Daniel and Jeremiah by those who selected them. Some of the five scrolls are known for their relative disinterest in typical theological discourse and two of them have female protagonists. In terms of reception and effect of a work on its audience, the choice of incorporating these books into the Jewish liturgy and the choice not to prioritize them in Christian liturgy are noteworthy. In addition to these books, many historical and deuterocanonical books, as well as some of the minor prophets, are completely excluded from the Prophetologion. According to Pentiuć, the lack of historical books may be explained in terms of perspective: “Whereas the Latin liturgy is predominantly retrospective ... the Eastern Orthodox worship is preeminently prospective, gazing at the eschatological fulfillment.”²⁶ Yet this observation only explains some of the material excluded by the Prophetologion. As Old Testament types of Christ can assumedly be drawn from any biblical book (see below), this interpretative principle does not entirely explain the selection, either. Therefore, it seems to me that the selection of passages used in liturgy reflects a more or less conscious praxis of using “a canon within the canon.”

To conclude, the selection of books for continuous readings in the Prophetologion may, just as in the rabbinic tradition, be partly governed by an impetus to reinforce a holistic view of Scripture. Continuous readings are extracted from books whose theological agenda was seldom questioned and, related to that, these books had long enjoyed status as authoritative scripture. Instead of claiming an ancient origin for liturgical readings in general (except for Pascha), it may be more reasonable to assume that such books reflect a “canon within the

25 Graves, “Public Reading,” 484.

26 Pentiuć, *Old Testament*, 226.

canon,” which itself can claim old age (such a canon may for sure have had blurry borders, like any canon). Thus, whereas Byzantine and Rabbinic liturgies reflect a rather similar structure wherein the biblical readings are placed, the Byzantine selection appears to be more conservative than the Rabbinic selection. It seems therefore that whereas Jews progressively incorporated a variety of books from the Writings (i.e., the *Ktuvim*) into their liturgy, Christians made place for the New Testament renderings in their services at the expense of the former.

To complement the contextual analysis, it should be mentioned that the selection of texts may also be connected to the nature or “quality” of these compositions. One may approach the selection of texts by simply asking if some texts are “better” than others. A “classic text” is typically perceived as timeless in the sense that new generations of readers identify as the addressees of the text.²⁷ From such a perspective, Isaiah chapters 40–66, for instance, have a high degree of “classic work potential” (or is a classic) and one may, perhaps, question whether all biblical texts in fact can be defined as classic texts. A somewhat different suggestion is offered by Brennan Breed, who more closely connects the potential of a text to the structures of the context in which it is being selected or disregarded. He encourages biblical scholars to approach the reception of biblical texts like ethologists approach the study of animals through their acts, capacity, diversity, and ability to evolve (as opposed to presumed essence).²⁸ Breed’s suggestion may be helpful to understand, for instance, why some texts thrive in the Jewish liturgy but not in the Prophetologion.

It is conducive to keep the discussions of the nature or quality of texts and their relation to context in mind when we move into the last section of this paper. The “canon within the canon” principle is not only applicable to continuous readings but to all readings in the Prophetologion. The last—and most slippery—question that remains to be discussed is what governs the final selection of passages from this pre-selected narrow canon.

27 For a discussion of the Gadamerian idea of a classic in connection to biblical texts, see for instance, Masiwa Ragies Gunda, “Reception History of the Bible: Prospects of a New Frontier in African Biblical Studies,” in *Reception History and Biblical Studies: Theory and Practice*, ed. Emma England and William John Lyon (London: T & T Clark, 2015), 125–138.

28 Breed, “What Can a Text Do?,” esp. 100.

4 Transposed

It is well known that texts used in the Prophetologion are often intended to be understood typologically.²⁹ As noted by Alexandru Mihaila, non-continuous readings are often selected in the Prophetologion according to what he labels a prefigurative principle and that a “system of cross-references” is created between the various texts.³⁰ The creation of cross-references does not only apply to typology, and is more complex than what may be construed from a quick look. In her analysis of biblical passages used in connection to commemorations of Constantinople in the Prophetologion, Victoria Casamiquela Gerhold notes that the process of “decontextualization and recontextualization” requires several agents: the liturgical author³¹ [i.e., “implied author”], who selects and recontextualizes the passages and the liturgical receiver or attendee [i.e., the “implied reader”], “who decoded the message by interpreting that recontextualization.”³² In addition, the nature of the biblical text to be decoded plays its part. She notes:

The referents—understood as the person (*personal referent*), object (*substantive referent*), situation (*situational referent*) or context (*contextual referent*) to which a linguistic expression refers—play in fact a major role in articulating the Old Testament within a certain liturgical context ... we can label as *implicit* all those referents that are semantically provided by the Old Testament passage itself ... we can label as *liturgical* all those ref-

29 Klaas Spronk, “The Prophetologion and the Book of Judges,” *Journal of the Orthodox Center for the Advancement of Biblical Studies* 6.1 (2013): 9–15. An extensive account, or interpretation, of biblical passages used for various feast days, is provided by Pentiu, *Old Testament*, 227–262; and by Georges Barrois, *Scripture Readings in Orthodox Worship* (New York: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1977).

30 Alexandru Mihaila, “Some Exegetical Aspects of the Old Testament Lections in the Orthodox Church,” in *Receptarea Sfintei Scripturi: Între filologie, hermeneuțică și traducțologie*, ed. Eugen Munteanu, Iosif Camara, Sabina-Nicoleta Rotenștein (Iași: Editura Universității Alexandru Ioan Cuza, 2014), 303–312, here 306–307. Exceptions to this rule are biblical passages commemorating biblical figures, such as Elijah and Paul, which reflect essential parts of their life or works.

31 It is likely that biblical readings read in connection to feasts developed over time. Thus, the term “author” does not refer to a specific person but to the fact that the texts were arranged and presented to the reader by a third party. Below, “authors” in plural will be used.

32 Victoria Casamiquela Gerhold, “The Old Testament in the Byzantine Liturgy: Some Remarks on the Liturgical Celebrations Devoted to Constantinople,” *Temas medievales* 23 (2015): 21–62, here 22–23.

erents that are semantically provided by the liturgical calendar ... we can label as *historical* all those referents that are semantically defined by the liturgical attender.³³

The act of recontextualization becomes successful if the liturgical authors create new, meaningful references between the biblical text and the liturgical and historical settings, which the receivers grasp and thereby complete.³⁴ For example, texts used for the commemoration of the foundation of Constantinople are selected from descriptions of “the New Jerusalem” in Isaiah (Isa 54:9–15; 61:10–62:5; 65:18–24). The prophecy of a “New Jerusalem” is not fulfilled in Old Testament times. A successful identification of the “New Jerusalem” outside of the Old Testament corpus must fulfill basic requirements predicated of the un-identified referent in the biblical texts such as “extreme wealth,” “special place before God,” and “joyful circumstances.” Since these passages are read on the day when the foundation of Constantinople is commemorated, the liturgical attender will identify the hitherto unidentified referent of Isaiah’s “New Jerusalem” with Constantinople. As a result, what was an apocalyptic New Jerusalem in Isaiah has become a historical reality in the city of Constantinople.³⁵

An effect of this recontextualization is that the worshipers are provided with the opportunity to read themselves into sacred history.³⁶ Following Casamiquela Gerhold, this platform was partly set up by the liturgical authors, and the final hermeneutical act was made by the liturgical attenders, but it is initially the text itself that enables interpretation and decides the form of the exegesis that is used to make the text relevant in new contexts. Consequently, one may assume that if the referent in the prophecy had already been fulfilled (i.e., had the source text been semantically closed), the liturgical authors would have been forced to use another technique to recontextualize the event, such as typology. Alternatively, they would have simply selected other texts.

In the reception of the approximately same passages in Revelation, the apocalyptic theme of the “New Jerusalem” is retained: “I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple” (Rev 21:22 NIV).³⁷ One is tempted to point out the apparent contradiction between these two Christian interpretations of Isa 54, yet diversity is intrinsically part

33 Casamiquela Gerhold, “The Old Testament,” 24.

34 Cf. Casamiquela Gerhold, “The Old Testament,” 27.

35 Casamiquela Gerhold, “The Old Testament,” 33–38.

36 Cf. Pentti, *Old Testament*, 262.

37 Steve Moyise, *The Old Testament in the New: An Introduction*, 2nd ed., T & T Clark Approaches to Biblical Studies (London: T & T Clark, 2015), 195–196.

of reception in the sense that the possibility of multiple interpretations and applications often is the reason a text is considered in new contexts to begin with.

Only the imagination of the interpreting subject puts limits on just how far an interpretation can go. Yet, in the *Prophetologion*, which has the luxury of choosing freely among biblical texts—or at least among those belonging to the “canon within the canon”—there seems to be a certain preference for texts with many undefined referents, which give the text an “open structure.” Similar to prophetic books, poetic literature often exhibits an open structure (esp. psalms) but also what is perceived as general wisdom. Georges Barrois notes correctly that the selection of Proverbs in continuous renderings seems to have been made on rather arbitrary grounds, but those parts of Proverbs that relate to “wisdom” enjoy a special status here and elsewhere, due to their association with the *Logos*.³⁸ Thus, Proverbs’ devotion to moral behavior and to the abstract principles governing the universe, here depicted as “wisdom,” seem to have guaranteed Proverbs its place in the Byzantine liturgy, which corresponds well with the general interest in wisdom literature in the Greek world.

What remains to be discussed are narrated events, in whatever genre they appear. Whereas biblical narratives do not contain as many open referents, the narrative events themselves—the dilemmas, the themes and the characters’ relation to them—often evoke identification. Casamiquela Gerhold points out that historical narratives may be used as thematic parallels and thus be perceived as timeless: if they happened once, they can happen again. For the commemoration of the siege of Constantinople (5 June), for instance, the siege of Jerusalem from Isa 36 is selected, and through analogy the reader draws a parallel between the destiny of Constantinople and the destiny of the biblical Jerusalem. Thereby the biblical and the liturgical events are merged by the liturgical attender.³⁹ In other biblical texts selected for the event, the object of speech, “you,” referring to Israel in the historical context, is extended to the contemporary audience in the liturgical context (cf. Casamiquela Gerhold’s term “double projection of referent-addresser”).⁴⁰ Such a historical replication offers the liturgical attender hope (as God saved before, he will save again) and

38 Barrios, *Scripture*, 55–59.

39 Casamiquela Gerhold, “The Old Testament,” 40, 44–45.

40 Casamiquela Gerhold, “The Old Testament,” 42. In their survey of the reception of Deuteronomy, Brown and Breed similarly observe that: “Precisely by addressing an imagined community as ‘you,’ the text remains structurally open to reading outside its initial context(s) of composition, which did not end with the formation of an ancient Israelite body politic.” See Brown and Breed, “Social Identity,” 25.

instructions for behavior (trust in God), but it also implies that the people of Constantinople need to repent from a sinful behavior—or else they will meet the destiny of the exiled people of Jerusalem. Thus, the recontextualization of these historical events aims at changing the behavior of the audience.⁴¹ In a similar vein, George Barrois notes that the readings selected for Theophany “[i]n addition to the recurring theme ‘waters,’ foreshadowing the baptism of regeneration, they imply a radical, ‘existential’ change in the destiny of a people or of an individual, involving an agonizing decision to be taken, an issue of life or death.”⁴²

The effect of the recontextualization here is not only providing the liturgical attender with the sense of participation in sacred history, but also gives the audience the impression that she/he participates in forming such a history—something that assumedly creates meaning, but also responsibility on the part of the audience. Thus, in this setting, the biblical text, in cooperation with its interpreters, lets human beings know that they ought to be responsible and that their behavior is meaningful.

The readings from Genesis furthermore reflect classical Christian Bible theology: according to Barrois, the selection of Genesis passages is in principle guided by the theme of divine election until salvation. He notes that there are those foreign to this process that are omitted in the Prophetologion: Lot and his descendants, Moab and Ammon, Ishmael and the Arabs, Esau, the offspring of the concubines, and many of the digressive stories that do not add to the master narrative of the covenant.⁴³

Finally, Casamiquela Gerhold correctly points out that passages selected for various commemorations of Constantinople are made meaningful through different strategies than those implied by typology.⁴⁴ As a principle, typology blends narrative events from “different worlds” and places the ultimate fulfillment of an Old Testament type in Christ and his church. It often relies on closed semantic structures and already fulfilled events. For example, the binding of Isaac was a completed event, and could therefore prefigure the crucifixion of Christ. As in the examples above, the parallels between Old Testament readings and the Christ-event are provided by the liturgical authors through

41 Casamiquela Gerhold, “The Old Testament,” 39–40, 46–49.

42 Barrois, *Scripture*, 159.

43 Barrois, *Scripture*, 54–55. He also notes here that the novel of Joseph and his brethren is omitted and suggests that this is connected to the “inability of the final redactor of Genesis to fuse his various sources into a satisfactory unit.” If this is correct, this “editorial error” deprived the text of an afterlife in the Byzantine liturgy.

44 Casamiquela Gerhold, “The Old Testament,” 59–60. Most importantly, the siege of Jerusalem is introduced as a warning example of what *could* happen, not what *will* happen.

their insertions into specific feast days and thereby recognized by the liturgical attenders.⁴⁵ For the feast of Annunciation, when Mary receives the good news from the angel Gabriel (cf. Luke 1:26–35), the first reading is taken from Moses and the burning bush (Exod 3:1b–8c).⁴⁶ The typological relation between the two events is well known: the mystery that “though the bush was on fire, it did not burn up” (Exod 3:2 NIV) prefigures the mystery of how a human being, Mary, can carry God within her and still endure. In Exodus, God appeared since he had “seen the misery of my people in Egypt” and came down “to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them ... [into] a land flowing with milk and honey” (Exod 3:7, 8 NIV) just like Jesus Christ came down to save humankind from their affliction, and bring them into the heavenly kingdom.

The recipient in typological exegesis is “passive,” to use Casamiquela Gerhold’s terminology, in the sense that typology does not evoke instant moral change. The aim of typology is, rather, to introduce the audience into the mystery of God, enact Christian doctrines, and show how God acts in history. Yet, transposed into this new constellation, the text also enables the idea that God still saves, still inhabits human beings, and ultimately enables a connection between the two, so that the liturgical attender is encouraged to participate in the work of salvation.

5 Concluding Remarks

Biblical texts that were selected for the Byzantine liturgy conform to a diffuse, yet distinguishable canon, created, transmitted, reused and thereby reinforced in tradition. It appears, thus, that the liturgical authors of the Prophetologion in some respect already worked from within a preselected corpus of Old Testament books. As opposed to the Jewish liturgy, where the many divergent voices of the Second Temple books were heard, the structures of the Byzantine liturgy appear to have preferred texts from the oldest authorized Old Testament books. Within this canon, texts with certain characteristics thrived in new contexts, whereas others did not—which led to a second selection taking place. As often noted, such texts include biblical passages known for their typological relations with the Christ. Although often building on thematic parallels, typology is perhaps the most unnatural exegesis, as it seems to be primarily

45 The act of recognition may play a pedagogical function: instead of being *told* you *understand*.

46 In the Arabic Prophetologion, these readings occur on the 24th of Adar [March] (fols. 56^r–57^r).

reliant on the meta-narrative of the interpreter, rather than enabled by the text. In principle, typology can therefore be drawn from any text. Yet, typological exegesis was not drawn from any text in the *Prophetologion*, but mostly from texts typically reflecting a “canon within the canon.” However, the selection of Old Testament texts for the Byzantine liturgy cannot be explained merely by a Christocentric reading of the Bible. The selection includes fulfillment, or partial fulfillment, of prophecies, as well as general wisdom literature, where people read themselves into the texts by identifying as the addressees of the texts.

Biblical passages were inserted into the *Prophetologion* in order to explain Christian doctrines, but also to involve the audience and make their existence meaningful by confirming the idea that they were part of something larger than themselves.⁴⁷ To enable involvement, the liturgical authors tend to select biblical passages introduced by direct speech (“you”) rather than passages with indirect speech (“them”).⁴⁸ In general, structurally open texts and texts in which people can identify with situations or use as moral guides enjoy a rich afterlife in Byzantine liturgy. The passages from Isaiah used in the *Prophetologion* make it clear that the Byzantine people were expected to draw such identifications from the people of Israel: what is primarily excluded from continuous (and other) readings are passages relating to other nations—cf. Isa 15–24, 30–31, etc. As such, the *Prophetologion* reflects the use of Isaiah in the New Testament and in the Palestinian rabbinic rite. Clearly, these passages were able to prosper in many contexts, and are, like psalms, influential agents.

“Typologically-friendly,” “morally extortive,” and “structurally open texts” do not explain all readings in the *Prophetologion*, which—as Pentiuc notes—are more “untamed” than Patristic exegesis,⁴⁹ and much work remains, especially to understand the selection of continuous renderings against other texts. Yet, we will end this section in the way we began and conclude that, in cooperation with many of these texts, the liturgical authors and attenders continued the work—initiated in the New Testament—of merging disparate realms. The demarcations of spaces, times, and even human ontology were consciously blurred in what—one may assume—was ultimately a struggle to make sense of, control, and improve human existence. And these are some of the things sacred texts can enable when transposed and allowed to thrive in new environments.

47 Cf. Taft, *Through Their Own Eyes*, 134–136.

48 Cf. Casamiquela Gerhold, “The Old Testament,” 60.

49 Pentiuc, *Old Testament*, 261.

Appendix: An Arabic Prophetologion in Sinai Arabic 588

It is only during the last decades that interest in the Prophetologion has gained grounds among scholars. Though Greek and Slavic manuscripts have attracted substantial interest, the heritage of Byzantine Christians, who, after the Islamic conquests, found themselves on the wrong side of the border, has not yet received much attention. This heritage is partly transmitted in Arabic. According to Joseph [Youhanna] Nessim Youssef, there are thirteen prophetologia in Sinai: Sinai Arabic 11–12; 14–18; 588; 594–596; 602; 682.⁵⁰ I have been able to access Sinai Arabic 588, Sinai Arabic 11 (dated 1116 CE), Sinai Arabic 595 (1290 CE), Sinai Arabic 594 (thirteenth century), Sinai Arabic 596 (thirteenth century), Arabic Sinai 18 (1350 CE), Sinai Arabic 12 (fourteenth century), Sinai Arabic 15 (fourteenth century), Sinai Arabic 14 (seventeenth century), and Sinai Arabic 602 (seventeenth century). I have not been able to access Sinai Arabic 16, 17, or 682.

The earliest Prophetologion, Sinai Arabic 588, is dated by cataloguers to the tenth or eleventh centuries. As such, it belongs to the early representations of the work. The manuscript is a triple palimpsest with layers in Syriac, Christian Palestinian Aramaic, and Arabic. A basic codicological description and the identification of texts have been provided by Grigory Kessel, André Binggeli, and Christa Müller-Kessler within the Sinai Palimpsests project.⁵¹ Nessim Youssef implied that the Arabic sub-layer represents an older Prophetologion.⁵²

Structure

Sinai Arabic 588 is incomplete at its beginning and at its end. Some folios appear to be lost within the text and the folios are partly bound together incorrectly. My suggestion for a reconstruction of the folio numbers is: fols. 18–27; fols. 1–17; fols. 28–39; fols. 41–49; fol. 40; fols. 50–67; [fols. 68–69]. The last two folios of the codex are placed upside down. The texts in these folios display partial overlap with other parts of the codex, and do not seem to belong to the original composition. Perhaps the one who bound the manuscript together knew that these folios contain the same text (a prophetologion) copied by the same hand yet that these folios belonged to another copy of the same

50 Joseph Nessim Youssef, "Prophetologion: An Arabic Manuscript in the Library of the Monastery of St. Catherine in Sinai, no. 588: A Survey and Critical Study," *Cahiers d'Alexandrie* (1967): 3–10. For additional manuscripts, see Georg Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur* (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1944), 1187–188.

51 "Sinai Palimpsests Project," <https://sinai.library.ucla.edu>.

52 Nessim Youssef, "Prophetologion," 6–7.

work. Such overlap seemingly appears within the text as well—Exod 33 on fol. 64 is partly repeated on fol. 65.

The copy at hand begins with the weekday readings for Pascha, followed by those for the Nativity of Christ, Theophany and the Blessing of Water, and only hereafter are the readings before Palm Sunday and Saturday of the Holy Week provided. After this, readings for great feasts from March until September are offered. Readings from October to November seem to be lost. It appears, thus, that the copyist began with the Triodion cycle, and then added a Menologion cycle (i.e., feasts with fixed dates), starting with Christmas. It is noteworthy that the Saturday readings for Pascha are placed in the Menologion cycle between February and March and readings for Pentecost between May and June. Mid-pentecost is missing, which is often the case in Greek manuscripts as well.⁵³

Dates in the fixed cycle are often provided for the evening (Sabbath) before the feast, i.e., Saturday as opposed to Sunday. For instance, the feast of Annunciation occurs 25 March, and in the Arabic manuscript it is stated: “In the 24th of the month Adar, on the day after which the feast of the Annunciation follows [يتأوه] ...”

There seem to be a few scribal mistakes in the manuscript. For instance, on Sabbath/Sunday before Pentecost, the manuscript states that the Fourth Council (Chalcedon 451 CE) is to be celebrated, but in a cross-reference to this event when the Fourth Council is normally commemorated (16th of Tamuz [July]; cf. fol. 64^r), the previous council is, correctly, referred to as the council of Nicaea 325 CE (i.e., the First Council). The biblical readings generally follow the Greek readings closely.

The structure of the Prophetologion is as follows:

- o. [first folios missing]
1. Lenten Triodion, weekdays (fols. 18^r–27^v; 1^r–17^v; fols. 28^r–33^v)
2. Nativity of Christ (fols. 33^v–36^v)
3. Theophany and the Blessing of Water (fols. 36^v–39^v; 41^r–43^v)
4. The Presentation of Christ (fol. 43^v)
5. Palm Sunday (fols. 43^v–44^v)
6. Saturday of Great and Holy Week (fols. 44^v–49^v; 40^r–^v; 50^r–56^r)
7. 24th [i.e., 25th] Adar [March]. Annunciation (fols. 56^r–57^r)
8. 11th of Ayyār [May]. Foundation of Constantinople (fol. 57^r–^v)

53 My sincere gratitude to Sysse G. Engberg for helping me analyze the order of the feasts. The readings below are located with the help of the index of lections in Høeg, Zuntz, and Engberg, eds., *Prophetologium*. For comparison with the Arabic text, I have used the English translation by Lancelot C.L. Brenton, “The Greek Old Testament (Septuagint),” <https://www.ellospos.net/elpenor/greek-texts/septuagint/>.

9. Ascension of Christ (fols. 57^v–58^v)
10. Sunday before Pentecost: Fourth [corr. First] Council (fols. 58^v–59^v)
11. Pentecost (fols. 59^v–60^v)
12. Monday after Pentecost and 17th Adar [March]. Great Earthquake (fols. 60^v–62^r)
13. Sunday of All Saints (fols. 62^r–63^r)
14. 27th [i.e., 28th] Haziran [June]. Feast of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul (fols. 63^r–64^r)
15. 16th Tamuz [July]. Fourth Council (fol. 64^r)
16. 5th [6th] of Ab [August]. Transfiguration of Our Lord (fols. 64^r–65^v)
17. 14th [15th] of this month [August]. Dormition of Theotokos (fols. 65^v–66^v)
18. 1st of Aylul [September]. New Year and Symeon the Stylite (fols. 66^v–67^r)
19. 8th of this month [September]. Nativity of the Theotokos (fol. 67^r)
20. 14th of this month [September]. Exaltation of the Cross (fol. 67^r)
21. On the 25th of this month [September]. Earthquake of Constantinople (fol. 67^{r-v})

The rest is missing; the two last folios seem to belong to another copy of the same text. They include readings for Ascension, the Fourth [First?] Council, and the Feast of Peter and Paul.

In the Lenten Triodion, hymns/troparia are provided [Ar. *tarnīma*] as are prokimenā [Ar. translit.]. The latter are a few, typically two, verses from a psalm incorporated into the text to introduce a longer reading, and sometimes also to close a reading. The Psalm numbers are written in Greek numerals or in Arabic letters and rendered in continuous order—with some psalms omitted—up to Thursday of Great and Holy Week. Thereafter the psalms seem to be selected thematically.

A typical Lenten entry is structured as follows (fols. 18^r–19^v):

- (a) Troparion/hymn (*tarnīma*) for Thursday in the fourth [lit. middle] week of the fast for the morning prayer (بالغداة) in the 2nd tone.
- (b) Text.
- (c) Prokeimenon in the 4th tone from Psalm 73 (12, 1).
- (d) Reading from the prophecy of Isaiah (28:14–22).
- (e) Prokeimenon in the 4th tone from Psalm 74 (9, 1).
- (f) Prokeimenon for the Evening Prayer from Psalm 75 (12, 29).
- (g) Reading from Genesis (10:32–11:9).
- (h) Prokeimenon in the 8th tone from Psalm 76 (2–3).
- (i) Reading from Proverbs (13:19–14:6).

In order to introduce the readings more fluently, minor text units such as “these words said the Lord” may be added before or after a reading. For similar reasons, minor text units may also be omitted within a passage. If a bib-

lical reading has once been offered, it is not repeated, save by the first few words of the passage, followed by a cross-reference to where the full rendition may be found in the codex. The Song of Moses and the Hymn of the Three Young Men are simply mentioned and neither rendered in the codex nor followed by cross-references. The information given in the manuscript is not always consistent—sometimes information regarding the tone or service is omitted.

*Description According to Reconstructed Folios*⁵⁴

Only the first verse and last verse of the biblical renderings below have been checked. For the sake of brevity, the troparion, which introduces a reading set in the manuscript (cf. above) is excluded in the account below, as are the reading numeration (“the first reading is from” etc.). Information provided within square brackets represents my own identifications of biblical chapters and/or verses. For instance, in the passage “Prokeimenon, 4th tone from Psalm 73 [12, 1],” the identification of verses [12, 1] are my own while the rest of the information is provided in the manuscript.

Wednesday of the Fourth Week of Great Lent, fols. 18^r

[Proverbs 13:4b–9].

Thursday of the Fourth Week of Great Lent, fols. 18^r–19^v

Prokeimenon, 4th tone from Psalm 73 [12, 1]. Isaiah [28:14–22]. Prokeimenon, 4th tone from Psalm 74 [9, 1]. Prokeimenon for the Evening Prayer from Psalm 75 [12, 2]. Genesis [10:32–11:9]. Prokeimenon, 8th tone from Psalm 76 [2–3]. Proverbs [13:19–14:6].

Friday of the Fourth Week of Great Lent, fols. 19^v–21^r

Prokeimenon, 6th tone from Psalm 77 [38?, 1]. Isaiah [29:13–23]. Prokeimenon, 6th tone from Psalm 78 [9; 1]. Prokeimenon for the Evening Prayer, 4th tone from Psalm 79 [2–3]. Genesis [12:1–7]. Prokeimenon from Psalm 84 [actually 80:2–3]. Proverbs [14:15–26].

Monday of the Fifth Week of Great Lent, fols. 21^r–22^v

Prokeimenon, 4th tone from Psalm 83 [4, 2]. Isaiah [37:33–38:6]. Prokeimenon, 4th tone from Psalm 74 [actually 84:8, 2]. Prokeimenon for the Evening Prayer,

54 Fols. 18–27; fols. 1–17; fols. 28–39; fols. 41–49; fol. 40; fols. 50–67. Fols. 68–69 did not originally belong to this manuscript.

4th tone from Psalm 85 [11, 1]. Genesis [13:11b–18]. Prokeimenon, 4th tone [from Psalm] 86 [2, 1]. Proverbs [14:27–15:4].

Tuesday of the Fifth Week of Great Lent, fols. 22^v–24^v

Prokeimenon, 6th tone from Psalm 87 [16, 2?]. Isaiah [40:1–2; 9–31a]. Prokeimenon, 6th tone from Psalm 88 [16–17]. Prokeimenon for the Evening Prayer, 4th tone from Psalm 89 [1–2]. Genesis [15:1–15]. Prokeimenon, 8th tone from Psalm 90 [1–2]. Proverbs [15:7–19].

Wednesday of the Fifth Week of Great Lent, fols. 25^r–26^v

Prokeimenon, 4th tone from Psalm 91 [2–3]. Isaiah [41:4b–14]. Prokeimenon, 6th tone from Psalm 92 [1]. Prokeimenon for the Evening Prayer from Psalm 93 [1–2]. Genesis [17:1–9]. Prokeimenon from Psalm 94 [actually a repetition of 93:1–2; added under the line from 95:1]. Proverbs [15:20–16:9 + verses 8–9 according to the Masoretic Text/Peshitta].

Thursday of the Fifth Week of Great Lent, fols. 26^v–27^v; fols. 1^r–^v

Prokeimenon, 6th tone from Psalm 96 [1–2]. Isaiah [42:5–16]. Prokeimenon, 6th tone from Psalm 97 [1]. Prokeimenon for the Evening Prayer, 6th tone from Psalm 98 [5, 1]. Genesis [18:20–31a—cont. on fols. 1^{r-v}: 18:31b–33]. Prokeimenon, 6th tone from Psalm 99 [1–2]. Proverbs [16:17b–33].

Friday of the Fifth Week of Great Lent, fols. 1^v–3^v

Troparion for ... in the 5th tone for the morning prayer on Saturday night, the Akathist [الاقاٲسطن] [HYMN]. Prokeimenon, 6th tone from Psalm 100 [1–2]. Isaiah [45:11–17]. Prokeimenon, 4th tone from Psalm 101 [2–3]. Prokeimenon for the Evening Prayer, 4th tone from Psalm 102 [8, 1]. Genesis [22:1–18]. Prokeimenon, 4th tone [from Psalm] 103 [24, 1]. Proverbs [17:17b–18:5].

Monday of the Sixth Week of Great Lent, fols. 3^v–6^r

Prokeimenon, 8th tone from Psalm 104 [3, 1]. Isaiah [48:17–49:4]. Prokeimenon, 6th tone from Psalm 105 [48, 1]. Prokeimenon for the Evening Prayer, 4th tone from Psalm 106 [1–2]. Genesis [27:1–41a]. Prokeimenon in barys (7th tone) [التقيل] lit. “the hard tone”] from Psalm 107 [6, 2]. Proverbs [19:16–25].

Tuesday of the Sixth Week of Great Lent, fols. 6^r–8^r

Prokeimenon, 4th tone from Psalm 108 [26, 1–2]. Isaiah [49:6b–10a]. Prokeimenon, 4th tone from Psalm 109 [4, 1]. Prokeimenon for the Evening Prayer, 4th tone from Psalm 110 [10, 1–2]. Genesis [31:3–16]. Prokeimenon, 4th tone from Psalm 111 [4–5, 1]. Proverbs [21:3–21].

Wednesday of the Sixth Week of Great Lent, fols. 8^r–10^v

Prokeimenon, 4th tone from Psalm 112 [1–2]. Isaiah [58:1–11a]. Prokeimenon, 6th tone from Psalm 113 [23, 24]. Prokeimenon for the Evening Prayer, 4th tone from Psalm 114 [9]. Genesis [43:25b–31, 45:1–16]. Prokeimenon, 4th tone from Psalm 115 [5/9, 1?]. Proverbs [21:23–22:4].

Thursday of the Sixth Week of Great Lent, fols. 10^v–11^r

Prokeimenon, 4th tone from Psalm 117 [20, 1]. Isaiah [65:8–10a; missing fol.].⁵⁵ [Proverbs 23:22b–24:5].

Friday of the Sixth Week of Great Lent, fols. 11^v–14^v

Prokeimenon, 4th tone from Psalm 121 [9, 1]. Isaiah [66:10–24]. Prokeimenon, 6th tone from Psalm 122 [3, 1]. Prokeimenon for the Evening Prayer, 6th tone from Psalm 123 [8, 1–2]. Genesis [49:33–50:26]. Prokeimenon, 4th tone from Psalm 124 [1]. Proverbs [31:8–31].

Monday of Great and Holy Week, fols. 14^v–17^r

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, One God Prokeimenon, 4th tone from Psalm 125 [1–2]. Ezekiel [1:1–20]. Prokeimenon, 4th tone from Psalm 126 [1]. Prokeimenon, 6th tone for the Evening Prayer from Psalm 127 [5, 1]. Exodus [1:1–20]. Prokeimenon, 6th tone from Psalm 128 [8, 1]. Job [1:1–12].

Tuesday of Great and Holy Week, fols. 17^r–^v

Prokeimenon, 4th tone from Psalm 129 [7, 1]. Ezekiel [1:21–28a]. Prokeimenon, 4th tone from Psalm 130 [3, 1]. Prokeimenon, 6th tone from Psalm 131 [8, 1–2]. Exodus [2:5–10]. Prokeimenon, 4th tone from Psalm 132. [missing]⁵⁶

Wednesday of Great and Holy Week, fol. 28^r

[missing until Job 2:6–10].

Thursday of Great and Holy Week, fols. 28^r–30^v

Prokeimenon, 1st tone from Psalm 82 [19, 2]. Jeremiah [11:8–12:5a; 9b–11a; 14–15]. Prokeimenon, 8th tone [Psalm 75:12, 2]. Prokeimenon for the Evening

55 Missing: Isaiah 65:10–16a; Genesis 46:1–7; beginning of Proverbs 23:15–22a.

56 Missing: prokeimenon from Psalm 132; Job 1:13–22 on Tuesday and Wednesday of Great and Holy Week, i.e., Ezekiel [2:3–3:3]; Exodus [2:11–22, 18:4] [Job 2:1–15].

Prayer, 1st tone [Psalm 139:1–3]. Exodus [19:10–19]. Job [38:1b–21, 42:1–5]. Prokeimenon in barys (7th tone) [Psalm 58:2–3?]. Isaiah [50:4–11].

Friday of Great and Holy Week, fols. 30^v–33^v

Prokeimenon, 4th tone [Psalm 69:2–3]. Zechariah [11:6–14, 12:10d, 13:6–7, 14:6–10a, 20a, 21b]. Prokeimenon from Psalm 11 [8, 2], 5th tone. Prokeimenon for the Evening Prayer [Psalm 34?]. Exodus [33:11–23]. Prokeimenon, 4th tone from Psalm 31 [?]. Job [42:12–17 incl. the Syriac additions 17b–c]. Prokeimenon from Psalm 21 [19, 2]. Isaiah [52:13–54:1].

Fol. 33^r “Arrangement” [نظام ترتيب] for the 6th hour of Great/Good Friday [!][+شهود ظلمه]. Isaiah [3:10–16a].

Nativity, fols. 33^v–36^v

Genesis [1:1–13]. Numbers [24:2b–3a, 5–9, 17c–18]. Micah [4:6–7, 5:1–3]. Isaiah [11:1–10]. Jeremiah [Baruch 3:35–4:4]. Daniel [2:31–36, 44b–45]. Isaiah [9:6–7]. Isaiah [7:10–16a, 8:1–4, 8c–10].

Theophany and the Great Blessing of Waters, fols. 36^v–39^v; 41^r–43^v

Genesis [few words provided, then cross-reference to Nativity, i.e., Gen 1:1–13]. From the same [sic!] book also [Exodus 14:15–17, 21–23, 27b–29a]. Exodus [It is mentioned that this reading is read also at the Feast of the Holy Cross and then the text of 15:22–16:1a is provided. Towards the end of v. 26 it is stated that “this is different from what is read during the Exaltation of the Cross,” seemingly referring to the clause “for I am the Lord who heals you” and perhaps what comes after it]. Joshua [3:7–8, 15–17]. 4 Kingdoms [2:6–14; * fol. 38^v, which comes in the middle of this passage, is blank but no text is missing]. 4 Kingdoms [5:9–14]. Isaiah [1:16–20]. Genesis [on fol. 39^v: Gen. 32:1b–2a; on fol. 41^r: Gen. 32:2–10b]. Exodus [a few words, then cross-reference to Great Tuesday, i.e., Exod 2:5–10]. Judges [6:36–40]. 3 Kingdoms [18:30–39, condensed]. 4 Kingdoms [2:19–22]. Then the Patriarch return from the palace [البلاد < البلاط] and the three troparia, the three doxologies and the prokeimena are done. If the day is a fasting day, and there should be celebrated a divine liturgy, a passage from the Epistles should be read. But if the next day of the feast is a Saturday or Sunday, it should be read before the Epistles a reading from Isaiah the Prophet [Isa 49:8, 13–15]. And when the Patriarch blesses the water and the pool, he reads these readings on [على الاقن? على الاقن]. Isaiah [35:1–10]. Isaiah [55:1–13]. Isaiah [12:3–6].

The Presentation of Christ to the Temple, fol. 43^v

For the feast when our Lord was received, a day before the feast, the three readings are from Genesis, the Prophet Ezekiel, and from the Proverbs. Their scripts [i.e., these passages] are presented on the 15th of Ab⁵⁷

Palm Sunday, fols. 43^v–44^v

Genesis [49:1–2; 8–12]. Zephaniah [3:14–19]. Zechariah [9:9–15a].

Saturday of Great and Holy Week, fols. 44^v–49^v; 40^r–^v; 50^r–56^r

Prokeimenon for Saturday, for the morning prayer, 4th tone [Psalm 43:27, 2]. Ezekiel [37:1–14]. Prokeimenon for Great Saturday for the Evening Prayer, 8th tone [Psalm 33:3?]. Genesis [here only 1:1 is provided]. Isaiah [60:1–16]. Exodus [12:1a, 2–11]. Jonah [1:1–4:11]. Joshua [5:10–15]. Exodus [13:20–15:1].⁵⁸ And the singer [al-*mutarannim*] will say/recite the Song [of Moses] in the 5th tone [i.e., Exod 15:1–19; only Exod 15:1b is provided], and he says after every three verses [فصول] of the hymn: “we give glory to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit” and repeats the verses again. Zephaniah [3:8–15]. 3 Kingdoms [17:8–24]. Isaiah [61:10–62:5]. Genesis [a few words provided, then cross-reference to Friday of the Fifth Week of Lent, i.e., Genesis 22:1–18]. Isaiah [61:1–10a]. [4] Kingdoms [4:8–37]. Isaiah [63:11b–64:5a]. Jeremiah [38:31–34]. Daniel [3:1–27]. The singer says/recites in this passage [الفصل]: “praise the Lord and exult him and elevate him forever” and after every three verses [فصول], he says/recites this passage [الفصل] till the end of the hymn. Then he says/recites: “glory is to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit” and adds an additional passage.

Annunciation, fols. 56^r–57^r

In the 24th of the month Adar, on the day which is followed by the feast of the Annunciation. Exodus [3:1b–8c]. Proverbs [8:23–30]. Genesis [18:1–10a].

Foundation of Constantinople, fols. 57^r–^v

In the 11th of Ayyār [May], and that is the day which is followed by the Foundation of the City of Constantinople. Isaiah [54:9–15]. Isaiah [cross-reference to 9th reading on Great Saturday, i.e., Isaiah 61:10–62:5]. Isaiah [65:18b–24].

57 On 15 August, Dormition, Genesis [28:10–17]; Ezekiel [43:27–44:4]; Proverbs [9:1–11] are read (cf. note 59).

58 The folios are misplaced: 49v contains Exod 13:20–14:9a; 40^r–^v contains Exod 14:9b–28a; 50r contains Exod 14:28–15:1a.

Ascension of Christ, fols. 57^v–58^v

Isaiah [2:2 then cross-reference to Tuesday of the First Week of Lent, i.e., to 2:3a]. Isaiah [62:10–63:3a, 7–9]. Zechariah [14:1a, 4a, 8–11].

The Sunday before Pentecost: The Fourth Council [Probably a Mistake for Nicaea, See Cross-Reference on fol. 64^r], fols. 58^v–59^v

For the Saturday which is followed by the feast of (one of) the holy fathers before Pentecost. These readings are read in remembrance of the holy fathers, who convened at the fourth [sic] council. Genesis [14:14–20a]. Deuteronomy [1:8–11, 15–17a]. Deuteronomy [10:14–21].

Sunday of Pentecost, fols. 59^v–60^v

For the Saturday of holy Pentecost. Numbers [11:16–17, 24b–29]. Joel [2:23–3:5a]. Ezekiel [36:24–28].

Monday after Pentecost and Commemoration of the Earthquake of Constantinople, fols. 60^v–62^r

For Sunday/first day of Pentecost, in the holy day at the evening, add these three readings and [also] on 17th Adar [March] called the big earthquake, there are three readings. Isaiah [63:15–64:9]. Isaiah [actually Baruch 4:21–29]. Daniel [9:15–19].

Sunday of All Saints, fols. 62^r–63^r

For the Saturday in which (one of) all saints are commemorated, there is a reading in the evening from Isaiah [43:9–14a]. The second reading is [also] read at the beginning of Aylul [September], for Saint Symeon, from Wisdom [3:1–9]. A third reading is [also] read at the beginning of the calendar from Wisdom [5:15–6:3a].

Commemoration of Peter and Paul, fols. 63^r–64^r

In 27th [!] of Haziran [June], the day which is followed by the feast of the holy apostles Peter and Paul. Peter [1Pet 1:3–9]. Peter [1Pet 1:13–19]. Peter [1Pet 2:11–24b].

Commemoration of the Fourth Council (Chalcedon), fols. 64^r

In the 16th of Tamuz [July], the holy fathers, who convened at the fourth council. Search for the readings on the Saturday which is followed by [the feast of] (one of) the holy fathers, who convened in Nicaea and you find them.

Transfiguration, fols. 64^r–65^v

In the 5th of Ab [August], which is followed by the feast of the transfiguration of our Lord [تجلي ربنا]. Exodus [24:12–18]. Exodus [33:11–13, 17–23, 34:4b–6, 8]. Last part of fol. 64^v is left empty and the beginning of fol. 65 repeats much of the previous passage, i.e., Exod 33:17b–23, 34:4b–6, 8]. 3 Kingdoms [19:3–4a, 5–9a, 11–13a, 15a, 16c].

Dormition, fols. 65^v–66^v

On the 14th of this month [August] on the day which is followed by the dormition of the holy mother of God, one should know that the readings are the same as those read for the feast of her birth, the presentation of Christ in the temple, and at the feast of her annunciation. In case this day [i.e., Annunciation] falls in the fast then [the reading is taken from] the introduction of the holy Theotokos into the temple. The second reading is also read on her annunciation and on her birth,⁵⁹ and on the presentation of Christ in the temple from Genesis [28:10–17]. Ezekiel [43:27–44:4]. Proverbs [9:1–11; only first words provided, then cross-reference to the third day of the third week of the fast.]

New Year and St. Symeon the Stylite, fols. 66^v–67^r

And in the 1st of Aylul, [it is the feast of] Saint Simon Stylite and the beginning of the year [التاريخ], there are three readings from Wisdom: [3:1–9; first words are provided, then cross-reference to the 2nd reading of All Saints]. Wisdom [4:7–15]. Wisdom [5:15–6:3a; first words provided, then cross-reference to the 3rd reading of All Saints].

Nativity of the Theotokos, fol. 67^r

In the 8th of this month [i.e., September] is the Nativity of Our Lady the Theotokos. Search for the three readings to read at her Dormition.

Exaltation of the Cross, fol. 67^r

In the 14th of this month [i.e., September], which is followed by this, i.e., the feast of exaltation of the holy cross. Exodus [15:22–16:1a; first words provided, then cross-reference to the 3rd reading from the Blessing of Water, cf. Theophany]. Proverbs [3:11–18; only first words provided, then cross-reference to

59 I.e., the Nativity, the Annunciation (there are two systems here), and the Dormition of Mary have the same readings here and in some manuscripts, the Presentation and the Introduction exhibit the same readings as well. My sincere gratitude to Professor Engberg for explaining this more uncommon system to me.

Thursday on the first week of the fast]. Isaiah [60:11–16; only first words provided, then cross-reference to the 2nd (corr. 3rd) reading on Great Saturday].

The Earthquake of Constantinople, fol. 67^{r-v}

On the 25th of this month [i.e., September] is the remembering of the Earthquake. Jeremiah [1:1–5a, 8]. Jeremiah [1:11–17]. Jeremiah [2:1–5a; rest is missing, i.e., to 12].

Folios 68–69

The last two folios contain part of a prophetologion. The first folio contains Isa 63:1b–9 and “the 3rd reading from” Zechariah [14:1a; 4; 8–11], i.e., Ascension, as well as the rubric for the Sunday before Pentecost: The Fourth [sic!] Council and the 1st reading from Genesis [14:14–17; rest is missing, i.e., to 20a]. The last folio contains the end of Wisdom [6:1b–3a] and readings for the Feast of Peter and Paul on the 29th of Haziran [June]. 1Peter [1:3–9]. 1Peter [1:13–19]. 1Peter [2:11–18a; rest missing].

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