

The Cathedral–Monastic Distinction Revisited Part I: Was Egyptian Desert Liturgy a Pure Monastic Office?

by

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I. Introduction

During the latter half of the 20th century it became increasingly common within liturgical science to uphold a distinction between cathedral and monastic liturgies. This distinction has by and large been accepted by now, representing for most scholars and amateurs of liturgy a constitutive, obvious part of liturgical history. From time to time, however, critical voices have been heard, questioning either the distinction as a whole or parts of it.¹ Robert Taft, today one of the most staunch defenders of the distinction, found it necessary, after observing a “growing tendency to consider the ‘cathedral’ and ‘monastic’ liturgy distinction as no more than a heuristic structure invented by the liturgists,”² to vindicate it in a recent article.³

Prompted by general studies on the Byzantine divine office and in particular by the “discovery” of what without doubt is the Georgian version of the book of hours of the Jerusalem cathedral (Church of the Resurrection) in Byzantine times and the content of which is *grosso modo* of pre-600 dating, I have myself come to join in this “growing tendency” to question the cathedral–monastic distinction.

There is universal agreement about the status of the “cathedral” part of the distinction. It is also worth noticing that more attention is given to it: most authors describing the two liturgies indeed have by far more to say about cathedral liturgy

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¹ Paul F. Bradshaw, “Cathedral vs. Monastery: The Only Alternatives for the Liturgy of the Hours?,” in *Time and Community. In Honor of Thomas Julian Talley*, ed. J. Neil Alexander (Washington, DC: NPM Studies in Church Music and Liturgy, 1990) 123-36; Byron D. Stuhlman, “The Morning Offices of the Byzantine Rite: Mateos Revisited,” *Studia Liturgica* 19 (1989) 162-78; and Peter Knowles, “A Renaissance in the Study of Byzantine Liturgy?,” *Worship* 68 (1994) 232-41.

² Robert Taft, “Comparative Liturgy Fifty Years after Anton Baumstark (d. 1948): A Reply to Recent Critics,” *Worship* 73 (1999) 532.

³ Robert Taft, “Cathedral vs. Monastic Liturgy in the Christian East: Vindicating a Distinction,” *Bolletina della Badia Greca di Grottaferrata* series 3, 62 (2005) 173-219.

than the monastic. What is not so clear is exactly the monastic part of the distinction. First, historically: what monastic liturgy did actually exist? And then, on the question of principle: what is monastic liturgy's relationship to cathedral?

The present work is the first part of a double article on the cathedral–monastic distinction and will examine the character of what is conventionally considered the pure monastic rite. The essay has been motivated by a growing doubt that there ever existed any pure monastic rite and, as a consequence of this, a questioning of the appropriateness of the whole cathedral–monastic distinction. Historically, Egyptian desert liturgy is put forward in presentations of the distinction as *the* pure monastic office. However, a closer examination of it raises very serious doubt that it was actually purely monastic. First, the synaxes of morning and evening very probably possessed a *selected*—that is, “cathedral” according to the cathedral–monastic paradigm—psalmody rather than a continuous—that is, “monastic”—one. Consequently, if Egyptian desert liturgy had cathedral elements, and that even in its core, may it then constitute a real counterpart to cathedral liturgy? May we still consider it an independent rite, a liturgy separate from that of the secular church and qualitatively equal to it? Or is it then simply an adaptation of the “cathedral” rite, possibly a reduction or an amplification of it? If so, the cathedral–monastic distinction has lost one of its two constitutive counterparts and therefore its meaning is open to question.

II. The Characteristics of Cathedral and Monastic Liturgy

For us to put the established cathedral–monastic distinction to test we need to state clearly what it claims to be establishing. Drawing from various publications,⁴ a quite general understanding of the cathedral–monastic distinction may probably be summarized as follows (the five numbers refer to Bradshaw's survey of the two ways of prayer):

⁴ Among others, Juan Mateos, “The Origins of the Divine Office,” *Worship* 41 (1967) 477-85; William Jardine Grisbrooke, “A Contemporary Liturgical Problem: The Divine Office and Public Worship,” *Studia Liturgica* 8 (1971–1972) 129-68, here particularly 143ff.; W. G. Storey, “The Liturgy of the Hours: Cathedral versus Monastery,” *Worship* 50 (1976) 50-70; George Guiver, *Company of Voices* (London: SPCK, 1988); Bradshaw, “Cathedral vs. Monastery”; W. Jardine Grisbrooke, “The Formative Period—Cathedral and Monastic Offices,” in *The Study of Liturgy*, rev. ed., ed. Cheslyn Jones et al. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992) 403-20; Paul F. Bradshaw, *Two Ways of Praying* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1995); and Robert F. Taft, “Christian Liturgical Psalmody: Origins, Development, Decomposition, Collapse,” in *Psalms in Community. Jewish and Christian Textual, Liturgical, and Artistic Traditions*, ed. Harold W. Attridge and Margot E. Fassler (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2004) 7-32.

PARAMETER	PURE CATHEDRAL LITURGY	PURE MONASTIC LITURGY
1. Dimension	Ecclesiastical, common Public	Individual Private
2. Church hierarchy	Priesthood necessary	Priesthood not necessary
3. Character	Praise <i>to</i> God and intercession	Quiet meditation Pedagogical means for spiritual growth
4. Orientation	Actions, symbols “To God”	Interiority “From God”
5. “Pray without ceasing” (1 Thess 5:17)	Whole life be a prayer	Literal implementation of the ideal: unceasing liturgical or inner prayer
Time	Fixed time (daily, weekly and annual cycles)	Unceasing prayer, independent of time
Psalmody	Selected psalmody: psalms chosen in view of time and occasion	Continuous psalmody: psalms in numeric order; whole psalter

When assessing both the distinction and, in a broader sense, all divine offices, the most important parameter is psalmody because it more eminently than the other parameters concerns liturgical structure. Consequently, psalmody constitutes the ultimate criterion for determining whether a given office would be cathedral or monastic. The two types of psalmody have been characterized by Mateos⁵ and Taft,⁶ among others: the so-called “cathedral” psalmody, consisting of selected psalms and including a refrain; and the psalmody termed “monastic,” consisting of continuous reading or chanting in numerical order of the whole psalter, and lacking a refrain.⁷ Such a monastic psalmody, a “*Durchbeten des Psalters*” to use

⁵ Juan Mateos, *La célébration de la parole dans la liturgie byzantine*, Orientalia Christiana Analecta 191 (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1971) 7-26.

⁶ Taft, “Christian Liturgical Psalmody,” 11-23.

⁷ Several points of psalmody classification are open to discussion, among them the nature of antiphony, and I hope to return to the psalmody question in a future article. In its main features, however, the distinction between cathedral and monastic psalmody is valid; it also has validity independent of the conventional distinction between cathedral and monastic liturgy.

Baumstark's expression,⁸ undoubtedly arose in ascetic circles, whether in urban, parochial asceticism⁹ or in monasticism proper.

The cathedral–monastic distinction depends on the validity, heuristic or historical, of both its counterparts. Imagining a pure monastic rite may be useful, but regarding the historicity of such a rite there are, as I see it, two criteria to be fulfilled if one is to acknowledge its historical existence: a) that it was created from scratch as a separate rite or office;¹⁰ and b) that it did not include any cathedral elements. We shall now examine these two criteria, in the reverse order.

III. Studies on Egyptian Desert Liturgy

The Egyptian desert fathers¹¹ did not observe or produce any written liturgical rule; we must resort to mainly literary sources, from which it is possible to glean a picture of their liturgy. Unfortunately, a thorough investigation of the prayer practice of the Egyptian desert fathers remains to be done; it is a *desideratum*, particularly in view of the important role given to this liturgical tradition as a first principle in the cathedral–monastic distinction. Among those scholars who have studied this topic in a preliminary way, first Lucien Regnault and then Hans Quecke have probably succeeded best in systematizing the literary data.¹² They

⁸ Anton Baumstark, *Nocturna laus. Typen frühchristlicher Vigilienfeier und ihr Fortleben vor allem im römischen und monastischen Ritus* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1956) 156.

⁹ By this I have in mind the so-called “pre-monastic” or “proto-monastic” ascetic movements within early Christian communities prior to the outburst of monasticism proper in the fourth century, the latter characterized by withdrawal from the world and from the secular church.

¹⁰ If it had gone back to a cathedral office it could not have avoided preserving cathedral elements. If it had eradicated all traces of its origin, one ought rather to speak of its creation from scratch.

¹¹ In this work which is mainly concerned with a question of principle, I shall be treating Egyptian desert monasticism and its liturgy in a rather grossly unifying way. A detailed examination would of course have to take into consideration differences of geography (Upper vs. Lower Egypt) and monastic type (cenobitic vs. semi-anchoretic). I am typically describing primarily the semi-anchoretic liturgy of Upper Egypt (Scetis, Kellia, Nitria) but, as is well known, there were cenobitic aspects of Nitrian monasticism (“semi-cenobitic”), so frontiers between various desert liturgies were not necessarily neat.

¹² Other major works on the liturgy or prayer of the Egyptian desert fathers include the following, in chronological order: Irénée Hausherr, “Comment priaient les Pères,” *Revue d'ascétique et de mystique* 32 (1956) 32-58, 284-96, here 284-96; Alexis van der Mensbrugge, “Prayer-time in Egyptian Monasticism (320–450),” *Studia Patristica* 2, Texte und Untersuchungen 64 (1957) 435-54; Irénée Hausherr, *Noms du Christ et voies d'oraison*, *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 157 (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, 1960), part 2: “Invocation du Nom,” 123-314 (incorporates the first part of the article from 1956); Antoine Guillaumont, “Le problème de la prière continue dans le monachisme ancien,” in *L'Expérience de la prière dans les grandes religions. Actes du colloque de Louvain-la-Neuve et Liège (22–23 novembre 1978)*, ed. H. Limet and J. Ries (Louvain-la-Neuve: Centre d'Histoire des Religions, 1980) 285-94; Robert Taft, “Praise in the Desert: The Coptic Monastic

have found that the prayer practice of the desert fathers consisted of three distinct components: synaxis (liturgical office, psalmody), *meletê* (meditation), and prayer.

Regnault, the great knower of the apophthegms, formulates his observation in this way: “La prière est donc nettement distinguée du travail, du travail manuel: on passe de l’une à l’autre occupation. Elle est aussi distincte de la *mélétè*, la méditation ou ruminant de textes de la Sainte Ecriture, et de la psalmodie.”¹³ Hans Quecke in a 1986 article more systematically identified a desert prayer practice consisting of the same three elements, even though he admits that they rarely appear together in the texts.¹⁴

Letter 143 of John the Prophet of Gaza (6th c.), disciple of the Egyptian elder Barsanuphios of Gaza, is particularly instructive of Scetiot¹⁵ cell liturgy or prayer practice; it merits a long citation since it strikingly illustrates Quecke’s and Regnault’s findings:

The Hours and the Odes are ecclesiastical traditions [*ekklêsiastikai paradoseis*], and they are good for establishing harmony among everyone. So, in monastic communities, they serve to unite a large number of people. Those who live in the scetes [*Sketiôtês*], however, neither observe the Hours nor chant the Odes, but rather do their manual labor and some prayer, each on one’s own. Now

Office Yesterday and Today,” *Worship* 56 (1982) 513-36, here 516-23; and Gabriel Bunge, *Das Geistesgebet. Studien zum Traktat De Oratione des Evagrius Pontikos* (Köln: Luth-Verlag, 1987). See also the more general presentation of Gabriel Bunge, *Irdene Gefässe. Die Praxis des persönlichen Gebetes nach der Überlieferung der heiligen Väter* (Würzburg: Verlag “Der christliche Osten,” 1996); ET *Earthen Vessels* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2002). The present article resumes parts of my publication in Norwegian: “Bønnens praksis i den egyptiske ørkenmonastisismen: en innledende studie (The Practice of Prayer in Egyptian Desert Monasticism: An Introductory Study),” *Norsk Teologisk Tidsskrift* 106 (2005) 147-69.

¹³ Lucien Regnault, “La prière continue ‘monologistes’ dans la littérature apophthegmatique,” *Irénikon* 47 (1974) 467-93, here 478.

¹⁴ Hans Quecke, “Gebet und Gottesdienst der Mönche nach den Texten,” in *Le site monastique copte des Kellia. Sources historiques et explorations archéologiques*, ed. Philippe Bridel (Geneva: Mission Suisse d’Archéologie Copte, 1982) 93-103, here 94: “Die vollständige Palette der verschiedenen Arten oder Aspekte des Gebetes umfasst aber zumindest drei Bezeichnungen, wenn diese auch nur gelegentlich alle drei zusammen genannt werden, nämlich *meletê*, *euchê* und *Psalmodie*.”

¹⁵ There is an ambiguity in the term *Sketiôtês* in that it may signify either a monk of Egyptian Scetis or any *scete* (lavra) dweller. Lanne (Emmanuel Lanne, “Le forme della preghiera personale in San Benedetto e nella tradizione,” in *Atti del 7° Congresso internazionale di studi sull’alto medioevo*, t. II [Spoleto: Presso la sede del Centro, 1982] 449-76, here 459) and Regnault (see footnote 16 [SC 427, p. 523]) opt for the first meaning, while Chryssavgis (see footnote 16 [p. 166, n.15]) thinks John of Gaza (lines 3-4 in the block quote above), explains the prayer practice of his own *scete* dwellers (translated “those who live in the *scetes*,” but the second time the term appears [see the block quote continued on the next page] he translates differently by “Scetiot^{es}”). Given that the liturgical tradition described by John of Gaza is that of Scetis, there is no doubt that by the term *Sketiôtês* he actually has in mind a dweller of Scetis.

when you stand for prayer, you should entreat God to deliver and liberate you from your old self, or else say the “Our Father in the heavens,” or even both of these, before sitting down to perform your manual labor. [Here follows a paragraph on prayer].

As for Vespers [*peri de hesperinôn*], the Scetioties recite twelve Psalms, at the end of each Psalm saying Alleluia instead of the doxology, and simply repeating one prayer. The same also happens at night: they say twelve Psalms, but after these Psalms they sit down to their handiwork. If any so wish, they may recite the Psalms by heart; otherwise, one may search one’s thoughts or else read the Lives of the Fathers. . . . “When one sings Psalms [*psallê*] or recites them by heart [*apostêthizê*], one should sing with one’s lips, at least if there is no other person nearby, in order to ensure that no one knows what one is doing.”¹⁶

John of Gaza’s letter, the main topic of which is the third element, the prayer (*euchê*) said standing, distinguishes clearly between meditational (*meletê*) psalms and the twelve psalms, mentioning the latter apart after explaining the recitation of psalms during manual work. This distinction of the two types of psalmody¹⁷ is essential to a correct understanding of Egyptian desert liturgy.

Relative to the conventional cathedral–monastic distinction, we notice that John of Gaza opposes the liturgy of “ecclesiastical traditions” to that of Scetis, thus seemingly confirming the existence of a pure monastic rite. But, as I shall say below, I believe that there are elements (the twelve psalms) of another ecclesiastical tradition in Scetiotie vespers and matins.

IV. The Synaxis

The daily office of the desert monks comprised two services called *synaxis*, “gathering,” celebrated evening (vespers) and morning (night office). Quecke carefully opts for characterizing the *synaxis* as an “*officium*,” that is, a liturgical office distinct from personal prayer:

Das Psalmodieren bezieht sich dabei zumeist auf eine Art spezieller Gebetzeit, auf die man mit einem gewissen Recht schon die Bezeichnung “*Officium*” anwenden

¹⁶ *Barsanuphius and John*, vol. 1; *Letters*, trans. John Chryssavgis, The Fathers of the Church 113 (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2006) 166–67. The latest edition of the Greek text (partially used as the basis of Chryssavgis’ translation) is in: François Neyt and Paula de Angelis-Noah, eds., *Correspondance*, vol. 1, pt. 2, trans. Lucien Regnault, Sources Chrétiennes 427 (Paris: Cerf, 1998) 520–25.

¹⁷ But we should note that, according to Quecke (“Gebet und Gottesdienst,” 94), the term *psalmodia* primarily denotes the *synaxis*.

kann, zumal wenn man sie noch in Anführungszeichen setzt. Ein in den Quellen häufig gebrauchter Ausdruck ist *synaxis*, der jedoch sehr vieldeutig ist. Auch die Präzisierung als “kleine *synaxis*” ermangelt weitgehend der Eindeutigkeit.¹⁸

The main element of the two daily *synaxes* was a unit of twelve psalms, as explicated by John of Gaza in the above citation, as well as, for instance, by John Cassian¹⁹ and some apophthegms.²⁰ There is an alleluia inserted in the twelve psalms series: after the twelfth psalm according to Cassian;²¹ after each psalm according to John of Gaza (see above). All agree that there was a collect²² after each psalm.²³ Other elements of the *synaxes* were private prayer and prostration.

The two *synaxes* show immediate signs of being *liturgical* offices and not some informal prayer in desert solitude: a) the term *synaxis*, “gathering,” surprising enough given the anchoritic and semi-anchoritic milieu of the sources; and b) the particular moments at which one gathers: even though these moments were without doubt somewhat flexible or movable for the monks,²⁴ “evening” and “morning” are sufficiently precise determinations of time for our purposes.

V. Meditation (*meletê*, *ruminatio*)

It was probably Heinrich Bacht who, in an article of 1955, rediscovered the meaning of monastic meditation (*meletê*).²⁵ A recent article by John Wortley, based on the *Apophthegmata Patrum*, confirms the findings of Bacht.²⁶ *Meletê* in monastic context signifies not an inner contemplation, but a concrete, physical activity consisting in the recitation by heart of biblical texts, especially the psalter, or even patristic or hagiographical texts, usually half-aloud. A synonymous verb to *meletân*

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ *John Cassian: The Institutes*, trans. Boniface Ramsey, Ancient Christian Writers 58 (New York and Mahwah, N. J.: Newman, 2000) II.5.

²⁰ *Apophthegmata patrum*, Systematic collection X.110, X.150, and XX.3; see Jean-Claude Guy, ed., *Les apophthegmes des pères. Collection systématique*, vols. 1–3, Sources Chrétiennes 387, 474, 498 (Paris: Cerf, 1993–2005).

²¹ “Having finished the twelfth with an Alleluia as a response . . .” (*John Cassian: The Institutes*, II.5.5).

²² Prayer said by the chanter, according to Cassian.

²³ *John Cassian: The Institutes*, II.5.7-11; John of Gaza, *Letter*, 143.30-32.

²⁴ The expression *hōra tēs synaxeōs* in Systematic X.93, X.149, X.152 probably refers to a round “time” rather than a precise hour.

²⁵ Heinrich Bacht, “‘Meditatio’ in den ältesten Mönchsquellen,” in id., *Das Vermächtnis des Ursprungs. Studien zum frühen Mönchtum I* (Würzburg: Echter-Verlag, 1972) 244-64 (revised version of the article in *Geistliches Leben* 28 (1955) 360-73).

²⁶ John Wortley, “How the Desert Fathers ‘Meditated,’” *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 46 (2006) 315-28.

is *apostêthizô*, “learn by heart; repeat from memory”²⁷ (of which the second meaning is the most relevant here). A common expression is *meletân tôn psalmôn*: “meditate the psalms.”²⁸ The psalter meditation, accompanied by manual work in a seated position, was interrupted regularly by prayer said in a standing position. The letter of John of Gaza tells that, after the twelve psalms at night, the monk sits down to do handiwork while meditating. In other words, there was possibly, perhaps usually, continuity in time between synaxis and *meletê*; however, there is no doubt that according to text data the two forms of psalmody are distinct.

The prayer proper was, according to Regnault and Quecke, the third element of the prayer practice of the desert fathers. Since it is not important for our purposes, I shall not comment further upon it here.

Contrary to the synaxis, the *meletê* bears no signs of being a liturgical, ecclesiastical office. It was just the continuous rumination of biblical texts, implying no ordo or structure and presupposing no gathering or moment whatsoever.

VI. At which Element in Desert Prayer was there Continuous Psalmody?

There is a widespread assumption that the two daily synaxes of fourth-century Egyptian desert monasticism consisted of continuous psalmody. Starting with pre-revolutionary Russia, we find it in the magisterial work by Skaballanovič on the *typikon*, who writes the following about “Egyptian cenobia according to Cassian”:

It is to be observed how everything which had been developed up to that time by the secular churches was eliminated from the office (*bogosluženie*): not only the litanies and prayers of fixed forms . . . , but even the psalms appropriate to the office hour—140 at vespers, 62 at matins: at the office the psalter was sung simply in sequence.²⁹

Musicologist James McKinnon, authority on early Western chant, states it bluntly: “The desert monks developed their own sort of morning and evening offices. . . .

²⁷ According to G. W. H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1961) 209.

²⁸ For instance, apophthegm numbered systematic V.53.11.

²⁹ Mikhail Skaballanovič, *Tolkovij tipikon* [Annotated Typikon], vol. 1 (Kiev: Tipografija Akcionernago Obščestva pečatnago i izdatel'skago děla N. T. Korčak'-Novickago, 1910) 243. (There is a new Russian edition of this work [not reprint]—Moscow: Izdanie Sretenskogo monastyrja, 2004—but for facility I refer to the old edition.) I follow, with some rectifications, the translation found in Alexander Schmemmann, *Introduction to Liturgical Theology*, trans. Asheleigh E. Moorhouse (London: Faith Press, 1966) 193-94.

Continuous psalmody figured prominently at these gatherings.”³⁰ Peter Knowles is just as affirmative, but arrives at it through a false reading:

Cassian also provides us with some information concerning the method of community prayer that he had found in Egypt. In Book Two, Chapter Eleven, he says that the psalms are recited by “an unbroken and continuous recitation.” This implies that the brethren chanted . . . the psalms in numerical order as found in the Bible.³¹

However, this is not how the translator Gibson, nor any other translator, understood Cassian. Knowles overlooks the comma after “service,” an error which produces the opposite meaning to what Cassian implied. Cassian simply says, to paraphrase him, that the Egyptians divide the psalms into sections; here is Ramsey’s more literal translation: “they do not attempt to do the very psalms themselves . . . in unbroken fashion.”³²

Others, while agreeing with this view about the continuous psalmody, interpret the texts in a less affirmative way. Robert Taft, in his influential overview of the liturgy of the hours of the various Christian traditions, presumes *psalmodia currentes*: “The core of the offices comprised twelve psalms, doubtless ‘in course,’ with private prayer, prostration and a collect after each.”³³ Taft’s carefulness was preceded by that of Mateos:

The psalms recited in these Egyptian monastic assemblies were not chosen, it seems, for their content or spirit. They had no connection with either the time of day or the type of celebration. The psalms were probably recited in numerical order in the morning and evening.³⁴

The serious point for our purposes, however, is that the cathedral–monastic distinction cannot tolerate any hesitation in this matter, because if the twelve psalms of the Egyptian desert synaxis are not in numerical order, the distinction is actually unfounded.

³⁰ James W. McKinnon, “The Book of Psalms, Monasticism, and the Western Liturgy,” in *The Place of the Psalms in the Intellectual Culture of the Middle Ages*, ed. Nancy Van Deusen (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1999) 43-58, here 49.

³¹ Peter T. Knowles, “Monastic Prayer: Text and Context,” *St. Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly* 39 (1995) 143-55, here 147. Knowles, not resorting to the Latin, uses the translation of E. C. S. Gibson in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (1894): “And, therefore, they do not even attempt to finish the Psalms, which they sing in the service, by an unbroken and continuous recitation.”

³² *John Cassian: The Institutes*, II.11.1.

³³ Robert F. Taft, *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West. The Origins of the Divine Office and Its Meaning for Today* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1986) 60.

³⁴ Mateos, “The Origins of the Divine Office,” 482.

We have just seen that continuous psalmody was performed during meditation accompanying manual work in the cell, that is, in the form of individual recitation. Would it be logical that both meditation and synaxis consisted in the same continuous psalmody, the only difference being that the synaxes limited the psalms to twelve? Was there not, on the level of their essential element (the psalms), a more significant distinction between meditation and synaxis?

An answer would seem to follow from a piece of information given by Cassian: the twelfth psalm has alleluia as *responsio* (II.5.5), and this psalm had to belong to a particular group of psalms: “[t]hey are also very careful that no psalm be said with an Alleluia as a response except that which is introduced by an Alleluia in its title.”³⁵ Then, if each twelfth psalm was an alleluia psalm, continuous psalmody would have been practically possible, since not every twelfth psalm of the psalter is an alleluia psalm.³⁶ But, as we have seen, John of Gaza on the contrary claims that the Scetioties say alleluia after *each* psalm (143, 31), and it is generally acknowledged that Cassian’s description of Egyptian practices was somewhat hampered by a fading memory and by local agenda. Consequently, the Cassian requirements cannot be regarded as trustworthy, at least not at this point in the research.

A first positive answer is indicated by later Coptic tradition. With a few exceptions, all the services of the present Coptic daily office, which is basically a Scetis tradition, have at their core a series of twelve psalms.³⁷ These have been chosen on the basis of a mixed principle: they are selected and fixed, but they are following in an always ascending and often numerical order. Thus in the course of the day and night seventy-six psalms are said, starting with Psalm 1 at matins and ending with Psalm 147 at compline/third nocturn.³⁸ The main principle behind the choice of psalms here is selection and not continuous psalmody, though admittedly there is a sort of numeric continuity within selection.

³⁵ *John Cassian: The Institutes*, II.11.3.

³⁶ There were apparently diverging opinions about exactly which psalms were alleluia psalms. The list offered by Athanasios of Alexandria (*Epistola ad Marcellinum*, PG 27:36B) reckons nineteen such psalms: 104–6, 111–18, 134–35, 145–50. Rahlfs’ Septuagint edition has twenty psalms carrying the title “Alleluia”: the same as Athanasios, plus 110, while Eusebius has only fifteen (*Commentaria in Psalmos*, PG 23:66): 104–6, 110–18, 134, 145–46. See Tomas Derda, ed., *Deir el-Naqlun: The Greek Papyri (P. Naqlun I)*, *Studia Antiqua* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 1995) 85–86.

³⁷ For a well informed summary presentation of the Coptic horologion, see Ugo Zanetti, “La distribution des psaumes dans l’horologion copte,” *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 56 (1990) 323–69, particularly 337–47. See also O. H. E. Burmeister, “The Canonical Hours of the Coptic Church,” *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 2 (1936) 89ff.

³⁸ The same twelve Psalms are said at compline and at the third nocturn of the midnight office; Psalms 148–50 are reserved for the “psalmodia of the night” (see Taft, *Hours*, 255–56).

Additional evidence against the assumption that the twelve psalms were “in sequence (*currente psalterio*)” is given by the so-called Rule of the Angel, preserved in two recensions: that of Palladios,³⁹ reused in secondary *Greek Lives* and the *Latin Life* of St. Pachomios,⁴⁰ and that of Cassian.⁴¹ Cassian in fact identifies the twelve psalm series with the Rule of the Angel (II.6). Now, it has been shown by Armand Veilleux that the Rule of the Angel in its pristine shape must have prescribed a psalm and a prayer at every hour, constituting therefore a succinct twenty-four hour horologion (book of hours).⁴² The grouping of the twelve psalms into one single office, as we find it in Egyptian and subsequently in Latin monasticism,⁴³ was apparently a secondary stage. If the twelve psalms were to be said each at a different hour, such a distribution would have precluded for all practical purposes the notion that they, even if they were in numerical order, represent a continuous psalmody.

On the basis of these two pieces of evidence, I conclude that the element of continuous psalmody in Egyptian desert liturgy was to be found in the meditation and not in the synaxis, that is, in the non-liturgical part of their prayer, and that the two series of twelve psalms in fact must have consisted of fixed, selected psalms.

VII. The Identity and Origin of the Twenty-Four Psalms

Two questions arise from the assumption that the twelve psalms were fixed. First, concerning the identity of the altogether twenty-four psalms of the two synaxes: Do we know which ones they were? Later Coptic tradition is of no help, for the growth of the Coptic daily cursus occasioned a new selection of twelve psalms series, the principle of which was incongruent with so low a number as twenty-four psalms, namely the principle of daily (but here incomplete) *Durchbeten des Psalters*.

³⁹ Palladios, *Historia Lausiaca*, 32; Greek edition: G. J. M. Bartelink, ed., *Palladio, La Storia lausiaca* (Milan: Fondazione Lorenzo Valla, 1990) 150-60.

⁴⁰ See H. van Cranenburgh, ed., “La ‘Regula Angeli’ dans la Vie latine de Saint Pachôme,” *Le Muséon* 76 (1963) 167-94, with specific references to these *Lives*.

⁴¹ “[The cantor = an angel] sang eleven psalms that were separated by the interposition of prayers, all the verses being pronounced in the same tone of voice. Having finished the twelfth with an Alleluia as a response, he suddenly withdrew from the eyes of all, thus concluding both the discussion and the ceremony. VI. Thereupon the venerable gathering of fathers understood that, at the Lord’s willing, a universal rule had been established for the groups of the brothers through the teaching of an angel, and they determined that this number [of twelve] was to be observed at both the evening and the morning assemblies” (*John Cassian: The Institutes*, II.5.5).

⁴² Armand Veilleux, *La liturgie dans le cénobitisme pachômien au quatrième siècle*, Studia Anselmiana 57 (Rome: Pontificium Institutum S. Anselmi, 1968) 324-39.

⁴³ See Baumstark, *Nocturna laus*, 106-18 (“Die Psalmenzwölfzahl”).

What is a much more fruitful track is connected with an Egyptian papyrus made known not long ago: *P. Naqlun inv. 72/89*, datable to the latter half of the sixth century, found at the former Lavra of Naqlun (today Deir el-Naqlun) in Fayyoun in Upper Egypt by a Polish excavation, and published in 1995.⁴⁴ This papyrus of Egyptian desert monasticism does contain twelve psalms, one for each hour of the day. However, its twelve psalm series does not stand alone; what it represents is not an individual or local creation but a succinct horologion which must have been quite widespread and the earliest witness of which is the fifth-century (first half) biblical uncial Codex Alexandrinus. The beginning of this section of Codex Alexandrinus is the following (British Library Royal 1 D VII, fol. 11v, or 532^v according to old numbering):

ΚΑΝΟΝΕΣ ΗΜΕΡΙΝΩΝ ΨΑΛΜΟΝ, “The canons of the day psalms”⁴⁵

Ω(PA) Ἀ ΨΑΛΜΟΣ Η, “First hour: psalm 8”

Ω(PA) Β ΨΑΛΜΟΣ ΚΘ, “Second hour: psalm 29,” etc.⁴⁶

The twenty-four psalms of Codex Alexandrinus, each ascribed to the corresponding hour of day and night, are the following: 8, 29, 1, 41, 50, 6, 69, 84, 111, 140, 110, 120; 74, 29, 54, 6, 4, 40, 31, 80, 87, 95, 21, 56.⁴⁷

In addition to the twelve day psalms, this horologion tradition, then, has twelve night psalms and it is found, with some variation, in a certain number of psalters of Palestinian and Byzantine traditions.⁴⁸ The Naqlun papyrus shows that the twenty-four psalms to be said at each hour of the day and the night were known in Egyptian desert monasticism in the sixth century, about a century and a half after the writing of Codex Alexandrinus.

Could it be that the two times twelve psalms of the Rule of the Angel and of the two daily synaxes of Egyptian desert monasticism were actually identical to

⁴⁴ Published in Derda, 79-81. The correspondence of the day psalms with other witnesses in which there are also the twelve night psalms indicates that the night part of the Naqlun papyrus is lost.

⁴⁵ Directly after this title follow three morning psalms, but they are not relevant for us.

⁴⁶ One edition of this list is found in Henry B. Swete, *An Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1902) 359.

⁴⁷ The psalm numbers differ in various editions of this list and they are not all legible on the published facsimile of the manuscript (Herbert Milne, et al., eds., *The Codex Alexandrinus (royal ms. 1 D v-viii) in reduced photographic facsimile: Old Testament, Pt. IV: 1 Esdras–Ecclesiasticus* (London: British Museum, 1957). I am extremely grateful to Dr. Juan Garcés and Dr. Scot McKendrick of The British Library for having undertaken at my request a new reading from the manuscript of the psalm numbers, communicated to me in an e-mail of January 31, 2008. This version of the psalm numbers in Codex Alexandrinus should henceforth be considered as the correct one.

⁴⁸ A list of seven such psalters, with their twenty-four psalms, is found in Georgi R. Parpulov, *Toward a History of Byzantine Psalters* (Ph.D.diss., The University of Chicago, 2004) Appendix C5.

these twenty-four psalms? Could it be, in other words, that we have identified which twenty-four psalms were prescribed by the Angel and used in this tradition?

If ascertained, an Egyptian provenance of the oldest witnesses of the twenty-four hour horologion would provide an argument in favor of connecting the twenty-four psalms of the Egyptian desert synaxes with those of the succinct twenty-four hour horologion. The provenance of Codex Alexandrinus was traditionally ascribed to the city of its name, a view held, for instance, by Kenyon in 1901: "All available evidence points to Alexandria as its most probably birth-place."⁴⁹ A recent conclusion on a text-historical basis also places its origin in Alexandria.⁵⁰ An unanimous certainty of such a point of view would have been excellent for our purposes, providing almost contemporary sources for the Rule of the Angel and the twenty-four hour horologion; however, there is unfortunately no such unanimity. Studies by Burkitt and McKendrick challenge the Alexandrian theory, the former proposing Constantinople as the place of origin,⁵¹ the latter Ephesus.⁵² The study of its provenance must therefore be pursued, taking into consideration a broad range of subjects, including orthography, script, decoration, text history, and liturgy. The location undoubtedly would have been a major ecclesiastical center of the period, for in McKendrick's words, "as a luxury manuscript of the full Bible, Alexandrinus must be the work of a sophisticated centre of book production."⁵³ A liturgical argument could possibly be provided by the ode series of the manuscript. Schneider, in his important but partly outdated study of the biblical odes, felt sure that the ode series of Codex Alexandrinus (he identifies one series of each of two scribes) are of Egyptian types.⁵⁴ But nowhere,

⁴⁹ Frederic G. Kenyon, *Handbook to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament* (London: Macmillan, 1901) 7.

⁵⁰ "En fait, son texte est éclectique: il est fortement marqué par la recension origénienne dans les premiers livres prophétiques. Dans les *Psaumes* et *Job* il atteste la recension lucianique. . . . Le codex a sans doute été composé à Alexandrie, mais il intègre des données textuelles propres à la Palestine et à la Syrie" (Gilles Dorival, Marguerite Harl, and Olivier Munnich, *La Bible grecque des Septante. Du judaïsme hellénistique au christianisme ancien* [Paris: Cerf, 1994] 56).

⁵¹ F. C. Burkitt, "Codex 'Alexandrinus,'" *Journal of Theological Studies* 11 (1910) 603-6. T. C. Skeat ("The Provenance of the Codex Alexandrinus," *Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s. 6 [1955] 233-35) supports the possibility of a Constantinopolitan provenance.

⁵² Scot McKendrick, "The Codex Alexandrinus: Or the Dangers of being a Named Manuscript," in *The Bible as a Book: The Transmission of the Greek Text*, ed. Scot McKendrick and Orlaith A. O'Sullivan (London: British Library, 2003) 1-16.

⁵³ McKendrick, 9.

⁵⁴ "Der Schreiber I vertritt die national-koptische Linie, die später ausschliesslich für Ägypten kennzeichnend geworden ist. Der Schreiber II ist mehr alexandrinisch-griechisch orientiert. Seine Odenreihe ist der Vorläufer jener klassischen Neun Oden, die sich in der ganzen orthodox-griechischen Kirche einheitlich durchgesetzt haben" (Heinrich Schneider, "Die biblischen Oden im christlichen Altertum," *Biblica* 30 [1949] 28-65, here 56).

it seems, does he argue why the main ode series, that of scribe 2, is Alexandrian; apparently Schneider assumes an Alexandrian origin for both the manuscript and its odes.

On the contrary, the Egyptian provenance of the Naqlun papyrus is clear. Both this papyrus and the Rule of the Angel belong to Egyptian desert monasticism. Admittedly, they are about two hundred years apart, so technically the twenty-four hour horologion could have been introduced to the Egyptian desert from elsewhere, possibly from the area where Codex Alexandrinus was produced if that was not Alexandria. If so, the two series of twenty-four psalms could be different. Nevertheless, the common location of the Rule of the Angel and the Naqlun papyrus does suggest a probability that the twenty-four hour series of both are connected and, consequently, that the psalms to be sung according to the Rule of the Angel are in fact identical to those of the Naqlun papyrus and the other witnesses.⁵⁵

A second question concerning the origin of the twenty-four psalms follows from this: If not the place of origin, may we more closely identify the *context* in which the twenty-four hour horologion arose?

According to Diakovskij, a pre-revolutionary Russian liturgist who made an important study on the liturgy of the hours that is little known in the West, the twelve night psalms were of anchoritic origin, but were in due time integrated into the collective liturgy of the Palestinian monastic tradition.⁵⁶ However, as a matter of fact, the practice of praying at each hour is not particularly compatible with cell prayer. The eremitic and lavriot cell monks would rather seek to avoid being disturbed by a formal or ritual prayer at every hour, preferring instead the continuous, inner prayer through meditation (*meletê*).

A more probable interpretation is that the succinct twenty-four hour horologion of Codex Alexandrinus and later sources represent not an anchoritic but a “cathedral” liturgical tradition. Its presence in the Codex Alexandrinus would point to

⁵⁵ The requirement of Cassian that the two twelfth psalms be alleluia psalms could have served as a criterion for judging whether the twenty-four hour horologion provides the psalms of the Rule of the Angel. But since Cassian, as noted above, is contradicted by John of Gaza, his requirements cannot be regarded as absolute for our purposes. In addition, there is the somewhat fluid nature of both the twenty-four psalms series and the alleluia psalms list (see footnote 40). Thus, concerning the series of twenty-four psalms, two slightly different redactions are discernible: the twelfth day psalm is 120 in one redaction, 111 in the other (see my entry, “Dvenadcati psalmov čin” [The order of twelve psalms], in *Pravoslavnaja enciklopedija*, vol. 14 [Moskva: Cerkovno-naučnij centr “Pravoslavnaja enciklopedija,” 2007] 232-34). Of these, the latter really is an alleluia psalm, but not the first; the twelfth night psalm, 56 in both redactions, is not an alleluia psalm. The twelfth day psalm of both Codex Alexandrinus and the Naqlun papyrus is the non-alleluiatic 120. There is, then, only a partial match between the twenty-four psalms series and the requirements of Cassian.

⁵⁶ E. P. Diakovskij, *Posledovanie časov’ i izobrazitel’nyx’. Istoričeskoe izsledovanie* [“Relationship between cellite and ecclesiastical services”] (Kiev: T. G. Mejnandera, 1913) 165, 192-208.

an urban origin or at least urban usage; as we have seen, this great codex was certainly not produced in the desert. A ritualized prayer at every hour conforms to a cathedral context, especially the ascetic tagmas of late antiquity, the most prominent task of which was exactly the divine office.⁵⁷

The discovery of the Georgian version of two ancient Palestinian horologia, both fragmentary and both belonging to Sinai Georgian O.34 (10th c.; O. = old collection), opens up new perspectives on many aspects of late antique liturgy, including that of the twelve psalms of the Egyptian desert fathers.⁵⁸ There is no doubt that the daily cursus of both these horologia, in spite of their fragmentary state, included twenty-four offices. The most recent of the two horologia, called “Sabaitic” in the manuscript, covers day hours 1–5 and is very close to the Greek Sabaitic horologion Sinai Greek 863 (9th c.).⁵⁹ The difference between the two Sabaitic horologia is, first of all, the existence in the Georgian one of “very small” hours between the minor ones: Prime, hour 2, Terce, hour 4, hour 5. The main elements of the “very small” hours are a fixed psalm and a cathisma of the psalter; the fixed psalms of these three hours are Psalms 29, 41, and 19. The two first of these psalms, prescribed for hours two and four, are identical to those of Codex Alexandrinus for the same hours, while the third psalm is not.

The most ancient of the two Georgian horologia, called “Georgian” in the manuscript (a term signifying the Georgian version of the ancient Hagiopolite rite), may with great certainty be connected with the cathedral of Jerusalem, its content without doubt belonging to the Byzantine period (pre-Arabic). It has preserved the last two hours of the day and the twelve hours of the night. Like the Georgian Sabaitic horologion, it includes between public offices (vespers, matins and others) “very small” hours of the same structure. Concerning the numbers of the fixed psalms, the ancient Jerusalem horologion is difficult to interpret because of a regrettable rewriting by a second scribe of the beginnings of the offices (who in addition usually re-prescribed more than one psalm). The most obvious matches between the horologia of Sinai Georgian O.34 and Codex Alexandrinus (and other witnesses of the same tradition) are given below:

⁵⁷ For Egypt, see Ewa Wipszycka, “Les confréries dans la vie religieuse de l’Égypte chrétienne,” in *Études sur le christianisme dans l’Égypte de l’antiquité tardive*, Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum 52 (Rome: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 1966) 257-78.

⁵⁸ I edited these two books of hours in my “L’Horologe ‘géorgien’ du Sinaiticus ibericus 34. Edition, traduction et commentaire” (Ph.D. diss., Université de Paris-Sorbonne [Paris IV], Institut Catholique de Paris and Institut de théologie orthodoxe Saint-Serge, 2003) and am preparing their publication.

⁵⁹ Edition in Juan Mateos, “Un Horologion inédit de Saint-Sabas. Le Codex sinaitique grec 863 (IXe siècle),” in *Mélanges E. Tisserant*, vol. 3.1, Studi e Testi 233 (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1964) 47-76.

		“Georgian” horologion	Sabaitic horologion	Codex Alexandrinus
Day hour	2	(lost)	29	29
Day hour	4	(lost)	41	41
Night hour	8	60, 66, 74, 78	(lost)	80
Night hour	9	80, 81	(lost)	86 (81) ⁶⁰
Night hour	10	94, 95	(lost)	95

These matches (Pss 29, 41, 80, [81], 95) are not too numerous, but they are sufficient to prove that there is a connection between the twenty-four hour horologion of Jerusalem and that of Codex Alexandrinus tradition. It must also be noted that the complete list of the twenty-four psalms of the latter is found in a fragment belonging to Sinai Georgian O.34; in other words, the series was known in Palestine.

Had we not known the ancient Hagiopolite horologion, one could have hypothesized that the twenty-four hour cursus was a particularity of the Great Lavra of Saint Sabas. But there is strong possibility that the “Georgian” Hagiopolite horologion is a redaction of the model of which the Sabaitic horologion represents a development. Consequently, the liturgical milieu in which the twenty-four were used in Palestine was primarily the cathedral of Jerusalem. It is reasonable to assume that the tagma of *Spoudaioi* at the Church of the Resurrection performed the “very small,” non-public offices of this horologion.

Moreover, according to Palladios and Cassian, the context in which the Rule of the Angel arose was not anchoritic. Palladios ascribes it to Pachomian cenobitism and, within this, to the beginners (novices); Cassian to the evangelist Mark, the first bishop of Alexandria. Of course, these legendary descriptions of origin do not prove anything, but they are at least congruent with my hypothesis about a non-anchoritic, cathedral origin of the twenty-four psalms.⁶¹

VIII. The Origin of Egyptian Desert Liturgy: Independent of Cathedral Liturgy?

Now, we may return to the first criterion for a liturgy to be pure monastic: that it was created independently of ecclesiastical or cathedral liturgy. In the first place,

⁶⁰ Psalm 81 in the other witnesses of this redaction of the twenty-four psalms.

⁶¹ If they are indeed of Egyptian tradition, one might speculate that the series originated in a cathedral milieu of Alexandria. Thus this great ecclesiastical center would have had its own twenty-four office liturgy, one for each hour, as Jerusalem had with the *Spoudaioi* in the Church of the Resurrection and Constantinople with the *Akoimetoι*.

one realizes that many scholars dealing with the cathedral–monastic distinction actually deny this criterion. It is worth noticing that the supposed founder of the cathedral–monastic distinction, Anton Baumstark, does not even mention Egyptian desert liturgy among his examples of monastic offices in *Liturgie comparée*,⁶² and he clearly does not believe in a separate creation of monastic liturgy: “In seinen Anfängen hat klösterlicher Brauch naturgemäss sich an allgemeingültige Formen bischöflicher Liturgie oder an bestimmte Einzelprägungen einer solchen angelehnt.”⁶³ For instance, Baumstark refers, immediately thereafter, the twelve psalms of the synaxis to the twelve biblical lessons of certain cathedral vigils at Jerusalem, Rome, and Gaul.⁶⁴ Similar views are expressed by Alexander Schmemmann (“there can be no doubt about the complete acceptance of the Church’s cult by early monasticism—as a norm and as an ideal, even when it could not be fulfilled”)⁶⁵ and W. J. Grisbrooke (“Nevertheless, monasticism did not develop a specific liturgical life of its own—at first. In the very early days the Church’s liturgy was still regarded as the self-evident norm of corporate worship.”).⁶⁶

In fact, Mateos seems to be the first scholar to postulate that the pure monastic Egyptian office originated separately from the ecclesiastical office:

The Egyptian desert tradition was born and practiced in the wilderness without any regard to secular church usages.⁶⁷ Since the Egyptian monks had no contact with the ecclesiastical world, they structured their two daily offices . . . according to their own needs.⁶⁸

It would seem, therefore, that Mateos was the real founder of the systematic and symmetrical distinction between cathedral and monastic liturgies, a distinction requiring a pure monastic office. The idea of a separate origin of the pure monastic office was then upheld in subsequent scholarship building on Mateos.

Our examination of Egyptian desert liturgy, even though it is limited and preliminary, indicates that it included an element, the twelve psalms of the synaxes,

⁶² Anton Baumstark, *Liturgie comparée* (Chevetogne and Paris: Éditions de Chevetogne, 1953) 122-32.

⁶³ Anton Baumstark, *Vom geschichtlichen Werden der Liturgie* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1923) 69.

⁶⁴ “Die pachomianisch-benediktinische Zwölfzahl von Psalmen des Nachtchores ist natürlich von der Zwölfzahl biblischer Lesungen nicht zu trennen, die sich als bezeichnend für die Struktur ältesten nächtlichen Gemeindegottesdienstes erweist, wenn sie der frühchristlichen Epiphanie- und Ostervigil Jerusalems mit der Karsamstagsliturgie Roms und Galliens gemeinsam ist” (Ibid.). In other words, Baumstark indicates that the number of psalms goes back to the number of readings of these particular vigils.

⁶⁵ Schmemmann, *Introduction*, 135.

⁶⁶ Grisbrooke, “The Formative Period—Cathedral and Monastic Offices,” 405.

⁶⁷ Mateos, “The Origins of the Divine Office,” 481.

⁶⁸ Juan Mateos, “The Morning and Evening Office,” *Worship* 42 (1968) 31-47, here 40.

that scarcely could have originated in the desert but on the contrary seems to be of urban origin, whether in public or ascetic urban liturgy.

IX. Concluding Remarks about Egyptian Desert Liturgy

1. The *meletê* of Egyptian desert monks was a non-liturgical exercise bearing practically all the features of pure monastic liturgy as summarized above: continuous psalmody; individual, quiet meditation independent of priesthood and time; absence of liturgical actions. What is described as “pure monastic liturgy” is then only a part of Egyptian desert liturgy, limited to its meditation. Further, pure monastic liturgy is not an office but just individual, pious prayer.

2. Continuous psalmody was not the only type of psalmody performed in Egyptian desert monasticism. The two daily synaxes most probably did not entail continuous psalmody but consisted mainly of a selected psalmody, the twelve psalms of the evening and night/morning synaxes. It is probable that the two twelve psalms series were identical to the psalms of a succinct twenty-four hour horologion whose earliest witness is Codex Alexandrinus. This horologion, which was in some form included in the twenty-four hour horologion of the Jerusalem cathedral in Byzantine times, most probably originated in an urban milieu, possibly in a cathedral to which was attached an ascetic or monastic community.

3. The assumption held by Mateos and later scholars about a separate origin of Egyptian desert liturgy cannot be upheld. It seems quite clear that its two series of twelve psalms represent a regrouping in two clusters of a succinct and fairly widespread horologion of twenty-four hours, each consisting of one fixed psalm and a prayer, to be said at all the hours of the day and the night. The nature of this horologion points rather to its having an urban origin, and such a regrouping may have been done as an adaptation to desert conditions after it was adopted and brought out into the desert. Therefore, one observes that even in the case of the prayer practice of the Egyptian desert, parochial or ecclesiastical liturgy is primary and monastic liturgy derivative of it, as its supplement.

4. Since neither of the two criteria of a pure monastic office has been fulfilled, i.e. that it has an origin independently of cathedral office and that it has no cathedral elements, the liturgy of Egyptian desert monasticism cannot be regarded as a “pure monastic rite,” contrary to what is usually held in overviews of cathedral and monastic liturgy. Since Egyptian desert liturgy is usually counted as the only “pure monastic rite,” the implication is that the pure monastic rite has not existed historically, neither was there any urban monastic liturgy that took an Egyptian, pure monastic office as its starting point. In other words, all monastic liturgy, whether of the city or of the desert, represents a monastization of cathedral liturgy.

However, differences remain between what is usually called cathedral and monastic liturgy. In the second part of this double article I will search for a new conceptual framework in which to explore these differences, in replacement of the now habitual, symmetrical two-office model.