

# CAPPELLA ROMANA

## Hymns of Kassianí

PORTLAND, OR

IN-PERSON CONCERT  
MONDAY, MAY 23 | 8pm

### TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

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Εἰς τὴν Γέννησιν τοῦ Κυρίου ·  
Εἰς τὸν Ἑσπερινόν

Οἱ Ἐπιλύχνιοι Ψαλμοί

*Ἦχος β´*

Κύριε ἐκέκραξα πρὸς σέ, εἰσάκουσόν μου,  
εἰσάκουσόν μου, Κύριε. Κύριε, ἐκέκραξα πρὸς σέ,  
εἰσάκουσόν μου · πρόσχες τῇ φωνῇ τῆς δεήσεώς  
μου, ἐν τῷ κεκραγέναι με πρὸς σέ · εἰσάκουσόν μου,  
Κύριε.

Κατευθυνθήτω ἡ προσευχή μου, ὡς θυμίαμα  
ἐνώπιόν σου, ἔπαρσις τῶν χειρῶν μου θυσία  
ἑσπερινή · εἰσάκουσόν μου, Κύριε.

Θοῦ, Κύριε, φυλακὴν τῷ στόματί μου, καὶ θύραν  
περιοχῆς περὶ τὰ χεῖλη μου ·  
εἰσάκουσόν μου, Κύριε.

Μὴ ἐκκλίνης τὴν καρδίαν μου εἰς λόγους πονηρίας,  
τοῦ προφασίζεσθαι προφάσεις ἐν ἀμαρτίαις ·  
εἰσάκουσόν μου, Κύριε.

Σὺν ἀνθρώποις ἐργαζομένοις τὴν ἀνομίαν, καὶ οὐ μὴ  
συνδυάσω μετὰ τῶν ἐκλεκτῶν αὐτῶν · εἰσάκουσόν  
μου, Κύριε.

Παιδεύσει με δίκαιος ἐν ἐλέει, καὶ ἐλέγξει με, ἔλαιον  
δὲ ἀμαρτωλοῦ μὴ λιπανάτω τὴν κεφαλὴν μου ·  
εἰσάκουσόν μου, Κύριε.

**Στιχηρὰ Προσόμοια**

Στίχ. Γενηθήτω τὰ ὦτά σου προσέχοντα εἰς τὴν  
φωνὴν τῆς δεήσεώς μου.

Πρὸς τὸ · Ὡς ὠράθης, Χριστέ  
Ὡς ὠράθης, Χριστέ,  
ἐν Βηθλεὲμ τῆς Ἰουδαίας

**At Vespers on Christmas (Eve)**

**Lamplighting Psalms (excerpt)**

*Mode 2*

Lord, I have cried to you, hear me; hear me, O Lord.  
Lord, I have cried to you, hear me. Give heed to the  
voice of my supplication when I cry to you.  
Hear me, O Lord.

Let my prayer be directed like incense before you;  
the lifting up of my hands be an evening sacrifice.  
Hear me, O Lord.

Set a guard, O Lord, on my mouth, and a strong  
door about my lips.  
Hear me, O Lord.

Do not incline my heart to evil words; to make  
excuses for my sins.  
Hear me, O Lord.

With those who work iniquity, let me not unite with  
their elect.  
Hear me, O Lord.

The just will chastise me with mercy and reprove  
me; but let not the oil of sinners anoint my head.  
Hear me, O Lord.

**Stíchera Prosómoia**

*Verse:* O let your ears be attentive, to the voice of my  
supplication.

*To the Melody "When You Appeared, O Christ"*  
When you appeared, Christ,  
in Bethlehem of Judea

ἐκ Παρθένου τικτόμενος  
καὶ τοῖς σπαργάνοις  
ἐνειλούμενος ὡσερ νήπιον  
καὶ ἐν φάτνῃ ἀνακλινόμενος,  
δῆμος ἀγγέλων ἐξ ὕψους ἐδόξαζε  
τὴν πολλὴν σου πρὸς ἀνθρώπους οἰκονομίαν  
ὁ διὰ σπλάγχνα οἰκτιρμῶν  
σάρκα περιβαλλόμενος  
καὶ τὸ πρόσλημμα θεώσας  
τῶν βροτῶν, Κύριε, δόξα σοι.

*Στίχ.* Ἐὰν ἀνομίας παρατηρήσης, Κύριε, Κύριε τίς ὑποστήσεται; ὅτι παρὰ σοὶ ὁ ἰλασμός ἐστιν.

Ὡς ὠράθης, Χριστέ,  
ἐκ γυναικὸς σεσαρκωμένος  
κατεπλήττετο τὴν σὴν  
συγκατάβασιν ἢ σὲ τεκοῦσα  
καὶ δακρύουσα, σῶτερ, ἔλεγε·  
Πῶς σε βρέφος φέρω τὸν ἄχρονον;  
Γάλακτι δε σε πῶς τρέφω, τὸν τρέφοντα  
πᾶσαν κτίσιν θεϊκῆ σου τῆ δυναστεία;  
Ὁ διὰ σπλάγχνα οἰκτιρμῶν  
σάρκα περιβαλλόμενος  
καὶ τὸ πρόσλημμα θεώσας  
τῶν βροτῶν, Κύριε, δόξα σοι.

*Στίχ.* Ἐνεκεν τοῦ ὀνόματός σου ὑπέμεινά σε, Κύριε,  
ὑπέμεινεν ἡ ψυχὴ μου εἰς τὸν λόγον σου, ἠλπισεν ἡ  
ψυχὴ μου ἐπὶ τὸν Κύριον.

Ὡς ὠράθης, σωτήρ,  
ὁ βασιλεύων τῶν αἰώνων  
ὑπὸ μάγων εὐσεβῶς προσκυνούμενος  
ὀδηγηθέντων δι' ἀστέρος σου, δόξης ἤλιε,  
τὴν πτωχείαν σου κατεπλήττοντο,  
δῶρα χρυσὸν δὲ καὶ σμύρναν καὶ λίβανον  
σοὶ προσήξαν ἐπὶ φάτνης ἀνακειμένῳ·  
ὁ διὰ σπλάγχνα οἰκτιρμῶν  
σάρκα περιβαλλόμενος  
καὶ τὸ πρόσλημμα θεώσας  
τῶν βροτῶν, Κύριε, δόξα σοι.

*Στίχ.* Ἀπὸ φυλακῆς πρωΐας μέχρι νυκτός, ἀπὸ  
φυλακῆς πρωΐας ἐλπισάτω Ἰσραὴλ ἐπὶ τὸν Κύριον.

Ὡς ὠράθης, Χριστέ,  
ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἐπιδημήσας  
καὶ πτωχεύσας συμπαθῶς τὸ ἀλλότριον

born from a Virgin  
and wrapped in swaddling clothes  
as a new-born  
and lying in a manger,  
a company of angels from on high praised  
your great concession towards mankind  
Who through the deepest compassion  
put on a body  
and deified the garment  
of mortals, glory to you.

*Verse:* If you, Lord, should mark iniquities, Lord,  
who will stand? But there is forgiveness with you.

When you appeared, Christ,  
made flesh from a woman,  
she who bore you,  
astounded by your condescension,  
tearfully said, Savior;  
“How can I bear you as infant who are eternal?  
How can I nourish with milk you  
who nourish the whole of creation with your divine  
power?”  
Lord, who through the deepest compassion put on  
flesh and deified the garment  
of mortals, glory to you.

*Verse:* For your name's sake I have waited for you, O  
Lord. My soul has waited on your word. My soul has  
hoped in the Lord.

When you appeared, Savior,  
who reigns through the ages,  
you were worshipped reverently by the Magi  
having been led by a star to you, sun of glory;  
they were astounded by your poverty  
and offered gifts to you lying in a manger,  
gold, frankincense and myrrh.  
Lord, who through the deepest compassion  
put on flesh  
and deified the garment  
of mortals, glory to you.

*Verse:* From the morning watch until night, from the  
morning watch, let Israel hope in the Lord.

When you appeared, Christ,  
to dwell on earth and  
in sympathy with others became poor,

πάσα ἡ κτίσις ὡς δεσπότη σοι προσεκόμιζε  
χαριστήριον ὕμνον χαίρουσα  
γένος ἀνθρώπων τὴν σὲ κύησασαν·  
γῆ τὸ σπήλαιον, οἱ μάγοι τὰ δῶρα·  
ὁ διὰ σπλάγχνα οἰκτιρμῶν  
σάρκα περιβαλλόμενος  
καὶ τὸ πρόσλημμα θεώσας  
τῶν βροτῶν, Κύριε, δόξα σοι.

### Ἔτερα Προσόμοια

*Στίχ.* Ὅτι παρὰ τῷ Κυρίῳ τὸ ἔλεος, καὶ πολλὴ παρ’  
αὐτῷ λύτρωσις, καὶ αὐτὸς λυτρώσεται τὸν Ἰσραὴλ ἐκ  
πασῶν τῶν ἀνομιῶν αὐτοῦ.

*Πρὸς τὸ · Ἄγγελος μὲν τὸ χαῖρε*

Ἄγγελοι ἐν σπηλαίῳ  
ἐπιστάντες ὕμνουν σε, Κύριε,  
τεχθέντα ἐκ Παρθένου ὡς ἀνθρωπον  
μάγοι δὲ καὶ ποιμένες  
σὺν αὐτοῖς, Χριστέ, προσεκύουν σε  
ἐν φάτνῃ ἀνακείμενον νήπιον·  
οἱ μὲν καταπλαγέντες  
τὴν πτωχείαν, Λόγε, σου τὴν ξένην,  
οἱ δὲ δῶρα χρυσόν σοι  
κομίζοντες καὶ σμύρναν καὶ λίβανον  
μεθ’ ὧν βοῶμέν σοι,  
εὐεργέτα τῶν ἀπάντων  
Κύριε, δόξα σοι.

*Στίχ.* Αἰνεῖτε τὸν Κύριον πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, ἐπαινέσατε  
αὐτόν, πάντες οἱ λαοί.

Τὸν ἥλιον τῆς δόξης  
φωτεινῆς σου μήτρας ἀνίσχουσα,  
ὧ κεχαριτωμένη πανάμωμε,  
τοῖς ἐν σκότει τοῦ βίου  
ταῖς ἀκτίσι θελήσαντα ἐφαπλῶσαι  
εἰς φαῦσιν σωτήριον  
παρθένος μετὰ τόκον  
ὡς πρὸ τόκου μένεις ὑπὲρ λόγον  
καὶ τοῦτον τοῖς σπαργάνοις  
ὡς νέφεσι καλύπτεις φωτίζοντα  
τοὺς πίστει κράζοντας,  
εὐεργέτα τῶν ἀπάντων  
Κύριε, δόξα σοι.

the whole creation offered you as Lord  
the people rejoicing bring a hymn of thanksgiving,  
to the one who bore you  
the earth offered the cave and the Magi the  
gifts; Lord, who through the deepest compassion put  
on flesh  
and deified the garment  
of mortals, glory to you.

### Other Prosimonia

*Verse:* For with the Lord there is mercy, and with  
him plentiful redemption, and he will redeem Israel  
from all his iniquities.

*To the Melody “An Angel Brought the Greeting”*

Angels present at the cave  
sang hymns of praise to you, Lord,  
born from a virgin as a man;  
Magi and shepherds with them  
worshipped you, Christ,  
lying in a manger, newborn;  
some were impressed by  
your unusual poverty, O Logos;  
others carried gifts to you,  
gold and myrrh and frankincense,  
joining them we cry aloud to you,  
benefactor of all,  
glory to you, Lord.

*Verse:* Praise the Lord, all you nations. Praise him all  
you peoples.

The sun of glory  
came forth from your radiant womb,  
O highly favored all-blameless,  
ordained to spread with its rays  
the light of salvation;  
you remained a virgin after the birth  
as you were before it,  
something unexplainable;  
and you covered him with swaddling clothes as a  
cloud, he who enlightens  
those who cry out with faith,  
benefactor of all,  
glory to you, Lord.

Στίχ. Ὅτι ἐκραταιώθη τὸ ἔλεος αὐτοῦ ἐφ’ ἡμᾶς, καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια τοῦ Κυρίου μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.

Ἡ κτίσις ἐφωτίσθη  
ἐπὶ γῆς τεχθέντος σου, δέσποτα,  
καὶ ἄγγελοι σε φόβῳ ἀνύμνησαν  
ποιμένες μετὰ μάγων  
εὐσεβῶς σε ἐδόξαζον  
ὡς πτωχεύσαντα, Λόγε, κατεϊδόν σε,  
καὶ σπάργανα φοροῦντα  
δι’ ὧν πάντων ἔλυσας, οἰκτίρμον,  
σειρὰς τῶν ἐγκλημάτων  
συνδήσας ἀφθαρσίᾳ ἡμῶν τὴν ζωὴν  
τῶν ἐκβοώντων σοι·  
εὐεργέτα τῶν ἀπάντων,  
Κύριε, δόξα σοι.

### Δοξαστικόν

Δόξα Πατρί, καὶ Υἱῷ, καὶ Ἁγίῳ Πνεύματι.  
Καὶ νῦν, καὶ αἰεὶ, καὶ εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων.  
Ἀμήν.

Αὐγούστου μοναρχήσαντος ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, ἡ  
πολυαρχία τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐπαύσατο, καὶ σοῦ  
ἐνανθρωπήσαντος ἐκ τῆς Ἀγνῆς, ἡ πολυθεΐα  
τῶν εἰδώλων κατήρηται. Ὑπὸ μίαν βασιλείαν  
ἐγκόσμιον, αἱ πόλεις γεγέννηται· καὶ εἰς μίαν  
Δεσποτείαν Θεότητος, τὰ Ἔθνη ἐπίστευσαν.  
Ἀπεγράφησαν οἱ λαοί, τῷ δόγματι τοῦ Καίσαρος,  
ἐπεγράφημεν οἱ πιστοί, ὀνόματι Θεότητος, σοῦ τοῦ  
ἐνανθρωπήσαντος Θεοῦ ἡμῶν. Μέγα σου τὸ ἔλεος,  
δόξα σοι.

### Κυριακὴ τοῦ Τελώνου καὶ τοῦ Φαρισαίου Ἐν τῷ Μεγάλῳ Ἑσπερινῷ

Εἰς τὸ Κύριε ἐκέκραξα Στιχηρὸν Δοξαστικόν Ἦχος  
πλ. δ’

Παντοκράτορ Κύριε, οἶδα, πόσα δύνανται τὰ  
δάκρυα· Ἐζεκιάν γὰρ ἐκ τῶν πυλῶν τοῦ θανάτου  
ἀνήγαγον, τὴν ἀμαρτωλὸν ἐκ τῶν χρονίων  
πταισμάτων ἐρρύσαντο, τὸν δὲ Τελώνην, ὑπὲρ τὸν  
Φαρισαῖον ἐδικαίωσαν, καὶ δέομαι, σὺν αὐτοῖς  
ἀριθμήσας, ἐλέησόν με.

Verse: For his mercy has been mighty towards us,  
and the truth of the Lord endures to the ages.

Creation was enlightened  
by your birth on earth, Lord,  
and the heavens praised you with fear  
shepherds along with Magi  
reverently glorified you  
when they saw you, O Logos, being poor  
and wearing swaddling clothes  
through which, merciful one, you broke  
all bands of sin  
uniting life with immortality  
for those who entreat you,  
benefactor of all,  
glory to you, Lord.

### Doxastikón

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy  
Spirit. Both now and ever and unto the ages of ages.  
Amen.

When Augustus reigned alone on the earth, the  
many kingdoms of mankind came to an end; and  
when you became man from the pure Virgin, the  
many gods of idolatry were destroyed; the cities  
of the world passed under one single rule; and the  
nations came to believe in one single Godhead; the  
peoples were enrolled by decree of Caesar; we the  
faithful were enrolled in the name of the Godhead,  
when you became man, O our God. Great is your  
mercy, Lord; glory to you!

### At Great Vespers on the Eve of the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee

At the Lamplighting Psalms, Sticheron at the  
“Glory” Mode Plagal 4

Almighty Lord, I know how powerful tears are. They  
brought Ezekias up from the gates of death. They  
delivered the sinful woman from the transgressions  
of many years. They justified the Tax Collector  
above the Pharisee. And so I pray, “Numbering me  
with them, have mercy on me.”

**Τετραώδιον τῷ Ἁγίῳ καὶ Μεγάλῳ Σαββάτῳ Ἦδὴ  
α' – Ἦχος πλ. β'**

**Ὁ Εἰρμός**

«Κύματι θαλάσσης  
τόν κρύψαντα πάλαι  
διώκτην τύραννον  
ὑπὸ γῆν ἔκρυψαν  
τῶν σεσωσμένων οἱ παῖδες  
ἀλλ' ἡμεῖς ὡς αἱ νεάνιδες  
τῷ Κυρίῳ ἄσωμεν·  
ἐνδόξως γάρ δεδόξασται».

**Τροπάρια**

Ἄφρον, γηραλέε,  
ἀκόρεστε, Ἄδη  
χανῶν ὑπήδεξαι  
τὴν τῶν ἀπάντων ζῶην·  
καταπιῶν γὰρ ἐμέσεις  
ἅς προπέπωκας δικαίων ψυχὰς

καθελεῖ σε Κύριος  
ὅτι δεδόξασται.

Ἰησοῦ, Θεέ μου,  
ὕμνῳ σου τὰ πάθη·  
ἐκὼν γὰρ τέθνηκας  
ὑπὲρ τῆς πάντων ζωῆς  
καὶ ἐν σινδόνι καὶ σμύρνη  
κηδευθῆναι κατηξίωσας  
τὴν ταφὴν δοξάζω σου  
ὕμνῳ σου καὶ τὴν ἔγερσιν.

**Τῇ Ἁγίᾳ καὶ Μεγάλῃ Τετάρτῃ εἰς τὸν ὄρθρον,  
Δοξαστικὸν τῶν ἀποστίχων Ἦχος πλ. δ'**

Κύριε, ἡ ἐν πολλαῖς ἀμαρτίαις περιπεσοῦσα Γυνή, τὴν  
σὴν αἰσθομένη Θεότητα, μυροφόρου ἀναλαβοῦσα  
τάξιν, ὀδυρομένη μύρα σοι, πρὸ τοῦ ἐνταφιασμοῦ  
κομίζει. Οἶμοι! λέγουσα, ὅτι νύξ μοι, ὑπάρχει,  
οἷστρος ἀκολασίας, ζοφώδης τε καὶ ἀσέληνος, ἔρωσ  
τῆς ἀμαρτίας. Δέξαι μου τὰς πηγὰς τῶν δακρῶν,  
ὁ νεφέλαις διεξάγων τῆς θαλάσσης τὸ ὕδωρ·  
κάμφθητί μοι πρὸς τοὺς στεναγμοὺς τῆς καρδίας,  
ὁ κλίνας τοὺς οὐρανοὺς, τῇ ἀφάτῳ σου κενώσει·  
καταφιλήσω τοὺς ἀχράντους σου πόδας, ἀποσμηξώ

**Tetraóðion of Holy and Great Saturday  
Ode 1 – Mode Plagal 2**

**The Model Stanza**

He who once  
Hid the pursuing tyrant  
In the waves of the sea,  
Was hidden beneath the earth  
By the children of those he had saved.  
But let us, as the maidens,  
Sing unto the Lord,  
For he is greatly glorified.

**Tropária**

Senseless, old,  
Insatiable, gaping  
Hell, receive  
The life of all mankind.  
For you will be sick devouring  
The souls of the righteous  
/ that you had swallowed down;  
The Lord will strike you down  
Because He is glorified.

Christ, my God,  
I sing in praise of your Passion,  
For you willingly died  
On behalf of everyone's life  
And condescended to be buried  
In a sheet and with myrrh;  
I glorify your burial  
And I offer praise to your raising.

**On Great and Holy Wednesday at Matins,  
Doxastikon of the Aposticha Mode Plagal 4**

Lord, the woman who had fallen into many sins,  
perceiving your divinity, took up the role of myrrh-  
bearer, and with lamentation brings sweet myrrh to  
you before your burial. "Alas!" she says, "for night  
is for me a frenzy of lust, a dark and moonless love  
of sin. Accept the fountains of my tears, you who  
from the clouds draw out the water of the sea; bow  
yourself down to the groanings of my heart, you  
who bowed the heavens by your ineffable self-  
emptying. I shall kiss your immaculate feet, and



## NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

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**K**assía was born to a noble family in Constantinople, now Istanbul but then capital of the East Roman (“Byzantine”) Empire. A strikingly independent woman whose historical position is comparable to that of the later German abbess Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179), Kassía has been recognized since the Middle Ages as a significant figure in the development of Eastern Orthodox Christian hymnody. According to the chronicle of Symeon Logethete, her great beauty led to her inclusion in a “bride show” held to find a consort for the Emperor Theophilos (d. 842). Theophilos challenged her by saying “It is from woman that evils come.” Kassía, according to Symeon, lost the competition (to the future Empress and Saint Theodora) when she, referring to the Virgin Mary, wittily responded “And also from a woman came the very best.”

Kassía demonstrated an early interest in monasticism through correspondence with Theodore, abbot of the famous monastery of Stoudios (759–826) and a notable defender of icons, the veneration of which was then being contested in Byzantium. She subsequently became a nun and eventually an abbess, but continued to manifest her brilliance by writing both secular Greek poetry and Christian hymns. Kassía is reported to have founded a monastery on the Constantinopolitan hill of Xerolophos after the final

restoration of icons in 843 and died at some point during the reign of Michael III (842–67).

Kassía’s hymns, which cover a broad range of sacred topics, are of two types: 1) **kanons**, sets of metrically identical stanzas (“odes”) originally attached to the biblical canticles (also called “odes”) of morning prayer (Matins, also called *Órthros*); and 2) **sticherá** (singular, **stícheron**), hymns for interpolation between verses (*stichoi*) of the ordinary psalms of the daily cycle of services. Her stichera include both: a) texts (**prosómoia**) written to be sung to pre-existing melodies; and b) hymns for which she composed original melodies (**idiómela**) according to a system of eight musical modes (the *Octoechos*) originally developed in Jerusalem.

Of the small group of Byzantine women known to have written texts and music for public worship, only Kassía succeeded in having her works transmitted widely in medieval manuscripts. They appear under such variants of her name as Kasia, Eikasia, Ikasia, and, most commonly in recent centuries, Kassianí. Her extraordinary musical contributions to Byzantine worship were recognized centuries after her death by Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos (1256–1335), a church historian and priest of Hagia Sophia, who featured her as the lone woman in his catalog of leading Byzantine hymnographers.

Approximately two thirds of the several dozen hymns attributed to Kassía in medieval sources were later included in the printed service books of the modern Byzantine rite, the liturgical system employed today by millions of Eastern Orthodox and Greek Catholic Christians. These officially sanctioned hymns are sung today not only in their original Greek, but also as translated into languages ranging from Albanian, Arabic, and Church Slavonic to Romanian, modern Serbian, and English. Only six of them list Kassía as their author, while the remainder are printed anonymously or attributed to other composers. Some of the latter are important hymnographers such as Patriarch Germanos or Theodore of Stoudios, but the most frequent attributions are to nameless individuals described as “Byzantios” (i.e. from Constantinople) or “Anatolios” (“Eastern”), geographic designations that, as Tatiana Senina observes, apply to Kassía.

Kassía has remained a popular figure in Greek culture from medieval historians to modern novelists. Her hymn for Holy Wednesday “On the Sinful Woman” is not only a musical highlight of the week before Easter in Balkan and Middle Eastern churches employing the Byzantine Rite, but over the past century it has been set multiple times by composers of western art (“classical”) music for various combinations of voices and/or

instruments. Cappella Romana has previously performed and recorded hymns by Kassia in settings ranging from chants newly edited from medieval sources to polyphonic settings by contemporary composers Christos Hatzis, Ivan Moody, John Vergin, and Tikey Zes. With this program we are inaugurating a scholarly and artistic project to edit critically and record her complete sacred works from their earliest manuscript sources.

### *Chants for the Vespers of Christmas Eve*

Services for Christmas in the Byzantine rite today contain only a single hymn by Kassia. This is “When Augustus Reigned,” which appears last in a set of stichera idiomela attached to the Lamplighting Psalms on Christmas Eve. Theologians and political historians have noted how its text draws parallels between political unification under the Roman Empire and the union of all humankind in Christ. This is reflected musically by paired phrases in which human and divine subjects are set to the same melody.

Kassia lived and worked at a time when Byzantine services celebrated according to the tradition of Jerusalem were fostering the composition of many new hymns. Only a portion of these were selected for inclusion in the late medieval manuscripts that formed the basis for the Greek service books that began to be published in Renaissance Italy. Among those culled from the standard collections are the two sets of stichera prosomoia

for Christmas attributed to Kassia that we sing on this concert. We offer them as they would have been heard at her Constantinopolitan convent, namely in the context of the Lamplighting Psalms of Vespers, the opening verses of which were sung with the refrain “Hear us, O Lord.”

### *Chants for the Penitential Season*

Constantinopolitan monasticism of the ninth century made significant contributions to the musical repertoires for the penitential season of Lent and its preceding weeks of preparation. This expanded cycle of worship was later systematized in a volume called the *Triódion*, a title recalling its many three-ode kanons composed by Theodore and Joseph of Stoudios. On the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee, the first of four preparatory Sundays with gospel readings foreshadowing the Lenten call to repentance, the *Triódion* features two stichera idiomela attributed in medieval manuscripts to Kassia. We sing the first of these hymns, which recalls not only the tax-collector from the parable in Gospel of Luke (18:9–14), but also the sinful woman who anointed the feet of Jesus (Luke 7:36).

The repentance of the sinful woman, who in Eastern Orthodox tradition is *not* identified with Mary Magdalene, is also the subject of Kassia’s famous hymn for the Wednesday before Easter. We sing two medieval settings of this dramatic hymn for Holy Week, the first of which is that transmitted widely in the standard hymnal (Sticheráion) that

presumably captures her own melodic style. The second is an extended “beautiful-sounding” (“kalophónic”) arrangement that is presented anonymously in a single late medieval manuscript copied by the composer, music theorist and cleric John Plousiadenos (1429–1500), but attributed in the nineteenth century by Chourmouzios the Archivist to a certain “Meletios the Monk.” Its author radically expands Kassia’s music with florid melodies and textual repetitions that at times dissolve into non-semantic syllables.

Kassia made another significant, but today virtually unknown, contribution to the services of Holy Week. We perform Ode 1 from her Four-Ode (*Tetraódion*) Kanon for Holy Saturday, a multi-stanza hymn that she wrote as a preface to an older work by Kosmas of Jerusalem (d. 787). According to Byzantine intellectual Theodore Prodromos (ca. 1100–ca. 1170?), ecclesiastical authorities uncomfortable with the use of hymns by a woman on the solemn eve of Easter Sunday proceeded to efface her work in two stages: first by reattributing the model stanzas for each of its odes to Kosmas, and second by commissioning Mark of Otranto to write replacements for its remaining stanzas. Although Kassia’s stanzas continued to be copied alongside those of Mark in Greek and Slavonic manuscripts through the thirteenth century, only those of Mark appear in the modern service books of the Byzantine rite.

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