



# LITURGICAL SUBJECTS

Christian Ritual,  
Biblical Narrative, and the  
Formation of the  
Self in Byzantium

DEREK KRUEGER

# LITURGICAL SUBJECTS

DIVINATIONS: REREADING  
LATE ANCIENT RELIGION

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and the Formation of the Self in Byzantium

DEREK KRUEGER

PENN

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Once again for Gene

*Bel contento già gode quest'alma  
né più teme d'aver a penar,  
che d'Amore la placida calma  
il mio seno qui giunge a bear.*

—Handel, *Flavio*, Act 1, Scene 4

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## CHAPTER 5

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# The Penitential Bible and the *Great Kanon* of Andrew of Crete

Liturgy provides a great deal of information about the models for introspection available to Byzantine Christians. As we have seen in the previous chapters, in the prayers and hymns, clergy encouraged congregants to pattern their self-reflection, providing forms through which they might have access to themselves. Compositions for Lent, in particular, deployed liturgical experience in the production of a penitent self. As the works of Romanos and the prayers of the anaphora demonstrate, this self was not unique to any individual. Rather, through the liturgy the clergy sought to reproduce this self in each participant. Byzantine liturgy thus provides access to the self as institutionally formed, not individual but typical. This self is not an autonomous religious self but rather a cultural product, the subject of liturgy. Perhaps more than any other work of Byzantine hymnography, the *Great Kanon* of Andrew of Crete, composed in the late seventh or early eighth century, has come to typify the Lenten self, the subject of lament and reproach. Through its capacious juxtaposition of the biblical narrative and the soul-accusing self, the *Kanon* reveals the underlying structures of the liturgically encouraged self and the exegetical mechanisms deployed to produce it.

Andrew of Crete's massive penitential poem, still chanted in Orthodox churches during Lent, marks an important moment in the Byzantine deployment of biblical narrative to form Christian subjectivity.<sup>1</sup> Organized into nine odes, the *Great Kanon* introduces Old Testament personages in the first eight odes roughly in the order of their appearance in the biblical text or according to Byzantine conceptions of the course of history. The ninth ode moves chronologically through a harmonized narrative of the New Testament Gospels. Today the hymn is sung among Orthodox Christians in its entirety at

Morning Prayer (*Orthros*), or Matins, on Thursday of the fifth week of Great Lent and also in four portions at Compline (*Apodeipnon*), the last office of the day, from Monday to Thursday during the first week of Lent.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, the original performance context was almost certainly during a single Matins service and, given the penitential content and the focus on Genesis, most probably during Lent, although the day is uncertain. When the *Great Kanon* first appears in service books associated with the Stoudios Monastery of Constantinople, it does so during Matins or Vespers on various days of the fifth week of Lent.<sup>3</sup> The method of original performance remains uncertain, although we shall see in the next chapter that, by the end of the eighth century, kanons were usually performed chorally. It is unclear whether Andrew wrote the *Great Kanon* for choral performance or to be chanted by a single cantor, and I have striven to consider the poem as an expression of a Byzantine voice, rather than to assume solo or choral performance of that voice.

The goal of Andrew's biblical survey is to inspire repentance. The poem opens with the question, "Where shall I begin to lament the deeds of my wretched life?" (1.1). The answer lies at the beginning of human history, with Adam, and from this beginning, the poet proceeds chronologically through the whole of the biblical narrative. In the course of 250 stanzas the poem's "I" employs a long series of biblical characters to accuse and convict himself of sin. The scriptural narrative provides both negative examples that the subject has imitated and positive examples that the subject has neglected. In the middle of the eighth ode, at the point where Andrew shifts from a chronological treatment of Old Testament figures to a consideration of characters from the New Testament, he explains the point of his endeavor:

I have brought before you, O Soul, all those from the Old Testament for a model [πρὸς ὑπογραμμὸν]: imitate the pious deeds of the righteous, and on the contrary flee from the sins of the wicked. (8.12)

The whole of the biblical corpus offers urgent moral instruction.

Andrew's exegetical method can be seen already in the opening ode in his consideration of the story of Cain and Abel from Genesis 4. The poet sings,

I have followed after Cain's bloodguilt, by deliberate choice; by giving life to the flesh I have become a murderer of the conscience of my soul (συνειδῶτι ψυχῆς), and I have gone to war against it by my evil deeds.

I have not resembled Abel's righteousness, O Jesus; I have never brought you acceptable gifts, nor godly deeds, nor a pure sacrifice, nor a life unblemished. (1.7–8)

The juxtaposition of Abel's offering of first fruits with Cain's act of fratricide offers Andrew the opportunity to contrast a negative exemplar with a positive one. The poet limits himself to the elements of the story as narrated in the biblical text. In fact, he appears to make little use of earlier commentarial traditions, including earlier sermons on Genesis.<sup>4</sup> In contrast to Cain's murder of Abel, Andrew's murderousness is reflexive; he has entertained fleshly thoughts and thus committed spiritual suicide. Throughout the poem, Andrew reads scripture against himself to prompt contrition and to seek God's forgiveness. Assurance of God's mercy frames the exercise from the start, as he petitions in the first stanza, "But as you are compassionate [εὐσπλαγχνος], grant me forgiveness of transgressions [παραπτωμάτων]" (1.1). In its bravura performance of a Christian conscience, the poem illuminates how the institutional church shifted its liturgical apparatus to shape the interior religious life of Christian persons.

Only the bare outlines of Andrew's biography can be known with any certainty. Andrew was born in Damascus around 660. In his youth, he joined the monastery of the Church of the Anastasis in Jerusalem, where he received an education that would have included biblical studies and theology. Indeed, in Byzantine tradition he is often called Andrew of Jerusalem. In 685, he journeyed to Constantinople, where he subsequently served as a deacon at the Church of Hagia Sophia and administered an orphanage and a poorhouse. At some point between 692 and 711 he became metropolitan of Crete and bishop of its capital city, Gortyna, on the island's southern coast. Although he was tonsured at a young age, he spent much of his career serving and leading lay people, attached to urban cathedrals. He died in 740 on the island of Lesbos, on his way home from a visit to the capital.<sup>5</sup> Among his surviving works are a number of liturgical hymns in the form of the *kanōn* for use during Morning Prayer and exegetical sermons keyed to specific liturgical feasts, including those dedicated to Mary: the Nativity, Dormition, and Annunciation.<sup>6</sup>

Andrew is often credited with inventing or perfecting the *kanon*, a new type of liturgical hymnody that replaced the sequence of nine biblical odes chanted at Morning Prayer.<sup>7</sup> Other early practitioners of the form included John of Damascus and Kosmas of Maiouma, both associated with the monasteries of the Judean desert, including Mar Saba, indicating that the *kanon* had its origin in the region around Jerusalem.<sup>8</sup> Andrew seems to have brought

this budding tradition to the capital. To date, most scholars have assumed that kanons were originally intended for monastic use.<sup>9</sup> This assumption deserves reconsideration. By the late seventh and early eighth centuries, the chanting of the biblical canticles was common both to monastic Morning Prayer and to the Morning Prayer service of the so-called cathedral hours in urban churches attended by the laity.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, Andrew's compositions may show how kanons with their series of new odes came to replace the canticles in lay worship even before the monasticization of the cathedral liturgy that began in the ninth century, when Sabaite liturgical forms spread throughout the Byzantine church under the influence of the Stoudios Monastery in Constantinople.

It is unclear whether Andrew composed the *Great Kanon* in Constantinople or later on Crete.<sup>11</sup> The best evidence for assigning the *Great Kanon* to Constantinople is the prayer in the final stanza to the Theotokos for the protection of the city (9.27), but these verses could just as easily have been written on Crete. Twice in the poem, the singer refers to his old age (1.13; 8.6), making a strong case for composition on Crete, although this claim might simply be a trope of penitential literature.<sup>12</sup> Since the *Great Kanon* expands the form to its limits, it is unlikely to have been an early work. Given Andrew's posts at Hagia Sophia and on Crete, it seems more likely that Andrew wrote not for a purely monastic audience, but for a congregation of clerics and laity assembled for the liturgy in major urban churches.<sup>13</sup> Thus, like the great sixth-century hymnographer Romanos before him, Andrew deployed the biblical narrative to model a style of interiority for a Christian congregation.<sup>14</sup>

The interior religious lives of Byzantine Christians at the end of antiquity and into the so-called Dark Age of the late seventh and the eighth centuries are difficult, if not impossible, to access. This is especially the case for lay people, who have left few sources. Outside of monastic literature, Christians rarely speak in their own voices about themselves. Letters, such as those found among the sixth-century correspondence of Barsanouphios and John of Gaza, occasionally reveal the troubled layman confessing to a wise monk or seeking guidance on a moral matter.<sup>15</sup> Hagiography narrates the lives of holy men and women, but rarely concerns itself with character development and gives little insight into ordinary people's self-reflection. The absence of early Byzantine autobiography is a mixed blessing: while it deprives scholars of a strong individual voice, such as Augustine's in the West, it prevents Byzantinists from taking an idiosyncratic and heavily rhetorical voice as typical. And if letters and hagiography survive for earlier and later periods, the

century and a half after the Arab conquests of the mid-seventh century witnessed a significant drop in the production of literature.<sup>16</sup>

The *Great Kanon*, on the other hand, dramatizes the recognition of the self. Within the *Great Kanon*, the recollection of biblical exemplars generates contrition or compunction, *katanyxis* [κατάνυξις] in Greek, most literally the puncturing or wounding of the self.<sup>17</sup> As Andrew begins his accounting, he encourages himself,

Come, wretched soul, with your flesh, confess [ἐξομολογοῦ] to the Creator of all, and from now on, leave your past folly and bring to God tears in repentance [ἐν μετανοίᾳ]. (1.2)

It is precisely this self-recognition that provides Andrew with access to himself. The cataloguing of biblical figures thus becomes a Foucaultian “technology of the self,” a mechanism for confession.<sup>18</sup> Of particular importance to Foucault were practices of *exomologēsis*, or confession, which produce a knowledge of the self in which one recognizes oneself as a sinner and penitent.<sup>19</sup> In such a process, one becomes the subject of one’s own reflection.

As we have already seen in Romanos, Byzantine liturgy mediated this practice beyond the confines of spiritual direction in the monastery. Andrew’s *Great Kanon* illustrates and dramatizes a style of the self formed in a typological and dialectical relationship with the biblical narrative, particularly as that narrative might be experienced liturgically. Explaining his method in Ode 9, Andrew prefaces his harmony of the Gospels thus:

I bring before you the examples [ὑποδείγματα] from the New Scripture, to lead you, O soul, to contrition [κατάνυξις]. (9.4)

The litany of biblical figures throughout the poem prompts interior self-reflection and both frames and guides the formation of the self as a penitent subject. The hymn’s performance of interiorly directed biblical exegesis thus provides critical evidence for the history of the self in Byzantium.

### Accusing the Self

The pioneering historian of Byzantine music, Egon Wellesz, declared Andrew “indefatigable in turning scriptural examples to the purpose of penitential

confession.”<sup>20</sup> The poet laments and accuses himself in the first person, a generic “I” with totalizing force. As in the opening and closing strophes of the kontakia of Romanos the Melodist, Andrew’s “I”-speech is not autobiographical in the strict sense; it is not the lament of a narrated or historical self. The poem names not specific sins but categories of sins in thought and deed. The result is a virtuoso performance of penance without the individual content that would make it the repentance of a particular person. Like the first-person speech in Romanos, Andrew uses the cantor’s voice to typify a troubled Christian conscience. He exclaims,

There is no sin in life, nor deed, nor wickedness that I, O Savior, have not committed, in mind, and in word, and by choice. In intent, will, and action [καὶ θέσει, καὶ γνώμῃ, καὶ πράξει], I have sinned as none ever has before.

Therefore have I been judged, and therefore have I been convicted, wretch that I am, by my own conscience [συνείδησις], than which there is nothing in the world more rigorous. O Judge, O Redeemer who knows me, spare and deliver and save me, your servant. (4.4–5)

In fact, this self-assessment and its reliance on the model of an interior courtroom where the conscience is put on trial is consistent with depictions of self-accusation and conviction in the hymns of Romanos, where the penitent serves as the subject of his own judgment.

As the hymn progresses, the self bifurcates, with the “I” of the poem accusing and berating his “soul,” whom he addresses in the second person. “Give heed [ἐνωτίζου, cf. Lat. *notare*], O my soul, to the cry of the Lord: and separate yourself from your former sin” (2.31). “To whom can I compare you, O soul of many sins?” (2.31–32). Recalling the punishment of the wicked in the Deluge in the time of Noah, he accuses,

It is you, alone, O soul, who opened the floodgates [καταρράκτας, cf. LXX Gen 7:11] of the wrath of your God, and who poured [it] down as upon the earth, upon your flesh, and your deeds, and your life, and you remained outside the Ark of salvation. (2.34)

Invoking the destruction of Sodom by fire from heaven, he declares, “you have kindled, O soul, the fire of hell, in which you also shall be burned bitterly” (2.39). In this manner, much of the poem is cast as a dialogue within

the self—between the cantor and his soul. Frequently he exclaims, “You have heard, O my soul.” Thus the singer calls the soul both to the recollection of biblical narratives and to their application to the self as a paradigm of failure. This soul as subject is the product of both biblical memory and reflexive judgment. In this sense the soul becomes the subject of biblical narrative, but only in a particularly self-accusing mode. The “I” uses the Bible to convict the soul through a consistent set of operations in which both the accusing Bible and the convicting conscience converge to produce knowledge of the self.

Traditions of penitential practice were already well developed in early Byzantine monasticism, although they did not constitute a sacrament (as they would in the West) or have a formal rite.<sup>21</sup> By the early ninth century, handbooks enumerated sins, especially sexual ones, and assigned penitential programs to each.<sup>22</sup> Monastic theoretical sources tended to distinguish between *metanoia* (μετάνοια), repentance for specific sins; and *katanyxis* (κατάνυξις), “compunction/contrition,” or *penthos* (πένθος), “inwardly directed sorrow,” a more generalized repentance of one’s sinful nature or habits.<sup>23</sup> During the course of late antiquity, baptismal preparation, spiritual direction, hagiography, hymnography, and sermons mediated these concepts and habits of self-regard to the laity.<sup>24</sup>

The oldest set prayers for penance and confession in the Byzantine tradition appear together in the Barberini Euchologion (Barberini gr. 336), a Constantinopolitan service book that dates from the 790s.<sup>25</sup> In a study of prayer and penance in Byzantium, Robert Phenix and Cornelia Horn have considered the place of these forms in the trajectory toward a developed confessional rite in the tenth or eleventh century.<sup>26</sup> The prayers to be recited by a cleric “for those who are repenting [ἐπὶ μετανοούντων]” and “for those who are confessing [ἐπὶ ἔξομολογουμένων]” appear independent of a set liturgy; that is, they belong to no penitential rite or formalized practice of confession. Instead, they seem to be for occasional use as the need arose.<sup>27</sup> The first prayer over penitents incorporates Old Testament types, establishing biblical precedents for the remission of sin: “O God our savior, who through your prophet Nathan granted remission to David who repented for his own faults, and accepted Manasseh’s prayer of repentance, also the very same, your servant N. [αὐτὸς καὶ τὸν δοῦλον σου τόνδε] who repents of his own transgressions [μετανοοῦντα ἐν τοῖς ἰδίῳις παραπτώμασι], accept him according to your habitual love of humanity, ignoring his offenses.”<sup>28</sup> Although Phenix and Horn rightly tie these references to narrations of the repentance of David in 1 Chronicles 21 and Manasseh in 2 Chronicles 33, the prayer’s immediate

referents are more likely liturgical than purely scriptural. The reference to David recalls Psalm 50 [51], David's song of repentance heard regularly at the opening of Morning Prayer. The invocation of Manasseh most likely recalls the Septuagint's Prayer of Manasseh, usually grouped in manuscripts among the book of Canticles, although not one assigned to the early Byzantine cycle of canticles at Morning Prayer.<sup>29</sup> In the *Great Kanon* Andrew alludes to Manasseh's prayer, bidding himself to "fervently rival his repentance [μετάνοια] and gain [his] contrition [κατάνυξις]" (7.16).

The Euchologion's prayer over those confessing, by contrast, invokes types not from the Old Testament, but from the New. "Lord our God, who granted remission of sins to Peter and the Harlot [ἡ πόρνη] through their tears and who justified the Tax Collector [ὁ τελώνης] who recognized the transgressions of his way of life, also accept the confession of your servant N."<sup>30</sup> As Phenix and Horn point out, Peter and the Harlot, together with the Prodigal Son, occur frequently as biblical exemplars of penance in Syrian Christian prayer and hymnography.<sup>31</sup> Both figure in hymns of Romanos as well. Thus both prayers call on biblical types for repentance and forgiveness that had become common in liturgical usage.

Significantly, Andrew occasionally removes figures from their biblical order, even though he also treats them elsewhere in their proper sequence. Peter, the Harlot, the Tax Collector, and the Prodigal Son step out of their places in the New Testament narrative to provide a counterpoint to the march of history, to provide models for repentance.<sup>32</sup> Thus, near the beginning of Ode 2, before an extended meditation on Adam, Andrew invokes both Peter and the Harlot:

The storm of evils surrounds me, O compassionate Lord: but as unto Peter, so unto me, stretch forth your hand.

The tears of the Harlot, I also set before the one who pities. (2.4–5)<sup>33</sup>

The New Testament figures, men and women alike, are thus not merely historical examples of virtue and vice, but also types for the penitent Christian that illustrate proper comportment before God during the penitential season of Lent. The only Old Testament figure that Andrew dislodges from his putative historical context is David (2.23; 7.17), who like the New Testament exemplars offers a model of repentance. In a particularly moving sequence he laments in successive verses, "I have sinned, like the Harlot I cry



out to you” (2.22). “I have fallen like David licentiously and fouled myself [βεβορβόρωμαι]” (2.23).<sup>34</sup> “Be merciful, as the Tax Collector I cry out to you” (2.24). Thus, like the emergent liturgical prayers, Andrew favors the concatenation of a familiar repertoire of penitent types, in this case without regard to historical sequence.<sup>35</sup>

In imposing the thoroughness of biblical chronology, however, Andrew moves beyond the invocation of classic penitential types to prompt and model repentance and confession. Now the entire narrative corpus of scripture convicts. He summarizes his literary practices and purposes toward the beginning of his ninth and final ode:

I have brought before you, O soul, Moses’ story of the creation, and after that, all the canonical scripture [πάσαν ἐνδιάθετον γραφήν] recounting for you [ιστοροῦσάν σοι] about the righteous and the unrighteous; O soul, you have imitated the second of these, not the first, and you have sinned against God. (9.2)

The Bible as a whole has taught him that he is a sinner and that he has not followed the good example of scripture. Despite his epic treatment of biblical history, his soul has remained unmoved to repentance:

The Law is enfeebled, the Gospel idle, in you all the scriptures are neglected, the Prophets and every word of the righteous man have lost their power. Your wounds, O soul, have multiplied; there is no doctor to heal you. (9.3)

In Andrew’s hand, the Bible in its entirety provides the measure of personal sin, an anthology suitable for gauging individual disobedience. Running through a gallery of negative and positive examples, the *Great Kanon* reconfigures the entire corpus of the Bible as a penitential text.

## Canticles and Odes

The *Great Kanon* recounts the major events and personages of the Bible to accuse the conscience of sin and to prompt the soul to seek divine rescue. In the course of 250 stanzas, or troparia, organized into nine odes, Andrew rehearses the entire scope of biblical history in loosely chronological if not

strictly canonical order. Each ode has its own meter and tune called an *irmos* (εἶρμός; plural *irmoi*), introduced in the first stanza and repeated. The second, third, and sixth odes are divided into two sections, with different irmoi, perhaps allowing Andrew a greater variety of chant melodies to break up what might otherwise become monotonous.<sup>36</sup> The irmoi exhibit a variety of meters and stanza lengths, although each form depends on conveying sense relatively simply, through short metrical units with little enjambment. The language is direct and broadly accessible, drawing on biblical and liturgical vocabulary. Andrew clearly wished his congregation to understand the hymn and absorb its implications for their understanding of themselves. Although hymnographers, including Andrew, usually wrote their kanon odes to pre-existent melodies and accent patterns, Andrew may have set the odes of the *Great Kanon* to canticle melodies he had composed himself. Most probably the earliest example of the hymn is found in a tenth-century manuscript, copied in the calligraphic style of the Stoudios Monastery in Constantinople and now at the Monastery of St. Catherine in the Sinai (Sinai gr. 735, f. 69r., Figure 14). Here the texts of the irmoi are drawn from the canticles. For example, Ode 1 is to be sung to an extant tune for Exodus 15:2, “The Lord is my help and my defender [Βοηθός και σκεπαστής],” the canticle it either follows or replaces. Eleventh-century service books, known as heirmologia, contain the irmoi needed for all kanons in the repertoire with musical notation. Here, the irmoi for the *Great Kanon* are attributed to Andrew, although this could perhaps simply indicate that their use in the *Great Kanon* was the most familiar.<sup>37</sup>

In the course of the composition, Andrew treats Adam and Eve (Ode 1 and 2); Cain and Abel (Ode 1); the generations from Cain to Noah and the tower of Babel (Ode 2); Sodom and the story of Lot (Ode 3; first irmos); then Abraham, Isaac, Ishmael, through Jacob (Ode 3, second irmos); Jacob, Esau, and Job (Ode 4); Joseph and his brothers, and Moses (Ode 5); the exodus from Egypt and the wandering in the desert, and Joshua (Ode 6, first irmos); the book of Judges, then Hannah, Samuel, and David (Ode 6, second irmos); the dynastic history of kings and prophets from David through Ahab, including Elijah (Ode 7); further prophets, repeating Elijah, then Elisha, Jeremiah, and Jonah (Ode 8); and a quick encapsulation of the Gospels (Ode 9).

The placement of Job between Jacob and Joseph reveals that Andrew proceeded not according to a plan that strictly followed the order of the figures’ appearance in the biblical canon, but rather according to a “chronological plan” invoking figures as they had occurred in the course of human “history.” Andrew places Job in Ode 4, after Esau, and before turning to Joseph in

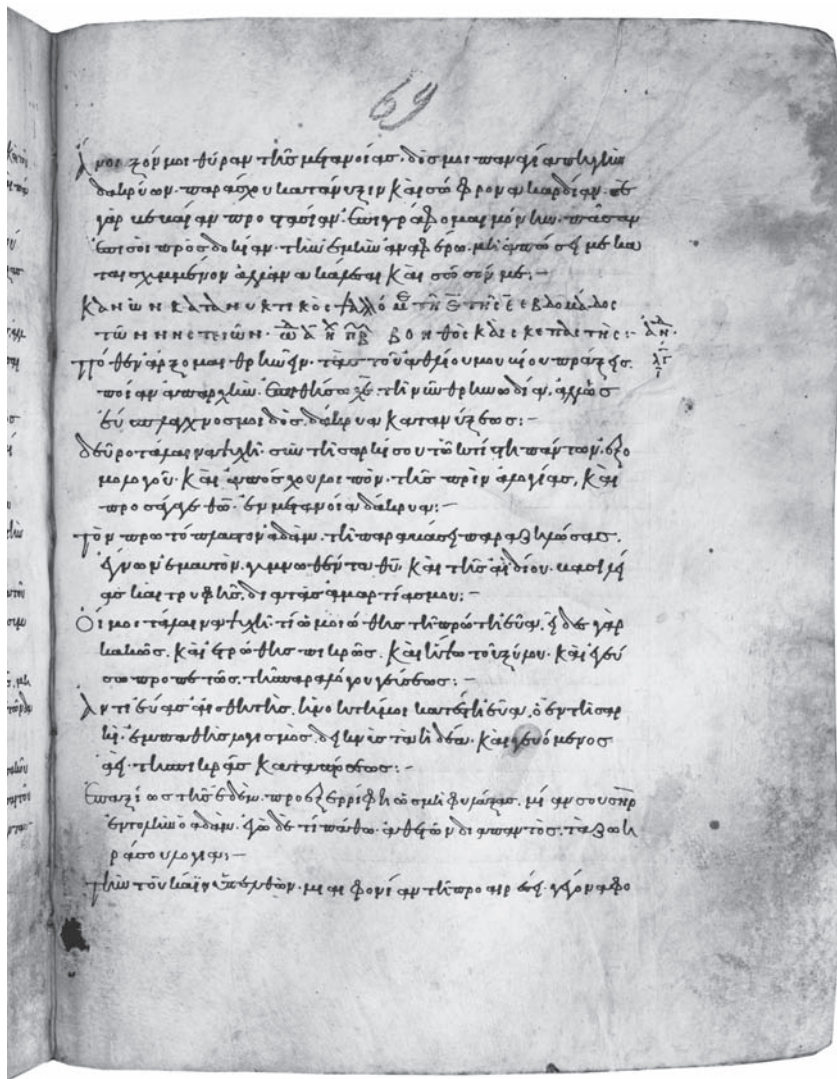


Figure 14. The opening of Andrew of Crete's *Great Kanon* in the manuscript Sinai graecus 735 of the tenth century. The poem's title appears in the sixth and seventh lines as "Penitential Kanon [Κανών κατανυκτικός] sung on Thursday of the fifth week of the Fasts." This is followed by the indication "Ode 1 in the second plagal mode" and the first words of the irmos, which is drawn from Canticle 1, the Song of Moses in Exodus 15. An abbreviation of Andrew's name (as Andrew of Jerusalem) appears in the *right* margin. Sinai graecus 735, f. 69r. Photo by permission of Saint Catherine's Monastery, Sinai, Egypt.

Ode 5. Additions to the Septuagint text of Job 42:17 identified Job with Jobab (Genesis 36:33) and claimed he was a great-grandson of Esau.<sup>38</sup> The result is a compendious treatment of the biblical history as a whole in the formation of the penitent subject, who regards the narrative with compunction and responds with contrition.

The nine odes of Andrew's *Great Kanon* replaced the nine biblical canticles of the Morning Prayer service with new exegetical hymnography and refocused the liturgy on penitential themes.<sup>39</sup> In the fifth-century Codex Alexandrinus and other early Greek Bible manuscripts, the biblical book of Canticles or "Odes" follows after the Psalms. Although the number of canticles in the manuscripts varies from nine to fifteen, from at least the fifth century a group of nine canticles provided a cycle of biblical songs for liturgical use that were distributed throughout the week, one per day, with the Magnificat recited daily; three canticles were chanted on Sunday. These canonical canticles include

1. The First Song of Moses (the Song of the Sea; Exodus 15:1–19)
2. The Second Song of Moses (at the end of his life; Deuteronomy 32:1–43)
3. The Prayer of Hannah (LXX 1 Kingdoms [1 Sam] 2:1–10)
4. The Prayer of Habakkuk (Habakkuk 3:1–19)
5. The Prayer of Isaiah (Isaiah 26:9–20)
6. The Prayer of Jonah (Jonah 2:3–10)
7. The Prayer of Azariah from the Greek book of Daniel (LXX Daniel 3:26–56)
8. The Song of the Three Holy Children, also from Greek Daniel (LXX Daniel 3:57–88 with three extra verses);
9. The combined songs of the Virgin (Magnificat) and of Zacharias (Benedictus) from the Gospel of Luke (Luke 1:46–57 and 68–79).<sup>40</sup>

Robert Taft has suggested that their use as a complete cycle at Morning Prayer, with all nine canticles chanted in order, originated in the monastic office of *agrypnia* or the Saturday Night Vigil. Such a practice was known to John Moschos and his companion Sophronios in the late sixth or early seventh century in Palestine and Sinai. Not long thereafter the nine canticles entered the cathedral rite of Morning Prayer.<sup>41</sup>

Replacing the canticles at Morning Prayer with new odes keyed to the liturgical season was a new practice in the late seventh and early eighth centuries. This shift from canticles to kanons was surely gradual, and the increased

liturgical activity during Lent and on key festival days provided opportunities for liturgical poets like Andrew to replace familiar biblical songs with new texts. We should assume, however, that throughout Andrew's life the cycle of canticles was still in use on most days of the calendar and was deeply familiar not only to Andrew but also to a significant part of his congregation. Most surviving early examples of the *kanon* are shorter than the cycle of canticles, and tend in each of their odes to make sustained reference to the texts they are replacing or, more likely, supplementing. Such is not the case with the odes of the *Great Kanon*, which both are longer than the canticles they replace and depart from their themes. Andrew's odes reproduce the sense of chronological movement through the events of the Bible and salvation history that structures the original selection and organization of the canticles. But at most, Andrew has been inspired by their roughly chronological sweep through examples of biblical hymnody.

The relationship with each of the original canticles, however, is loose to nonexistent. Andrew's odes proceed through the biblical narrative at a different pace as well as with different emphases. The first biblical canticle sings triumph and thanksgiving for deliverance from the Red Sea. Andrew's first ode reflects on Adam and Eve's fall in the Garden and then on the contrast between Cain and Abel.

The second canticle is the song of Moses at the end of his life—a text that in fact recounts some biblical history as it enumerates Israel's faithlessness; but Andrew's second ode is still meditating on Adam and the fall from grace in the garden. Indeed, the odes would seem to supplant the original canticles, since the juxtaposition of the original canticles with his new odes would be quite jarring.

In aggregate, the original cycle of biblical canticles is not particularly or primarily penitential. The words *katanyxis*, *penthos*, and *metanoia* do not occur in any of the canticles. In places, the canonical cycle does address themes of sin. The Second Song of Moses (Cant 2) contrasts God's faithfulness with Israel's faithlessness and recounts some biblical history, while the Prayer of Azariah (Cant 7) includes a confession of collective sin: "For we have sinned and broken your law in turning away from you; in all matters we have sinned grievously. We have not obeyed your commandments; we have not kept them or done what you have commanded us for our own good (LXX Dan 3:29–30)." But overall, the *Great Kanon* replaces hymns praising God with narratives accusing the self, doxology with penance. In exchanging

scriptural canticles for a sweeping biblical survey, Andrew provides a liturgical meditation on salvation history appropriate to the season of Lent.<sup>42</sup>

### The Old Testament, the Lectionary, and Lent

Eight of Andrew's nine odes treat the Old Testament. The focus on the Old Testament is significant, given the paucity of Old Testament readings in the emerging Byzantine lectionary system.<sup>43</sup> While some monks, clergy, and educated laymen with access to books might have been familiar with entire books of scripture, the vast majority of Christians encountered the Bible chiefly when they heard it read out in church during the eucharistic service of the Divine Liturgy, during sermons, or during prayer hours. Their Bible and their knowledge of it were determined by the appointed readings. By the ninth century, the standard service book containing passages from the Old Testament, known to modern scholars as the *Prophetologion*, assigned lections from Old Testament texts primarily during Lent and on principal Christological and Marian festivals, but this system must already have taken shape earlier, perhaps in the sixth century.<sup>44</sup> Only a small percentage of the Old Testament (less than 15 percent) would be heard in the course of the liturgical year, and the lectionary includes brief excerpts from only about half of the Old Testament books.<sup>45</sup>

Old Testament readings had fallen out of use in Constantinople during nearly all celebrations of the Divine Liturgy by Andrew's time. In fact, it remains a matter of scholarly debate whether or for how long earlier Constantinopolitans had heard more of the Old Testament during the eucharistic service, in a pattern similar to the Western Christian practice of having three readings during the Liturgy of the Word, usually a reading from the Old Testament, followed by a reading from an Epistle and a lection from the Gospels.<sup>46</sup> The Armenian witnesses to the lectionary in use in Jerusalem in the first half of the fifth century and the Georgian witness to the lectionary in use there around 700 attest readings from the Old Testament through much of the year, although more heavily during Lent and on major feasts.<sup>47</sup>

Within Byzantine lectionaries in Andrew's day, the greatest exposure to the Old Testament occurred during Lent and came from just three books: Genesis, Proverbs, and Isaiah. On weekdays throughout the Great Fast, lections from these books proceeded according to a system of continuous

reading, although none was read in its entirety; as Lent progressed much of each book was passed over. Moreover, the excerpts were read not during the Eucharist, but Genesis and Proverbs during Vespers (*hesperinos*) and Isaiah during the mid-day prayers.<sup>48</sup> For Holy Week itself, these texts gave way to passages from Exodus, Job, and Ezekiel respectively. The overwhelming prominence of Genesis among Old Testament lections during Lent may reflect an expansion of a primitive Easter Vigil that highlighted the events in biblical history relevant to understanding the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Christ.<sup>49</sup>

Andrew's treatment of Old Testament narratives reflects the centrality of Genesis in the Lenten lectionary. Odes 1 through 5 handle figures from Genesis, from Adam to Joseph. His order of presentation does not strictly proceed through the canonical order of the book's chapters. In Ode 3, for example, he opens with an extended meditation on Lot and Sodom (Genesis 19) before returning to Noah (Genesis 7 and 8), whom he had already introduced in Ode 2. As Ode 3 progresses, he treats the binding of Isaac (Genesis 22) before the story of Ishmael and Hagar (Genesis 16 and 21); and invokes Jacob's ladder (Genesis 28) before Melchizedek (Genesis 14). He returns to Lot and Sodom at the end of the ode. Some of these stories do not appear in the Prophetologion, including the story of Lot and Sodom in Genesis 19 and the story of Jacob and the angels in Genesis 32:22–32. Andrew is clearly working here from a complete text of Genesis and a more thorough knowledge of its stories than one might glean even from regular church attendance. At the same time, the lectionary does govern to some extent the treatment of individual figures, as the handling of Job illustrates. The Prophetologion assigns readings from Job for Vespers from Monday through Thursday of Holy Week, covering Job 1:1–2:10 (the opening narrative before the book's lengthy speeches); Job 38:1–23 (part of God's answer to Job); and Job 42:1–5 (Job's reply to God).<sup>50</sup> Andrew's treatment of Job invokes details from Job 1 and 2 only and thus most probably reflects or demands a familiarity with Job from the liturgical readings alone.

Andrew's handling of the remainder of the Old Testament proceeds more quickly. Part way through Ode 5, more than halfway through the poem (at stanza 132 out of 250), Andrew proceeds from the stories of Joseph and his brothers in Genesis to the story of Moses in Exodus. He does nothing to mark the shift to a new biblical book, but moves seamlessly from Joseph in the pit to Moses in a basket, suggesting a greater interest in the progression of history than in divisions within their Old Testament sources. The treatment of

Moses and Exodus carries over into the first irmos of Ode 6, with reference to the manna from heaven and the fleshpots of Egypt, both drawn from the book of Numbers. To the extent that members of the audience knew most of the stories from Genesis and the story of Moses, the effect of Andrew's poem was to focus the exegesis on the implications of each relatively familiar biblical story for self-regard.

However, from this point until the last section of Ode 8, Andrew's invocation of Old Testament figures (with the notable exception of David and perhaps Elijah) moves far beyond the familiarity with biblical stories one might expect from the lectionary. At the end of Ode 8, Andrew invokes figures familiar because songs from their books were used liturgically as biblical canticles: Jonah, Azariah, and the three Boys in the Furnace (LXX Dan 3); and the prophet Jeremiah, from whose book the Byzantine lectionary tradition assigns readings for Holy Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. Here however, Andrew is no doubt relying on his monastic formation and his study of scripture—especially Genesis—in monastic settings. As the poet rather rapidly surveys figures drawn from Judges and 1–4 Kingdoms [1 and 2 Samuel and 1 and 2 Kings], none but the very learned would know what he was talking about. Instead, the message would be an overwhelming sense that the whole of scripture—even its most obscure corners—converged to convict the conscience of sin. Indeed, as the lectionary confirms, Lent was a season of heightened interest in the Old Testament; this meant that the Old Testament would tend to be read as a penitential text.

In subsequent centuries, knowledge of Old Testament history in Byzantium would be mediated in part through Andrew's *Great Kanon*. Manuscripts of Old Testament books in their entirety, let alone complete Old Testaments, were relatively rare. In contrast, the lectionaries and service books necessary for conducting the liturgy were relatively common. This meant that, in addition to those narratives transmitted through the Prophetologion, the *Kanon* provided the most familiar and available access to biblical history before the time of Jesus. In fact, the author of a curious renarration of Old Testament history known as the *Palaea Historica*, composed no earlier than the ninth century, cites Andrew as an authority more than any text outside the Bible, terming him variously "Andrew," "the Cretan," and "the wise man."<sup>51</sup> A learned commentary on the *Kanon* in the thirteenth century by Akakios Sabaites further demonstrates that the poem's extensive sweep of biblical history remained attractive to Byzantine intellectuals.<sup>52</sup>



## Old Testament Exemplars

Andrew's treatment of specific biblical figures illuminates his techniques and objectives. Because he aims to draw a moral judgment on the narrating self, his engagement with the biblical narrative remains fairly basic. He does not appear to draw significantly from ancient commentarial traditions. He refers to enough details in the story to make the contrast between what his soul has been doing and what it ought to have been doing, but he eschews a deeper inquiry into the text so typical of Jewish and Christian exegesis in late antiquity. He does not expand the narrative by adding additional, extrabiblical details, in the mode of midrash, nor does he compose additional dialogue giving depth to the characters as in earlier liturgical hymnography, such as in the Syriac *soghitha* or Greek *kontakion*. He generally avoids a typological reading of Old Testament figures and episodes as prefiguring Christ. Instead, the Bible comes mediated only by a hermeneutic of self-accusation.

Adam and Eve serve to illustrate Andrew's theology of human responsibility in the fall from Paradise and the expulsion from Eden, thus beginning a chronicle of human sin and disobedience to divine will. They also offer an opportunity for the singer to reflect on his own sinfulness by reading his own sins as reproductions of biblical sins.<sup>53</sup> The story of Adam and Eve and their expulsion from the garden was familiar from the lectionary as well as from more general Christian lore: the Prophetologion assigns Genesis 2:20–3:20 (from the creation of Eve from Adam's rib through God's pronouncement of punishment) to Friday of the first week of Lent, and Genesis 3:21–4:7 (from God's making of leather tunics for Adam and Eve through the middle of the story of Cain and Abel) to Monday of the second week.<sup>54</sup> As appropriate to his sequence through biblical literature, Andrew addresses the first humans at the beginning of his survey, in Ode 1.

I have rivaled in transgression (τῆ παραβάσει παραζήλωσας) the first-created Adam, and I know myself stripped naked of God and of the everlasting kingdom and [its] delight because of my sins. (1.3)

Already here, Andrew finds the vocabulary for his presentation of the self in the biblical account. He applies Adam's nakedness to himself and invokes the "delight [τρυφή]" of Paradise in Genesis 3:23 from which he too has been exiled. Eve also provides an exemplum:

Alas wretched soul! How much are you like the first Eve! You saw evil and you were grievously [πικρῶς] wounded, and you grasped the tree [ξύλος] and rashly tasted the food of unreason [παράλογος].  
(1.4)

Andrew's life of sin becomes a reenactment of Eve's story in the Garden, seeing the fruit, touching and eating it.

Andrew returns to Adam in the second ode, where in a sequence of nine stanzas he further allegorizes elements of the story of Adam's fall, rendering Adam's narrative a script through which the poet rehearses his own fall into sin. By reassembling key details, Andrew spiritualizes the story and performs exegesis on himself. He laments,

Now I have rent my first robe [στολή] which the Fashioner [Πλαστουργός] wove for me from the beginning, and so I lie naked.  
(2.7)

Focusing on Adam's clothing and nakedness, Andrew depends on earlier and widely familiar exegetical and hymnographic traditions that in the fall Adam and Eve were stripped of their original and beautiful raiment or "robe of glory."<sup>55</sup> This widespread tradition in Jewish and Christian exegesis stands in tension with the statement in Genesis 2:25 that after their creation Adam and Eve were "naked . . . and not ashamed," but emphasizes the rupture into mortality that Adam and Eve's sin entails.<sup>56</sup> Andrew himself is responsible for the destruction of his God-given garment. The next stanza continues the theme of Adam and Eve's clothing to narrate the self:

I have clothed myself in the rent tunic [χιτών], which the serpent wove for me with [his] counsel, and I am ashamed. (2.8)

In contrast to the text of Genesis 3:21, where God makes tunics of skin or leather [χιτώνας δερματίνους] for Adam and Eve after he sentences them to travails and labor, here the serpent weaves the debased textile with his subtle enticements. In shifting responsibility for this second and lesser garment to the serpent, Andrew reprises Eve's own attempt to displace blame for disobedience in Genesis 3:13: "The snake tricked me, and I ate," just as Adam himself had sought to blame Eve.<sup>57</sup> Andrew also attempts to escape responsibility. In a subsequent verse, the textile production shifts again:

The sin stitched for me tunics of skins [τοὺς δερματίνους χιτῶνας],  
having stripped me of the first robe, woven by God. (2.12)

The plural “tunics” derives directly from the biblical verse indicating both Adam and Eve’s postlapsarian costume, even as Andrew assigns the garments’ manufacture to his own transgression. Ultimately, then, Andrew accepts responsibility for his spiritual clothing:

I am clothed in the raiment of shame [τὸν στολισμὸν τῆς αἰσχύνης]  
as with fig leaves.

I am dressed in a tunic of disgrace [κατεστιγμένον χιτῶνα].

I have soiled the tunic of my flesh and fouled, O Savior, that [which  
was] in accord with the image and likeness. (2.13–15)

Andrew has debased not just his clothing but God’s own creation—the image of God in which he was created.

Andrew’s shame recapitulates the fall of Adam, not because all have sinned in and through Adam, as the Western doctrine of original sin might argue, but because Adam functions as a type for the sinful individual. In fact, Andrew’s freedom with the biblical story and the shift in agency for the tunic of skins clarifies responsibility for Andrew’s own fall. In the course of these verses, Andrew accepts that he has been the agent of his own sins. Metaphorically, and with some creative reworking of the story’s details, Adam serves Andrew as a biblical pattern through which to recognize himself. Biblical clothing, of course, prompts other associations, and just two stanzas later, Andrew alludes to Joseph’s garment (Gen 37:3) in a similar vein:

I adorned the statue of the flesh [σαρκὸς ἀνδριάντα] with the many-  
colored coat of shameful thoughts [λογισμοί], and I am condemned.  
(2.18)

Throughout the poem, Andrew’s sins occur in the realm of the mind, as an engagement with shameful thoughts and sinful desires. In this register, Andrew abstracts a spiritualizing interpretation from the flesh of the text. With reference to Adam’s sin in the garden, Andrew reflects on himself:

I looked at the beauty of the tree, and I deceived my mind [νοῦς], so I  
lie naked and ashamed. (2.9)

And earlier in the poem, in the first ode, Andrew declares,

Instead of the Eve of sensory perception, I have the Eve of the mind [Ἄντι Εὐας αἰσθητικῆς, ἡ νοητῆ μοι κατέστη Εὐα], the passionate thought in the flesh, suggesting sweet things, but always tasting bitter when gulped down. (1.5)

In contrasting an Eve of the flesh with an Eve of the mind, Andrew's exegesis thus recapitulates the physical and fleshly sins of the Old Testament figures in the movements of his own mind, particularly in his desires for fleshly things.

This shift in concern from physical sins to their mental contemplation, common in Christian moral reflection, finds its biblical warrant in the Sermon on the Mount, where Jesus equates angry thoughts with murder and lustful thoughts with adultery (Matthew 5:21–32). The use of philosophical vocabulary, such as the distinction between an aesthetic and a noetic Eve, is rarer in the *Kanon*. Yet occasionally Andrew draws on monastic moral and philosophical discourse, part of Byzantium's Evagrian legacy. Later in the poem, in Ode 4, he introduces additional categories derived from moral theology in his allegorizing treatment of Jacob and his wives, where Leah and Rachel come to represent action (πράξις) and knowledge (γνώσις). Like the monastic John Klimax, Andrew reads Jacob's ladder as a pattern or model (δείγμα) "of mounting through action and ascent through knowledge" (4.6) that should prompt a reformation of the self:

If then you wish to live in action and knowledge and contemplation (θεωρία), make yourself anew. (4.6)

*Theōria*, "contemplation," serves two functions, to describe a life of moral discernment through contemplation of God and to introduce the exegetical approach of allegorical reading. Andrew uses *theōria* in this more technical sense two stanzas later in his allegory of Leah and Rachel.

Think for me of the two wives as action and knowledge in contemplation [ἐν θεωρίᾳ]. Action for Leah as (she had) many children; knowledge for Rebecca as (the result of) many labors. For without labor, neither deeds nor contemplation, O soul, will be successful. (4.8)<sup>58</sup>

The allegorical treatment of Jacob's wives, however, is exceptional within the poem, as is the focus on theoretical distinctions between action and

knowledge. For the most part, Andrew engages in a more straightforward moral exegesis of the biblical stories, where biblical figures provide examples to imitate or avoid.

If Adam and Eve are the standard types for the fall from grace into sin, King David exemplifies the penitent sinner. Having slept with Bathsheba and arranged the death of her husband Uriah (2 Kingdoms [2 Sam] 11), David is guilty of both adultery and murder. These most famous aspects of the story of David were not read out from the lectionary in the course of the liturgical year, but more likely remained familiar because of David's importance as the composer of the Psalms, and particularly Psalm 50 [51], the penitential Psalm par excellence. According to an ascription that had become part of the Psalm's text in the Septuagint, David composed the Psalm "when the prophet Nathan came to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba" (LXX 50:2). In fact, David's prayer of repentance had been one of two possibilities for use as the opening psalm at Morning Prayer since the fourth century.<sup>59</sup> By the late sixth century Psalm 50 preceded the nine canticles in the monastic communities of Palestine and Syria and quite likely preceded the original performances of Andrew's kanons.

In a series of stanzas in the seventh ode, Andrew sings of "David, the father of God [πατρόθεος (or: 'ancestor')]" who sinned twice, "pierced by the arrow of adultery"—an allusion to the weapon of Eros—and "captured by the spear of murderous vengeance." Reflecting on himself in light of David's faults, the poet accuses his soul, "But you are more grievously ill because of your impulsive will [ταῖς κατὰ γνώμην ὀρμαῖς] than your deeds" (7.4). While David, "mixed adultery with murder," he "at once demonstrated a double repentance" (7.5; cf. 2 Kingdoms [2 Sam] 12:9, 13. Thus David, whose sins become paradigms of the worst of human desire, especially in light of Jesus' remarks about anger and lust in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5:21–30), should serve to prompt penance, but Andrew has willfully failed to seek God's forgiveness.

In his capacity as the composer of the Psalms, David provides Andrew with another sort of model for himself, although the connection remains implicit. "David once composed a hymn [ῥῆμος], painting as in an image [συγγραψάμενος ὡς ἐν εἰκόνι], by which he exposes [ἐλέγχει] the deed which he did" (7.6).<sup>60</sup> The "hymn" in question is Psalm 50 [51], David's great penitential prayer for forgiveness. Andrew continues, "He [David] cried out, 'Have mercy on me [Ἐλέησόν με, Ps 50:3 (51:1)]; 'for against you alone have I sinned [Ps 50:6 (51:4)]; the God of all. 'Cleanse me yourself [Ps 50:4 (51:2)]'" (7.6).

Here Andrew quotes David, or nearly so, adjusting his wording slightly to fit his meter. At the end of the seventh ode, Andrew once again weaves David's lament with his own, naming his source and model: "But in pity restore to me the joy, as David sings" (7.18). The reference is to Psalm 50:14 [51:12], "Restore to me the joy of your salvation." And in the following stanza he cries out, "O only Savior, you yourself have mercy on me, as David sings, according to your mercy" (7.9), quoting David's words that open the Psalm, "Have mercy on me, O God, according to your great mercy" (Ps 50:3 [51:1]). Thus Andrew revoices the psalmist's words, striving to imitate David's act of composing a hymn, as well as his tuneful confessing of sin and penitential disposition.<sup>61</sup>

### New Testament Exemplars

Throughout the hymn, the singer laments that his litany of Old Testament exemplars has failed to bring about his repentance or reform. Perhaps New Testament models will be more effective. In some sense, he already imitates them, as a stanza in Ode 8 demonstrates. He compares himself to a list of savable sinners from the Gospels.

Like the Thief I cry out to you: "Remember" [Lk 23:42]. Like Peter I weep bitterly [Mt 26:75; Lk 22:62; cf. Mk 14:72]. "Forgive me, O Savior," I call out like the Tax Collector [cf. Lk 18:13]. I shed tears like the Harlot [cf. Lk 7:38]. Accept my lament, just as once [you accepted] the Canaanite Woman's [Mt 15:22].<sup>62</sup> (8.14)

Each biblical figure provides a phrase or action, or both, to which the poet joins his own expressions of regret and atonement. The self presented in the stanza and from the pulpit thus reenacts a pastiche of biblical penitents at their moment of entreaty.

In contrast to many of the Old Testament figures invoked earlier in the poem, most of these New Testament types would have been familiar to Andrew's late seventh- or early eighth-century congregants from their appearance in the Lenten and Holy Week lectionary. The late antique Armenian and Georgian lectionaries for Jerusalem both assign the reading of Matthew's account of Peter's denial of Christ and his bitter weeping (Mt 26:69–75) to a cycle of Passion readings on the eve of Good Friday.<sup>63</sup> The story of the penitent thief crucified next to Jesus, who would be with him in Paradise, unique

to the Gospel of Luke (23:39–43), was appointed for Vespers the following day.<sup>64</sup> Andrew would have known this practice while at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in his youth. Later witnesses to the Constantinopolitan lectionary reflect the influence of Jerusalem's reading cycle and assign Peter's denial to the Eucharist on Holy Thursday and Luke's account of the Thief to Vespers on Good Friday.<sup>65</sup> This same lectionary assigns Matthew's story of the Canaanite woman (Mt 15:21–28) to the thirty-second Sunday after Pentecost and Luke's Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector (Lk 18:10–14) to the thirty-third Sunday after Pentecost, that is, to the eucharistic liturgies for weeks just prior to the beginning of Lent, although the placement of the Parable of the Pharisee may have occurred after Andrew's time.<sup>66</sup>

Congregants' familiarity with these stories, however, was likely grounded in or enhanced by the cycle of liturgical hymns composed in previous centuries, which had become canonical or were in widespread use. Every one of these figures appears in the hymns of the sixth-century poet Romanos the Melodist, some as principal characters in his midrashic expansions of their narratives.<sup>67</sup> Andrew is quite fond of his New Testament penitents, and he includes all but Peter in his chronological harmonization of the Gospels in Ode 9. And as we have seen, he also invokes Peter, the Harlot, the Tax Collector, and the Thief in the earlier odes, relieving his survey of Old Testament figures with a catalogue of redeemed sinners who interacted directly with Jesus in order to encourage repentance. Perhaps more than any other biblical personages, these are the people he wishes to identify with and emulate.

### The Harlot from Romanos to Andrew and Kassia

A focus on Andrew's treatment of the figure he consistently calls "the Harlot [ἡ πόρνη]" illuminates how Andrew constructs his appeal to New Testament models. Comparison with Romanos's kontakion on the same woman, discussed in Chapter 2, allows us to chart important differences between the two hymnographers' handling of scriptural narrative. Furthermore, consideration of a ninth-century hymn attributed to the nun Kassia affords perspective on how the Harlot became a canonical type for all Byzantine Christians. Although we have attended to the story earlier, the shape of the gospel traditions themselves reveals Andrew's marked conservatism. The Gospel of Mark recounts a meal that Jesus took in the house of Simon the Leper two days before Passover (Mk 14:3–9). During the meal, a woman approaches

Jesus with an alabaster jar full of expensive scented oil, or *myron*, breaks the jar, and pours the perfume on his head. Matthew follows this source rather faithfully, but Luke's account places the story much earlier in the narrative, at the home of a Pharisee, and adds details that reshape the woman as a penitent sinner; it is this version, with subsequent Christian interpretations, that captures Andrew's interest. Luke writes, "And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner [ἀμαρτωλός], when she learned that he was at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster jar of scented oil [ἀλάβαστρον μύρου], and standing behind him at his feet, weeping [κλαίουσα], she began to wet his feet with her tears [τοῖς δάκρυσιν], and wiped [ἐξέμασσεν] them with the hair of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the scented oil (Lk 7:37–38)." When the Pharisee objects, Jesus chastises him and explains, "Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little." He then tells her, "Your sins are forgiven" (Lk 7:47–48). John 12:1–9 recounts a similar story about a dinner at the home of Mary and Martha, in which Mary pours *myron* on Jesus' feet; but the hymnographic tradition leading up to Andrew, including Romanos, does not identify the sinful woman with Mary the sister of Lazarus. It fell to the commentators and hymnographers to identify the woman's sin as harlotry.

As Susan Ashbrook Harvey has shown, this sinful woman was especially popular with the authors of dialogue hymns. Extensive poetic explorations of her tale survive in Syriac by Ephrem and Jacob of Serug, and in Greek in the corpus known as Greek Ephrem and in the hymns of Romanos the Melodist.<sup>68</sup> A glance at Romanos reveals both Andrew's debt to this earlier tradition and his departures from their midrashic methods. Romanos, in his typical fashion, opens the story up, giving dialogue to each of the participants. In the manner of a Method actor he provides the woman with an extensive back-story and a variety of psychological motivations. As we saw in Chapter 2, he "search[es] the mind of the wise woman" (10.4.1–2).<sup>69</sup> He invents a scene in the market where she converses with the perfume merchant. Romanos compares her to other persistent women, including the Canaanite Woman, Hannah the mother of Samuel, and Rahab the Harlot. Moreover Romanos plays jauntily on themes of harlotry and desire, calling the *myron* a "love potion" (10.10) and constructing Jesus as the woman's true lover: "I break with past lovers, that I may please my new love" (10.10).

The contrast with Andrew's treatment is stark. In the two stanzas where Andrew reflects further on the Harlot, he adheres to the biblical account.



Shortly after his list of figures whose words and deeds he imitates, Andrew returns to the Harlot to compare himself again with her.

As I empty out an alabaster jar of tears like scented oil, O Savior, upon your head, I call out to you like the Harlot, seeking mercy. I bring to you entreaty, and I beg you to give me release.<sup>70</sup>

Here the basic elements of Luke's text suffice. He maintains Luke's vocabulary: tears, alabaster, scented oil. Andrew permits himself an unoriginal pun and an elegant effect: When he compares himself to her in "seeking mercy [ἔλεον]," he uses a homophone of the word for olive oil [ἔλαιον]. And he imitates the Harlot by emptying on Jesus a jar filled not with oil but with tears. This is not, however, the first time in the poem that he has made this transposition. When he mentions the Harlot much earlier in Ode 2, he declares, "I have sinned like the Harlot. . . . O Savior, accept my tears as scented oil" (2. 22). Having landed on this evocative substitution, he has stuck with it.

In Ode 9 the Harlot appears for a final time in the *Great Kanon*, this time in her chronological order within Andrew's survey of gospel personages. Once again, Andrew hews closely to the account in Luke, maintaining much of its vocabulary, recasting Luke's words as necessary to the metrical scheme.

O my wretched soul, you have not emulated the Harlot, who took the alabaster jar of scented oil, and with her tears anointed the Lord's feet. She wiped them with her hair.<sup>71</sup>

We have again the scented oil, the alabaster jar, the tears, and the feet of Jesus. All the vocabulary comes directly from the biblical text.

The various details of this treatment do not amount to exegesis in the sense of approaching the text to discover something within it, but rather function to invoke literary epithets or visualize an iconography, identifying a figure according to biblical conventions. Indeed, Andrew persists in this practice throughout the hymn, reproducing the language of the Bible to form the penitent subject and restating biblical elements to smooth or flatten the biblical variety for a single purpose. In great contrast to Romanos, Andrew employs the woman not to plumb the depths of the narrative or the mind of the woman but to accuse the hearer and himself. Andrew allows the woman not merely to wet Jesus' feet with tears, but to "anoint" them [σὺν δάκρυσιν ἡλειψε]. But even here, the anointing of feet acknowledges Luke's version and

the story in John, where Mary uses the jar of scented oil to anoint Jesus' feet, rather than his head. In effect, the poet repeats the story; he does not retell or rethink it.

Romanos, on the other hand, performs extensive metrical exegesis of the story with varied diction, even avoiding some of the key words in the biblical account. He never uses the word for "alabaster jar [ἀλάβαστρον]"; he uses the verb "to weep [κλαίω]" only once, when the woman is describing her own motivations for approaching Jesus; and he uses the word for "tears [δάκρυα]" only twice in eighteen stanzas, both times in Jesus' mouth describing the woman and her actions. Like Andrew, Romanos also frames his treatment of the Harlot by focusing on himself.<sup>72</sup> In the first stanza, he declares that he too is a fornicator, and that while "the Harlot quailed" at the threat of eternal punishment, he "remain[s] in the filth of his deeds" (10.1). In the eighteenth and final stanza, he prays that he too will have his debts forgiven, extending the fiscal metaphor:

Relieving me of the capital of my soul and interest of my flesh,  
as you are compassionate, pardon, forgive  
*the filth of my deeds.* (10.18)

But Romanos uses self-reflection to enlarge and open the narrative, whereas Andrew uses self-reflection to focus it.

Perhaps the most famous treatment of the Harlot in all of Byzantine liturgical poetry is the shorter sticheron, or versicle, by the ninth-century nun from Constantinople, Kassia.<sup>73</sup> Born into an aristocratic family, Kassia wrote both secular and religious verse, and corresponded with the great monastic leader, Theodore the Stoudite, before entering religious life.<sup>74</sup> Likely composed to be performed between sections of psalms at Morning Prayer on the Wednesday of Holy Week, the hymn opens describing the woman briefly in the third person. The framing verses blur the moment of the Harlot's appearance at the dinner in the home of Simon the Pharisee with the moment when the Marys approached Christ's tomb to anoint him in death. Moreover, both of these events are folded into the liturgical present.

Lord, a woman who fell into many sins,  
Recognizing your divinity,  
Took up the myrrh-bearer's office,  
And with tears brings you myrrh before your entombment.

Although in the biblical accounts, the women at the tomb are led by Mary Magdalene, the poem does not name her, and this association is lacking in earlier Byzantine hymnography.<sup>75</sup> The rest of the poem reimagines the woman's own voice in the first-person singular, addressing her prayer to God in a speech-in-character. Like Romanos, Kassia enters the woman's interior life as she crafts a typologically complex entreaty. The third-person frame, which does not reappear at the end of the hymn, eases the transition from the singer's own persona into the role of the Harlot, as she laments her transgressions and bids Christ for forgiveness.

“Ah me!” she says, “night is upon me,  
 The goad of incontinence, gloomy and moonless,  
 To lust after sin.  
 Receive my streams of tears,  
 You who feed clouds to draw the water of the sea;  
 Bend to my heart's groans,  
 You who bent the heavens with your ineffable abasement [κενώσει].”

Assuming her subjectivity, the singer compares her tears with God's oceans, and her humiliation with God's self-emptying in the incarnation. She thus imitates him in miniature, conforming herself to his expansive and magnanimous example, and thus seeks his acceptance.

In the following verses, the speaker moves from a description of anointing Christ's feet with her hair to another association with the feet of God, and thus pulls herself toward another sinful woman, Eve, who did not present herself in repentance but rather hid from the divine presence in the Garden of Eden.

I shall cover with kisses  
 And wipe again  
 With the hair of my head  
 The immaculate feet of you,  
 At whose footfalls echoing in her ears,  
 Eve in paradise at even-tide hid herself in fear.

The poem closes as the Harlot's prayer tends toward a more generic confession and entreaty, a petition appropriate to the penitential season:

Soul-saving savior, who will track down  
 The numbers of my sins and the depths of your judgments?  
 Do not overlook me your servant,  
 You who have pity without measure.

Thus, without returning to the voice of the frame narrator, the poem leads the singer through the role of the Harlot to a model for the Christian self, but without breaking character. In contrast to Romanos's and Andrew's treatments, Kassia does not focus on the interiority of the opening narrator, an "I" beyond the biblical context. Where the earlier poets use the Harlot as a lens, among many, through which to view the self, Kassia fuses the singer's subjectivity entirely with the Harlot; the singer becomes her, even as she emulates Christ and contrasts herself with Eve.

It is reasonable to assume that Kassia wrote her hymn *On the Sinful Woman* to be performed by the nuns of her monastery. In such instances, the voice of the frame and the voice of the Harlot are women's voices. A singing nun assumes the identity of a penitent biblical woman. But the earliest manuscript appearances of the hymn suggest additional forms of reception. Perhaps because of Kassia's presence in Constantinople and her association with Theodore the Stoudite, the hymn entered the tradition of the Triodion, the Lenten service book that is the subject of the following chapter. The earliest example of the hymn is found in the manuscript Sinai graecus 734–735, which also contains the earliest witness to Andrew's *Great Kanon*. The Stoudite editors included Kassia's hymn as the eleventh of twelve *stichera idiomela*, that is, short hymns composed to their own melodies rather than to model tune types, appointed for Holy Wednesday.<sup>76</sup> An eleventh-century Triodion copied in southern Italy at Grottaferrata and now in the Vatican Library, Vaticanus graecus 771, includes Kassia's hymn as the last in a series for the same day.<sup>77</sup> In both cases, the hymn appears without attribution to any composer or author, which is not unusual in these manuscripts, although some hymns, especially longer kanons, are provided with their author's names. These manuscripts indicate that from an early period, Kassia's hymn *On the Sinful Woman* was also sung by men, rendering the frame in a male voice, a gendering perhaps reinforced if someone using the manuscript did not know the poem was by Kassia. The male singer then shifts into the voice of the Sinful Woman, much as the cantor of Romanos's kontakion, engaging in an apparently commonplace liturgical transgendering. Singing Andrew, one compared him- or herself to

men and women of the Bible, but singing Romanos or Kassia, singers of both genders *became* the men and women of the Bible. In short, the penitential imaginary of Byzantine hymnography encouraged movement between and across genders in the quest for an appropriate subjectivity.

### Andrew of Crete and the Aesthetics of the Self

Considering the kontakion of Romanos, the *Great Kanon* of Andrew, and the sticheron of Kassia, we witness differences in genre based on liturgical placement and function. Through much of the reign of Justinian, Romanos composed his lengthy verse sermons for All-Night Vigils on Saturday nights, the eves of major festivals, and during Lent. The Vigil service included psalms, hymns, and the reading of scriptural passages relevant to the liturgical season, including also those appointed in the lectionary for the following day. Romanos's kontakia thus commented through expansion on biblical texts that had just been heard. His works are verse homilies, and this function accounts for their approach to scripture. The kanon, by contrast, supplemented the biblical hymnody appointed for Morning Prayer. Rather than functioning as sermons, kanons provided a series of liturgical reflections in the form of prayerful song. Mary Cunningham has characterized the kanon as "meditative rather than didactic" and their form "more as soliloquy than as dramatic dialogue."<sup>78</sup> Kanons were also keyed to the liturgical season and could reflect the lectionary, as Andrew Louth has demonstrated regarding John of Damascus's kanons for the feasts of Easter, Transfiguration, and the Dormition of the Theotokos, and, as we shall see in the following chapter, in the hymns of the Stoudite reform.<sup>79</sup> But the models remained the canticles themselves, first-person hymns of praise, thanksgiving, and repentant self-reflection. Kassia, on the other hand, wrote in a genre of short hymns that punctuated the appointed psalmody with reference to the day's lections. In that sense, her work was like Romanos's but in miniature, a poignant character sketch.

In the *Great Kanon*, Andrew preferred a survey of biblical types more like a catena than an interpretation. In this, he borrows from the use of exemplars or types in prayer forms, including, for example, the penitential prayers in the Barberini Euchologion or in the anaphora of the *Liturgy of Basil*, which recounts much of sacred history in the process of giving thanks over the bread and wine. In the *Great Kanon*, Andrew gathers the sweep of salvation into a single literary unit, bringing the entire cast of the biblical narrative to bear

on the formation and wounding of the Christian conscience. But the difference also seems to indicate a difference in liturgical aesthetics, away from the exegetical and toward litany. By assembling biblical events into a single penitential hymn, Andrew achieves an aesthetic result not unlike those emerging roughly simultaneously in Jewish liturgical poems, called *piyyutim*, for the Day of Atonement, suggesting a shared approach to biblical narrative as a repository for moral instruction and the formation of the penitent subject.<sup>80</sup>

If we can recognize differences in artistic styles, for example, between late Roman naturalistic painting and middle Byzantine frontal and more static iconic representations, we should also be able to examine and describe changes in liturgical styles. While Romanos fleshes out the background of each biblical figure, Andrew presents a surprisingly uniform gallery of biblical types. Kassia's portrait is, in some sense, also iconic, focusing on one figure, although that figure then engages in her own exegesis of biblical self-identification. While Romanos expands the biblical narrative, Andrew refocuses the entirety of the Bible on a single self-accusing operation. Kassia's Sinful Woman reads the Bible in a similar fashion. Thus from Romanos to Andrew to Kassia we can chart a difference not only in the representation of the self but in the mechanisms employed to coerce the formation of this self. Romanos opens the biblical narratives to explore them, to place the congregants within the narratives as witnesses to the drama, creating a feeling of immediacy, as if one were there.<sup>81</sup> Andrew places the subject at a greater distance from the narrative—hearing about it, recalling it, but ultimately absorbed within the act of self-reflection—not so much present to the Bible as present to the self as subject. Kassia's hymn shows how these operations might coexist, compressing an exegesis of self and scripture into very few lines.

While it might be tempting to posit a tendency toward dramatically increased introspection over time—from the early Byzantine liturgical drama of Romanos, to the interior anxiety of the contemporary Christian in the *Great Kanon*, and then, perhaps, to Kassia's focus on the Harlot's exegetical interiority—these differences may have more to do with developments of their respective literary genres and hymn forms than with broad and consistent changes in the conception of Byzantine selfhood. Our evidence is fragmentary, and my analysis selective. Moreover, for much of Byzantine history, the use of these genres overlapped. In Andrew's own day, this shift from biblical exegesis to self-reflection may not have been so momentous. It is nearly inconceivable that Andrew would not have known the corpus of Romanos's hymns, which had become canonical in some churches by the late sixth or early seventh

century. The *Miracles of Artemios* attests the cantor at the Church of John the Baptist in Constantinople who spent 52 years singing the hymns of Romanos at weekly Night Vigils throughout the liturgical year.<sup>82</sup> Andrew arrived in the city only twenty years later. A careful study by Alexander Lingas has refuted the notion, once standard in music history, that the kanon replaced the kontakion in the course of the seventh and eighth centuries. These musical forms always belonged to different services: the kontakion to the sung office of the Night Vigil, the kanon to Morning Prayer; the first a popular service of urban cathedrals; the second, I would argue, a form shared in its basic outline by monastics and laity alike.<sup>83</sup> Lingas has shown on the basis of manuscript evidence that the cathedral Night Office persisted in Constantinople on the eve of festivals into the twelfth century, perhaps until 1204, and included the singing of a kontakion, if sometimes truncated. For the most part, new kontakia ceased to be composed after the ninth century, but the earlier texts provided ample material for the liturgical cycle. That is, Romanos's style of the self coexisted in ninth-century Byzantine liturgical life with Andrew's and Kassia's. Indeed, these subjectivities coalesced and reinforced each other.

The persistence and prominence of the kontakion means that while Andrew composed kanons for Morning Prayer in the late seventh or early eighth century, Romanos was almost certainly still chanted during the Night Vigil. Perhaps we should imagine that Andrew, a deacon during his years in Constantinople, himself chanted them at night before rising the next morning to sing one of his kanons. Or perhaps he chanted all night through, beginning Morning Prayer at dawn. In any case, Romanos would have cast a long shadow over any aspiring hymnographer. Evidence for direct influence is slight but telling. In a few places, Andrew's *Great Kanon* seems to echo Romanos.<sup>84</sup> Two stanzas in Ode 4 recall the prelude to Romanos's hymn *On the Crucifixion*, also called *On the Powers of Hell*. Andrew writes, "The end draws near, O soul; it draws near and you neither take thought nor prepare [Ἐγγίζει ψυχή τὸ τέλος, ἐγγίζει καὶ οὐ φροντίζεις, οὐχ ἔτοιμάζει]" (4.2), possibly rephrasing Romanos:

O my soul, my soul, wake up! Why do you sleep?

The end draws near and you will be troubled

[Ψυχή μου, ψυχή μου, ἀνάστα· τί καθεύδεις;

Τὸ τέλος ἐγγίζει καὶ μέλλεις θορυβεῖσθαι]. (Romanos, *Hymns* 21 prelude [SC 37])

The phrase “the end draws near” may seem a commonplace, but Romanos continues, “Come to your senses [ἀνάνησον] so that Christ the God might spare you.” And in his following stanza, Andrew rebukes himself, “Come to your senses, O my soul! [Ἀνάνησον ὧ ψυχῇ μου]” (4.3).<sup>85</sup> This is just the sort of echoing in sequence that one might expect if Andrew knew his Romanos intimately. There is also some evidence in his treatment of the Harlot that Andrew was dependent on Romanos’s poem about her. After the Lukan Harlot wipes Jesus’ feet with her tears in the passage quoted above, Andrew introduces an image from a different biblical text, Colossians 2:14, where the Pauline author describes forgiveness as the blotting out of a handwritten accusation, or *cheirographon*.<sup>86</sup> In Andrew’s words, the Lord “tore up for her the hand-written document with the ancient accusations [τῶν ἀρχαίων ἐγκλημάτων, τὸ χειρόγραφον ῥηγνύοντος αὐτῆ]” (9.18). The intercutting of the *cheirographon* and the story of the Harlot also occurs in the final stanza of Romanos’s hymn *On the Harlot*, where Jesus addresses both the Harlot and Simon the Pharisee. He forgives them both:

Depart. You have both been released from the rest of your debts.

Go. You are exempt from every obligation.

You have been freed. Do not be subjected again.

The handwritten documentation [of your debts] has been torn up

[τοῦ χειρογράφου σχισθέντος]. Do not incur another. (10.18;

trans. Lash, 84)

Only the *cheirographon* is common to both hymns, but the linking of the *cheirographon* to Luke’s Sinful Woman may indicate how Romanos shaped Andrew’s conception.<sup>87</sup>

Andrew’s new presentation of the self arose in a context where Romanos’s approach still operated, but where creative energies were shifting from the narrative exegesis of the kontakion to the interior reflection of the kanon. In later centuries, the occasions for singing the kontakia of Romanos became less frequent. Monks truncated these hymns to one or two stanzas to insert them between the sixth and seventh odes of the kanon at Morning Prayer. These stanzas were generally the ones where Romanos speaks in his own voice, either introspectively or on behalf of the congregation. That is, these are the stanzas most like Andrew’s *Kanon*. Middle Byzantine liturgical aesthetics apparently preferred the *Kanon*. As the tenth-century liturgical manuscript



at St. Catherine's Monastery in the Sinai, Sinai graecus 734–735, attests, the *Great Kanon* was so popular and important that it moved at some point from the Morning Prayer liturgy to the Vespers service of the fifth Thursday of Lent, perhaps to provide sufficient time for the long work.<sup>88</sup> Andrew's use of the Bible in the shaping of a common personal religion would long outlive him, displaying an icon of the style of Orthodox self that the church encouraged, particularly during Lent.

\* \* \*

Prayer scripts the self. The recitation of set prayers conforms the speaker to a particular model of self-understanding and self-expression. In praying, one becomes the subject of the prayer, both in the sense of becoming the persona the text talks about and in the sense that one is acted upon, is under the creative power of the prayer to produce a particular self. In its emotionally charged performance, the *Great Kanon* both expresses and produces contrition. Its use of biblical models renders exegesis an instrument of subjectivation, a reading of the Bible to make the self and make it known. Andrew is dogged in applying biblical stories for the recognition of sin, imposing an interpretive unity on the self. The self that emerges is remarkably consistent in its construction. In the course of nine odes, Andrew shapes an interior life that became a Byzantine model for interiority. The hymn, then, provides evidence not precisely for the religion of individuals, but for established and institutional images or imaginings of individual interior life.

The *Great Kanon* sheds light on the technologies by which the institutional apparatus of the church shaped individual subjectivities. If we imagine Andrew, the bishop, chanting his kanon before congregants in his large three-aisled basilica at Gortyna, we can reflect on the effects of his remarkable liturgical self-abasement. Among listeners, the Christian self promulgated by the *Great Kanon* forms not through identity with biblical figures directly, but rather with the poem's "I." The hearer is to identify with the singer or singers, and with his or their performance of lamentation and self-reproach. The poem works by forming the interior life of each Christian person in the image of the cantor or choir. In contrast to Romanos, whose encounters with the biblical narratives afford increasingly textured and nuanced access to and insights into a biblical reality, Andrew's Bible points in a single direction,

toward the self. The effect of the poem is to apply a master pattern for the subject upon congregants. Watching the singers perform the anguish encouraged a recognition of the self as sinner in need of divine assistance. Andrew implicitly called all to see themselves through the penitential lens of scripture. The entirety of biblical history results in the convicted conscience, and this is his instruction to his flock.