but with the restoration of icons and the triumph of Orthodoxy in 787, he was rehabilitated and eventually canonized, his feast day being celebrated on May 12.

THE LITURGY OF GERMANUS' TIME

We begin with a brief description of the liturgy as it was celebrated in Constantinople in the eighth century. We must be able to visualize the liturgy Germanus is describing to understand properly what he says, for it is chiefly the *visual* aspects of the rite which he explains. And the visual aspects of the Byzantine liturgy in Hagia Sophia, the cathedral church of the capital city of the empire, were impressive. It is precisely this strong visual effect, rather than any rational discourse, which caused Vladimir's emissaries (from Russia to Constantinople, A.D. 987) to report: ". . . We knew not whether we were in heaven or on earth. For on earth there is no such beauty, and we are at a loss how to describe it. We only know that God dwells there among men . . ."[23]

The edifice itself, built under Justinian and dedicated in 537, is indeed hard to describe.

> In sheer size it is one of the largest man-made structures in the world; its great vaulted nave easily surpasses all the vaulted interiors of antiquity and the Middle Ages for space enclosed within a single clear span. In engineering it is as puzzling today as it was terrifying to Procopius, to whom it appeared to soar aloft without reliable support, theatening the safety of those within.[24]

[23]S. H. Cross and O. P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor, *The Russian Primary Chronicle, Laurentian Text* (Cambridge, MS, 1953) 110-111.

[24]T. Mathews, *The Byzantine Churches of Istanbul. A Photographic Survey* (University Park and London: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1976) 263. The most accessible study of Hagia Sophia and its liturgy is by the same author, *The Early Churches of Constantinople: Architecture and Liturgy* (University Park and London: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1971).

Most striking about the church were the tremendous size of the nave, or body of the church, and the brilliance of its lighting.[25] Some thirty-five doors allowed easy access to the church, a feature absolutely necessary for a liturgy which was essentially stational, composed of numerous processions which were not restricted, as today, to a confined space, but encompassed the whole city in their rounds.

At the center of the nave, almost directly under the dome, stood the ambo, a large, oval platform with stairways leading up to it on both the east and west ends. Under the ambo, which was supported by eight large columns, was a space where the cantors stood. The ambo was connected to the sanctuary area by a long path, called the solea, with a barrier on either side. The sanctuary area was π-shaped, extending well into the nave, with chancel barriers (the precursor of our modern iconostasis) which were about waist-high. The altar table stood in front of the apse, which was completely filled with the synthronon, a series of semicircular steps on which the clergy sat during the readings and homilies.[26]

The following is a description of the liturgy of Germanus' period:

A. *The Preparatory Rites*

These took place in the skeuophylakion, a circular structure located just to the north-east of Hagia Sophia. This building served as the treasury, where the liturgical

[25]Taft, "The Liturgy of the Great Church," 48.

[26]Mathews, *The Early Churches*, 96-99.

vessels were kept. Here the clergy vested for the services. Here also the people brought their gifts before the beginning of the liturgy. There was as yet no formal "rite" of preparation: the deacons simply selected bread and wine from among the gifts brought by the people, and prepared all the necessary implements, patens, chalices, etc.[27] In our interpolated text, however, we can already detect the development of today's prothesis rite.

On many days, there would be a station. Clergy and people would gather at some place in the city, a church or another site, for a service of prayer and intercession. Then all would process to an intermediate station or to the cathedral to the singing of antiphons. Antiphons consisted of psalms sung by one or more psalmists, with short refrains, called troparia, sung by all the people. Arriving at the atrium, a large courtyard in front of the church, the people stopped while the clergy entered the narthex and stood before the "royal doors" (reserved for the emperor and clergy), which led from the narthex into the nave. Here, they recited the Entrance (Introit) Prayer, and then they processed into the church, while the assembled people entered through all the other doors.

B. *The Enarxis*

This was a short office of three antiphons used on those days when there was no station. It consisted of three psalms, sung antiphonally, each preceded by a diaconal invitation, "Let us pray to the Lord," and a prayer recited by one of the priests. There was no opening doxology or "Litany of Peace" at this point in the service. The patriarch was not yet in church, but was vesting in his palace nearby.

[27]In our reconstruction, we are essentially repeating that offered by Taft, "The Liturgy of the Great Church," 49ff.

The faithful gradually entered the church through its many doors, first dropping off their offerings at the skeuphylakion.

C. *The Introit*

This was the real beginning of the liturgy, everything prior being merely preparatory. The patriarch, already fully vested, arrived before the royal doors in the narthex and recited the Introit Prayer during the singing of the third antiphon, which normally consisted of Ps 94 (LXX), with the troparion "Only-begotten Son" (*Ho Monogenes*) as its final refrain. The text of the Introit Prayer is not the same as that of the present entrance prayer: "O Lord and master, our God, who in heaven has established the order and armies of angels and archangels to minister unto your majesty, grant that the holy angels may enter with us, and with us serve and glorify your goodness. . . ."[28] Then, preceded by the Gospel Book and the Cross, the procession entered the church. Germanus, in ch 24, sees this entrance as the coming upon earth of Christ himself: " 'Come let us worship and fall down before him: save us o Son of God.' And we proclaim the coming which was revealed to us in the grace of Jesus Christ." The singing of the Trisagion follows immediately, while the patriarch continues in procession around the ambo, up the solea, into the sanctuary, where he venerates the altar, then up to his throne (the "synthronon") in the back of the apse. We can still observe this last part of the procession at the present-day hierarchical liturgy.

[28]As translated by Taft, "The Liturgy of the Great Church," 51. The original Greek text, which appears in the earliest extant euchology, Barberini 336 (ca. 795), can be found in F. E. Brightman, *Liturgies Eastern and Western* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1896) 312.

D. *The Liturgy of the Word*

The patriarch, after entering the church in splendid procession, turns and greets the people: "Peace to all." Then he sits down and the readings begin. The prokeimenon precedes the epistle reading, and the alleluia psalm comes between epistle and Gospel. Germanus here again stresses the presence of Christ, Who comes to us in His word. The readings are proclaimed from the ambo in the center of the church. During the alleluia psalm, the Gospel book, which was placed on the altar table at the Introit, is incensed. A sermon follows the Gospel.

E. *The Great Entrance*

After the sermon, the patriarch and the clergy descend from the synthronon and stand around the altar. One of the deacons goes to the ambo to recite the petitions for the catechumens and their dismissal—this, by the time of Germanus, was already a mere formality.[79] The eiliton, a large veil, is spread over the altar. As one of the deacons continues the intercessions, several others, taking a censer, leave the church through one of the north-east doors, and go to the skeuophylakion. Completing the preparation of the gifts, they begin the procession back to the church, entering through one of the side doors directly across from the ambo. As they enter, the deacons begin to sing the Cherubic Hymn, which is then taken up by the psalmists.

Visually, the Great Entrance was the most dramatic rite in the liturgy. A pair of deacons led the procession with candles and incense. Next came a deacon with the flabellum, or fan, followed by deacons carrying the veils used to cover the chalices and patens. Then came the gifts themselves

[79]Taft, "The Liturgy of the Great Church," 53.

(the bread and wine to be consecrated), contained in the chalices and patens, and finally the aer, which was used to cover all the gifts. The procession moved from the side door to the center of the nave, just behind the ambo. If the emperor was present at the liturgy, he would meet the procession here, accompanied by his entire retinue. Doubled in size, the procession wound its way around the ambo and up along the solea to the doors of the sanctuary. There, the gifts were presented to the patriarch, and all the participants in the procession returned to their proper places.[80] No additional formulae accompanied the rite—there were no commemorations to interrupt the Cherubic Hymn, nor was anything said as the gifts were placed on the altar.[81]

As the psalmists completed the final repetition of the Cherubic Hymn, the patriarch bowed to his concelebrants around the altar and asked for their prayers. They responded with the text from Lk 1:35: "May the Holy Spirit come down upon you, and the power of the Most High overshadow you." Then the patriarch moved up to the altar for the anaphora, beginning with the preparatory Prayer of the Proskomede. No litany followed the Entrance.

F. *The Anaphora*

After completing his prayer, the patriarch turns to

[80]As reconstructed by Mathews, *The Early Churches*, 161-162.

[81]Taft, "The Liturgy of the Great Church," 53-54. The commemorations did not appear until medieval times, and the deposition formulae appeared only in the 13-14th centuries, under the influence of an increasingly allegorical approach to the liturgy. A complete description of the origin and development of the Great Entrance and its subsidiary rites is the classic work in English by Taft, *The Great Entrance*.

the people and says "Peace to all." The archdeacon then commands the assembled faithful to share the peace: "Let us love one another." All then exchange the kiss of peace with those of their own rank—clergy with clergy, lay people with lay, men with men, women with women. The only response to the diaconal command is the exchange of the kiss. Then all chant the Creed. The great veil, or aer, is removed from the gifts in preparation for the anaphora proper. The anaphora was said silently,[32] with no ceremonial action, and thus Germanus does not give it any sort of symbolic explanation. Rather, he gives a straightforward outline of the content of the prayer, which, on a normal Sunday in Constantinople, was that of St Basil.

G. *Lord's Prayer and Communion*

The Lord's Prayer followed the anaphora immediately, and then the distribution of communion. Germanus says little about either and ends his commentary rather abruptly. Perhaps this was due to the fact that frequent communion was no longer common in his time and, in any case, of little interest visually, unlike the splendor of the processions earlier in the liturgy. After communion, the deacons took the vessels back to the skeuophylakion. A deacon exclaimed "Let us depart in peace," and the "Prayer behind the ambo" was read in the nave as the clergy processed out of the church.[33]

Such, in brief was the shape of the liturgy in Germanus' day. The scope of this introduction makes a more complete description impossible, but the reader is encouraged to

[32]The anaphora was recited silently in Constantinople since at least the sixth century. Cf the references in Taft, "The Liturgy of the Great Church," 56, footnote 64.

[33]Cf Mathews, *The Early Churches*, 172-173.

pursue the subject by reviewing the works cited in the footnotes.[34]

THE PLACE OF GERMANUS IN THE TRADITION

As with any theological work, Germanus' commentary can only be appreciated in its proper context. Thus it is important to know the state of the liturgy which he describes. Equally important is an understanding and appreciation for the literary genre into which the commentary fits, as well as for the theological and historical currents out of which it arose. In short, the *Ecclesiastical History* must be viewed within the perspective of tradition to be properly understood. Without such an approach, the work appears highly confusing, at times self-contradictory, at best an allegory.

A. *The Genre of the Liturgical Commentary*

The liturgical commentary has its origins in the fourth century, with the famous mystagogical catecheses of such leading figures as Cyril of Jerusalem, Ambrose of Milan, and John Chrysostom. Their purpose was to explain the Christian mysteries, baptism and eucharist in particular, to the masses of people who began flocking into the church after its transformation from a persecuted minority to the official state religion. Originally in oral form only—delivered as sermons during the octave of Easter—the mystagogical catecheses were soon written down and widely distributed. They remained popular and useful even after the initial,

[34]Taft, *The Great Entrance* also has an exhaustive and up-to-date bibliography, xiii-xxii.