

KOINONIKON: THE HYMNOLOGICAL CONTEXT OF HOLY COMMUNION

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The sacrament of Holy Communion is the most significant rite in Christian worship. It is therefore important that the hymnology and music with which the rite is couched and decorated, appropriately demonstrates the honour and value that Orthodox Christians would ascribe to it. However, current practice in some Greek Orthodox Churches throughout the world, presents various problems that need to be addressed. It is therefore the purpose of this article to outline those problems associated with the current state of the *koinonikon* (communion hymn) in Greek practice, and to propose appropriate renditions based on the work of Conomos¹, Phountoules², Taft³ and Papagiannes⁴. This article will argue that the hymns associated with Holy Communion should conform to older and more ancient forms of musical practice, insofar as the current structure is not upset.

Function of the *koinonikon*

The *koinonikon* is the hymn that is sung during Holy Communion. Its role is to provide a suitable textual and musical accompaniment to the sacred rite of the Eucharist. Indeed, the entire service builds up to and climaxes

at Communion. The liturgical context therefore of Communion is meant on the one hand to prepare the hearts and souls of the people to receive the Holy Gifts and on the other, to express and articulate the people's feelings of edification and gratitude to God. Regrettably, current trends testify to a deterioration in the liturgical practice of this important item – to the extent that the original meaning and symbolism of Communion is largely undermined.

Problems with current practice

Solo chanting. In churches that follow Greek practices, the *koinonikon* is sung by a solo singer in the 'papadikon' style of chant. (The *papadikon* style of chanting is characterised by the application of long, extended musical phrases to relatively short texts. They are called *papadika*, literally 'the priestly ones' because they usually constitute musical cover for the priest, who is taking considerable time in the preparation of a liturgical item. The term *papadikon* is used interchangeably with the term *melismatic*, perhaps not correctly.)

In spite of the brevity of its text (usually a half-verse from the Psalter), the syllables of the text are set to extended, florid melodies that draw the hymn out into a seven to ten minute performance. This performance of *koinonika* generally requires a level of chanting skill not found in every parish, even in Greece. If the soloist has poor knowledge and skill in the Byzantine musical tradition (as is often the case), the text becomes blurred, the singing monotonous and the congregation loses any sense of meaning in the words. In such cases, the only person in the Church gratified by the *koinonikon* is the chanter himself. The entire procedure is frequently exacerbated by the chanter's insertion of nonsensical syllables (*te-ri-rem*) into the psalm verse.

Tererismata, otherwise known as *kratemata*, are musical compositions which do not use words but rather syllables such as *te-ri-rem* or *ne-na-no*. *Kratemata* (literally holding on) are often appended at the end of a melody either to take up time or to serve as a musical digression or

tangent. Corresponding to the western syllables tra-la-la, *tererismata* have been the tools by which composers could produce musical compositions free from the constraints of words and flowing with a regular rhythm (as opposed to the tonic rhythm of Byzantine ecclesiastical music). As such, *kratemata* are little different from secular artistic music, lacking in spiritual and didactic purpose. They thus constitute a departure from the fundamental element of ecclesiastical music, that is, the appropriate balance and harmonious marriage of words and music (λόγος-μέλος). Attempts to justify the use of *kratemata* with theological language (that they are like the words that the virgin Mary used as lullabies to the baby Jesus or that they are like the incomprehensible singing of the angels that apostle Paul heard) mask the fact that they are essentially free musical compositions written since the 14th century and mainly in the post-Byzantine period. St Nikodemos was unequivocally against them.⁵

This manner of chanting the *koinonikon* is indicative of the shortcomings of soloist chanting as it exists in the Church today. Some of the characteristics of this monodic style of chanting are an undue emphasis on personal expression, excessive rubato (to the extent that no constant rhythm remains) and untraditional, exhibitionist ornamentation. The very same melodies sound entirely different when chanted by a choir singing with a flowing rhythm in the more traditional style of Byzantine chant. In this way the original musical phrases are not fragmented, but are rendered in a more fulsome and complete manner. In fact, there is no imperative to cling to the current individualistic style of chanting in church. The ancient Church used congregational singing which developed in the Byzantine Church into choral music. The dominance of soloist chanting emerged after the introduction of highly ornamental musical styles in late Byzantium and was cemented in the Ottoman period. This is because a highly ornamental musical style limits learning and practice to a professional few. Such exclusivity is of course contrary to the Christian spirit and it would be better if more communal and choral traditions of the first millennium were revived. This ethos of ecclesial communion is well illustrated by St Ignatius of Antioch, who, after describing the church as a harmonious lyre said:

Make of yourselves a choir, so that with one voice and one mind, taking the keynote (*chroma*) of God, you may sing in unison with one voice through Jesus Christ to the Father, and he may hear you and recognise you, in your good works, as members of his son. It is good for you therefore to be in perfect unity that you may at all times be partakers of God.⁶

The broken integrity of Communion. Many a perceptive student of Byzantine Chant has asked the following question: ‘Why is the *koinonikon* (communion hymn) called this if it is not chanted during Communion?’ The question arises from a misunderstanding of the liturgical practice at that stage of the liturgy. To a layperson standing among the congregation, it may very well seem that Holy Communion begins when the priest emerges from the Sanctuary and invites the people to come forward to partake. In current practice this takes place at the end of the singing of the *koinonikon*. Contrary, however, to what may be commonly perceived, Communion of the body and blood of Christ does indeed begin during the *koinonikon* and not after the invitational phrase ‘With fear of God...’ (Μετὰ φόβου Θεοῦ...). In other words, the clergy proceed to commune before this phrase and the people are simply invited by this phrase to come forward and take part in an act that has already begun. Liturgical terminology distinguishes between ‘communion of the clergy’ and ‘communion of the faithful’. But there are not two communions, only one. Clergy are not separate from laity when it comes to the body of Christ but simply take their turn in a logical order of precedence.⁷ Since, therefore, the essence of the Eucharist has to do with unity and communion⁸ then the hymnological context should also reflect this.

Current practice in many churches, however, shatters and fragments the unity of the Eucharistic act by various malpractices. These malpractices are, of course, recent introductions. Firstly, the shutting of the Royal Door during the communion of the clergy leaves the people oblivious to the fact that Holy Communion is in progress and furthermore induces the people to sit down and consider that moment unimportant. Secondly, the bringing out of donation trays at that most climactic moment of the liturgy which provokes noise and distraction among the people. Thirdly, the preaching of the sermon whose proper place and context is directly

after the scriptural readings. And, fourthly, which is arguably a symptom of the previous three, discontinuing the communion hymn by introducing another hymn altogether ‘Of your mystical supper...’ (Του δείπνου σου...); one hymn for the communion of the clergy and another for the communion of the people!⁹ Procedures such as these clearly sever the continuity of the communion rite.

By reverting to ancient customs the original integrity of the Eucharist could be restored. In other words, the communion hymn should cover the entire act of Communion without any disruption whatsoever. It would pause only momentarily for the priestly invitation, ‘With fear of God...’.

Post-Communion urgency. When all have received communion, the priest is seized by an urgency to place the chalice at the *proskomide*, cense it and then return to the holy altar for the invocation ‘Arise, having received...’ (Ορθοί μεταλαβόντες...). In the urban Greek practice there is hardly any time to do this. Indeed, matters are worse when a deacon is present. The unfortunate deacon is forced to rush unceremoniously out the Royal Door (instead of the North door) in order to recite the next litany. In earlier times this urgency did not exist. Patriarch Sergius in 623 introduced the *akroteleution* troparion ‘Let our mouths be filled...’ (Πληρωθήτω το στόμα ημών...) to cover the required liturgical actions.¹⁰ It was only during the Ottoman period that this troparion was omitted from the manuscripts.¹¹ The transition back to the old practice would be very easy because this hymn is still used in Greek monasteries and in the Slavonic churches.¹² In light of this, the hymn has been reinstated correctly in the official English edition of the Divine Liturgy published by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia.¹³

Historical development of the *koinonikon*

Evidence for the chanting of psalmody during communion appears in the late 4th century. But before the development of the *koinonikon* from that period onwards is outlined, it is important to give the historical background of the Eucharist. Although it is virtually impossible to accurately recreate

early Christian worship (due to lack of substantial evidence), the New Testament gives us some indication of what Christian meetings entailed. Thus, when Christians assembled in remembrance of Christ¹⁴ by sharing his body and blood, it involved prayer, singing and teaching¹⁵. Other hymns may have been used but there is little historical evidence specifying the content of these hymns. By the time of Justin the Philosopher, material from the Old and New Testaments was combined with the improvised words of the officiators.¹⁶

When the church was given freedom in the 4th century, many of the local, oral traditions were put to paper and were attributed honorifically to the apostle or bishop associated with that church.¹⁷ In addition to this and from the fourth century onwards, the Book of Psalms emerged to hold pride of place in Christian worship. A treatise attributed to St John Chrysostom made it very clear:

What can I say about the blessed David? That the grace of the Spirit brought it about that he be declared every day and every night. For all bear him in their mouths in the place of myrrh. In the evening services of the church, David is first, middle and last. In the morning praises, David is first, middle and last. In the processions to the abodes of the dead, David is first, middle and last. In the prayers of virgins at their homes, David is first, middle and last. What wondrous things! Many who have not even tasted the beginning of learning letters, learn all of David by heart.¹⁸

In fact, the Book of Psalms was honoured and valued by the Church Fathers¹⁹ to such an extent that: 'it would be better for the sun to be extinguished, than the words of David to be forgotten.'²⁰ Also in the 4th century and in order to combat the various heresies, certain church fathers were forced to add new prayers to existing liturgies, with words designed to convey the true teaching of the Church.²¹

With a written liturgical tradition existing from the fourth century onwards, scholars can more easily uncover evidence that indicates what was chanted during communion in different periods. Thus, it can be argued that the most common communion hymn from the fourth to the ninth century was Psalm 33.²² It was chanted responsorially (call and answer) or antiphonally (verse and refrain). In other words, a single chanter called

out each verse or half verse and the people answered with verse 9 as a refrain.²³ For this to occur, this refrain must have had a simple melody easily remembered by the congregation who were led by the *psaltai* (chanters).²⁴ The invention and development of notation however gave rise to professional singing. Choirs, who at first lead the people in chanting, eventually took over all the singing component of the service.²⁵

Nevertheless, the *koinonikon* was given considerable attention by the Byzantine Christians, who by the ninth century had developed a most beautiful and rich cycle of psalms for communion.²⁶ The Byzantine Communion cycle was a collection of 26 psalmodic verses, each of which corresponded to specific celebrations of the Church calendar.²⁷ A psalmodic verse was often chosen for a celebration because its content related in meaning and symbolism to that specific celebration. For example, verse 26 of Psalm 117 was matched with Palm Sunday because of the words: ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord’ (Ευλογημένος ο ερχόμενος εν ονόματι Κυρίου). Thus, this special psalmodic verse was chanted as a refrain while a selection of other verses, mostly, but not always from the same psalm, served as antiphonal cues (call-cries) before the choral response. This antiphonal manner of chanting the communion hymn represents the high watermark of the *koinonikon*’s hymnological development. It was in direct historical continuity with ancient Christian practice, it struck the appropriate balance between words and music (with neither overwhelming the other), and best expressed the Christian spirit of unity and communion since it was sung either congregationally or chorally.

But this beautiful responsorial/antiphonal system of chanting the *koinonikon* which existed from at least the 4th century to around the 11th century did not continue to this day. The earlier emphasis on the words and poetry of the Psalms shifted to an emphasis on melody and music. Singers came to give more attention to the refrain or *troparion*, embellishing and expanding its music. This meant that the psalmodic verses were increasingly omitted. Thus, all that eventually remained was the single verse of what was formerly a refrain.²⁸

Indeed, this tendency to embellish short phrases with more florid music gave rise to the *melismatic* (mellifluous) style of chanting, evident from the 11th century onwards and well developed by the 13th - 14th centuries.²⁹ It was a very expanded and ornamental style, which was applied to the now single-versed *koinonika*, to the *cheroubika* and to other hymns. However, the difficulty of learning the *melismatic* style restricted chanting to only a handful of professionals with the ultimate consequence being that choirs disappeared and the single chanter became entrenched at the *analogion*. Of course, the *melismatic* style did not monopolise all the chanting. Existing styles characterised by their brevity continued to exist and indeed survive to this day. Such are the *eirmologic* (hymns modelled on the *eirmoi*) and *sticheraric* styles (hymns that are appended to the psalmic verses of the vespers (*esperinos*) and matins (*orthros*) and the *ekphonic* (recitative) style used for scripture readings and other melodies.³⁰

The *melismatic* style continued through the late Byzantine and subsequent Ottoman periods, periods which witnessed the single, one-line phrases of the *koinonika* being set in musical compositions the notation for which was two or more pages long and lasted from seven to twenty or more minutes. With the musical reform of 1814, Byzantine music became relatively more accessible and the *melismatic koinonika* were transcribed from the old shorthand notation to the more analytical notation of the new method. The new method's relative simplicity allowed for the first printed publication of Byzantine music in 1820. This meant that Byzantine chant became more widespread to the point that the publications of the 19th century (which were essentially old Byzantine and post-Byzantine compositions re-written and reworked into the new method) are now considered the classics of Byzantine music.

But soloist chanting continued its detrimental influence in the 20th century. Feeling that the hymnography as encapsulated in the classics was inadequate in expression and floridness, various famous chanters reworked the originals to produce compositions that matched their own personal style and peculiarities. The *koinonika*, along with the *cheroubika*, were subjected to a malformation bordering on the 'amane' (lament) of Turkish music. The lack of flowing rhythm along with demanding and

sinuous melodic lines meant that these hymns are now entrenched as the exclusive property of the solo-chanter. It is a form of chanting that is less expressive of the communal spirit of earlier times.³¹

Today, increased populations in the urban centres have made Holy Communion generally longer in duration and this results in the hymn '*Of your mystical supper...*' being repeated far too many times. Furthermore, most people feel an aversion to endless, extended vowels muttered by a single chanter (as opposed to a choir). To address this public feeling some well-intentioned but arbitrary moves were made. These included some of the malpractices outlined above as well as the substitution of the *koinonikon* by out-of-place hymns irrelevant to the Byzantine Communion cycle. Examples include, *Polyeleoi* (Πολύελεσι), *Where shall I go?* (Πού πορεύθω), *Confess the Lord* (Εξομολογείσθε) and more recently, *Pure Virgin* (Αγνή Παρθένη).

Revival of ancient practice

A wiser step would have been to use the fruits of modern research to revive older, more ancient forms of the communion hymn and to eradicate the various malpractices which do not conform to traditional practice but were introduced relatively recently.³² In reviving some of the ancient practices, the following guidelines have been proposed by Phountoulis³³ and are currently being implemented and taught as a systematic standard in the theological schools of Thessaloniki and Athens:

1. The sermon should not be preached at communion time, but rather after the scriptural readings;
2. The choice of *koinonikon* is dictated by the *typikon* according to the commemoration of the day. The chanter finds the corresponding psalm or *ekloge* (selection) and then chants the *koinonikon* in one of the following ways: (a) verse and refrain; (b) verse and response; (c) verse by verse; (d) *papadikon* (by a choir);

3. On occasion, those *koinonika* used before the Communion cycle was established (pre 9th century), may also be chanted, for example Psalms 33, 144 or 41;
4. The *koinonikon* continues right through the communion of the people. ‘*Of your mystical supper...*’ (Του δείπνου σου...) strictly belongs to Holy Thursday only;
5. After ‘*Always now and ever...*’ (Πάντοτε νυν και αεί...) and before ‘*Arise having received...*’ (Ορδοί μεταλαβόντες...), the following hymn should be chanted: ‘*Let our mouth be filled with praise, Lord, that we may sing of your glory, for you have made us worthy to partake of your holy mysteries. Keep us in your holiness as all the day we meditate upon your righteousness. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia*’ (Πληρωθήτω το στόμα ημών ανιέσεως, Κύριε, όπως υμνήσωμεν την δόξαν σου, ότι ηξιώσας ημάς των αγίων σου μετασχεῖν μυστηρίων. Τήρησον ημάς εν τω σώ αγιασμά, όλην την ημέραν μελετώντας την δικαιοσύνην σου. Αλληλούϊα, Αλληλούϊα, Αλληλούϊα).³⁴

Further guidelines for chanters

Chanters may study the following schematic tables (see Paradigms 1 - 4) which illustrate the different ways the *koinonikon* may be chanted. A chanter only needs a *Psalterion* (Book of Psalms) or an *Eklogarion*³⁵ and the table of the communion cycle that is appended at the end of this article.³⁶ The only two music books which are currently suitable for the restoration of the ancient practice, are the *Antiphonarion* of K. Papagiannes³⁷ and the *Psalterion Terpson*³⁸ of Simonopetra monastery.

In most cases, the psalm should last long enough to cover all of Communion. If however, there are hundreds of people taking Holy Communion as on important feast days then a combination of two styles (of the one psalm) is acceptable. For example, Christmas day would require the chanting of Psalm 110 for about ten minutes, which may be followed by a half-hour *papadikon* melody *Salvation* (Αύτρωσιν) - preferably by a choir - to cover for the many faithful that will take Holy Communion on that day.³⁹

Chanters will note that all these paradigms are different forms of antiphony. Psalm 33 will be used as the model.

Paradigm 1: Verse and Refrain.

For example: *Την τιμιωτέραν, Ταις πρεσβείαις*

Solo	Refrain	Γεύσασθε... Taste and see...
Solo	Verse 1	<i>Ευλογήσω τον Κύριον...</i> <i>I will bless the Lord...</i>
Choir	Refrain	Γεύσασθε... Taste and see...
Solo	Verse 2	<i>Εν τω Κυρίῳ...</i> <i>In the Lord...</i>
Choir	Refrain	Γεύσασθε... Taste and see...
Solo	Verse 3	<i>Μεγαλύνετε τον Κύριον...</i> <i>Magnify the Lord...</i>
Choir	Refrain	Γεύσασθε... Taste and see...

Paradigm 2: Verse and Response

For example: *Κανονάρχισμα, Κύριε σώσον τους ευσεβείς*

Solo	Verse 1	<i>Ευλογήσω τον Κύριον...</i> <i>I will bless the Lord...</i>
Choir	Response	<i>Ευλογήσω τον Κύριον...</i> <i>I will bless the Lord...</i>
Solo	Verse 2	<i>Εν τω Κυρίῳ...</i> <i>In the Lord...</i>
Choir	Response	<i>Εν τω Κυρίῳ...</i> <i>In the Lord...</i>
Solo	Verse 3	<i>Μεγαλύνετε τον Κύριον...</i> <i>Magnify the Lord...</i>
Choir	Response	<i>Μεγαλύνετε τον Κύριον...</i> <i>Magnify the Lord...</i>

Paradigm 3: Verse by Verse		
For example: 50 ^m Psalm of the Sunday Orthros		
Choir A	Verse 1	Ευλογήσω τον Κύριον... I will bless the Lord...
Choir B	Verse 2	Εν τῷ Κυρίῳ... In the Lord...
Choir A	Verse 3	Μεγαλύνετε τον Κύριον... Magnify the Lord...
Choir B	Verse 4	Ἐξεζήτησα τον Κύριον... I sought the Lord...

Paradigm 4: Papadikon melody ⁴⁰	
Γεύσασθε και ἴδετε ὅτι χρηστός ὁ Κύριος. Ἀλληλούϊα. Taste and see that the Lord is good. Alleluia.	

These provide some guidelines for the revival of the ancient practices of communion psalmody.⁴¹ A revival of ancient practices would mean that liturgical worship would improve immensely in expressing the spiritual feelings of the Orthodox Christian faithful. It would also mean that the various malpractices outlined in this article would finally be rectified. Having achieved this, Holy Communion could once again be couched in a liturgical context that more appropriately corresponds with its purpose and meaning: union, sharing and being part of the Body of Christ.

Appendix

The Byzantine Communion Cycle according to the current typikon (based on Conomos, op.cit. 48-51. See also Taft, op. cit. 302-5)

Commemoration	Verse LXX	Greek text	English text
a. Variable Koinonika			
Sundays Forefeasts	Ps. 148:1	Αινείτε τον Κύριον εκ των ουρανών. Αλληλούϊα.	Praise the Lord from the heavens. Alleluia.
Mondays Angels (8 Nov.)	Ps. 103:4	Ο ποιών τους αγγέλους αυτού πνεύματα και τους λειτουργούς αυτού πυρός φλόγα. Αλληλούϊα.	Who makes his angels spirits and his ministers a flame of fire. Alleluia.
Saturdays Martyrs Prophets All Saints	Ps. 32:1	Αγαλλιάσθε δίκαιοι εν Κυρίω, τοις ευθέσι πρέπει αίνεσις. Αλληλούϊα.	Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous, praise is becoming for the straight. Alleluia.
Tuesdays John the Baptist Hierarchs Righteous	Ps. 111:6b	Εις μνημόσυνον αιώνιον έσται δίκαιοι. Αλληλούϊα.	The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance. Alleluia.
Wednesdays Mother of God	Ps. 115:4	Ποτήριον σωτηρίου λήψομαι και το όνομα Κυρίου επικαλέσομαι. Αλληλούϊα.	I will take up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord. Alleluia.
Thursdays Apostles	Ps. 18:5	Εις πάσαν την γην εξήλθεν ο φθόγγος αυτών και εις τα πέρατα της οικουμένης τα ρήματα αυτών. Αλληλούϊα.	Their sound goes out through all the earth and their words to the ends of the world. Alleluia.

Commemoration	Verse LXX	Greek text	English text
Fridays, Holy Cross (14 Sept., 3 rd Sun. Lent)	Ps. 4:7	Εσημειώθη εφ' ἡμᾶς το φῶς του προσώπου σου Κύριε. Αλληλούϊα.	The light of your countenance is marked upon us, O Lord. Alleluia.
Dead Saturdays	Ps. 64:5 & Prov. 101:13	Μακάριοι οὗς εξελέξω και προσελάβου Κύριε και το μνημόσυνον αυτῶν εἰς γενεάν και γενεάν. Αλληλούϊα.	Blessed are they, O Lord, whom You chose and brought near; and their memory will endure unto generations and generations. Alleluia.
b. Fixed Koinonika (Menaion)			
New church year (1/9)	Ps. 64:12	Ευλόγησον τον στέφανον του ενιαντού της χρηστότητός σου [Κύριε]. Αλληλούϊα.	Bless the circle of the year with your goodness [Lord]. Alleluia.
Entry of the Mother of God (21 Nov.)	Ps. 44:15a 16b	Απενεχθήσονται τῷ βασιλεῖ παρθένοι οπίσω αὐτῆς, αχθήσονται εἰς ναόν βασιλέως. Αλληλούϊα. {Currently: Ποτήριον σωτηρίου}	Virgins shall be brought to the king after her, they shall be brought into the temple of the king. Alleluia.
Dedication of the Great Church (23 Dec.)	Ps. 25:8	Κύριε, γάπησα ευπρέπειαν οἴκου σου. Αλληλούϊα.	O Lord, I love the splendour of your house. Alleluia.
Nativity (25 Dec.)	Ps. 110:9a	Λύτρωσιν ἀπέστειλεν [Κύριος] τῷ λαῷ αὐτοῦ. Αλληλούϊα.	[The Lord] has sent deliverance unto his people. Alleluia.

Commemoration	Verse LXX	Greek text	English text
Theophany (6 Jan.)	Titus 2:11	Επεφάνη η χάρις του Θεού η σωτήριος πάντων ανθρώπων.	The grace of God that brings salvation to all people has appeared.
Annunciation (25 Mar.)	Ps. 131:13	Εξελέξατο κύριος την Σιών, ηρετίσατο αυτήν εις κατοικίαν εαυτού. Αλληλούϊα.	The Lord has chosen Zion, he has desired it for his habitation. Alleluia.
Transfiguration (6 Aug.)	Ps. 88:16b & 17a	Εν τῷ φωτί [της δόξης] του προσώπου σου Κύριε, πορευσόμεθα καὶ ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί σου αγαλλιασώμεθα [εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα] Αλληλούϊα.	We shall walk, O Lord, in the light [of the glory] of your countenance and in your name shall we rejoice [unto the ages]. Alleluia.
c. Movable Koinonika (Triodion & Pentecostarion)			
Presanctified Liturgy	Ps. 33:9a	Γεύσασθε καὶ ἴδετε ὅτι χρηστός ὁ Κύριος. Αλληλούϊα.	Taste and see that the Lord is good. Alleluia.
Lazarus Saturday	Ps. 8:3a	Ἐκ στόματος νηπίων καὶ θηλαζόντων κατηρτίσω αἶνον. Αλληλούϊα.	Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings you have perfected praise. Alleluia.
Palm Sunday	Ps. 117:26	Ευλογημένος ὁ ἐρχόμενος ἐν ὀνόματι Κυρίου. Αλληλούϊα.	Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord. Alleluia.

Commemoration	Verse LXX	Greek text	English text
Holy Thursday	Non-scriptural	Του δείπνου σου του μυστικού σήμερον, υιέ θεού, κοινωνόν με παράλαβε· ου μη γαρ τοις εχθροίς σου το μυστήριον είπω· ου φίλημά σοι δώσω καθάπερ ο Ιούδας· αλλ'ως ο ληστής ομολογώ σοι· μνήσθητί μου Κύριε, εν τη βασιλεία σου.	At your mystical supper receive me today, O Son of God, as a partaker; for I will not speak of the mystery to your enemies, I will not kiss you as did Judas, but as the thief I will confess you: Remember me, O Lord, in your kingdom.
Holy Saturday	Ps. 77:65	Εξηγέρθη ως ο υπνών Κύριος [και ανέστη σώζων ημάς]. Αλληλούϊα.	The Lord is risen as from sleep [and is risen saving us]. Alleluia.
Easter	Non-scriptural	Σώμα Χριστού μεταλάβετε, πηγής αθανάτου γεύσασθε.	Partake of the body of Christ, taste the source of immortality.
Thomas Sunday	Ps. 147:1	Επαίνει Ιερουσαλήμ τον Κύριον, αίνει τον θεόν σου Σιών. Αλληλούϊα.	Exalt the Lord, O Jerusalem; praise your God, O Zion. Alleluia.
Mid-Pentecost	John 6:56	Ο τρώγων μου την σάρκα και πίνων μου το αίμα εν εμοί μένει καγώ εν αυτώ, [είπεν ο Κύριος].	He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him, [said the Lord].
Ascension	Ps. 46:6	Ανέβη ο θεός εν αλαλαγμώ, κύριος εν φωνή σάλπιγγος. Αλληλούϊα.	God has gone up with a shout, the Lord with the shout of the trumpet. Alleluia.

Commemoration	Verse LXX	Greek text	English text
Pentecost	Ps. 142:10	Το πνεῦμα σου [το αγαθόν], οδηγήσει με εν γῇ ευθεία. Αλληλούϊα.	Your [good] spirit shall guide me into a land of righteousness. Alleluia.
Holy Spirit		Το Πνεῦμα σου το Ἅγιον μη αντανέλης αφ' ἡμῶν δεόμεθα, φιλόνηρωπε. Αλληλούϊα.	Take not your Holy Spirit from us, we pray O compassionate One. Alleluia.
d. Miscellaneous (pre 9 th c.)			
	Ps. 33:9	Γεύσασθε και ἴδετε ὅτι χρηστός ὁ Κύριος. Αλληλούϊα.	O taste and see that the Lord is good. Alleluia.
	Ps. 41:1	Ὅν τρόπον επιποθεῖ ἡ ἔλαφος ἐπὶ τὰς πηγὰς τῶν υδάτων, οὕτως επιποθεῖ ἡ ψυχὴ μου πρὸς σε, ὁ Θεός. Αλληλούϊα.	As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for you O God. Alleluia.
	Ps. 144:15	Οἱ ὀφθαλμοί πάντων εἰς σε ἐλπίζουσιν, και συ δίδως τὴν τροφὴν αὐτῶν ἐν ευκαιρίᾳ. Αλληλούϊα.	The eyes of all hope in you, and you give their food in due season. Alleluia.
	Ps. 148:1	Αἰνεῖτε τὸν Κύριον ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν. Αλληλούϊα.	Praise the Lord from the heavens. Alleluia.

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NOTES:

- ¹ Dimitri E. Conomos, *The Late Byzantine and Slavonic Communion Cycle: Liturgy and Music*, (Washington DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1985). See also Thomas H. Schattauer, 'The Koinonikon of the Byzantine Liturgy', *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, 49 (1983):91-129.
- ² Ιωάννη Φουντούλη, *Λειτουργική Α΄: Εισαγωγή στη θεία λατρεία*, (β' έκδ.), Θεσσαλονίκη, 1995. More information from Phountoulis on the issue of the *koinonikon* can be found in his books: *Απαντήσεις εις λειτουργικάς απορίας*, Athens: Apostoliki Diakonia 1982, vol. 3, 89-97; vol. 4, 127ff.
- ³ Robert F. Taft, *A History of the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom; Volume V: The Precommunion Rites*; Chapter VI The Communion Psalmody or "Koinonikon", *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 261, Rome 2000.
- ⁴ π. Κωνσταντίνου Παπαγιάννη, *Αντιφωνάριον: περιέχον τα εν πάσαις ταις ιεραίς ακολουθίαις προκείμενα, αλληλουάρια, αντίφωνα και κοινωνικά, συμπληρωθέντα και αποκατασταθέντα κατά την αρχαίαν τάξιν*, Θεσσαλονίκη 1998.
- ⁵ See his commentary on the 75th canon of the sixth ecumenical council in *The Rudder*, publ. Aster, Athens 1990, 286. This illustrates that despite the fact that they have been a 600 year old tradition, they still do not qualify as being correct and proper.
- ⁶ Ignatius of Antioch, *Letter to the Ephesians*, ch.4. Series: *The Fathers of the Church*, vol. I, Washington DC: CUAP, 1962, 89.
- ⁷ See John Chrysostom's homily on 2 Thessalonians 4, 4 (PG 62:492).
- ⁸ The 'oneness', unity and communion in the body of Christ are the fundamental theological concepts associated with the Eucharist. See 1 Corinthians 11:18-21, 29, 33; and Ignatius of Antioch *Letter to the Philadelphians*, ch.4. Series: *The Fathers of the Church*, op. cit., 114.
- ⁹ This is a relatively recent and arbitrary innovation which can be traced back to the new editions of the 20th century. Early 20th century *typika* and *ieratika* do not stipulate that any hymn should be said after the *Μετά φόβον Θεού...* (*With*

fear of God...). It was understood that the koinonikon would continue right through to the end of the communion of the people. The change is present in the 1951 edition of the Ieratikion (84).

- ¹⁰ *Chronicon Paschale* (624), 1-6: ‘...and after chanting the final verse of the koinonikon, that this troparion also be sung: “May our mouth be filled with your praise...”’ PG 92:1001.
- ¹¹ Taft, *op.cit.* 296.
- ¹² Φουντούλη, *op.cit.* 248.
- ¹³ Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia. *The Divine Liturgy according to St. John Chrysostom*, Sydney: St Andrew’s Orthodox Press, 1996, edition of 2005), 102-3.
- ¹⁴ 1 Corinthians, 11:23-26.
- ¹⁵ Acts 2:42. Colossians 3:15-17.
- ¹⁶ Justin the Philosopher and Martyr, First Apology, 67, 3-5. *The Apostolic Fathers*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1985.
- ¹⁷ For example, the Liturgy of St. Iakobos, the Liturgy of St. Mark, the Liturgy of Clement of Rome.
- ¹⁸ John Chrysostom, *On repentance and on the reading of David regarding the wife of Uriah*, P.G. 64,12.
- ¹⁹ Athanasius; *The Life Of Antony And The Letter To Marcellinus*; translated by Robert C. Gregg; Paulist Press, New York; 101-129; 1980. St. Basil, *Exegetic Homilies*, trans. S. Agnes Clare Way, *The Fathers of the Church*, XLVI (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1963), 152-54. St. Basil, *The Letters*, trans. Roy J. Defarrari, IV (London: W. Heinemann, 1934), 419. Ambrose, *Explanations of the Psalms (Ps 1, 9-12: CSEL, 64, 7, 9-10)*.
- ²⁰ John Chrysostom, 2nd Homily on Repentance, PG 49 p.286. And yet the Book of Psalms has suffered a demise that would have Chrysostom lamenting that his words were not heeded. In fact, one could say that many of the problems associated with current hymnological practice stem from the displacement of the Book of Psalms from its original, early Byzantine use. The koinonikon issue is only one aspect of this greater problem. Similar articles such as this may be written in the future so as to address some of the other aspects of the problem: *Typika*, *Allelouarion*, *Cheroubikon* etc.

- ²¹ As for example in the Liturgies of St. Basil, of St. Gregory the Theologian, of St. John Chrysostom, and of St. Epiphanius of Cyprus.
- ²² Conomos, op. cit. p.15. See *Apostolic Constitutions* (4th c.), Book VIII, Ch. XIII:16- ‘Let Psalm 33 be said while all the rest are communicating.’ Also Cyril of Jerusalem’s *Catechesis* 5:20; Jerome’s *Commentarius in Esaiam* II 5:20, PG 24:86D. Further testimony to this, is the psalm’s survival in the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts and its chanting during the antidoron in the Russian Orthodox Church. The Typikon of the Great Church (10/11thc) clearly specifies Ps.33: ‘And after giving [communion] to everyone [in the sanctuary] he [the bishop] goes off to the first communion table, and when the deacon carrying the diskos has said, “Bless, master,” the bishop says, “I will bless the Lord at all times...” [Ps. 33:1]. And the whole psalm is done by the assistants while the people are receiving communion. And if there are still other communicants, the deacon says again, “Bless, master,” and the bishop says, “I will bless the Lord...” [Ps. 33:1 again]. And this is said two and three and several times, for as long as there are communicants.’ (X. 13-15 British Library Add. 34060), quoted in Taft, p.290.
- ²³ Conomos, op.cit. p.17. In exactly the same way as the *Τιμιωτέραν, Ταῖς πρεσβείαις* and *Σώσον ἡμᾶς νιέ θεοῦ*. But with the phrase “Alleluia” at the end of each response.
- ²⁴ ‘As for the psalmody executed with singing and tone, and with the people responding the akrosticha with melody and singing – these things let us [monks] leave to readers, psaltai, subdeacons, and deacons...’ Here St. Nilus is urging monks to avoid music altogether, but gives witness nonetheless to the fact that the standard in the cities was the people being led in chant by the *psaltai*. Cf. *Narration of John and Sophronius* (6/7th c.), lines 238-41, quoted in Taft 282-3.
- ²⁵ Conomos, op.cit. 15.
- ²⁶ The oldest surviving manuscripts of Byzantine music come from the ninth and tenth centuries.
- ²⁷ This cycle of hymns is still in use today, even though it is currently chanted in a different manner.
- ²⁸ Some scholars attribute this shortening of the *koinonikon* to a decline in frequency of Communion. The argument is as follows: though people still attended church, they shied from taking Holy Communion. This made lengthy psalms obsolete because communion did not last long. In a natural step therefore, all that remained from the psalmic communion hymns was the single verse of the refrain. See Παναγιώτης Ν. Τρεμπέλας, *Εκλογή Ελληνικής Ορθοδόξου Υμνολογίας*, Athens: Σωτήρ 1978. p.146; Φουντούλης

I., *Απαντήσεις εις λειτουργικά ερωτήματα*, τομ. Δ', Athens: Apostolike Diakonia 1982, p.79ff. The decline in frequent communion (communing at every single Eucharist) began in the 4th century and culminated by the 12th century. See Taft 179ff & 521.

²⁹ Ioannes Plousiadenos represents the developments of the 11th c. Ioannes and Gregorios Koukouzeles, Xenos Korones represent the 13th and 14th c. developments.

³⁰ Oral tradition on the Holy Mountain and at the Patriarchate of Constantinople has preserved a recitative manner of chanting the *leitourgika*, only recently put to paper in musical books such as D. Sourlantzis' *Byzantine Leitourgia*, Thessaloniki 2001.

³¹ For biblical and patristic basis, see note viii.

³² What is being proposed in this article is not an innovation but a revival. The malpractices mentioned so far constitute inappropriate changes that require reversal, particularly since they were made when the fruits of modern research were not available.

³³ Φουντούλης, op. cit., 235.

³⁴ Based on Psalm 70:8, 15, 24.

³⁵ Nikephoros Blemmydes (13th c.) produced the *Eklogarion* that is most widely in use today. This was a 'Selection Book' of psalmic verses collated according to the theme of the commemoration. The commemoration for example, of the Transfiguration would have a selection of related verses from all over the Psalter, called an *ekloge* and starting with the phrase: 'On his holy mountain, Alleluia.' (Εν ὄρει αγίῳ αὐτοῦ, Ἀλληλούια).

³⁶ The table is a slightly revised version of the table provided in Conomos D., op.cit. pp.48-51; in that it takes into consideration what the current *typika* specify. Four of the *koinonikon* refrains are non-psalmic. In these cases, chanters can find verses in the *Eklogarion*, at the *Antiphons* of the day or in the *Apostolos*.

³⁷ A new edition of which is due to be released by Apostolike Diakonia soon. In fact, this book is an epitome of what needs to be done with the Book of Psalms in the context of a liturgical renewal.

³⁸ Ιερά Μονή Σίμωνος Πέτρας, *Ψαλτήριον Τεμπνόν*, Άγιον Όρος 1995. Some of the short koinonika have been rendered into English in: St Anthony's Greek Orthodox Monastery, *The Divine Liturgies; As chanted on the Holy Mountain*, Arizona 2006.

- ³⁹ Another option is to read the Pre-Communion prayers as it is unlikely that they have been read at home by the majority. Yet another option is the practice of the double *koinonikon*. This occurs when two equally important commemorations coincide on the same day so that two different *koinonika* are chanted.
- ⁴⁰ The *papadikon/melismatic* compositions sound much better if chanted by a choir with a flowing rhythmic pace. The musical phrases originally woven together by the great *protopsaltai* and *lambadarioi* of the *melismatic* period should be kept together like a sentence. Solo chanting does indeed have a place in Orthodox worship and that is within the context of a choir (*apechemata, stichoi* & elaborate *theseis*).
- ⁴¹ An honourable goal that chanters can set for themselves, is to leave behind the ways of soloistic chanting (which express an individualism not reflecting our Church's spirit) and instead teach students and establish choirs. These need not have a hundred members. The Byzantines were quite content with two *ebdomades* (groups of seven) who were led by a *primikerios* (leader). See Conomos, op.cit. p.18. The promotion of choirs in the Byzantine style by the Patriarchate of Antioch is a commendable example to follow.

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