

# **Psalmic Music in Orthodox Liturgy as Foundation, Movement, and Ministry**

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## *Introduction*

The meaning of any given text relies heavily on its content, structure, and style. The psalms are especially rich in these elements, encompassing through the eyes of a great king the multi-dimensional and sometimes brutally honest reality of humanity's relationship to God, and God's relationship to humanity.[1] Orthodox Christians, among others, also propose that the Gospel message of Christ further enhances and amplifies psalmic meaning, stressing thematic continuity and linkage between pre-Christianity and Christianity itself. That Christ fulfilled written law and prophecy emphatically suggests that He also fulfills all things currently, and that life for the Christian is always experienced by virtue of His illumination. Therefore, it is a natural Orthodox inclination to look beyond exact historical boundaries and conditions as they might be revealed in the Old Testament to discover other dimensions of meaning in the context of an ongoing faith.

Meaning, concerning the psalms in particular, can exist on more than one level. This especially occurs when the auditory dimension is added to the literary component, i.e. when the psalms are actually sung and heard in worship. Conditions such as liturgical circumstance – what in worship is appointed to take place and why as a certain psalm is chanted – alongside musical setting structure, and even use of cantorial, choral, or congregational singing in any particular form or combination may add significantly to the message of the a particular psalm as it is encountered in the ears of the faithful listener. In other words, specific aspects of textual or literal meaning may remain unchanged, but the actual faith encounter with meaning may broaden and re-shape as the psalms are enacted within the context of liturgy. One may ask, therefore, what more can a psalm actually mean when it is sung by a certain person or group of people in worship, at a certain point, linked to a certain act of event? Furthermore, what are the ramifications of multi-dimensional psalmic meaning for North American Orthodoxy today?

## *Early Christian and pre-Christian influences*

To explore all levels of functional meaning in the psalms first requires an examination of when and how psalmic function, seemingly, was originally assigned within the early Christian community. Of particular importance is that these texts, as inherited from the cult of Israel, were meant to be sung, which is honored in many Christian traditions even today, especially by the Orthodox. While a justifiably broad historical survey lies outside the scope of this paper, a couple summary points elucidate the matter.

To start, early Christians of the pre-Constantinian era needed to hear their faith, since they lived their lives in an intensively auditory environment, and since their encounters with Christ had not yet been canonically documented in what would become the New Testament. Belief, in

the formal sense, was primarily communicated through gathering, preaching, and spontaneous proclamation -- in other words a charismatic oral encounter enlivening the image and message of Christ. In fact, as Edward Foley writes, "...oral performance...[is]...at the heart of the early Christian message, and [it] generated the new religious form of truth known as the gospel. It was only through this auditory *kerygma*...that belief was possible." [2] In worship specifically, music played a central role in the expression of that Christian auditory *kerygma*. Foley also writes, "...to celebrate worship without music would be completely unintelligible to Christians of the first centuries. In order to enter into the world of early Christianity and comprehend the place and function of music in that world, we have to imagine and penetrate an auditory environment very different from our own." [3]

Therefore, to utter and to hear the words and meaning of faith were essential to early Christians, as was music in their worship. But, how does this relate specifically to the psalms? In other words, how did the psalms initially manifest themselves in early Christianity, and how did they continue to function during this period? It is beyond dispute, as mentioned, that the psalms were originally written to be sung by the ancient cult of Israel, but the assumption that they were written to be sung exclusively in worship is, as many some scholars have recently discovered, a problematic proposal. [4]

An eye-opening reality, in fact, is that chanting the *entire* Psalter in worship as a comprehensive liturgical songbook is perhaps a uniquely Christian phenomenon only after the third century. Beginning with pre-Christianity, not all psalms were necessarily written for temple worship in the ancient Hebrew world. [5] Foley elucidates this point:

the psalms were intimately related to Israel's cult...[but]...[t]his does not mean...that all or even most of the psalms were related to Temple worship. Very few of the psalms have specific or identifiable liturgical references that allow them to be linked with any certainty to worship or, more importantly, to worship in the Temple. [6]

In fact, formative Christianity during the first century shows relatively little evidence that the psalms were officially or comprehensively used in sung worship as well, although perhaps they were emerging as liturgical readings, as text fragments referred to in preaching, as part of the early Christian table ritual or Eucharist, and as a traditional and structured poetic biblical source now reinterpreted in light of the Jesus experience. [7]

The second and third centuries, however, brought "ample witness to the singing of Davidic psalms in various Christian gatherings," [8] and after the third century, they take on unavoidable liturgical presence and shape. Therefore, while not all psalms may have been written and appointed for liturgical use in the temple, they all were eventually embraced as part of the core auditory expression of faith in fourth century Christianity, i.e. the time when Christian worship was legally recognized and eventually favored by the state. [9] In fact, a famous quote attributed to St. John Chrysostom not only suggests the popularity of the psalms in fourth century worship,

but implies that they also served as a pervasive and relevant presence throughout Christian culture and everyday life:

If the faithful are keeping vigil in the church,  
David is first, middle, and last.  
If at dawn anyone wishes to sing hymns,  
David is first, middle, and last.  
In the holy monasteries, among the ranks of the  
    heavenly warriors,  
David is first, middle, and last.  
In the convents of virgins, who are imitators of Mary,  
David is first, middle, and last.  
In the deserts where men hold converse with God,  
David is first, middle, and last.[10]

To underscore further the importance of Byzantine Christian psalmody, the quote actually mimics poetic psalm structure with a common refrain written into the text, as one finds in Psalm 136.[11] Therefore, ancient Byzantine Christianity, which is the great liturgical ancestor of modern Orthodoxy, comprehensively embraced the psalms at the heart of Christian expansion, rooted in Constantinople and then spreading throughout the empire.

#### *Psalmic Music...as Foundation*

Orthodox worship as a series or cycle of structured ritual events can vary slightly or greatly from nation to nation, from region to region, or even from one neighboring community to the next. Even those traditions that are direct ancestors of Hellenic-Byzantine Christianity – Slavic Orthodoxy for instance – sometimes embrace rubrical practices at certain points in worship that boldly distinguish these traditions liturgically from their ancestors (the question of language and musical style aside).[12] Yet, there is enough common liturgical material and action across the board to make Orthodox worship generally recognizable in spite of particular cultural differences. Perhaps the most important quality, again in terms of rubrical structure, is the prominence of the psalms in each service. In fact, one can even navigate worship by the psalms. They often introduce major liturgical segments and prepare or accompany major liturgical acts, between which other liturgical components such as litanies, special hymns, or prayers move the faithful from one portion of worship to the next.[13]

More striking, perhaps, is that numerous other textual structures, such as *troparia* and *stichera*, written to honor and elucidate Orthodox feasts, saints, and other historical acts of faith, often attach themselves to the psalms, usually between the verses. This affords the assembly the unique opportunity to embrace psalmic meaning not as the faith of Israel that anticipated a Messianic coming, but in light of a Messiah who has already come. Consider the Paschal antiphon that begins with "Let God arise..." (Ps. 68:1) to which the *troparion*, as refrain, replies, "Christ is risen..." As David Drillock writes, "[this] functions as the Church's interpretation of the psalm...[t]he resurrection of Christ from the dead is the fulfillment of the prophecy uttered by the psalmist." [14] A second level of meaning, as previously described, is therefore quintessentially apparent in this example. One could not encounter psalmic meaning in light of

an actual Messiah, a risen Christ, simply by reading through the psalm text *per se*. It is a level of meaning one only encounters by singing and embracing these interpretational psalm components that blend pre-Christian and Christian texts in worship, thus articulating and stressing the fundamental revelation that Christ fulfills the law and the faith of Israel.

### *Psalmic Music...as Movement*

The singing of psalms, especially for the ancient Byzantine church, often indicates movement by procession. The idea that one would have entered into the worship space and stood almost motionless for the duration of the service would have been a foreign, if not ridiculous, notion to the early Byzantines. Processions portray a church with sacred destinations and common points of arrival. On Holy Friday, for instance, the faithful solemnly accompany Christ's body in procession so that they may rest him in the tomb. For a time in Byzantium, the faithful would arrive at the great Hagia Sophia for Divine Liturgy only after having moved in procession throughout the city, stopping at various other churches and holy places along the way to celebrate stational services. Once at the monumental church, the processions continued: the people entered singing Psalm 95 and the patriarch then continued to his throne to the singing of "Holy God," originally a responsorial psalm antiphon. A little later, after the Gospel had been proclaimed and preached, the Great Entrance took place – and it was just that – to the singing of the *Cherubikon*, also a responsorial psalm antiphon originally. Finally, during the *Koinonikon* or Communion psalm antiphon, the faithful would move in procession to the chalice.

Today, movement seems to exist noticeably for many Orthodox churches only on special occasions, such as Pascha or at a funeral service; that is to say, processions in the fullness of their physical dimensions and liturgical relevance, by a large, are now absent from the regular Sunday gathering.[15] Two conditions, among others, help explain this. First, today's churches are generally smaller with less room for movement (which can be further inhibited by pews where they exist). Second, Orthodox services are now directed to take place almost entirely inside the church building, under one roof, so to speak. A second level of psalmic meaning, however, is sacrificed as a result. A verse such as "Let us come into His presence with thanksgiving" (Ps. 95:2), as it might have been chanted at the introit or little entrance during the third antiphon, should not only conjure a mental image of the faithful standing before God the King and Creator, but should actually compel them to move into the liturgical space designated as His kingdom on earth.[16] And the rest of the verse, "let us make a joyful noise to Him with songs of praise" can equally be seen in this context as a liturgical direction acknowledging and reflecting the musical nature of the entrance. What our Christian ancestors seem to be saying is that, as psalms are chanted in procession, they not only enable and guide liturgical movement as their textual meaning reaches the hearts of the faithful, but they can also compel the physical response, thus engaging those gathered in worship multi-dimensionally.

### *Psalmic Music...as Ministry*

Based on historical precedent, Orthodox Christianity is a responsorial faith. In fact, the uniquely responsorial nature of the Christian assembly is evident in several ancient manuscripts, especially the New Testament. Early Christians were known to respond enthusiastically with acclamations such as "Amen," "Alleluia," and even "Hosanna." [17] These responses were brief,

emphatic, and they indicated the interactive and charismatic nature of early Christian worship.[18] They also portrayed the Christian faithful engaged in dialogues of faith. To internalize the gospel message on hearing it was not enough: it had to be audibly confirmed through response.

The responsorial psalm antiphon – as the most popular and extensively employed performance structure used to sing the psalms in Byzantine worship – fit perfectly the dialogic character of early Christians.[19] As well, it formalized the ministry of the liturgical singer. In responsorial performance, according to the ancient model, the cantor or cantors would announce a particular appointed psalm through intonation, and in the same manner the psalm's refrain – which was either a text fragment from the psalm or an "Alleluia" (*troparia* refrains came slightly later). Then they would chant the verses, to which the assembly as liturgical respondents would sing the response. The refrain, therefore, as the element of consistent textual repetition, supplied the framework of common thought and response for any series of unique and contrasting psalm verses. And since the refrain text was drawn from the psalm itself, the thematic connection between it and the verses was unavoidable.

This ancient practice reveals several things about the character of Byzantine Orthodox liturgical execution. First, it underscores the continuing role of the congregation to listen and to respond as a unified body gathered in a common dialogue of faith. This role is at the heart of the congregation's liturgical ministry to confirm audibly their scriptural faith on behalf of all. As well, the singers fulfill two primary roles as part of their own ministerial offering: 1) to prepare and execute those textual and musical components that change from verse to verse, and furthermore from week to week, feast to feast, and season to season; and 2) to introduce, to lead, and to support the assembly in the singing of its own responses. Therefore, a second level of meaning evolving from the execution of the psalms in traditional responsorial format describes and clarifies both the ministry of the liturgical singer, as well as the ministry of the liturgical congregation.[20]

The psalms, from a slightly different perspective, also minister to worship itself. Often a particular psalm is sung in preparation of a liturgical event. The *prokeimenon*, for instance, prepares the Epistle reading; likewise, the following psalm verses and Alleluia refrain prepare the Gospel reading. As responsorial psalm antiphons, these two components engage the entire assembly in a liturgical dialogue as previously described, thus collecting the worshippers into a dynamic and unified body, perfectly prepared to receive the scriptural message. That the textual content of a psalm from the Old Testament can prepare for the reception of revelation from the New Testament underscores the church's interpretation of fulfillment in Christ, again, a comprehensive meaning attainable only when the psalms are carefully placed and actually sung in worship.

The difference between the psalms as written text and as liturgical performance, therefore, has profound impact on worship and the spiritual enrichment of the faithful. As Gerald H. Wilson points out, "What might otherwise seem overly repetitious in a *written* text achieves great energy when *recited orally* in antiphonal form, drawing the participants into the ethos of thanksgiving and driving home the major theme of the psalm in a powerful way." [21] True, Wilson is referring specifically to the aforementioned Psalm 136 where the refrain is actually written into

the text, but the concept applies broadly to any psalm that is captured on paper in whatever literary form that one may simply read. The psalms not only communicate meaning more dynamically and multi-dimensionally in auditory antiphonal performance, but they add immediacy to worship as well. When the gathered faithful actually "discuss" a psalm through antiphonal singing, an historic document turns into a renewed expression of living faith. That is to say, when the faithful gather at Pascha, hear the clergy intone "Let God arise," and then proclaim in song, "Christ is Risen..." it is not so much that they are making an historical acknowledgment as it is an immediate and profoundly powerful expression of a faith which is alive today.

### *Textual and Cognitive De-emphasis in Orthodox Practice*

The principles that underscore the centrality of the psalms in Orthodox worship at various essential levels of meaning are not necessarily reflected in all forms or aspects of current liturgical practice. Whereas the psalms and their attached significance may exist in theory, they have in many instances become overshadowed or dismissed by invasive elements seemingly unconcerned with psalmic music as foundation, movement, and ministry. Using the Divine Liturgy's third antiphon to characterize this issue bluntly, Robert Taft comments:

the troparia after the third antiphon have been so multiplied as to take on an independent existence detached from the psalmody which they were originally destined to serve as refrains. This exemplifies another common development in liturgical history; the process whereby ecclesiastical compositions multiply and eventually suffocate the scriptural element of a liturgical unit, so that what we are left with is simply debris, bits and scraps of this and that, a verse here, a refrain there, that evince no recognizable form or unity...[22]

In other words, as liturgy eventually became overstuffed with text – especially as Orthodoxy continued after the 988 mass conversion of the Slavs – psalmody was either trimmed back or completely suppressed to make room for textual components commemorating new saints, feasts, or special events within the life of the church. It might seem to the modern worshipper, in fact, that psalm verses were inserted between poetic stanzas such as *stichera* to give these stanzas distinction, when in fact the *stichera* were originally inserted between the appointed psalm verses instead.

Another factor that can de-emphasize psalmic meaning in Orthodox worship is when music blatantly dominates and obscures text, which one can trace most dramatically throughout the second Christian millenium. With the foundational and ministerial dimensions of the responsorial psalm antiphon now in recession – as psalm verses were being cut in favor of ecclesiastical texts, and perhaps because of shifts in cultural and religious aesthetic values – music by itself took on greater independence. Liturgical singing, in many instances, no longer seemed to serve and enliven the cognitive elements of the text as a fundamental issue, but rather

became the vehicle for an intensively aesthetic experience, which only implied certain spiritual concepts formerly offered in more concrete terms through text.

The Byzantine *kalophonic* style of singing, for instance, which became popular after the thirteenth century, could stretch a single psalm verse or refrain for several minutes through ornamental singing. Often, the cantor would also insert meaningless monosyllables between or even within the words to help carry his voice through the long phrases. It would appear that the goal of this new and radical style of church singing was to offer wordless praise to the Creator – to go beyond the words, in a sense, and to transcend mere cognitive issues – within a new realm of prayer. Less well known perhaps is that the Slavs also adopted a similar style of chanting, meaningless syllables and all. One may encounter fairly often in greater *znamenny* chant a phrase of fifty to one hundred notes over a single syllable. To be fair, sometimes these elongated phrases or *melismas* simply decorated and underscored an important word or concept that the congregation could nevertheless grasp cognitively because of familiarity or logical implication, especially with "Alleluia." Also, melismatic cadential formulas were sometimes used to emphasize final phrases of text that offered some sort of summary statement or acclamation.

One may argue, perhaps, that intensively melismatic singing did not obscure text as much as enhance and further elevate words and phrases that the initiated faithful would already have been able to recognize. Ancient manuscripts suggest that sometimes this was true, while other times the text was undoubtedly obscured beyond logical recognition. One may also argue that this manner of singing resides legitimately within Orthodox tradition, because of its musical integrity and longevity. Nevertheless, the various levels of concrete meaning described in this article that can coexist in liturgical performance, and the theological emphasis, among other things, that Christ is the ultimate answer to the psalmic message, are obviously compromised to lesser and greater extents when *each* sacred word can no longer be understood by the faithful at the cognitive level. The monk Evfrosin evidently had the same reaction when, in 1651, he said:

Pay heed diligently to what the Holy Spirit says: He commands to sing...not [merely] with...the ornamenting of the voice, but so that the singers would know what is being sung, and the hearer would understand the meaning...In our singing we only decorate the voice and preserve the *znamennyi neumes*, while crippling the sacred words.[23]

The introduction of choral singing into the Slavic church encouraged by Peter the Great et. al. also at times threatened textual intelligibility and, in another way, distanced the congregation from the oral proclamation and confirmation of their faith. Psalmic and other text fragments were often repeated ad nauseam in overlapping polyphonic phrases within a particular choral setting. As well, these complex musical works required well-trained – even virtuosic – choirs to execute the rhythms and counterpoint with clarity and precision. If the words, say, of a psalm refrain were able to penetrate the imitative musical phrasing, certainly the congregation was not able to sing along with ease. Additionally, because initial text fragments were repeated, there was little room for the remaining verses, especially from elongated psalms. Thus, a psalm antiphon that once consisted of all its verses – each one answered by a psalmic or ecclesiastical common

response – was now abbreviated to a few snippets of text extended through contrapuntal compositional style, in many cases lasting just as long, if not longer, than the original full text rendition. The music itself was compelling, but textual meaning in the fullest sense, as well as congregational participation, were lost.

As a matter of practicality, these musical styles have generally fallen into disuse in most parish situations (whereas one may hear even today intensively melismatic chanting in some of the Mount Athos monasteries, for instance), simply because they are too difficult to sing properly for the average cantor and choir. Nevertheless, one still encounters numerous examples of abbreviated or fully suppressed psalmic texts throughout current practice – mostly through the disappearance of responsorial psalmody in lieu of through-composed musical settings – and many among the faithful have just accepted a certain level of textual ambiguity as a result. For sure, they hear the words themselves. But, removed from the larger body of verses and refrains that give these words context and amplified concrete meaning, their message loses power and the ability to penetrate deeply into the minds and hearts of the faithful gathered. Especially problematic is when psalms written according to a specific poetic formulae, e.g. chiasmic structure, are abbreviated such that the internal structural and thematic relationships between the verses is obscured or lost entirely, much like viewing only a portion of a tremendous landscape painting whose meaning and impact relies on the full image. This requires, among other things, looking at each psalm individually to determine to what extent abbreviation may occur without sacrificing essential meaning. Indeed, in some cases only a verse or two is needed to help enable a certain liturgical function; other times it is the entire message of the psalm that is required.

### *Restoring Psalmic Liturgy*

North American culture currently values cognition and participation, much like cathedral Christian culture at the end of the first millennium, and in fact much like Christians from the early centuries. As well, numerous styles of Orthodoxy co-exist on this continent to confuse unified religious expression and our cultural inclinations (which tend in and of themselves to be multi-dimensional and multi-ethnic). To restore the necessary passageway between everyday life and "everyday" worship, the Orthodox of North America are currently afforded the opportunity to re-examine foundational sacred principles and to ponder the ramifications of returning to a style of worship that requires cognitive understanding as a fundamental, though not exclusive, element of the experience.

Of course, the Orthodox, at least of late, do tend to respond and over-correct at the opposite extreme. For instance, simply restoring all psalm verses of a particular antiphon, e.g. the *prokeimenon*, will merely recreate the problem of an over-stuffed liturgy, thus taxing the ears and attention spans of the assembly. Similarly, dismantling the choir or dismissing the cantors so that the congregation can sing *everything* is a gross over-reaction and equally destroys the dialogic character of the responsorial psalm antiphon and the added levels of meaning that result from liturgical "conversation" in song.

The problem, therefore, is not easy to correct. A step in the right direction, however, is to ensure that, whatever the style of music, textual intelligibility will be the logical result. The way the text is set within the music, as well as several interpretative elements, such as tempo, balance,

dynamics, lyricism, and so forth, will have impact. Also, aspects of responsorial structure introduced originally through psalm singing can be restored without radically changing the aesthetic feel of the music itself. When singing festal responsorial antiphons, for instance, one may clearly distinguish the verses from the refrain: the choir, a semi-choir, or one or two cantors may sing the verses *by themselves* and then lead the congregation in its common response – rather than having the entire choir or the entire congregation sing the *entire* setting. Even the so-called *Hymn to the Theotokos*, which follows the consecration, reflects responsorial psalmic structure, though the text is purely New Testament oriented. Again, the musical forces of the church may sing the opening verse "It is truly meet to bless you...", and the congregation may join in at "more honorable than the Cherubim..." This way the faithful restore the dynamics of liturgical dialogue and prevent liturgy as a whole from becoming an elaborate stage performance for a silent audience of believers or an amateurish sing-along.

### *Conclusion*

The psalms currently reside as collected texts in a book that one may use as a liturgical resource or simply read through and contemplate in silence. Our ancient Christian ancestors seem to teach us, however, that the primary residence of the psalms exists in their liturgical performance, where, by themselves or coupled with other ecclesiastical refrains and hymns, they expand and embrace fuller meaning and greater presence. Conceivably, the psalms will express the faith of those gathered most vibrantly when they divide into a series of verses and refrains and organically assume dialogic structure. How strange, in fact, it would appear to an ancient believer to attend church today and hear a choir or set of cantors sing a few psalmic excerpts in through-composed chant or harmony while the assembly either stands in silence or desperately tries to sing along. True, our culture is distant from ancient Christian existence, but we do seem to share in common a basic and essential value in cognitive understanding. This means the sacred words of the psalms are not only important to recite, but to express dynamically and interactively – as manifested by the ancient models – that they might penetrate each liturgical moment and make it seem immediate and critical for the worshipping community.

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Many of the topics within this article helped to provide the framework for an interactive workshop Mark Bailey led in a workshop held in February, 2000 at Christ the Saviour Paramus, New Jersey, entitled: *Vocal Technique and Musical Awareness in Orthodox Church Singing*.

The participants worked on vocal and choral techniques, sang through several antiphonal settings, and discussed the impact liturgical awareness has on how church music is perceived and sung.

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### ***ENDNOTES***

[1]. Similarly, George Barrois writes, "the goal of the psalms is to promote an immediate relationship with God; and, even when...[the psalms]...reflect the concrete human predicament, they depend less on temporal conditions." See George A. Barrois, *The Face of Christ in the Old Testament*, (Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir's Press, 1974), 136. Stressing the comprehensive nature of the body of psalmic texts and its spiritual result, St. Niceta of Remensiana writes, "You will find in David's psalms everything that can help edify and console men and women of every class and age" as cited in "The Ministry of Hymns and Psalm," *Psalm Notes* 4:2 (Spring 2000), 20. A multitude of quotations and citations in like manner can be found to characterize psalmic literary meaning and impact.

[2]. Edward Foley, *Foundations of Christian Music: The Music of Pre-Constantinian Christianity*, (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1996), 23. This article relies heavily on Foley's important and unique book on early Christian music.

[3]. *Ibid.*, 5.

[4]. *Ibid.*, 37-38.

[5]. *Ibid.*, 37.

[6]. *Ibid.* Many traditional Orthodox and non-Orthodox scholars appear to have leaned in the opposite direction from Foley's more recent conclusions. George Barrois, for one, straightforwardly contends that "the psalms had given voice and expression to the worship of the Jews...the Psalter was the hymnal of the Temple." in *The Face of Christ*, 136. Barrois does admit certain ambiguities, however, (see *Ibid.*). The editors of the 1977 *New Oxford Annotated Bible* (Revised Standard Version) are only slightly less convinced than Barrois when, in the introductory remarks to the Psalter (p. 656), they write, "Most of the psalms were probably composed to accompany acts of worship in the Temple..." In his published on-line document entitled "Types of Psalms" [<http://home.apu.edu/~ghwilson/PsalmsTypes.html>], Gerald H. Wilson, moving a step closer to Foley, writes, "While it appears unreasonable to claim that *all* of the 150 canonical psalms were created for use in the temple worship of Israel, it is certainly true that many psalms show clear evidence of having been shaped in this context." Foley's contentions, even if somewhat over-stated, further the discussion of psalmic functionality and beg several critical questions, some of which this article attempts to raise.

[7]. Foley, *Foundations*, 75

[8]. *Ibid.*, 94.

[9]. Foley offers an interesting hypothesis on why the psalms "became a constitutive element of Christian worship after the third century" in *Ibid.*, 67.

[10]. Pseudo-Chrysostom, *De poenitentia*, PG LXIV, 12-13, in David Drillock, "Liturgical Song in the worship of the Church," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly*. 41:2-3 (1997), 186.

[11]. The refrain being "for his steadfast love endures forever." (RSV).

[12] Among many examples, the Slavs sing the Beatitudes (Matt: 5:3-12) as the third antiphon of the Divine Liturgy (non-festal), the Greeks do not.

[13]. One may travel through Great Vespers by way of the psalms, for instance. "Come let us worship" – a reference to Ps. 95:6 – is followed by "Bless the Lord" (Ps. 104), which is followed by "Blessed is the Man" (Ps. 1 etc.), which is followed by "Lord I Call upon Thee" (Ps. 141 etc.) – with the insertion of "Gladsome Light," which is followed by the prokeimenon (a psalm text that generally depends on the day of the week) and so forth, with litanies and special prayers linking one psalmic component to the next.

[14]. Drillock, "Liturgical Song," 192.

[15]. There is a greater sense of procession or liturgical movement when a hierarch is present for Liturgy.

[16]. Keep in mind that early Byzantine Christians would have been entering the church from the outside at this point. As Paul Meyendorff puts it, "[The introit or little entrance]...was the real beginning of the liturgy..." See Paul Meyendorff, ed. and trans., *St. Germanus of Constantinople: On the Divine Liturgy* (Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir's Press, 1984), 19.

[17]. Foley, *Foundations*, 77

[18]. Ibid.

[19]. Antiphonal singing in the sense of one group on the right singing back and forth with the group on the left was also in practice during this era, as Robert Taft emphasizes. In this configuration, nevertheless, the responsorial element was maintained through alternating cantors and alternating responses. See Robert Taft, SJ, *Beyond East and West: Problems in Liturgical Understanding*, (Washington, D.C.: The Pastoral Press, 1984), 157-159.

[20]. This thesis, and the accompanying material within this portion of the paper, is based on Mark Bailey, "The Ministry and Song of the Liturgical Assembly," *Jacob's Well*, (Spring/Summer 1998), 26-27.

[21]. Wilson, "Types of Psalms."

[22]. Taft, *Beyond East and West*, 175-176.

[23]. Simon Azar'in and Ivan Nasedka, "Zhitie I pogvigi arhimandrita Dionisiia" [The life and exploits of Archimandrite Dionisiy] in Vladimir Morosan, *Choral Performance in Pre-Revolutionary Russia* (Madison, Connecticut: Musica Russiaca, 1986), 37.