

THE LITURGICAL BOOK OF PENTECOSTARION. EVOLUTION AND SYNTHESIS

Protos. PhD. Cand. Gherasim SOCA
Faculty of Orthodox Theology "Dumitru Stăniloae",
"Al. I. Cuza" University, Iasi

<https://doi.org/10.47433/tv.xcixn9-12.158>

Abstract

The Pentecostarion is one of the most beautiful liturgical books in the Orthodox Church. It is used in worship for eight weeks a year, from the Resurrection of the Lord to All Saints Sunday. The hope of the Resurrection that it conveys, the joy of the presence of the Risen Christ amid Christians, and the festive light, springing from the light of the Resurrection, that permeates the hearts of the faithful during these days are central landmarks of the spiritual life for the entire liturgical year. However, the Pentecostarion didn't exist in the Church from the beginning. Like all books of worship, it is the fruit of an evolution of almost a millennium, an evolution dependent on the gradual emergence of Christian hymnography. The present study traces in broad outline the emergence of this liturgical book, with references to the liturgical books to which it is indebted and to the moments of synthesis-reform that defined it. At the same time, starting from the specificity of Holy Saturday's services and the theological-liturgical logic, we will try to show that the service that should open the book of the Pentecostarion is the Vespers united with the Holy Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great celebrated on Holy Saturday.

Keywords: Great Saturday, Hymnography, Pentecostarion, Tropologion, Typikon

The emergence of a liturgical book

In early Christianity, there were no liturgical books in the actual meaning of the term and each local Church had its own liturgical formulas. Divine worship was so performed that the priest, and especially the bishop, was left free to improvise*. The spiritual freedom of the clergy and the lack of liturgical books

* Abbreviations used: *Sat* = Saturday; *GSat* = Great Saturday; *Triodion1994* = *The Lenten Triodion*, translated from the original Greek by Mother Mary and Archimandrite Kallistos Ware, St. Tikhon's Seminary Press, South Canaan, 1994; *Pent2010* = *The Pentecostarion of the Orthodox Church*, translated from the church Slavonic by Reader Isaac E. Lambertsen, Liberty, The St. John of Kronstadt Press, 2010.

Eric Palazzo, *A history of liturgical books from the beginning to the thirteenth century*, trans. by Madeleine Beaumont, Liturgical Press, Collegeville, 2006, pp. 83-84.