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ORTHODOX CHANT IN PORTUGAL TODAY PROJECT PRESENTATION

PROJECT TEAM

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III THE MODERN CONTEXT: TEXTS

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INTRODUCTION

This paper is integrated in a pioneering project with the objectives of creating an overall panorama of the expressions of Orthodox chant in Portugal, in a plurality of contexts, and of establishing specific strategies for future projects.

As in other countries of Western Europe, the establishment of Orthodox parishes and the establishment of Orthodoxy as part of the religious expression of Portugal has meant an increased need for theological and liturgical texts in the language of the country. Several translation projects have been undertaken over the years, usually with little coordination, so that there exist, for example, a number of translations of the Divine Liturgy and other services in use by the various jurisdictions represented.

The translation of the texts in this project is intended to be useful to the Orthodox communities that celebrate in Portugal. It is undertaken through the preparation and publication of a set of scores, with texts in Portuguese and/or in transliteration from Greek or Slavonic) of the fixed parts of the Liturgy, Vespers and Matins, the Sunday Octoechos and the propers for the most important feasts (bringing together repertoires from the Churches of several countries and different stylistic tendencies). In this particular context, even if the translation of the Word is in accordance with the tradition of the Church and the faith it professes, the work of adapting the vernacular text to the original melodies represents a time-consuming and rigorous task.

The current panorama relies on a multi-linguistic (Slavic, Greek, English, Portuguese) and multi-alphabetical (Cyrillic, Greek, Latin) repertoire often assembled through an amalgamation of annotated photocopies (sometimes of poor quality) or manuscripts with different handwritings.

To change this panorama, I share in this paper some of our guidelines and practical criteria for the musical adaptation of the original melodies to the Portuguese translations.

With a special focus on musical texts, I also look briefly at the translation of liturgical texts since the musical texts intend to respond to liturgical texts.

METHODOLOGY

A mixed methodology was adopted. In first place we chose the "Documentary analysis" method,¹ which allowed us to obtain a solid description of a phenomenon² starting with identification, selection, data collection and verification (research heuristics). It also allowed the collection of interpretations in different written sources, in traditional or digital formats, to give them meaning (hermeneutics of research), with the purpose of developing empirical knowledge.³ Secondly, we adopted a ethnographic, personally devised methodology in the sense that if "ethnography is deeply personal and positioned, then it is also deeply subjective."⁴ This allowed us to adopt a positivistic paradigm in which the investigators' experience and position are a support base for their considered options and choices.

CONTEXT OF THE TRANSLATION OF PORTUGUESE TEXTS

The Word of God is the centre of Christian prayer and the primary reason why Christians come together in community. This was how the first Christians, "who were regulars in the teaching of the Apostles, in fraternal union, in the breaking of bread and in prayers" (Acts 2, 42), joined in community. Just as they had been with Jesus through reading (proclamation) (Lk 4, 16) and singing (Mt 26, 30), the Word of God guarantees His presence among the faithful, just as He had promised his disciples (Mt 18, 20).

The translation of the Word of God has been an old practice since the Jewish traditions and "for over 2,300 years, Jews, as individuals or as committees, have produced versions of the entire Hebrew Bible or only of the Torah in the vernacular language of the major populations in which they resided." In fact, "the first translations of the Bible, the Septuagint (from Hebrew into Greek) and the Targums (from Hebrew into Aramaic), were prepared by Jews for Jews."

G.A. Bowen, "Document Analysis as a Qualitative Research Method," *Qualitative Research Journal* 9, no. 2 (2009): 27–29.

² R. Stake, The Art of Case Study Research (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1995); R. Yin, Estudo de Caso: Planejamento e Métodos. 4.a. (Porto Alegre: Bookman, 2010).

Bowen, "Document analysis", 27; J. Corbin and A. Strauss, *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2008).

⁴ Elizabeth Campbell and Luke Eric Lassiter, *Doing Ethnography Today* (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2015).

⁵ Leonard J. Greenspoon, "Jewish Bible Translations." Last modified May 26, 2016. https://doi.org/10.1093/OBO/9780199840731-0129.

⁶ Ibid.

Thus also the translation of liturgical texts into the Portuguese language had the same origin: a practical sense that was "intended for use alongside the original Hebrew rather than as a replacement for it" totally.⁷

Orthodox translations into Portuguese appear with the aim of being able to celebrate the liturgy correctly, but not exclusively in Portuguese. The liturgy was always intended to be celebrated in several languages. Thus, the translations do not have the authority duality original versus explanatory/accessible vernacular language, as in the old translations. The polyglot dimension of the liturgy above all responds and provides a sense of belonging to the ecclesiastical community that is multicultural, multinational. Translation, by exegesis, by linguistic, theological and pastoral study, is intended to have the same authority as any other language: the authority of the Word of God.

For this reason, Fr Ivan Moody and Susana Moody started and have been working on translating the liturgical texts in order to be able correctly to celebrate the Orthodox liturgy in Portugal. This has resulted in some documents published by Ivan Moody on his website, initially with the copyright of *Greek Orthodox Church of Portugal, Parish of St. Nektarios and St. Gregory V (Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople)*, where you can find the Portuguese translations of *The Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom* (2001a), *Sacrament of Marriage* (2000), *Mnimóssinon* (2001c), *The Akáthistos Hymn and Small Compline* (2001b), *Ascension Thursday*, *Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom* (2002) and *Christmas Eve 24 December Great Vespers (from 25 December)* (2001). One can also find the *Office of the Triumph of Orthodoxy* (2015) with the copyright of *St. John the Russian Orthodox Parish* (Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople), Estoril, Portugal.

We can also find some texts published on Fr Alexandre Bonito's website: *The Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom, Christmas Eve 24 December Great Vespers (from 25 December), Sacrament of marriage* and *Mnimóssinon (Panikhida - Requiem).*⁹

A quick search on online search engines¹⁰ quickly allows us to note the dispersion of translations of prayers or liturgies, with different authorities and "backstage jobs":

- Sperandio, André. *Rito de Jerusalém A Divina Liturgia de S. Tiago, Irmão Do Senhor*. Edited by João Manuel Sperandio and Paulo Augusto Tamanini. Teresina: Editora da Universidade Federal de Piauí, 2016.¹¹
- Igreja Ortodoxa Russa, Patriarcado de Moscou. "A Divina Liturgia Liturgia Dos Catecúmenos." *Missão Ortodoxa Da Proteção Da Mãe de Deus.* 2016. 12
- Thomaz, Luís Filipe. *Missal Ortodoxo Horas do Oficio Divino e Liturgia Eucarística*. 2019. Edited by Pedro Pruteanu. Associação Lusortodoxia.
- Bishop Alexander [Mileant] (Russian Orthodox Church Abroad). "Божественная Литургия A Divina Liturgia." *Fatheralexander.Org.* Last modified 1999.¹³

Although two of these entries correspond to translations for Brazil, the possibility of finding translations from different sources in the Portuguese is clear.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Alexandre Bonito, "Textos Litúrgicos Ortodoxos." Accessed May 20, 2020. http://p035454545.planetaclix. pt/Textos.html.

Research conducted at 21/05/2020 on Google with the Portuguese translation of the terms: "Portuguese orthodox liturgical texts".

¹¹ https://www.ecclesia.com.br/biblioteca/liturgia/doc-pdf/a-liturgia-de-sao-tiago-pt3-.pdf.

¹² https://protecaodamaededeus.org/files/Liturgia-site-03-2016.pdf.

¹³ http://www.fatheralexander.org/booklets/portuguese/liturgy_russian_portuguese.htm.

TRANSLATION FOR MUSICAL ADAPTATION

As is well known, Christian prayer is diverse, praying and singing words that come from different sources: biblical sources and inspired sources. These are two different situations that may require two different solutions. A conceptual doubt can be raised in relation to textual sources: Since the chants convey words of biblical or inspired origins, can the adaptation of the chant have different criteria of rigidity in the words? Regardless of the criteria for the translation of liturgical texts, music has its own criteria of translation and adaptation.

In the first place, the poetic dimension should be highlighted. Poetics can be more or less present in the quality of the translation,. In everything it impels the prayer to enter the mystery of prayer, the transcendence of beauty manifests itself in the words and in the sound that resonates in the prayer. The Book of Psalms is a clear case of a biblical source that has a poetic, musical, expressive and interpretive nature that is so often explicit in the first verse of many psalms. This book clearly requires that its translation be done "with art and with soul" (Ps 33, 3).¹⁴.

Let us compare the short psalm 131 (130), where the various translations make it possible to understand the possible differences in the poetic dimension.

TABLE 1: TWO PORTUGUESE TRANSLATIONS OF PSALM 130 (131)

Divine Office according to the Roman Rite (Secretariado Nacional de Liturgia 2016, 1181)	João Ferreira de Almeida's Bible ¹⁵ (2000, 631)
¹ Senhor, não se eleva soberbo o meu coração, nem se levantam altivos os meus olhos. Não ambiciono grandezas, nem coisas superiores a mim. ² Antes fico sossegado e tranquilo, como criança ao colo da mãe. ³ Espera, Israel, no Senhor, agora e para sempre.	¹ Senhor, o meu coração não se elevou, nem os meus olhos se levantaram: não me exercito em grandes assuntos, nem em coisas muito elevadas para mim. ² Decerto fiz calar e sossegar a minha alma: qual criança desmamada para com sua mãe, tal é a minha alma para comigo. ³ Espere Israel no Senhor, desde agora e para sempre.

For Portuguese readers, in the Catholic version for the Divine Office, the poetics of this psalm is more involved in the affectionate and tender mystery of a maternal lullaby for her child (Ps 131, 1: "Instead I am calm and peaceful, / as a child on his mother's lap")¹⁶ compared to a translation that focuses on an attitude of obliging oneself to silence and stillness (Ps 131, 1: "I certainly made my soul to be quiet and settle down: like a child weaned from its mother, such is my soul towards me").¹⁷ João Ferreira de Almeida's translation is perhaps more literal, conveying more the idea of movement denial (Ps 131, 2: "I do not concern myself with great matters")¹⁸

¹⁴ Translation from Secretariado Nacional de Liturgia, Oficio Divino Segundo o Rito Romano, 917.

[&]quot;João Ferreira de Almeida, first Bible translator in Portuguese; he was born in 1628 in the small village of Torre de Tavares, near Mangualde" and started translating the Bible at the age of 16 on the island of Java Indonesia (Almeida 2000, i).

^{16 &}quot;Antes fico sossegado e tranquilo, / como criança ao colo da mãe" (Secretariado Nacional de Liturgia 2016, 1181).

^{17 &}quot;Decerto fiz calar e sossegar a minha alma: qual criança desmamada para com sua mãe, tal é a minha alma para comigo" (Almeida 2000, 631).

[&]quot;Não me exercito em grandes assuntos" (Almeida 2000, 631).

instead of denying desires (Ps 131, 2: "I do not aim for greatness)¹⁹. Comparing these two and more translations, one can realize that according to the music different criteria can impose themselves, whether the melody is *harsher* or more *caring*.

Not only psalms, but also Old and New Testament chants, the apocalypses, the poems of St Paul, the Magnificat and Benedictus, are wrapped in that poetic dimension that elevates the prayer to contemplate God through the beauty of the sung Word. Just as biblical sources, so inspired sources, such as the hymns, must express poetics.

Secondly, the texts themselves need some plasticity in modelling themselves to the original melody, just as the original melody can be more or less flexible in the way it is adapted to the translated text. In the context of this project, the processes to facilitate the adaptation of Orthodox communities to the Portuguese language are important, promoting the conservation of the original melody and arrangement as much as possible, thus facilitating the choirs' natural processes as described by James Chater: "music must first be learned, then practiced and then prayed." Such process will imply paying attention to the measures undertaken to adapt the text to the pre-existing melodies already sung and prayed by the communities in Greek, Slavonic, English or any other significant language in each community.

This practice is widely used in the chants of the Taizé Community. With an Orthodox cultural and theological syncretism, some Orthodox chants can be found in Taizé's repertoire, such as *Bogoroditse Dievo*, *Exomologisthe to Kyrio*,²¹ and others. Jacques Berthier affirmed that "In [...] short pieces, the music is strongly tied to the text, its rhythmic structure and colour of the syllables. To change the text would, in most cases, mean weakening the specific message of the music." But Judith Kubicki explains that the reality was different:

Different language groups who have visited Taizé or become acquainted with its music have worked on 'unofficial' translations. These have been done with varying degrees of expertise. As a result, greater efforts have been made to guarantee more careful translations. The final results, however, are not literal translations and sometimes not even dynamic equivalents. Rather, the same prayer sentiments are often expressed in very different ways.²³

The adaptation of the text to the melody must firstly respect the original melody and its interpretative tradition so that the community when faced with the work can pray it without a shock to their common practice. This rule is strongly observed in Taizé's translations, since the original melodies are unaltered in any official translation. For our project, the original melody can be flexible with regard to the translated text. In doing so, it must still fulfill musical and musicological criteria and respect the original composition.

^{19 &}quot;Não ambiciono grandezas" (Secretariado Nacional de Liturgia 2016, 1181).

James Chater, "Staying Awake at the Wheel, Some Thoughts on Arranging and Composing Orthodox Church Music," in *The Traditions of the Orthodox Music* (Joensuu: University of Joensuu & The International Society for Orthodox Church Music, 2005), 66.

²¹ Taizé Community, "Bogoroditse Dievo 2 (Богородице Дево)." Last modified 2015a. https://www.taize. fr/spip.php?page=chant&song=1371&lang=en; "Exomologisthe to Kyrio." Last modified 2015b. https://www.taize.fr/spip.php?page=chant&song=4634&lang=pt.

²² Judith Marie Kubicki, Liturgical Music as Ritual Symbol: A Case Study of Jacques Berthier's Taize Music (Paris: Peeters Publishers, 1999), 85.

²³ Kubicki, Litugical Music, 86.

PRACTICAL QUESTIONS OF MUSICAL ADAPTATION

In general terms, the adaptation of the Portuguese text to the original metric results in several different scenarios, with melodies whose textual correspondence can be psalmodic, melismatic, neumatic or/and syllabic. We guided our adaptations by three practical criteria: 1) matching the syllabic tonic to the melodic tonic, 2) recognizing and maintaining the essential rhetoric and tradition of music and 3) preferring the *singability* and diction of sounds of Portuguese pronunciation. The first and third are general vocal music criteria.

As a proclaimed word that intends to be understood by those who proclaim it and by those who hear it, a preference for the correspondence of the syllabic tonic with the melodic tonic applies. This implies decision-making on a case-by-case basis, melody to melody, since words as common as Γοςπόμε, Κύριε, Senhor, Lord e πομαλύ, ἐλέησον, misericórdia, have mercy have different tones and can be oxytones, paroxytones or proparoxytones. Even so, in the Portuguese tradition, as in the others, some prayers have several variants with the same meaning, as is the case of the example given where in a supplication it can be said as Senhor, misericórdia; or Senhor, tende piedade; or Senhor, tende piedade de nós among many other pleas for forgiveness that can be adapted to the liturgical occasion, such as: Perdoai-nos, Senhor or Cristo, misericórdia.

EXAMPLE 1: JUXTAPOSITION MARKED BY A LIGATURE OR UNDERSCORE UNDER THE TEXT²⁴



the In any case, adaptation in the four syllabic correspondences has common features that can be identified and registered according to their methodologies. In psalmodic correspondence, the aim is to match the syllable tonic to the melodic tonic. The task is since there is a great deal of freedom to lengthen the recitation tone by the number of syllables necessary to make this correspondence, and in each case, one can decide to make an elision/agglutination or a juxtaposition of some syllables to result in a speechlike pronunciation. This often happens in Catholic liturgical music, marked by a ligature or underscore under the text for a juxtaposition (example 1) or an apostrophe for an agglutination (example 2).

²⁴ Carlos da Silva, Orar Cantando (Fátima: Secretariado Nacional de Liturgia, 2001), 111.

EXAMPLE 2: AGGLUTINATION MARKED BY AN APOSTROPHE²⁵



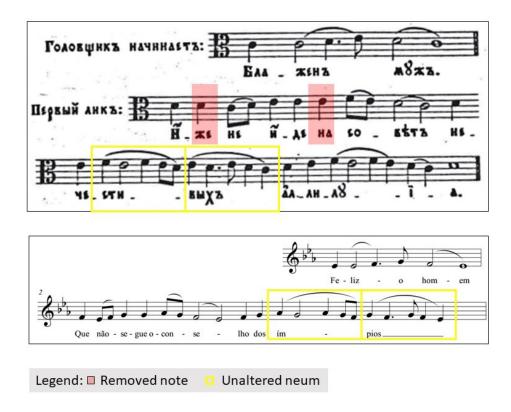
In the case of melismatic chants, textual adaptation follows less free criteria, as there is a need to recite a fixed text with a fixed melody. However, the melismatic texture makes it possible to blend the syllabic tonic, with the melodic tones standing out. However, the syllabic difference of the translation, as is the case of Госпо́дь, Боже, Κύριε, Senhor or Lord, can imply differences in the interpretation, with there being a need to separate melisma into syllables or to lengthen

two to a single syllable. Although some syllabic differences are decisive in the characterization of the melisma, such joints or cuts are frequently necessary.

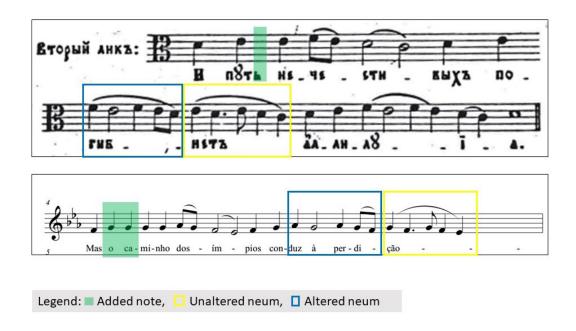
In neumatic chants, there are two different kinds of melodies: strophic neumatic melodies, which apply to different phrases/hemistychiae and melodies that are not repeated. In the strophic case, the adaptation of the text to those neumatic forms becomes freer, with melodic formulas that are divided to incorporate more or fewer syllables within the same number of notes, with the obligation to keep some sets of notes without division for maintaining the interpretive and compositional tradition of music.

In the adaptation of *Blazhen Muzh*, these cases are manifest: in *example 3* we notice that two notes are eliminated without changing the melody, because it is between equal notes (the psalmodic-like case). Also in this example, the neumes where able to maintain their original form. Contrarily, *example 4* has the neume marked in blue cut syllabically. This happens so that at the beginning of the verse only two notes need to be added and the metrics of the word *per-di-ção* that are short-short-long, do not alter significantly as shown in *example 5*. The cutting of that neume also privileges the syllabic tonic match to the last neume.

EXAMPLE 3: BLAZHEN MUZH "PSALMODIC" MELODY ADAPTATION. UNALTERED NEUMES²⁶



EXAMPLE 4: BLAZHEN MUZH "PSALMODIC" MELODY ADAPTATION. ALTERED NEUMES²⁷



²⁶ Обиход одноголосный церковного богослужебного пения по напеву Валаамского монастыря 1902, 4; arrangement by the author.

²⁷ Обиход одноголосный церковного богослужебного пения по напеву Валаамского монастыря 1902, 4; arrangement by the author.

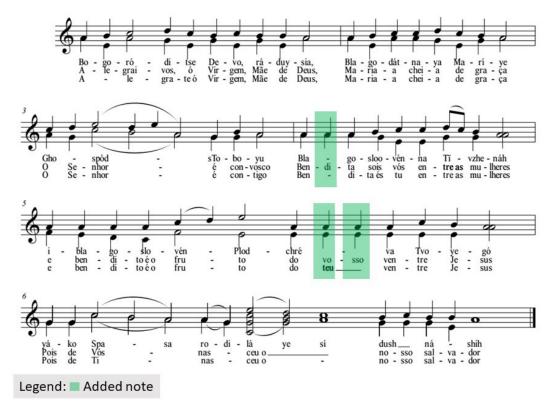
EXAMPLE 5: BLAZHEN MUZH "PSALMODIC" MELODY ADAPTATION. UNALTERED NEUMES.²⁸



Versus



EXAMPLE 6: BOGORÓDITSE DEVO'S COMPARED ADAPTATIONS²⁹

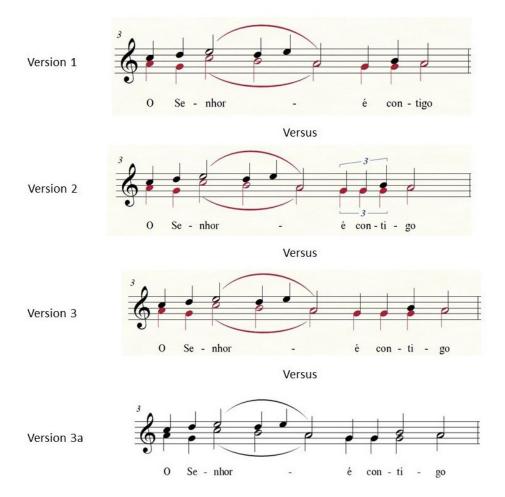


EXAMPLE 7: BOGORÓDITSE DEVO'S MATCHING OF SYLLABLE TONIC TO MELODIC TONIC VERSIONS³⁰

²⁸ Обиход одноголосный церковного богослужебного пения по напеву Валаамского монастыря 1902, 4; arrangement by the author.

²⁹ Arrangement by the author.

³⁰ Arrangement by the author.



As to respect for musical tradition, a clear example is *Bogoródítse Devo*³¹. At the words *Gho-spód-s To-bo-yu* the words *O Se-nhor é con-ti-go* have two extra syllables [Music example 6]. Whilst one of them can be easily introduced in the first neume/ two notes, the seventh extra syllable could be also not considered, since they are poetic syllables and the tonic is *contigo*. Alas, this does not coincide with the melodic tonic (*example 7* – Version 1), and thus one has to add another note to make B the melodic tonic. In this case, a triplet could still make the G-G-A respect the original melodic timing and give a very smooth and practical pronunciation (Version 2). But the division of the unitary note does not correspond to the repertoire of the Ascension Monastery of the Moscow Kremlin's tradition, which leads us to choose Version 3a.

Even with these practical criteria, adaptation must show some plasticity according to the investigator's position and experience. An example may be seen where I personally prefer not to respect the tonic's concordance (Version 2) but respect the rhythm of the original melody instead (Version 1) in *Bogoródítse Devo's* word *Maria* (*example 8*). This practice is not uncommon, since it happens often in Catholic hymns where the strophic melody overlaps the syllabic tonic (*example 9*).

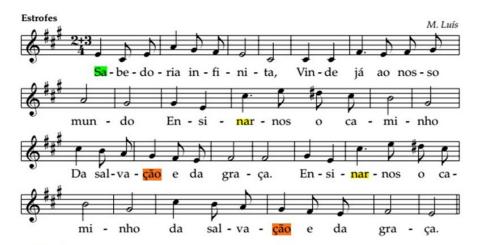
The version considered is traditionally attributed to the repertoire of the Ascension Monastery of the Moscow Kremlin founded in the 14th century and destroyed in 1929.

EXAMPLE 8: BOGORÓDITSE DEVO'S CRITERIA'S ADAPTABILITY³²



EXAMPLE 9: NO SYLLABIC TONIC CORRESPONDENCE WITH MELODIC TONIC IN STROPHIC CHANTS³³

Sabedoria infinita



- Vós que sois luz infinita, / Vinde já ao nosso mundo Iluminar a cegueira / Para vermos o caminho.
- Palavra do amor de Deus, / Vinde já ao nosso mundo. Nascei, Senhor, na minh' alma. / E ficai p'ra todo o sempre.

Legend: ■ Melodictonic 1, ■ Melodictonic 2, ■ Melodictonic 3, ___ Syllabictonic

CONCLUSION

The modern context allows us to notice that there are several versions of Portuguese liturgical texts and the texts of some chants. Relying on good translations, we can advance to the adaptation of the chants. The three practical criteria we adopted are strong guidelines that allow us to obtain good musical results. The exceptions and particularities that arise in each chant must be approached case-by-case. In each

³² Arrangement by the author.

³³ Liturgia Das Horas, Edição Para Canto 2003, II:16–17.

case these criteria, original melody and text must present some plasticity so that adaptation is the best possible. We also recognize that the adaptations are constructed in a laboratory environment and only after taking them to the communities and the choirs can we become fully aware of some aspects of each work.

Although these tasks are not a novelty and have been undertaken for a long time by many people, the repertoire needs a compilation, transliteration and translation of good quality and reliable editions for publication and dissemination throughout Portuguese Orthodox communities. This project will be able to provide them.

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