

CONTRIBUTIONS À L'HISTOIRE ET THÉORIE DE LA MUSIQUE, DU THÉÂTRE ET DU CINÉMA

TURNING TO ACCOUNT THE BYZANTINE MUSIC TREASURE LORE IN ROMANIA

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Byzantine music in Romania was a reality, being a constituent part of the artistic and cultural past of this country; it was maintained, developed and transmitted to the coming generations in a traditional spirit, by Romanian psalm-readers and psalm singers, experts in the chant and in the neumes. These people founded and organised schools of church-singers, attached to the most important monasteries — such as, the School of Neamț, and the School of Putna, both known since the 15th century, or the School of Șcheii Brașovului (Șchei, a district in Brașov town) and others.

When speaking about the musical, artistic and cultural past of the Romanian people, one must always have in view the three great veins, the three great musical fields that are part and parcel of the Romanian people's spiritual structure: the *folk music*, whose origins are lost in the mist of time, the *Byzantine music*, which has come to this country as cultivated, as "professional" music even, together with the adoption by the Romanians of the Christian faith, and the *linear music*, the "European" music, as the great Romanian psalmists, Macarie the Hieromonk and Anton Pann, used to call it (known also as "western" music) — developed first in the west of Romania, i.e. in Transylvania, (beginning with the 15th century) and later generalized throughout the Romanian lands. All these three branches of the Romanian musical art co-existed throughout centuries along parallel, but clearly different paths guarding the gates of our culture to this day; they have characteristics of their own, their own foundations, making up, however, a unitary whole, which may be termed generically "the treasure lore of Romanian musical culture", "the Romanian musical heritage".

If folk music was preserved and transmitted chiefly through oral way, our ethnomusicology identifying it in MSS only in mid 17th century, (in the so-called *Codex Caioni* compiled by the Romanian composer Ion Căianu-Căioni — in 1652), the Byzantine and the linear music can be traced back to far remoter periods, our libraries and collections conserving a lot of MSS of ancient Byzantine music (11th — 18th cc) and a lot of scores of linear music, in various tabulatures and

printings (the earliest dating from the 15th — 16th cc). These constitute a true national musical patrimony, a precious repository of ancient art, certifying the presence of cultural forms on the territory of this country since the remotest times, forms that have continued to develop under the most varied aspects.

As known, the Byzantine music MSS contain the Orthodox church chant practised according to "the ancient system" (based on the neumatic notation used until 1814), and to "the new, modern, system", due to Chrysanthus of Madytos (in use after 1814 to this day in the Romanian Orthodox churches). In order to get an insight into the structure of this music, into its origins and the way it was used for more than five centuries by Romanian liturgical practice, and define its particularities, and area of circulation within the most important monasteries and schools, we must study the MSS extant in Romania, and draw the right conclusions thereof.

By their content and spreading, the Byzantine music MSS represent the most valuable evidence of an old Romanian cultural tradition. However, it is only in the past twenty years that musicians, linguists and historians began taking an interest in them. Indeed, there are a lot of linguistic, to say nothing of musical problems, that could be answered properly by studying these manuscripts. In the last instance, it is only the difficulty

of deciphering their music that discouraged people willing to devote their energy to this study. Therefore revaluating this artistic heritage of old Romanian culture means placing it at the disposal of all people interested in these matters.

There are more than 250 MSS of ancient Byzantine music in Romania, disseminated in various public libraries or private collections¹. Most of them were compiled in our monasteries, by psalmist transcribers, identified through their colophons and marginal inscriptions, or anonymous persons. Other MSS were brought by monks, priests, travellers and other people coming from Constantinople, Thessalonica, Athens, Mount Athos or other great monastic centres of Byzantium. These books started being used for the singing in the lecterns, becoming valuable sources for the compilation — in a kind of “chain reaction” — of new MSS in the form of “anthologia” (known in the west under the name of “aklouthiai”)².

Due to the pens of the Romanian psalmist transcribers, some musical MSS circulated abroad and were discovered in the libraries of Moscow, Sofia, Leipzig, the Island of Lesbos (Leimonos), Copenhagen, London, Janina, Macherà (in Cyprus) and so on³.

The Byzantine music MSS extant in Romania are interesting not only for the Romanian culture, but also for that of the countries having assumed the Orthodox liturgical practice. The musical content of these MSS originates in the Byzantium spreading in the course of time to nearly all the Orthodox people. In this way, Byzantine music reached the most distant Orthodox centres in a unitary form, following the musical score and literary text, already traditional, to the letter. The Romanian princes, and the heads of churches felt the need to be in permanent touch — especially on the cultural-artistic plane — with the Byzantine civilization. The Romanian-Byzantine relations were direct and close, rich evidence in this respect being provided by the documents referring to the donations made by the Romanian princes and boyars to Byzantium and to Mount Athos. Even after the Turks’ had settled in the Balkan Peninsula, the Romanian princes continued to favour the penetration of the Greek-Byzantine civilization in the territory of their coun-

tries, being more than once constant allies of the Byzantine emperors. After the fall of Constantinople, the Romanian princes considered themselves to be the successors of the Byzantine power. Quite relevant in this respect are the opinions expressed by the great Romanian scholar Nicolae Iorga: “Byzantium, together with all it represented as type of civilization, embodying the Hellenic intellectual heritage, the Roman law, the Orthodox faith and all that it stimulated and preserved in matters of art, did not disappear, as indeed it could not disappear with the successive fall of its three capitals: Constantinople, Mistra and Trebizond... Many new things will thus come to the fore but, deep down, it is only the unflinching Byzantine continuity that lasts”⁴. Although the historical age of Byzantium had come to an end in May 1453, a “Byzance après Byzance”, as Nicolae Iorga said, continued to exist, being transplanted, on the cultural-artistic plane, to the Romanian countries, as well. This is why we refute the view which associates the end of the historical epoch of the Byzantine empire with the end of Byzantine art, distinguishing artificially between the Byzantine art proper and the post-Byzantine art especially in what concerns the art of music, an art which, in point of notation and repertoire (structure and creations), continued for a long time along traditional lines. The musical creations of some great Byzantine masters, like Glykys, Koukouzeles, Kladas and others, written in the notation of the 14th — 15th centuries, were taken over chiefly in the 16th — 17th century MSS and even in the 18th century ones. To these were added the creations of new composers, who followed the ancient system of notation of their predecessors, in the style and form of Byzantine art. Of course, in the structure of this art new elements did appear owing mainly to the influence of the peoples coming successively in touch with the Byzantine music, but these elements did not alter it; it went on being Byzantine, i.e. the same art as that practised once in Byzantium. Tradition was a factor of the utmost importance for the transmission of music, and this made psalmists observe it in the strictest way out of respect for their predecessors’ art. One could even say

that nobody ever attempted to modify the works transmitted through the MSS; all was most piously preserved as an expression of a high spirituality of divine origin. New works were evidently created, but all were pervaded by this spirit, by this respect for the predecessors' outlook. Semiography remained the same, as for centuries the ancient neo-Byzantine notation maintained its initial structure. The few signs added belonged mostly to the interpretative-ornamental (cheironomic) field and far less to the diastematic (intonational) one.

The Romanian MSS are quite relevant in this respect, preserving the music of Byzantium in all its purity, both as concerns the neumatic notation and the writing of the literary text under the neumes. This music, composed by the great Byzantine masters known from many MSS, is identically reproduced also in the 15th – 18th cc Romanian MSS. To it were added the works of Romanian psalmist composers – Evstatie the Protopsalmist of Putna, Dometian Vlahu, Theodosie Zotica and others (15th – 16th cc), Callistus the Hieromonk, the protopsalmists of the Bucharest Metropolitan See (17th century), Filothei sin Agăi Jipei, Șerban, Ioan sin Radului Duma Brașovean, Constandin, Mihalache Moldovlahu, Naum Rimniceanu, Iosif from Neamț Monastery, renowned 18th-century psalm singers.

These Byzantine MSS are a pertinent proof that artistic-musical preoccupations in the Romanian lands were for more than five centuries deep-going and exquisite. We have repeatedly pointed out the original archaic character of the works due to Evstatie, the protopsalmist of Putna, considered to have been the founder and leader of a school. He left us a MS (from 1511) of the greatest interest for the study of Romanian medieval music; it comprises no less than 50 works by Evstatie himself. These works are quite remarkable due to their obvious attachment to the basis of the Byzantine art and to the original way in which they continue the archaic trend, so very specific to Christian primitive art. The same is characteristic also of the compositions of the other Romanian psalmists from Putna, whose creations, though far more restricted in the extant MSS, form a part of the valuable 16th-century com-

positional stock of the Romanian Principalities.

We often wonder what the language of the religious service was like in this country over the time? If we resort to the pertinent factual arguments offered by the old Byzantine music MSS (11th – 18th cc), we see that their overwhelming majority (more than 95 %) maintains Greek liturgical texts under the neumes. This situation lasted only till 1713, when the *Psaltichie rumânească* (Romanian book of chants written in the psaltic style) by Filothei sin Agăi Jipei of the Walachian Metropolitan See (in Bucharest) appeared. This manuscript marks the introduction of Romanian also in the religious chant. One finds no Byzantine music MS in this country written entirely in Palaeoslavonic; a few MSS, however, preserve such texts, notably two MSS from the Music School of Putna collection, early 16th century⁵. Thus, the chant – heard best and for the longest part of the church service – was performed rather in Greek than in Palaeoslavonic. Also, the musical education was in most instances based on music grammars ("Propedia") written in Greek only, as proved by the old Byzantine music MSS. In this way, Romanian psalmists learnt the art of music therefrom. In order to exemplify the rules, these grammars were accompanied by the so-called "paralageia" i.e. collections of chants ("anthologia") set to literary texts written in Greek, too. From the MSS themselves one may conclude that there existed, indeed, a distinct bilingual service, with the Greek language obviously prevailing. The MSS comprising the greatest number of Palaeoslavonic texts are due to Evstatie; in all the subsequent MSS the quantity of these texts is rapidly decreasing until they disappear completely. The study of ancient Byzantine music MSS from Romania proves the above and, moreover, enables one to reconsider the former hypotheses concerning the church languages used by the Romanians during the remote past.

Therefore reevaluating the Byzantine musical culture in Romania is a matter of the utmost importance for the knowledge and a better understanding of Romanian medieval culture and of the south east European culture as a whole. Reevaluating the treasure lore of ancient musical

culture can be done through the printing of "monumenta" and "transcripta".

These materials ought to be published for the following considerations:

a) Printing ensures the preservation of the manuscripts, eliminating the risk of their disappearance and destruction, the facsimile being available in public libraries.

b) Multiplication enables investigators to study the manuscripts and shed new light on their content.

c) Transcription of the manuscripts written in unintelligible notation facilitates the access of composers, musicologists and interpreters for developing, playing and analysing the music contained therein.

d) The editions of "monumenta" and of "transcripta" may become a source of reference and a working tool for researchers dealing with the history of the rich Romanian spiritual life during the remote past and the medieval period from an artistic, historical, archaeological, linguistic and palaeographic viewpoint.

As early as the 19th century, owing to the dissemination of printing and chiefly to the emergence of several Romanian scholars interested in the study of the Romanian cultural-artistic patrimony which they assumed to have a historical function of the utmost national importance, several works appeared in which the idea of document was awarded a historical value by historians, archaeologists, linguists and by all those aiming to substantiate the existence of this Romanian spirituality on scientific grounds. They contended that there can be no history in any artistic-cultural field unless documentary sources exist.

As concerns music, a few praiseworthy attempts were made to publish some documents referring to the Romanian artistic past. Macarie the Hieromonk and Anton Pann, two great early 19th century musicians, revaluated some Byzantine music works produced by their great predecessors. Theodor T. Burada, a historiographer, published in his almanacks documents concerning the artistic past, making precise references to both Dimitrie Cantemir and the Romanian MSS extant at Mt. Athos. The first to point to *Psaltichie rumânească* was Constantin Erbicéanu (1897). Nicolae M. Popescu studied the activity of Macarie the Hiero-

monk. From 1932 until his death in 1970, Ioan D. Petrescu published a lot of 13th — 18th cc Byzantine chants both in facsimile form and in transcription, focusing chiefly on their theoretical aspects. Another important set of contributions was made by Marcu Beza and Vasile Gheorghiu: the latter draws the historiographers' attention to the famous 11th century Gospel Lectionary from Iași. Professor George Breazul emphasized upon the value of documents, of sources, for a historical argumentation of culture. In the two last decades of the 19th century Romanian musicologists followed in the wake of their predecessors — historians, archaeologists, linguists, musicians — viewing the editions of documents as major proofs of an ancient history and culture on Romania's territory. Their works established a good tradition in turning to account these documents.

The repertory of Byzantine musical culture should be revaluated on a scientific basis and in a critical spirit by way of:

1. *Critical Editions of Documents* — which will bring together in printed form (facsimile — "monumenta" — and transcription — "transcripta" —) Byzantine music sources.

2. *Studies* ("subsidiaria") which will throw light on the most important aspects of Byzantine music, outlining the syntheses proper to this music, and afford the elaboration of a history of music and of culture along the ages.

A critical revaluation presupposes an approach to past phenomena from present stands. Given the importance of the act of revaluating a musical heritage contained in the pages of ancient MSS, we must have in mind the grounds on which they are to be reconsidered.

Of course, not all the 250 MSS of ancient Byzantine music notations found in Romania must be published in critical editions. A rigorous selection is necessary for only those MSS or parts from them should be retained which help a good knowledge of what is essential and representative for the field as a whole, comprising important synthesis elements of historical, theoretical or aesthetic generalisation. Most conclusive in this respect are the Putna MSS of which only ten are known today (six in Romania and four abroad). We suggest that only some

of those found at Putna, in Iași, Moscow, Leimonos and Leipzig should be edited (facsimile and transcription) which, in our opinion, are best representative, synthesizing and comprising most of the Putna psalmists, chants (over four hundred)⁶. The other MSS repeat the musical content of the above, adding only about 50 new chants that could be published in a supplementary anthology. In this way, the whole Putna creation of the 15th – 16th centuries could be revaluated, while various monographs, analyses, syntheses could establish the main stylistic peculiarities that differentiate these chants.

Similar selection criteria must be applied also to the 17th century Byzantine music MSS which are more numerous and varied in content (e.g. those at the Central University Library in Iași: MS III-88, a *Mathimatarion* – *Sticherarion*, comprising a lot of anagrammatic chants, as well as an interesting Propaidea; MS II-89, an *Antologion*, accompanied by a Propaidea with very interesting exercises in Paralageia; then a few *Anastasimataria* (MSS I-19, I-39, I-40), *Sticheraria* (MSS III-85, III-86, IV-71, III-93), an *Antologion* (MS I-24), a *Heirmologion* (MS III-96) a.s.o., all of which are of research interest. Other 17th century MSS holdings, those at the Library of the Romanian Academy: MSS 564, 791, 1096 (*Anthologia* all); the Central State Library in Bucharest: MSS A 1 (*Anthologion*), A 2 (*Mathimatarion*), the MS Visarion (*The Triodion Chants*), A 12 (*Anthologion*), the four MSS coming from the library of the Byzantinist Ioan D. Petrescu; at the State Archives in Craiova (MSS 25 and 27 – (*Anastasimataria*), at the Oltenia Museum Library in Craiova (MSS 73, 78, 94 – (*Anastasimataria*); at the Holy Synod Library in Bucharest (MSS I-2, I-12) a.s.o. By their varied musical-artistic content, circulation of chants, diversity of styles, forms and authors, by the theoretical problems approached in their Propaidea and by the notation of the chants themselves these manuscripts are valuable sources for a comparative research in Byzantine music.

A specimen of the utmost interest in the Greek IV-39 MS at the Central University Library in Iași. It is a *Sticherarion* dating to the 13th century, which comparative studies have shown to be similar in point of medio-Byzantine notation and

features with the *Codex Theologicus Graecus 181* from Vienna (1221) and with the 13th century *Anciens Fonds Grecs 261* MS nowadays at the National Library in Paris. As interesting are the three MS 953 at the Library of the Romanian Academy in Bucharest, which comprises a *Sticherarion* from the same period, written in the same medio-Byzantine notation. Both these *Sticheraria* should focus the concern of Romanian musicologists.

A particular case is that of the 11th century MS called by us the *Gospel Lectiary from Iași* found today at the Central University Library in Iași (MS 160/IV-34), in ecphonetic notation, recently printed by the Musical Publishing House in Bucharest (1982)⁷, both in facsimile and in transcription, accompanied by a study due to the late musicologist Grigore Panțiru. The author's point of view, based on an original diastematic interpretation of the neumes, has stirred up some controversies among Byzantinists. The MS, already printed in facsimile, is available to all investigators who can thus offer other possible interpretations of the ecphonetic signs, taking into account all the previous studies concerning this notation (e.g. those by Carsten Höeg, Lorenzo Tardo, Egon Wellesz a.s.o.).

The 18th century MSS make us Romanians approach a stage of research marked by an obvious subjectivism. If until 1713 the text of the Byzantine music MSS in Romania was written mostly in Greek and some of it in Palaeoslavonic – as these were the only official church languages – after that date Romanian began being used also for ritual Orthodox chants. It was at that time of cultural-artistic flourishing under prince Constantin Brâncoveanu of Wallachia (1688–1714), that a first Byzantine music MS with a text written wholly in Romanian was published: *Psaltichie rumânească*. This MS is of the utmost importance for Romanian culture as it documents not only the introduction of Romanian in church singing and in the lectern books, but also the moment of the first manifestations of the Romanian musical prosody, of the rhythmic cantillation, of the adaptation of the text to the music and vice versa. The publication of this MS, both in facsimile and in transcription, is imperative⁸, the more so as it affords the understanding of a series of other Romanian

MSS of Byzantine music that dominated the whole 18th century. Their number is quite impressive, and so is that of the Romanian psalmists that asserted themselves in this field. The diversity of the 18th century MSS (*anastasimataria*, *sticheraria*, *heirmologia*, *doxastaria*, although *antologia* prevail) enable us to cover all the chants set to Romanian texts sung in the Orthodox church. Moreover, we come thus in contact also with the creations of other psalmists from Constantinople and Mount Athos, beside which the Romanian chants developed in parallel, along own characteristic lines. The music schools from Bucharest, Neamț Monastery, and Scheii Brașovului which had marked both the style of the chants and the structure of the MSS re-asserted themselves. A major event in the development of art music was the re-establishment of the printing house in Bucharest, where in 1820 they printed books of psalm music for the first time worldwide: *The New Anastasimatarion* and *The Concise Doxastarion*, using the new notation ("the new system") devised by Chrysantus of Madytos, edited by his disciple, Peter of Ephesus at the expense of some Romanian supporters.

We have put forward herein a few suggestions concerning the revaluation of the Byzantine musical culture in Romania in order to set off the importance of these MSS for the Romanian cultural-artistic patrimony and to arouse the interest of musicians, linguists, historians and palaeographers for the investigation of such a comprehensive field. Before concluding we would like to point out a few ideas, namely:

This Byzantine musical treasure in Romania is a factual reality liable to throw light on the remote past of Romanian spiritual life. Turning it to account is of the greatest urgency in order to save an artistic inheritance buried in manuscripts easily degraded with the lapse of time.

Therefore, it is urgent to publish some catalogues of the still extant MSS, namely, a general analytical catalogue and several catalogues on specific items each, otherwise all attempts at turning these materials to account will become ever so difficult. A few steps in this respect have already been made⁹, but they went no further than the manuscript form. Efforts should be stimulated, as these catalogues

are by far the surest guide to such a diversified and specialised field, being especially useful to comparative studies in the MSS and in the chants comprised therein.

In Romania, there is a fairly compact group of researchers in ancient Byzantine music have asserted themselves by various studies in the field, published in a number of special journals: they carry on the tradition of their predecessors, observing the truth and respecting the MSS in a scientific spirit (obviously, when necessary, controversies are welcome). When compiling a bibliography of the achievements of Romanian Byzantinists we were amazed to discover an impressive amount of published studies, articles and books. One of the most fertile consequences of the effort to reevaluate the ancient Byzantine music is the artistic phenomenon ever more conspicuous within the Romanian symphonic creation. Owing to the strivings of Romanian Byzantinists for transcribing and actualizing this old music, whose sonorities have disclosed a purely archaic diatonism and, here and there, an incipient chromatism, more and more composers have been showing an interest in Byzantine melodies, taking them over, in a creative manner, in all types of composition. Following the example of the late Paul Constantinescu, who created the *Two Byzantine Oratorios*, i.e. the *Easter one* and the *Christmas one*, sung, recorded and printed abroad (at Bärenreiter Verlag in Kassel) and of the late Dimitrie Cuclin, who incorporated a lot of Byzantine intonations into his symphonies, other Romanian composers, such as Doru Popovici, Aurel Stroe, Viorel Munteanu, Pascal Bentoiu, Myriam Marbe, Iancu Dumitrescu a.s.o., are processing Byzantine music themes, whose novelty is remarkable, indeed: symphonic and vocal-symphonic works, madrigals and even operas in which the Byzantine melos is prevailing.

The last two decades have witnessed the publication of numerous studies and books on Byzantine music, while other like studies and books are forthcoming. These have been put out largely by the Musical Publishing House in Bucharest. Since the Byzantine music MSS from this country are not only of national but also of international interest, as they concern the whole southeast European

music, the further publishing of some volumes of monumenta and transcripta, of some catalogues and monographic stu-

dies (subsidia) would be highly welcome as these could contribute to enriching the national and universal repository.

Notes

¹ We mean the ancient Byzantine music, because the MSS comprising the music used since 1814 (called "chrisantic", "modern", even "psalmic" a.s.o.) are by far more numerous.

² The circulation of the MSS constitutes a most interesting chapter in the Romanian musical historiography, which musicologists should investigate most thoroughly.

³ See in this respect the accounts by Emil Kałużniacki, A. I. Yatzimirskiy, J. A. Raasted, Dimitri Conomos, Anne E. Pennington, Manolis K. Hadjiyakoumis, A. Jakovlevic, Marcu Beza, Gheorghe Ciobanu, Marin Ionescu, Titus Moisesescu a.s.o.

⁴ Nicolae Iorga, *Bizanț după Bizanț*, Bucharest 1972, p. 3 (Foreword).

⁵ *Antologhionul lui Evtatie Protopsaltul Putnei*, dating from 1511 (MS Ščukin No. 350 in Moscow comprises 89 chants on Palaeoslavonic texts out of a total of 177; *Antologhionul de la Putna*, dating from 1520 (MS 56/544/576 I — P/I) includes only 25 chants of this kind out of a total of 78. The other Putna MSS, all from the 16th century, do record a few isolated chants in Palaeoslavonic, fact that does not change our asseveration. There is also a MS No. 8 from the 18th century, held in the Neamț Monastery Library, which preserves only one "Cheroubikon"

and the "Prosomoia" of the eight ehoi in Palaeoslavonic, all the other chants being set to Greek texts.

⁶ The Putna MSS (MSS 56/544/576 I — P/I and P/II) and the MS from Iași (MS I—26) were published in facsimile ("monumenta") by Gheorghe Ciobanu, Marin Ionescu and Titus Moisesescu (eds), Ed. muzicală, București, 1980 and 1981. *Antologhionul lui Evtatie Protopsaltul Putnei (1511)* has been edited by Gheorghe Ciobanu and Marin Ionescu (eds), Ed. muzicală, București, 1983.

⁷ Grigore Panțiru, *Lectionarul evanghelic de la Iași*, Ed. muzicală, București, 1982.

⁸ The *Psaltichie rumânească* will be published in four volumes, in the "monumenta et transcripta" series. The first volume, *Catavasierul* (Book of Katabassi), commented and transcribed by Sebastian Barbu-Bucur, appeared in 1981 (Ed. muzicală, București). The second volume, *Propedia și Anastasimatarul* is due to appear this year (Ed. muzicală, București).

⁹ Nicu Moldoveanu, *Catalogul analitic al manuscriselor de muzică veche bizantină*; Marin Ionescu, and Titus Moisesescu, *Catalogul manuscriselor putnene*; Adriana Șirli, *Catalogul analitic al Anastasimatarelor din România*; *Catalogul Irmologhioanelor* will be compiled by the same author; Urisanta Petrescu, *Catalogul analitic al Stihirarelor din România*.