

VASILE PETRAȘCU. THE TRANSYLVANIAN RELIGIOUS MUSIC BETWEEN STABILITY AND CONTINUITY

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SUMMARY. From a diachronic perspective, the Transylvanian Religious Orthodox music can be defined by two specific and complementary characteristics: stability and dynamics. The stability of religious music is given by the continuity, in time, of some unitary melodic matrixes, and the dynamic is determined by the development of specific melodic patterns under the action of many historical and cultural factors. In the core of the Transylvanian religious music tradition, in a both conservatory and innovative composition process, we could include Professor Vasile Petrașcu's musical creation. By assimilating both ways of religious music, oral and written, he engages in a wide composition and publication process, writing an entire series of religious creations destined to cult performance. Combining in a personal manner the melodic matrixes present in the first musical document by Dimitrie Cunțanu, in 1890, with new melodic patterns which had appeared because of the folk music's interaction, with the cult music and the music of the other co-living cults, manages to enrich the Transylvanian musical religious repertoire with an entire series of musical collection. All his works have multiple purposes: firstly, they have an instructive-educational purpose, being composed as a teaching material for the Theological Academy and the Theological Seminary's students; secondly, they have a practical purpose, many of them being destined for the religious celebrations that were taking place in the ecclesiastic and community space and, moreover, they were composed to enrich the new choirs' repertoire; and last, but not least, we can determine a patrimonial purpose, that of preserving and continuing in an authentic and steady spirit, the Transylvanian religious music tradition.

Keywords: Petrașcu, Cluj, the Transylvanian religious music tradition

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Once the Great Union was accomplished, in all the integrated provinces, there began a wide modernization process of the entire Romanian educational system. In this favorable context from a historical, social and cultural perspective, 1924 shall remain an emblematic year for the theological studies in Cluj. On the 7th of May, 1924, the consistorial act no.2871/1924 was read during the Eparchial Gathering in Cluj, referring to the construction and foundation of the Theological Institute in Cluj².

In this context of founding a theological education in Cluj, on the 30th of September 1924, Vasile Petrașcu received the nomination of temporary tenure teacher at the Theological Institute, for the subjects: *Liturgy Rules/Types and Religious Chant; Constitutional Law; Accounting*³. Accompanying this nomination, he would receive from his hierarch, Bishop Nicolae Ivan, many assignments: to finish the project that Cunțanu had started of gathering and fixation in linear notation of the religious music, to disseminate a uniform style of singing, to lay the foundations of a church choir, that should have the name of the newly founded diocese, and to embark, with this very choir, on missionary tours in different diocese' parishes, on the bishop's visits or with other opportunities⁴. Assuming the entrusted mission, for almost three decades, Vasile Petrașcu would proceed to the shaping of a Cluj musical tradition, based on an academic education, on the foundation of some choir formations and the composition and editing some musical pieces.

Although he dominated the academic space for more than three decades, Vasile Petrașcu's work has not been subjected to keen and meticulous analysis. The present research has the purpose to emphasize Vasile Petrașcu's contribution to the development of the religious music in Transylvanian tradition. To this end, we shall take into consideration the studies, articles and prefaces in his collections, which we will foremost extract his vision on religious music and analyze his most representative papers from. Through this analytic-descriptive approach we want to emphasize on stylistic particularities, which we can find in his musical work.

² Moraru, Alexandru, *Învățământul Teologic Universitar Ortodox din Cluj / The Theological Orthodox University Education in Cluj (1924-1952)*, Presa Universitară Clujeană, Cluj-Napoca, 1996, p. 28.

³ *Academia Teologică Ortodoxă Română Cluj. Anuarul (1924-1930)*, Decizia No.5959-1924.

⁴ Stanciu, Vasile, „Episcopul Nicolae Ivan și compozitorul Dr. Vasile Petrașcu sau roadele unei colaborări de excepție” / “Bishop Nicolae Ivan and composer Dr. Vasile Petrașcu or the fruits of an exceptional collaboration”, în: *Renașterea*, nr. 2 (1996), Cluj-Napoca, p. 4.

Life, activity and work of Vasile Petrașcu

About Vasile Petrașcu's identity, we can find biographical information in Gheorghe C. Ionescu⁵, Viorel Cosma⁶ și Vasile Stanciu's studies⁷. In these we can find only a few data regarding his life, studies, activity and work. We can find many more unique aspects about Petrașcu's life in Daniel Mocanu's paper⁸. Regarding the analysis of Petrașcu's musical work, we have a few papers that only tackle the composition activity partially: Vasile Stanciu⁹, Elena Chircev¹⁰, and Daniel Mocanu¹¹.

To summarize, Vasile Petrașcu was the first teacher of the Religious and Ritual Music Chair, of the newly founded Theological Academy in Cluj. Having followed the courses of the Andreian Theological Institute in Sibiu, had mentors and teachers Dimitrie Cunțanu și Timotei Popovici, which determined his education on the Transylvanian religious music tradition.

However, after having graduated the Institute, between the years 1912-1914, he would follow the courses of the Superior School of Commerce from the Commercial Academy in Budapest. His musical education would come to being from 1915, when he would enroll in the Bucharest Conservatory, following its courses until 1916, which he would continue in Cluj-Napoca.

⁵ Ionescu, Gheorghe C., *Muzica bizantină în România. Dicționar cronologic / The Byzantine Music in Romania. Chronologic Dictionary*, București, Editura Sagittarius, 2003, p. 373-374.

⁶ Cosma, Viorel, *Muzicienii din România. Lexicon / The Musicians in Romania. Lexicon*, vol. VII, Editura Muzicală, București, 2005, p. 363-364.

⁷ Stanciu, Vasile, „Viața, activitatea și opera muzicală a prof. dr. Vasile Petrașcu / Life, activity and musical work of prof. dr. Vasile Petrașcu”, în: *Mitropolia Ardealului*, XXXIII (1988), nr. 2, p. 20-36; Stanciu, Vasile, *Muzica bisericească corală din Transilvania / The Transylvanian religious choral music*, vol. I, Editura Presa Universitară Clujeană, Cluj-Napoca, 2001; Stanciu, Vasile, „Petrașcu Vasile”, în: *Dicționar de muzică bisericească românească / Dictionary Romanian church music*, (coord.): Nicu Moldoveanu; Nicolae Necula; Vasile Stanciu; Sebastian Barbu-Bucur, Basilica, București, 2013, s.v. Petrașcu Vasile.

⁸ Mocanu, Daniel, „Vasile Petrașcu – reperele unui traiect intelectual / The benchmarks of an intellectual direction”, în: *Icoană, mărturie creștină, totalitarism / Icon, Christian Confession and Totalitarianism*, editori: Vasile Stanciu și Cristian Sonea, Cluj-Napoca, Editura Presa Universitară, 2017, p. 597-621. Noile informații sunt preluate din Dosarul de încadrare de la Universitatea „Regele Ferdinand”, Arhivele Naționale Cluj, Fond nr. 798.

⁹ Stanciu, Vasile, *Muzica bisericească corală / The Transylvanian religious choral music ...*, p. 233-238

¹⁰ Chircev, Elena, „Priceasna în colecții de cântări bisericești din Transilvania și Banat / The Spiritual Chant in Collections of Religious Songs in Transylvania and Banat”, în: *Byzantion romanicon, volumul IV*, Academia de Arte Iași, 1998, p. 231-245.

¹¹ Mocanu, Daniel, *Praznicul Cincizecimii – abordare liturgică și muzicală. Analiză de caz: cântări din tradiție ortodoxă românească a secolelor XIX-XXI / The Pentecost Feast-liturgical and musical approach. Case analysis: chants of Romanian Orthodox tradition in the 19th -20th centuries*, Editura Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2020, p. 324.

In Bucharest, he had as teachers Alfonso Castaldi, which he studied harmony with and Dimitrie Kiriac, who taught him Musical Theory. What is more, in 1919, he enrolled in the Faculty of Law, King Ferdinand University in Cluj-Napoca, which he graduated in 1922, and after having sustained the necessary exams, in 1924, on the 13th December, obtained the university degree of “doctor of law”¹².

After obtaining the doctor title, he would also function as lawyer listed in the Bar and the Lawyers’ Union in Romania, on 34, Iuliu Maniu Street, Cluj, pleading in trials, in all courts¹³.

Being opened to all kinds of occupational areas, Petrașcu was involved in many founding and consolidation projects of the theological education in Cluj. Benefiting by an entire series of abilities accumulated in the study years, he managed to be professor, choir conductor, composer, editor, accountant and lawyer.

Consequently, as a teacher he taught at the Theological Academy in Cluj, between the years 1924-1940, and 1945-1950, courses of *Liturgy Rules/Types and Religious Chant; Constitutional Law; Accounting*¹⁴. During his teaching activity (1924-1950), at the Theological Academy there were large missionary campaigns of culturally inform the people living in the countryside, where he involved the Students’ Choir, answering in the Holly Liturgy and sustaining an entire series of educational concerts. The purpose of this campaign was to promote the professional interest through the presentations and choir concerts, to preach the Gospel’s word to the Transylvanian Romanians and to disseminate teaches with a moral, national and economic character. What is more, in addition to the musical and cultural missions that he made in the eparchy, Vasile Petrașcu gave a series of speeches, in the cycle of Conferences at the Cluj Centre for Priests Guidance: *Keeping the Ritualistic Unity and the Religious Orthodox Chant; Notions of Church Administration and Accountancy; The Liturgical Recitative Technique. The Church Choir’s Organization*¹⁵.

Receiving from the Bishop Nicolae Ivan the task of founding a choir to be able to answer to the Holly Liturgy, Petrașcu shall found the Bishop Choir. According to the approved Staff Regulations of the venerated Consistory, with the address no. 822/1922, from the 31st of March and recognized by

¹² Arhivele Naționale Cluj, Fond nr. 798, fila 56: Certificat Oficial. No.996/924-5 la 13/XII.924.

¹³ Arhivele Naționale Cluj, Fond nr. 798, fila 57: *Diploma de avocat*. Nr. 2937, Decizia N°131/928.

¹⁴ *Academia Teologică Ortodoxă Română Cluj. Anuarul (1924-1930)*, Decizia No.5959-1924.

¹⁵ Hașchu, C., „Tabloul conferințelor de la Cluj / The Panel of the Conferences in Cluj”, în: *Renașterea*, XXVII (1 iulie, 1949), 25-26, p. 5.

the by the Great Eparchial Council of Cluj Diocese, then came into legal existence *The Choir Reunion of the Male Choir of the Romanian Orthodox Diocese in Cluj*. It had Bishop Nicolae Ivan as patron, its honorary president being Maestro Gheorghe Dima (1847-1925) and directing president professor Dr. Vasile Petrașcu.

With the present occasion an organization and functioning status was written down of the Choir Reunion, which had specified in article 4 in the Regulation the quality of the reunion's members: active members, helping members, founding members and honorary members¹⁶. In 1925, Petrașcu would retire from the Archdiocese Choir's leadership out of personal reasons and would spend the majority of his time with the Theological Academic Choir, which he would undertake many cultural and missionary projects with.

In addition to the teaching, conducting and missionary part, Vasile Petrașcu also had time to compose. During his teaching activity, but also after its closure, he dedicated a lot of time restoring and fixing in writing the Transylvanian church musical tradition. In this way, all his musical papers are characterized by the use of the strata and melodic structures by the note "in Cuțanu's style". The musical style imposed by Dimitrie Cuțanu was professionally carried on by Vasile Petrașcu, and this thing can be noticed in his melodic formulas and musical discourse in his choir creations.

The Religious music Conception

Vasile Petrașcu made full use of the foreign religious music, integrating into the tradition initiated, in the kingdom, by D.G. Kiriac and then continued by Gheorghe Cucu, I.D. Chirescu and Nicolae Lungu, and in Transylvania, by Dimitrie Cuțanu, Gheorghe Dima, Iacob Mureșianu, Timotei Popovici and Augustin Bena. Starting from the ideas formulated by Petrașcu regarding the religious music in Ardeal, which we found in different periodicals, studies and articles, in the following, we will refer to his vision, which we find reflected in the didactic activity, composing, conducting and publishing. According to Petrașcu, the religious music from Ardeal, Bihor and

¹⁶ *Proces verbal* încheiat în data de 8 III 1922, cu ocazia adunării generale de constituire a reuniunii corale: Corul bărbătesc al Episcopiei Ortodoxe Române din Cluj. Diac. prof. Ioan Brie, „Corul Catedralei Arhiepiscopiei Vadului, Feleaacului și Clujului, 58 de ani de la înființare”, Report concluded on 8 III 1922, at the General Assembly meeting establishing the choir: choir male Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of Cluj. Deacon. prof. John Brie, "Cathedral Choir Archdiocese of Vad, Feleac and Cluj 58 anniversary", in: *Îndrumător bisericesc / Religious Guide*, Cluj-Napoca, 1979, p. 194.

Banat carries a characteristic zonal imprint, which makes it unique and gives it an invaluable value, framing it in the national musical heritage. Regarding its origin, in Ardeal and, especially, in the area of Sibiu and Cluj, the religious music is in a great proportion close to the original Greek songs that circulated in a Romanian form, in the old Kingdom, thanks to the efforts made by Macarie Hieromonah and Anton Pann. Moreover, the religious music from the Old Kingdom was borrowed from the Constantinopolitan repertoire and developed under the influence of Byzantine melos¹⁷. Unlike in Transylvania, the songs in the Banat area are very similar to those of the Serbs, because for a long time the Orthodox Church in this area was under the jurisdiction of the Serbian hierarchy¹⁸.

Due to the outline of a religious musical tradition around centers such as Sibiu, Cluj and its enclave, the Transylvanian version was protected from the "influences of Turkish chants"¹⁹ that we find in the songs from Kingdom. Although for several centuries a unique church musical tradition was established in Transylvania, however, after the moment of unification with Rome in 1701, religious music was split into two styles, the orthodox musical style and the Greek-Catholic musical style, both from the same old Byzantine vein. Unlike the orthodox version, "after Cunțanu", the songs of the songs used in the Greek Catholic Church are "much more influenced by the lay songs" and this is due to the late setting in linear notation of a local variant. Until the appearance of Celestin Cherebețiu's work in 1930, the music of the Greek Catholic Church was subjected to "a continuous process of preface and transformation"²⁰.

From a structural point of view, analyzing the two styles of singing, Petrașcu states that "there would not be too obvious differences between these two Churches, because almost all the songs are inspired by the modes and the church melodic phrases inherited and kept from generation to generation, transmitted from elders from father to son, from church singer to church singer"²¹. The differences and small nuances that characterize the two styles are noticeable in the melodies of the eight modes, troparion,

¹⁷ Gheorghită, Nicolae, "The Byzantine Chant in the Romanian Principalities during the Phanariot Period (1711-1821)", in: *Studia UBB Musica*, LIV, 1 (2009), p. 39-83.

¹⁸ Petrașcu, Vasile, *45 pricesne (chinonice) pentru Liturghiile Duminecilor* colectate, notate, compuse sau prelucrate după diferiți autori, cântăreți, și amatori de muzică bisericească pe o singură voce / *45 Spiritual Chants, for Sunday Masses collected, recorded, composed and processed by different authors, singers and church music enthusiasts with one voice* Cluj, Edit. Petrașcu-Ardeleanu, 1938, p. 1.

¹⁹ Petrașcu, Vasile, *45 de Pricesne / 45 Spiritual Chants*, p. 2

²⁰ Idem

²¹ Ibidem

antiphons, idiomelon and other special tunes. Petrașcu is of the opinion that these small differences are due to the lack of a variant fixed in linear notation, due to the changes in the songs performed by the church singers, which were influenced by the lay songs and the songs of other cults²². However, even if some differences are found between the variants performed in the same archbishops, what does not disappear is the “original character and the basic motives of the church echoi”²³.

Regarding the dynamics of Transylvanian music, Petrașcu believes that “the church modes with their troparion, antiphons and podobias, as they were systematized and fixed in notes, will be kept under the present conditions, until their new purification and uniformization, what will be required in the near future”²⁴. Moreover, the Orthodox Church music of the Transylvanian tradition is an original synthesis that has been carried out in this area, for several centuries, between the original Byzantine background and the very strong folk music influences²⁵.

In order to preserve the specific musical character, but also in order to standardize the entire musical liturgical repertoire, Petrașcu, following Cunțanu’s example, will continue to perpetuate, implement and develop church music in full accordance with the two complementary aspects of the Transylvanian tradition: stability and dynamics. These two aspects will be found mainly in his work.

In the wider context of the evolution of the religious music we can detect two main factors on which the two aspects of the Transylvanian tradition are based, namely the orality and the uniformization or “Romanianization” of folkloric invoice of the Byzantine musical repertoire.

When we refer to the orality of religious music in Transylvania, we notice a series of structural features that define and individualize it from the psaltic music in the Kingdom. First of all, all musical creation is anonymous. Often, the paternity of some local variants is placed on the account of the communities and of the “old chant singers” who succeeded in a certain area. Then, the orality assumes the existence of a matrix common to the whole

²² Péter, Éva, “Hymns of Repentance in the Worship Practice of the Reformed Church of Transylvania”, in: *Studia UBB Musica*, LVII, 1 (2012), p. 53-65.

²³ Petrașcu, Vasile, „Importanța muzicii și rolul cântărilor bisericești în cultul divin / The Importance of Music and the part of religious chants in the divine cult”, în: *Zece ani în slujba Bisericii și Neamului 1924-1934*, editor Ioan Vască, Cluj, 1934, p. 181.

²⁴ Petrașcu, Vasile, „Importanța muzicii / The Importance of Music...”, p. 184.

²⁵ Șoima, Gheorghe, „Muzica bisericească și laică în Institutul Teologic din Sibiu / The religious and laic music of the Theological Institute in Sibiu”, în *Mitropolia Ardealului*, VI, 11-12 (1961), p. 798.

area, generating new variants. Moreover, by orality we mean, at the same time, the existence of active, creative musical elements, which in their developments are impregnated with new local musical elements. Finally, it is often stated that simple musical formulas, present in orality, create stereotypes that can cause a monotonous character to appear during the performance²⁶. But, for the most part, it is precisely these so-called stereotypes that characterize the execution of the songs and ensure the active participation by singing of the believers, in the performance of the church services.

In Ardeal, the oral character of the church music was predominant. The lack of educational institutions, the specialized singers, the lack of books with musical notation and the lack of a direct and uninterrupted connection with the Old Kingdom, all of them generated a state of provisionalism and conjunctural subjectivity at the level of local variants. Religious music in its oral form is still characterized today by learning melodic and cadential formulas and intonational formulas that serve as *aide-mémoire*²⁷, when applying the song to a new liturgical text. The cadential typologies, specific to each mode, were applied on any hymnographic text, respecting the appropriate style, (phrenological, sticheraric or papadic).

All these particularities present in the oral variants were included in a scripted form when considering the unitary style of singing. The uniformization of music in Transylvania can be equated with a "Romanianization" imposed by an ecclesiastical authority and elaborated by a specialized person. In this endeavor, the work of Dimitrie Cunțanu, from the year 1890, is inscribed. This is a matrix for future generations of teachers and composers who will depart in their creations from the style imposed by Cunțanu. Among those who continue the process of fixing some church songs in the Transylvanian style is Vasile Petrașcu.

The working method that Petrașcu adopts in his compositions is one in which the static aspect of tradition is combined with the dynamic aspect. Starting from the oldest musical elements, which he finds fixed in the linear notation, he adds new cadential formulas and modal lines that he takes from the oral variants that circulated at that time, within the Archdiocese of Vad, Feleac and Cluj.

Petrașcu's works can be characterized by his desire to set in writing the most successful musical variants he has encountered in the oral

²⁶ Ciobanu, Gh., „Cântarea de cult bănățeană - origine, vechime, specific / The Cult Chant in Banat- origin, legacy, specific”, în: *Studii de etnomuzicologie și bizantinologie*, vol. III, București, 1992, p. 114.

²⁷ Wellesz, Egon, *A history of Byzantine Music and Hymnography*, Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1998, p. 24.

tradition. Also, they have a stable character, trying to keep the melodic elements in their original unit. Then, Petrașcu's work also carries a dose of conjunctural subjectivism, they respond most of the times to requests from the ecclesiastical authority or from strict cultural needs. The lack of scriptural variants prevented the unitary and academic execution of many responses to the church services, which were most often celebrated outside the church and demanded a tailor-made performance. In one of his works²⁸, Petrașcu specifies the reason that determined him to undertake the extensive compositional process. Thus, he states that the wrong execution of the church chants, the incorrect pronunciation of the words with the reversal of accents, produces on the believers an unpleasant state, depriving them of the beauty of the songs and the state of prayer. Wishing to contribute to the elimination of these shortcomings, he will proceed to elaborate variants destined to the needs of theological schools of all grades and to all amateur and professional church singers²⁹.

Regarding the way in which the song should be played, Petrașcu is of the opinion that the performance must "be clear and prosaic, so that the text or the words of the hymns are understood or, in other words, the melodic or musical accent must coincide with the true Romanian accent of the solitary words, which compose the text contained in the ritual books. Of course, first of all, it is necessary, as well as the ritual texts translated from foreign languages or transcribed with Latin characters after the Cyrillic ones, to be correct and to correspond in a unitary way to the topic and style of our clean Romanian language"³⁰.

At the level of identity between the liturgical text and the melodic line, which we find in the variants composed by Petrașcu, we can spot the author's concern regarding the theological message that the new songs convey. He states that "in church songs, the text is the essential part, and the melody is only their cloth or clothing [...] As the outer garment of the text will be more appropriate as the religious character of the text will have more effect, overwhelming in the captivity of the religious feeling of the believers,

²⁸ Petrașcu, Vasile, *Și acum și pururi / Now and ever... Prea binecuvântată ești* (You are most blessed)... *Doxologia Mare* (Great Doxology), aplicate pe melodia troparelor și a antifoanelor, după indicațiile tipiconale la diferite servicii ale cultului divin din toate duminicile și sărbătorile bisericești de peste an, împreună cu troparele de la sfârșitul Utreniei (Matins) / sing to the mode of tropars and antiphones, according to the typical indications at various services of the divine cult from all Sundays and church holidays over the year, along with the tropars at the end of Matins: *Astăzi mântuirea / Today the atonement ...*, glasul 4 și *Înviat-ai din mormânt / You Rose from the Grave...*, glasul 8, Cluj, p. 2.

²⁹ Petrașcu, Vasile, *Și acum și pururi/Now and ever...*, p. 2.

³⁰ Petrașcu, Vasile, *45 de Privesne / 45 Spiritual Chants ...*, p. 2.

predisposing them to his deepest penetration and elevating them to the heavenly ones". At the same time, in order to avoid the monotony and too dense repetition of a single musical phrase, Petrașcu will use the three-four phrases specific to each mode, to vary the melodic line. Particular importance will be given to the correct and prosodic pronunciation of the liturgical text, synchronizing it with the musical one³¹.

Petrașcu also believes that the decisive role in transmitting the theological message of the song and in creating a liturgical atmosphere that predispose to prayer is the church singer, hence the need for his proper training, but also of adopting a conduct decent. "As far as the possibilities are concerned, we will consider the improvement not only of the song or the musical composition, but also of the performing singer, who must master both the text and the melody, because the beneficial effect of the song depends, to a large extent, on the way and the manner of the executing body, that is to say, the voice, the school and the singer's own outfit. The musical culture and the long practice of the singer will contribute to the good interpretation and the correct execution of the church songs, which must still be done with all the appropriateness and modesty. The executing body, that is, the voice, will use itself in the margins of its natural power, avoiding the unnecessary shouting and forcing of the voice"³². A song within the limits of an authentic church tradition requires, according to the author, a prior musical training, accompanied by vocal qualities and a moral life. "The singer will strive to sing as much as possible, simple, natural, with a clear and praying voice, avoiding the shouts and tones too high or too deep, which he cannot master"³³.

Main papers' analysis

To show the way in which Petrașcu accentuated the lectern chant in Transylvanian tradition present in oral variant and the chant fixed by Dimitrie Cunțanu, as it follows, we shall analyze some of his most important works, specifying the context that generated their appearance, his sources, the structure and the melodic patterns they follow.

To catalogue and divide Vasile Petrașcu's entire musical creations we will use the list in the activity memoir, edited by him³⁴. From the beginning we will make reference to those collections that contain original

³¹ Petrașcu, Vasile, *Și acum și pururi/Now and ever...*, p. 2.

³² Idem, p. 3.

³³ Ibidem, p. 2.

³⁴ Arhivele Naționale Cluj, Fond nr. 798: op. cit., Filele 20-24.

compositions, written for a singular voice, following the musical pattern in Cunțanu's paper.

The first collection that we will tackle is called *Catavasier/Irmologion/Hymn Book*³⁵. The book's complete title is: *Irmologion/ Hymn Book comprising the odes or the chants of the most important canons on the Sundays and Holidays over the entire Church Year*, applied and fixed in linear notation by Dr. Vasile Petrașcu, professor at the Theological Academy in Cluj, 1933³⁶.

The publication of the *Irmologion*, in Cluj, represented an extremely important editorial event in the religious music scene of the time. What is more, from 1890, since the first Dimitrie Cunțanu edition, no chant book for the use of singers had been published in Transylvania.

In the academic scenery of the time, Petrașcu's effort to compose did not pass unnoticed. In one of the cultural chronicles of *Renașterea* magazine of the *Archdiocese of Vad, Feleac and Cluj*, *The Irmologion* was seen as a manual to "unify and correctly apply the Transylvanian music, in which the essential in not only our mouth's musicality but also our heart's musicality, of the idea, of the spirit of the text"³⁷.

The Irmologion published by Petrașcu represents an important moment in the evolution of religious music in Transylvania, and this is proven by the fact that Cunțanu's paper was limited and did not comprise all the chants of the liturgy. The author, forced by economic factors, limited himself to publishing just a few representative chants, meaning to serve as a model for the other hymns which were not written in linear notation.

In Cunțanu's paper were fixed only two ways of singing the hymns³⁸: „Hristos se naște/Christ is born” – 1st hymn of the Birth of the Lord – and

³⁵ *Catavasier / Irmologion*, sau *irmologhion* it is also called the book with psaltic or linear notation, or with both comprising: catavasias for the common days or Saints with polyeleus and for the royal feasts.

³⁶ Reissue: *Catavasier*, cuprinzând Catavasiile cele mai însemnate ale cultului ortodox, aplicate și fixate pe notație liniară de dr. Vasile Petrașcu, fost profesor de Muzică bisericească și ritual la Academia Teologică din Cluj. Ediție revizuită și îngrijită de pr. dr. Vasile Stanciu / *Catavasier* comprising the most significant Catavasias of the Orthodox cult, applied and fixed on linear notation by Dr. Vasile Petrascu, former professor of church music and ritual at the Theological Academy in Cluj. Revised edition by pr. dr. Vasile Stanciu, Editura Buna-Vestire, Beiuș, 1995. *Catavasier*, cuprinzând odele sau pesnele canoanelor (catavasiilor) mai însemnate din duminici și sărbători peste întregul an bisericesc, aplicate și fixate pe notație liniară de Dr. Vasile Petrașcu, ediție îngrijită și revizuită de pr. prof. univ. dr. Vasile Stanciu, Editura Renașterea, Cluj-Napoca, 2016.

³⁷ Fl. M., „Cărți și reviste” / “Books and magazines”, in: *Renașterea*, XII (28 ianuarie, 1934), 4, p. 4.

³⁸ Catavasia (κατάβασις = descent, exit) it is an hymnographic form at the beginning of each song within the 9 ode of the canon, of the saint or the celebrated event, executed during the service of Matins. The catavasias are a summary of the canon to which they belong and represent a prozodic and musical model for all the hymns / tropars of the respective song.

„Ziua Învierii/The Resurrection Day” – 1st hymn of the Resurrection of the Lord – accompanied by the mention that they served as a “model³⁹, and “the other hymns are sung on the line of the antiphon mode or of the shown in the idiomelon”⁴⁰. Therefore, for the modes II, IV and mode plagal IV, there is a special chant in the antiphon’s singing, which is the model for all the hymns written in the mode. For the idiomelon written on the mode that do not have an antiphon, the modes I, III, and modes plagal I, II, III, in application, the song of the hymn or the idiomelon shall be used, written in the cult book and indicated by Cunțanu.

In this context, in which there was not a fixed musical form to norm a correct execution of the idiomelon, we can appreciate at the right pace the contribution that Vasile Petrașcu had in writing in linear notation the idiomelon of the most important great feasts, applied and fixed by Dimitrie Cunțanu. In the preface of *his Irmologion*, Petrașcu has a contribution in the continuity of the church musical tradition noted by his teacher in Sibiu, foreseeing that: “in the prosodic application of the church songs, the formulas were kept, the the characters and main phrases, and the main cadences of the songs used nowadays in the Sibiu Archdiocese and the *Archdiocese of Vad, Feleac and Cluj*. I had as a base the fixed models of Dimitrie Cunțanu, who, in his turn, adapted from his antecessors, professors P. Ioan Bobeș and Ioan Dragomir, but also other older singers from the 1st half of the 19th century”⁴¹.

From the contents of these collections we can deduce that this collection is not complete. It comprises the songs of the idiomelon for the following great feasts: the Birth of the Lord, the Baptism of the Lord, with the mention “on the mode II antiphon”, The Greeting of the Lord, with the mention “on the mode III troparion”, Annunciation Day with the mention “on the mode IV antiphon”, the Palm Sunday, the Holy Easter, the Rising and the Pentecost, The Mother of God’s Dormition, The Rising of the Holy Cross, with the mention “on the mode plagal IV idiomelon”.

The source that Petrașcu started from in the hymns composition is Cunțanu’s collection. From this he would take the model chants for the hymns of the Birth of the Lord and the Holy Easter, composing the other songs on the melodic patters by Cunțanu. Regarding the way in which the other hymns were composed and the sources of inspiration, we have to

³⁹ *Cântările bisericesti după melodiile celor opt glasuri ale Sfintei Biserici Ortodoxe, culese, puse pe note și arangate de / The Religious Chants by the melodies of the eight modes of the Saint Othodox Church, collected, noted and aranged by Dimitrie Cunțanu, profesor la Seminarul „Andreian” Archidieceșan, Sibiu, Editura autorului, 1890, p. 40.*

⁴⁰ *Cântările bisericesti / The Religious Chants...*, p. 53.

⁴¹ Petrașcu, Vasile, *Catavasier / Irmologion...*, p. 2.

mention that Petrașcu used the troparion and antiphons noted by Cunțanu, valorizing each modes modal structure.

Referring to the novelty degree of each collection, we can determine that at each cadence formula's pattern, which we can find in the oral tradition and that are to be noted in the model chants forwarded by Cunțanu. This proves Petrașcu's declared passion to develop the traditional religious chants in the imposed limits of the local musical anon, but with strong influences from the oral tradition areal. What is more, the novelty stands in the imposition in musical script of an academic repertoire, destined to answer all the structural and aesthetic requests.

Another important original paper for the Transylvanian religious space is: *Și acum și pururi/ Now and ever... Prea binecuvântată ești/ Too blessed are you... Doxologia Mare/ The Great Doxology*, applied on the rhythm of the troparion and antiphons, by the indications of the tipicons of the different services of the divine cult in all the Sundays and religious feasts over the year, together with the end of the Matins' troparion: *Astăzi mântuirea/ Today the salvation*, mode IV and *Înviat-ai din mormânt/ Resurrected Thee from the Grave*, (troparion mode plagal IV), Cluj⁴².

This original paper is presented by the form of an essential contribution which Petrașcu brings to the systematization in linear note of some hymns which are sung so often in the Orthodox services. The chant "*The Great Doxology*"⁴³ is a hymn which is sung each Sunday or during feast days, at the end of the morning service, of the Matins. According to the liturgical order, the mode on which *The Great Doxology* is sung is noted in the Orthodox calendar. In the rubrics of the calendar for each week is written the mode sung in the given week. Because he did not have a musical example written down in Dimitrie Cunțanu's paper, this hymn is usually sung, on the mode the singer used to know best, not taking into consideration the calendar notation. The most used mode in practical application of the *Great Doxology* is the mode IV, antiphon formula.

⁴² Due amount, the melody simple and affordable, these compositions have been reprinted by Vasile Stanciu in his: *Anastasimatarul sau Cântările vecerniei de Sâmbătă seara și ale utreniei de Duminică dimineața, compuse și fixate pe notație liniară după melodiile celor opt glasuri bisericesti, notate de preotul Dimitrie Cunțanu / Anastasimatar or Vespers Songs of Saturday evening and of Matins Sunday morning, composed and fixed on linear notation according to the songs of the eight Church modes, noted by priest Dimitrie Cunțanu*, Editura Reîntregirea, Alba Iulia, 2010¹; Editura Renașterea, Cluj-Napoca, 2016².

⁴³ *Doxologie* (δοξολογία, from δόξα = glory and λόγος = word) sau *slavoslovie*, it is also called the angelic hymn Because its first stih: "Glory to God in those above..." It is the hymn which the angels sang at the Nativity of Christ (Luke 2, 14). This song is the oldest part of the service of Matins. When it is sung on Sundays and holidays it is called large doxology, and when it is read in the rest of the days, it is called small doxology.

Vasile Petrașcu realized that the lack of a scripted variant leads to an amateur improvisation, and therefore he fixed in linear notation „Doxologia Mare/ *Great Doxology*” on the eight modes. Regarding the utilized sources of inspiration, from the variants’ analysis we notice that he was inspired by the songs of the troparion modes I, III, and modes plagal I, II, III and the songs of the antiphons modes II, IV, and mode plagal IV. Starting from the melodic structures and the cadential formulas noted by Cunțanu, he composes in the spirit of the Transylvanian music the *Great Doxology’s* songs for the eight modes.

From the degree of difficulty point of view, the variants can be placed in a medium difficulty registry for those with minimum theoretical knowledge of linear music. The melodic lines are simple and calm, with a range from step to step, without great intervals’ jumps.

Moreover, it is composed by eight church modes for the chant *Most-blessed*, which is sung at *And now...*, at the end of Matins.

With the above mentioned musical papers, Vasile Petrașcu used his harmonics knowledge from the maestros Alfonso Castaldi și Dimitrie Kiriac, to compose a few musical pieces on four voices. Due to the fact that the Theological Academy members were asked to answer to multiple events solicitations organized for feasts and local and national celebrations. Petrașcu was to be confronted with the lack of a harmonized repertoire adapted for such moments; therefore, he would compose, in the Transylvanian church style, many more chants destined for: *Te-Deum and Sfințirii celei mici a apei/ The Blessing of the Holy Water*.

Therefore, using the melodic pattern of the modes fixed by Cunțanu he would compose the following mini-collections of chants:

Coral answers to Te-Deum, 10th November 1926. In the entire paper, he writes for four male voices: *Rugăciunile începătoare/ Starting prayers, Doamne miluiește/ God Bless* in La major; *Dumnezeu este Domnul/ God is the Lord, Mântuiește Doamne/ God Bless* (the harmonization of the troparion composed by Dimitrie Cunțanu) in Si minor; *Doxologia Mare/ The Great Doxology* in La major, after the chants of the antiphon mode IV.

Sfințirea Apei mici/ The Blessing of the Holy Water, is as a whole addition to the “Te-Deum”. This mass’s chants were firstly executed by the Orthodox Theological Academy Choir in Cluj, under the author’s lead, at the inauguration of the building laboratories of the Academy of High Agronomical Studies in Cluj, on the 23rd of October 1932. The chants for the blessing of the Holy Water were adapted in oral variant that circulated in the Cluj area.

The purpose of this collection was a practical one, the author having taken into account the liturgical necessities of these prayers. Consequently, apart from the beginnings prayers written as if being recited on four voices, he composed the song of the troparion: *To the Mother of God*, in Do Major, according to the song of the troparion mode IV. This song is sung predominantly in Ardeal, at the *Paraklesis of the Holy Mother of God* during the *Lent of her Dormition*. What is more, he harmonizes the local variant of the troparion: *Now the Time Has Come*, in La Major, after the song of the idiomelon mode plagal II. The melodic line cannot be found in Cunțanu's collection, it is original from the oral tradition and it can be found all over Transylvania.

Also out of liturgical necessities of the Theological Academy's Male Choir, Petrașcu composes the following chants, destined to be performed both during mass at Church, and outside it.

Our Master (archiery chant composed by an original melodic line), *The Lord of the Skies* (on the mode plagal IV melody), *He is Worthy* (answers to ordinations by an original song), the works are accompanied by a dedication to His Holiness Nicolae Ivan, Bishop of Vad, Feleac and Cluj, 10 XI 1926. *Lăudați pe Domnul/ Bless the Lord* (Priceasnă/ spiritual chant) and *Axionul/ The Axion* (2nd variant, mode plagal I), dedicated to His Holiness Dr. Grigorie Comșa, Bishop of Arad, Ienopole and Hălmagi, Cluj, 1926; *Axionul/ The Axion* (1st November 1926) for a male choir adapted and harmonized with motives taken from psaltic music.

Bine ești cuvântat/ Blessed are Thee (the troparion of the Pentecost on the mode plagal IV, adapted and harmonized by a song fixed by Dimitrie Cunțanu), *Înconjurați popoarelor/ Surround the Peoples* (on the song of the troparion first mode), *Luminează-te Ierusalime/ Lighten up, thee Jerusalem* (on motives taken from the troparion first mode), Cluj, 1929. *Al Domnului este/ Our Lord's is*, Ps. XXIII, Cluj, 1929. *Cântări la mormântul (prohodul) Mântuitorului, ce se cântă în Vinerea mare la Priveghere/ Chants at the Savior's Tomb (requiem) that is sung in the Great Friday since Rising* (written and adapted from ancient church songs), Cluj, 10 III, 1934. *Învierea Ta, Hristoase/ Your Rising, Christ* (on the song of the idiomelon on mode plagal II).

Troparul Adormirii/ The Dormition Troparion (composed at the Sanctification of The Episcopal Cathedral in 1933, on the song of the troparion mode I), *Cântarea arhierască/ The Bishop's Chant* (adapted by Petrașcu), *Hristos a înviat/ Christ is Risen*, (on an ancient church song, adapted and harmonized by Petrașcu), Cluj, 13 X 1933. *Să se îndrepteze/ Let it atone* (answer to the Liturgy of Saint Gregory the Dialogist, harmonization

by Cunțanu), *Mărire/ Grace* (the answers given in the Great Thursday after each Gospel is read), *Aliluia/ Halleluiah* (that is sung after each short hymn of the Friday Matins' mass, in the 5th week of the Great Lent), *Dimineața auzi glasul meu/ In the morning hear my voice* (chant that is sung in the 1st Hour Mass, in the Great Lent) and *Învieerea Ta/ Your Resurrection* (Chant that is sung at Easter after the church is circled, on the song of the idiomelon on the mode plagal II), 12 III 1934, Cluj.

These coral harmonization and adaptations had a great echo in the Transylvanian musical space. They were said to uniform the chant and cultivate a musical style adapted to the celebrated moments, having a great spiritual and social plan. As a review states: "They are a series of religious chants, founded on our religious music base, beautifully harmonized, that can be easily learnt and sung by church choirs, some at the Holy Masses, others at the Te-Deum and some of them at churches sanctifications. The Axion and spiritual chants, till now, had not been harmonized, so even were a church choir existed, were allowed to be sung by church singers or others, in unison, spoiling the magic of choir singing, in the solemn key of the divine service. The same thing happened at the churches sanctification, where the special chants, sang in unison, because many mixed in the chant-being an occasion of demonstration of voice's strength- always spoil their beauty. The harmonized choir singing preserves this outstanding beauty, tenfold rising the feast's solemnity"⁴⁴.

Another paper of great value for the Transylvanian church music is *Saint John Chrysostom's Liturgy in La Major*, composed in 1936 for a male choir on four voices. From a content perspective, the chants of the Holy Mass begin with *Come all to Worship*, jumping the introductory part of the Great Litany and the Antiphons.

At the melodic discourse level, we can establish that Petrașcu's paper is written in an easy manner, active, often with a cursive melodic line, that does not integrate in a melodic structure of a religious mode. The seaming simplicity gives a wide auditive and interpretative accessibility. In the compound Liturgy, given into circulation, a musical material of religious origin searches to emphasize the liturgical text's meaning. From a stylistic perspective, the paper can be added to the compositions that glorify the lectern chant, generating a personal composition style, which holds all the premises, through which this creation is destined to be performed during the cult.

⁴⁴ D.A., „Bibliografie/Bibliography”, în: *Renașterea*, VII (28 aprilie, 1929), 17, p. 7-8.

Regarding this Liturgy, we could read this in the media: “Dr. Vasile Petrașcu make possible in our Churches, to rhythmically undulate, the same authentic, Byzantine melos, but adapted to the Romanian soul, enables that the tender troparion and the rhythmic liturgical answers, to follow a well establish chant, in which content we can find an adequate form of expression. In the musical composition, the author took into consideration firstly the singing style in Sibiu, (where he studied Theology, with chant maestro Cunțanu) and starting from this deserved area, he modeled it in some places, so as to form a harmonic unity. In our Church a phenomenon can be observed (nevertheless very natural) of differences in singing according to regions. Professor Petrașcu tries to pass areal borders, to contribute to the uniformity of the religious chant”⁴⁵.

Moreover, he composes melodies for a three voices choir and a mixt choir. For a three equal voices choir: *The Axion*, with solo and duet, 28 IV 1938 – Cluj. *Pe Tine te lăudăm/ We Praise You*, a three equal voices, 28 IV 1938 – Cluj; *Axionul/ The Axion*, for three equal voices. Chants for a mixed choir: *Cuvine-se cu adevărat/ It Is Truly Meet* (with solo and duet), 25 I 1940 – Cluj; *Ridica-voi ochii mei/ Shall I Raise My Eyes to the Skies* (Spiritual Chant with solo tenor and bas), 25 I 1940 – Cluj.

Another important collection that is worth mentioning is a mini liturgical repertoire destined to the Spiritual Chant’s performance in the Holy Mass. The collection *45 pricesne (chinonice) pentru Liturghiile Duminecilor/ 45 Spiritual Chants (koinonikon) for the Sundays Liturgies collected, noted, composed and adapted by the different authors, singers and religious music amateurs on a single voice*, Cluj, Petrașcu-Ardeleanu Publishing House, 1938.

From its content we can notice that Vasile Petrașcu gathers the most popular spiritual chants not only in Transylvania and Banat, but also in the Old Kingdom. Consequently, we can find spiritual chants taken from the collections of Dimitrie Cunțanu, Atanasie Lipovan, Celestin Cherebețiu, Augustin Bena, Trifon Lugojan, Davidof, Gheorghe Muzicescu, T Roșu, I. Vorobchievici, I. Cart, G.N. Mugur.

From a structural perspective, the spiritual chants are written for a solo voice, valorizing the melodic resorts of the lectern music in different areas of the country. Regarding the innographic content of these spiritual chants, they respect the celebrated moment, being in accordance with the church tipic’s rules. Due to their positioning in an authentic religious music tradition and having text from the Holy Scripture, the spiritual chants comprised

⁴⁵ I.E.N., „Bibliografie / Bibliography”, în: *Renașterea*, XIV (8 martie, 1936), 10, p. 4.

in the present collection are parted from the sentimentalist and heterodox side of the pious chants, taken and sung often in Orthodox Community, from the Lord's Troops or other alike cults. Petrașcu's collection was considered at the time, a valuable paper that replaces the older songs and offers to the singers "a vademecum", starting from an "artistic resonance of the religious melos"⁴⁶.

Moreover, we remind that the compositional endeavors of Vasile Petrașcu found their place in the folkloric preoccupations. Even though they were composed for various occasions they were performed by the Theological Academy Choir. *Nepoții lui Horea/ Horea's Gradchildren*, 1934. Folk songs on three equal voices. The folk poem is found in 1920 in Luncoiul de jos village, Hunedoara County by Emul Fugătă, Brad. *Imn de urare Prea Sfinției Sale Nicolae Colan, din prilejul instalării Sale în scaunul de Episcop al Eparhiei Vadului, Feleacului și Clujului de către I.P.S. Sa Dr. Nicolae Bălan, Mitropolitul Ardealului/ Wishing Hymn to His Holiness Nicolae Colan, for His institution on the throne of Bishop of Vad, Feleac and Cluj by His Holiness Dr. Nicolae Bălan, the Metropolitan of Ardeal*, 1936. The lines and song were composed by de Vasile Petrașcu. *Imnul Cooperăției/ The Cooperation Hymn*, text by Pavel Beraru, Dedication to madam and prof. dr. Victor Jinga from the Commerce Academy Cluj, 1934. *Imn jubiliar din prilejul aniversării a 10 ani de existență a Academiei Teologice Ortodoxe Române din Cluj-Napoca/ Jubilee Hymn for the 10 year anniversary of the existence of the Romanian Orthodox Theological Academy (1924-1934). Text and music by Dr. Vasile Petrașcu*. 1934. *Mic putpuriu coral/ Little choral Mix* (composed by popular songs). I. *Iată că vine/ Here it Comes...*; II. *Foaie verde, foaie rară/ Green leaf, rare leaf...*; III. *Du-te bade/ You can go bade...*, 1934.

Seen as a whole, the musical work of Vasile Petrașcu completes the sight of the Transylvanian liturgical musical repertoire, continuing the work began by Dimitrie Cunțanu. What is more, he carries on the "after Cunțanu" style, adding new melodic elements from the oral religious tradition of the Archdiocese of Vad, Feleac and Cluj.

Summing Considerations

Through his composing effort, Vasile Petrașcu has a valuable place in the composers' constellation that promoted the valorizing of the autochthonous religious music as a part of a special musical culture. In this way, the melodic resorts of the Transylvanian church music, in oral and scriptic variant, were fully developed and conserved in his musical compositions.

⁴⁶ I.E.N., „Bibliografie / Bibliography”, în: *Renașterea*, XVI (16 octombrie, 1938), 42, p. 4.

Regarding the Transylvanian church music tradition vision, Petrașcu is convinced that it has to be kept, valorized and developed. This belief was confirmed in his thirty years of didactic, conducting, composing and editorial activity. As a result, from his vision of the church music, the following ideas can be deduced: a uniform Transylvanian musical style, validated by an academic institution and based on the existence of a noted musical basis in different collections; the valorizing of the melodic elements of the areal ethos; the identity of the liturgical and musical text and the care in emphasizing the word through melodic lines.

On the other hand, Vasile Petrașcu's entire composing work can be regarded as a punctual musical answer to liturgical needs of the newly founded *Archdiocese of Vad, Feleac and Cluj*. The lack of music books, of specialized singers and the state of temporary and amateurism of the Transylvanian religious music, was what determined Petrașcu to begin this wide compositic process to enrich the musical liturgical repertoire.

Thanks to his sustained effort, in the Cluj Diocese he founded an autochthonous musical tradition that combines harmoniously Cunțanu's variant with the zonal ethos. That is the reason why, through his originality, this Transylvanian religious musical treasure constitutes an important identity mark in the Romanian and European context phenomenon.

Through the actions that he undertook in the religious musical domain in the Cluj Archdiocese, Petrașcu can be rightly considered, the founder of the religious music school in Cluj.

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