

THE PERFECTING OF THE ROMANIZATION PROCESS AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE MUSICAL LIFE IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

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SUMMARY. The spiritual history of the Republic of Moldova has been permanently marked by an original and ancient musical art, incorporated in an infinite array of emotions. With roots in the most ancient times, new musical strata were added to the folk melos, in time, multiplying and continually diversifying the musical landscape. The Byzantine music is the essential part of Moldova's artistic and cultural past. It has been the stepping stone in the development of the Romanian sacred music. Being a part of the Romanians' cultural past, it has developed and has been transmitted from generation to generation, in their own traditional spirit.

Keywords: Byzantine music, Romanization process, Moldova, sacred music, musical Art

The historic changes and social movements, animated by the will for a national affirmation, have directly influenced the evolution of the musical life, which has manifested through the extension of the life parameters and classical music creation towards all fields of professional culture. Hence, in the liturgical creation, new ways of chanting were introduced, based on the major-minor harmonic system, with compositional techniques that pertained to the European tradition and style.

The period of Romanization of the church chants promoted by Macarie manifested itself by bringing together heterogeneous structures, of different artistic values, through sudden dramatic metamorphoses. One of the dramatic changes has been the replacement of the psalter notation system with the staff notation system. In this stage, church music incurred a double metamorphosis: on one hand, through the actions of Romanization of church music, by removing the multitude of Oriental influences from the chants around the lectern and the generalization of chanting in the Romanian language; on the other hand, the giving up to the multi-secular tradition of Byzantine monodic chants and the introduction of the new Western system of harmonic chant, based on the mensural notation system.

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The Romanization of the liturgical creation was not attained by just translating the text into Romanian, but also by tackling the native character of the melodics and putting it in accordance with the text. This accordance between text and melody is very well delineated in the creation of Macarie, the Hieromonk and of Anton Pann.

Here is what they had to say about this:

Macarie, the Hieromonk: "... *here is, through Your love, as promised, the "Irmologion" with a flawless structure, both in the tone of words, as well as in the good wording of the melodics... You will find it is in no way inferior to the Greek one, but, on the contrary, enriched in all respects, so that it does not alter the flow of the melody or the formation of the word.*"²

Anton Pann – "... *and many others have tried to sort out the church chants, but all they managed to do was to replace the syllables of Romanian texts and, in the melody, where there were not enough syllables (as some words were shorter in Romanian), they supplemented with vowels; likewise, where the syllables were in excess (as some of the words were longer), they crowded all the syllables in the same place, so that the accent of the melody did not coincide with the accent of the saying; in this way, the meaning of the readings that ask for ascent may fall in descent and the readings that ask for descent may go in ascent... How wrong would a book translator be, should he say "earth" instead of "sky", or "ruin", "moaning" instead of "piety" and "joy"; so would the translator of a chant be, should he use the melody of a reading instead of another's, because, as all the other sciences have their own rules and principles, so the music has its own. Such rules have not yet been written down in Romanian, nor have they been taught in any school, as no one knew they needed such rules. This is why we cannot blame anyone who did not guard the rules when translating the chants, as they had no previous examples to follow...*"³

The primary phase of the metamorphosis of religious music engaged high theoretical and practical implications. The Psalts never gave up entirely to the psaltic neumes, but they resorted to some concessions. Macarie, the Hieromonk and Anton Pann simplified the chants by eliminating the Greek-Oriental inflexions. However, since they bore the responsibility of preserving and perfecting chants around the *lectern*, they proved their inability in finding a solution of compromise that would put in accord the usual autochthonous monodies with the harmonic principles of the new wave. Full of aspirations, eager for new changes and animated by the idea of musical emancipation, Archimandrite Visarion stood out from all the other psalts of his time, by

² Macarie, the Hieromonk, *Irmologion or Musical Book of Hymns*, Vienna, 1823, page VI

³ Anton Pann, *The Theoretical and Practical Basis of Church Music or the Melodic Grammar*, Bucharest, 1845, Church Music Printing House, p. XXXV - XXXVII

totally neglecting the previous, traditional chanting and introducing the harmonic chants instead. Therefore, the autochthonous fund, which continued to live on clandestinely in some monasteries, was replaced with harmonic chants borrowed from anywhere, thus leading to a deadlock in the field of church music.

The national aspirations triggered in the period of the 1848 Revolution movement brought this deadlock to an end, contributing to its nationalization by the materialization of an autochthonous musical creation, thus favouring the crystallization of the national, professional liturgical music.

The first accounts of church chants in the Romanian language on Moldova's territory date back to the 1650s.

In the process of Romanization of religious chants, Romanian music from the late 18th century and the first half of the 19th century was based on its three pillars: *Hieromonk Filothei*, *Hieromonk Macarie* and *Anton Pann*.

One of the difficulties of Romanization was the inconsistency between the text in Romanian and the traditional melody, which could not be changed.

Filothei sin Agăi Jipei was the one who managed to overcome this obstacle, thanks to his theological, philological and especially musical education, which he had acquired domestically and during his stay at Mount Athos. On December the 24th, 1713, he wrote the first Romanian religious musical work, "Psaltichie rumânească", a Romanian Book of hymns, in which he adapts the Romanian text to the traditional melody.

From the preface of the manuscript written by Filothei we find that the Romanization of the religious creation had been imposed by the Brâncovenian rule, so that the Christian churchgoers would not only listen to, but also understand what was being chanted during the church services.

The chants of Filothei sin Agăi Jipei were circulating throughout the entire Romanian territory, as shown by the Byzantinologist Sebastian Barbu-Bucur in his article, "*The action of Romanization of psaltic chants and its social-patriotic grounds. Filothei si Agăi Jipei and other authors from the 18th century*", published in: *The Romanian Orthodox Church* (XCVIII), no. 7-8, p. 849- 850, 1980.

Other great protopsaltes who have contributed to the Romanization of religious music were: Filothei's apprentice - Șerban, Constantin Ftori Psalt, Mihalache Eftimivici and Mihalache Moldoveanu.

Starting with Mihalache Moldoveanu, a new, much more complex stage of Romanization of the religious creation emerges. Unlike the incipient stage, in which the Romanian text was being adjusted to the traditional Greek melody, in this new stage, the melodic line is changed and processed, adapting it to the Romanian text. Hence, the inconsistencies between text and melody disappear, and the religious works become exhaustively autochthonous. For a most successful Romanization of the autochthonous

religious creation, Mihalache Moldoveanu restructures the *First tone*, by transmuting the melody from *Ke* (A 1) in *Pa* (D 1), the cadenzas being - in the **sticheraric takt** - imperfect on *Ga* (F 1) and *Pa* (D 1), perfect and final on *Pa* (D 1), and in the *heirmologic takt* - imperfect on *Di* (G 1), perfect and final on *Pa* (D 1).

The creation of this psalt is much superior to that of Filothei, thanks to its improved musical prosody and melodic construction. Its supple, singable music, full of elasticity, naturalness and beauty comes very close to the music of today. He wrote an *Anastasimatarion* and a series of chants included in various manuscripts, five of them being found in the Library of the Romanian Academy. The first two manuscripts are dated back to the last decades of the 18th century; the other three from the early 19th century.

Stylistically, the chants from the last manuscript make the shift from the first stage of Romanization to the second stage of the first phase of Romanization. In this period (the last quarter of the 18th century), **Monk Joseph** founded and led the *Romanian Musical School*, near Neamț Monastery, which was afterwards led by his apprentice, Hieromonk Visarion.

The chants of **Monk Joseph were kept in many monasteries** in Moldova. One of his most renowned chants, "*the Moldovan Anixandaria, translated by Monk Joseph*" was transcribed in the new system of psaltic music and it circulated all around Moldova, throughout the 19th century. In his work, Monk Joseph gave priority to the syllabic style and to the syntomon chants, which thus facilitated the evolution and perfecting of the chants' Romanization process and long anticipated the work of Hieromonk Macarie and Anton Pann, later on.

As a result of the 1814 edict by the Patriarch of Constantinople, the neo-Byzantine notation system was replaced with a new system, the so-called *psaltic music*. This reform was promoted by three great psalts of that time - **Archimandrite Chrysantos**, *Gregorios Lampadarios* and *Chourmouzios Chartophilax*. Thus, in the early 19th century, the modern religious music emerged, also called "Chrisantic" music, after the name of one of the reformers. The reform was enforced in all the Romanian Principalities. Muntenia and Moldova enforced this reform, thus remaining much closer to the Greek - Athonite traditions, as compared to Banat, Transylvania and Bessarabia, which were under the influence of Serbian and Russian religious practice. The enforcement of the new reform coincided with the development of the Romanization process of Byzantine chants. Hence, the three representatives of the reform enforcement: *Hieromonk Macarie*, *Anton Pann* and *Dimitrie Suceveanu* used the changes incurred in the semiography of religious music in order to complete the complex process of Romanization of the Byzantine chants.

Therefore, the 19th-century psaltic music was dominated by its three pillars, who laid a new foundation to the Romanian church music. These great Romanian scholars and psalts adhered to the political, social and cultural ideals of national liberation, choosing to create psaltic music in the Romanian language, a music that maintained the strict canons of Byzantine tradition, whilst conforming, also, to the specific of the Romanian language. One of the central personalities of the reform, who monitored its enforcement in the Romanian Principalities and taught the religious chants, according to the “*new notation system*” in one of the most important monastic centres in Moldova – the Neamț Monastery (considered the Romanian Pantocrator), was Metropolitan Veniamin Costache. His name is connected to the action of enforcing the Chrisantic reform on Moldova’s territory. Here is what Byzantinologist Vasile Vasile tells us in his book, “*The History of Byzantine Music and its Development in the Romanian Spirituality*” about this Metropolitan bishop:

“In the preface to the *Anastasimatarion* printed in Vienna, in 1823, Protopsaltis Macarie himself admitted that Metropolitan Dionisie of Walachia had been inspired by the example of the Moldovan Metropolitan bishop, Veniamin Costache, to adopt the new Psaltiki and to set up the *School of music* in Iași, in 1805, together with protopsaltes Peter and Grigorie Vizantie, former protopsaltes of the Patriarchal Church of Constantinople.”⁴

The two schools of Veniamin Costache and Dionisie Lupu and the School in Neamț, led by Joseph, Visarion, Dorothei and Macarie, were the ones to contribute to the Romanization of the church chants.

Veniamin Costache’s school anticipated the social status of Musicescu’s choir, by initiating the systematic study of Chrisantic Byzantine music that the school’s apprentices had to pass on.

In order to make sure that the institution in Iași cultivated a genuine Orthodox spirit, a few protopsaltes were brought along from Constantinople by the Metropolitan. These were Petre, Grigorie Vizantie and Iancu Malaxa. However, they were unable to achieve this goal in the Romanian language; this is why Hieromonk Macarie, a personality of great historic and cultural importance, remained the most representative musical authority of the time.

Metropolitan Veniamin Costache did not only enforce the Chrisantic reform and perfect the Romanization process; he shifted from the use of manuscripts to musical printed matter, in which the texts were accompanied by the Chrisantic musical semiography.

At his initiative, two musical printing houses were established, one at the Neamț Monastery, the other at the Metropolitan Cathedral in Iași. The basic books of the époque were printed in these printing houses: *The*

⁴ Vasile Vasile, *The History of Byzantine Music and its Development in the Romanian Spirituality*, vol. II, Bucharest, 1995

Idiomelar, the Lord's Lamentations, Theoretikon, Anastasimatarion of Dimitrie Suceveanu and the *Anthology and Book of Church Chants* by Nectarie Frimu. Metropolitan Veniamin Costache held the central role in applying the Chrisantic reform and in the Romanization of church chants. Here is what historian Constantin Erbiceanu writes about him in his book, "*The History of the Metropolitan Seat of Moldova and Suceava and of the Metropolitan Cathedral in Iași*".

"The endeavors of the Metropolitan bishop, who dominated the cultural and religious life of the first half of the last century shortly led to a thriving development of the church service, church hymnology and national chanting in Moldova. At some point, the Romanians would even surpass Constantinople, in terms of church pomp. All the men with good voices were standing around Metropolitan Veniamin: archdeacons, deacons, priests, psalts, psalt assistants; they all were selected and it was a pleasure to listen to them – you just couldn't take your ears away from the Metropolitan church service. Soon, the rest of the country would benefit from the generations of church apprentices trained in those schools, being provided with priests and psalm readers who were well trained in church service matters. Everything that we see today in terms of religious pomp, a grandiose church service or an interesting chanting in our Romanian church, especially in the upper part of the country, is the result of Metropolitan Veniamin's actions."⁵

The new system had a much more stable and lucid theoretical foundation, while using the same monody and neumatic musical notation.

What is the difference between the old and the new notation system? First of all, the semiography was simplified by eliminating: **five diastematic signs** (*oxeia, kouphisma, pelaston, dyo-apostrophoi syndesmoi, kratemohyporhoon*), **four rhythmic signs** (*apoderma, kratema, dyo-apostrophoi syndesmoi, kratemo-hzporrhoon*, the last two having diastematic functions, as well), numerous **chieronomic** signs and by keeping only five of the old ones (*varia, omalon, antikenoma, psifiston and eteron*); Secondly, they differ in the modal structure: the new notation system complicates the modal structure by introducing 20 new *ftorals* (modulatory signs) – eight diatonic ones, five chromatic, five enharmonic and two auxiliary ones; thirdly, by modifying the cadenza formulas; and, last but not least, the rhythmic structure in the new system became much more complex, which made psaltic music much clearer and with a higher precision. During solmization, the new notation system replaces the old mnemotechnical formulas: *neanes, name, amanes, neughie*, etc. with the octaviated syllable notation: *pa, vu, ga, di, ke, zo, ni, pa*, which, in linear notation, correspond with: *D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D*.

⁵ Constantin Erbiceanu, "*The History of the Metropolitan Seat of Moldova and Suceava and of the Metropolitan Cathedral in Iași*", Bucharest, 1888, page 345-346

The new notation system clearly established the difference between the *echoi*, systematized according to the three genres: *diatonic*, *chromatic* and *enharmonic*, based on the determination of variables - the intervals underlying the respective scales.

The size of the intervals was being modified upwards or downwards only by the “*diez*” and “*ifes*”. In the new notation system, the number of “*ftorals*” (modulatory signs that indicate the shift from a certain scale into another), grew to 18 (eight for the diatonic genre, five for the chromatic genre and five - for the enharmonic).

The appearance of *echoi* was marked graphically by two, overlapped elements. The element on top indicated the syllable of the solfeggio and the one on the bottom - the sign of the echos.

Once the new methods were introduced, there also appeared grammar books of the new notation system, either in manuscript or printed matter. The most important of such books was considered Anton Pann’s “*Theoretical and Practical Basis of Church Music or the Melodic Grammar*”.

One of the first manuscripts of the new notation system is “*Greek ms. #850. B.A.R. - Rules for Changing the Echoi*”, which dates back to March 1819. In this manuscript, there are described the rules for the structure of diatonic, chromatic and enharmonic *echoi*, depending on the *ftorals*.

Another manuscript is the one signed by Theodoros Gherasimou, “*Greek ms. #761 B.A.R.- Introduction to the Theory and Practice of Church Music*”, dating back to 1820, which is a more comprehensive theoretical codex.

In the following year, 1821, Chrysanthos’ first theoretical book is released in Paris: “*Introduction in the Theory and Practice of Church Music*”, compiled for the use of those who wanted to study the New Method. This book describes and explains the methods of the new notation system. Two years later, in 1823, Hieromonk Macarie prints in Vienna his “*Theoretikon*” – the first music manual printed in the Romanian language; *Anastasimatarion* and *Irmologion*.

Another important work by Chrysanthos of Madytos was “*Great Theory of Music*”, printed in Trieste in 1832. The work has 2 parts. In the first part, the author tackles music theory issues, referring to melos, in general, as well as to metrics, rhythm and harmony. The second part of the work is dedicated to the history of music, starting from the Ellada, the ancient Greece: Pythagoras, Plato Aristotle and ending with Byzantine musicians: Saint John of Damascus and Kosma Melodou.

An important event of this period is the setup of the first school of psalt music (1816), initiated by the Greek musician Petros Efesios, the professor of both Hieromonk Macarie and Anton Pann – two eminent representatives of the Romanian psalt music of the 19th century.

The existence of a significant music culture in the period of Romanization is proven by a series of books that contain the main theoretical elements of the new musical notation system and the basic repertoire of the Orthodox cult in the Romanian language. These represent a rich legacy, attractive through its high imaginative level, compositional refinement and exquisite musical thinking. The nationalization and Romanization of the church patrimony have fully contributed to the awakening of the Romanian culture at the brink of the 19th century.

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