

THE REFORMED CHURCH AND THE MUSIC

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SUMMARY. The reform has brought big changes in the Christian life and holiness. The reformers, wished to renew the entire liturgy. The passive role of the Christian believers at the mass is changed with their active participation, including in the canticle.

In the study we shall present on one side the contribution regarding the community singings of the three most important representatives of the reform: Luther, Calvin and Zwingli; on the other side the achievements of the Hungarian reformers in the grounding of the community canticle. In the third part we shall present the collections named graduals, and in particular the Old Gradual, which is the most important musical collection of the XVII. century. Its significance is special from the point of view the Hungarian ecclesiastic music, as well as from the point of view the music's history.

1. The teaching of the reformers regarding the ecclesiastic anthem

The reform that shook the entire Europe has brought big changes in the Christian life and holiness.

The reformers, rediscovering the pure teaching of the Gospel, they wished to renew the entire liturgy. Instead of the sacrifice presented in mass they put the accent on the Word, instead of the domination of the hieratic point of view the prophetic one has reached the power, the passive role of the Christian believers at the mass is changed with their active participation, including in the canticle. Amongst the first products of the Reform we find the translations of Scripture and the community singings of mother tongue.

Onwards we shall present on one side the contribution regarding the community singings of the three most important representatives of the reform: Luther, Calvin and Zwingli; on the other side the achievements of the Hungarian reformers in the grounding of the community canticle.

1.1. The community singing in the Lutheran reform

Martin Luther (1483–1546) was a prophetic personality, therefore in the first place a preacher of the Gospel. He discovered even in singing a proper way of intermediate preaching. The sum of his principles referring to singing and the canticle we find it in the preface of the books of singings

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edited by him starting in the 1524.² According to Luther the song and the music are gifts from God, which affects our spiritual state, they have a constitutive character and are very important in pedagogy, in education.³ In association with the general ecclesiastic education and that of character of the youth Luther considered, that youths can be powerfully bounded to the church through singing. He believed that from the liturgy, music and the principles about the music of the roman – catholic church has to be maintained all that does not contravene to the Holy Bible.

Behold the bareness of the proper singings, in neediness he committed himself to write the canticles. He accomplished the assumed assignment in such a way that his singings were satisfying the contemporary exigencies, these served as stimulant for collaborators and they are valid examples until now. Reading them it expound to us the face of a rich poetic personality, powerful; the formal variety and of content of the singings, their fidelity towards the Gospel, their theological content and the personal tone confers them a freshness long lasting in time.

He activated in the first place as an author of the texts, but he participated in an active way even to the recomposition of the melodies mostly borrowed from the medievalism. He has even some inherent compositions, however he didn't composed so many melodies as imputed by tradition. He already had gathered his collaborators in 1524 to discuss about the shape and the order of the liturgical singings. The members most known of his circle of poets were Johannes Agricola (1494–1566), Paul Speratus (1484–1551), Johann Poliander [Gramann] (1487–1541), Justus

² The first collection is the booklet from 1524 dated from Wittenberg but printed at Nurnberg by the title of *Etlich Cristlich lieder Lobgesang, van Psalm dem rainen wort Gottes Gemess*, containing 8 canticles(4 melodies). From the following editions with a more and more rich content of canticles we enumerate the most important ones: *Erfurter Enchiridion*, Erfurt 1523 or 1524 with 25 canticles(15 melodies) in the first edition, in the second one with an insertion of 8 more canticles. *Geystliche gesangk Buchleyn* (the book of singings of Johannes Walther), Wittenberg 1524, the first Evangelic Germanic book harmonized (in 5 voices). *Geystliche gesenge duerch Doktor Martini Luther*, Wittenberg 1525. *Klug's Gesangbuch* 1529. *Geystliche Lieder auff's nev gebessert*, Wittenberg 1533; in the next year an edition from Magdeburg in the local dialect, *Geystliche leder, uppert nye gebetert tho Wittemberg dorch D. Martin Luther*. The completed edition from 1535 of the book *Klug's Gesangbuch* it contains already 52 reforming canticles with the same quantity of melodies. The most comprehensive collection appeared at Leipzig in the edition of Valentin Babst with the new preface written by Luther for this book. The title of the book is *Geistliche Lieder mit einer newen vorrhede Dr. Mart. Luth*. This book of canticles is named after the editor *Babstches Gesangbuch*. It contains 128 canticles in two parts. Because this is the last book of singings that appeared under the personal control of Luther and with the newest preface written by him, regarding the reformer's own texts this book is considered a pattern, having in mind that Luther had the custom to review his canticles in the succeeding editions.

³ Csomasz Tóth, Kálmán, *A református gyülekezeti éneklés*, Református Egyetemes Konvent, Budapest, 1950, (Csomasz 1950), 32.

Jonas (1493–1555) and Pasul Eber (1511–1569). Amongst his musician specialists he most appreciated Johannes Walter (1496–1570), the organist from Torgau and the court conductor of Frederic the Wise. The noble melodies of the Lutheran reform have flourished especially from his activity and of some of his colleagues. They betook even laical melodies applied at the new texts. Luther, concerning the adaptations of the melodies said the followings: “Gentlemen, you comprehend in a laudable mode the music and at your musical notes, but in what concerns The Word of God, there I to have a saying.”⁴

It is a most appropriate method that with which Luther and Walther have transformed the medieval melodies for the community interpretation. Simplifying the mellisms of the melodies intensely colored, by the keeping of the sounds that represented the center of gravitation, have formed solid melodies, puritans and nevertheless very expressive, in which nothing was lost from the original beauties. These melodies are until today still fresh, expressive and have a value of pattern. They show their infusive effect beside the ecclesiastic cultivated modern music and the fact that it can be found in all the books of Evangelic singings in any language in the world, have its place between the most valuable pieces.

The tradition considers that among the most old singings of the Reform thirty seven are of Luther`s. In the case of thirty three there are no doubts. These singings are divided in two main groups: original and adaptation. The exact numbers of the original singings are 6, but it can be considered as original another seven singings inspired from the psalms. The rest of the singings were written partly after biblical texts, partly represents translations of the Latin medieval singings, adaptations of some singings translated from Latin before the Reform, or developments of some German community singings preceding the Reform. Even this latest can be considered partly original.

Quantitative it seems to be modest, but the reformatory activity of Martin Luther developed in the domain of the canticles is epochal and has a significance that surpasses the period of the Reform, showing an example for posterity. At its stimulation and after its example arises as if of the ground the most fertile and noble vegetation of the poetics of singings: the German evangelic community canticle, named later “chorale”. These poetic is characterized through the pure biblical content, genre of approach simple, objective, natural and tightly related to all days’ life. To the new texts will be attached the melodies that present, either the characteristics of the popularized Gregorian, either of the German melodies in full process of developing. The Germanity, which in the barbarian Europe of the early

⁴ Csomasz 1950, 85.

medievalism was the last in the assimilation of the ecclesiastic musical culture Latin medieval, it installed maybe the most deeper in the spirituality of the ecclesiastical mode and in the world of the Gregorian melodies and in the Reform of Luther it found an it expressed its own voice, therefore it succeeded to open more larger the gate of progress with the keeping and the development onwards to most traditions.

1.2. Zwingli and the music

Huldrych Zwingli (1484–1531) was the most educated among the reformers from the musical point of view. Although he wrote the text of a singing of three strophes and is assumed that still he wrote the melody for this one, in Zurich he dissolved the entire canticle.⁵ Later on, in the first place at the influence of Johannes Zwick (1496–1542), he gradually conceded, discarding of his firm position on the basis in which he replaced the community singings with the antiphonal responsorium between priest and community (later between the priest and deacons) containing biblical texts. He considered possible the community singing in the liturgy sacrament. In the churches in Zurich only seventy years later it was introduced the singing at Mass, according to a decision of the superior ecclesiastic authority.

1.3. Calvin and the Genevese Psalter

Jean Calvin (1509–1564) had very strict reforming principles. Even though he was not an adherent of the ecclesiastic music, however he remarked the important role of the singing.⁶ He comprised his teaching about music and the community singing in the analysis of some texts from the Scripture and at the preface of the Genevese Agenda, dated in 10 June 1543. To reflect his principles we reproduce the most important ideas of the preface in free translation.⁷ According to this exhibition Calvin considered that: music is the gift of God and if it is so, then the believers have to make use of it only to His glory. To sing just for singing is a sinful and harmful occupation, because every joy which wants to remove from the celebrating of God is vanity and abuse of God's gift.

It is not permitted to introduce any kind of instrumental music in the mass because the preaching of the Bibel is more important than anything else. The music would not ennoble our divine service but it would distract our attention of the word of God. Its introduction would create a precedent to renew other dispositions of the old law. However: we don't have a

⁵ Heussi, Karl, *Kompendium der Kirchengeschichte*, Tübingen 1991, cap. 77/i.

⁶ Doumergue, Emile, *Művészet és érzelem Kálvinnál és a kálvinizmusban*, in Zsoltár I/2, Budapest, 1994, 2.

⁷ Csomasz 1950, 32.

demand from God in this way. In the people's cult of under the law music has its own place, even the official order of musicians; theoretically we can't condemn not even the ecclesiastic singing, not even the ecclesiastic use of instruments, if they really serve the holiness of God and the edification of the Christians. This thing isn't though achievable in practice.

The canticle, as a way of praying is very recommendable. The prayer song in the mass is supported on the firm disposition of the Holy Bible together with the preaching of the Gospel and the Enigmas. The canticle is an affirmation given in the man's mouth by God itself, an advice to praise the lord, memento against the sin, healing in temptations and misfortunes, prevent medicine against the sin and the unfaithful, helpful way of holiness.

The canticle gives warmth in the divine community service. It doesn't have an effect only over our sentimental life, but it influences and it keeps us in discipline by the sense through its biblical content and by the power which create community. Together with the other elements of the divine service it serves the community edification. It leads us towards an active position common and unitary. In God's direction it is a response – being prayer – and towards the people is guiding and teaching.

The canticle is always born from the union of the two elements: text and melody. These are different in nature and pretension, but they unite in singing. The text can be inspired only from God's World. For this the most appropriate are the psalms, because in them not only God is speaking, but even the man can recognize himself. The melody has to have a disciplinary form, because these kind of forms are the most appropriate to vibrate the sacred subject with the gravity and dignity desired, and to be interpreted in the community.

About the singings way Calvin writes: to be guided by heart and mouth or better by heart and judgment. The heart has to be before the tongue, because saying just words we would be entirely hypocrites.

The singing represented by all the believers has to vibrate in the people`s tongue. The singing must not be taught only to adults but even to the children, above all it is the children's and the pupils duty to teach the adult people to sing.

The fact that in Geneva Calvin has introduced only the psalms, was explained by the reformer through the fact that the renewed Church does not yet have written canticles of praising God and canticles of the synod appropriate with the text inspired from the Word. It demanded a great deal of time the composition of the most necessary psalms in an accessible form, being able to be sang even in the motherly language. It has passed 23 years from the appearance of the first experimental book of canticles, from Strassburg (1539), containing 19 psalms and the full edition from

Geneva (1562). Furthermore even in the book from Strassburg were shown three singings beside the psalms (Simeon`s Singing, The ten commandments, The Creed). It is obvious, that Calvin didn`t want to limit the ecclesiastic canticle to just one biblical book, to the Psalms.

He personally didn`t have poetic talent. The entire book of psalms was born only due to the firmness and permanent stimulation of the reformer. In connection with the singing of the psalms he underlined in *Mémoire sur l'organisation de l'Église de Geneve* that: it is wishful to sing in Church, as it is exemplified by the affirmation of the old Church and of the apostle Paul which considers a good thing the singing appeared from the mouth concordance with the heart. The psalms can make us to rise our hearts towards God and they give birth in us of such holiness that we call to him for help and to praise with eulogizes the glory of its name.⁸

The booklet of psalms of Calvin, the forebear of the great Psalter from Geneva has appeared in 1539. From the 19 psalms that it contained, Calvin wrote 6, the rest belonging to Clement Marot (1496–1544). In 1543 Calvin withdrew his texts, giving the possibility of elaboration to the psalms to the more talented poet, which translated in totally 49 psalms. After his death, the work was continued by Théodore de Beze (1519–1605), that even though he had a more modest poetic talent, he did a meritorious work. The translation of the 150 psalms was made in many stages and was finished only in 1562. It was edited in Geneva, from where it comes the appellation The Genevese Psalter.

The melodies of the psalms have passed through many selections. Not even till today it couldn`t be established with certainty who were the composers. From the 125 melodies 81 of them have as author Louis Bourgeois. The opinions are different regarding the persons that have participated beside him at the preparation of the melodies. The analysts agree that the majority of the other melodies are tied to the name of the so called Maître Pierre, but the identity of this musician can`t be established without equivocation. But however it was raised, the melodies of the geneveze psalms are composing the most unity collection and the most valuable of the history of the Christian canticles, being able even in present to enlighten the believers.

These singings have become popular very quickly not only in Geneva, but even in France; thing that we can understand easily if we think that Marot was initially a court poet in Paris, most of his poems inspired from the psalms have been brought to fashion by princes and courtiers. Although the contemporary cult music and that afterwards was not influenced by them in the rhythm in which all happened with the Germanic

⁸ Csomasz 1950, 97.

Lutheran melodies of chorale, composers like Orlando di Lasso, Claudin le Jeune, J. P. Sweelinck, or even J. S. Bach himself have worked many of them in their works. In the second half of the XVI century and in the first half of the XVII century, in a period of 70 years, have appeared about 1530 choral works and approximately 200 on the instrument so used in that period, on lute.⁹ Even, Louis Bourgeois published his own works at four voices of the psalms.¹⁰

Between the up writers of the psalms Claude Goudimel (approximately 1505–1572) occupies a special place, which made this in three forms – starting from the difficult technique and passing towards easier solutions. First he composed the motets of psalms with complicated polyphony (in 1564), framing the melodies in a contrapuntal ambit with exchanged texture from strophe to strophe; the second time he published the melodies of psalms under a more concentrated and simpler way, but still polyphonic; finally, the third time he atoned homophonic (1565). At the melodies that were singing *ad notam* many more texts the versions have been adjusted with different technique. This third version has had an extraordinary success proven not only by the great number of the redactions, but also of his translations. Among the Hungarian for example, the harmonic Psalter of Maróthy György (Debrecen, 1743) and its editions until 1774 contain the harmonies of Goudimel.

Calvin developed the idea that children and adolescents have to transmit the singings towards the adults, thus besides the singing in society in places outside the church, the psalms on four voices have celebrated and purposes of coral instruction. Having in count that in Geneva the organ hasn't been used at the divine service, and the melodies, with all the beautifulness of the unison form, they would request an harmonic cadre and finally, because of the European civic culture of the age it was characterized through the knowledge of the musical notes and the high capacity of singing in anthem from the notes, it is easy to understand that the main mode of popularization of the Genovese melodies of psalms it became the interpretation of the harmonization of Goudimel.

The Genovese Psalter, this collection of canticles with value and an almost unique stile, could not irradiate these kinds of effects in the history of music, that would have to appear from the value of his melodies, on one side due to the fact that reformed church music has narrower liturgical possibility, on other side due to the fact that the ecclesiastic Germanic

⁹ Markus, Jenny, *A reformátusok hozzájárulása a XVI–XVII. Századi gyülekezeti énekhez*, in *Magyar egyházzene 1994–1995*, Budapest, 51.

¹⁰ About this subject see: Bódiss, Tamás, *A négyszólamú zsoltárkönyv legújabb megjelenése elé*, in *Zsoltár IV/2*, Budapest, 1997, 15.

evangelic life, with its exceptions towards the calvinian psalms, didn't open the door in front of the Huguenot melodies, because it had its own rich production of melodies. Analyst of the psalms, Sir Richard Terry aggregated as follows: The Genovese Psalter remained there where it has been left by Marot and by Beze, whilst the Lutheran books have enriched. [...] But even the melodies have flourished in the hands of more composers, until this prosperity acquired for itself at J. S. Bach, the pomp of the tropical forest. Contrary to these Genovese Psalms have reached the maximum even in the life of those that created them. Then came Bourgeois and Goudimel to refresh the powerful and majestic melodies with their harmonies that are until today so fresh the same as they were four hundred years ago. But this was the end, all have remained the same. They couldn't develop in the hands of the late musicians, as the Lutheran choral has developed.¹¹ In the practice of the community the psalms could not enroot, frequently are sang only 20 – 30 of them. According to Révész Imre, they are kept as some „museum exponents” instead of being sang.¹²

The resurrection of the neglected and damaged genevese psalms is due to the reformation of the world towards the singings of the ancestors. In many places, mostly in Holland, it can be observed encouraging signs of the renaissance of the psalms.

In the matter of these melodies it exists the possibility of some great modern masterpieces, as we are let to guess by the small and bigger adaptations of Kodály Zoltán.

2. The ideology of the Hungarian reformed church about music and the singing

2.1. The opinion of the Hungarian reformers

The literature of the XVI century is in essence a poem of canticles; in this age each poem was destined to singing, interpreted singing. Beside the general fashion of the age, this corresponded even to the ancient Hungarian tradition. It wasn't written poetry for recitation or reading.

The reformers, the priests, the Hungarian preachers that have discovered the role of singing, its contribution in the popularization of the teachings of the Reform, have promoted the poetic of canticles, the religious Hungarian lyric. The probation of singing in the mother tongue has enhanced the role of the written canticles in the Reform's spirit, has encouraged the integration of the communities in the ecclesiastic musical life. Due to the fact that the Genovese psalms have appeared only in 1607, the Hungarian preachers, following the example of the reformers, have

¹¹ Terry, Richard, *Calvin's First Psalter*, London, 1932

¹² Révész, Imre, *Mostani és leendő énekeskönyvünk*, in *Zsoltár*, II/1, Budapest, 1995, 3.

written themselves canticles. In some they worked on the basic idea or the entire row of ideas of one psalm, in others only the first line it refers to a biblical text. In the case of the canticles "inscribe" are included even entire biblical rows in the text. In the canticles it appears in uncounted times texts of prayers, creeds, confessions of the sins.

From the Hungarian reformers Dévai Bíró Mátyás (approximately 1500–1545) was in contact with Luther. Probably this relationship influenced in a positive way his opinion on music.¹³ Gálszécsi István (? – approximately has published in 1536 in Krakow a book of singings; in the preface of the volume the editor presents himself as a defender of the Hungarian singing. In the activity of Sztárai Mihály (approximately the singing has received an accentuate role. He obtained his musical knowledge at Padova. He accompanied his singing with the violin and he fructified his musical talent even in the organization of the community of the region Baranya. The cult of the psalms in the Hungarian Reform starts by his activity; they have been kept three paraphrases of psalms written by him; he composed even three stories in singing with a biblical subject and two about the events of the Church's history. Méliusz Juhász Péter (approximately has adopted the principles of Calvin concerning music. He accepted the singing on churches with an instrumental accompaniment. More than this he protects the liturgical singings of Gregorian origin. Beythe István (1532–1612) was keeping in touch with Méliusz, therefore it is supposed that he had a similar opinion about singing and music. Szegedi Kis István (1505–1572) was a reformer and a poet which was following the custom of Zwingli; literature keeps for him six singings. The preacher and the author of singings Batizi András (approximately is one of the first promoters of the Reform. From the ten singings composed by him two are kept in the book of singings of Hoffgreff. Dávid Ferenc (1510–1579) was the most special thinker and the most original of the Hungarian Reform, the spreader of the Unitarian religion; it is known a canticle written by him. The books of canticles have kept two written canticles by the reformed priest and the author of canticles Skaricza Máté (1544–1591). He translated as well psalms. Szkhárosi Horváth András (XVI century) was the most appreciable author of canticles of the Hungarian Reform. In the book of canticles of Bornemissza Péter (1582) were for him ten canticles. Kecskeméti Vég Mihály (XVI century) became known as a translator of the 55 Psalm. This translation is displayed through the similar works of the age; it redeems the words of the original text in plastic poetic images. Not by chance Kodály Zoltán has chosen this text for the work named. *Psalmus Hungaricus*. Nagybáncai (Nagybánkai)

¹³ Benkő, András, *Az egyházi ének története*, Erdélyi Református Egyházkerület Igazgatótanácsa, Kolozsvár, 1994, 22.

Mátyás (XVI century) according to some opinions he was a reformed preacher as well. He wrote religious singings, epic poetry with biblical subject or of Hungarian history. It has been kept only two of the canticles and two as well from its chronicles. Szegedi Gergely (1511–1570), the preacher, the author of canticles has published his book of canticles of great popularity in 1569 in Debrecen; in the volume he included ten translations of psalms and four of his own compositions.

Huszár Gál (?–1575) is one of the most important personalities of the Hungarian reform. The printed gradual, published in 1574 at Komjáti is related to his name. Although he studied in Wittenberg, he maintained a correspondence with Calvin. His book of canticles, appeared before in Debrecen (1560) was dedicated to the local bishop Méliusz Juhász Péter. In the written preface at the gradual printed in 1574 it displays the necessity of singing in community, in the motherly tongue of the believers, specifying the types of canticles: Psalms, glorifyings, synodic singings. He assures the readers, that at the drafting of the collection he took care that this can contain celebrations in the mother tongue, as well as prayers for the benefit of the parishes. He describes in detail the divine service of Christmas with communion, presenting in a short introduction the phases of the development of the liturgy. He offers in every point of the divine service the possibility that the liturgic function is taken by the community singing.

From the incursion of above it results, that the Hungarian reformers were conscious of the importance of singing, even though the direct declarations in this sense are very sporadic. In exchange, as a proof of their positive apprehension is the fact that they put on the disposition of the believers books of canticles with texts in the mother tongue, texts of which spiritual value, not less the poetic one, didn't vanished not even until today.

2.2. The opinion of the bishop Geleji Katona István regarding the ecclesiastic music

An important document in the presentation of the official apprehension of the reformed church about the canticle and the instrumental ecclesiastic music, in relation with some instruments and laical songs is itself the preface of the Old Gradual, formulated by the bishop Geleji Katona István, with dating from 1636.

Geleji expressed his viewings in the Calvinist austere spirit. In the preface we find almost fifty biblical relations. Other author to whom he makes references are: Aventinus (the third book), Augustinus's Confessions, Horatius (*De arte poetica*), Plinius (the tenth book), Ovidius (the fourth book, the first elegy), Platon and others.

We present in the followings his opinion in free translation with explications:

1. In the literature of specialty often is quoted his negative opinion regarding the organ. Geleji Katona István is generally enemy of the musical instruments, saying that the instrument is disturbing the understanding of the text. Starting from this point of view he tolerated the existing organs, but he didn't permit the installation of the ones: "[...] do the Christians really have permission to live in the divine services with the tools of the music? [...] If the Ecclesia of the New Testament is those seven hundred years in which the science and the esteem were more pure and more flourished, they could live without the sound of the organ and the twiddle of the violins, even more they could live even now [...]. It would be better that the flutes with big windbag and the aerophone where it still exist in the churches, to be thrown and given to the workshops of the black smiths. Those who maintain the old ones, have still an excuse, because they avoid provoking a war with their throwing in the community that can't let go of bad and old hobbit, but those who order some new ones, are hard to save, because they don't search but bodily delightfulness, even though only their years are ticketed."¹⁴ It is hided a contradiction in the formulation of opinion of Geleji: it can be formed an equivalent practice regarding the using of the instruments: in some churches the organ can be used in others not. Geleji's position didn't make it to remove definitely the organs of the church, there have been installed many more organs: in Cluj, Aiud, Tg-Mures; in colleges it has been introduced the studying of the organ from the second half of the XVIII century "pro cantu exactione".

Beside the organ he reminded also the violins and the flutes. In the preface of the Old Gradual we can also find the names of some instruments: *regala* (little organ, portable), *lyre*, *cembalo*, *horn*, *trumpet*, *caraba*, *bagpipe*, and with a general denomination, "all kinds of calliope". He disapproves even the using of the ones in church, but at weddings and at parties they can use them, as well as the chronicle songs. We know that in our churches tried by superstitions we can find here and there some tools of music, but these are not made by our people and after the desire of many wise people it should be thrown from the church [...] we are not some Temistocles so that we can't suffer them during the happiness in the castles of princes and at parties, only that this shouldn't drag us into delightfulness, beyond Christian joy". On the other hand he considers the adepts of the instrumental ecclesiastic music as people that cannot distinct the church from a tavern, being alike the vintner that sells a fetid wine full of water and vinegar and which is surrounded by musicians (violinists and flutes) so they can detract the attention of the costumer from his bad

¹⁴ The quotation originate from the Old Gradual copy wich can be founded in the library of the Theology from Cluj.

merchandise. Amongst the representatives of antique music – referring to the origin and the old function of the music – it mentions Orpheus, Linus, Amphion, Apollon, Pan and Iubal.

2. Concerning the ecclesiastic canticles the foundation of his conception is the understanding of the text, of the content. Proceeding from this prerequisite he condemns some manifestations and accepts, - better yet he praises – others. He disapproves the polyphonic genre (“figuristic”): “the singers sing only for themselves and not for the listeners.” He agrees that music and the polyphonic song as an independent art “is an mastership invention, beautiful and wise, being one of the seven cult arts, but I state that it is as indecent and not useful in church as it is the instrumental music and that of the organ”. Another argument of his: “[...] this doesn’t serves the spiritual edification either, but only the bodily pleasure, being in him not even a judgment besides the sounding [...], it is a squeaking without judgment [...], although the Christian singing has to have judgment and to be constructive for the Christians.” He considers however a correct thing the integration of the entire community, including women and children in the unisono singing, because he sees in these “the apparition of the triumphant church”. “ However I could say that it is a beautiful and useful thing to sing the praising in the mother tongue, with chosen words, beautiful and slowly, distinct and articulated, separating the words one from the other and pronouncing them clearly, because otherwise beside the prayerful pleasure we would have the fertile edification.” He underlines the origin, the kind, the use of this simple canticle: “[...] all of them sing from the little to the biggest at the same cadence [...], this being an ancient custom without argumentation, because in the Eastern Church starting right after the apostles and even until our days it is the habit that God has to be praised with canticles. [...] The benefits are many for him [...], because the minds of those who sing and of the listeners are gladden in the same manner in a miraculous way, the beautiful song meliorates the sadness or it even makes you to forget about your sadness, it attenuates the burden of your labor [...], and through the religious canticle the Holy Spirit it joins with you giving to your soul all its gifts.” In another place the influence of the canticle resembles with the power of caressing and tranquility of the nanny`s song.

3. Geleji Katona touches even a characteristic in general less accentuated – present even in the Calvinian teaching –the quality of the singing, the interpretation mode which has in count before everything else the content of the canticle`s text. “We cannot forget those who shout only with their mouth, and their thoughts go elsewhere [...]. We reprehend even those ones (glory to the religious young people!) that do not even open their mouth in the choir being ashamed to praise God, but they stay in front of the lectern as some mute idols [...], or if they indeed sing, only their mouth is vibrating, their heart catches mice elsewhere, their hearts don`t have the minimum idea about those yelled with their throat.”

4. It is especially current the warning of Geleji Katona István regarding the cantor's activity and the preparation of the cantors: We should add to the assiduity of the Italians and the billet of the Germans the Hungarian music. If note by ignorance then by the indolence of the cantors it results, that they do not teach the children and the pupils to read notes and they do not train them in the canticles. They only start to sing and the pupils sing after them, making a singing which does not have a slice of beauty and it cannot be pleasant to the Christians. On this ground we should abnegate the Gregorian liturgical melodies, living only with strophic singings, because beside the Hungarians not even other evangelic nations do not live in their language; or towards the cantors we should have a bigger care".

5. The musical writing and reading. The ideology before Geleji Katona and that after his time could distinguish the cantor teachers from those that teach music in colleges. The preface does not put under doubt their preparation; they rather condemn the non ambitious work because of the laziness. The cantor (from Alba Iulia or of the sovereign court) well prepared had a role significant in the writing of the musical notes in the Gradual. The fact itself that the Gradual has in the bigger part notes, it is assumed that it exists an certain degree of musical reading, else the volume would not have any use. Therefore we even know the fact that the level of the musical culture of the XVII century was in decline due also to the Turkish occupation and other circumstances, in the protestant colleges it began a rebirth only in the time of Szigeti Gyula István and Maróthi György.

Starting with the second half of the XVII century the teaching of the song in school was limited to the singing without rhythm and in slow tempo of the psalms. The Supreme Consistory from Cluj should have given until 25 September 1739 an order regarding the rising of the level of the community singing, because not only the Christians, but also the students did not know to sing correctly the melodies. The students have learned to sing from the cantors, in the lower classes with the help of the students' collaboration, in some colleges with the help "cantus praeses" or "musicus praeses". Geleji Katona does not pretend less just that the students could know to sing reading from the notes the melodies of each genre of ecclesiastic singing. It is a requirement which the recent literature accentuates more and more. "And our students, even if they cannot do more, but they should understand music in such as to find out from the notes and keys the melody of each psalm, prose, anthem and of other ceremony, in such way that their word can stay the same, without dragging the melody from here to there, as they usually do." Otherwise – as we have remembered in the other context – from the end of the XVII century in the colleges it was used the organ exactly to help the ecclesiastic singing.

In Geleji Katona István's views, confessed regarding the music, we can consider as exaggerated the abnegation of the using of instruments – especially the organ. This position was not accepted in an unanimous mode not even in his age with all the austerity (even he himself has referred to existent organs), and in the decades that followed his death, the using of organs was expanded, we do not even have to speak of the fact that in the universal history of the music it had already accomplished an important role and it had a rich literature in the XVII – XVIII century. It is enough to think of Bach and Handel's works.

As exaggerated as that was in Geleji Katona István's conception the abnegation of the polyphonic music with a referring to the possibility that the text sang that way cannot be deciphered. In the other protestant Churches (to whom Geleji refers) it exist a more favorable opinion about polyphony. The adaptations remained in the manuscript of Nagy Mihály in Cluj and Odorheiul Secuiesc (1753), and of Orbán Zsigmond in Odorheiul Secuiesc (1766), and of Jósza Ferenc in Cluj (1766) proved that harmony singing has conquered in the second half of the XVIII century even the colleges.

On the basis of all these the role of Geleji Katona István and the importance of the Old Gradual are doubtless results of the ecclesiastic life.

Continuing with the activity of adaptation of his predecessor, Geleji Katona has completed the manuscript of the Bethlen Gradual with new liturgical canticles (responsers, versicles, blessings, with a group of antiphon, with a canticle and with some hymn). This material constitutes the quarter of the main source and the half of the adaptation. It enhances the credit of the work that throughout the examination and selection of a colossal material, counting even the editing and the emendation has created one of the most important epochal documents with musical notes. He saved thus in translation and he integrated in the reformed liturgy multi centennial musical values – in the case of the ambrosia hymns (until the appearance of the Gradual) even millennial – for a longer or shorter period. He personally wrote the preface, which did not have the weight of just a personal opinion, but it represented the official position which influenced for a long time the Reformed Church's record from Transylvania towards the music. During the redaction and the motivation of his viewing has presented an entire row of dates for the characterization of the musical culture of his age (musical instruments, musical genre, musical study, the ecclesiastic canticle), and non the less: he transmitted to posterity the most important episodes of the Gradual's genesis.

In his plans of perspective – making use of experiences of the redaction of the Gradual – it figured the adaptation, the renewal of the book of canticles named the little Canticle. A pity that this plan of his wasn't realized: we remained poorer with a musical work from the XVII century.

Pity that the exigency towards the musical education level (the reading of the musical notes) it was forgotten during time. However it is worthy of attention his advice which we can appreciate as a unity realized in a critic and a creation which are fruits of the elders experience and the impetuosity of the youth: "Read them – write about his texts – at the end of the Gradual, and judge them alike, so until you do not write more beautiful and better, do not calumniate!"

The Old Gradual is a liturgical book of canticles in which the author *did not imitate the patterns from abroad, but he followed the main line of the Hungarian Gregorian*, exemplifying concomitant even the fact that a very significant part of this material was kept the Graduals; the Old Gradual itself is the most ample content of the singing and of the liturgical practice of the protestant church of Hungarian language in Gregorian stile. In the protestant practice it also represents the closure of the traditional Gregorian line. Its character and its wide relative spreading, thanks to the typing, explains the fact that the Graduals that followed it depend of it from the point of view of the content, it presents in exchange a decline regarding the quality of the writing. Its matter of melodies – as it results from those shown – is of Gregorian origin and character, undertaking this tradition with a varying in a little or bigger way. This melodious material has claimed the existence of a musical culture relative developed, for which formation in the rural schools were missing the conditions, it existing even in the urban schools in a reduced way; the most favorable conditions were offered by the colleagues, but not even these were not fully fructified.

The Old Gradual can be considered as a last try for the maintaining of the Latin hymns and of the liturgy characterized through the variety of the canticle. The attempt did not make it though. The Puritanism, enhancing rapidly, it discarded the liturgical type represented by him and together with this and its musical material. The official ecclesiastic conception has motivated in 1729 the removal of the hymns with the fact that the communities did not sing them anymore (they could not even sing them, if they did not study them at school), because of this the intonation of the melodies has become doubtful. A next point of the argumentation in the circular of the superintendent Zoványi was that, the embellished style of the canticles was similar with that of the catholic canticles.

Concomitantly the appearance in 1607 of the Psalms translated in Hungarian verses by Szenci Molnár Albert has made it easier for their spreading. The Puritanism favored these as the blessings with simple melody structures. At all of this it has contributed even the popularity of the canticles, their little volume and format and the possibility of their obtaining towards the massive Old Gradual which only the cantor could use.

Therefore the Old Gradual was losing step by step from its significance, in the XVIII – XIX centuries it was used only by some cantors from the towns, intoning in the first place the passions, as it is shown from examples from Huedin, Dej, Făgăraș, Cluj and Târgu Mureș.¹⁵

In Transylvania the first book of canticles with musical notes, after the Old Gradual, has appeared in 1744 in Cluj. We find still 37 hymns in it, the numbers of the praising canticles have risen at 169 and beside those 150 psalms it contains 90 paraphrases of psalms as well. In the books of canticle of much latter the singing material inherited by the Old Gradual keeps falling down.

The relation of the Old Gradual with the Hungarian popular music is very sporadic, until now we know just a few cases.

We watch the Old Gradual as a respectable value of the musical life from the XVII century, which “even if dogmatic or not, but musical would have opened the path to cultivation of the common tradition with the Catholic Church”.¹⁶ Still in 1912 wrote in a similar way the teacher from Cluj Seprődi János, one of the best experts of the material of hungarian protestant canticles, the editor of the book of canticles in 1907 appeared at Cluj: „Who ever sees in what way the protestant ecclesiastic musical life remained behind contrary with the catholic one, thinks with desolation at the time in which in the protestant church were heard the canticles of the Batthyány Gradual and of the Old Gradual”.¹⁷ It is indeed a great loss that the Reformed Church, forced by the historical circumstances, gave up at a very significant part of this material of canticles and melodies which represented it still does even now the common legacy of the Christian Churches. Through the gradual degradation of the qualification of the cantors and of the choir, the presence in the divine service of the liturgical singings has lost its prestige and value.¹⁸

In the material of the singings of the Old Gradual is about a multi centennial tradition, and in the case of the ambrosian hymns even for a milenium and a half. Starting from the middle of the XX century the musicology has studied even more deeper this treasury of melodies. Some analysts consider that the material of the graduals cannot be sang anymore in the Mass,¹⁹ however it is tried to reintegrate in a selective mode some pieces, canticles that are near us.

¹⁵ Hoppál, Péter, *A hiányzó láncszem: a bánffyhunyadi Passió*, in Magyar Egyházzene, 1997–1998, Budapest, 425–434; and Bárdos, Kornél, *Harcok a passió éneklése körül Magyarországon*, in Zsoltár, III/2–3, Budapest, 1996, 13.

¹⁶ Dobszay, László, *Az egyházzene egyetemessége*, in Zsoltár I/4, Budapest, 1994, 8–12.

¹⁷ Seprődi, János, *A Batthyány-kódex jelentősége*, in EME Emlékkönyv, szerk. Erdélyi Pál, Kolozsvár, 1913, 132–140.

¹⁸ H. Hubert, Gabriella, *Lelki éneklésről régi magyarok*, in Magyar Egyházzene, Budapest, 1999–2000, 346–347, 351.

¹⁹ Czeglédy, Sándor, *Megifjodó öreg graduálok*, in Confessio, Budapest, 1978, 77.

3. The Gradual

3.1. The most important graduals

The liturgical gregorian singings translated in the hungarian language and prepared especially for the protestant church were comprehended in collections named gradual. The expression gradual used in the hungarian tongue does not coincide with the term *graduale*, which expressed in the medievalism a liturgical genre or a type of liturgical book. According to Csomasz Tóth Kálmán, the graduals are books of liturgical singings of the early Protestantism, with Gregorian melodies and with Hungarian texts.²⁰ They were edited in the first place for the use of the priests and of cantors and not for the community. The most graduals were kept in reformed territories, but are also known evangelic – Lutheran and Unitarian graduals.

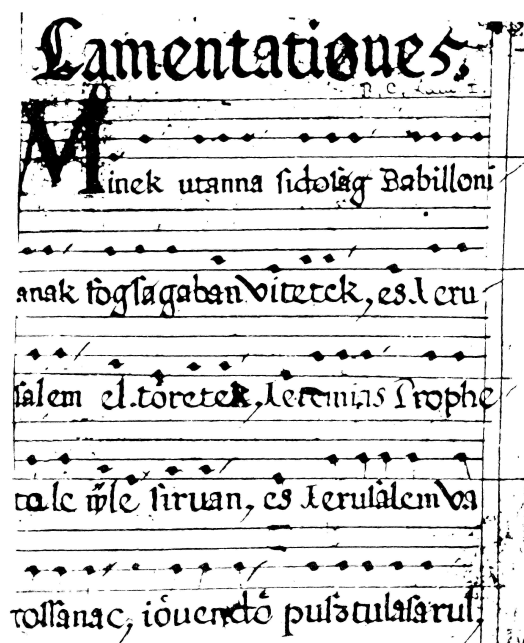


Fig. 1

The first graduals have appeared in a manuscript. The most older ones are the Batthyány Gradual and that of Óvár. Both were edited in the second half of the XVI century. It belongs to this century another fragment of gradual from Miskolc,²¹ and from the next century there known the

²⁰ Brockhaus-Riemann, *Zenei lexikon*, Szerk Carl Dahlhaus és Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht, a magyar kiadás szerkesztője Boronkay Antal, Budapest, 1984, 62–63.

²¹ About this subject see: Dobszay, László, *A magyar graduál-irodalom első emléke*, in Magyar Könyvszemle, Budapest, 1982, 100.

graduals of Boroszló, Csát, Sárospatak, Spácza, Kálmánca, Nagydobsza, Csurgó, Kecskemét, Ajak, Komjátszeg, Ráday Gradual (Fig. 1), as well as an Unitarian gradual from 1697, a fragment of gradual from Transsylvania. We have to name even the gradual from Eperjes (Fig. 2.), which from the point of view of the musical material contained is a fond of reference of the analysis of the Hungarian protestant ecclesiastic music. It is a evangelic – Lutheran gradual, noted in the year 1635, subsequently completed until the year 1652. Among the books of liturgical canticles, this is the only one in which are noted even polyphonic parts: Goudimel's melodies for the genevese psalms, easy adaptations of some German canticles and some works from the North of the country. At the divine service in Eperjes it was used community singing, polyphonic adaptation and Gregorian in the Hungarian language.

Concentus 24
DE INCARNATIONE DOMI
NI NOSTRI JESU CHRĪ
Intritus.

get harmatosatok: On nan fe
nyúl: és az feleget czepegie
as igazat: nyilatkoztek meg: a föld és terem
te az idvösítót. És eget as jsten dicsőle
get hirdetik. És az ő kezei alkotmányat hir
delti az erőlség. Dicsőleg Atyanak és Jiu-
nak és szent Lélek jstennék. Miképpen kes

Fig. 2

Among the edited graduals we remember that of Kálmáncehi Sánta Márton. From this it does not exist any copies. Another edited gradual of canticles was of Huszár Gál (Fig. 3.), entitled *A keresztyén gyülekezetben való Isteni dicséreték és imádságok*, appeared in 1574 at Komjáti in the North of Hungary. The first part of the book is reminded amongst the volumes of 166

gradual type, not because of the title, but thanks to its content; the second part contains original reformed singings. This book of Huszár Gál is in fact the only Hungarian gradual from the XVI century. Furthermore it is a musical agenda. It determines the singings and the recitation of the texts of the night divine services, morning, of those before meal(with communion) separately for the priest, choir and community. The virtues of this agenda gifted with melodies are raised by the fact that it was foregone by only one publication: the liturgical order of the prima, edited in 1560 – 1561 in Debrecen in the second part of the book of canticles of Huszár Gál.

<p style="text-align: center;">REOVELI</p> <p>ben. Az mi Vrucne Iesus Christuf- nac alkala, Ki te veled el es Vral.z.c. <i>Benedicamus à Magne Deo</i> <i>Notatara.</i></p> <p>ÓRúlyúnc mi aldottac es va- laftoortac mennyorffagra: nam à Christus ð bent Attyát nekúnc meg engesfélé.</p> <p>Hálat adgyunc az Atyanac es fiunac mind öröcké: egyerenben fiér. Leleknee egy felleges Istēnec.</p> <p>~~~~~</p> <p>MAS HYMNVS, NVNC <i>sancti spiritus.</i></p> <p>~~~~~</p> <p>Immár mostá óbértelec, eg aruaal es fiuaal;</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">ENEKLESEC</p> <p>~~~~~</p> <p>es fiuaal: nagy vigan az mi fiuúnc ~~~~~</p> <p>be, méltoztaffal bé ballani. Teltuellelecel tegedet, hogy stintelen mi diczériúnc: Szeretet legyé mi bēnűnc, es mi fele bara- tinkban.</p> <p>Adgyad ezt kegyelmes Atya, es te Atyanac egy fia: az vigaßra- lo bent Lelecel, most es öröckön öröcké. Vgy legyen.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">ANTIPHONA.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Diczerez</p>
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Fig. 3

There have been edited protestant graduals even in the second half of the XVII century. The Gregorian of Hungarian language has discarded from the protestant practice probably in the latest decades of the XVII century, when because of the enhanced counter reform and of the ad – hoc court in Eperjes (1684), the protestant churches have lost much of their power, being in need – of course – to fight a little more to maintain themselves, rather than to develop the mass. The fate of the books of gradual type was sealed in this time. There instead proofs that some Gregorian genres, like the passion and the grievance of Jeremiah, were sang in some places even at the beginning of the XVIII century; furthermore, in the books of community canticles edited was kept until the end of the XVIII century a version of *Te Deum*²² and some antiphon transformed in canticles of introitus. The Puritanism that has rejected the liturgy of the medieval church per totally,

²² The song book from Kolozsvár 1744 has the *Te Deum laudamus* at nr.37, pages 40–43.

has proven to be more powerful and he put aside the using of the liturgical canticles in a definite way.²³ Only the editors of the books of canticles from the XX century have discovered again, how important these canticles are, including a part of them in the new books of canticles.

3.2. The Old Gradual

The image shows a page from a musical manuscript titled "A DIVTORIVM." It contains three sections of music with lyrics in Latin and Hungarian. Each section begins with a large, ornate initial letter. The first section starts with a large 'M' and the lyrics: "K A M Isten fies minket megh segitteni, ily nagyfzúkféginben, Christus Iesus-ért mi V rünk-ért és megh váltónk-ért." The second section starts with a large 'K' and the lyrics: "óniórúly raicunk V r Isten, és halgasd megh az mi imádfaglnkat." The third section starts with a large 'S' and the title "EQVNTVR HYMNI" followed by the Latin text: "juxta feriem & curlum feltorum totius anni, ac primum quidem de adventu Domini noltri, IESV CHRISTI." Below this is a large 'V' initial and the lyrics: "Y világoflagh jelenék, réghi tévelygés cfen. deffedék, Isten igiéjelenék, uyonna nekünk adatek." The music is written on a five-line staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat.

Fig. 4

It is considered one of the most important musical collection of the XVII century. Its significance is special from the point of view the ecclesiastic music, as well as from the point of view of the music`s history.

In the denomination of the Old Gradual (Fig. 4) through the adjective old it is understand: book of high volume, with a considerable height and width.²⁴ Many times it is mentioned as the Big Gradual, referring to the primary meaning of the adjective old.

²³ Bódiss, Tamás, *Graduáléneklés egykor és ma?* In Zsoltár IV/2, Budapest, 1997, 10.

²⁴ Ballagi, Mór, *A magyar nyelv teljes szótára*, Budapest, 1873.

The history of the genesis of the Old Gradual begins with Bethlen Gradual, composed between the years 1622 – 1628 and disappeared latter. The editing of the Bethlen Gradual was a common work of the two priests from the court, that succeeded in the bishop`s chair at Alba Iulia: Keserői Dajka János și Geleji Katona István.

Keserői Dajka (Dayka) János (approximately 1580–1633) was the priest at the court of Bethlen Gábor, then bishop of Transylvania from 1618. The musical knowledge achieved in the college he enriched during the studies that he made in the German Universities. Geleji Katona István incites him to adapt the canticles. His works turned in the first place over the hymns and of psalms. He corrected the text and the rhythm of the hymns on the basis of the Latin original. Because in the antecedent graduals there were not psalms, only just a few paraphrases, he adjusted the 150 psalms so that these can be sung more easier. The antiphons, proses, (sequences) the *Te Deum* and the litany remained unmodified.

Geleji Katona István (1589–1649) was also a priest of the court of the prince and provost of the community in Alba Iulia, then as a follower of Keserői Dajka János he became from 1633 the reformed bishop of Transylvania. He went in a journey for the first time at the age of 26, in the periods that he spent at Heidelberg he became aware of the level of the musical life from there. Beside the music and the ecclesiastic singing he practice acutely even with the Hungarian language, as testimony we have the preaching volume in Hungarian language and the manual of *Little Hungarian grammar* from 1645.

He continued with Keserői Dajka`s work in a qualification of editor of the Gradual he corrected the translation of many medieval Latin hymns regarding the number of syllables. He dreamt even in his young age to compose a gradual pattern, free of mistakes, from which it will be able to make many copies. In base of those approximately 40 graduals that the churches have sent from all over the country at the editors` request, he corrected the exemplar manuscript used at Alba Iulia, enriching its content.

The work has gained the admiration of the prince Bethlen Gábor which put a deacon with “good hands” to copy it. On the page 9 of the recommendation letter of the Gradual we find the name of the copier: Nagyenyedi Pálfi István²⁵ (1600–1660) was the deacon that wrote so beautiful and was remunerated for this work with a function at the Mănăștur Convent Cluj.²⁶

²⁵ He was one of the most famous writer form the first half of the XVII century because he had a fine hand.

²⁶ Szabó T, Attila, *Újabb adatok és pótlások kéziratok énekeskönyveink és verses kézirataink könyvészetéhez*, Erdélyi Tudományos Füzetek 132 sz, Kolozsvár, 1941, 54.

The copy was made on a Regal paper²⁷ with big old letters. At Bethlen Gábor's request the book was fasten with lids decorated with silver, embellished with the emblem of prince. Rákóczi György I seeing the book in the church decided to print it.

It is about a very big gradual, with a much bigger format then the other existent before. One of the reasons for which the printing was necessary was precisely the size. The volume was big and hard to open, to browse among. Printed in a smaller size it could have been used more easier. The manuscript proved to be incomplete, that is way Geleji has added one more passion, Sunday antiphones, responsors, verzicles, blessings.²⁸ But even so, almost finished, it could not serve but a parish; the printing has made possible the using of the gradual in many more churches.

The printing of the Old Gradual has begun at the end of the year 1632. The work was finished in July and August 1536. The recommendation letter of the Gradual describes the technique of the printing: the staves without the notes were engravings in wood and the text with plumb letters was placed below. With this collection it was made the first correction on which the cantor of the prince's church in Alba Iulia, Bánffyhungyadi András, has marked the place of the notes. In basis of these modifications there have been made new staves together with the notes and the empty staves were replaced with these ones. In the case of some copies the finger print has doubled: the entire collection had moved. The irregular placing of the notes shows that they were not in plumb but engraved together with the stave in wood of wild pear. The correction of the Gradual was made by the bishop Geleji, which has put an accent only on the errors from the text writting them on the Errata from the last page. The correction of the musical errors was assigned to the cantors.

The musical notation from the Old Gradual has a manuscript character, a misxt notation of gothic from the hungarian Metz. The manuscript character of the notes was maintained even after the printing, because the carver, not very smart in music, has made the notes after the manuscript of the cantor. The editors have used only a stave with 4 rows (except the passion written after the four Gospels, this being noted on 5 lines). At the begining of the stave we see a tenor key or alt (most of time is wrong).

As well as in the manuscript graduals, it appears even in the Old Gradual things written by the users. From the total of the plays only two thirds are noted with melody. At the notation of the melody the editor has applied most of the times the value of note *semibrevis*, near the keys we find the minimum value, and at some groups of sounds which are played on a single syllable, we find a form of a note, which is similar with *longa*. In the

²⁷ The name regal can be concerning to the measurement of the page, 70x50 cm; or to the paper quality: Papyrus regalis.

²⁸ See the Vorwords of the Old Gradual, 10.

case of the prolonged values was doubled a value or the other. The editor of the Old Gradual signalizes even the articulations of the melody through short vertical lines.²⁹

Typographically speaking it is a curiosity that in the Old Gradual we find initials and decorations of closing of the printing machine Telegdi. The paper of the Gradual was probably procured from abroad as it is shown by the signs of the firm. The prince has sent to the parishes the 200 copies – unfastened, because the workshop did not execute the other final works as well. The prince had endured himself the expenses of the printing; he wrote a dedication to the bigger parishes where he sent the copies.

The title page with a rich text of the Gradual it informs us over the content of the book, the authors and the editors, about the Gradual manuscript during the time of Bethlen, nominating even the two supporting princes Bethlen and Rákóczi. It does not show the name of the printer, only the place and the year of publishing. After the title page it follows the letters of recommendation of Rákóczi and Geleji, then it appears four numbering pages containing the board of materials. The recommendation letter of the prince is even a donation act. From the two hundred printed copies non of them was sold on money, all have been sent to the reformed parishes as gift.

In the board of the singings the plays are laid after genre, in the cadre of the genre in alphabetic order. The Gradual is divided in 3 parts: in the first part, between the pages 1 – 512 it is found the material of the divine services, grouped by the celebrations of the ecclesiastic calendar; in the second part with the numbering from the start, 1 – 215, there are found the psalms in the translation of Károli Gáspár; in the third part, on the pages 216 – 268, there are the canticles.

In the gradual there are preponderant six genre antiphone, psalms, responsors, blessings, versicle and hymn, which per ensemble represents more than ninety parts from the material included in the gradual.

The preface of the Old Gradual is written by the bishop Geleji with dating from 25 January 1636. He develops his own ideas about the ecclesiastic canticle and the ecclesiastic instrumental music; related to some instruments and lyric songs and a few problems of the laic music. Per ensemble this preface is a very important document of the culture's history, not to talk about its played role in the history of the church. In his time – partially latter – was the exposure of the official conception of the Reformed Church about the raised problems, because the author, Geleji Katona István was a priest of the prince's court, respectively bishop of Transsylvania on the time he was writing the preface and when this appeared.

(Translated from Romanian by: Dinuța Nicu)

²⁹ Some kind of measure line.

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