

SOUND HYPOSTASES OF THE PRAYER OF THE HEART¹

MIRELA MERCEAN-ȚÂRC² 

SUMMARY. Song has always accompanied prayer in moments of worship of man throughout time. More precisely, the sound form of prayer has proven to be a necessity of expression, communication and communion with Divinity. The Prayer of the Heart or the Prayer of Jesus Christ is simple, non-canonical, being an exercise of asceticism for Christian believers. Its text is “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner!”, and its continued repetition responds to the call of the Apostle Paul who urges us in his Epistles: “Pray without ceasing!”. The practice of this prayer is part of the hesychast tradition, it is attested both in the writings of the Holy Fathers and in the practice of some Athonite monks, to this day. The testimonies of the ones who delve into this prayer converge towards the idea of ordering the mind and connecting it with the heart and with Divinity. By transcribing and analyzing the melodic types with which the Prayer of the Heart was clothed sonorously, the work aims to highlight their circulation in the environment of Christians from the Romanian, Russian, Ukrainian and Belarusian churches, as well as the spread, respectively the adaptation of these songs to the musical specificity of Western culture. From modal, monodic songs, processed in rudimentary polyphonies with ison, to tonal songs, harmonized in the manner of the choral, from solo to choral interpretation, or accompanied by the electronic ison, the forms of representation of these prayers are of great variety, underlining the transition from a collective, oral, anonymous creation to that of the cult musical creation represented in this exhibition by two masterpieces by the Romanian composer Paul Constantinescu.

Keywords: Prayer of the Heart, Jesus Christ, Christian song, sung prayer

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² Prof. Ph.D. Habil., Department of Music, Faculty of Arts, University of Oradea, Romania. Email: merceanmirela@yahoo.com



Introduction

Song has accompanied prayer in moments of worship of man throughout time. More precisely, the sound form of prayer has proven to be a necessity of expression, communication and communion with Divinity. The Prayer of the Heart or the Prayer of Jesus Christ is considered one of the most profound and mystical prayers, it is powerful and “useful in all circumstances of life” as Father Arsenie Boca and many other priests, spiritual fathers, philosophers teach us. It is assumed that the Apostle Paul referred to this prayer when he said, “Pray without ceasing!”

It is a simple, non-canonical prayer, a hesychast one, which through repetition orders the mind and connects it with the heart, for which reason it has also been called the Prayer of the Mind. For believers, this hesychast prayer is an important ascetic exercise. The form of the prayer has changed over time from “Lord, have mercy on me” to “Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner”. Other forms encountered: “Son and Word of God” or “have mercy on us” marking the transition from individual to collective prayer through singing.

Father Cleopas reminds us that this prayer should be said as often as possible but correlated with the respiratory rhythm, and Saint Gregory of Sinai urges us to say it quietly and without noise, lest the voice scatter and diminish the feeling and attention of the mind.

The hesychast tradition dating back to the early centuries of Christianity has been preserved to this day. Both through the writings of the Holy Fathers and the practice of the Athonite hermits or monks. There are many testimonies of the hesychast practice of the prayer of the heart, *The Way of the Pilgrim*³ being a famous reference throughout the world of believers. In his book *A Night in the Desert of the Holy Mountain*⁴, Metropolitan Hierotheos describes the mystical experience of a hermit from Mount Athos who practices the Prayer of the Heart. Five stages of spiritual experience are described. The first represents the continuous, out loud recitation of the prayer, the second stage is the recitation in thought with all attention focused on the words, on the name of Jesus Christ, a concentration that gathers, orders the mind and sensitizes the soul.

The third stage is when the prayer reaches the “depths of the heart” while in the fourth stage the heart and mind unite, then the prayer “utters

³ Anonymous, *Pelerinul rus, Marturisirea plina de har despre cautarea si practica Rugaciunii inimii (The way of the Pilgrim. The Graceful Confession on the Search and Practice of the Prayer of the Heart)*, Editura Herald, 2020.

⁴ Ierotheos Vlachos, *Mitropolitul Nefaktosului, O noapte în pustia Sfântului Munte. Convorbire cu un pustic despre Rugăciunea lui Hristos (A night in the wilderness of the Holy Mountain. A conversation with a hermit about the Prayer of Christ)*, Editura Sophia, 2019.

itself" uninterruptedly. In the fifth stage, inside the soul, "a flame that burns gently and enlivens"⁵ is felt, a sign that the Holy Trinity has made its home in the heart.

The question that arises after studying these ascetic paths is: How exactly does sung prayer correlate with these professed practices? Why did the faithful feel the need to enter the "altar" of their mind and heart and to give the spoken prayer a sonorous, sung embodiment?

Qui cantat, bis orat - "He who sings, prays twice", says a Latin proverb. The word addresses the mind and the sound, the music addresses the heart directly, being a link between thought and experience.

*"The Holy Fathers speak of an opening of the mind towards the infinity of God, but it seems that it is in the heart that the mind realizes this opening (...) The infinity of God cannot be experienced without the love that God has for us. And this love of God for us calls for our love (...) it is what makes our heart an organ of love. But it is a heart that (...) knows that God enters into an intimate relationship with us through Christ. This is why the mind is the one that rests in the heart. In the heart it finds the infinity of God"*⁶.

And through prayer, the heart sings from the overflow of this love, seeking its path, a lively flow of sounds in the melody sung with humility, asking for mercy and compassion from the "Son and Word of God."

Objectives and methods

The paper aims to transcribe and analyze the melodic types of "The Prayer of the Heart" that circulate among Orthodox Christians in the Russian, Belarusian, Ukrainian, Romanian churches, but also those that are found in other churches. The research was carried out according to the online sources since this sung prayer is not part of the ecclesiastical repertoire, it is transmitted orally, it is an anonymous creation, it does not have a well-defined functionality, the melodies being sung in churches, monasteries or recorded in studios, both individually and by vocal groups on equal voices, mixed amateur or professional choirs, both in Slavic, Latin and English languages, currently proving an extensive practice in Christian churches of various denominations.

⁵ Idem, p 69.

⁶ Dumitru Stăniloae, *Rugăciunea lui Iisus - Experiența Duhului Sfânt (The Prayer of Jesus – The Experience of the Holy Spirit)*, translated into Romanian by Marilena Rusu, Sibiu, Editura Deisis, 1995, p. 54.

Melodic types of The Prayer of the Heart

The prayer of the heart sung by a group of nuns from the Dragomirna monastery⁷ presents a melodic type with an archaic modal structure in the Byzantine sixth sound (ἦχος)⁸.

E. g. 1



The three melodic lines, a-b-c, adopt an asymmetrical melodic pattern following the structure of the versification of 8 and 10 and 7 syllables respectively. We note that the prayer has four more syllables added to the initial verse, including “and the Word”. This emphasizes the quality of Jesus Christ as the Son and Word of God, “through whom all things were made” (*The Creed*).

The interpretation mode starts from the monodic variant to which an ostinato ison is added through repetition, then, as a third voice, a prolonged ison on the basic sound of the mode.

⁷ Dragomirna Monastery is a monastic complex of nuns in northern Moldova, Romania, attested since 1602. The patron saint of the monastery church is the Descent of the Holy Spirit.

⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YgE6rsfTh1M>, accessed in 10.04., 12.04., 14.04., 18. 04. 2023.

E. g. 2

Doa - mne I - su - se Hris - toa - se

Doa - mne I - su - se Hris - toa - se

Doa

8

Fi - ul și Cu - vân - tul lui Du-mne-zeu mi - lu - ieș - te - ne pe noi

Fi - ul și Cu - vân - tul lui Du-mne-zeu mi - lu - ieș - te - ne pe noi

The second melodic type⁹ belongs to a metrically framed Ukrainian song, in the meter of four. The pentatonic-hemitonic melody presents anacrusis and syncopated rhyme formulas as well as being in the key of F minor, with a varied harmonization at the repetitions. It is sung in unison then gradually two- and three-voice harmonies are introduced which are ultimately “colored” with an Aeolian F modal ethos.

E. g. 3

I - su-se I - su-se Sî - nu Bo-jîi po - mâ-lui po-mâ - lui nas

⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OEOTQ97Vqik>, accessed in 10.04., 12.04., 14.04., 18. 04. 2023.

The melodic form is a-b-a and the structure of the verses is hexasyllabic, with two 3+3 hemistiches, *I-su-se, I-su-se* (*Je-sus, Je-sus*), tetrasyllabic on the verses of *Sînu Bojîi*, and heptasyllabic divided into two hemistiches, 3+4 *Po-mâ-lui+Po-mâ-lui-nas*.

The two-voice harmonization emphasizes the singing variation on the second repetition by doubling the melody on the upper third.

E. g. 4

5 I - su-se I - su-se Sî - nu Bo-jîi po - mâ-lui po - mâ - lui nas I -

9 su - se I - su - se Sî - nu Bo - jîi po - mâ - lui po - mâ - lui nas I -

The third repetition in two voices, this time with an ostinato ison on C, brings back a pentatonic modal mood color with fluctuating E–Eb.

E. g. 5

13 su-se I - su-se Sî - nu Bo-jîi po - mâ-lui po - mâ - lui nas I -

The repetition in three voices brings the mixtures of thirds and the ison, configuring a modal structure of Aeolian F or natural minor F in the final cadence.

E. g. 6

su-se I - su-se Sî - nu Bo-jîi po - mâ-lui po - mâ - lui nas

The performance alternates between two-voice singing and three-voice singing, and the ending returns with the monodic version of the melody.

The third melodic type¹⁰ is a Russian Orthodox chant very widespread among Ukrainians and also among believers in Belarus. The melodic pattern has several variants of harmonization: with ison, with ostinato ison, in doublings of thirds or sixths. The melody is very simple tetrachordic (an Aeolian or Dorian tetrachord) in transposed voice 1, made up of two phrases A and Av whose morphological units are two different motifs: a + b and a + bv

The structure of the verses is 3+5 and 4+7.

E. g. 7

Go - - - spo di I - su - se Hri - ste

Si - ne Bo - - ji po - mi - lui - nea grej - na - co

A	Av
a + b	a + bv
3 + 5	4 + 7

In the four-voice harmonization, the mobile ison that descends to the subtone and the doubling of the melody in sixths are noticeable, voices being gradually added to the interpretation, through repetition.

E. g. 8

Go - - - spo di I - su - se Hri - ste

Go - - - spo di I - su - se Hri - ste

¹⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mfzXHDBSaIQ>, accessed in 10.04., 12.04., 14.04., 18.04. 2023.



The circulation of this melodic type in the Russian, Belarusian and Ukrainian cultural space is attested by several recordings that we found in the virtual space, representing as many variants as possible that preserve the vocal character and the type of singing with ison¹¹.

A variant interpreted antiphonally by the male choir of the Valaam monastery¹² in northern Russia with double ison and a more alert tempo in the heirmologic style, without the dubbing of thirds or sixths, reveals an authentic, traditional form of interpretation.

The same melody, sung solo in 4 voices by the members of the *Harpa Dei* band, in slow movement and with varied harmonization variants, expresses the atmosphere of recollection and the intimate character of prayer¹³.

The version of the women's choir of the Saint Elizabeth Monastery in Minsk, Belarus¹⁴, brings a more alert way of interpretation, in the manner of heirmologic singing. The harmonization has a symmetrical structure: starting from monody, singing with isons and back to monody by gradually giving up the isons.

Examples: the Valaam men's choir from northern Russia and the St. Elizabeth women's choir from Minsk.

¹¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2LOVHZkfpXQ> sung in 4 voices by a Ukrainian choir, Perkovoŋo Škola Spivi, accessed in 13.03 2025.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F1YQISm-Nn0> solo interpretation with accompaniment of guitar and voice.

¹² https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AHP4Z84a_WY, accessed in 10.04. 12.04. 14.04. 18. 04. 2023.

¹³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mFzXHDBSalQ> soloistic song Harpa Dei (Catholic ensemble) accessed in 13.02 2025.

¹⁴ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-uTTVE-J_e8&list=RD-uTTVE-J_e8&start_radio=1&rv=-uTTVE-J_e8&t=28, accessed in 10.04., 12.04., 14.04., 18. 04. 2023.

E. g. 9

Go - spo di I - su - se Hri - ste

Go - spo di I - su - se Hri - ste

Si - ne Bo - ji po - mi - lui - mia grej - na - co

Si - ne Bo - ji po - mi - lui - mia grej - na - co

Another variation is that of “The Orthodox Sisters” performed by a mixed choir in the church. It appears modified in the b phrase with the syllables melismatized differently and the ison made on three sounds D, C and A. The manner of interpretation is slow, with crowns in the b phrases. The vocal preparation is reminiscent of a professional choir.

E. g. 10

Go - spo di I - su - se Hri - ste

Go - spo di I - su - se Hri - ste

Si - ne Bo - ji po - mi - lui - mia grej - nu

Si - ne Bo - ji po - mi - lui - mia grej - nu

In Romanian, this melodic type is found in the interpretation of the choir of the Monastery of Saint Lawrence in Chernigov, Ukraine¹⁵ and presents the following adaptation of the melody to the text of the prayer.

¹⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LVAXdXpm4RU>, The Saint Lawrence choir, Chernigov, Ukraine.

E. g. 11

Doa - - - mne I - su - se Hris - toa - se

Fi - ul lui Dum - ne - zeu Mi - lu - ieș - te - ne pe noi

The harmonization is achieved by ison on D and C by the male voices then with the addition of an ison on A and G to the treble voice creating double isons of fifths.

Interesting takeovers of this Russian/ Ukrainian song are presented in recordings that are made in the English-speaking cultural space, probably representing songs from Western Catholic, Protestant or Orthodox churches.

The English version of the choir of the Orthodox Church of Saint Theophanes from Colorado Springs¹⁶ presents in phrase **b** the same pattern found in the choir of the Orthodox Sisters, as well as the slow manner of interpretation, the recording also being from the church. The lyrics are *Lord Jesus Christ/ Son of God/ Have mercy on me/ A sinner*.

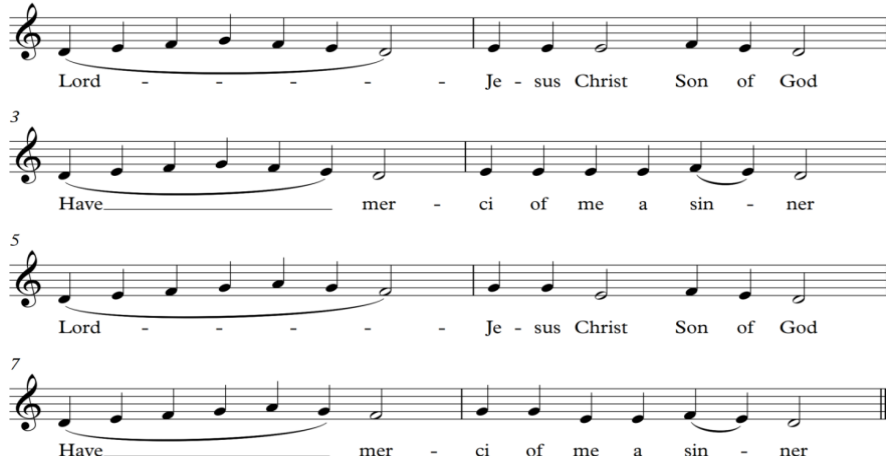
Recorded in a studio by soloist Paul Lenck¹⁷, the Russian melody, this time titled “The Lord’s Prayer”, receives electronic ison and dubbing. The melodic deviation produced with the performer’s attempt to include the melodic variant transposed to a third in the second line is interesting. The modal character is thus modified, the melody receiving a tonal-functional coloring, in which the singer probably feels “at home”. The English text is adapted to the melody quite unnaturally, with unjustified text accents on unaccented melodic beats and unaccented syllables on accented beats. *Have mer-cy on me*. The Latin and

¹⁶ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WxvqW_2rovA, accessed in 10.04., 12.04., 14.04., 18. 04. 2023.

¹⁷ In the presentation text, it is asserted that this the prayer is also found in Western Christianity in the catechism of Catholic Church, as well as in conjunction with the recent innovation of Anglican Prayer Beads. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=GzduFfQxuCY>, accessed in 10.04., 12.04., 14.04., 18. 04. 2023.

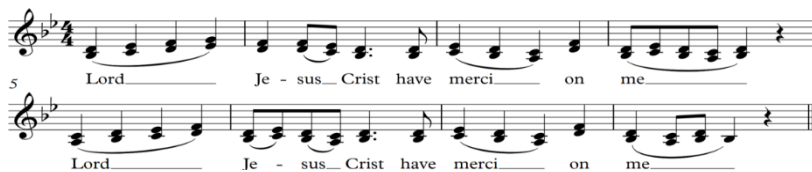
Russian versions that the author posts are better adapted as far as the accents of the text and the melody are concerned¹⁸.

E. g. 12



We also encountered a variant of this Russian melody in a Catholic women's choir¹⁹, the melody being intoned by two voices in bourdons in parallel thirds. The original song appears here with transformed contours, the ancient modal ethos, with the power to penetrate the world of hesychast prayer being replaced by a melody in the key of Bb major, in a measure of four fourths, with a divisional rhythm, having a cheerful, optimistic character, sung in a fast tempo. We note the absence in the last verse of the word a *sinner*. Thus, that part of the prayer that has power through the humility with which the believer repents of sins in order to be able to ask for mercy from God is lost.

E. g. 13



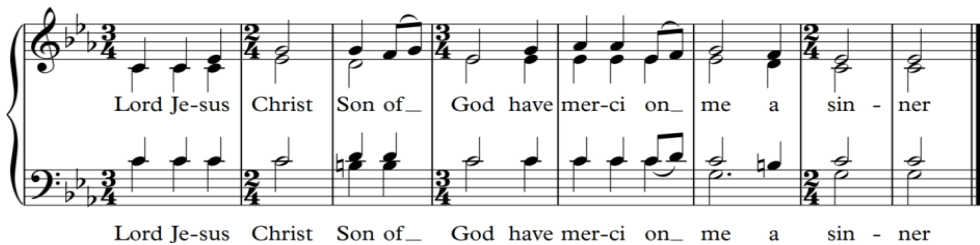
¹⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tJJvSbcSZRg>

Paul Lenck' Latin variant. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vyfQo6j0Bvg> the Russian variant.

¹⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hpu-3EDa-xw>, accessed in 10.04., 12.04., 14.04., 18. 04. 2023.

Another example that reflects the integration of this prayer into the repertoire of believers from cultural spaces other than Orthodox ones is a tonally functional anonymous²⁰ creation for four voices in the form of a harmonized chorale, probably performed by an amateur choir since we could not fit the song into a unified meter (2/4 alternates with the $\frac{3}{4}$ measure). The tonality of C minor, the harmonization with the chords of the dominant and the VI degree in the second verse *Have mercy on me*, the way of interpretation with a rich dynamic and strong choral voices, betray more a collective, dramatic, spectacular spirit, a pathetic prayer, rather than an intimate prayer of a humble heart.

E. g. 14



The following melodic type is found in churches in Romania. The melody is taken from the repertoire of the Oastea Domnului²¹ movement. The key is F major; the melody has two phrases of 4 and 3 measures respectively that are sung individually or collectively and has the same function as the other prayers dedicated to divine service.

E. g. 15



²⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZxiLd5nBTbY&t=512s>, accessed in 10.04., 12.04., 14.04., 18. 04. 2023.

²¹ The Lord's Army is a movement within the Romanian Orthodox Church, which came into being in 1923. After 1948 the movement was declared illegal by the communist regime in Romania. Its members were sentenced to hard years in prison.

The circulation of this “Prayer of the Heart” sung today in various religious cultural environments represents a picture of modern society that takes over much of the external form of a song, modifies it, without making the effort to preserve and integrate its ethos, in fact its essence (Spirit). It thus receives a form of a content that has lost its primary function, that of intimate communion with God.

From oral and anonymous practice to the cult musical creation, signed by a composer, the “Prayer of the Heart” becomes a source of inspiration and traverses naturally the path from a creation with a utilitarian function to one with an aesthetic function.

In Romanian musical creation there are two works inspired by the Prayer of the Heart. They were signed by the composer Paul Constantinescu and are two emblematic creations for the *Burning Bush*, a spiritual movement that came into being in 1946, after the war. “The burning bush, which burned and was not consumed” (Exodus 3) is the symbol of the Unceasing Prayer, therefore the Prayer of Jesus. This interpretation belongs to the Hieroschemamonk father Daniil Teodorescu, the initiator of the Burning Fire, who died in prison of Aiud²². This movement included clergy, students, monks, philosophers, teachers, mathematicians and scientists, university professors, writers, journalists, musicians, visual artists, who attended and gave conferences and lectures at the Antim Monastery in Bucharest, on the topic of man’s faith in a materialistic world, a world that loomed menacingly in the ideas of the new atheist communist regime that followed the second great world conflagration in Romania²³. Since 1948, the communist political Police began to monitor the activity of the *Burning Bush* and in 1958, arrests began, 16 of the movement’s members were imprisoned and sentenced to hard labor between 15 and 25 years, with sentences of “conspiracy against the regime”, “legionary conspiracy”, “conspiracy against the constitutional order”, absurd motivations, unproven in the trials held behind closed doors. The testimonies of the survivors of communist prisons are shocking: convicted without guilt, beaten, humiliated, starved, kept in the cold, tortured until extermination, they resisted through strong faith and prayer. “From cold, starvation and terror, the word of God flourished”²⁴.

²² <https://www.crestinortodox.ro/religie/rugul-aprins-temnita-69599.html>

The testimony of Father Sofian Boghiu in 1996, a member of the Burning Bush, imprisoned by the communist regime.

²³ https://www.procesulcomunismului.com/marturii/fonduri/mart45_64/gombos_miscarea_spirituala_rugul_aprins.htm drd. Stelian Gombos (PhD. Candidate).

²⁴ <https://www.cuvantul-ortodox.ro/recomandari/rugul-aprins-miscarea-antim/> TVR Report, the show Universe of Faith.

The legacy of this movement's activity has not been lost. As a result of philokalia and resistance through culture, conferences were held, hymns were composed ("The *Akathist* of the *Burning Bush*" – Sandu Tudor), paintings, frescoes and mosaics were created (Olga Greceanu), a poetic and religious literary creation of great depth flourished (V. Voiculescu), books were written about this movement that inspired subsequent generations²⁵.

Paul Constantinescu, inspired by the *Burning Bush* movement²⁶, wrote three works: “The Troparion of All Saints” and two creations composed in 1946 on the text of the Prayer of the Heart, two masterpieces that represent the integration of this prayer sung into the repertoire of religious music.

The first is conceived in the form of an infinite canon symbolizing uninterrupted prayer, the second, a fugato written for male choir, both created with aesthetic purposes and finality or, if they are performed in the Church, a functional finality, relevant to the fact of living. From this point of view, Fr. Stelian Ionașcu states that “The Prayer of the Heart as an individual practice thus becomes the Prayer of the Church, as a liturgical breath in public divine worship”²⁷.

E. q. 16

Glas I ♪_q Πα T

I II

π_q Doam - ne li - su - se Hris - toa - se ε Dum - ne - ze - u - le

III IV

Fi - ul mi - lu - ieş - te - ne pre noi π_q

Paul Constantinescu *Prayer of the Heart* (infinite canon) transcribed in psaltic notation by Hieromonk Petroniu Tănase²⁸ (the Roman letters indicate the entries of the voices in the canon)

²⁵ <https://ziarullumina.ro/actualitate-religioasa/documentar/pagini-din-arhiva-rugului-aprins-viata-ca-un-oratoriu-189748.html>

Author: Marius Vasileanu.

²⁶ Paul Constantinescu wrote the two Byzantine oratorios during the period of intense activity of the Burning Bush Movement, *The Passion and the Resurrection of the Lord*, the first version 1943 and the final version 1948, respectively *The Nativity of the Lord* - 1947, works for which he was awarded a significant sum of money by the Antim Monastery. Apud Vasile Vasilache, *De la Antim la Pocrov (From Antim to Pocrov)*, Editura Eikon, București, 2015, p. 39.

²⁷ Stelian Ionașcu, *Rugăciunea inimii de Paul Constantinescu (The Prayer of the Heart, by Paul Constantinescu)*, in CHIPUL, NUMELE ȘI SLAVA, *Simpozion Internațional de Știință, Teologie și Artă*, ISSTA 2022, Alba – Iulia 9-10 mai 2022, p.345

²⁸ *Ibidem* p. 343.

E. g. 17

I

Doam - ne Ii - su - se Hris - toa - - - se,

2

III

Dum - ne - ze - - u - - le Fi - - - ul

3

IV

mi - lu - ieş - te - ne pre noi

**Paul Constantinescu *Prayer of the Heart* (infinite canon)
transcribed in linear notation**

Since these works have been thoroughly treated by Fr. Stelian Ionaşcu²⁹, I will not go into analytical details but will only add a few structural and harmonic considerations to the second Prayer of the Heart.

The same theme of the „infinite canon” here is presented monodically in the bass voice. The fugue exposition with the response to the upper fourth is perfectly adapted to the modal language in which the fourth represents a (tonal modal) plagal relationship. The exposition is a model of polyphonic stratification in which it appears semanticized through the ascending entries from bass to soprano, the symbol of the increase in the intensity of experience in collective prayer. The theme presented in the A Aeolian mode (or transposed voice 1) and the response in the D Aeolian (or voice 1) are counterpointed successively, constituting on the harmonic vertical a modal-diatonic jewel, the fruit of the inspiration of a “craftsman” who deeply understood the spirit of Orthodox singing.

²⁹ Stelian Ionaşcu, in *op. cit.* and in the book *Paul Constantinescu şi muzica bizantină românească* (*Paul Constantinescu and the Romanian Byzantine Music*), Editura Institutului Biblic şi de misiune a Bisericii Ortodoxe, Bucureşti, 2005, p. 90-93.

T.

B.

D Aeolian

T.

B.

A.

T.

B.

Aeolian I IV V I_{6/4} VI IV I

A.

T.

B.

IV I I IV I IV I VI II

Paul Constantinescu: *Prayer of the Heart*, m. 8-21

Thus, from the polyphonic plot, we can distinguish plagal-type harmonic relationships, chords without thirds, relationships with subtone (gradual harmonic progression) or relationships of thirds³⁰ that give the polyphonic discourse archaic coloristic “iridescences” of a special charm.

E. g. 19

S.
A.
T.
B.

I V_{4/3} I₆ II_{6/5} V I_{4/3} II/V I_{4/3} IV 7

D Aeolian

S.
A.
T.
B.

II_{6/5} I_{4/3} II_{6/5} I_{6aj} V_{6/4} I V₆ I IV V

Paul Constantinescu: *Prayer of the Heart*, m. 22-28

³⁰ “What governs modal relationships are the interchordal relationships of undertone, plagal, authentic, and third.” *Apud* Hans-Peter Türk, *Aranjamente corale (Choral Arrangements)*, Acad. de Muzică Gh. Dima, Cluj Napoca, p. 3.

A scheme of the form would include the three states described by Fr. Stelian Ionașcu: the exposition or accumulation of experience, the culmination or incandescence zone of experience, and the hesychast silence in the final episode³¹.

Fig. 1

EXPOSITION – accumulation	DEVELOPMENT	climax	FINAL EPISODE
R	Tv		ison
T	Cp	Cp with cells in stretto	tv1 Head.t.v. ison
R		Cp	t.v
T	Cp	T	tv
A Aeolian; D Aeol; A D	A Aeolian	E Aeolian	tvi
m. 1 -----28	29----- 35----- 36-----42		43-----52

Paul Constantinescu: *Prayer of the Heart*, the scheme of form³²

E. g. 20

The musical score displays four staves for Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. The Soprano and Alto parts are in treble clef, while the Tenor and Bass parts are in bass clef. The notation includes various note values, rests, and dynamic markings, representing a choral setting of a prayer.

Paul Constantinescu: *Prayer of the Heart*, m. 47-52

³¹ Stelian Ionașcu, *Rugăciunea inimii de Paul Constantinescu* (*The Prayer of the Heart*, by Paul Constantinescu), op. cit., p. 344-349.

³² **Cp**= counterpoint with cells imitated in *stretto* formed from the head of the theme; **cap t.v.** varied thematic head in microimitations; **tv** varied thematic head.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cc6MpWgKcHo>. The Nicolae Lungu choral, conductor Stelian Ionașcu. Accessed in 10.04., 12.04., 14.04., 18. 04. 2023.

Conclusions

The description of the melodic hypostases of the Prayer of the Heart has revealed to us the existence of several types and forms of singing practiced by Christians of different denominations. Coming from the Eastern hesychast tradition, the Prayer of the Heart appears sung in the Romanian and Russian faith space with modal melodic designs in the VI and I voice, respectively, simple in structure and melodic design, revealing an archaic modal ethos. These melodic types present a harmonization (rudimentary polyphony) achieved spontaneously in the practice of collective singing, both through mixtures of thirds or sixths, after the model of the bourdon and through the ison specific to the Byzantine ethos. The Ukrainian melody as well as the three-voice choir in C minor (possibly sung in a Protestant church) are anonymous tonal-functional creations, possibly of more recent date. Of all the melodic types described, the Russian melody is the most widespread, being sung all over the world (we recently heard it sung by believers in Jerusalem for Easter, proof that it has already been adopted as a pilgrimage song). Once it leaves the Orthodox space, this melody takes on unnatural contours, unfit for tonality, with lyrics clumsily adapted to the English language, losing its ethos and the vibration of interiorized experience. The Prayer of the Heart by Paul Constantinescu is a model of cultured creation realized in the spiritual diatonic modality of church singing, of great depth of spiritual experience. We can thus reconstruct the evolution of this prayer from the intimate character, of individual singing haloed by the vibrations of the mind and heart, to the collective character of singing in the Church, with humility, piety or pathos. The last stage is represented by the musical creation, through which this prayer emerges from anonymity and conquers the concert hall, symbolically marking the transition from the inside to the outside, from hesychasm to community, communion and communication, from spiritual functionality to spectacular aesthetics (perhaps offering us a picture of the spirit of our current society).

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