

THE PROSOMIA OF THE EIGHT MODES ACCORDING TO DIMITRIE CUNȚANU

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SUMMARY. The aim of the present study is to analyse the prosomia recorded in the ecclesiastical musical tradition of Transylvanian, based on the collection of „Cântări bisericești” (Church Hymns), published by Dimitrie Cunțanu in 1890 in Vienna. The collection represents a significant attempt to standardize the Orthodox liturgical singing of the Metropolis of Transylvania, aligning itself with similar efforts previously undertaken in Wallachia and Moldova. By means of a historical-musicological research method, the present study highlights the context of the emergence of these melodic variants, the characteristics of the included prosomia, as well as their impact on contemporary musical practice. Prosomia, introduced as melodic interpretation models for hymns lacking their own musical line, constitute a point of intersection between the Byzantine tradition and the influences of Transylvanian folk music. The research reveals the presence of varied modal structures, including diatonic and chromatic modes, with a limited ambitus, a predominance of syllabic rhythm, and modal adaptations specific to the Transylvanian cultural-religious context. These features initially facilitated the integration of the prosomia into the musical repertoire but were later affected by the lack of continuity in the musical training of church singers and the preference for oral transmission of the hymns. In this context, the analysis of cadential formulas and modal particularities highlights an attempt to harmonize the Byzantine tradition with the musical and social realities of the Orthodox communities in Transylvania. The study highlights the fact that, despite their historical and pedagogical importance, Cunțanu’s prosomia have been gradually marginalized, being preserved only in a few parishes in southern Transylvania. The causes of this decline in visibility can be attributed to the lack of specialized singers, the formulaic structures, and melodic lines, distinct from the traditional system of the eight ecclesiastical modes. Additionally, the lack of interest in institutional frameworks to support the continuity of the tradition of prosomia and the preference for adapting hymn texts to the melodic structures of the resurrection troparia contributed

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to their diminishing role. The present study provides a detailed insight into the process of adapting the Byzantine musical tradition in Transylvanian space and the dynamics between orality, local cultural influences, and efforts to standardize prosomia. The conclusions provide a basis for future research on the mechanisms of adaptation and transformation of ecclesiastical singing and contribute to the understanding of the evolutionary dynamics of liturgical music in Transylvania, as well as the potential for revitalization of this musical heritage with identity and cultural value.

Keywords: prosomia, ecclesiastical music, Dimitrie Cunțanu, Transylvania, orality.

In 1890, when Dimitrie Cunțanu published *Cântări Bisericești* in Vienna, the religious music in the Metropolis of Transylvania was only modestly aligning itself with the editorial projects initiated in the early 19th century in Wallachia and Moldavia. With a small number of pages and minimal content in terms of the essential hymns for the various religious services, the collection set out in linear notation a version that was intended to be normative for the entire region. In addition to the specific chants for Vespers, the Divine Liturgy and the Mass, the collection also included a series of chants, called prosomia, which were introduced to serve as melodic models for the chants that had no melody of their own. Of all the prosomia included in Cunțanu's collection, only a few remain in use today, and even those are preserved in only a handful of areas in Ardeal. Unlike other regions of Romania, where prosomia have become widely accepted as melodic models, they failed to establish themselves as a standard in Ardeal.

The present study aims to highlight those prosomia recorded by Cunțanu that have survived over time and are still in use today, as well as to describe their modal framework.

The aim of this endeavour is multiple. Firstly, to describe the historical context, which was the basis for the fixing in linear notation of the prosomia in the Transylvanian version. Secondly, to provide a general analysis of the musical structures of the prosomia. This aspect is particularly important because the modal structures of the prosomia recorded by Cunțanu differ significantly from those he used to construct the eight ecclesiastical modes. Thirdly, the study examines the prosomia preserved in the oral tradition today. The continued presence of certain prosomia in a few parishes in southern Transylvania demonstrates the dynamic transformations that have occurred over several decades, highlighting the modal structures and cadential formulas that have withstood the test of time and remained part of the chanting practice. Last but not least, the study aims to reintegrate into the active repertoire of Transylvanian chanters singing those prosomia that exhibit the most widespread variability, ensuring their continued use in contemporary liturgical practice.

Given the nature of this research, which intersects hymnography and musicology, we employ a dual methodology: one specific to liturgical theology and another specific to musical theology. From a hymnographic perspective, following the structuralist approach of Robert F. Taft², we emphasize the role of prosomia as hymnographic models in liturgical chanting at the kliros.

As for the musical analysis of the theme, we will proceed to highlight the modal structures and the cadential system of the prosomia set by Dimitrie Cunțanu³, we will inventory the prosomia melodies collected by Professor Vasile Grăjdian in 2012 and we will make brief descriptions of their modal structure. The musical analysis model we propose is based on the analytical grids used by Victor Giuleanu⁴, Gheorghe Ciobanu⁵, Vasile Stanciu⁶ and Maria Alexandru⁷.

Terminological clarifications

The term *podobie* (prosomia) comes from the Slavonic (Подобѣва) *podobevea* - meaning pattern, norm. The lexeme *podobie* is synonymous with the Greek term (προσομοία) *prosomia* - similar, analogous. In both cases, the term is used to describe the troparion (troparion), stihira (sticheron), the hymn that is sung according to a specific melodic model⁸.

Within Byzantine religious poetry we cannot speak of a classical metric system. Whereas classical poetry was governed by the prose of metrical symmetry, where the metrical accent was dominant, Byzantine liturgical hymns followed a tonic rhythm, based on a stressed syllabic system.

² Taft, Robert. "The structural analysis of Liturgical Units: an essay in methodology", in: *Beyond East and West: Problems in Liturgical Understanding*, Washington, D.C. 1984, pp. 187-203.

³ A modal analysis of the church chants after Dimitrie Cunțanu was made in: Daniel Mocanu, "Stylistic features of church music after Dimitrie Cunțanu, a default typology", *Studia UBB Musica*, LXVIII, Special Issue 1, 2023, p. 225 – 260.

⁴ Giuleanu, Victor. *Melodica bizantină. Studiu theoretic și morfologic al stilului modern neo-bizantin*, (*Byzantine Melodica. Theoretical and morphological study of the modern neo-Byzantine style*), Editura Muzicală, București, 1981.

⁵ Ciobanu, Gheorghe. *Studii de etnomuzicologie și bizantinologie*, (*Studies in ethnomusicology and Byzantinology*) vol. I, Editura Muzicală a Uniunii Compozitorilor, București, 1974.

⁶ Stanciu, Vasile. *Muzica bisericească ortodoxă din Transilvania*, (Orthodox church music from Transylvania) Cluj-Napoca, Presa Universitară Clujeană, 1996.

⁷ Alexandru, Maria and Tsougras, Costas. "On the Methodology of Structural Analysis in Byzantine and Classical Western Music - A Comparison", in: *Symposium "The Current State of Byzantine Musical Studies after 75 Years of MMB"*, Copenhagen, 17th (June 2006), pp. 1-19.

⁸ Wellesz, Egon. *A history of Byzantine Music and Hymnography*, Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1998, p. 244; Petre Vintilescu, *Despre poezia imnografică din cărțile de ritual și cântarea bisericească*, (*On hymn poetry in ritual books and church chant*) Editura Partener, Galați, 2006, p. 113; W. Christ et M. Paraniakas, *Anthologia graeca carminum christianorum; adornaverunt*, 1871, p. LX. LXI, LXVIII.

In hymnographic poetry, vowel quantity - whether long or short - played no role. The tonic accent used in hymnography did not indicate the duration of syllables, their quantity, or timbre, but rather a rise in pitch, a melodic inflection in height. The stressed syllable was called oxytone (sharp), while unstressed syllables were referred to as grave. Tonic prosody did not consider vowel length but rather the special quality of pitch height and the degree of its sharpness⁹. The specificity of the Greek language played a crucial role in Byzantine prosody¹⁰.

In hymnographic poetry, the tonic accent followed strict and rigorous rules: it had to be positioned at the same interval in each stanza, matching exactly the number of syllables in the first stanza, which served as the model. This created a fixed rule - syllabic and accentual parity - ensuring that each stanza had the same number of syllables as the model stanza. Consequently, liturgical hymnography developed a syllabic system or syllabic meter, which ensured a tonic rhythm¹¹.

Byzantine hymnographers resorted to this writing technique because they could create a hymn that could not be altered by the intrusions of wrong teachings, without altering the meaning and the entire structure. Not only was the melody fixed, but also the initial letters of each verse and all syllables were counted and set in place. This technique was intended to ensure that, when quoting Scripture, all its elements remained in the divinely intended order, without a single syllable being displaced. If needed, every article of the teaching of the faith, every acclamation of the martyrs, can become a stanza petrified into a song, without any outsider being able to introduce any extraneous element¹².

If a hymnographer did not compose a new hirmos for the ode of a canon, they could use an older hirmos that had already gained popularity in liturgical practice. The subsequent troparia, centered on the theme of the canon, followed the metric and melodic model of the hirmos. The grammarian Theodosius of Alexandria describes this process: "To create a new poem, the hymnographer, after choosing a suitable hirmos for the subject, or composing one himself, then writes troparia that imitate the hirmos syllable by syllable and accent by accent, ensuring that the stressed syllables correspond to the accented beats in the melody".¹³

Thus, we can conclude that isosyllabia (syllabic equality) and homotonia (accentual alignment) are the two fundamental rules of Byzantine hymnography. These two principles alone were sufficient to give rhythm to religious poetry.

⁹ Bouvi, Edmond. *Poètes et mélodes : étude sur les origines du rythme tonique dans l'hymnographie de l'Église grecque*, Impr. Lafare frères, 1886, p. 97-98.

¹⁰ Bouvi, Edmond. *Poètes et mélodes*, p. 349.

¹¹ Pitra, J.B. *Hymnographie de l'Église grecque*, Roma, 1867, p. 11-12.

¹² Pitra, J.B. *Hymnographie de l'Église grecque*, p. 26.

¹³ Bouvi, Edmond. *Poètes et mélodes*, p. 355.

The principle of isosyllaby had already belonged to classical lyricism, being the fundamental principle, present throughout the centuries in choral poetry, characteristic of Dorian lyricism. The second principle, that of homotony, replaced classical prose based on the quantity of vowels. The transition from classical lyricism to the principles of Byzantine lyricism was gradual. "Prose became poetry, without having pretended so, and hymn composers became poets"¹⁴.

As the number of liturgical celebrations increased, hymn writers had to compose new hymns. These hymns needed to be set to simple, familiar rhythms that could be easily learned by congregations. Since they were used in worship and sung by both the kliros and the congregation, the variety of melodies had to remain limited. If too many melodies had been composed, it would have complicated the service, making it difficult to prepare a daily celebration with unique music. In such circumstances, hymnographers used hymns and rooted melodies as melodic models for new creations. This led to the emergence of three categories of hymnographic compositions: *idiomela*, *automela* and *prosomia*.

The ancient *meloidoi* (hymn composers) composed *hirmos*, *idiomela* and *automela* and the hymnographers focused on composing *psosomias* and *podobias*.

Idiomela and *automela* were composed as standalone hymns, each with its own melody. The key difference was that while *idiomela* were self-contained and not intended to be imitated, *automela* were specifically designed as models for *prosomia*. Instead, the *automela* serves as a model for other *troparia*. When composing a new *troparion*, the hymnographers started from the rhythms and melody of an older *troparion*, modelled it on an older *troparion* and imitated it in terms of isosyllaby and homotony.

Care was taken to maintain the same number of syllables and the same pattern of accents. This principle allowed new *troparia* to be easily sung to the melody of the *automelon*. The *troparia* that imitated an *automelon* were called *prosomia* (*podobii* in Romanian). In Orthodox liturgical books, the *troparia* have an indication at the front of the *troparia*, indicating the text with which the model *automela* begins, to indicate the melody to be sung.¹⁵

In the Greek musical tradition, for each ecclesiastical mode, there exist multiple *prosomia* serving as models for hymns found in liturgical books¹⁶. In the case of the hymns contained in the *Mineion*, *Triod* and *Pentecostarion*,

¹⁴ Bouvi, Edmond. *Poètes et mélodes*, p. 273.

¹⁵ Vintilescu, Petre. *Despre poezia imnografică* p. 113; W. Christ et M. Paranikas, *Anthologia graeca*, p. LX. LXI, LXVIII.

¹⁶ Here you can find a complete overview of the ornaments used in the Greek musical tradition: <https://www.imkorinthou.org/keimena/misc/Prosomia.htm>

before the troparia and sticheres, we find a number of indications referring to the voice in which the hymn is to be sung and the prosomia/ prosody which serves as a model. In the Greek tradition we find this metrical and syllabic concordance between the model prosomia and the written hymn.

On the other hand, in the liturgical languages of other Orthodox Churches, such as Romanian, Slavonic, Serbian, Bulgarian, Georgian, this principle of strict metric alignment was lost due to the nature of translations. Hymns were often translated more freely, without preserving the homotonia (accentual alignment) and isosyllabia (syllabic parity) of the original texts. As a result, prosomia could no longer be applied precisely, as their melodic structures no longer matched the translated texts. This loss of structural symmetry forced church singers to improvise the melodic line of prosomia, trying to remain as faithful as possible to the original cadences.

Prosomia in the Romanian Musical Tradition

From the 19th century onwards, we observe a pronounced interest on the part of psaltists and music teachers in the printing and distribution of books containing the prosomia of church chants¹⁷. This indicates that aligning with the Greek musical tradition was a clear objective among the pioneers of Romanian psaltic music. Generally speaking, analysing these collections of

¹⁷ *Irmologhiu sau Catavasier care cuprinde în sine toate irmoasele sau catavasile sărbătorilor împărătești de peste an, troparele, condacele și exapostilarile.* (The Irmologhion or Catavasier, which includes all the hirmos or catavasias of the royal feasts of the year, the troparion, Kontakion and exapostilarion) Cuprinde și podobiile tuturor glasurilor, Binecuvântările și Slujba morților și altele. Traducător, editor și tipograf: Anton Pann. București, 1846; *Albina muzicală. Coprinzînd în sine tipurile cele mai uzitate ale Prosomiilor (Podobiilor) celor opt glasuri, făcute a se cînta întocma ca în grecește, și cîntări sărbătoreale din Triod, Pentecostar, Octoih și Minee, aplicate la tipuri întocma ca în grecește.* (The Musical Bee. It contains in itself the most common types of the Prosomials (Podobials) of the eight-modes, made to be sung in the Greek form, and festive songs from the Triod, Pentecost, Octoih and Mineon, applied to the Greek form) De Arhiereul Ghenadie fost Episcop de Argeș. Cu bine-cuvîntare Înalt Prea Sfințitului Arhi-Episcop și Mitropolit al Ungro-Vlahei, Primat al României și Președinte al Sfințului Sinod D. D. Calinic Miclescu. București (Tip. Toma Teodorescu), 1875; *Podobiile, troparele Învierii, troparele și condacele praznicelor și sfinților mari.* (The prosomia, resurrection troparion, troparion and Kontakion of feasts and saints) Editor: I. Popescu Pasărea. București, 1904; *Podobiile, troparele Învierii și alte cîntări din Triod și Pentecostar.* Editor: I. Popescu Pasărea. București, 1921, 1925; *Podobiile celor 8 glasuri, (The prosomia of the eight modes)* după Anton Pann și cîntări din Triod și Pentecostar, precum și troparele și condacele sfinților și praznicelor. Editor: I. Popescu Pasărea. București, 1934; *Albina muzicală (podobiile celor opt glasuri și alte cîntări), de arhiereul Ghenadie Teposu.* București, 1985; *Cîntările Sfintei Liturghii (Hymns of the Holy Liturgy)* (în dublă notație). Editor: Pr. Nicu Moldoveanu. București, 1991.

songs, in contrast to the collections of psaltic music in the Greek tradition, we note the reduced number of prosomia that the authors tried to disseminate among Romanian singers. In fact, we have selected those podobes that have the highest recurrence in Byzantine hymnography and present the most familiar and performed melodic patterns. The analysis of translated and Romanianized prosomia is not the object of this study. The problem is quite complex and will be the subject of future research.

For the purposes of this study, we will focus only on the prosomia that Dimitrie Cunțanu chose to include in his book of church hymns.

The second section of Dimitrie Cunțanu's *Cântări bisericești* (Church Hymns) is dedicated to the ecclesiastical prosomia. Describing how these hymns were gathered and selected, Cunțanu states: "I was indebted to the church for an important group of songs until 1884. They were the "Podobiile" By 1884, I still owed the Church an important group of hymns: the prosomia of the eight modes, which had been so neglected that even in our seminary they were no longer taught, and thus no one knew them, except in part. However, I wished to secure for the Church the right to these hymns, once widely used and even prescribed for divine service in our ritual books. So, after inquiring far and wide about who might still know the prosomia as our elders once sang them, I was directed to the cantor of our church in Daneș, in the protopresbyterial district of Sighișoara, a certain Simion Florea, an elderly singer who, according to his own account, had served the Church, both as a teacher and cantor, since 1837. After I invited him in writing, offering to cover his travel expenses to and from Sibiu, provide his meals, and compensate him with a daily allowance, he accepted my invitation and came to sing the prosomia for me. Thus, from June 5 to June 14, 1884, I wrote down the prosomia exactly as the cantor Simion Florea sang them for me. In this way, with the help of the Almighty, after long and painstaking work, accompanied by significant personal sacrifices, I was able to complete my collection of church hymns with models for all the melodies prescribed in the ritual books of our Holy Church"¹⁸.

Who was Simeon Florea?

Simeon Florea (1818–1892) was born in the village of Daneș, where he spent his childhood and attended the local Orthodox confessional school. His education was directed toward a teaching career, following the professional

¹⁸ Popa, Pr. Valeriu. *Școala Ortodoxă Română de Cântăreți bisericești Dimitrie Cunțan din Sibiu, (Dimitrie Cunțan Romanian Orthodox School of Church Singers from Sibiu)*, Anuarul II, 1927, 1937-1947, Suceava, 1947p. 8-11.

formation model of the time. After completing his pedagogical training, he worked as a teacher in various Romanian confessional schools in the villages of Seleuş, Hoghilag, and Criş, near his hometown.

In addition to his teaching duties, he served as a church cantor in the Orthodox Parish of Daneş. According to his own testimony, he had direct collaboration with Dimitrie Cunţanu, a professor of church singing at the Andrei Şaguna Academy in Sibiu, highlighting his active involvement in the religious and cultural life of his era. Local accounts suggest that church singing was a lifelong passion for Simeon Florea, and he may have also had connections with Anton Pann¹⁹.

The prosomia collected by Cunţanu were later revised in the second edition of his collection by Professor Timotei Popovici, who removed certain hymns. Popovici observed that the relative standardization of Cunţanu's chant did not necessarily eliminate other oral variants of church singing that coexisted in Transylvania. Acknowledging this reality, in 1925, Timotei Popovici, together with Candid Popa and Aurel Popovici, sought to improve Cunţanu's book by introducing some alternative versions, likely drawn from oral tradition. They justified their project as follows: For the new edition to meet contemporary needs, it must undergo revision. This revision can be done in two ways: by upholding the melodies used in the archdiocese, but making the necessary corrections, or by applying the principle of unification of church chant. Thus, they recommended that the new edition be reprinted, subjecting the entire material to revision both in terms of melodies and the application of texts. Texts with melodies which in the course of time had proved practically useless because of their cumbersome structure should be adapted to melodies currently in use, as these are more suitable. The attempt of Timotei Popovici and his collaborators to update Cunţanu's collection was not well received at the time²⁰, which seems to have discouraged other attempts - which would not have served, among other things, the tendencies of uniformity (of "unification") pursued by the ecclesiastical authority, both regionally and, later, nationally, tendencies to which Timotei Popovici also refers in passing, in the lines of the *Preface to the 1925 edition*²¹.

¹⁹ Vichente, Dăngulea. "Simeon Florea, fost cântăreţ bisericesc la Biserica *Sfântul Nicolae* din Daneş", ("Simeon Florea, former church singer at St. Nicholas Church in Daneş") in: *Actualitatea Dăunăseană*, iunie 2012, anul 1, nr. 3, p. 5.

²⁰ As evidenced by the fact that the following editions of D. Cunţan's book, although published by T. Popovici (3rd edition in 1933 and 4th in 1944, also published in Sibiu), return to the initial version, that of the 1st edition, from 1890.

²¹ *Cântările bisericesti după melodiile celor opt glasuri al sf. biserici ortodoxe culese, puse pe note si aranjate de Dimitrie Cunţanu*, (Church chants after the melodies of the eight voices of the Holy Orthodox Church, collected, put on notes and arranged by Dimitrie Cunţanu) Ediția a II-a, Sibiu, 1925.

Catalogue of the prosomia from the collection of songs compiled by Dimitrie Cunțanu and Timotei Popovici.

Table 1

The Modes	Podobia 1st, 3rd, 4th edition after Cunțanu	2nd edition after Cunțanu, revised and added by Timotei Popovici
I	Ceea ce ești bucuria (You who are the joy) Prea lăudaților mucenici (Most praised martyrs) Mormântul Tău (Your Tomb)	Ceea ce ești bucuria Prea lăudaților mucenici Mormântul Tău
II	Casa Eufratului (House of Euphrates) Când de pe lemn (When from the wood)	Când de pe lemn - 4
III	De frumuseștea fecioriei tale (Of he beauty of your virginity) Fecioara astăzi (The Virgin today)	De frumuseștea fecioriei tale - 4
IV	Ca pe un viteaz (Like a mighty warrior) Dat-ai semn (You have given a sign) Spăimântat-s-a Iosif (Joseph was amazed) Arătatute-ai astăzi (Show yourself today) Cela ce ești chemat (That which you are called)	Dat-ai semn
V	Cuvioase părinte (Venerable Father) Bucură-te cămară (Rejoice, oh, bridal chamber)	Bucură-te cămară
VI	Toată nădejdea (All our hope) Îngereștile puteri (The Angelic Powers)	Toată nădejdea Învierea Ta, Cristoase
VIII	O, prea mărită minune (Oh, too great a wonder) Pe înțelepciunea (On wisdom) Ce vă vom numi (How we will name you)	O, prea mărită minune

Timotei Popovici's collection contains fewer prosomia than the 1890 version. This is due to the fact that Popovici together with the other editors decided to promote only those melodic variants that were still in use. The revision and promotion of only some of the prosomia drew the attention of

the decision-makers at the level of the Metropolitan Synod, who considered that the proposed approach was detrimental to the standardisation and preservation of the Transylvanian musical tradition. Opposition to the new edition also came from church singers who were already familiar with a certain melodic structure fixed in linear notation. Although the tradition of singing by notes was not yet well established among church singers, with its emphasis on orality, they resisted the changes made by the new edition of 1925. This led to a new edition of the 1890 edition without additions or revisions. In this sense, Cunțanu's first edition remained a monument of church chant, hardened in the structures he had established at the end of the 19th century.

Considering the dynamics of the evolution of church music in Transylvania, strongly influenced by the pressure of oral tradition, we can say that the prosomia set by Cunțanu remained, with small exceptions, melodic models hardened in time, without having any connection with the way they were to be played over time.

Modal analysis of the prosomia

From the outset we must state that it is necessary to make a series of observations regarding a possible classification of the prosomia, a classification of a provisional nature, but which has been outlined since the beginning of the analysis process, following the listening of the recordings made by Vasile Grajdian. Thus, it was quickly realised that some variants are very close, if not identical, to the version printed by Dimitrie Cunțanu, while others show a progressive accumulation of melodic-rhythmic and ornamental variations, reaching, in some cases, forms considerably different from the reference version represented by Cunțanu's edition. Many of them end up being sung on the structure of the resurrection troparion in the corresponding mode.

Concerning the comparative study of the recorded prosomia, we have encountered some problems related to the nature of orality. The framing of the oral version in a measurable system poses difficulties because of intonation, rhythm, which often falls into the *ad libitum* or *rubato* style, and ornamentation. Recognizing these transcription challenges, Professor Vasile Grăjdian proposed a methodological precaution: continually referencing the actual recordings. This (actual) recording is, after all, the most faithful frequency (and rhythmic, "temporal") transcription of sound reality, much more faithful than that provided by any of the "classical" notation systems²².

²² *Cântarea liturgică ortodoxă din sudul Transilvaniei: cântarea tradițională de strană în bisericile Arhiepiscopiei Sibiului (Orthodox Liturgical Chant in the South of Transylvania: traditional lectern chanting in the Sibiu Archdioceses)*, Vasile Grăjdian, Sorin Dobre, Corina Grecu, Iuliana Streza, Sibiu, Editura Universității "Lucian Blaga" din Sibiu, 2007, p. 133.

The nature of the differences between the version established by Cunțanu and the one performed by various church singers is due to several considerations. Firstly, there is the lack of musical literacy. The lack of minimal musical literacy led to rote learning of melodic patterns which they later applied to various hymn texts.

Musical memory played a fundamental role in preserving and transmitting prosomia. Frequently repeated hymns were retained more easily, while less frequently used ones were adapted or forgotten²³.

Music memory is suitable for songs that are frequently repeated in services²⁴. For new, complex and rarely performed hymns, the liturgical singer has essentially two main options. The first and most accessible option is to adapt the liturgical text (such as that of a troparion) to an already familiar melody, which is considered suitable from both a musical and an expressive perspective. In this context, the cantor may use the melody of the prosomia specified for that hymn or, in the absence of knowledge of that prosomia, may interpret the text using the troparion form of the indicated voice. In such cases, the interpretation may be adjusted to more faithfully reflect the character of the liturgical text. At the same time, the melody may be subtly altered to emphasise the solemnity of the hymn, while maintaining stylistic coherence. This practice of musical adaptation is frequently found among singers in Ardeal, reflecting a flexible and contextualised approach to hymn interpretation in the Orthodox liturgical tradition²⁵.

The second option for performing complex and rarely used hymns is to learn a system of musical notation and develop some solfege skills, even at a late stage or in a rudimentary form.

This synthesis between the oral tradition and the reading of the score contributes to a deeper and more flexible understanding of the musical text, allowing the performer to preserve the authentic character of the liturgical chant, but also to gradually integrate new musical elements. Thus, the process of musical learning does not involve a simple transition from orality to notation, but a complex and dynamic interaction that continues to

²³ Wellesz, Egon. *A History of Byzantine Music and Hymnography*, ed.II, Oxford, 1961, p. 325 ș.u.: "the construction of melody in Byzantine church musică was based on the combination and linking together of a number of melodic formulas characteristic of the way (the voice) in which the song was composed. The mode (...) is not just a scale, but the sum of all the formulas that constitute the quality of an Eh". This definition is in line with that given by Chrysanthos de Madythe in her *Mega Teorêtikon tis mousikês* Trieste, 1832, p.198; v. și *ibid.* (E.Wellesz, *op.cit.*), p. 340.

²⁴ Grăjdian, Vasile. *Cântarea din sudul Transilvaniei, (Songs from southern Transylvania)* p. 134.

²⁵ Mocanu, Daniel. "The tradition of "cunțanu" church music between the orality and the uniformization trends", in: *Studia UBB Musica*, LXIV, 2019, 1, pp. 291 – 314.

shape the interpretation of Orthodox hymnography in the contemporary context²⁶.

As for the prosomia found in Cunțanu's collection, we will only emphasise some essential aspects related to their modal and cadential structure, and a more in-depth examination of them will be the subject of future research. The study of these prosomia will allow a better understanding of the interpretative diversity existing in the Transylvanian tradition and will contribute to the consolidation of a broader perspective on the dynamics and evolution of church singing in this cultural space. In analysing each individual prosomia, we will consider the way in which the voice is structured, as well as the modal scale (and implicitly the gender), the functional modal gearing (specifying the place where the modal base and the modal dominant are located) and the cadence system.

Modal analysis of the prosomia

The prosomia are in the irmologic style²⁷, but some of them also present aspects of the peculiarities of the sticheraric style, which is characterised by slightly melismatic singing, with few vocalisations, with decent vocal prolongations that do not hinder the understanding of the text of the song. This style is played with a moderate movement and corresponds to the andante movement²⁸. Another important aspect to be noted with regard to the modal scales is the numbering of the steps within them: according to a long-established practice, the steps are numbered with Arabic numerals for those above the modal base and with Roman numerals for those below the modal base, similar to the way they are treated in ethnomusicological studies²⁹.

²⁶ Grăjdian, Vasile. *Cântarea din sudul Transilvaniei, (Songs from southern Transylvania)* p. 135.

²⁷ Is characterized by predominantly syllabic, unornamented singing, with few melismas and corresponds to the allegretto movement, with a lively, lively tempo, moving at a steady, steady speed. The irmologic style appears in two forms, the antiphon and the troparion.

²⁸ Styharic songs, in the unfolding of the melodic flow, develop, in a balanced way, some melismas. Melisms are the group of two to three or more sounds accompanying syllables. The syllables carrying melisma coincide with rhythmic (tonic) accents, because melisma emphasizes the importance of one syllable in the context of the others in the word. (Victor Giuleanu, *Melodica...*, p. 68; Mihaela Corduban, "Pasajele melismatice și rolul lor în muzica psaltică" ("Melismatic passages and their role in psaltic music"), in revista *Byzantion*, Academia de Arte George Enescu, vol.II, Iași, 1996, pp. 121-123).

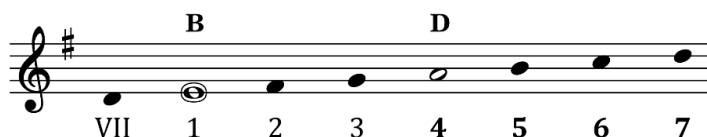
²⁹ In other words, the base will be given the number 1, the other sounds will be notated: with Arabic numerals on the right, with Roman numerals on the left of the modal base, whatever it will be (Gheorghe Ciobanu, "Muzica bisericească la români, ("Romanian church music") pp. 188-189, nota 147; Elena Chircev, *Muzica românească de tradiție bizantină, (Romanian music in the Byzantine tradition)* p. 20, nota 1 și p. 39, nota 1).

The modal scale of the prosomia in Mode 1

The prosomia in the first verse, “You who are the joy”; “Most Praised Martyrs” belong to the diatonic genre and use two musical scales.

The two prosomia use a modal scale³⁰ of minor mood, belonging to the Aeolic folk mode.

E. g. 1



The modal gearing is represented by the E4 sound which is the base of the prosomia and the A4 sound, 4th degree, dominant.

Final cadences (tonic): E4;

Perfect cadences: E4;

Imperfect cadences: A4.

“Most praised martyrs”

E. g. 2



The modal gearing is represented by the E4 sound, which is the base of the podoba and the E4 sound, the 4th degree, the dominant.

Final cadences (tonic): E4;

Perfect cadences E4;

Imperfect cadences: G4, B4.

³⁰ Modal sound systems are also functional systems, the sounds that make up a mode being differentiated and prioritized according to the role they play in the configuration of the mode. It should also be emphasized that the functions that sounds perform in modal structures are melodic in nature, being generated by their role in the modal melody, whereas in tonality, the functions of sounds are harmonic in nature, arising from the relationships of sounds on the harmonic plane (Giuleanu, Victor. *Tratat de teoria muzicii, (Treatise on music theory)* vol. 1, Editura Muzicală Grafoart, 2013, pp. 234-235).

The prosomia “Your Tomb” uses a natural musical scale of major state, belonging to the ionic mode. In the melodic unfolding, we find a modulatory process of passage from a major mode to a parallel mode or to the homonymous minor mode. The major-minor parallelism can be observed in the sections where the melody unfolds around the tonic (tonic) and the G4 sound is altered with the natural. The two modulatory passages change the melodic line and intervallic structure from the major mode of the ionic mode built on the E4 sound to the minor mode of the E4-based Aeolic mode.

E. g. 3



The modal framework is represented by the E4 sound, which is the base of the prosomia and the A4 sound, the 4th degree, the dominant.

Final cadences (tonic): E4;

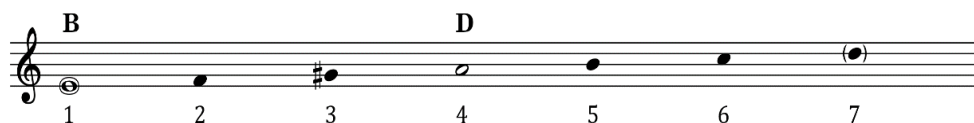
Perfect cadences on: E4;

Imperfect cadences: F4.

The modal scale of the prosomia in the 2nd mode

The prosomia “House of Euphrates” uses a chromatic musical scale with a base in E4, borrowed from the scale of the 6th modes, which, in the stycheraric version recorded by Dimitrie Cunțanu has a chromatic structure. The modal structure of the prosomia is similar to the version of the antiphon of the 2nd modes “I lift up my eyes to heaven” recorded by Dimitrie Cunțanu as a model of chant for the hymns written in this voice.

E. g. 4



The modal framework is represented by the E4 sound, which is the base of the prosomia and the A4 sound, the 4th degree, the dominant.

Final cadences (tonic): E4;

Perfect cadences on: E4;

Imperfect cadences: A4.

The prosomia “When From the Wood” uses a major-state musical scale, belonging to the ionic mode.

E. g. 5



The modal framework is represented by the F4 sound, which is the base of the prosomia and the A4 sound, the dominant 3rd degree.

Final cadences (tonic): F4;

Perfect cadences on: F4;

Imperfect cadences: A4.

The modal scale of the prosomia in the 3rd mode

The prosomia “Of the beauty of your virginity”, uses a scale with a main base on D4 and the dominant on A4, a secondary base on A4 and the dominant on D4, belonging to the major state ionic mode.

E. g. 6



Final cadences (tonic): D4;

Perfect cadences on: D4;

Imperfect cadences: A4.

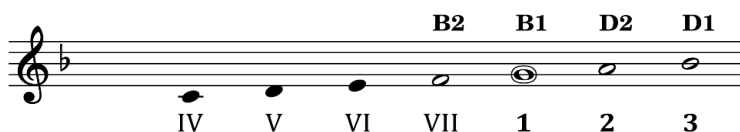
The prosomia “The Virgin Today”, uses a double modal framework characterised by minor-major parallelism. The main base is on E4 and the dominant on G4, and the secondary base is on the A4 sound and the dominant on D4. In the melodic unfolding of the prosomia, the structure that stands out is the minor-state structure, based on the E4 sound.

E. g. 7

Final cadences D4;
 Perfect cadences E4;
 Imperfect cadences: G4.

The modal scale of the prosomia in the 4th mode

Prosomia "Like a mighty warrior" uses a double modal structure, characterised by minor-major parallelism.

E. g. 8

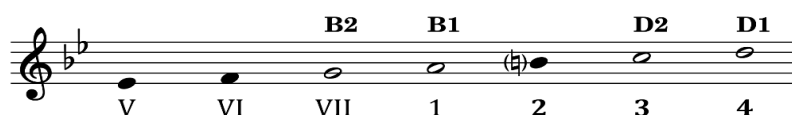
The modal structure is represented by the G4 sound which forms the main base of the prosomia and the B4 sound, the 3rd degree, the dominant. This structure is based on the natural Doric minor mode. The secondary base of the melody is built on the sound of F4, with the dominant on the sound of A4, and uses the scheme of the ionic mode. The weight of the melodic lines between the two minor-major structures is equal. At the end of the prosomia we find a modulatory passage, a Phrygian structure, with the second step lowered.

Final cadences (tonic): G4;
 Perfect cadences G4;
 Imperfect cadences: F4.

The prosomia "You have given a sign" uses a scale belonging to the aeolian minor mode. The modal framework is represented by the A4 sound which is the main base of the prosomia and the D4 sound, 4th degree, the dominant. The second base is built on the G4 sound, the dominant being the C4 sound, 3rd degree.

The characteristic of this structure is the minor second and the diminished fifth on the tonic. In the unfolding of the melodic line, the instability of the second step can be observed: B4 natural – B4 flat, which changes the structural character. It is the secondary base of the voice that is more emphasised.

E. g. 9



Final cadences (tonic): A4;
 Perfect cadences on: A4;
 Imperfect cadences: G4.

The prosomia “Joseph was amazed” uses a scale characterised by the existence of a double modal structure. The main base is on the sound of A4 and the dominant on the sound of C4 and uses a scale belonging to the major state ionic mode. The secondary base is on the B4 sound and the dominant on the G4 sound. The secondary structure of the lute belongs to the doric minor mode. To this structure is added a modulatory inflection of a phrigyc nature, the C4 sound being lowered.

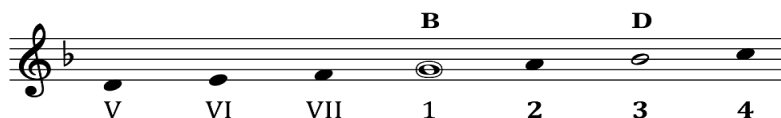
E. g. 10



Final cadences : A4;
 Perfect cadences: A4;
 Imperfect cadences: B4.

The prosomia “Show yourself today” uses a scale belonging to the Doric mode. The modal gear consists of the base on the G4 sound and the dominant on the B4 sound.

E. g. 11



Final cadences (tonic): G4;

Perfect cadences on: G4;

Imperfect cadences: B4.

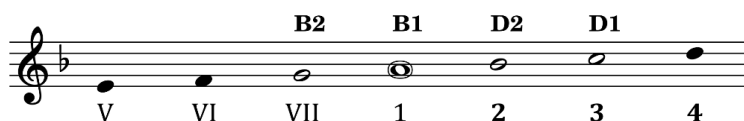
The prosomia “That which you are called” is made up of two superimposed modal microunits that act alternately in the unfolding of the melodic flow. So, we have a double modal framework.

The first and most common microunit is an Aeolian tetrachord, with the main base on the A4 sound (1st degree) and dominated by the C4 sound (3rd degree). In the ascending course, we observe the mobility of the 2nd degree (the B4 sound) through the ascending alteration of the B4 (B4 flat and B4 flat and B4 flat).

The second microunit is the G4 – B4 flat trichord, in which the secondary base is on the G4 sound (7th degree) and the dominant on the B4 flat sound (2nd degree).

This intervallic structure resembles the V scale, the irmologic, troparion form.

E. g. 12



Final cadences: A4;

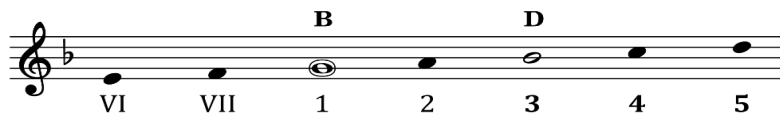
Perfect cadences A4;

Imperfect cadences: G4.

The modal scale of the prosomia in the 5th mode

The prosomia “Venerable Father” uses a minor Aeolian scale, based on the G4 sound and dominant on the 3rd degree, the B4 sound.

E. g. 13



Final cadences: G4;
 Perfect cadences G4;
 Imperfect cadences: F4, D4.

The prosomia "Enjoy the pantry" has the same modal structure as the podobia "That which you are called", which Dimitrie Cunțanu has placed in the fourth voice

The modal scale of the prosomia in the 6th mode

The prosomia "All Our Hope" uses a double modal framework with two modal structures, one based in E4 and the other a minor third based in G4. The main structure in the melodic unfolding is the one based in E4, stretching within the limits of an Aeolian pentachord, of minor state.

The second structure, based in G4, unfolds within the confines of a major tetrachord. In the melodic course one can observe the alternation of the two layered modes, the major-minor parallelism.

E. g. 14



Final cadences (tonic): E4;
 Perfect cadences: E4;
 Imperfect cadences: G4, A4.

The prosomia "The Angelic Powers" uses a musical scale made up of a chromatic tetrachord (with the augmented/ frigic second). The base of the prosomia is on the D4 sound and the dominant on the G4 sound.

E. g. 15



Final cadences (tonic): D4;
 Perfect cadences on: D4;
 Imperfect cadences: G4, C4.

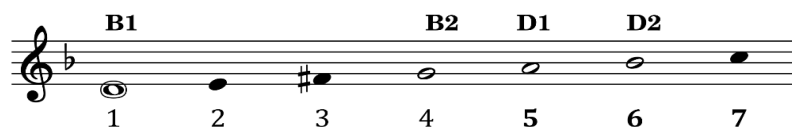
The modal scale of the prosomia in the 8th mode

The prosomia “Oh, too great a wonder” is made up of two superimposed modal microunits that act alternately in the unfolding of the melodic flow. Thus, we have a double modal structure.

The first and most common microunit consists of a major-state mixolydian tetrachord, with the main base on the D4 sound (1st degree) and the dominant on the A4 sound (4th degree).

The second microunit is made up of the G4 – B4 flat minor trichord, in which the secondary base is on the G4 sound (7th degree) and the dominant on the B4 flat sound (2nd degree).

E. g. 16



Final cadences (tonic): D4;
 Perfect cadences on: D4;
 Imperfect cadences: G4, A4.

The “On Wisdom” and “How we will name you” are distinguished by the presence of a single functional framework, consisting of a major-state, ionic pentachord. The base of the voice is on the sound of F4 and the dominant on the sound of C4.

E. g. 17



Final cadences: F4;
 Perfect cadences: F4;
 Imperfect cadences: A4, B4, C4.

Synthesis of the analysis of Dimitrie Cuntanu's prosomia

The prosomia noted by Dimitrie Cuntanu constitute a distinctive expression of the Orthodox liturgical musical tradition in Ardeal. The analysis of these prosomia reveals a series of specific musical features that differentiate them from other forms of church singing, but also a series of particularities that facilitate their use in church services by singers with minimal musical knowledge.

The modal systems of Dimitrie Cuntanu's prosomia are built on diatonic and chromatic modal bases close to those of the Transylvanian tradition of church chants and to those of Byzantine music. However, there is a Western tonal influence in general, and an influence of folk music in particular, through the use of modal structures reminiscent of Romanian folk modes.

The melodic-rhythmic structure of the prosomia is characterised by a clear melodicty, without an abundance of melisma, which facilitates intonation. The predominantly syllabic or lightly melismatic rhythm supports the understanding of the liturgical text, while at the same time enabling church singers to sing without major technical difficulties.

Another defining characteristic is the restricted ambitus of the songs, which rarely exceed the range of an octave. This deliberate limitation serves a twofold purpose: on the one hand, it ensures the accessibility of the chants for the church community, and on the other hand, it contributes to the preservation of a sober and balanced style, appropriate to the liturgical climate.

The musical phraseology in Cuntanu's prosomia presents a balanced structure, with clearly defined cadence points. These allow for a coherent articulation of the liturgical text, respecting the principle of unity between the music and the hymn text. The cadences are often of the authentic or plagal type, with the function of supporting the theological discourse.

Transylvanian folk music has left its mark on some melodic lines and certain intervallic structures in Cuntanu's prosomia. Particularly noteworthy is the specific way in which the intervals of thirds and fourths, characteristic of Romanian folklore from this region, are used. This aspect confers an autochthonous character to the songs and facilitates their recognition and assumption by the faithful.

A particular feature of Cuntanu's prosomia is the framing of some songs in other modal scales than those used for the setting of liturgical tone. This innovative approach suggests an intention to adapt the musical tradition to the musical and community realities of Ardeal.

The formulaic apparatus of the prosomia differs from that of the melodies of traditional ecclesiastical modes.

An intriguing aspect of Cuntanu's work is the absence of a specific prosomion for the 7th voice. This peculiarity raises questions about the criteria for the selection and structuring of the prosomia. Possible explanations could be related either to a difficulty in adapting the specificity of the 7th mode to the requirements of the Transylvanian community, or to an omission in the process of systematisation of the chants.

The prosomia that we find today in the oral tradition are few in number. From researching the archive of the priest Vasile Grăjdian, which contains thousands of recordings from 110 church singers from the area of the Metropolis of Transylvania, we found the following prosomia: "What Joy Thou Art" (1 variant), "Thy Sepulchre" (3 variants), "When on the Wood" (4 variants), "House of the Euphrates" (3 variants), "Of Beauty" (4 variants), "Thou Art Showing Thyself Today" (4 variants), "Like a valiant man" (4 variants), "As the mighty man" (4 variants), "O Joseph, O Joseph, O Joseph, O Joseph, O Joseph" (3 variants), "Rejoice in the pantry" (1 variant), "All hope" (1 variant), "O most blessed wonder" (2 variants)³¹.

Following the research of the prosomia recorded from church singers by Professor Vasile Grăjdian, we can outline some important aspects. First of all, the melodic and cadential structure of these songs shows significant changes compared to their original version, as recorded by Dimitrie Cuntanu. These changes can be explained by the strong influence of the oral tradition, which, in the absence of formal musical education and against a background of musical illiteracy, led to the adaptation of the melodies over time. At the same time, the lack of professional stranger singers has contributed to these variations, emphasising the natural process of transformation of melodic lines.

Another significant aspect is the small number of variants of the prosomia. This reality suggests that these songs were not consistently assimilated into the liturgical practice of singing in the kliros, remaining rather at the level of nineteenth-century musical testimonies. They did not become part of the musical practice, but rather maintained a marginal presence, without becoming an organic part of the church repertoire.

A relevant observation in this context is the closeness of the prosomia to the structure of the resurrection troparia, corresponding to the respective tones. This tendency could be interpreted as the result of a natural adaptation, specific to community musical practice, in which oral transmission favoured the simplification and standardisation of melodic lines according to the stronger models.

³¹ The recordings come from the project: 'Systematic research and valorization of the oral treasure of peal singing in the churches of the Archdiocese of Sibiu', carried out between 2002-2004.

However, in spite of these transformations, there are also some prosomia that have kept their melodic structure almost intact, remaining, by and large, faithful to the variants recorded by Dimitrie Cunțanu. Relevant examples are “Virgin today”, “Show yourself today” and “Beauty”. The persistence of these melodic lines could indicate a greater stability of these songs, either because of their popularity or because of their liturgical significance, which favoured their transmission in a form close to the original one.

The analysis of these poems reveals a complex musical landscape, in which the dynamics between oral tradition, the social context and the level of musical education of the singers have determined a specific evolution of the liturgical repertoire. The results of this research emphasise the importance of further studies in this area to better understand the mechanisms by which church music adapts and preserves itself over time, while reflecting the cultural and spiritual identity of the communities that practise it.

Why don't they sing the prosomia after Dimitrie Cuntanu today?

Today, the prosomia composed and notated by Dimitrie Cuntanu can rarely be heard in the Orthodox churches of Ardeal, this phenomenon being determined by a series of historical, cultural and musical factors, which have decisively influenced the reception and integration of these songs into musical practice. In the following, we will highlight the main causes which, in our opinion, explain the absence of the prosomia in the current Transylvanian musical repertoire.

One of the major factors is the way these chants have been approached in theological training institutions. In theological seminaries and Orthodox theological faculties, the chapter on the prosomia has often been neglected or treated superficially. There are several reasons for this: firstly, the absence of these songs from the repertoire of church singers, which has meant that interest in them has been low. Secondly, the melodic structure of Cunțanu's prosomia is considered by many singers to be cumbersome and difficult to assimilate, due to the melodic-cadential formulae which differ from those found in chanting at the kliros in Transylvania. These formulas, although valuable from a musicological point of view, failed to be integrated into the musical repertoire. Thirdly, the singers' disinterest in singing according to the prosomia can also be explained by the fact that learning these melodic patterns requires additional effort, in a context in which many church chanters are self-taught and lack formal musical education.

Another determining factor is the desire to standardise church singing at national level. With the intensification of efforts to unify the Romanian Orthodox musical repertoire, the adoption of a common musical style based on

the Byzantine tradition was favoured. In this context, Cuntanu's prosomia, although representing an important part of the musical identity of the Transylvanian region, were perceived as a regional peculiarity that was difficult to harmonise with the general unification trends. Thus, the specific character of Transylvanian prosomia influenced as much by the Byzantine tradition as by Western tonal and local folkloric elements, failed to prevail against the influence of classical psaltic music, which gradually spread throughout the country.

Also, the melodic structure of Cuntanu's prosomia was an obstacle to their popularisation. These songs are built on modal scales different from those used in the known and present melodic formulae unaccustomed to those accustomed to the musical style specific to the Transylvanian tradition. The adaptation of these prosomia to Western linear notation, although intended to facilitate learning, created additional difficulties for singers trained exclusively orally. The lack of stable sound cues and the differences in structure from traditional singing led, over time, to the abandonment of this repertoire.

Another essential aspect is the discontinuity of the oral transmission of the prosomia. The oral tradition was, for centuries, the main means of preserving and perpetuating church singing in Transylvania. However, in the case of Cuntanu's prosomia, this mechanism did not work efficiently. The lack of specialised singers, as well as the absence of an organised system of teaching and learning these melodic patterns, meant that the prosomia were gradually forgotten. With the passage of time, even those that had survived in the collective memory underwent significant changes, being adapted to the pattern of the troparia.

In church chant in Ardeal, there was a generalised tendency to adapt the hymn texts to the melodies of the Resurrection troparia, corresponding to each liturgical mode, instead of using the melodies of the indicated prosomia. This practice, justified by the desire to facilitate the singing by using already familiar models, contributed directly to the decrease in the frequency with which Cuntanu's prosomia were used. Over time, this practice became generalised, becoming the norm in many parishes in Ardeal, which accentuated the process of forgetting the prosomia.

In conclusion, the gradual disappearance of Dimitrie Cuntanu's prosomia from Transylvanian musical practice reflects a complex combination of cultural, educational and functional factors. Their neglect in theological training institutions, the desire to standardise the singing on a national level, the difficulties generated by the specific melodic structure and the discontinuity of oral transmission led, over time, to a progressive marginalisation of this repertoire. This transition towards standardised liturgical singing has resulted in the loss of a valuable musical heritage which reflects the identity and cultural

particularities of the musical tradition of Transylvania. An in-depth study of these prosomia and the rediscovery of their musical value could, in the future, contribute to a better understanding and appreciation of the diversity and richness of church singing in this region.

Conclusions

The study of the prosomia recorded by Dimitrie Cuntanu reflects a complex interaction between the Byzantine musical tradition, oral transmission, local folk influences, efforts of musical standardisation in Transylvania and the adoption of the Western linear notation system. This musicological approach represents a significant attempt to standardise liturgical chant in Ardeal, with the aim of establishing a unitary reference point for the musical interpretation of liturgical hymnography. However, the dynamics of orality and the tendencies to standardise exclusively the chants according to the system proposed by Cuntanu have gradually led to the marginalisation of these melodic models in current liturgical practice.

The analysis of the prosomia reveals a diversity of modal structures, including diatonic and chromatic modes, marked by obvious influences of Transylvanian folk music. The restricted ambitus, the predominance of syllabic rhythm and the adaptation of melodic formulae to the needs of less experienced church communities are essential features that initially facilitated the assimilation of prosomia in the Orthodox worship in Ardeal. However, the perpetuation of these models was compromised by the lack of continuity in the musical-liturgical training of new generations of church chanters, which led to a significant decrease in the frequency of the use of prosomia in liturgical practice.

A remarkable aspect of Dimitrie Cuntanu's collection is the absence of a prosomion dedicated to the 7th voice, which raises a series of questions related to the methodology used and the selection criteria applied. This musical lacuna gives rise to the hypothesis of a possible difficulty in adapting the particularities of this voice to the modal system promoted by the author or of a deliberate selection based on the liturgical relevance of the prosomia.

At the same time, the adaptations of the cadential formulas and the distinct formulaic apparatus highlight an attempt to harmonise the Byzantine tradition with the musical specificity of the Orthodox communities in Transylvania. These changes reflect a concern for contextualising liturgical chant according to local cultural and social realities, integrating melodic elements familiar to parish communities.

Cuntanu's prosomia constitute a reference material for Byzantine musicological and ethnomusicological research, providing insights into the interaction between local and ecclesiastical musical traditions. The study of these melodic patterns allows the identification of cultural influences and the processes of adaptation and transformation of Orthodox church music in Transylvania.

The prosomia recorded by Dimitrie Cuntanu are not just simple liturgical chant models, but represent a bridge between Byzantine tradition, Transylvanian cultural specificity and the need for musical accessibility for local Orthodox communities. Their importance lies in preserving and reflecting the regional musical identity, facilitating the process of learning and applying them in church services, and providing researchers with a valuable tool for analysing the evolutionary dynamics of Transylvanian liturgical music.

Nowadays, only a few prosomia from Cuntanu's collection are still in use, especially in the parishes of southern Transylvania. Their persistence in certain areas attests to their cultural and musical-liturgical value, emphasising the need for a re-evaluation of this tradition in the current context of peal practice. The present study provides a solid basis for future research, with a view to elucidating the mechanisms that determined the structural transformations of the prosomia and to assessing the possibility of revitalising this musical heritage of liturgical and cultural importance.

Translated from Romanian by Angelica Marcu

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