

# THE RESEARCH OF BYZANTINE MUSIC IN ROMANIA. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS\*

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## ABSTRACT

The research of the Byzantine music started in Romania during the first decades of the twentieth century, especially due to priest Ioan D. Petrescu’s studies. A restricted group of researchers continued this work within the second half of the last century, thus making way to important paths of research, particularly oriented towards the musical manuscripts belonging to the Romanian archives. Following 1990, together with the change of the political regime, much was written on the Byzantine music in Romania. Our paper aims at succinctly unveiling these concerns which have sprung out of the legitimate questions mostly related to the age of the Byzantine music within the Romanian space, to the Romanian contribution to the perpetuation of the Byzantine tradition, and to the peculiarities of the pew music form the different areas of Romania. A presentation of the most important themes of research tackled within the last decades in Romania is given, together with the scientific manifestations and the categories of papers published within the

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given amount of time. Numerous are the questions that have troubled those interested in the Byzantine music over the years. Now, many of these questions belong to the young people willing to revive the ancient Byzantine music in the pews of the Romanian churches. The perplexities and difficulties the young are confronted with when adequately interpreting the specific semiography are briefly presented in the final part of our paper, a section dedicated to the questions which are still waiting for an answer.

**Keywords:** church music, Byzantine tradition, musical manuscripts, neumatic notation, transcription, process of “Romanianization”, research topics

## **Introduction**

Byzantine music is an integral part of Romania’s artistic, cultural and spiritual past, while the manuscripts preserved in the Romanian libraries are among our most precious treasures, standing out as an eloquent testimony to a past that links us to the Byzantium and to all the countries that used the Orthodox rite in their liturgical practice. In Romania, the research of these manuscripts and of Byzantine music started in the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and was intensified and diversified in the last couple of decades. Although many questions about Byzantine music and its practice in the Romanian space have found their answers through the efforts of the Romanian musicologists, many others still bother the minds of those interested in church music, researchers and chanters alike, urging further research.

Our paper is an attempt to synthesize these concerns, which stem from legitimate questions regarding the oldness of Byzantine music in the Romanian space, the Romanian contribution to the perpetuation of the Byzantine tradition and the characteristic features of the liturgical chant in different areas of Romania. We will present the main research topics addressed in the past decades in Romania, as well as the scientific events and the categories of papers published during this period. In Transylvania, the western part of Romania, where I work, more and more young people are willing to revive old Byzantine music in the Romanian churches. The questions and obstacles they face in the proper interpretation of the specific notation are summarized in the final part of the paper, dedicated to the questions that are still unanswered.

We have decided to structure this survey of the research on Byzantine music in Romania according to historical criteria, given that the current concerns of the Byzantinologists are the result of some previous stages and of the particular conditions under which the research was conducted during the last century.

## 1. The first question

A first contact with the Romanian Orthodox Church music might be disconcerting for a foreign researcher, because in terms of notation of the church repertoire, the Romanian space is characterized by the paradoxical coexistence of two systems. The neumes and staves used in the church book pages preserve church songs that have the same origin, but different stylistic features, based mostly on the notation system used. Why are there more systems of notation? How has it come to this? To find the answer we must go back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the first collections of chants in Guidonian notation were printed. Almost simultaneously, in Moldova, the most important chants for the three main church services were **transcribed** from neumatic notation, while in Transylvania and Banat the church service repertoire was **written in staff notation**.

Although the working method was different, the main objective pursued by printing church chants in staff notation was the same: preserving the Romanian church music unaltered.

Another different aspect was the socio-political and cultural context in the two major Romanian areas delimited by the Carpathian mountain range. The beginning of the national revival movement through the abolishment of the Phanariot rule following the 1821 revolution, the union and the creation of the modern national state and the gaining of the independence were historical events that had a strong impact on the Romanian culture, making the 19<sup>th</sup> century into a time of rebirth and modernization of the society; scholars worked closely with the entire society in the joint effort to catch up with the civilized nations of Europe. None of these statements include the western part of the present-day Romanian territory (Transylvania), which in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. We must therefore present the situation in the two areas separately.

In the southern and eastern Romanian provinces (Wallachia and Moldova) of the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, church music followed the same route as that in Greece, adopting the New Method through the teaching and editorial activity of Petrou Efesiou, who came to Bucharest in 1816<sup>46</sup>. Shortly thereafter, Hieromonk Macarie (?1770-1836) and Anton Pann (?1790/1797-1854) translated and printed the chant repertoire in the Romanian language<sup>47</sup>, so that by the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century the chanting in Romanian was generalized. The process of adaptation of melodies of

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<sup>46</sup> It is well known that in 1816, Petros Ephesiou opened a school in Bucharest where he taught the New Method and that in 1820, again in Bucharest, he printed the first books written in neumatic notation (*Neon Anastasimatarion* and *Neon Doxastarion*).

<sup>47</sup> Hieromonk Macarie printed the first books in Romanian in Vienna in 1823 (*Theoriticon*, *Anastasimatar and Irmologhion*). The chants in his books were later re-edited and many of them have been preserved in the church services to this day. Anton Pann printed 14 collections of chants and three theoretical books.

Byzantine origin to the Romanian language continued until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, but neumatic notation is still used in the churches of southern and eastern Romania, although there have been attempts of transition to staff notation, as we shall see further on.

The victory of the Romanian language in Church was just one facet of the process of national assertion and modernization of church chanting. This was happening at a time when a new trend began to emerge, as more and more voices were calling for the replacement of psaltic music and the adoption of choral singing. To this contributed both the contact with Western music – especially through opera performances<sup>48</sup> – and the influence exerted by the harmonic music of the Russian Church at the time. The preference for the radical solution of replacing the monody, however, was in line with the general trend of renewal that had already started in all the compartments of life in the Romanian provinces.

The idea of choir in the Romanian Orthodox Church dates from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, when the abbot of the Neamț monastery, Paisie Velicikovski, accepted the harmonic singing brought by the Russian monks who had come to the monastery. We know for sure that in 1826, choral singing was also practiced in south-western Romania<sup>49</sup>. A certain solemnity and monumentality of the service led to the establishment of the first church choirs in Bucharest in 1836 and in Iași, in 1844.

With the establishment of the first church choirs, two distinct positions emerged regarding the church repertoire. The adepts of the changes saw in choral singing an opportunity of alignment to the Western music system through notation, creation and interpretation. On the other hand, their opponents were blaming the abandonment of the traditional liturgical chant by adopting a foreign repertoire. The supporters of the two orientations were in constant dispute, which peaked towards 1860. A decree of Prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza<sup>50</sup> (1820-1873) who regarded psaltic music as a reminiscence of the Phanariot era, imposed the generalization of choral singing. Professor Ioan Cartu took on the important mission to organize the church choirs, to guide them and to control their activity.

Due to unwanted events<sup>51</sup> this ample process of transformation of church music remained just a desire. Moreover, a state of confusion was created because of the difficulties in organizing and training the choirs and of the lack of a unified repertoire. The crisis lasted until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and was remarkably illustrated in *Memoriul pentru cântările bisericesti în România*, written by Bishop

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<sup>48</sup> The first tours of the foreign opera ensembles took place at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, but the permanent seasons of the Italian opera in Bucharest began in 1843.

<sup>49</sup> The preface to the *Octoih* printed by Constantin Diaconovici Loga in 1826 describes both the monodic chanting and the choral singing, as used to be taught and practiced in Arad. See: Octavian Lazăr Cosma, *Hronical muzicii românești*, vol. III, Editura Muzicală, Bucharest, 1975, p. 147.

<sup>50</sup> Decree No. 101 of January 18, 1865.

<sup>51</sup> In 1866, Prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza was forced to abdicate and Professor Ioan Cartu, who had been charged with the training of the choir conductors, died.

Melchisedec of Roman<sup>52</sup> and read in the autumn session of the Holy Synod in 1881. This study offers a thorough analysis of church music in the Romanian Principalities. The author summarizes the historical information available at the time on the music practiced in the Eastern Orthodox churches from ancient times until the modern era. We will not insist on this important document; we will just note that in paragraph 7 of the conclusions, Bishop Melchisedec clarifies his position on notation, opting for a unified notation that could bring near the two repertoires, psaltic and choral, thus integrating church singing in the “*general musical art*”<sup>53</sup>, and also advocates for the transcription of church songs. The study concludes with a *Proiect de regulament* (Draft Regulation) to improve church music in Romania.

After this *Memoriu*, the first books were printed with church chants transcribed on staff. The authors of the transcriptions were the musicians from Iași Gavriil Musicescu, Gheorghe I. Dima<sup>54</sup> and Grigore I. Gheorghiu<sup>55</sup>. Between 1881 and 1899, they published 13 collections of psaltic repertoire in linear notation<sup>56</sup>. In 1899, Gavriil Musicescu submitted to the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church a request for the books to be introduced as textbooks in the Seminaries, but the request was rejected. One of the reasons for the failure of this initiative was the lack of prior scientific studies on Byzantine music notation as a whole, which resulted in the absence of any indications about the consonant signs. Consequently, neumatic notation continued to be used in southern and eastern Romania, and harmonic music was introduced in the Divine Liturgy service in the churches where multiple-voice choirs could be set up.

In Transylvania, which was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire for a long time, the whole enterprise of printing church songs on staff had different causes and connotations. First there was the lack of schools and books, and then there was the decline in number of chanters and of those familiarized with the neumatic notation. Oral transmission, with all that it implies, was the only way of preserving the Orthodox chanting tradition in the context of the Protestant and Calvinist propaganda. Writing down a repertoire whose preservation depended on the collective memory became a necessity. Given that the staff notation system was the only one available, it was adopted automatically. Not incidentally, the first chant book

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<sup>52</sup> Episcopul Melchisedec, *Memoriu pentru cântările bisericești în România*, in “*Biserica Ortodoxă Română*”, 1881, year VI, No. 1, p. 43

<sup>53</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 15.

<sup>54</sup> Gheorghe I. Dima (19th century, in Iași), music teacher, psalt, church music composer.

<sup>55</sup> Grigore I. Gheorghiu (1837-1922), psalt and choir conductor at the Metropolitan Cathedral in Iasi, professor of church music at the *Veniamin Costache* Theological Seminary at Socola.

<sup>56</sup> Among these we mention: *Rânduiala Vecerniei de sâmbătă seara a celor 8 glasuri* [*The Service of the Saturday Evening Vespers in the Eight Modes*] (1883), *Cântările Vecerniei* [*Vespers Hymns*] (separate books for each mode, 1884-1889), *17 Axioane* [*17 Axions*] (1897), *Catavasiile sărbătorilor* [*Feast-Days Katavassias*] (1889) etc.

in linear notation appeared in Bukovina<sup>57</sup>, before Musicescu's volumes. We are referring here to *Psaltichia bisericescă așezată pe note lineare*, printed in Vienna in 1879 by Silvestru Morariu Andrievici from Cernăuți; the melodies, however, are not transcriptions from neumes of the liturgical repertoire, but a notation on staff of what was sung in churches.

The same method was used in the book entitled *Cântările bisericești după melodiile celor opt glasuri ale bisericii*, published in Vienna, in 1890, by Professor Dimitrie Cunțanu from Sibiu. Just like in Bukovina, this book was the result of the involvement of the religious authority, i.e. the Metropolitan Andrei Șaguna, concerned with the situation of religious music. In Banat, the first church music books were printed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, first by Trifon Lugojan<sup>58</sup>, and then by Terentius Bugariu<sup>59</sup>, whose collection, however, failed to have a significant impact, so that in 1927, Trifon Lugojan's repertoire was re-printed<sup>60</sup>. In the western region of Transylvania (Bihor), the collection printed by Cornel Givulescu in 1929<sup>61</sup> became a landmark manual for the theological schools.

The church music written in staff notation imposed itself and remained unchanged in the western part of Romania, so that the neume and staff notation systems continue to coexist in our country in the chanting practice.

## 2. The first answers and new questions

Below we will attempt to answer two questions related to the beginnings of the research on Byzantine music in Romania: when did its scientific study begin and what were the first research topics?

The contact with the Western European musicology, where the interest in Byzantine culture was growing, had a great influence on the Romanian musicians who were studying there. This is how the first Romanian preoccupations with Byzantine music arose, along with the first dilemmas.

In Romania, the first "answers" relating to Byzantine music date from the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and their consistency had important consequences for the further development of the field. These answers can be found in the chapters of the book entitled *Les idiomes et le Canon de l'Office de Noël*<sup>62</sup>, published in 1932 by

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<sup>57</sup> Region located in north-eastern Romania; today, a part of this territory belongs to Ukraine.

<sup>58</sup> Trifon Lugojan, *Strana* (Cele Opt Glasuri, Heruvices, Irmoase, Pricesne), Tipografia Diecezană, Arad, 1905.

<sup>59</sup> Terentius Bugariu, *Sentinela cântărilor bisericești - române*, Tipografia Sudungară, Timișoara, 1908.

<sup>60</sup> Trifon Lugojan, *Cele Opt Glasuri la Vecernie*, Tipografia Diecezană, Arad, 1927

<sup>61</sup> Cornel Givulescu, *Cele opt glasuri*, Editor Fondul de Excursie al Absolvenților Academiei Teologice Ortodoxe Române, class 1932, Oradea, 1929.

<sup>62</sup> Ioan D. Petrescu, *Les idiomes et le Canon de l'Office de Noël*, préface de Amédée Gastoué, Librairie orientaliste Paul Geuthner, Paris, 1932.

Priest Ioan D. Petrescu<sup>63</sup>. In fact, it is widely accepted that the research of Byzantine music in Romania began with this work, as asserted in the statement “the Byzantine monody thus became an object of scientific research”<sup>64</sup>. The volume is the result of the work initiated in Paris, at the urging of his teacher of Gregorian chant from the *Schola Cantorum*, Amédée Gastoué (who in 1907 had catalogued the Byzantine manuscripts from the National Library in Paris).

There were many questions that arose for researcher I. D. Petrescu, who was priest at the Romanian Chapel in Paris, but also practitioner of Gregorian chant and knowledgeable in Latin palaeography. The priest-musician sought answers to these questions in the Byzantine manuscripts from the National Library in Paris, in the library of the Grottaferrata monastery and in the chanting tradition of the Orthodox Church. The chapters of the paper deal with theoretical aspects of great importance for medieval music: the Byzantine modes, the neumatic notation systems, the melodic structure of the stichera and of the canon, the melodic formulas, the possibility of transcription on staff etc. The content, the denseness of information, the firmness of the conclusions formulated by the author immediately drew attention to the work; except for Amédée Gastoué and the Byzantinologists H. J. W. Tillyard and Oliver Stunk, the Romanian historian Nicolae Iorga and the French musicologist L. Serraz published reviews or comments on the importance of the volume, which also received the “Thorlet” award of the French Academy, *l’Institut des Beaux-Arts* in Paris (1933).

Priest Petrescu’s book provided the Romanians not only with a plethora of information in a field almost unknown to them until then, but also offered them a viable model in terms of the research method: basing any assertion only on existing manuscripts, using the comparative research method to study the evolution of idioms during the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup> centuries and providing facsimiles and transcriptions were constant elements in his studies, as well as in the Romanian research studies that followed.

The Byzantine music of the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries was the main subject of research of Priest I.D. Petrescu, who performed pioneering work in the Romanian libraries of Bucharest and Craiova, while also trying to answer certain questions related to the Byzantine modes and notation through research carried out in the

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<sup>63</sup> Ioan D. Petrescu (1884-1970), Romanian priest and Byzantinologist; he carried out his studies at the “Nifon” Seminary in Bucharest (1895-1902), at the Faculty of Theology in Bucharest (1902-1906, graduation diploma in 1907), at the Bucharest Conservatory (1924-1928) and at the “Schola Cantorum” in Paris (1928-1931). Priest at St. Vissarion Church in Bucharest (1911-1968); between 1928 and 1931, he was transferred to the Romanian Orthodox Church in Paris, professor of oriental music history and Byzantine musical Palaeography (1934-1941), professor of Gregorian chant (1937-1941) and director (1939-1941) at the Religious Music Academy in Bucharest, teacher of Gregorian chant at the Conservatory of Bucharest (1941-1948).

<sup>64</sup> Titus Moisescu, *Monodia bizantină în gândirea unor muzicieni români*, Editura Muzicală, Bucharest, 1999, p. 7.

libraries of Paris, Rome, Grottaferrata, Milan and Berlin. The practical knowledge of the liturgical chant and of the Romanian tradition placed him on a different level of research and on a different position from that of the Western researchers – E. Welles, C. Hoeg, H. Tillyard.<sup>65</sup> The position adopted by priest I.D. Petrescu was maintained by the Romanian researchers of the second half of the last century, who were especially animated by questions related to the Byzantine music in the Romanian space.

### 3. Lines of research and new answers in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century

Continuing our historical foray, new questions arise concerning the liturgical chant and the activity of the Romanian musicologists of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This period witnessed the publication of several collections of chants written in double notation, as well as of important volumes born from the scientific curiosity of the few musicians who were knowledgeable in musical palaeography. What was the purpose of the church music books written in double musical notation? Why was the Romanian musicologists' tendency to transcribe Byzantine music on staff so intense for decades? These are two important aspects that we will dwell upon in the following pages.

In order to understand a certain predilection for the transcription in staff notation we must remember that in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, the political regime in Romania changed<sup>66</sup>. One of the consequences of this change was the drastic decline in number of the theological schools and universities, which also had a negative impact on church music. First, the number of those who knew neumatic notation decreased, including those who served in the church. In this context, there was a shift back to the transcription of the psaltic melodies on staff, but this time they were presented in simultaneous notation. This is how the so-called “standardized” repertoire appeared<sup>67</sup>, which was promoted by including it in the curricula of the theological seminaries and faculties. Although mandatory, this repertoire was not agreed upon

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<sup>65</sup> His research activity was remarkably illustrated by musicologist Titus Moiesescu in *Monodia bizantină în gândirea unor muzicieni români*, op. cit., pp. 9-87.

<sup>66</sup> On December 30, 1948 the Romanian People's Republic was proclaimed and the communist regime was established.

<sup>67</sup> 1951 was the year when the book entitled *Gramatica muzicii psaltice*, by Nicolae Lungu (1900-1993), Grigore Costea and Ion Croitoru (1884-1972) was published at *Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române* in Bucharest. According to the principles of this book, the Vespers and Matins chants were transcribed and published by the same publishing house, under the title *Anastasimatarul uniformizat*. The purpose was to eliminate the regional differences by using some unique collections that would enable the chanting from neumes or staff, according to the local tradition.



and therefore in each region, the local collections written in neume or staff notation continued to be used.

The transcription on staff was not something new, as it had also occurred in the comparative analyses conducted by priest Ioan D. Petrescu in his works. Subsequently, the publication of deacon Grigore Panțiru's book (1905-1981) *Notația și ehurile muzicii bizantine*<sup>68</sup>, in which the neumes were explained through their staff equivalent, enabled lay musicians to become familiar with the neumatic notation and implicitly with church music. Among these composers there were those who were interested in resurrecting the local musical heritage in their works.

It is interesting how in that increasingly difficult cultural context (especially after President Nicolae Ceaușescu's visit in North Korea – 1978) many old musical documents were brought to light. The late musicologist Titus Moisescu, director of *Editura Muzicală* [the Musical Publishing House] for more than two decades, is credited with having distracted the censors' attention from issues related to Church and religion, by emphasizing the documentary value of the manuscripts and the opportunity of putting Romania in a favourable light through the publication thereof, something to which Ceaușescu and the Communist Party leadership were quite sensitive. Thus could be initiated in 1977, with the support of the Union of Composers and Musicologists of Romania, the series "Sources of Romanian Music". The printed books brought Byzantine culture back to the musicians' attention, while also providing a rich study material for musicologists and composers through the editions *Documenta* and *Transcripta*.

The published volumes provided answers to the questions that had troubled Gheorghe Ciobanu (1909-1995), Marin Ionescu (1909-1992) and Titus Moisescu (1992-2002) (trained as researchers by priest Ioan D. Petrescu) in the 1960s, when they conducted a sustained campaign for the identification and preservation in the Romanian Academy Library of the monastery and church manuscripts that were in danger of disappearing under the political conditions of the time. Gradually, they were joined by other musicians, especially by those who had attended theological schools before 1950, such as archdeacon Sebastian Barbu-Bucur (b. 1930), the priests Alexie Buzera (1934-2011), Florin Bucescu (b. 1936) and Nicu Moldoveanu (b. 1940), musicologist Constantin Catrina (b. 1933) etc. The main issues on which they focused were related to the role played by the Romanian people in the preservation of the Byzantine musical tradition. Here are some of the questions to which they sought answers through their research:

- What is the number of Byzantine musical manuscripts preserved in Romania and where are they to be found?

- What is the relationship between the Bulgarian musical culture and the Romanian psaltic music?

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<sup>68</sup> Grigore Panțiru, *Notația și ehurile muzicii bizantine*, Editura Muzicală, Bucharest, 1971.

- Are there any manuscripts that were copied or written by Romanians?
- Did the Romanians compose Byzantine music?
- What were the sacred languages used by the Romanians?
- When and where was the Romanian language used in singing?
- How old is the chromatic genre in Byzantine music?

In what follows we will point out the main results obtained in the research conducted in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In a first stage:

- the first research studies on Byzantine music in Romania were carried out<sup>69</sup>;
- musical manuscripts from different periods were examined;<sup>70</sup>
- the existence of a music school at the Putna monastery was demonstrated, which functioned uninterruptedly in the 16<sup>th</sup> century; the conclusion is based on the 11 musical manuscripts that were gradually discovered in libraries from Romania and abroad<sup>71</sup>;
- the first works of a Romanian hymnographer were identified and presented: *Pripaelele* by Filotei the Monk of Cozia<sup>72</sup>;
- the first record was made of the propaedias in the manuscripts preserved in Romania<sup>73</sup>;
- the ungrounded claim that many 17<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> c. works would be remnants of the old Bulgarian culture was rejected<sup>74</sup>;
- the problem of the sacred languages used by the Romanians was clarified; it was concluded that the Greek language was used uninterruptedly since the Christianization of the Romanians, along with Latin, then Slavonic and finally Romanian. The musical manuscripts from Putna show the predominance of the Greek language as a sacred language (in 91.55% of the chants) during the medieval period, and invalidate the theory of cultural Slavonism<sup>75</sup>;

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<sup>69</sup> Gheorghe Ciobanu, *Cultura muzicală bizantină pe teritoriul României până în secolul al XVIII-lea*, communication presented in Bydgoszcz (Poland), 1972, published in *Musica antiqua Europae Orientalis*, in the "Muzica" journal, Bucharest, year 23, (1973), No. 3 (244), pp. 42-47 and in *Studii de etnomuzicologie și bizantinologie*, vol. I, Editura Muzicală, Bucharest, 1974, pp. 278-287.

<sup>70</sup> Gheorghe Ciobanu, in *Studii de etnomuzicologie și bizantinologie*, vol. I, *op. cit.*: *Manuscrise psaltice românești din secolul al XVIII-lea*, pp. 287-296; *Idem*, *Cultura psaltică românească în secolele al XVII-lea și al XVIII-lea*, pp. 297-306; *idem*, *Un kyrie eleison la patru voci în notație bizantină la începutul secolului al XVII-lea*, pp. 402-417.

<sup>71</sup> See the attached bibliography for the studies on the Music School in Putna.

<sup>72</sup> Gheorghe Ciobanu, *Pripelele lui Filotei monahul*, in "Studii de etnomuzicologie și bizantinologie", vol. II, Editura Muzicală, Bucharest, 1979, pp. 269-292.

<sup>73</sup> Sebastian Barbu-Bucur, *Propedii ale muzicii psaltice în notație cucuzeliană aflate în Biblioteca Academiei R.S. România*, in "Studii și cercetări de istoria artei", series TMC, Bucharest, vol. 21, 1974, pp. 59-70.

<sup>74</sup> The assertion belongs to Bishop Melchisedec of Roman and was countered by Gheorghe Ciobanu in the study *Originea Canonului Stălpărilor alcătuit de dascălul Șarban*, in: "Mitropolia Olteniei", Craiova, 1970, , No. 5-8, p. 778-787.

<sup>75</sup> See the introductory study in the 3<sup>rd</sup> volume of the series "Izvoare ale muzicii românești" [Sources of Romanian Music] and Gheorghe Ciobanu, *Limbile de cult la români în lumina manuscriselor muzicale*, a

- the cultural-musical unity of the Romanians in the three provinces was demonstrated<sup>76</sup>.

- certain aspects related to the adoption of the New Method in the Romanian space were clarified and the first book on psaltic music theory was reprinted in Romanian: Hieromonk Macarie – *Theoriticon*<sup>77</sup>;

During the last two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century there was a significant progress in the study of musical manuscripts. In 1973, musicologist Gheorghe Ciobanu conducted an analysis of the state of the research on Byzantine music in Romania (published only in 1979) and presented the objectives set by the few existing Romanian Byzantinologists for their future activity: “We would like to select and prepare a few volumes clearly showing both the structural and stylistic evolution of this music, and the ascending line of the “Romanianization” of melodies...”<sup>78</sup>.

We will emphasize only the most important achievements of the years that followed:

- Deacon Grigore Panțiru formulated an original answer with regards to the function of signs in ecphonetic notation, following the study of the manuscript 160/IV-34 kept at the Mihai Eminescu University Library of Iași<sup>79</sup>;

- Archdeacon Sebastian Barbu-Bucur reached important conclusions on the adaptation of the Byzantine melody to the Romanian language: he established the main stages of the process of “Romanianization” of church music<sup>80</sup>; he published the first manuscript with full text in Romanian, written in 1713 by Filothei sin Agăi Jipei (photocopies and transcriptions) and established the Romanian origin and genealogy of Filothei’s family; he identified and studied the copies of the aforementioned manuscript; he identified Filothei’s disciples and established their role in the transmission of the liturgical repertoire in Romanian<sup>81</sup>;

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study written in 1981, but published in “Studii de etnomuzicologie și bizantinologie”, vol. III, Editura Muzicală, Bucharest, 1993, pp. 87-98

<sup>76</sup> Gheorghe Ciobanu, *Muzica bisericească la români*, in the “Biserica Ortodoxă Română” journal, 90 (1972), No. 1-2, pp. 162-195, republished in “Studii de etnomuzicologie și bizantinologie”, vol. I, op. cit. pp. 329-401.

<sup>77</sup> Macarie, Ieromonahul, *Opere, I. Theoriticon*, Editura Academiei R.S.R., Bucharest, 1976, with an introductory study by Titus Moisescu, Editura Academiei R.S.R., București, 1976.

<sup>78</sup> Gheorghe Ciobanu, *Probleme și preocupări contemporane în paleografia muzicală românească*, in “Studii de etnomuzicologie și bizantinologie”, vol. II, op. cit. p. 255.

<sup>79</sup> Grigore Panțiru, *Leccionarul evanghelic de la Iași (documenta et transcripta)*, Editura Muzicală, Bucharest, 1982.

<sup>80</sup> Sebastian Barbu-Bucur, *Cultura muzicală de tradiție bizantină pe teritoriul României în secolul XVIII și începutul secolului XIX și aportul original al culturii autohtone*, Editura Muzicală, Bucharest, 1989.

<sup>81</sup> Barbu-Bucur, Sebastian, *Filothei sin Agăi Jipei-Psaltichie românească*, vol. I: *Catavasier*, Editura Muzicală, Bucharest, 1981, in: “Izvoare ale muzicii românești”, vol. VII A – *Documenta et transcripta*; vol. II: *Anastasimatar*, Editura Muzicală, Bucharest, 1984, in: “Izvoare ale muzicii românești”, vol. VII B – *Documenta et transcripta*; vol. III, *Stihirariul*, Editura Muzicală, 1986, in: “Izvoare ale muzicii

- musicologist Titus Moiescu continued the research on the Music School of Putna; he transcribed on staff and analyzed many examples (especially works by Evstatie the Protopsaltis, Thodeosie Zotica and Dometian Vlahul) in order to emphasize the connection between this school and the Byzantine music in the Greek space; he described all the 16<sup>th</sup> century manuscripts preserved in Putna<sup>82</sup>; he created a catalogue of the works written by Evstatie the Protopsaltis of Putna<sup>83</sup>;

- musicologist Adriana Şirli compiled an analytical and thematic catalogue of the anastasimataria found in the Romanian libraries<sup>84</sup>;

- research was intensified on the Romanian contribution and certain aspects were clarified related to the Romanian manuscripts, copyists, chanters or composers<sup>85</sup>;

- a lexicon was created including all the Romanian chanters, copyists and Byzantinologists<sup>86</sup>;

- the first history of Byzantine music in Romanian was published<sup>87</sup>.

In the above quoted text, Gheorghe Ciobanu was also expressing his fears regarding the evolution of these research efforts:

“We have a certain feeling of doubt: we are not sure that our work will ever see the light of print. In addition to this, we are wondering: Will we ever be able to carry out what we have set out to do? Because at present most of the active Byzantinologists are already retired! Therefore, the following question arises: Who will continue this work? Because, even if we carry out our planned work, there still remains much to be done for a thorough knowledge of this culture, which started with the brilliant Byzantium, which we borrowed and carried further in our own way, and which – me must admit – we sometimes feel ashamed of without knowing it, because it is monodic, and not polyphonic like the Western one”<sup>88</sup>.

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româneşti”, vol. VII C - *Documenta et transcripta*; vol. IV, Editura Episcopiei Buzăului, Buzău, 1992, in: “Izvoare ale muzicii româneşti”, vol. VII D – *Documenta et transcripta*.

<sup>82</sup> See the studies included in the volume *Muzica bizantină în spațiul cultural românesc*, Editura Muzicală, Bucharest, 1996

<sup>83</sup> Titus Moiescu, *Catalogul creației muzicale a lui Evstatie Protopsaltul Putnei*, Editura Melos, Bucharest, 1997.

<sup>84</sup> Adriana Şirli, *Repertoriul tematic și analitic al manuscriselor psaltice vechi (secolele XIV-XIX). I. Anastasimatarul*, Bucharest, Editura Muzicală, 1985.

<sup>85</sup> See the bibliography for the works printed between 1980 and 2000.

<sup>86</sup> Gheorghe Ionescu, *Lexicon al celor care de-a lungul veacurilor s-au ocupat cu muzica de tradiție bizantină în România*, Bucharest, Editura Diogene, 1994

<sup>87</sup> Vasile Vasile, *Istoria muzicii bizantine și evoluția ei în spiritualitatea românească*, Editura Interpret, Bucharest, 1997.

<sup>88</sup> Gheorghe Ciobanu, *Probleme și preocupări contemporane în paleografia muzicală românească*, op. cit., pp. 255-256.

The publication of the first volume of the series “Izvoare ale muzicii românești” [Sources of Romanian Music] expanded the narrow circle of palaeographers of the sixth and seventh decades of the last century with other musicologists interested in Byzantinology, eager to understand the music of the ancient manuscripts. They were free to fulfil their interests and concerns because they were satisfying certain strict requirements of the communist state: enhancing the value of our cultural heritage. This desideratum also explains why researchers focused more on the Romanian contribution to the preservation of Byzantine music, and only subsidiarily on specific issues related to Byzantine music in general.

Through strenuous work, the few experts in neumatic notation, palaeography and codicology provided the bibliography required for the development of this area in the coming years. We therefore look back with great respect to the researchers who managed to carry out such a substantial activity even under the harsh conditions of communism. It is thanks to them that after the 1989 changes, those who wanted to specialize in Byzantine music had enough bibliographic information at their disposal to be able to explore the field opened by the previous generations.

#### **4. Dialogues and new answers**

The freedom of expression brought about by the change of the political regime enabled seasoned researchers to find a new way to capitalize on their experience, besides that provided by the printed books: the dialogue carried out in scientific meetings. Thus, the questions and queries of self-taught learners (such as myself) or of beginners could benefit from the experience of those who had enhanced the palaeographic research initiated by I. D. Petrescu and also from the guidance of great international personalities.

The most important scientific event and also a good opportunity for a constructive dialogue was organized at the initiative of the teachers of the “George Enescu” Academy of Arts in Iași<sup>89</sup>, Priest Florin Bucescu, Professor, Ph.D. and Gabriela Ocneanu, Professor, Ph.D. Between 1994-2008, annual symposia were organized and the journal “Byzantion romanicon” was published<sup>90</sup>, under the supervision of the Center for Byzantine Art at the “George Enescu” Academy of Arts. 1998 was the foundation year of the Centre for Byzantine Studies in Iași, around a group of renowned researchers from across the country. The scientific

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<sup>89</sup> Current name: George Enescu University of Arts, Iași.

<sup>90</sup> The first two issues of the journal appeared under the name “Byzantion”. The issue No. 8-9 was printed in 2012.

meetings organized by it gained international status and its papers were published in the journal "Acta Musicae byzantinae"<sup>91</sup>.

The research directions of those years are reflected in the pages of the two journals, as follows:

- most studies by Romanian authors present 19<sup>th</sup> century manuscripts and prints preserved in Romanian libraries, or draw attention to the Romanian contributions to the copying or writing of books required for the performance of church services.

- the number of people interested in this field of research is growing and includes students who are stimulated by the musicology and psaltic music interpretation contests initiated by the aforementioned centres (many of them are now completing their doctoral studies);

- the presence of outstanding Greek researchers at symposia and the publication of their papers bring new topics in question (such as: thesis and exegesis), which will later be found among the Romanian researchers' concerns;

- a new conception arises on the psaltic music of the New method, understood as a continuation of medieval music.

Some of the books printed in recent years point to the continuation of certain topics pursued consistently over long periods of time. Thus, during this time, Archdeacon Sebastian Barbu-Bucur has tried to answer three important questions:

- How did church music evolve in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, after the writing of the first manuscript in Romanian (*Psaltichie rumânească*, Filothei sin Agăi Jipei)?

- Who was Ghelasie Basarabeanul and what was his contribution to the promotion of church music in the Romanian language, in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century?

- What manuscripts written or copied by Romanians can be found in the libraries of the Holy Mountain of Athos?

The answers can be found in the books he published: the four volumes encompassing Gelasie's songs – scattered in over 60 manuscripts<sup>92</sup> – printed in collaboration with Priest Ion Isăroiu, Associate Professor, Ph.D.; the catalogue of Romanian musical manuscripts from Mount Athos<sup>93</sup> and the anastasimatarion

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<sup>91</sup> The first issue of the journal was published in 1999; the journal was published annually until 2008.

<sup>92</sup> Ghelasie Basarabeanu, *Vecernier și Utrenier*, series "Izvoare ale muzicii românești" vol. XI A, Editura Muzicală, Bucharest, 2004; vol. XI B, *Liturghier*, Editura Muzicală, Bucharest, 2005; Vol. XI C, *Doxastar*, Editura Muzicală, Bucharest, 2006; vol. XI D, *Doxastar, Triod, Pentecostar*, Editura SemnE, Bucharest, 2007

<sup>93</sup> Arhid. dr. Sebastian Barbu-Bucur, *Manuscrisele muzicale românești de la Muntele Athos*, Editura Muzicală, Bucharest, 2000.

written by Mihalache Moldovlahul<sup>94</sup>, which has absorbed his interest for over three decades<sup>95</sup>.

The indefatigable researchers, Priest Alexie Buzera, Ph.D., Priest Florin Bucescu, Ph.D. and Constantin Catrina, Professor, Ph.D. conducted studies on the regions of Oltenia, Moldova (the eastern area of Romania) and Braşov, enriching the relevant literature with outstanding works of synthesis<sup>96</sup> that highlight the local contributions and clarify historiographical and palaeographic issues.

Another important project is Priest Nicu Moldoveanu's work entitled *Istorie a muzicii bisericesti la români*<sup>97</sup>, an attempt to collect and organize data on the penetration of Byzantine music in the Romanian space, its evolution from the early centuries until the present, the religious musical education, choral music, musical manuscripts, Romanian researchers of Byzantine music etc.

Despite the strenuous activity carried out during the last two decades, we still have no enlightening answer as to the number of musical manuscripts stored in the Romanian libraries; in several studies, Titus Moisescu mentions the "250 manuscripts written in old notation", estimating the number of those written in new notation to 1000<sup>98</sup>. More catalogues have been developed in recent years, particularly as part of doctoral studies, some of which have already been printed. The following have been catalogued:

- the 17<sup>th</sup> century manuscripts (Ozana Alexandrescu);
- the 19<sup>th</sup> century manuscripts (Alexie Buzera);
- the 19<sup>th</sup> century manuscripts preserved in Moldova (Florin Bucescu);
- the manuscripts preserved in Braşov (Constantin Catrina);
- the manuscripts preserved in Cluj-Napoca (Petru Stanciu);
- the 11<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century manuscripts preserved in Moldova (collective of authors)<sup>99</sup>;
- the psaltic manuscripts preserved in Romania (Marcel Spinei)<sup>100</sup>.

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<sup>94</sup> Arhid. Sebastian Barbu-Bucur, *Mihalache Moldovlahul. Anastasimatar I*, Series „Izvoare ale muzicii româneşti”, vol. XII A, Editura Muzicală, Bucharest, 2008, 575 p.; *Mihalache Moldovlahul. Anastasimatar II*, Series „Izvoare ale muzicii româneşti”, vol. XII B, Editura Muzicală, Bucharest, 2011, 582 p.

<sup>95</sup> The first study in which Archdeacon Dr. Sebastian Barbu-Bucur addresses issues related to Mihalache's Anastasimatarion dates from 1976. See: *Manuscrise psaltice româneşti şi bilingve în notaţie cucuzeliană*, in “Studii de muzicologie”, vol. XII, Editura Muzicală, Bucharest, 1976, pp. 118-181.

<sup>96</sup> See the list thereof in the bibliography.

<sup>97</sup> Pr. Nicu Moldoveanu, *O istorie a muzicii bisericesti la români*, Editura Basilica a Patriarhiei Române, Bucharest, 2010, 598 pages.

<sup>98</sup> In the catalogue of the 19<sup>th</sup> century manuscripts, Priest Alexie Buzera, Ph.D. describes 652 manuscripts, see: Alexie Al. Buzera, *Cultura muzicală de tradiție bizantină din secolul al XIX-lea*, Fundația Scrisul Românesc, Craiova, 1999, 461 pages.

<sup>99</sup> See the section dedicated to catalogues, in the bibliography.

<sup>100</sup> Marcel Spinei, *Catalogul manuscriselor psaltice-muzicale din România*, the *BOR journal*, Year 123, No. 4-6, 7-9, Bucharest, 2005.

The contact with Byzantinologists from abroad and the access to the international bibliography and to various scholarships have opened new perspectives for research. Among the outstanding achievements of the young generation there is the comprehensive study on the Sunday communion hymn in the Byzantine period, performed by Nicolae Gheorghîță<sup>101</sup>, those conducted by Costin Moisil on Byzantine music in Romania, part of which are included in his doctoral thesis<sup>102</sup>, or the research on the manuscripts belonging to the Irmologion category, conducted by Constantin Secară<sup>103</sup>.

In Transylvania, a team of researchers from the Faculty of Orthodox Theology of the University of Sibiu conducted a very interesting project over several years, whose research topic was the orality of the liturgical chant of Byzantine origin in southern Transylvania.<sup>104</sup> At the same time, the doctoral studies organized at the Faculty of Orthodox Theology of the Babes-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca were oriented towards the research of church music in the local dioceses. These studies have enriched the historical information and have highlighted certain local aspects of the melodies included in the collections of religious chants.

In 1973, Gheorghe Ciobanu mentioned<sup>105</sup> four specialists in Byzantine music palaeography, adding his name to those of Grigore Panțiru, Marin Ionescu and Sebastian Barbu-Bucur. Today, the growing interest in Byzantine music makes it difficult to determine their real number. On the other hand, our intention was not to provide a panorama of the research on Byzantine music, but rather to present some questions and answers raised by the Romanian musicologists and palaeographers over the last decades.

## 5. Still more questions instead of conclusions

Still more questions are naturally raised today about Byzantine music. We gladly notice that in Transylvania, where the tradition of the psaltic chant has been lost, more and more young people show a growing interest in Byzantine

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<sup>101</sup> Nicolae Gheorghîță, *Chinonicul duminical în perioada post-bizantină (1453-1821). Liturgică și muzică*, Editura Muzicală, Bucharest, 2007, 344 pages.; *ed. a II-a*, Editura Sophia, Bucharest, 2009.

<sup>102</sup> Costin Moisil, *The Construction of the Romanian National Church Music (1821–1914)*, doctoral thesis supervised by Katy Romanou, Professor, Ph.D., University of Athens (2012).

<sup>103</sup> Constantin Secară, *Irmologhionul – tipologie, evoluție și reprezentare în manuscrisele din România*, doctoral thesis, National University of Music Bucharest, 2008, under the supervision of Archdeacon Dr. Sebastian Barbu-Bucur.

<sup>104</sup> Vasile Grăjdian, *Oralitatea Cântării bisericesti din Ardeal*, Editura Universității "Lucian Blaga", Sibiu, 2004, 300 p.; *Cântarea liturgică ortodoxă din sudul Transilvaniei*, Editura Universității "Lucian Blaga", Sibiu, 2007, 464 p.

<sup>105</sup> Gheorghe Ciobanu, *Probleme și preocupări contemporane în paleografia muzicală românească*, op. cit., p. 254.



music, especially in terms of its performance. Most of them are not musicians, but plastic artists and theologians, members of the “St. Ioan Damaschin” group, who organize events entitled “The Days of Byzantine Art”, which this year are in their 7<sup>th</sup> edition. Sacred art exhibitions, conferences, concerts, workshops etc. are meant to annually gather representatives of the three ecclesiastical arts – painting, architecture and music – and thus revive the Byzantine art in the Transylvanian space. When visiting Cluj, Professor Grigorios Stathis and first chanter Gregorios Anastasiou were assaulted by countless questions. Here are some of them:

- What is the best way to learn the psaltic chant?
- Should the Kanonaki be used in the process of learning the chants?
- How is an authentic performance?
- To what extent does the current interpretation of psaltic melodies resemble that of the glory days of Byzantium?
- What does the authentic music sound like, i.e. the music that used to resound in Hagia Sophia?
- Is music an autonomous art or is there a connection between the ecclesiastical arts?

The list of questions could continue with others relating to the interpretation of neumes, the configuration of modal scales etc. We are confident that the connections established during this summer between the “Gheorghe Dima” Academy of Music of Cluj-Napoca and the Department of Music Studies of the University of Athens will contribute to the clarification of many questions and to a better understanding and practice of Byzantine music in Transylvania.

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