

Tradition and Characteristics in the Approach to Psaltic Music Theory in Romania – the 20th Century

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Abstract: Throughout the 20th century, Byzantine music theory was a constant preoccupation of chanters, teachers and musicians, who contributed to the development of this field and to the publication of a significant number of books in the Romanian language. The paper addresses these theoretical contributions based on several key elements: conception, structure, content, vocabulary, musical exercises and examples, extension, graphic aspect, relevance in the era –, but also in the context of the development of a specialized literature in Romanian. The analysis of these books reveals that everything that was published in Romania in the 20th century in the field of psaltic theory remains within the confines of the Byzantine tradition, faithfully passed down to the modern era. At the same time, the changes that the Romanian society went through in the second half of the century influenced the manner of approach to the theoretical notions, which were treated in the light of staff notation and Western music theory. However, over the course of the 20th century, successive authors managed to develop a specialized terminology in Romanian and to transmit the notional content specific to the Byzantine tradition.

Keywords: communism, musical grammar, simultaneous notation, propaedia, Byzantine tradition.

1. Introduction

Developed over the centuries in parallel with a persistent and strong oral tradition, the theory of Byzantine music gradually became a self-standing discipline, asserting itself fully only in the 19th century, with the publication of the first book in the field by one of the three great Teachers of the New Method, Chrysanthos of Madytos – *Εισαγωγή εις το θεωρητικόν και πρακτικόν της εκκλησιαστικής μουσικής* (Paris, 1821). Based on the notions used in the medieval propaedias and on the above-mentioned oral tradition, the work benefited from the advantages of the printing press and enabled the faster transmission and assimilation of the theoretical notions and of the repertoire of chants written in the new notation. The completion and detailing of the content initially displayed by the famous chanter led to the publication of the *Mega Theoreticon of psaltic music* (*Θεωρητικόν Μέγα τής Μουσικής*, Trieste, 1832).

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This book by Chrysanthos has remained to this day a reference bibliography for all those who wish to research psaltic music or to improve their skills in kliros singing in Orthodox churches, regardless of language and country.

Chrysanthos of Madytos's comprehensive book was not translated into Romanian, but the theory of the New Method spread to the Romanian Principalities soon after 1814; it was adopted and transmitted to the specialized schools throughout the 19th century, mainly due to the theoretical and editorial contributions of Macarie the Hieromonk (?1770-1836) and Anton Pann (?1796-1854)¹. Their works, written in Romanian, served as a basis for the development of textbooks in the next century.

Everything that was published in Romania in the 20th century in the field of psaltic theory remains within the confines of the Byzantine tradition, faithfully passed on to the modern era. This continuity was ensured by the relentless reference to the books printed in the decades immediately following the ratification of the New Method by the two above-mentioned authors. On the other hand, in the second half of the last century, due to the changes that occurred in society and the political interference in the instructive-educational activity of the theological schools and in everything that meant the manifestation of the Orthodox faith, we also witness certain particular approaches to psaltic music theory, generated by the special conditions mentioned above. Therefore, a new direction appeared in the approach of the theoretical elements: through the prism of staff notation and of the Western music theory. This direction was maintained until the end of the century, when the change of the political regime in Romania enabled the free expression of faith, the access to information and the return to the theory handed down by the Byzantine tradition.

The Romanian bibliography includes mentions of the theoretical preoccupations in several historical writings or in those whose aim is to present the origin and structure of the books printed by Macarie and Pann². The references to the theoretical contributions of the 20th century are brief and refer mostly to the 1951 volume (Lungu & Costea & Croitoru, 1951). We therefore intend to provide a more complete image of the theory of psaltic music in 20th century Romania, by emphasizing the influence of the theoretical books

¹ In 1816, the first school was opened in București where Petros Manuel Ephesios introduced the New Method to the Romanian chanters, and in 1820, the same chanter printed, for the first time in the world, the first psaltic music books, i.e. an Anastasimatarion and a Doxastarion. See the study *Începuturile tiparului românesc în notație bizantină* [The Beginnings of the Romanian Printing Press in Byzantine Notation] (Moiescu, 1985).

² We refer primarily to the introductory study written by Titus Moiescu on the republication of the *Theoriticon* published by Macarie (1976), and to the detailed study on Pann's grammar, conducted by Fr. Alexie Buzera, Ph.D. (1999). We have also considered all the works on the history of church music that speak of these contributions.

published shortly after the application of the 1814 reform to the authors of the following decades, and also to indicate the transformations undergone by the textbooks of psaltic music theory, based on certain key elements: conception, structure, content, vocabulary, illustrative material and musical examples, extension, graphic aspect, relevance in the era, but also in the context of the development of a specialized literature.

2. Theoretical preoccupations before 1900

Given that the development of a psaltic music theory in the national language is a long-lasting process, we find it necessary to take a retrospective look at the elements that generated these preoccupations and, in particular, to try to understand the status that music theory had as a discipline of study in medieval education and in the institutionalized education of the modern era. This historical perspective will allow us to emphasize the permanent relationship of the Romanian chanter to the Byzantine source, to the tradition expressed in Greek and, at the same time, to see the contribution of the Romanian chanters to the development of a musical theory in the national language before the 20th century.

2.1. Theoretical writings in Byzantine manuscripts

The complementarity between the oral and written traditions is one of the major characteristics of Byzantine music. Therefore, the formulation of some theoretical notions is related to the practical activity at the *kliros* and to the crystallization of musical notation, which facilitate the preservation and spread of the rich repertoire already existing in the second half of the first Christian millennium. Documented by the manuscripts dating back to the 10th century, the crystallization of the neumatic notation required an instructive process for which the teacher-apprentice dialogue (i.e. the oral transmission of tradition) was no longer sufficient. The teaching of notation and of the theoretical principles therefore required improved teaching methods, since the reading of musical texts is only one step in a long series of stages an apprentice had to go through in order to learn the art of interpreting psaltic music. This explains the mixture of theoretical notions, exercises and methods of learning music that is found in the protheory recorded in musical manuscripts for centuries (Liakos & Mazera, 2013).

The notation of sung music led to the written formulation of certain statements about neumes and tones, meant to facilitate the learning process. These medieval texts were the starting point for the elaboration of some proper theoretical works. According to the distinguished Byzantinist musicologist Gregorios Stathis, the brief theoretical notions necessarily preceded the chants from the Papadike-type collection, being also accompanied by schematic

representations of the relationships between tones and by exercises³, in order to facilitate the learning process. These texts had various names in the Byzantine musical manuscripts: propaedia, grammar, introduction, papadike, etc. In modern times, Byzantine music researchers refer to the medieval theoretical texts using mainly the generic term “grammars” (Alexandrescu, 2011-2012, 2015).

The oldest theoretical writing on the act of chanting is the treatise *Hagiopolites* (Raasted, 1983 and Alexandrescu, 2011-2012, pp. 21-55), preserved in two manuscripts dating from the 14th century (Paris gr. 360 and Vat. gr. 872) (Alexandrescu, 2011-2012 and Liakos & Mazera, 2013). At the same time, another type of theoretical writing is also recorded in the form of a dialogue, while in the 17th century, Cyrilos Marmarinos used the name *Theoritikon* (Liakos & Mazera, 2013). The increasing number and the variety of these writings found in the musical manuscripts has led researchers to try to classify them according to content (Tardo, 1938 and Alexandrescu, 2011-2012, apud Floros).

The oldest known manuscript used in a Romanian school was written by Evstatie the Protopsaltes of Putna in 1511, followed by two more propaedias from the 16th century⁴ and by many others from the following centuries (Barbu-Bucur, 1984, p. 2). They attracted the attention of musicologists as early as the last century, so that, in the Romanian bibliography, a first study on the propaedias was published (in two parts) by Archd. Sebastian Barbu-Bucur, Ph.D. (1974, 1975). The author had found 58 manuscripts with Koukouzelian notation containing propaedias in the Romanian libraries, to which in 1999, Fr. Alexie Al. Buzera, Ph.D. added two more propaedias⁵.

A more recent research on musical grammars was carried out by Ozana Alexandrescu, who also created a typology for the musical grammars preserved in the Romanian libraries, along with a detailed presentation of some of these works (Alexandrescu, 2011-2012). The researcher has identified the existence of three types of grammars. Type I, the simplest one (which provided only literacy and was 6-8 pages long), is most often found in Anastasimataria, but

³ “However, the papadike will always begin with a comprehensive protheory of the psaltic art, representing a comprehensive collection of the so-called “methods” (of teaching – our note) belonging to different teachers, for the teaching and explanation of the various themes of psaltic music, with additions from the writings of the best known theorists. In this protheory we also find representations of tables or of the qanun instrument, of the wheel and tree (as parallage methods), of the so-called «complex parallage of Maistor John Koukouzelis», of the «very wise parallage of Ioannes Plousiadenos» etc.” (Stathis, 1975).

⁴ The Greek manuscript I-26, *Antologhion* [Anthology], from the “Mihai Eminescu” Central University Library in Iasi and mss. 283 from the Romanian Academy Library in București.

⁵ One in an 18th century manuscript and the other one written much later, in 1845, in a manuscript with polychronia and school hymns in the notation of the New Method, but with a propaedia in Koukouzelian notation (Buzera, 1999, p. 27)

sometimes also in Anthologies. This type includes the list of signs, phtorals, the names of the echoi, the wheel of the echoi, the apechematas, parallage exercises, the poem *The Great Ison* of Koukouzelis, and, after the 17th century, it also includes the *troparia for the Mathetas* of Chrysaphes. However, the content of the propaedias may vary, by including the presentation of neumes and phtorals, but lacking certain sections. Type II is an extensive grammar (about 50 pages long), notated in the Anthologies of the 17th and 18th centuries. Having a strong applicative character, in the first section it includes the texts of type I, while in the second part it includes a large number of applicative musical examples, with pieces entitled “metrophonia” and “method”. Type III includes only theoretical content, i. e. texts that circulate under the name of *Tratatul Pseudo-Damaskenos* [Pseudo-Damaskenos Treatise], but the author has also identified a different text in manuscript III-88 in Iași (Alexandrescu, 2015).

Regarding the Romanian contribution to the transmission of theoretical notions – in addition to the copying of the Greek manuscripts –, with the affirmation of the national language in church, the theoretical notions were also translated⁶. The first theoretical text in Romanian belongs to Filothei sin Agăi Jipei, who calls it *propaedia* and includes it in his manuscript *Psaltichie rumanească* [Romanian Psalm Book] (1713)⁷ before the Anastasimatarion. The text belongs to type I and was published by Archd. Sebastian Barbu-Bucur, Ph.D. (1930-2015), who notes that in the beginning, the author reproduces the texts of the Greek propaedias almost identically (1984, p. 4)⁸. Based on the extensive research undertaken by Archd. Sebastian Barbu-Bucur on ms. rom. 61 from B.A.R. (Romanian Academy Library) (and its copies) it was found that the last copy of Filothei’s propaedia was written in 1821⁹, but the last propaedia with the old notation is from a manuscript dated 1845, a period when the printed psaltic music book was in full swing.¹⁰

⁶ Archd. Sebastian Barbu-Bucur, Ph.D. (1930-2015) believed that most of the theoretical notions were transmitted in the Romanian language: “All these small grammars of psaltic music are extremely brief [...] because the teaching was done only partially in Greek, *while most of the musical knowledge was passed down to the disciples orally, in Romanian*” (our emphasis) (Barbu-Bucur, 1984, p. 2).

⁷ The Romanian manuscript no. 61, *Psaltichie rumanească* [Romanian Psalm Book], is kept at the Library of the Romanian Academy in București and was published in four volumes by Archd. Sebastian Barbu-Bucur. The books contain photocopies and the complete transcription of the chants, accompanied by introductory studies.

⁸ Filothei Jipa’s propaedia includes: the categories of signs – somata, pneumata, cheironomic signs, the phtorai of the 8 modes, the apechemata of each mode, parallage exercises, Chrysaphes’s troparion for the Mathetas, the transition from one mode to another, martyrias and the wheel of the modes.

⁹ This is found in ms. rom. 5970 B.A.R., written by Hieromonk Acachie from Căldărușani Monastery, according to the model established by Filothei at the beginning of the 18th century (Barbu-Bucur, 1984, p. 4).

¹⁰ It is the one mentioned by Fr. Alexie Buzera, (1999, p. 27).

The theory of the New Method was introduced in the Romanian Principalities shortly after the Reform became official, with the important contribution of the school founded by Petros Manuel Ephesios in 1816, at St. Nicholas Church in the Șelari suburb in București, and of the musical manuscripts brought by other Greek chanters (Moisescu, 1976, p. 19). The research carried out by Priest Prof. Alexie Al Buzera, Ph.D. (1934-2011) on the 19th-century manuscripts preserved in the Romanian libraries revealed the existence of 632 musical manuscripts (343 dated and 289 undated), along with 35 other manuscripts containing the new musical theory, 24 of which are with Romanian text. After studying them, the author concluded that the manuscripts were integral or fragmentary copies of Macarie's *Theoriticon* [Theoretikon], of works printed by Anton Pann or variants that used combinations of them with elements (theoretical or exercises) from unidentified Greek sources (Buzera, 1999, pp. 27-33). The parallel circulation of the theoretical manuscripts and prints reveals the existence of an organized education, in which the teaching-learning process was increasingly based on the written theory. The detailed, explicit works took the place of the brief medieval propaedia, and thus the Romanian copyists contributed their work to the dissemination of the New Method.

2.2. Theoretical works printed in the 19th century

After the penetration of the New Method in the Romanian Principalities and the printing of the first books with neumatic notation in București (1820), the activity of copying/editing the manuscripts continued, along with the translation of the new repertoire into Romanian. Hieromonk Macarie is well known for having managed to print the first church music books with Romanian text in Vienna, in 1823 – the *Anastasimatarion* and the *Irmologion*. On the same occasion, the worthy Hieromonk also printed the first book of music theory in the Romanian language. Entitled *Theoriticon* [Theoretikon], the volume published by Hieromonk Macarie was a translation from Greek, but its sources have not been identified yet¹¹. According to T. Moisescu, the decision to write a separate book containing theoretical notions was made after Macarie's arrival in Vienna and was probably inspired by his contact with Chrysanthos's work, written in 1821 (1976, p. 20).

Hieromonk Macarie's book was the first in a series of 18 printed books containing notions of psalms music theory, published in the 19th century¹². *The Theoriticon* was republished at least three times: in 1848, in Iași, by Dimitrie

¹¹ In connection with this manuscript, Titus Moisescu states: "... we believe that Macarie did not use this ms. gr. 761, as was erroneously believed until now: perhaps another manuscript was available to him – or perhaps he used Chrysanthos's work written in 1821." (1976, p. 20).

¹² See the complete list in the appendix of the present paper.

Suceveanu, in 1856, in Buzău, by Hieromonk Seraphim and in 1875, also in Buzău, by Neagu Ionescu.

Meanwhile, another theoretical work appeared and dominated the second half of the 19th century: *Bazul teoretic și practic al muzicii bisericești sau Gramatica melodică* [The Theoretical and Practical Basis of Church Music or the Melodic Grammar], the volume with which in 1845, Anton Pann inaugurated the series of church music books printed in his printing house¹³. The need for a theoretical book, felt in the schools of the time and well known to Pann in his capacity as professor of church music at the Seminary of the Holy Metropolitan Church of București, determined him to return two years later with *Prescurtare din Bazul muzicii bisericești și din Anastasimatar* [Abridged Form of the Basis of Church Music and of the Anastasimatarion], and, in 1854, with the work entitled *Mică gramatică muzicală teoretică și practică* [The Small Theoretical and Practical Musical Grammar]. Anton Pann's contribution to the construction of a fundamental theoretical work was emphasized by many musicologists and historians, while Fr. Alexie Buzera, Ph.D. is the one who drew attention to the main Greek source used by the great chanter, namely, Theodor Fokaefs's work, published with the same title in Greek, at the Patriarchal Printing House in Constantinople, in 1842 (1999b, p. 39).

Pann's work was widely circulated in the second half of the 19th century and established itself as a model due to its more evolved and easier-to-understand vocabulary¹⁴. The text was easy to follow due to its catechetical form and clearer explanations, so that by the end of the century, seven more books were published that were nothing more than abbreviated versions of Pann's work, printed with/without mentioning the source¹⁵ by former students of the great chanter, who had become teachers in theological seminaries and in schools for church singers. This ensured the preservation of tradition, by

¹³ The year of publication of this book is considered to be 1845, as is recorded in the copies preserved in various libraries. The cover of the copy preserved in the Digital Library of the Stavropoleos Monastery in București was printed in 1846, but the title page of the same copy indicates the year 1845. The book was probably covered in 1846, but the contents had been printed a year earlier and Pann did not replace the title page. This copy comes from the library of musicologist Titus Moisescu, but in the study dedicated to the first prints of psaltic music in the Romanian space he indicates the same year 1845 for the mentioned grammar (1985). The year 1846 is also mentioned by the authors of *Gramatica muzicii psaltice* [Grammar of Psaltic Music] (Lungu & Costea & Croitoru, 1951, p. 5).

¹⁴ We will not insist on the content, as all the information is accessible in the above-quoted book of Father Alexie Buzera and in the study "Anton Pann – Bazul teoretic și practic sau Gramatica melodică. Contribuții" [Anton Pann – *Theoretical and Practical Basis or the Melodic Grammar*. Contributions], published in the journal "Acta Musicae Byzantinae", (Buzera, 1999a, pp. 51-60).

¹⁵ The list of books can be found in the appendix of the present paper.

passing down the theory and model established by Pann in written form, along with the oral model of the church chant.

The manuscripts and works printed in the second half of the 19th century provided a lasting basis for the subsequent completion of a specialized vocabulary. At the same time, the numerous printed books reflect the interest in the quality of training in theological schools. Especially relevant is that in one single year, i. e. 1897, five theoretical works were printed. Along with the reprints (or with the works drawing on the dominant model), the first edition of a theoretical work based on a new concept and in line with the times draws attention: *Principii de muzică bisericească orientală* [Principles of Oriental Church Music] by Ion Popescu-Pasărea (1871-1943). We will return to this contribution in the next section of the study.

In the last year of the 19th century, an elementary course in oriental (church) music [*Curs elementar de muzică orientală (bisericească)*] was published by the protopsaltis of the Buzău Bishopric, Nicolae Severeanu (1864-1841), and approved by the Holy Synod as a textbook for the theological seminaries and schools for church singers. Although succinct (only 32 pages long), this textbook also stands out through its vocabulary and clarity of presentation and illustrates a modern orientation in approaching the theoretical notions in schools, foreshadowing the changes that would occur in the coming decades.

3. Theoretical works of the 20th century

3.1. Theoretical books of the first half of the 20th century

The activity of elaboration and publication of theoretical works continued with the same intensity in the first decades of the new century, as the training of those who provided liturgical services was a constant concern of the teaching staff in seminaries and schools for church singers. Between 1901-1942, 12 more books were published, written by six authors. They are (in order of their appearance): Nifon Ploeșteanu, Ioan Zmeu, Ion Popescu-Pasărea, Theodor V. Stupcanu, Nicolae Severeanu and Amfilohie Iordănescu¹⁶. There

¹⁶ To these could be added the theoretical notions presented in the opening of the book signed by Mihail Vulpescu, mentioned by Gh. Ionescu: "In 1930, he publishes the volume *Cântecul popular românesc* [The Romanian Folk Song] (300 pages), with a preface by Nicolae Iorga, in which he introduces a chapter on psaltic music notation. As a matter of fact, he used to notate the folk songs collected in villages and from his seminary students in both linear and psaltic notation" (Ionescu, 2003, p. 370). Musicologist Viorel Cosma specifies the title of this section: *Câteva indicii asupra muzicii bisericești* [A Few Clues about Church Music] (Cosma, 2006, p. 275). We did not have access to this book, but considering the above, we believe that the aforementioned pages do not represent a theoretical work, like those in the books of Bishop Nifon or Amfilohie Iordănescu.

are just as many variants of the title¹⁷, in which we find key words from the covers of the previous century (*principles, method, course*), but also three new formulations; in 1902, Nifon Ploeșteanu¹⁸ compiled and published a *Carte de muzică bisericească* [Book of Church Music] (our emphasis); Ioan Zmeu entitled his booklet published in 1903, *Extract din teoria muzicei ecclesiastice* [**Extract** from the Theory of Ecclesiastical Music] (our emphasis), and three decades later, Amfilohie Iordănescu compiled a comprehensive volume entitled *Buchet de muzică* [**Bouquet of Music**] (*psaltic chants*) (our emphasis). In addition to the republication of *Principiile* [Principles] by Ion Popescu-Pasărea and of the *Curs* [Course] written by Nicolae Severeanu, Theodor Stupcanu (music teacher at the “Veniamin Costache” Theological Seminary in Iași) summarizes the basic theoretical knowledge for his students, in a 32-page book entitled *Metodă pentru a învăța psaltichia* [Method for the Learning of Psaltic Music], published in two editions (1911 and 1932). However, Ion Popescu-Pasărea remains the most important representative of psaltic music of the first half of the 20th century, with a remarkable contribution in the theoretical field. His 1897 book (*Principii de muzică bisericească orientală* [Principles of Oriental Church Music]), revised and completed at the 1906 edition, was republished six times until the middle of the century (1906, 1910, 1923, 1928, 1939, 1942), including a Braille edition (1938).

Comparing the extension and content of the theoretical books of that period, we notice the volumes compiled by Bishop Nifon Ploeșteanu (400 pages) and by monk Amfilohie Iordănescu (222 pages), which preserve the characteristics mentioned for the medieval propaedias, their books being musical anthologies preceded by theoretical notions. In fact, Bishop Nifon Ploeșteanu does not even mention their existence in the title; instead, he specifies the content of his collection, which includes church music written in neumatic notation and on the staff for three voices, which is a unique combination of monody and choral works. Most of the other publications are, in fact, booklets of 30 or 32 pages, with the exception of I. Zmeu’s *Extract* which is only 19 pages long, and I. Popescu-Pasărea’s *Principiile*, which is 72 pages long¹⁹. The conciseness of these writings (illustrated also by the formulation of the titles) sends us thinking of the same medieval propaedias, the difference lying in the manner of organization of the information and, of course, in the vocabulary²⁰. But, as in the case of the texts that preceded the

¹⁷ See the list of complete titles in the Appendix of the present paper.

¹⁸ Nifon Ploeșteanu (1860-1923) was Bishop and Vicar of the Metropolitan See of Ungro-Wallachia between 1895-1909.

¹⁹ Pann’s grammar has 232 pages.

²⁰ However, this similarity with the medieval propaedias is attenuated if we compare it with works printed only a few years earlier; for example, in Lazăr Ștefănescu’s work published in 1897 (*Teoria principiilor elementare de Muzică Bisericească și Anastasimatarul teoretic și*

Anastasimataria of the previous centuries, their purpose was to provide students with the elementary notions, which would help them to sing the musical texts written with neumes.

However, the theoretical works of the first half of the 20th century solve an important aspect, even if they are tributary to Anton Pann's grammar, in both form and content. Although the catechetical dialogue from Pann's *Bazul* [Basis] is preserved, the authors manage to detach themselves from their teacher's book by updating the terminology, because the main problem of the books printed in the last decades of the 19th century was the old, cumbersome vocabulary which made learning difficult. Here is what N. Severeanu (as a teacher at the seminary in Buzău) noticed in the brief preface to his course published in the last year of the 19th century, justifying the stringency of certain editorial initiatives, along with his own initiative to write a theoretical course: "If I decided to publish this book, it was not out of the desire to assert myself as an author, but rather, as a connoisseur of oriental music and an experienced singer, I cannot remain indifferent when I see that this art, instead of progressing, has fallen behind. I am not saying that there aren't any books, but that they have not achieved their objective at all, or, in other words, they are not practical (far from me saying pedagogical), because those who reprinted the old oriental music books, only limited themselves to replacing the Cyrillic letters with the Latin ones and nothing more. [...] I did everything I could to modernize the old language which was so strange for the new generation and to present the theory in such a way as to make it completely accessible to those who will learn it." (1900, pp. 3).

N. Severeanu's remarks reflected the position of a chanter who had also studied the theory of Western music as a student at the Conservatory of Music in București (where he graduated in 1890), which led Titus Moisescu to say that through his course he "brought a breath of new and modern air by introducing the language of Western linear music into psaltic theory", whereby the musicologist was referring to the replacement of the word "temporal" with "signs of lengthening and shortening of the sound", or the replacement of the phrase "consonant signs" with "elements of expression" (1976, pp. 27).

Even if these phrases did not impose themselves in the musical grammars that followed, Severeanu's book had anticipated the evolution that psaltic music theory would undergo in the following decades, thanks to Ion Popescu-Pasărea's contribution. With a similar training – graduate of the "Nifon Mitropolitul" Seminary in București and of the Conservatory of Music in the same city (Ionescu, 2003, p. 301) –, this prestigious musician had the great

foarte practică [The Theory of the Basic Principles of Church Music and the Theoretical and Very Practical Anastasimatarion]), theory occupies only seven pages.

opportunity to have Ștefanache Popescu as a teacher at the seminary²¹, who had been a student of Anton Pann. Ion-Popescu Pasărea had therefore benefited from a direct connection with the psaltic tradition of the 19th century, through his teacher, who noticed his talent and influenced him in the choice of the music²² that he served throughout his entire life and whose perennality was one of his constant concerns. Nevertheless, the influence of Pann's grammar is not so obvious in his theoretical book, as we have seen by comparing it (its structure, content and vocabulary) with those developed by the above-mentioned authors.

We will dwell a little longer on the complexity of the musical training of the authors in question: they learned church music from the most educated chanters of the time and, in addition, attended Western music courses at university level, four of them being graduates of the Conservatories in București (Nifon Ploeșteanu, Ion Popescu-Pasărea) or Iași (Th. Stupcanu, N. Severeanu). The thoroughness of their training was reflected in their interests, in the way they approached the theoretical problems, in their efforts to modernize the way of transmitting knowledge in psaltic education, but also in their understanding of the importance of oral tradition, passed down to them by their former teachers. The connection with the Byzantine tradition was also made through the direct contact that some of them had with the psaltic music practised in Greece or in Constantinople²³.

Based on the knowledge gained in the years of teaching and on their experience as teachers or as chanters at the kliros, these devoted servants of the Church wrote music theory textbooks meant to facilitate the initiation in musical writing and reading and the learning of the modal system. The amount of knowledge is similar, but the structure and presentation depend on the author's personality and skills. For example, the only grammar that still preserves the Socratic manner of presenting the notions is the one developed by Amfilohie Iordănescu – a reminiscence, perhaps, of the years when he was a student at the school of church singers at the Cernica Monastery²⁴. The text of

²¹ Bishop Nifon Ploeșteanu completed the same training, as a student of Ștefanache Popescu and a graduate of the Central Seminary in București, in 1882 (Ionescu, 2003, p. 267).

²² I. Popescu-Pasărea was also a graduate of the Department of Law, but he gave up practising law and dedicated himself to psaltic music.

²³ For example, Ioan Zmeu learned psaltic music from his father, Manolache Zmeu, who had been a colleague of Dimitrie Suceveanu and had made a study trip to Greece in 1840. This experience determined him to send his son to Athens, Constantinople and Jerusalem, to improve his psaltic music skills (Ionescu, 2003, 255, 266).

²⁴ Cernica Monastery is a historical monument built on two islets, in the town with the same name located 14 km from București. It was built in 1608 and became an important monastic settlement and a centre of culture, spirituality and religious art. It houses a monastic seminary, a museum and a 15,000-volume library.

the other books is arranged in sections marked by titles (called chapters in those written by Zmeu and Iordănescu) and/or numbered.

Following A. Pann's example, the authors introduce students to the psaltic art starting from the definition of music²⁵, which, for Bishop Nifon Ploeșteanu is "the *language of the soul* (our emphasis), because it shows us its secret movements and intimate life" and, at the same time, "the *art of producing and combining sounds, to delight the ear, to interest the spirit and to move the human heart*" (our emphasis) (1902, p. 10 and p. 83). This definition is almost identically formulated by N. Severeanu: "... the art of producing and combining sounds in a way that is pleasing to the ear" (1926, p. 5).

The structure of the books is similar, following a natural sequence, from introductory notions (information about sounds, the names of the notes, signs), to the categories of neumes, the various combinations/special situations and the notions related to the church modes. Due to the limited number of pages, the content is reduced to the basic information, with few explanations, which emphasizes once again the strength of oral tradition. At the same time, the demonstration and clarifications provided by the teacher are essential to the understanding and learning of the notions and to the students' progress. With regards to the arrangement of the chapters/sections, we notice the (unnatural) order in which the categories of signs are presented – by Ploeșteanu, Zmeu, Iordănescu –, with the temporal signs being presented last, after the consonant ones²⁶.

The terminology used by the authors is homogeneous, the variations being, most of the times, insignificant, for example: *temporal/timporal*, *consonante/consunante*. The terms "note" [notes], "semne" [signs] or "semne de scriere" [writing signs] are used to designate the neumes, while in I. Zmeu's book we also find the old term used by Hieromonk Macarie – "caractere" [characters]. We mentioned earlier the novelties proposed by N. Severeanu; surprisingly, the same chanter uses a strange form, "torale", for the signs called phthorai, ignoring the Greek etymology of the word (φθορά = "corruption"). His attempts at "modernization" have not stood the test of time, and the theory has preserved to this day the names of the categories of signs –

²⁵ The only exception is I. Popescu-Pasărea, who appreciates that: "Music, in the general sense of *singing* (our emphasis), is one and the same; it belongs to all times and all peoples" (1939, p. 3).

²⁶ However, in I. Zmeu's book, the parallage exercises with clasma and diple precede those with consonant signs; only the exercises with the gorgon's multiples (which are not mentioned in the text) are placed after the examples with consonant signs.

vocal, temporal, consonant²⁷ – as they were laid down by the theory of the 19th century²⁸.

To further the comparison of these books, we will refer to the chapter dedicated to the modes, noting the consistency given to this section – so important for the church chant – by I. Popescu-Pasărea. While the other authors limit themselves to brief statements about modal signatures, the tuning formula, scale, cadences and range, the great chanter adds essential information about the melodic formulas, explaining in detail the meaning and role of cadences in configuring the specificity of each heirmologic or sticheraric mode. In addition, he provides examples of the usual formulas for all the types of cadences, along with a so-called *calapod* [pattern] of the heirmologic and sticheraric mode. Other clarifications are also made when there are exceptions in the cadence system, for certain chants etc. We emphasize the importance of writing down these formulas, which were indeed presented by the teachers who used other theoretical resources, but only orally. Through the author's efforts, they were made available to students, who could repeat them at any time, without needing the teacher's presence. Before presenting the characteristics of the modes separately, I. Popescu-Pasărea also provides guidelines for the mastering of each mode: "In order to know the modes well and to distinguish between the two variants of each mode: *sticheraric* and *heirmologic*, we must study the four characteristic attributes of each mode, namely: *the scale, the basis of the mode, the cadences and the cadence formulas*, which make up the type of each mode..." (p. 36).

In all the grammars, the theoretical notions are practised with the help of examples whose repetition facilitates the formation of the skills required for a fluent reading. The exercises are either incorporated in the chapters (Severeanu) or placed at the end of the text and vary in number between 14 (Zmeu) and 36 (Severeanu). There are no examples of this type in the theoretical part of Ploeșteanu's book, because his intention was not, in fact, to write a textbook of music theory, as it results from the introductory text of the section and from the preface²⁹: "Given that some people, whether out of ignorance or ill-will, *call psaltic music primitive and rusty*, and consider its characters³⁰ *as hieroglyphic signs* and therefore impossible to learn; that is why I have decided to deal briefly in this book with the basic theory of psaltic music, so as to allow anyone to see that this music is easy to learn, should anyone be eager and willing to study it." (1902, p. 83)

²⁷ We note that A. Pann uses the term *consonate*, but this variant was not adopted (1845, p. 54).

²⁸ In the volume *Gramatica muzicii psaltice* [The Grammar of Psaltic Music], supervised by Fr. Nicu Moldoveanu, Ph.D. and published in 2013, the names are the ones mentioned above.

²⁹ In the book's *Preface*, Nifon Ploeșteanu showed that his intention was to bring together in the same volume the monodic and choral chants that are most useful to church singers.

³⁰ He refers to neumes.

These examples sometimes coincide with those of 19th century grammars, but each author also uses variants inspired by older models, as well as personal examples. We notice N. Severeanu's orderly manner of presenting them by numbering them, thus facilitating the teaching activity in the classroom.

The ability to read the musical texts written with neumes was formed with the help of exercises in which the names of the scale steps were written under the neumes, as was the custom in the 19th century³¹; this is, in fact, a wrong method, as it does not facilitate the memorization of the signs and of the function they perform, nor the student's independence in reading the chants.

In Popescu-Pasărea's *Principii* [Principles], exercises are placed in the last pages of the book, with titles that reference various sections of the text. What draws our attention here are the clarifications in the title ("writing, reading and intonation EXERCISES on the above principles"), which reflect a well-defined and different teaching strategy from that of other authors. The learning of the scale step names is achieved through question-and-answer exercises: "If we move from $\pi\alpha$ two tones above, where do we end up? From $\delta\upsilon$ 3t. above?" etc. – so as to make students think, consciously pronounce the name of the step and then intone in the same manner. Learning the intonation of the diatonic scale is not limited to singing it in ascent and descent, but also requires the singing of the melodic formulas notated with scale step names (Example no. 2 p. 66). The learning of the diastematic neumes (vocal signs) is facilitated by the writing exercises (Example no. 3, p. 66).

It was only after the student practised enough neume writing that followed the reading (uttering the name of the scale step, without intonation) and only afterwards the "reading and intonation" exercises, which were repeated until the chapter on rhythmic signs was approached, which meant that, by then, the fluent reading of the vocal signs had been learned (Example no. 8 b, p. 68). We therefore appreciate that the great chanter's theoretical work asserted itself by this different approach to teaching, which was much more efficient than the mechanical one suggested by the other textbooks.

According to the models used in the previous century, the grammars contain the schematic rendering of the scale of each mode, with the steps, martyrias and the indication of the value of the tones. All the books follow Pann's model, where the octave is divided into 22 sections, with the three types of tones having the following sizes: the great tone (4 sections), the middle tone (3 sections) and the small tone (2 sections). The scale diagrams are presented

³¹ See Macarie's *Theoritikon* [Theoretikon] (Moisescu, 1976), on pages 6-7, 26-30. In Pann's *Bazul* [Basis], all the exercises in Part II are presented in this manner. Part III, *Pentru melodia ehurilor* [For the Melody of the Modes], includes examples from chants, in which the neumes are accompanied by text.

from a vertical perspective, as they appear most of the times in Pann's model, while N. Severeanu presents them horizontally³². We find that none of the books aligns with the system of octave division into 68 sections – as it appears in Hieromonk Macarie's *Theorithicon* [Theoretikon] –, or with the system established in 1881, with tones of 12, 10 and 8 sections.

From what has been presented so far, we can say that in the first half of the 20th century, the authors of the psaltic music theory books managed to create an adequate structure of the content and updated the vocabulary, which was preserved as such in the decades that followed. Through his musical grammar, I. Popescu-Pasărea managed to create a model in which theory and practice intertwined harmoniously, in a manner that covered the needs of an efficient education. In fact, his contribution to the evolution of psaltic music in Romanian is unanimously appreciated, and he is therefore considered the one who, through his books, marked the completion of the process of Romanianization of church chants.³³

3.2. Theoretical books of the second half of the 20th century

A comparison between the number of works published in the two halves of the last century reveals a disarming contrast, because for five decades, only three books on psaltic music theory were published in Romania and the *Theorithicon* [Theoretikon] of Hieromonk Macarie was republished (1976). The cause of this surprising decline was the change of political regime, because, with the forced abdication of His Majesty King Mihai I of Romania and the proclamation of the Romanian People's Republic (1947), the country entered the sphere of influence of the Soviet Union. The establishment of the atheist communist state was followed by a succession of normative acts regulating the activity of religious cults, which came entirely under the jurisdiction of the communist party, of the government and of the Grand National Assembly. The decrees issued in 1948 and 1959³⁴ radically affected everything related to the

³² In Pann's *Bazul* [Basis], the charts appear in this manner only in the case of the scales formed with the help of the phthorai mustaar, nisabur, hisar, general ifes and general dies, pages 137-140.

³³ See, in this regard, the works of Archd. Sebastian Barbu-Bucur on the process of Romanianization of church chants.

³⁴ The subordination of the religious denominations was stipulated in Decree no. 177/1948, on the general regime of religious denominations; Article 13 stated: "The organization and operation of any religious denomination are subject to recognition by a decree issued by the Presidium of the Grand National Assembly, upon Government proposal, following the recommendation of the minister of religious affairs. In well-motivated cases, recognition may be withdrawn in the same manner". The decree also provided for the abolition of numerous theological schools (seminaries, schools of church singers) and departments of theology. Decree no. 410/1959 supplemented the previous one with amendments that had retroactive effect and which affected the monastic life. The persecution against those who wore monastic

Orthodox Church and to the spiritual life of the Romanian people³⁵, that period being later characterized as one of the worst crises undergone by the Church³⁶. Apart from the reprisals against the monastery dwellers³⁷, this crisis was reflected in the measures taken for the reorganization of the religious affairs, including the dissolution of over 100 monasteries and the abolition of the schools of church singers, of numerous seminaries and of the departments of theology.

The process of purification that the entire society, those who served the Orthodox Church included, went through during that period, affected both the quality of the theological education and the performance of the religious services. In this context, in the June 1952 session, the Holy Synod decided to introduce a unique version of the church repertoire throughout the country, thus trying to save the traditional psaltic chant (“Lucrările...” [The Meeting ...], 1952, pp. 616-617). The so-called “standardized chant” had to replace the local variants existing in the collections published in the previous decades and at the same time to ensure the active participation of the parishioners in the religious services³⁸. This true church music reform had been prepared by the publication of *Cântări liturgice omofone și cântări la Cateheze pe ambele semiografii suprapuse* [Homophonic Liturgical Chants and Catechetical Chants in Both Overlapped Notations] (Lungu, Uncu, 1951) and of a grammar, followed by two volumes of the *Anastasimatar uniformizat* [Standardized Anastasimatarion], containing chants for Vespers and Matins (Lungu, Costea, 1953, 1954).

The decisions of the communist state led to a decrease in the number of those who were familiar with the neumatic notation, as well as to a

robes intensified, many monks and nuns being forced to leave the monasteries and work in factories, in order to undergo a process of re-education. Retrieved from <http://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocumentAfis/47>.

³⁵ See more details about the situation of the Romanian Orthodox Church during communism in Chircev, 2019.

³⁶ In 1999, on the occasion of the republication of Victor Ojog's *Anastarimatar* [Anastasimatarion], Archd. Sebastian Barbu-Bucur, Ph.D. and Fr. Alexie Buzera wrote the following in the book's preface: “Psaltic music has gone through several crises ... from time to time, but none has equalled the crisis of the last 50 years” (Ojog, 1999, p. V).

³⁷ The attention of the authorities turned to the monasteries, especially after the Hungarian revolution of 1956, because they were believed to be hiding opponents of the communist regime among the monks.

³⁸ On the occasion of the 1951 Meeting of the Holy Synod, His Beatitude Patriarch Justinian Marina (1901-1977) stated: “... it is time to put an end to regionalist church music and it is absolutely necessary that in Transylvania, Banat and in all the parts of the country we abide by the traditional psaltic music, so that at one point, by standardizing the church chant, a believer from Dobrogea can always take active part in the responses to the Divine Liturgy in a church in Maramureș, or a believer from Banat can do the same in a Moldavian church”. (*Lucrările Sfântului Sinod* [Meeting of the Holy Synod], 1952, p. 617).

deterioration in the quality of the musical training offered in theological schools. To ensure the training of the few students enrolled in these schools, the music theory books published in the first half of the century were replaced with a single textbook, published in 1951, at the initiative of His Beatitude Patriarch Justinian³⁹: *Gramatica muzicii psaltice* [The Grammar of Psaltic Music] (Lungu, Costea, Croitoru, 1951)⁴⁰. The structure of its content was entrusted to a commission formed by Professor Nicolae Lungu⁴¹, Priest Professor Grigore Costea⁴² and Professor Ion Croitoru⁴³.

The textbook opens with an extended preface containing the findings of the commission based on the analysis of the repertoire and of the existing theoretical works and emphasizing the need for a theoretical work to serve as a basis for a unique handbook of chants, designed to ensure a uniform chant in all the churches. As can be seen in the titles of the books published in 1951, the commission proposed a different approach to the neumatic musical notation, which could be assimilated with the help of the Western staff notation, which is a peculiarity in the field of psaltic music theory, then found only in the Romanian space⁴⁴. This orientation is also highlighted in the subtitle of the new grammar – “Studiu comparativ cu notația liniară” [Comparative Study with the Linear Notation] – and is justified by the authors as follows: “... The

³⁹ The colophon of the book is preceded by a text belonging to the Publishing House of the Bible and Mission Institute of the Romanian Orthodox Church, in which this specification is made along with the fact that the textbook was published on June 6, 1951, thus marking three years of office of His Beatitude the Patriarch (Lungu, Costea, Croitoru, 1951, p. 207).

⁴⁰ The book was republished in 1969 and an English version was printed in Canada (Lungu & Costea & Croitoru, 1984).

⁴¹ Nicolae Lungu (1900-1993) was a teacher, conductor and composer who carried out his activity in București. Between 1949 and 1976 he was an associate professor of Church Music, Ritual and Typikon at the University Theological Institute. He was the conductor of the Choir of the Romanian Patriarchate (1947-1985) and a member of the Union of Romanian Composers. He published textbooks, wrote studies and articles and composed religious and secular psaltic and choral music works.

⁴² Grigore Costea (1882-1963) was a priest and teacher at theological seminaries in Galați (at the Cernica Monastery) and in București (at the “Central” Seminary, after Ion Popescu-Pasărea's retirement, in 1936). He contributed to the transcription of the standardized repertoire on staff.

⁴³ Ion Croitoru (1884-1972) was a teacher, conductor and composer. A student of Neagu Ionescu at the school of church singers in Buzău (1896-1899), he then attended the courses of the Conservatory of Music in București and later earned his undergraduate degree from the Department of Law in București (1921). He was a teacher at various high schools and at the Academy of Religious Music in București (1932-1939), and a conductor of numerous choral groups and church choirs. He wrote music textbooks, as well as articles, chronicles and reviews for various newspapers and journals. He composed religious and secular choral music.

⁴⁴ Fr. Nicu Moldoveanu, Ph.D. states that this was a unique initiative in the whole Orthodoxy and that simultaneous notation was introduced in Greece only after 1990 (Lungu & Costea & Croitoru *et al.*, 2013, p. 14).

entire semiography, from the first to the last chapter of this grammar, as well as all the theoretical notions, exercises and applicative psaltic chants were transcribed and explained through linear music, a **music so well known today by the great mass of the people** (our emphasis). We are confident that this grammar, which, **through the comparative study, enables anyone to easily and accurately learn the chant** that accompanies the church service, will be of real use.” (Lungu, Costea, Croitoru, 1951, p. 8).

Thus, staff notation was seen as an adjuvant designed only to facilitate the learning of neumatic notation and to contribute to the preservation of the traditional church music, i. e. of psaltic music, as the authors further state: “...our effort does not aim, therefore, to change or replace psaltic music, as, perhaps, it is believed by those who are not familiar with the topic, but, on the contrary, to save and secure it, like an asset that is an integral part of our spiritual heritage. [...] What really counts is that the unparalleled beauty and charm of the psaltic chants **be not distorted by misinterpretation and faulty performance**, as is happening today at every step, **because of the intricate and confusing psaltic grammars that are in existence**” [...] ... we will be spared of what must in no way happen, namely the disappearance of the psaltic chant and its replacement with another type of chant, as has happened in other Orthodox Churches” (our emphasis) (Lungu & Costea & Croitoru, 1951, p. 8).

For the elaboration of this textbook, the commission appointed by the Romanian Patriarchate relied on the two 19th century theoretical works written in the Romanian language – Hieromonk Macarie’s *Theoriticon* [Theoretikon] and Anton Pann’s *Bazul teoretic* [Theoretical Basis] –, but also on works from the Western bibliography, among which the book of French Musicologist L. A. Bourgault Ducoudray, *Études sur la Musique Ecclesiastique Grecque* (Lungu & Costea & Croitoru, 1951, p. 9).

The work carried out by the three authors was fruitful and resulted in a 208-page volume with an exhaustive and well-structured content, with a clear text and eloquent explanations, far superior to the brief booklets written in the previous decades. Apart from the large number of pages, the comparison of the content of this book with that of the old grammars shows a more judicious distribution of the semiographic concepts throughout the successive chapters, as well as the fact that each theoretical problem is immediately followed by exercises and musical examples in which the theoretical notions are applied. The first section of the book, however, preserves the usual introductory character, containing *Noțiuni generale asupra muzicii* [General Notions of Music], though with a more consistent text than in the previous grammars, which also includes notions of the musical scale (including its schematic representation), the names of the scale steps and exercises for their practice.

We generally notice a better teaching training of the authors, who knew how to combine the learning of the categories of neumes in such a way that the

exercises lead the student gradually and naturally to the psaltic monody. For example, the assimilation of all the combinations of vocal signs is done in stages. After practising the simple vocal signs, two temporal signs are approached (clasma and gorgon) and only then the combined and supported vocal signs, other temporal signs, rests, consonant signs, alteration signs and martyrias. In all the other grammars the signs from the two categories are not mixed, which limits the content of the applicative exercises and gives them a mechanical character.

Other notions, taken from the Western theory, are also included in these chapters: apart from the beat and the musical scale, one learns about the tone, semitone, tetrachord and nuances, the last two terms being introduced for the first time in a psaltic music grammar, along with the notion of interval. We find that the three types of tones from the traditional theory are abandoned with the transition to the equal tempered system of Western music, which was also facilitated by the system of division of the octave into 22 sections, previously adopted by Anton Pann and then perpetuated by most of the authors who followed him. In this system, the small tone (2 sections) represents half of the great tone (4 sections), the relationship between a semitone and tone being thus foreshadowed in the old grammars, which also had a tone of 3 sections. With the new system of octave division, the quarter tone (characteristic of the enharmonic genre) was abandoned, being considered “a ballast, as burdensome as it is useless and harmful”, which caused confusion on the theoretical level, while on the practical one, “... exasperating fakes for the listener and compromising ones for the unsurpassed beauty and charm of the psaltic melody.” (Lungu & Costea & Croitoru, 1951, p. 6). Through the adoption of the equal tempered system, the quality of the intervals used in psaltic music was (theoretically) transformed: the quarter tone became semitone and the difference between the augmented second intervals of the chromatic modes disappeared (according to Macarie’s *Theoreticon* [Theoretikon], the augmented second had 14 sections in the 2nd mode, and 18 sections in the 6th mode).

The influence of the Western theory can also be noticed in other aspects related to the church modes, which, according to the book’s preface, can be major and minor, like the tonalities, although no classification is provided based on this criterion, but only the explanation of this new characterization, which is related to the possibility of harmonizing the psaltic melodies (Lungu & Costea & Croitoru, 1951, p. 7). In fact, in all the chapters dwelling on modes, the authors do not deviate from the traditional theory and evoke the division into authentic and plagal modes, and, respectively, diatonic, chromatic and enharmonic ones (their names were preserved, even if they lost their main feature, i. e. the quarter tone) (Lungu & Costea & Croitoru, 1951, p. 64). Apart from the 8th mode, compared to the C major scale, the major or minor character is not specified for any other mode.

Regarding the modes, we also notice the types of cadences, including the imperfect, perfect and final ones, along with the *semicadence*, explained as "... the stop or pause on the *fifth* step of the scale in which the chant is written" (Lungu & Costea & Croitoru, 1951, p. 65) – a notion that is foreign to the psaltic monody; however, it is not mentioned in the chapters dedicated to each mode, except for the 8th and 6th sticheraric modes. We can see, therefore, how difficult this approach through the Western theory was, and the impossibility of overcoming certain incompatibilities.

The new notions, which appear in the preface to the work and in the musical examples with simultaneous notation, also include the terms of movement and nuances, borrowed from the Western theory for two reasons: to create an expressive chant and because they are known by everyone (Lungu & Costea & Croitoru, 1951, p. 8).

In the final part of the book we find some general remarks on the semiography, from which it results that in the transcription of the psaltic chants on staff, the authors opted for a simple variant, accusing an abuse of the use of consonant signs in the previously published volumes. Through the manner of rendition of the text (with repeated/extended kratima), without repeating the vowels in the melismata, the commission also influenced the traditional manner interpretation (marking the sound corresponding to each neume) by introducing the expressive legato (Lungu & Costea & Croitoru, 1951, pp. 158-159).

The 1951 grammar also stands out among all the books of this kind by the initiative of the commission to add a valuable appendix at the end (*Ortografia psaltică după Macarie și Anton Pann* [Psaltic Orthography According to Macarie and Anton Pann], in which the rules of sign combination in the neumatic semiography are explained. The authors believe that this study "... can be of great use to those who would like to deepen their knowledge of or even write psaltic music" (Lungu & Costea & Croitoru, 1951, p.163).

Although the contents of the book have often been criticized in recent decades, the work published in the mid-20th century was for decades the basic textbook used in the theological schools and an important source of documentation for the musicians who wanted to get closer to psaltic music. The permanent reference to linear notation and to the tonal-functional system was useful at the time and in the context in which the textbook was published. In the meantime, a number of aspects have been clarified that differentiate the two sound worlds, i. e. tonal-functional and psaltic, so that in the wake of the third millennium, the servants of the Church were requesting the return to the traditional chant. We quote, in this respect, the opinion of Archd. Sebastian Barbu-Bucur, Ph.D. and of Priest Prof. Alexie Buzera, Ph.D., expressed on the occasion of the republication of Victor Ojog's *Anastasimatar* [Anastasimatarion]: "Between 1950 and 1990, this "standardization" of psaltic

music was welcomed and in part achieved its purpose, especially with the chants of the Holy Liturgy in which many believers participate actively, a good gain that will be with us for a long time. On the other hand, the completely uneducated believer in this respect could not assimilate the psaltic chant for Vespers and Matins. Now that theological education has been reconfigured, it is necessary to reintroduce the authentic chant as it was promoted by the classics of psaltic music” (Ojog, 1999, p. V).

Two decades after the publication of the grammar compiled by the committee appointed by the Romanian Patriarchate for the transcription of the repertoire needed for the standardization of the church chant, a second book containing theoretical notions was published at *Editura Muzicală* [Musical Publishing House]. Entitled *Notația și ehurile muzicii bizantine* [Byzantine Music Notation and Modes], the volume signed by Deacon Grigore Panțiru⁴⁵ is intended, in particular, for researchers or for those who wish to become acquainted with the neumatic musical notation, as is clear from the brief *Introducere* [Introduction] signed by the author, who states: “In order to enable those interested to learn and extend their knowledge in the field of reading and transcribing the Byzantine musical notation, I have compiled this work of a theoretical and practical nature. It is addressed to all musicians and connoisseurs of Western music, to whom the Byzantine chant is presented in the notation of different epochs, as it emerged and developed over time, up to the church music of today” (Panțiru, 1971, p. 5).

As intended, in the two parts of the work, the author presents the characteristic features of the notation used in each period. From the ecphonetic notation to that of the 15th to 18th centuries, the historical and theoretical information is accompanied by examples and transcription exercises extracted from musical manuscripts, all of which facilitate any musician’s approach to Byzantine music. In fact, the purpose of the 308-page volume was to stimulate the young people’s interest in musical palaeography, given that at that time there were few people who were familiar with both notations, had a complex training and were able to contribute to the solving of the many problems contained in the Byzantine musical manuscripts: “We do not claim to offer a work with original theories on Byzantine music, but rather to provide a synthesis of the research conducted in this field so far, in order to facilitate and attract as many people as possible to the research of these issues, in order to bring to light the treasures found in manuscripts” (Panțiru, 1971, p. 5).

⁴⁵ Grigore Panțiru (1905-1981) was a teacher, musicologist and composer with a rich research work in the field of Byzantine music, materialized in studies and articles and in the two volumes: *Notația și ehurile muzicii bizantine* [Byzantine Music Notation and Modes] and *Lecționarul evanghelic de la Iași (Ms. 160/IV-34, sec. XI)* [Evangelical Lectionary from Iași (Ms. 160/IV-34, 11th c.)], published in 1982. Through his research work he made an important and original contribution to the interpretation of ecphonetic notation.

The notation of the New Method is addressed in the second part of the paper, which has nineteen chapters and also includes numerous examples and transcription exercises, allowing the immediate application of the theoretical knowledge, i. e. the reading of the musical texts rendered in psaltic notation. The neumes and the notions of psaltic music theory are explained by means of the Western notation, with staff equivalents for each case. Compared to the 1951 *Grammar*, we notice a few differences in the interpretation of certain signs such as *petasti*, *clasma* and the consonant signs, but each time Gr. Panțiru provides clarifications in the text or in the footnotes⁴⁶. For example, *clasma* is interpreted as an extension of duration by one beat, but in the footnote it is specified: “Anton Pann ornaments the *clasma* as if he had written an *omalon* under the oligon. (See *Bazul teoretic și practic* [Theoretical and Practical Basis], p. 195). In this paper, the *clasma* is transcribed without ornament, as it was in the old music and as it is performed in Moldavia” (Panțiru, 1971, p. 185). Such comments and references to the studied bibliography appear on many pages of the book and reveal the author’s concern for clarifying certain variants of interpretation and for providing documented explanations of his own manner of transcription.

Church modes are presented in detail, in the order of their numbers, with each being treated in a special chapter that includes, in addition to the presentation of the characteristic traits, examples of chants. The scale of the mode is rendered in psaltic style and on the staff, with the specification that “in order to have a complete picture of the cadences in each mode, we will mark the cadences on the staff with the following values: perfect, with a whole note, and imperfect, with half notes” (Panțiru, 1971, p. 210).

The terminology used is the traditional one, combined with Western terminology; for example, although the chapters are entitled *Semne de durată* [Duration Signs] (Chapter IV) or *Ornamentele* [Ornaments] (Chapter VIII), the first sentence of each chapter contains the term/phrase used in the traditional theory. The book is thus useful both to the musicians with musical training and to the theologians who learned the theory from *Gramatica muzicii psaltice* [Psaltic Music Grammar] in seminaries and university departments. Given that two decades after its publication, the number of copies of that grammar was insufficient, the volume published by Deacon Gr. Panțiru was an important bibliographic source for many generations.

Well structured, with clear explanations and illustrative examples, the book is based on a rich bibliography, capitalizing on the works then available

⁴⁶ His transcriptions are based on the oral tradition from eastern Romania (Moldavia), which was well known to him as a graduate of the “Veniamin Costache” Theological Seminary in Iași – where he had studied with Theodor Stupcanu (1861-1936) – and as a teacher at the Monastic Seminary from the Neamț Monastery (1927-1928, 1932-1940). Many examples in the book are taken from the *Anastasimatar* [Anastasimatarion] published in 1926 by his teacher from Iași.

in Romania on the Byzantine neumatic notation, written in Bulgarian, English, French, German, Greek, Italian and Romanian, with half of the titles being taken from foreign bibliography. Many footnotes show that the author compared various bibliographic sources, but also took into account the oral tradition when interpreting and transcribing the psaltic neumes on the staff⁴⁷. In addition to the books printed in the 19th and 20th centuries, there are also 27 manuscripts, which were consulted directly or, in some cases, through photocopies.

Thus, even though it is not an actual musical grammar, the book served as an important source of information during the communist years. In fact, the book was published at a time when there was a period of relaxation in society, after the death of Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin (1953) and after the gradual detachment from Moscow, especially after Nicolae Ceaușescu became head of the Romanian Communist Party (1965). As we have seen on another occasion, all those who had studied in seminaries and theological departments or knew church music from the practice at the kliros were able to capitalize on their knowledge and get involved in research work or even compose choral religious works in the 8th and 9th decades of the last century (Chircev, 2019). This explains how the publication of the book was possible, having met the conditions imposed by the communist censorship with a title that avoids forbidden phrases such as “church music” and dealing with an issue related to our musical heritage⁴⁸.

During the same period, another volume was published, which, however, exceeds in content and complexity the usual musical grammars understood as textbooks for the learning of psaltic theory and chant. We are referring here to Professor Victor Giuleanu’s extensive work entitled *Melodica bizantină. Studiu teoretic și morfologic al stilului modern (neo-bizantin)* [Byzantine Melody. Theoretical and Morphological Study of the Modern (neo-Byzantine) Style], published by Editura Muzicală [Musical Publishing House] in București, in 1981. In fact, the author himself (indirectly) emphasizes this aspect in *Prefață* [Preface], putting forward three objectives of his approach. The first objective of his monographic study is related to music composition, his intention being “to pave the way for today’s creator to the expressive subtleties of the Byzantine musical art.” A second objective is musicological, i. e. “... on the one hand, the identification, formulation and systematization of the fundamental principles and techniques of Byzantine melodic composition, and,

⁴⁷ The examples provided in the books are numerous, but we will mention only one: in explaining the function fulfilled by the dotted antichenoma, Gr. Panțiru opts for a different interpretation than that provided in *Gramatica muzicii psaltice* [Grammar of Psaltic Music], comparing it with a grupetto. It is a variant heard from a singer from Syria, a good keeper of Byzantine tradition (1971, p. 198).

⁴⁸ See details about the functioning of censorship in Gheorghiuță, 2015.

on the other hand, their integration in the general arsenal of musical devices, as a component part of the universal musical science” (1981, p. 5). The third objective of his research “... takes into consideration the interference of the musical art with the Romanian folk and high art of the past centuries and of today, about which special considerations are made in homage to all the earlier and contemporary composers for having created in music such an original and attractive compositional style in the world of universal arts, consisting of the symbiosis between the Byzantine and the Romanian...” (1981, p. 6).

Concerned with the “supremacy of the concept of melody” and with the “modal variety” of the Byzantine musical structures, V. Giuleanu conducts a 400-page detailed study of the Byzantine monody, treated more as a musical art and less as a component part of the Orthodox cult. Therefore, his book – based on an extensive bibliography and sprinkled with numerous musical examples (staff-notated) –, despite also including the presentation of the church notation and modes, is addressed mainly to composers and musicologists, urging them to exploit the Byzantine melody in the large-scale vocal-symphonic musical works. The thorough study conducted by V. Giuleanu made his book into an important bibliographical source, in which the reconsiderations and re-evaluations of the specific notions and terms proposed by the author managed to “facilitate their two-way circulation: from the Western music to the Eastern one, and vice versa” (Giuleanu, 1981, p. 5), allowing musicians to get closer to church music.

The last decade of the 20th century was one of recovery and revival of the psaltic tradition, in the context created after the establishment of democracy, in December 1989. In addition to the re-establishment of the seminaries and departments of theology (dissolved by the 1948 decree), special sections of Religious Music began to operate in the three institutions of higher music education in București, Cluj-Napoca and Iași (since the fall of 1990) – an attempt to revive the Academy of Religious Music that had operated in București in the interwar period, under the leadership of priest Ioan D. Petrescu (1884-1970). For the students enrolled in this specialization, a specialized bibliography was needed; therefore, in 1993, Archd. Sebastian Barbu-Bucur printed multiple copies of a course book entitled *Teoria, practica și metodică muzicii psaltice. Exerciții de paralaghie* [Theory, Practice and Methodology of Psaltic Music. Parallage Exercises]. In the same year, a book was prepared that included photocopies of the two important works of the 20th century: *Gramatică muzicii psaltice* [The Grammar of Psaltic Music] and the 1939 edition of I. Popescu-Pasărea’s *Principiile* [Principles]. This certainly was a saving solution for that period of revival of psaltic music and of the research of this tradition, an initiative that enabled the initiation of many young people in this field. A large volume of church chants in simultaneous notation had already been published a year earlier, but which had been prepared before

1990⁴⁹. A new theoretical work would be printed only in 2006, by Fr. Prof. Stelian Ionașcu, Ph.D., from the Department of Orthodox Theology of the University of București: *Teoria muzicii psaltice pentru seminariile teologice și școlile de cântăreți* [Psaltic Music Theory for the Theological Seminaries and Schools of Church Singers] (2006); we only mention it, because it exceeds the time allotted for this paper. However, we note that in this new grammar, simultaneous notation is no longer used, but only the non-pneumatic one.

4. Conclusions

Our retrospective look highlights several important aspects related to the presence of music theory in the area of interests of the Romanian chanters and musicians of the 20th century.

First, we have found that this discipline aroused the interest of many chanters and musicians who served as teachers in theological schools of different levels of learning and who strove to provide high-quality training to pupils and students, even in the harsh conditions of the communist period. On the other hand, we notice that the number of works, along with their originality and structure, the terminology used and the didactic solutions used in the treatment of the neumatic musical notation were influenced by the transformations that took place in the Romanian society. This is the reason why, although the evolution of the theoretical works represents a continuous process, it was necessary to treat them in separate stages, according to the demarcation line set up by the establishment of the atheist state in Romania. The change of the political regime interrupted the natural course of evolution of this field and generated the contrast between the prolificacy registered in the first half of the century and the reduced number of psaltic music theory books from the second part of the century. At the same time, this is also the reason why the second half of the 20th century was marked by the use of simultaneous notation, where the neumes were accompanied by their transcription on staff, both in the theoretical books and in the collections containing the standardized repertoire published after the middle of the last century, which is a peculiarity of psaltic music theory in 20th century Romania.

The comparison of the content of the psaltic music theory books reveals the clumsiness of some of the texts published in the first decades of the century as compared to the thoroughness of the studies undertaken later. However, there are also similarities between the two stages, because each half of the century was marked by a dominant work: *Principiile* [Principles] by Ion Popescu-Pasărea and *Gramatica* [The Grammar] published in 1951. Not coincidentally, after 1990, these two books were the first ones made available

⁴⁹ See the Preface to *Cântările Sf. Liturghii*, 1992 [The Chants of the Holy Liturgy].

to those who studied church music, being combined into a single volume that was multiplied rapidly with the means available at the time. Despite the criticism brought in the last twenty years to the way in which certain chapters of the theory are treated in the ‘Grammar’, the book continues to be a reference manual in the Romanian bibliography, if we consider the fact that in 2013 it was republished by Fr. Prof. Nicu Moldoveanu, Ph.D. from the Faculty of Orthodox Theology in București, being presented in *Nota editorială* [Editorial Note] as “the only official textbook used in seminaries and university theological education”, which is accessible and useful to all those who want to learn the music of Byzantine origin, but imbued “with an authentic Romanian flavour” (Lungu & Costea & Croitoru *et al.*, 2013, p. 5).

Another conclusion is that Anton Pann’s grammar remains the most important bibliographic source in the field of psaltic theory in the Romanian language throughout the 20th century. In the first decades it was often compiled, then the important ideas, the terminology, the way of rendering the musical scale, etc. were retained. This finding is another argument that attests to the permanent connection of the Romanian Orthodox church music with the Byzantine tradition (present in works in simultaneous notation), given that, as Father Alexie Buzera demonstrated decades ago, the text of the 19th century chanter is a translation and adaptation of a Greek theoretical text. After 1990, this connection was also emphasized by the publication of a new translation from Greek, in 2010. The book in question belongs to professor Georgios Konstantinou and is entitled *Teoria și practica muzicii bisericesti* [Theory and Practice of Church Music], regarded by its translator, Adrian Sârbu, Ph.D., as “a synthesis based on the most important psaltic music books, such as that of the reformer Chrysanthos of Madytos, or of the famous contemporary theorist, Byzantinologist and ethnomusicologist Simon Karas” (Konstantinou, 2012, p.15).

Psaltic music theory in the Romanian language had a meandering course in the 20th century, during which successive authors managed to develop a specialized terminology and to transmit the notional content passed down for centuries by chanters and teachers, heirs of Byzantine music, through manuscripts and old musical prints.

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Appendix 1

Theoretical works printed in the 19th century

1823 – Macarie Ieromonahul, *Theoriticon*, f.e. Vienna.

1845 – Anton Pann, *Bazul teoretic și practic al muzicii bisericești sau Gramatica melodică*, Întru a sa tipografie de muzică bisericească, București.

1847 – Anton Pann, *Prescurtare din Bazul muzicii bisericești și din Anastasimatar*, Întru a sa tipografie de muzică bisericească, București.

1848 – Macarie Ieromonahul / Dimitrie Suceveanu, *Theoriticon*, Iași.

1854 – Anton Pann, *Mica gramatică muzicală*, Întru a sa tipografie de muzică bisericească București.

1856 – Macarie Ieromonahul/ Serafim Ieromonahul, *Theoriticon*, În tipografia Sfintei Episcopii, Buzău.

1859 – Oprea Demetrescu, *Principii elementare ale muzicii bisericești și prescurtare din Anastasimatar*, București.

1872 – Oprea Demetrescu, *Principii elementare ale muzicii bisericești și prescurtare din Anastasimatar*, ed. a II-a Oprea Demetrescu, Râmnicu Vâlcea.

1875 – Oprea Demetrescu, *Principii elementare ale muzicii bisericești și prescurtare din –Anastasimatar*, ed. a III-a Oprea Demetrescu, Râmnicu Vâlcea.

1875 – Neagu Ionescu, J.B. Sburlan, *Gramatică, Anastasimatar, Irmologhion și Doxologii retipărite întocmai cu cele tipărite în Episcopia Buzeului în anul 1856*, București.

- 1875 – Neagu Ionescu, *Gramatica muzicii bisericești coprinzătoare de toate regulile, semnele și scările necesare la învățământul acestei arte, culeasă și aranjată după ale repausatului Anton Pann...*, Buzău.
- 1892 – Gheorghe Ionescu *Manualul celor opt glasuri bisericești precedat de o scurtă teorie elementară*, Partea I, București.
- 1897 – Neagu Ionescu și Nae Severeanu *Anastasimatarul, irmologhionul și gramatica muzicii bisericesci*, ed. a II-a, Buzău.
- 1897 – Lazăr Ștefănescu *Teoria principiilor elementare de Muzică Bisericească și Anastasimatarul teoretic și foarte practic*, București.
- 1897 – Neagu Ionescu, *Gramatica muzicii bisericești aranjată după a răposatului Anton Pann, a treia oară tipărită și modificată*, București.
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- 1897 – Ion Popescu-Pasărea, *Principii de muzică bisericească orientală*, Tipografia Cărților Bisericești, București.
- 1900 – Nicolae Severeanu, *Curs elementar de muzică orientală*, Buzău.

Appendix 2

Theoretical works of the 20th century

- 1902 – Nifon Ploșteanu, *Carte de muzică bisericească pe psaltichie și note liniare pentru trei voci*, Tipografia Carl Göbl, București.
- 1903 – Ioan Zmeu, *Extract din teoria muzicii ecclesiastice pentru usul școalelor de cântăreți din țară*, București.
- 1906 – Ion Popescu-Pasărea, *Principii de muzică bisericească orientală*, Tipografia Cărților Bisericești, București.
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- 1911 – Theodor V. Stupcanu, *Metodă pentru a învăța psaltichia după vechea notațiune orientală*, Iași.
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- 1936 – Ion Popescu-Pasărea, *Principii de muzică bisericească orientală*, I. Tipografia Cărților Bisericești, București.
- 1933 – Amfilohie Iordănescu, *Buchet de muzică (psaltichii)*, Tipografia Cărților Bisericești, București.
- 1942 – Ion Popescu-Pasărea, *Principii de muzică bisericească orientală*, I. Tipografia Cărților Bisericești, București.
- 1951 – Nicolae Lungu, Grigore Costea, Ion Croitoru, *Gramatica muzicii psaltice. Studiu comparat cu notația liniară*, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al B.O.R.

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- 1971 – Grigore Panțiru, *Notația și ehurile muzicii bizantine*, Editura Muzicală, București.
- 1981 – Victor Giuleanu, *Melodica bizantină. Studiu teoretic și morfologic al stilului modern (neo-bizantin)*, Editura Muzicală, București.