

12. THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE LATENT POLYPHONIC VIRTUES OF PSALTIC MONODIES OF THE TROPARION OF ST. PARASKEVA, ECHOS VIII (PERSONAL CHORAL ARRANGEMENT)

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Abstract: *Troparion of St. Paraskeva in ehul VIII psaltic belongs to the series of general hymns (standard) that is played in the venerable holidays. The Psalter Troparion experienced some choral harmonization signed by Ioan D. Chirescu, Achim Stoia and Nicolae Lungu. This paper analyzes and explains a new treatment of this hymn, which combines homophon writing with elements of imitative writing and fleeting use of different tonal plans, exploiting latent plurivocal virtues of psaltic monody.*

Key words: *melody, eh, consonance, imitative polyphony, total plan, choral treatment*

Troparion (in gr. *Τό τροπάριον*) is “the oldest, smallest and simplest form of hymnographic poetry used in Orthodox worship”. Its purpose is to briefly illustrate the holy event or celebration of a specific saint. There are several types of troparion categorized by content as melodic patterns or not for other troparion, by religious service to which they belong or by the way they are sung: as a stand-alone or suite. Troparion of St. Paraskeva belongs to the troparions called “general” (standard) and we sing it to celebrate the holy pious (nuns); the only thing that changes is the name of the Saint. Being monostrophic, up to 5-6 verses⁶¹, musically speaking the troparion has a specific tempo called Troparion (Allegretto-Allegro), predominantly giusto-syllabic rhythm with vocal short runs (2-4-6 sounds) in the highlights of the musical phrases and in the cadences inner and final always on the stressed syllable.

Troparion of St. Paraskeva is written in the VIII echos/mode (psalm from *Ga* sound) tempo giusto, diatonic mode, major scale, which is “founded on the principle wheel quart”⁶², also named *triphonic*. In psaltic (neo-Byzantine) music theory the arrangement scalar of sounds of a mode (echos) does not coincide with a range of tonal music theory, although there may be similarities. The scale of echos VIII of *Ga*, with its *tonic* transcribed on sound *G*, covers the ambitus of the melody of troparia hymns.

Regarding the mode, the melody is organized around certain sounds operating perfect and final cadence on the sound *Ga/g* and inner suspensive cadences on the sounds *Di/C*, *Ni/D₁* and - in many other troparions - on *Ni' /D₂*. I

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⁶¹ Ene Braniște, (1993), *Liturgica generală*, ediția a II-a revizuită și completată, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, p. 713

⁶² Victor Giuleanu, (1981), *Melodica bizantină. Studiu theoretic și morfologic al stilului modern (neo-bizantin)*, Editura muzicală, București, p. 379

choose the psaltic melody of *Troparion of St. Paraskeva*, published by the protopsalt Ioan Popescu Pasarea⁶³ for transcribing it on linear notation with its tonic on sound G.

EH VIII

Ga In tru ti ne Mai că cu o sâr di e s'a mân tu i i it ce el du pă ă chip
 În-tru ti-ne Mai-că cu o sâr-di-e s-a mân-tu-it cel du - pă chip,
 că lu-ând cru- cea ai ur- mat lui Chris- tos și lu- crând ai în- vă- țat să nu se
 că lu-ând cru- cea ai ur- mat lui Chris- tos si lu- crând ai în- vă- țat să nu se
 u- tu- te la trup căci e e ste e tre că ă tor ci să poar- te
 ui- te la trup căci es- te tre - că - tor, ci să poar- te
 gri- je e de su- u- u- flet de lu- crul cel ne- mu- ri- tor pen- tru a cea a
 gri- jă de su- flet, de lu- crul cel ne- mu- ri- tor, pen- tru a cea -
 sta a a și cu în- ge- rii im- pre- u- nă se
 sta- si cu în- ge- rii im- pre- u- nă se
 bu- u- cu- u- ră cu vi- oa- să Mai- că Pa- ras- che e e vo- o- du- hu- ul- tău
 bu- cu- ră cu- vi- oa- să Mai- că Pa- ra- sche - vo- du- hul- tău.

Consisted of 7 melodic lines, the last of which is part of a unified musical phrase, this liturgical song has a covering space of an octave ambitus. Transcribed on linear notation, the psaltic melody integrates G major tonality. Regarding the **melody** of Troparion, the citation of melodic phrases was done as faithfully as possible, sometimes with insignificant corrections, enabling either gradual continuity or adopting a certain musical intervals to facilitate imitation to another voice. Only the last sentence has undergone substantial changes of melodic drive, wishing to create an ascendant highlight, at the top of the echos scale, more exactly at the lyrics “*the angels rejoice together*” and “*venerable mother Paraskevo*” where the sinuous course is conditioned by prosodic accents.

⁶³ Ion Popescu-Pasărea, (1934), *Podobiile celor 8 glasuri, Troparele Învierii și Troparele sfinților și Praznicelor*, Tipografia Cărților bisericești, București, p. 60

The choral treatment of Troparion combines the homophone writing with elements of polyphonic writing, although usually - because of their small size – the troparions go through a simple harmonization of the melody. There are only a few choral treatment of this Troparion made by Ioan D. Chirescu, Achim Stoia and Nicolae Lungu. For the choral enrichment of this melody I tried to put emphasis on the musical discourse with the help of harmonic writing - at the beginning and at the end of this work. Also I wanted to give a dramatic note by using elements of polyphonic writing which grows gradually from canon in two voices: soprano - tenor (bar 10-16), to the loose and strict imitation to other parties of the choir.

Although intended to be used in monody execution only, Psaltic melody - transcribed by linear notation - becomes able of polyphonic treatment. Moreover, by its specific structure with melodic flourishments of its own, cadences on certain music stages of the range and emphasis on specific sounds, psaltic melody shows polyphonic latent possibilities that allow vesting without diluting its ethos but rather enhances it. For example, the persistence of the sound Di/C_1 as a central sound around which outlines arching melody and inner suspensive cadences facilitate natural inflection modulating the tonality of the C minor. The increase agreement of stage VI ($E-G\#-B$) that now has become dominant enhances the sounds attraction to the new tonal center. This means that phrase 1 (bar 1-6) starts with a homophone writing, where the bass goes contrary to the soprano voice, with a fugitive modulation at minor supertonic tone and perfect cadence at agreement tonic of the original tone.

The second phrase (bar 7 auftakt–10), corresponding to the verse “*You followed that by taking the cross of Christ*” with semi cadence in the second stage, has a harmony that creates a progressive tension by using the minor agreement of stage VI on the word “*cross*” and inflection modulating to the supertonic tonality, culminating in agreement with the reduced lowered seventh (*G#-B-D-F natural*) gives dramatic expression on idea of taking the cross and follow Christ.

Starting with the 3rd phrase (bar 11 auftakt -17) the dramatization of musical discourse of the Troparion intensifies through the emergence and dominance of polyphonic writing. Although Psaltic melody was not created to develop a polyphonic music, certain melodic passages with gradual ascending–descending melody give space to some small imitations. Moreover, walking sinuously upward-downward in equal amounts on a hexacordic space (E_1-C_2) enables an imitative polyphonic between soprano and tenor, which borders on a loose canon, conducted over a vibe pedal on sound *D* (stage V), on low voices. Singular appearance in sound *B flat₁* in Psaltic melody (bar 11) and the tenor’s persistence, establishes homonymous minor (*G minor*), in whose depressive sonority finds expression the lyrics “*do not look at the body for it is temporary*”.

Starting with the 4th phrase (bar 18 auftakt–22) the vocal score becomes more and more crowded by the entries of voices, making loose and strict

imitations as harmonic essence allows to happen. Thus, although the construction of the musical phrase does not allow melodic imitation, other voices enter one by one, creating a non-imitative polyphony in order to highlight, through repetition, *caring for the soul, the immortal thing*. Imitations regard the beginning of the musical phrase and take place in the literary text (soprano-alto-tenor-bass), bar 16-19. However, the structure of the psaltic song allows free imitation of the thematic word and flourishment of the melodic cadence of the tenor (bar 19-25).

S
Ci să poar - te gri - jă de su - flet, de lu - crul cel de mu - ri -

A
Ci să poar - te gri - jă de su - flet, ne - mu - ri -

T
Ci să poar - te gri - jă de lu - crul cel ne - mu - ri -

B
Ci să poar - te gri - jă ne - mu - ri -

II I 6 5 IV II la: I

22
S
tor. Pen - tru a cea - sta si cu în - ge -

A
tor. Pen - tru a - cea - sta

T
tor. Pen - tru a - cea - sta si cu în - ge -

B
tor. Pen - tru a - cea - sta în - ge -

The final phrase (bar 23-34) gathers the whole drama of previous musical polyphony into a homophone writing that bursts triumphantly into exclamation: “For this and the angels rejoice, Venerable Mother Paraskevo, your spirit!”

im - pre - u - nă se bu - cu - ră cu - vi - oa - să Mai - că Pa - ras - che - e - vo - o
du - hu - ul - tău
du - hul - tău.

Since Psaltic original song does not have a significant highlight in this sentence, I made changes in the melodic arc by extending it to the sound of the acute E_2 . Liturgical text prosody produces sinuous melodic giving two different accents, one on the word *rejoice* and another one on the word *mother* winding descending up to tonic of the echos. This subtle change in melody moves the melodic climax of the Troparion (emphasis pathetic) to the final sentence, where the whole emotional tension is gathered.

Alternating tone plans major (G major) to the minor (C minor and G minor) creates contrasts of color, lights and shadows, putting emphasis on different emotions that the Troparion describes. Combining homophonic writing with polyphonic writing constantly stimulates the musical discourse whose consistency lies in the dialectic tension-relaxation.

The choral processing above demystifies the theory of traditional songs dedicated exclusively to Monod interpretation, demonstrating that any monody – including the Psaltic one – can be improved through various polyphonic possibilities, which emphasize the authenticity and richness of sound. Furthermore, composers of religious music inspired by the Byzantine style led to the creation of a national liturgical choral repertoire and facilitated the enrichment of existing repertoire, continuing the tradition begun by our Romanian predecessors.

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