

Book Reviews

Anastasimatarul arădean alcătuit după notațiile muzicale ale lui Trifon Lugojan de Constanța Cristescu, Eurostampa Publ., Timișoara, 2021, 515 pp.

We have the great satisfaction to signal the appearance of a book that explores the generous space of the Romanian church music, with visibly local or regional accents, the pew music from the Arad area. Eurostampa Publishing House offers us in a clear and rich editorial format (515 pp.), The scores in an anastatic edition of the manuscript of the author Constanța Cristescu, thus allowing the general public access to a book of songs, which can be placed with confidence, on the right pew of places of worship.

Anastasimatarul (*Anastasimatar* means in English *Book of Hymns at the Lord's Resurrection*) represents the collection of church songs for the Sunday services, put on scores, thus including the Vespers of Saturday evening and the Matins of Sunday, according to the order of the 8 binary modes.

In the History of Church Music, the *Anastasimatar* evolved as a structure, from the stage of oral transmission and continuing with that of the songs mentioned in manuscripts (10th-11th centuries) and prints (early 19th century). The oldest and longest-lived Greek version of the *Anastasimatar* belongs to Chrysostom the New, Protopsalt of the Great Church of Constantinople (1671). In parallel with this variant, other versions of *Anastasimatar* belonging to Iacob Protopsaltul, Petru Lampadarie or Daniil Protopsaltul also circulated. It is worth mentioning that **the first printed version of an *Anastasimatar* appears in Bucharest (1820) – being also the first music book in the world printed with psaltic notation** – composed by Petre Efesiu, after the songs of Petre Lampadarie. This zeal for the saintity in the Romanian space is, really, remarkable. If we consider that **the first printed orthodox Liturgy (Liturghier)** in the world is also an achievement in the Romanian space (Hieromonk Macarie, Târgoviște 1508, in Slavonic language) – while in Greek it will be printed

in 1526 only, (Rome, study and propaganda edition and Venice in 1526 together with Molitfelnicul, and a separate edition of the *Greek Liturgy* in 1578) – then it is no longer a surprise that, immediately after the first print of a *Greek Anastasimatar* (Bucharest, 1820, Petre Efesiu) we have 3 Romanian prints (Vienna 1823, Macarie Ieromonahul – *Teoreticon, Anastasimatar* and *Irmologhion*), through the zeal of the greatest Roman protopsalt, Macarie Ieromonahul (1770-1836). In fact, 110 years after the **first manuscripted collection in Romanian of church chants** (*Psaltichia Rumânească*, 1713, Filotei sin Agăi Jipei), Macarie Ieromonahul offers us **the first music books in church notation printed in Romanian**. Among the best known *Anastasimataras* – up to the *Anastasimatarul uniformizat* (Nicolae Lungu & coll., Bucharest, 1953, 1954) -, we remark the variants of Mihalache Moldovlahul (1767), Ianuarie Protopsaltul (lost manuscript), Ghelasie Basarabeanul (manuscript printed in 2004 by Sebastian Barbu-Bucur), Dimitrie Suceveanu (1847), Anton Pann (1854), Victor Ojog (1943).

If in the short introduction above I pointed out *the roots and stem* of this great tree of the church musical tradition, the branches grown from the same sap are detached in such a melodically varied and rich crown, but sharing the same language and faith, the same ritual or same liturgical dramaturgy, among which the present book stands out: *Anastasimatarul arădean* fixed by Constanța Cristescu.

The launch of this challenge – of writing a few words about this new edition of an *Anastasimatar* from Arad -, I embraced it with enthusiasm but also with a certain fear. Beyond the fact that someone from beyond the mountains has to express an opinion, not being directly involved in the interpretive act of this regional musical style, the very subject of the book itself appears, which raises serious problems and obstacles even for those who have endeavored to provide clear landmarks of interpretation in a delta of orality and singing at will. And I am referring here to the basic author of the book himself, Trifon Lugojan, but also to other initiators of the monodic song of the pew – Atanasie Lipovan, Terentius Bugariu or Dimitrie Cusma – as well as to the contemporary professional translators, Constanța Cristescu and Remus-Mircea Buta, direct educators and performers at the church music department of the Faculty of Theology in Arad and at the pew of the chapel of this prestigious theological institution.

So, faced with this challenge, I took it seriously with all the admiration for the teacher and researcher Constanța Cristescu, whom I had the honor to meet since my student years at the Conservatory, between 1993-1994, when she attended classes of psaltic music at the Academy of Music and at the *Psalmodia* choir, in the class of professor Sebastian Barbu-Bucur. Since then I have had the opportunity to read his scientific papers in the field of Byzantine music and her apologetic position – as a layman – for the Orthodox Church, in numerous conferences and symposia where we intersected.

I do not hide the fact that I had the opportunity to review a launch of a *Transylvanian Anastasimatar*¹ (2016) fixed and care taken by Fr. Prof. Vasile Stanciu, published in Cluj. Only in that case things were much clearer. In a brief comparison with the traditional *psaltic Anastasimatars* we came to some conclusions:

1. “In modes I, III and VII, we speak of identical modal structures for both the songs collected and noted by Dimitrie Cunțanu, and the psaltic ones, as performed in Muntenia and Moldova. Identical modal structures but with different melodies, which explains why Fr. V. Stanciu kept them and did not tip the scales in favor of the psaltic monody from Bucharest. It would have been lost a rich local melodic experience and full of spiritual scent and it would have been a regrettable for the memory and effort of its predecessors. 2. Modes II and VI – where mode II has an original and distinct modal structure from the psaltic one, and mode VI is the only chromatic mode in the sense of psaltic music – follow the same scientific path of ordering in *Anastasimatar*, through the exchanges imposed by the laws of organization of songs, namely the antiphons from Utrenia mode VI are in the form of mode II and vice versa, the same exchanges are made in stihoavne, and the troparions of the resurrection modes II, IV and VI are in the form of mode II ... ”

I presented in this way other elements of identity and differentiation between the *Anastasimatarul uniformizat* and the *Transylvanian Anastasimatar*, which I do not reproduce here.

¹ Vasile STANCIU, *Anastasimatar transilvan*, Ed. Renașterea, Cluj-Napoca, 2016, 378 pp.

As I mentioned, this book presents modal structures and songs organized differently than in traditional psaltic music or songs after Cunțan. *Anastasimatarul Arădean* is a work with a double intention: 1. It is a theoretical milestone, meant to guide students or singers through the varied area of orality on some clear coordinates of singing in the Arad area “after the singing of His Holiness Mr. Ioan I. Papp the bishop of Arad”. 2. A rich material of pew for the Resurrection services at Vespers and Matins on the 8 church modes.

Professor Constanța Cristescu’s scientific approach is remarkable, proving a complete training in the area of Byzantine singing of psaltic and linear notation and a power to adapt to new cultic and cultural spaces. *Anastasimatarul Arădean* is a revised collection of some older works² from the time when she was a professor of church music at the Faculty of Theology in Arad and which are now gathered in a rich volume including Vespers³, Matins, Holy Mass Songs, Songs at Te-Deum, Akathist To our Lord Jesus Christ, Paraklisis of the Most Holy Mother of God, the Prohod of the Lord and our God Jesus Christ and the Prohod of the Mother of God. It can be considered a *Compendiu*, *Anthologhion* or *Stihirar*, after the old names of the manuscripts that also included *Anastasimatar* among the chants from the mentioned books.

The desire of an institution to republish a work almost two decades after its first appearance, says that this work is very useful.

The author seeks to obtain the best version of the songs as is the tradition in the Arad area, synthesizing a real era of publications of church song collections, starting with the one from 1905, the first *Anastasimatar* of Trifon Lugojan and continuing with the following editions from 1907, 1912, 1913, 1927 and 1939. Naturally, later editions are also the most relevant. In addition, the 1912 and 1939 editions specified on the cover “after the singing of the former bishop of Arad Ioan I. Papp”, collections that Constanța Cristescu also uses for the elaboration and promotion of this *Anastasimatar Arădean*. It is very difficult to explain the sources of this collaboration between a musician and his hierarch. Let’s call it voluntary

² Constanța CRISTESCU, *Anastasimatar arădean*, CD-rom ed., București, 2006, 516 pp. (<http://muzicieni.cimec.ro/Foto/CC-Anastasimatar-cop-cup.pdf>)

³ Constanța CRISTESCU C., *Cântările Vecerniei în stilul Episcopului Ioan I. Papp al Aradului*, Ed. Arefeană, București, 2003, 129pp. (<http://muzicieni.cimec.ro/Foto/CC-Cantarile-Vecerniei-cop-cup.pdf>)

humility, listening or even a less common collaboration, in which the musician retreats into the shadows (C. Cristescu says “anonymity”, pp. 16) and leaves room for his bishop. There is also the plausible version that the model of songs offered by Bishop John I. Papp is exceptional and so convincing that Trifon Lugojan was impressed and adjusted his own songs from previous editions and write them as he heard them to his bishop. As mentioned in the Preface, “... Bishop Ioan I. Pap, great church singer and founder of the Romanian theological school in very difficult times” (p. 15) managed to impose his version of singing as “the most representative version for the Ardead area ” (p. 16). Constanța Cristescu took her mission of fixing and editing those songs seriously in order to present some models of songs based on the paradigmatic examples she met at Trifon Lugojan. In the work *Crâmpeie din cronologia unei deveniri*⁴, vol II (2005) (in English: *Fragments from the chronology of an evolution*) the author also offers the most important fragments from the prefaces of some collections of church songs belonging to Atanasie Lipovan and Trifon Lugojan. Among these, we also list those that we found relevant to understand the place and role of an *Anastasimatar Arădean*:

“We, the Romanians from the dioceses of Arad and Caransebeș, received the songs of the Serbian church; that is why we differ in songs from the Transylvanians, who adopted more the Greek and Slavonic ones. The difference in church singing is shown more and more between the dioceses of Arad and Caransebeș; even in the various church communes. This difference comes from the fact that our songs are not fixed and are sustained only by hearing, so that each singer can change the song according to his taste, thus forming his own emphasis and sometimes altering the rhythm” (Atanasie Lipovan).

“... so the church singers were left alone, by themselves and not sufficiently trained, – I understand those without school education – church singing began to be distorted by the omission of some musical phrases, as well as by the misapplication of church texts to various songs” (Atanasie Lipovan).

⁴ Constanța CRISTESCU, *Crâmpeie din cronologia unei deveniri*, Ed. Muzicală, București, vol. I (2004), vol. II (2005).

If Atanasie Lipovan's statements are understood as concerns that have in perspective the correction of situations left until then random, let's see what is the perspective of Trifon Lugojan:

“The religious songs in this collection – as a song – are arised from the soul of our right-believing people on the western border of the country (...) It is not known who composed them. In vain would we try to find out the name of the one who sang his sigh for the first time in the prayer chants: *Tell me, Lord, what is the man?* (...) The piety of a people is known from the religious song. These songs, melodious and gentle, sprinkled with tears, express the thirst of our people for God. Whatever the resemblance between their melody and that of other neighboring peoples – which we will not deny – any connoisseur will admit that the soul of our people has shaped the religious songs according to his heart, that they are echoes of our piety” (Trifon Lugojan).

In a brief analysis, we consider Trifon Lugojan's statements at the limit of canonicity. We believe that he abuses the particularity and originality of Arad's songs to the detriment of tradition and primary sources. However, the liturgical experience that the Church has reached today sums up all the stages that it has gone through – both those of glory and those of sadness – so that the pew church singing is the one that the Church expresses today both at the Patriarchy Cathedral as well as in the isolated hamlet in the country.

From a technical point of view, the presentation of the respective modes and chants is a total commitment of the author who found the best means of selecting and presenting them. A note of originality that I would like to point out is the presentation of some songs in psaltic notation as well, thus showing the common Byzantine source of these songs, not only by notation but also by the melodic turnes specific to Byzantine singing, morphology and syntax of chants, cadences, rhythm or tempo.

Regarding the modal structure of the modes, with all the surprise that at Vespers, *God, I shouted* from mode I is in the form of mode IV – aspect suggested to the author by the great Professors Nicu Moldoveanu and Sebastian Barbu-Bucur in the reviews on the first edition of the content of *Anastasimatar* – I am also inclined to believe this strange phenomenon,

because even in psaltic music there are sedelne from Utrenia mode I in the form of mode II, or the tropars in modes II, IV and VI are sung only in the form of mode II. How it happened that the “mode itself” (I) turned into the mode IV, remains, in my opinion, a mystery that can remain so, any attempt to unravel it involves a number of disputes and controversies. For those who want to delve deeper, if it will help in some way, I can remind you that in the music of the Romanian Kingdom, the form of the stoic IV mode borrows cadential elements from mode I, but never the other way around, mode I from mode IV. Therefore, the slip of the Vespers mode I to a form of the IV diatonic mode is a regional phenomenon, which I would not consider a consequence of the fact that the pew music of the choir was left to the discretion of some singers who abused their personal performances and their liked, but as a long-standing phenomenon that has settled over time as an expression of some feelings that have resonated in the piety of Arad. It is a very fine border between tradition and freedom, which was also emphasized by the Patriarch of our Church when he stated that “in cult books it is not allowed to express particular or individual ideas, just to stand out the author, but the Church belief should be expressed” (2022).

In conclusion, I would like to express my admiration for a monumental work by Prof. Constanța Cristescu, a sound reference that theological students in theology and church singers can always use and also a choir conductor who periodically checks the tone after the tuning fork, in order for re-confirming and reaffirming that it is in the consonant range of glorious Orthodoxy, even if it is expressed through the local watercolor, patented here over the centuries.

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