# An overview of the similarities of the intonational essences between Dimitrie Cunțanu's and Trifon Lugojan's religious voices

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**Abstract**

The overview on simililarities of international essences from within the church's tones, noted by Dimitrie Cunțanu and Trifon Lugojan, represent the analysis of a melodic inheritance from the church's music patrimony transmitted to us by the two professors of orthodox scales. This dowry has built already a practice domain for many teaches, composers, music historians and critics, who praised and underlined its great importance. The expression „intonational essences" from the title hides in itself a large number of expressions already established, such as: melodic models[1], rhytmical-melodic patters, melodic physiognomy, ensemble formulas[2] and melodic structures[3], specific vocal runs, melodic lines, phrasing devices[4]...etc. If we add to those other expressions of plasticized nature like: „secret geometry", architectonic schemes, matrix structure, „architectonic sounds", phrasing extraction, sound

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[1] Nicolae Lungu, Grigore Costea, Ion Croitoru, *The Grammar of psaltica music,* ed. II, București, 1969.

[2] Vasile Grăjdian, *Religious songs, carols and ionstrumental pieces,* Editura Universității „Lucian Blaga", Sibiu, - 2000.

[3] Stelian Ionașcu, *Theory of psaltica music for thology schools and singing schools,* Editura Sophia, București, 2006.

[4] Victor Giuleanu, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

panorama, „structural map"[5], lines and melodic phrases,...then it should be clearly suffient that these were meant to enrich the expressive palette of the reality of the church's tones. The entire melos noted by the two teachers represents the proof of the byzantine roots from this geographic area and at the same time it is a doxological sound structure with a Eucharistic purpose.

**Keywords**
melodic essences, ensemble of melodic formulas, specific vocal runs, architectonic schemes, sound panorama, melodic lines.

At the beginning of this millennium, we ought to remember the most important people, our worthy predecessors, to whom we all have to direct the attention of our minds in order to benefit as much as possible of the guidance of the written inheritance they have forwarded to us. Thus, I considered that an overview of a certain part of the musical heritage of Dimitrie Cunțanu in comparison with Trifon Lugojan is one of the most welcomed forms of underlying the importance of the two in this field of reference. I am sure that, as this dowry has already been a field of study for many teachers, composers, musical historians, musical critics, from now on, their studies will be primary reference documents and at the same time a starting point for further investigation.

I have conceived this overview as a synthesis of my teaching activity at the Faculty of Orthodox Theology in Arad over a period of almost two decades, in which I had the chance to go through the religious voices written down by Dimitrie Cunțanu at Vespers (the evening service) together with the students who came from other parts of the country who could perform in the pew, as well as with the students in the west where we could sing Trifon Lugojan's notations.

The practical process of assimilation written down by the two authors mentioned above has multiple implications and manifold difficulty levels. Thus, on the one hand there is the musicological level of the perception of religious voices with its all supposed theoretical characteristics of the modal scales, of the functional gearing, of the variable height scales, of the pillar on which the cadence and the semi cadence are carried out, of the

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[5] Mircea Buta*, Songs of Church for Vespers in their International Essence, in notations by Trifon Lugojan,* Editura Universității „Aurel Vlaicu", Arad, 2006.

microtones[6], etc., and on the other hand there is the level of the executing pew singers, with medium musical knowledge and sometimes even less, but who acquire an impressive natural spontaneity and creativity when rending the beauty and the complexity of this sacred music after a long repetition of applying their musical knowledge on the religious books' texts.

In the above mentioned context, I want to approach this overview in order to be easily understood and accepted by any singer who has minimal musical knowledge and very little practical activity.

## Short explanation on the approaching manner and on the used terminology

In order to perceive and understand the religious voices in an easy way and especially by a large mass of people, my first thought was to use a terminology as general and as accessible as possible. Thus, the expression *intonational essences* in the title hides in itself in fact a multitude of already established expressions, such as melodic last, melodic models[7], rhythmic-melodic patterns, melodic physiognomy, formulae ensemble[8] and melodic structures[9], specific melisma, melodic lines, phrasal devices[10] etc. If we add to these the plasticized expressions such as 'secret geometry', architectonic schemes, matrix structure, 'deep-toned architectonics', phrasal extraction, sonorous panorama, 'structural map'[11], melodic lines or sentences,…then it should be clear enough that through all these I did not want anything else than to enlarge and to enrich the picturesque palette

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[6] Musicological analysis made by Victor Giuleanu in *Melodica bizantină,* Editura muzicală, Bucureşti, 1981 and Elena Chircev in *Muzica românească de tradiţie bizantină între neume şi portative*, Academia de Muzică „Gheorghe Dima", Cluj-Napoca, 1998, PhD thesis.

[7] Nicolae Lungu, Grigore Costea, Ion Croitoru, *Gramatica muzicii psaltice,* ed. II, Bucureşti, 1969.

[8] Vasile Grăjdian, *Cântări religioase, colinde şi lucrări instrumentale*, Editura Universităţii „Lucian Blaga", Sibiu, 2000.

[9] Stelian Ionaşcu, *Teoria muzicii psaltice pentru seminariile teologice şi şcolile de cântăreţi,* Editura Sophia, Bucureşti, 2006.

[10] Victor Giuleanu, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

[11] Mircea Buta, *Cântările glasurilor bisericeşti la Vecernie şi esenţa lor intonaţională, în notaţiile lui Trifon Lugojan,* Editura Universităţii „Aurel Vlaicu", Arad, 2006.

concerning the precise reality of the religious voices. I would add to the established musical terminology the term 'melodic formulae', which is, of course, a specific term, but… besides its accuracy, seems quite singular, poor, rigid and blank. In order to understand as easy as possible the musical discourse of the religious voices written down by Dimitrie Cunțanu and Trifon Lugojan we have to add to the richness of denominations enumerated above another tool of musical construction, which is in fact a simple, efficient, easy to understand and applied system. From the early beginning, each 'grammar' of the sacred music has tried to find a way as easy as possible to make itself understood and to convince the probationers of a certain clarity of the suggested system, but… I want to mention here the approaching of Victor Giuleanu's musical discourse, who by introducing the literary form elements in the musical patterns; he obtains a correspondence between *verse and melodic line, between hemistich and half a melodic line* or *distich and a group of two melodic lines*[12]. Another way of approaching which tries to elucidate the internal structure of the religious voices is to be found in Stelian Stonescu's work, who at his turn tries to underline the importance of the cadence systems or of the 'specific cadence turns' which applies to each individual religious voice[13]. All in all, the approach which is closer to the easy understanding of a pupil or of a student in the Romanian orthodox theology schools seems to be the analytic method of Valentin Timaru, who states the following in a subchapter entitled '*The Discreet Aspect of the Structure*' which is part of the course THE MORPHOLOGY AND THE STRUCTURE OF THE MUSICAL FORM at page 226, I quote: 'No matter the typology and the degree of organization of a structure, it is invariably based on the interaction of some micro structural units'…the author mentioning here, in brackets, that in this case he refers to the bar. I allowed myself to speculate and to think that in our case it is about the specific melodic formulae, or as they are also named typified melodic formulae or melisma. Maybe the most complex explanation of the melisma, states the teacher Valentin Timariu is that this is a 'figuralized' cell, this being an 'adjacent case between figure and cell', which can have 'figural-melismatic melodic variations'. Because I have mentioned the terms *figure* and *cell* I want to mention further on the essence of their semantic acception. Thus, Valentin Timaru states that 'the musical figure

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[12] Victor Giuleanu, *Melodica bizantină,* Editura muzicală, Bucureşti, 1981, p. 205.
[13] Stelian Ionaşcu, *op. cit*., p. 93.

is a micro unit of the musical morphology, which has a reduced extension, and is formed of a characteristic rhythmic or rhytmico-melodic 'drawing' and mot of the times it is imposed by repetition. It is a rhytmico-melodic formula-which has binder characteristics of a musical discourse without having expressive latencies in itself…The rhythmic constant drawing imposes the figure as entity…and in the previous musical practices-of the vocal music hegemony-the melisma was the one which outlined its existence by a melodic tournure of figurative essence…in the context of the complexity of the musical language, the figure manifests itself by a permanent addiction of a 'cellular layer' with the help of which its structural staticism is folded on a certain cellular latency which inevitably transfers its own expressiveness (page 43). The CELL is also a micro unit of the musical morphology but it has expressive latencies, having a specific interval or a defining rhythmic formula, being able to generate the evolution of a subsequent musical discourse (p. 35). All in all, I consider that the following sentence is extremely suggestive: 'the figures and the cells complete one another; this thing being quite difficult when one wants to mark the limits of their weight in the musical language. These true 'sonorous syllables' are uttered, on the foundation of the creative intentions, through endless combining possibilities'. (p. 54).

After the things stated before, where one could add the intention of drawing a parallel and correlating the idea of 'sound functionalism' in the tonal music world with a sort of 'functionalism of the melisma or of the melodic lines' in the writings of Dimitrie Cunțanu and Trifon Lugojan, I have decided to create this overview on the similarities of the intonational essences which are worth mentioning, in order to prove the unity of this music for the faithful persons in this geographic area and not only.

As representative essences for the writings of Dimitrie Cunțanu I have used the ones which were written by Vasile Grăjdian, who is a professor in Sibiu at the Faculty of Orthodox Theology and published ten years ago[14]. I have preferred them for the way in which the author has rendered the most important details he made reference to and I want to render them further on so that people can take them into account: 'These customary melodic versions in Ardeal (after Dimitrie Cunțanu) are a practical application of the religious voices between 1986-1990. Because there are some differences

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[14] Vasile Grăjdian, *Cântări religioase, colinde şi lucrări instrumentale*, Editura Universității „Lucian Blaga", Sibiu, 2000.

form the book 'Church Kymns'-Dimitrie Cunțanu, I have included them in this volume, so that they can be useful for everybody who is interested in the church hymns. The application of each voice is in accordance with the indicated formulae, and when the imnografic text is close to its end, we have to go to the ending melodic formula. The *legato* signs have only an orientation purpose, mostly important being in all the cases the most natural allocation of the text on the tune. The notation has been made without bars, in order to be closer to the free way of singing, which is specific to the respective style. The existent bars usually mark a unitary fragment of the melodic formula, the alterations having the same meaning as for a normal bar. The tonal framing has been made in such a way in order to be as close as possible of the linear transcript of the psaltic voices[15], the voices in Ardeal being very closely connected to them, the reason being their common Byzantine origin[16].

The observed similarities in these notations begin with the intonational patterns of the **tune of the Hymn in voice I**. Here you have it written down by the priest Vasile Grăjdian:



GLASUL I
Tropar
D. Cunțanu

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[15] Cf. Prof. Nicolae Lungu, Pr. Prof. Grigore Costea, Prof. Ion Croitoru, *Gramatica muzicii psaltice*, ed. II, București, 1969.

[16] Vasile Grăjdian*, op. cit*., p. 108.

and further on the intonational essence written down by Trifon Lugojan:

**GLASUL I**
Tropar

T. Lugojan



A first sight analysis of the two intonational essences offers us a melodic sketch made up of two exposed melisma in the form of two lines. The first one, marked with *a* or *1*, begins with a supportive fourth and immediately after the second sound it has the possibility of executing a reciting chord (in both versions, the reciting chord can be both on the supporting fourth (*re*) and on the foot of the voice (*sol*). In writing, I have rendered this by the notation of the three notes in brackets and this will be the same in each example of this sort.

**GLASUL I**
Tropar

D. Cunţanu



**GLASUL I**
Tropar

T. Lugojan



According to this intonational radiography, we could say that the first sentence has an interrogative purpose, and the second can be considered as an answer to this. Here is the answer speech noted with *b* and *2*:

D. Cunţanu

T. Lugojan

One can observe quite easily that both notations have an enlarging melodic line of the ambitus with two ascending steps, even if they are not under different forms:

*(c)-can be sang instead of a, but not at the beginning* or *as a prerhythmic version.* Likewise, I have to underline the fact that the Transilvanian version brings about a widened melodic line with two descending steps from the supporting fourth. Here there are lined up parallel to the added sounds which are framed.



c) - se poate cânta în loc de a), dar nu la început

D. Cunţanu

variantă precadenţială

T. Lugojan

It is also important to remark the fact that at Trifon Lugojan, although the two tunes are identical in content, the final cadence is differently grasped.



cadenţa Stihoavnei

T. Lugojan

cadenţa Troparului

T. Lugojan

Stihoavna closes its speech on the supportive fourth while the Hymn closes its on *sol.* I could say that there is no difference in the practice of the pew singers in the west who finish their early services with the Antiphons, the catavasii, and the doxology most of the times as a version of the Hymn.

**VOICE II, the tune of the Antiphon and of the Stihoavna**

These are the intonational essences:

## GLASUL II



## GLASUL II



These intonational sketches resemble the former ones by the fact that from the structural point of view they are made up of two melodic lines and their sonorous speech is unfolds around this major second interval (*mib-fa#*). In Cuntanu's version, the debut is on the supportive fourth and we have to notice that the sound on which the reciting chord can unfold is only the lower one, *re*. In the same version there is quite an interesting aspect, the absence of the reciting chord on *sol*, this appearing only on the step above, on the note *la*, and the reciting on *sol* only takes place in the final sentence. In Lugojan's notations, although the tunes in the practical hymns are almost the same, we can easily distinguish the absence of the supportive chord from the beginning and the appearance of the 'subtonic' for the lower sound, *do*, for *re*, pointed out below with the help of the frame:

The favorite spots where we can use the reciting chord in the three most important sounds in the tune, on *sol, re* and *do*. If we had to speak about their importance, we could say that *re* and *sol* are equally important, being all the time in a dialogue of 'messages'. If on a map of the 'spatial' structure were two places, then the message goes from the first, from *re* and travels on the sounds until the second place, *sol*. Then, in a compulsory way, the discourse continues with the answer of the second backwards. The first sonorous centre, *re*, is powerfully sustained by the subtonic *do* and by the sound *mib*, and the second, *sol*, is also sustained by its satellite *fa#* and *la*. From the gravitational point of view, they appear like two stars with two satellites each. The *re* star, with its satellites *do* and *mib* and the *sol* star with its satellites *fa#* and *la*. Here are these two framed on the stave.



Both cases, as we can observe in the intonational essences exhibited above close the cadential melisma on *re*.

**VOICE III, the tune of the Antiphon and of the Hymn and not only that**

In the beginning we expose their intonational essences:



Esența intonațională
**GLASUL III**

Introducere        Tropar        T. Lugojan

The content of the musical ideas of voice III can offer, at the first sight, a relatively simple attempt of discussion, but…underneath there is a highly more complicated reality. For example, in the paper *Cântările glasurilor bisericești la Vecernie și esența lor intonațională, în notațiile lui Trifon Lugojan* I have tried to prove with solid arguments the differences between Voice III, „Însuși glas" and the intonational sentences from the version of the tune for the Antiphons, Stihoavna and the Hymn. Even if in writing I had quite clear arguments, in the practical reality things are quite different and I have observed this particularized and delicate aspect simultaneously over quite a long period of time, long enough for me to mention it. For example, I even now dare to raise this problem to my distinguished colleagues from Sibiu and Cluj who have improved versions of this melos, to think about a possibility of underlying the differences of their absence between „Însuși glas" from voice III and the tune of the Antiphone. Of course I do not want to speak about differences of tempo or something similar, I want to go straight to the references of the architectonic structures which

have to keep into account the content of the voice. Consequently, going back to the sonorous panorama exposed by the priest Vasile Grăjdian and to the one extracted from Trifon Lugojan's notations, a forst observation would be the one that in this case we have to deal with a phrasal extraction from more than one melismas, meaning *a, b* and *c*, where the last is before the cadentian line in Cuntanu's version and in Lugojan's version before those three musical sentences plus an incipit and a cadential formula. If we add to this situation the possibility of adding and substracting each melodic formula, then we can have serious problems with the secret geometry of voice III. I prefer these two terms which refer to the possibility of adding and substracting of a melodic line, because it seems that it completely reflects the aspects which can intervene in the evolution of a melodic line. We can say that there are some differences between the two authors concerning the written versions of this voice,… in practice, they are diluted and they resemble very much. Thus, we can say that if we think that *fa* is the basis of this voice, then although the two versions come out from different steps, the first semicadence is on the same step (on the sound *la*). We render below the first line noted with *a)* in the Transilvanic version then noted as *Introduction* in the western version:



The second melodic line is in the same situation with its debut and evolution, meaning…it makes its debut from different sounds, but the semicadence is the same. We exemplify with the second melodic line noted as *b)* and *1:*

The melodic tournure written down by prof. Vasile Grăjdian and noted with *c*, whose cadence is on the sound *do* cannot be found in the intonational essence for Trifon Lugojan's Stihoavna. On the contrary, we find it at the intonational essence from the form „Însuși glas" numbered with *two*. We render below the intonational common content rendered above:



As a conclusion to voice III, I can state that although some famous pew singers succeed to differentiate the musical discourse as the two forms of the voice, most probationers do not do this and even more,… there are not a few cases when they sing an altered melodic discourse for the third melodic line, thus simplifying an existing sonorous complexity.

**VOICE IV, the tune of the Antiphone and of the Stihoavna**
Here are the intonational essences:

The similarities of the melodic discourse of the Antiphone and Sti-hoavna concerning voice IV are quite easy to establish. First, even if you have a superficial look you can observe the similarity, almost the total juxtaposition of the cadencial line together with the note used as a recital chord. Example:



Then, the debut formula of this form for voice IV is very much alike, especially if we consider the line noted *with d* by Vasile Grăjdian-*a version to the introduction.* Here there are, one besides the other:



The sounds on which the recital chord can be sustained are the same, *sol* and

mi,…but, as you can quite clearly see is the fact that Cuntanu's version brings about another possibility of executing a reciting chord on *do* in the debut of the melodic line noted with *a.*



The main cadences are on *re* and *mi,* and in the Transilvanic version you have to stop on the melisma noted with *b* an don the sound *sol,* which cannot be seen in the western version.

D. Cunțanu

In the pew with the students, one can sometimes observe a similarity of the two intonational essences close to juxtaposition .

### VOICE IV, the tune of the Hymn
The tune of the Hymn for voice IV is very simple and interesting arranged in paralell with Lugojan's notation. Here they are one after another:

**GLASUL IV**


*Introducere*      **Tropar**      D. Cunțanu

**GLASUL IV**


**Tropar**      T. Lugojan

I have seen many times famous pew singers with a long activity in the church hymns, who wanted to sing one of the versions and who in fact began with the other. This is mainly due to the melodic drawing,… drawing which is overlaped between these two notations, except for the ending formula and another exception named by some singers as ,one version is in minor and one in major' We note the versions extracted from the essences above which are noted with *Introduction* and *1* for exemplification:

Until here things seen to be quite clear and explicit for them, but if we try to go a little bit further, then we will see that such easy findings are not the case anymore, because the intonational systems of reference can be quite different. Thus, in Lugojan's notation, a fair execution is that in which the sound from the second step, *sol* is very high, with an insistent reference on the ,very high' tone in the Byzantine intervals. In this sonorous reality, in the version from the west of the country ,the major' some singers mention, is 'disturbed' quite a lot if *sol* is sang with half a sharp, then…even if the two drawings or the two melodic lines are visually overlaped, they are quite different from the point of view of the function of the sound on which cadences are made. We note further on Lugojan's essence but we will add half a sharp for the sound *sol* , in order to underline more prominently the practical reality of this sonorous matrix:



If we speak about the Transilvan version, we could say that there are two cadencial poles, *fa* and *re, do* being also present in the discourse, in the

debut of the melisma noted with *b, do* sustaining *fa* quite strongly, being a a supporting fourth, but at the same time being a subtonic for the second cadencial sound, *re.*

By contrast, the functionalism of the cadence sounds in Lugojan's version is definitely different. Here we can speak about a certain 'dictatorship' of the basis of this voice, meaning the sound *fa*, and the second cadence sound, *la,* offers only an implicit support as importance of the same basis, of the sound *fa*. As a concluding idea, this intonational pattern, this sonorous sketch, even if it is overfolded as a visual drawing in both notations, (at a three step distance), then it is quite different from the point of view of the interaction among the functions of the cadence steps.

### VOICE VIII, the tune of the Hymn

The phrasal content for the tune of the Hymn in voice VIII is almost the same for the two explored authors and this is proved by the practical application along the years. Of course that some sounds for melodic 'adornment' seem different, or from a rhythmic point of view appear some divisions or subdivisions of the durations, or…the adding and substracting modes of the standardized patterns can bring about some sonorous 'lights and shades', but the structural geometry of this tune is quite constant. Here are the extracted essences:



Esența intonațională
**GLASUL VIII**
Tropar
T. Lugojan

**Esența intonațională**

# GLASUL VIII

**Tropar**

D. Cunțanu



*Introducere*

*a)*

*b)*

*Încheiere*

Having seen these expositions we can say that both of them begin with the basis of the scale, on the sound *fa*, on which one can also execute a reciting chord and you can also make the cadence. Let us see the introductions for these two notations consecutively:

**Tropar**

D. Cunțanu

*Introducere*

**Tropar**

T. Lugojan

*Introducere*

As one could clearly see in the row above, in the western version of the country one can use as a debut the supporting fourth from the sound *do*, taking into consideration the litarary accents of the sang stihira. Then, the 'sonorous brick' is the second (which resembles with the one in the introduction) which performs an ascending melodic spring which has the same base with a stop on the second step, *sol*. The alternation between these two sounds offers a well-defined bone structure of the phrasal content. So,… we begin with *fa* with a cadence on *sol* and then we begin with *sol* and we stop on *fa*. They are exposed here:

The same thing can be seen at Trifon Lugojan:

From the two intonational segments exposed above we can observe the fact that one can easy sing a melodic line from a notation and the answer with the other segment from the second author or vice-versa. It is clear that the impression of 'question-answer' between the two ideas seems very visible and if we were to extract the important pillars, it would look like this:

An important aspect of this voice is the multitude of step son which you can create on the reciting chord: *fa,sol,la* and in Lugojan's version on *flat si* and even on *do.* Likewise, we have to point out the high ascending leap (fifth and sixth) which exists in the closing melodic line both in the Transilvan and in Lugojan's versions. Here they are in the frame below.

From the perspective of the simultaneous practice of singing in the pew of the first or of the second version, I have to say that there are no noticeable differences worth mentioning. On the contrary, the paralell execution offers varied and creative possibilities of adding and substracting the intonational patterns.

## Concluding ideas

- Dimitrie Cunțanu and Trifon Lugojan have bequeathed us very well-shaped 'sonorous bricks'.
- All in all, the sacred music from Transilvania and from the west of the country has an open dynamic nature, offering sufficient possibilities of adding and substracting the melodic discourse.
- In my opinion, the fact that in some parts of the country different aspects or even major changes have appeared in the melos, is based upon musical roots motives and especially administrative-historical and social-geographic ones.
- Due to Lugojan and Cuntanu's notations we can observe if a melodic line has been left aut of the musical discourse or if improper musical ideas have been added.
- Also due to the notations of the two mentioned above we can estimate if the performers comply with a temperate development of the intonational order of the 'bricks', meaning that they master or they do not master the 'map' or the 'discreet geometry' of the religious voices.
- Thanks to these two, we can also apprehend the neglect of the nature of verse hymns and of the irmologic ones,… in the first case by excessive use of the syllables on each sound, and in the second case by using some syllabic hymns at the tunes from „Însuși glas".
- Thanks to them we can also observe the proper or lack of preparation of the melodic line and its finalisation or lack of finalisation in a convincing version.
- Thanks to their notations we can state that by the reduction of some melismas and by their execution in such a substracted or added manner-we can establish a dispersion of some coherence in the tune of the voice.

- Thanks to Dimitrie Cunțanu and Trifon Lugojan's notations, we can say that the application of the religious voices can be too vague. They are reduced to the minimum and the intonational essences have as an immediate result the appearance of the monotony and of the melodic 'poorness'.
- Likewise, exaggerating the matrix structure of the religious voices noted by these two in an extreme manner, can equally direct us to a musically rigid ambiguity which can make the message in the religious books unfavourable.

To sum up, this overview on the similarities of the intonational essences in Dimitrie Cunțanu and Trifon Lugojan's notations which I wanted to create in a rather 'mathematic' way, is in fact,… a confirmation that the entire melos of the two is the proof that the Byzantine roots in this geographic area is a sonorous doxologic structure with an eucharistic purpose.