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The Exaposteilarion of the Savior's Resurrection. Interpretive Nuances

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Abstract

Through His Sacrifice and Resurrection from the dead, Christ restores man to his pre-sin state. That is why the two moments are inseparable. The presence of cultic and hymnographic language in the current scientific plea emphasizes the theological heritage of the Church. Highlighting a masterpiece from the Pentecostarion period diversifies the contemporary scientific debate. The presence of “Exaposteilarion”, as an essential piece of the Resurrection Matins, certifies the valorization of the ecclesial musical heritage. The compositional thinking of Nicolae Lungu represents for Romanian church musicology a benchmark for all generations of musicians.

Keywords

Resurrection, Pentecostarion, Matins, Exaposteilarion, Nicolae Lungu

I. Preliminary

The Resurrection of the Savior Jesus Christ clarified existential truths, first with regard to His Person, then with regard to man and then with predilection for the entire universe. If the greatest event “Resurrection” had not happened between heaven and earth, His grave would have been a landmark for some. But the risen Christ proved that He is the master of

life and the conqueror of death. That is why His Resurrection is called “the feast of feasts and the holiday of holidays”. In this sense, the Lamb of God takes upon Himself the sin of Adam, He crucifies us on Golgotha, He cleanses us with His Precious Blood in His capacity as the envoy of the Trinity of God, as Redeemer, as King of the Cosmos, Head of the Church, the Good Shepherd, which leads us to the ineffable and immeasurable love of the heavenly Father.

He becomes in time and space the Conqueror of death, the One who defeats it crushes it and destroys it, our deliverance from the captivity of death, the Conqueror and the King of heaven, the First born from the dead: “He who delivers us from the wrath to come” (Thess 1, 10). The hope for a joint inheritance with Christ the Crucified and Resurrected is highlighted by the same Apostle of the Gentiles quoted earlier when He addresses the Romans: “God shows his love for us in that Christ died for us (Rom 5, 8)”, because the Son of God, named in history, embraces the entire creature from one edge to the other of the earth, giving us peace and eternal love, manifested through arms crossed on the divine and saving Cross.

II. The Pentecostarion and the Resurrection Matins – Overview

At the center of the history of our salvation is the life-giving Sacrifice of Christ the Redeemer, reflected in His voluntary Passion and not least its corollary His glorious Resurrection from the dead.

The period of Pentecostarion is one of the three liturgical periods of the cycle of the church year, along with the Triodion and the Octoih. Through the chants and services of the period in question, we glorify the resurrected and pneumatized Christ after the Resurrection. The victory of the light springing from the life-giving “empty tomb”¹ of the Risen One represents the final victory over sin and death. Through the Glorious Mystery of the Saviour's Resurrection, the old Adam is replaced by the new Adam, who came in temporality to definitively restore to us the possibility of the eternal foretaste of His Kingdom. The period in question is known

¹ Stelian TOFANĂ, *Evanghelia lui Iisus. Misiunea Cuvântului (The Gospel of Jesus. The mission of the Word, n.t.)*, Ed. Mega, Cluj – Napoca, 2015, p. 25.

as the post-Paschal period which presents us with luxurious detail all the redemptive events, actualizing the mystery of the Resurrection, but also the action of redeeming man from the slavery of sin and death, bringing us “from death to life and from the earth to the sky”. This period glorifies and praises through its Canon, the greatest event in the life of mankind, the Resurrection. One of the hymns is eloquent in this regard: “You descended to the lowest parts of the earth and broke the eternal locks that kept those bound, O Christ, and on the third day, like Jonah from the plaster, you rose from the grave”².

The role and mission of composing the book called *Pentecostarion* belongs to Saint Joseph the Hymnographer. He lived in the time of the emperor Theophilus the Iconoclast (842) and had as his brother Saint Theodore the Studite. From their childhood, their parents gave them a chosen education, quickly acquiring writing, studying and deepening the Holy Scriptures and the Church Fathers. Saint Joseph, Archbishop of Thessalonica, and his brother Theodore, hegumen of the Studion Monastery in Constantinople, a renowned institution composed of illustrious monks and spiritual fathers of the Church, were elected to high positions. The 9th century represented for Eastern hymnography the golden age of the School of Scholars³, where these two brothers mentioned above stand out. Going along the hymnographic line of our plea, we find that the research area of St. Joseph completes the ritual from the Triod to the Feast of Pentecost: 35 Triods for the Lent of the Forsaken, chants on the Saturdays preceding the Feast of the Resurrection, the Prochod of the Lord, etc. The Sunday Canon of the prodigal son and countless other chants are also connected to the name of St. Joseph the Studite. Likewise, the *Pentecostarion* gives us other evidence that comes to strengthen the authorship of this book to Saint Joseph by the fact that, the Triodes that begin to be sung from the Epiphany on the Sunday of Saint Thomas the Apostle until the Sunday of All Saints, after Pentecost, the Canons of the Leaven, of the Samaritan,

² See The Irmos of the Sixth Canticle of “Canonul Învierii Domnului (Canon of the Resurrection of the Lord, n.t.)”, in: (*Penticostar Pentecostarion*), Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune Ortodoxă, București, 2021, p. 18.

³ Petre Vintilescu, *Despre poezia imnografică din cărțile de ritual și cântare bisericească (About the hymnographic poetry in the books of ritual and church songs, n.t.)*, Ed. Partener, Galați, 2006, p. 102.

of the blind man, of the pre-celebration of the Ascension of the Lord are clear evidence of the compositional activity of the representative of the Archbishop of Thessalonica. Saint Joseph's role in creating Pentecost was not an easy one at all. The hymnography of this period contains important dogmatic and liturgical sources for Christian posterity.

At the beginning of Pentecostarion, the Holy Saturday Canon is placed, which highlights the veracity of the Savior's descent with his soul into hell, highlighting the intrinsic connection between the Cross and the Death of Christ, as the beginning of our rising from the depths of sin: "Yesterday I was buried with you Christ, Today I rise together with You, resurrecting, Yesterday I crucified myself with You, You Himself glorify me Savior in Your Kingdom"⁴. The image of the Savior is described in the hymns of Pentecostarion, through typical definitions "Christ the King". "Lord of Life and Death", etc.⁵ and integrates us into the dimension of the Kingdom of God whose gates were wide open through the Resurrection of the Savior⁶.

All this enlightened period represents a fountain of life for all humanity thirsting for the eternal waters, in which we receive the perfect forgiveness achieved through the Crucifixion of the Savior as an act of perfect humility⁷. The songs of the Holy Easter Canon emphasize the fact that through the Resurrection of Christ the doors of the Kingdom of God were opened, Sunday, becoming the eighth day of the week "This also called holy day, one of the Saturdays, Queen and Lady, of the Feast of the Feasts and Holiday of the Holidays, in which we bless Christ forever"⁸. Also, in the Canon of the Resurrection we also experience the Holy Mysteries

⁴ See The Irmos of the Fourth Cantic from "Canonul Învierii Domnului (Canon of the Resurrection of the Lord, n.t.)", in: *Penticostar*, p. 17.

⁵ Nicolae DINU, "Penticostarul, oglindă a spiritualității ortodoxe", in: *Mitropolia Olteniei (Magazine of the Oltenia Metropolitanate)*, 1964, nr. 7-8, p. 548.

⁶ See at length Lucian FARCAȘIU, *Teologia imnografiei Praznicelor Împărătești din ciclul pascal. Studiu liturgic – istoric (Theology of the hymnography of the Royal Feasts of the Paschal cycle. Liturgical – historical study, n.t.)*, Editura Universității "Aurel Vlaicu, Arad, 2010.

⁷ Benedict GHIUȘ, *Taina răscumpărării în imnografia ortodoxă (The mystery of redemption in Orthodox hymnography, n.t.)*, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, București, 1998, p. 178.

⁸ See The Irmos of the Eighth Cantic from "Canonul Învierii Domnului (Canon of the Resurrection of the Lord, n.t.)", in: *Pernticostar*, p. 22.

of the Church, the Baptism and the Eucharist, the hymn answering our physical requests as a foretaste of the age to come.

This service is always performed in the morning, except for the night of Holy Easter, when it has a nocturnal character⁹ and precedes the Holy Liturgy. From a historical – symbolic point of view, it reminds us of the redemptive Passions, of the night when He was caught and taken to the judgment of Ana and Caiaphas¹⁰, respectively the first blows and mockery that were brought to the Redeemer. From a liturgical point of view, it represents one of the seven Praises that are performed daily in monasteries, and the churches of Myrrh only on Sundays and holidays, being mentioned in the Christian area in a letter of Pliny the Younger to the emperor Trajan¹¹.

The training book as a cult book includes the services for the 8 voices, constituting the second part of the representative book called *Anastisamatar*. This book has known in the history of the Orthodox cult several editions belonging to the representatives of the Romanian hymnography, such as: Filotei sin Agăi Jetei (1713); Mihalache Moldoveanu (1767); Peter of Ephesus (1820); and the most representative appearance from that time belongs to the famous Byzantinologist Macarie Hieromonakh (1823), printed in Vienna, etc. In the 20th century we know the editions from 1951 and 1953, the second edition 1974 and the last one completed and edited by the contemporary music byzantineologist Pr. Prof. Dr. Nicu Moldoveanu, in Bucharest (2002 and 2004)¹².

III. Luminânda – Etymological Perspectives

In specialized literature, “luminânda/exaposteilarion” is also synonymous with *svetilnă* or *expostillarie*¹³, which symbolizes a request to send light

⁹ See the ordinance at length in: *Slujba Învierii (Resurrection Service, n.t.)*, București, 2002.

¹⁰ *Dicționar enciclopedic de cunoștințe religioase (Encyclopedic Dictionary of Religious Knowledge, n.t.)*, Ed. Diecezana Caransebeș, 2001, p. 529.

¹¹ *Dicționarul de Muzică bisericească românească (The Dictionary of Romanian Church Music, n.t.)*, Ed. Basilica, București, 2013, p. 834.

¹² *Dicționarul de Muzică bisericească românească*, pp. 48 – 49.

¹³ *Dicționarul de Muzică bisericească românească*, p. 267.

to the one above “being a category of isolated stichs or tropes” that are sung before Praise during Matins. They are so called because they used to be sung as day began to break, hence the idea of “sending” and “light”. I understand from this the sending of the holy women to the Apostles by Jesus on the day of the Resurrection, as well as the sending of the 12 Apostles to preach, through the promise of the Holy Spirit, made by the Savior before His Ascension to heaven. In the practice of the Church in Constantinople, a singer was sent in the middle of the Church to perform these songs.

We have 11 *svetilne*¹⁴, corresponding to the 11 Gospels of the Resurrection, composed by Leo VI the Philosopher (886 – 912) and the son of the Byzantine emperor Constantine VII the Porphyrogenet (913 – 959).

IV. The Composer – Bio-Bibliographic References

One of the most important Orthodox religious musical personalities of reference in the autochthonous space of the 20th century is the teacher, conductor, composer and musicologist Nicolae Lungu. He was born on March 2, 1900 in the village of Dobridor in Dolj county and left for the eternal on July 18, 1993 in Bucharest. From his prestigious training widely reflected in music dictionaries and encyclopedias, we mention the following: Central Seminar in Bucharest (1912 – 1920), with Ion Popescu – Pasărea (church music), Dimitrie Teodorescu (vocal music), Cezar Papacostea (Latin language), Petre Gârboviceanu (Romanian and pedagogy); The Faculty of Theology of Bucharest (1921 – 1927); Bucharest Conservatory of Music (1921 – 1925) where he studied with: D.G. Kiriac (solfeggio theory), Ștefan Popescu (choral conducting), Constatin Brăiloiu (music history and folklore), Gheorghe Cucu (choral composition), etc¹⁵.

¹⁴ *Dicționar enciclopedic de cunoștințe religioase*, pp. 488 – 489.

¹⁵ *Dicționarul de Muzică bisericească românească*, pp. 384 – 388. See Gheorghe ALEXE, “Compozitorul Nicolae Lungu la 60 de ani” (“Composer Nicolae Lungu at 60 years old”, n.t.), in: *Glasul Bisericii*, 1960, nr. 9-10, pp. 850 – 854; Nicu MOLDOVEANU, “Profesorul, compozitorul și dirijorul Nicolae Lungu la 75 de ani” (“The teacher, composer and conductor Nicolae Lungu at 75 years old”, n.t.), in: *Biserica Ortodoxă*

He also specialized through summer courses in Vienna in choral art (1928, 1929), with Professor Keldorf.

From his glorious musical activity we mention the following: vocal music teacher at the School of Church Singers as well as at the high schools: Mihai Eminescu, Aurel Vlaicu and Tudor Vladimirescu all from Bucharest (1927 – 1956); music teacher and inspector for education of all grades in Romania (1939 – 1944).

The culminating point of his didactic-musical career was his status as a lecturer at the Department of Church and Ritual Music at the University Degree Orthodox Theological Institute in Bucharest (1949 – 1975). In addition to these academic and didactic attributions, he also held several leadership positions, among which the most important position within the patriarchal administration was that of conductor-director of the Choir of the Romanian Patriarchate (1949 – 1985), respectively as conductor at several cultural institutions of the time: the Carmem Choral Society (1922 – 1928) and the Romanian Choral Society from Bucharest (1934 – 1937).

He was awarded the Order of the Crown of Romania in the rank of knight (1929), the Patriarchal Cross for laymen (1970), etc. He was also an honorary member of “George Enescu” International Cultural Society from Montreal, Canada and last but not least of the Union of Composers and Musicologists from Romania.

His compositional work is broadly structured as follows: liturgical compositions (such as: the chants of the Holy Liturgy (1951), homophonic liturgical chants on both musical notations (1951), the uniform Anastasimatur (1953), chants from the Pentecost period (1980), liturgy psalter for three equal voices and for mixed choir (1956 – 1957). Likewise, his compositional creation also includes: Heruvices, Great Responses, Sunday and festive Acts, God’s Grace, Tropares, Stichera, Vivegheri,

Română, XCII (1975), nr. 5-6, p. 693-697; Nicu MOLDOVEANU, “Profesorul, compozitorul și dirijorul Nicolae Lungu – octogenar – omul și opera muzicală”, in: *Biserica Ortodoxă Română*, XCVIII (1980), nr. 3-4, p. 459-472; Iulian CÂRSTOIU and Constantin DRĂGUȘIN, “Maestrul Nicolae Lungu la 85 de ani” (“Master Nicolae Lungu at 85 years old”, n.t.), in: *Studii Teologice*, XXXVII (1985) 5 –6, pp. 411 – 430; Viorel COSMA, *Muzicieni români (Romanian musicians, n.t.) – lexicon*, Ed. Muzicală, București, 1970, pp. 281 – 283.

countless colophons, the funeral service, respectively the well-known arch piece “Iubite-voi Doamne...” (“I will love Thee, my Lord”, n.t.) and the object of our current academic research “Luminânda Învierii (Cu Trupul adormind ...)” (“The Light of the Resurrection (With the Body asleep...)” n.t.) We will not go into details regarding his religious and secular didactic work, the great works were recorded in the emblematic work of Rev. Prof. Dr. Nicu Moldoveanu “Antologie corală religioasă și laică pentru formații mixte”, (“Religious and secular choral anthology for mixed formations”, n.t.), Bucharest, 2006. This brief highlighting of his unmistakable life and activities in the religious and secular musical area of the 20th century comes to an appreciable commemoration (30 years) from his departure to heaven.¹⁶

¹⁶ Nicu MOLDOVEANU, *Religious and Secular Choral Anthology for Mixed Formations*, Bucharest, 2006, pp. 191-193.

Luminânda Învierii Domnului

Glasul 3

arm. Nicolae Lungu

Andante

mf

S. Cu tru - pul a - dor - mind ca un mu - ri -

A. Cu tru - pul a - dor - mind ca un mu - ri -

T. Cu tru - pul a - dor - mind ca un mu - ri -

B. Cu tru - pul a - dor - mind ca un mu - ri -

tor, Îm - pă - ra - te și

tor, Îm - pă - ra - te și

tor, Îm - pă - ra - te și

tor, Îm - pă - ra - te și

Doam - ne a tre - ia zi ai în - vi -

Doam - ne a tre - ia zi ai în - vi -

Doam - ne a tre - ia zi ai în - vi -

Doam - ne a tre - ia zi ai în - vi -

at, p re A - dam din stri - că - ciu - ne

at, p re A - dam din stri - că - ciu - ne

at, ai în - vi - at, pre A - dam din stri - că - ciu - ne

at, ai în - vi - at, pre A - dam din stri - că - ciu - ne

ri - di - când și moar -

ri - di - când și moar -

ri - di - când și moar -

ri - di - când și moar -

tea pier - zân - du - o,
tea pier - zân - du - o,
tea pier - zân - du - o
tea pier - zân - du - o

f Paș - ti - le ne - stri - că - ciu - nii
f Paș - ti - le ne - stri - că - ciu - nii
f Paș - ti - le ne - stri - că - ciu - nii
f Paș - ti - le ne - stri - că - ciu - nii

lu - mii de mân - tu - i - re!
lu - mii de mân - tu - i - re!
lu - mii de mân - tu - i - re!
lu - mii de mân - tu - i - re!

V. Analytical – Musicological Characteristics

The present musical composition of a post-Paschal bill represents a benchmark both from a musicological point of view and theologically. It is part of the chants specific to the 3rd psaltic voice, and compositionally in the bright key of A Major, based on, as you can see, three alterations. It is divided into several melodic phrases, as follows: the first phrase (“With the body asleep like a mortal, Emperor and God ...”), begins with the descending leap of the fourth (E – A), where we notice the unison debut of all the voices, respectively the semicadence on the third (E – G#), continuing with the unison opening from the base of the tonality, where the tenor thirds the soprano in the melodic line.

In the middle part of the works we encounter two consecutive jumps of fourths (E – A), the meeting of voices in the mentioned interval unison (“the third day ... and Adam ...”), the increase in vocal amplitude, respectively the diversification of the line basic melodies, as well as the presence of the third, in the classic vocal tandem (soprano – tenor).

The culminating point as well as size and valorization of the voices is the phrase (“and destroying death, Easter of incorruption...”), witnessing the grandeur of the melodic lines, as well as the resolution in the final cadence based on the tonality (A Major). The scope of the work unfolds over the distance of a ninth, the emphasis of the work being the F # sound.

VI. Theological Reflections

If He who resurrected the daughter of Jairus, the son of the widow of Nain, and a week before His Passion, His friend Lazarus of Bethany, it was clear that He Himself could not be overcome by death, even if He “fell asleep with the flesh as a mortal”, because He is the “King and Lord” who will rise on the third day breaking the seals of death forever. We observe that He “descends to hell”, in the depths of the earth raising the first fallen in the sin of disobedience, Adam from corruption and overcoming or “losing death bringing to humanity the definitive release from the bonds of sin

and eternal death, offering us to share «Easter incorruptibility», that is, His Body and Blood”. The objective salvation achieved by the Redeemer named in history constitutes the basis for the appropriation of subjective salvation through divine grace, faith and the personal deeds of each individual.

VII. Conclusion

The present academic foray emphasizes par excellence the interpenetration between the word, worship and hymnography, in the life of the Church and the Christian. Highlighting on the course of the work the various aspects related to the area of deepening of the central event, the Resurrection, are reflected in the liturgical and hymnographic treasury of the post-Easter period. Also, the composer of this masterpiece is included in the pantheon of personalities of all times from the Romanian and universal space.