

Editorial

In a study published at the end of the last century by the late Miloš Velimirović († 2008), the prominent Serbian musicologist observes that despite the highly promising publishing effort begun by Roman Jakobson and Arne Bugge in the 1950s as part of *Monumenta Musicae Byzantinae*, the study of musical semiographies from pre-Mongol Russia and elsewhere were still treated “as a kind of Cinderella – neglected and relegated to the domain of the exotic, different and remote” (M. Velimirović, “Russian Musical *Azbuki*: A Turning Point in the History of Slavic Chant”, in *The Study of Medieval Chant – Path and Bridges, East and West: In Honour of Kenneth Levy*. Edited by Peter Jeffery, Woodbridge: Boydell, 2001, p. 257). Moreover, the linguistic barrier, compounded by the political barrier, seemed to restrict still further the access of scholars to important archives, such as those in the Soviet Union, and knowledge of sacred music practices imported from Byzantium to Russia from the beginning of the eleventh century seemed to remain a chimera for the academic world.

The celebration of the Millennium of Christianity in Russia in 1998, but also, above all, the lifting of the Iron Curtain in the 1990s, lent fresh impetus to musicological research in the field of Byzantine chant in the Slavonic tongue. Numerous musical manuscripts from the libraries of the former communist bloc were rescued from the dust of time and oblivion and studied alongside those preserved in the monasteries of Mount Athos and Western Europe. Performers and researchers from all over the world are becoming more and more interested in and aware of the value of the musical heritage of Slavonic Byzantium, which today accounts for more than one thousand musical manuscripts copied between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, not taking into account the hundreds of codices dating from before that period.

This is why the present issue of *Musica Sacra* is dedicating three studies and one review by renowned researchers to Slavic-language Byzantine musical culture, on topics that are extremely current and challenging.

Gregory Myers’ article, *Troparian tis Litys: the Processional Chant in the Liturgical Practices of the Mediaeval Slavs*, examines the Byzantine liturgical repertoires preserved in the Kondakaria, in particular the Trisagion and the Kontakion for Palm Sunday, and their dissemination within the ritual of the *Slavia Orthodoxa* in mediaeval times.

Yulia Artamonova, in *Kondakarian Chant: Trying to Restore the Modal Patterns*, intends to reconstruct the modal system of the kondakarian chant (*Kondakarnoie penie*), explains the mechanisms of its musical structure, and the stylistic features that define the hymnographic corpus of early Slavonic ecclesiastical chant.

Last but not least, the paper by Vesna-Sara Peno, *Post-Byzantine Chanting Tradition in the Serbian Monastery of Hilandar on Mount Athos* explores the monodic Slavonic musical practices in the Balkans and its relationship with Constantinople, reflected in the tradition of Mount Athos, and the Hilandar Monastery in particular, and the impact of the school from the former capital of the Byzantine Empire on the Athonite monastic tradition in the nineteenth century.

The bringing together of these different academic viewpoints in the present issue of *Musicology Today* undoubtedly sheds greater light on the study of Slavonic-Byzantine musical semiographies and the religious heritage that has been passed down from mediaeval times. But at the same time, I am convinced that the complexity of the subjects explored herein will, perhaps equally as much, be able to reveal lesser-known aspects of a common Latin-Byzantine history that was united for more than a millennium by a true “sacred bridge”, despite temporal and geographic distances.

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