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ALEX CISTELECAN
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RALUCA MUȘAT
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Editura Muzicală, Bucharest, 2012

PROBLEMS OF IDENTITY IN THE ORTHODOX CHURCH MUSIC IN TRANSYLVANIA

Transylvania and the Orthodox people from Transylvania

Transylvania is the region that stretches to the Central and Western part of Romania today. Broadly speaking, Transylvania represents the territory once under Hungarian and Austrian dominion which became part of the Romanian state after the First World War and in the aftermath of the dissolution of Austria-Hungary. Strictly speaking, the term refers to the territory delineated by the Eastern, Southern and Western Romanian Carpathians, a territory that generally overlaps the former principality of Transylvania since the time of the Hapsburg dominion. Transylvania, in a wider sense, also includes the territories stretching to the west of the former Transylvanian principality (Banat, Crişana) and to the north of it (Maramures).¹

The largest part of Transylvania's inhabitants are Romanian. The Hungarians are the most important minority, approximately 20% of the region's population.² A significant proportion is made up of the Roma population, but their number is difficult to estimate; the correct percentage is somewhere between 5 and 10%.³ The Germans and the Jews, other times numerous, are nowadays an insignificant number.⁴ As to the religious affiliation, approximately 70% of the inhabitants are Orthodox Christians, 10% each for Reformed and Roman-Catholic, 2% each for Pentecostal and Greek Catholic. In an overwhelming proportion, the Romanians and the Roma are Orthodox, while the Hungarians are Reformed or Roman-Catholic.

Although the Romanian Greek-Catholic Church (or *United with Rome*)⁵ has a small number of devotees, it played an important part in the history of the Transylvanian Romanians in the 18th-19th centuries. The Romanian

Greek-Catholic Church was set up in 1701, when most Orthodox Romanians agreed to unite with Rome, accepting Catholic dogmas, but having the right to keep the liturgic rites unchanged. Transylvania's metropolitan, Atanasie, was ordained again by the Catholics, severed his ties with Bucharest and Constantinople and became subject to Rome. Once Catholic faith embraced, the clerics received legal rights and tax exemptions.⁶

For more than half a century, the united episcopate was the only churchly institution of the Transylvanian Romanians recognized by the Austrian Empire. Also, since the Romanian nobility had been turned Hungarian until the 15th century, the Greek-Catholic clergy made up the political and intellectual elite: it established and administered schools and printing houses, sent the youngsters to study in Vienna and Rome, fought for the political rights of Romanians, and later – around 1800 – developed works of history and linguistics and laid the foundations of the Enlightenment and of the national revival.

Not all Orthodox people accepted the union, though. As a consequence of the former's pressure and of Russia's influence, the Austrian Empire granted that the Transylvanian Orthodox people be represented by a bishop subject to Karlowitz, starting 1761; in the next 50 years however, the episcopal seat was vacant half the time. After the next half a century, in 1864, under Andrei Șaguna's rule, the Orthodox episcopate of Transylvania was to be reorganized as a metropolitan church, gaining full religious power, and to become politically active.

The proportion of the Orthodox and the Greek-Catholic people in the 18th and 19th centuries is hard to estimate. In the first half of the 20th century, the ratio was roughly one of equality. In 1948, shortly after the communist regime was instated, the Greek-Catholic Church was disbanded, and its churches and other properties went to the Orthodox Church. A part of the Greek-Catholic believers turned to the Roman-Catholic churches of the Hungarians, where the service was done in Latin. Others chose to perform the services illegally. Most, however, accepted the affiliation to the Orthodox Church as a temporary solution, and later as a consummated fact. Affiliation to one community or another only partly depended on the differences in teaching between the two Churches. For a healthy amount of believers, it seems that the social aspect weighed more than the dogmatic one: it was more important to attend service in the nearby church, where they and the rest of the village or the district used to go, and it was less relevant if the priest prayed for the Orthodox

bishop or for the Pope, or if the Creed was recited with the Filioque or without it. This partly explains the number below expectation of Orthodox people who returned to Greek-Catholicism after 1989, as well as the large number of Orthodox people who accepted the union with Rome in 1701.

Orthodox church music in Transylvania – general overview

In this paragraph I will make a short presentation of the church chant nowadays, showing who sings it, where, when and what they sing exactly. The presentation takes into account the music in Transylvania, but – at a general level – many of the elements mentioned are present in the other Orthodox churches in Romania and in the entire Balkan area as well.

The church music is sung, naturally, especially in churches, during the services. It can be sung in other places as well: in people's houses and even in public institutions for blessing the water, in processions and pilgrimages. Outside the liturgical contexts, it can be listened to in concerts (sometimes in churches, other times on stage), in the radio or TV broadcasts (live or studio recordings),⁷ in the clips uploaded on video-sharing websites⁸ or on audio support (CDs, more seldom audio tapes).⁹ For a few years now, in some churches the sound system plays church music also when the church is open but there is no service being performed. This music is rendered from original CDs or, of late, downloaded from the Internet.

During church services, the music is performed by several types of chanters. The most important is the chanter *per se*, who is remunerated. The latter is almost always a man.¹⁰ His place in church is in a distinct area (*kliros*, Rom.: *strană*), in one of the lateral apses (in the front part of the church), usually the one on the right. Sometimes, there are several such "official" chanters. Beside the chanter or chanters who know the chant rules, one can find one or more persons willing to help, but whose musical and liturgical knowledge is scant. In the altar, there is another category of musicians, the priests and the deacons. Their musical role is limited: most of the times it is confined to reciting melodically certain litanies or passages from the Scripture. However, they may come to the *kliros*, in order to help the chanters, in certain moments.

In the churches that have a choir, be it plurivocal or monodic, it is set in the *kafasi* (Rom.: *cafas*), a balcony situated in the opposite side from the altar. The choir sings only at certain services: the Divine Liturgy (all throughout, or starting with a certain liturgical moment – the Gospel or

the Cherubic Hymn), possibly at funerals and weddings. The choir is led by a conductor. Usually, the conductor has a musical education of the western kind and may be from outside the community. The chanter may or may not join the choir, depending on the type of musical education he has acquired.

In many churches, the congregation blends its voices with those of the chanters above mentioned, for the Divine Liturgy chants and a few other chants from the other services. The believers are people from all walks of life. The number of those who regularly go to church is hard to estimate: a recent survey which considered Romania entirely showed that 22% of Romanians declare that they go to church at least once a week, while another 26% go to church monthly, but this percentage is probably overstated.¹¹

The chant is performed at well defined moments of the service, which alternate with recited passages or with passages that are recited slightly melodically, as I have remarked above. The services take place with a higher or lower frequency, depending on the church. At the monastery churches, the services are performed every day, at several moments in the day: usually, in the morning, in the afternoon, and in the evening. At the parish churches, they take place once or several times a week, but more important from the theological and social points of view are the Divine Liturgies from Sunday mornings and the big feasts (Easter, Christmas, and so on), to which occasional services are added, such as for weddings, funerals or requiems. These are actually the services in which the choir, if there is one, sings.

The duration of a chant varies from less than a minute to several minutes; at the monasteries, one can find chants that may last for even half an hour. The duration of a service stretches from a few minutes (under 10 minutes for a commemoration service performed rapidly) to a few hours, and it also depends on the magnitude of the feast and the place where it is performed (in the parish or at the monastery). The general duration of the Sunday Liturgy is one hour and a half, the same length being valid for the Matins service that precedes it. The believers come to church earlier or later, and are allowed to enter the church anytime during the two services, but most take care to arrive before the beginning of the Liturgy.

From the point of view of the text, the musical pieces are divided into two main categories: psalms from the Old Testament and hymns. In the Eastern Orthodox Church almost one hundred thousand hymns must have been composed, many of which are the size of a single stanza. Of

these, a few tens of thousands are still in use, including in the monasteries in Transylvania. The period when the poetic creation thrived is framed between the 7th-10th centuries, but hymns are being composed nowadays as well. Some hymns are sung more often, others more rarely (once a year or even more seldom than that), according to some relatively precise but complicated rules;¹² during Liturgy, most part of the repertoire is invariable.

The rules indicate the text that is to be chanted, but they give freedom to choose the musical version. Certain versions are more popular, but are not unique. Also, creation is not a closed field and nowadays new musical versions are being composed. Moreover, improvisation plays an important part.

Group identity and musical identity

The term *identity* is used with various meanings, depending on the field (psychology, sociology, philosophy etc.), on the school of thought and, of course, on the author. In this study, I examine group identity, not the individual one, and I will not focus on the psychological and philosophical perspectives.

Identity refers to a set of characteristics shared by the members of a group. X and Y, group members, are characterized by a series of common traits; hence, we can say that, from the point of view of the defining group traits, X and Y are the same. I chose to use a working definition adapted from that which Anthony D. Smith used for national identity.¹³ This definition involves two aspects: on the one hand, identity is “the continuous reproduction and reinterpretation of the pattern of values, symbols, memories, myths and traditions that compose the distinctive heritage of the group”; on the other hand, it refers to “the identification of individuals with that pattern and heritage and with its cultural elements”. Hence, identity is not given and immutable, but the result of a continuous process of reinterpretation of the characteristics, a process which unfolds at a slower or faster pace, depending on the context. Identity also presupposes that the group member should acknowledge the values and the other elements mentioned as being his as well (to a larger or smaller extent).

Every person has a multiple identity, since everyone who lives in society belongs simultaneously to several groups. Most people have an ethnic affiliation, a geographical one, but also a familial affiliation, a professional one, an age one, and so on. Many of these types of affiliation can be

subdivided, generating thus as many identities. For instance, someone can be a Transylvanian, but also a Romanian, a European, a person from Țara Chioarului or another Transylvanian region, from X village or from Y district of a town. Similarly, someone can feel part of the group of teachers in general, but also part of a more restricted group, of the history of early music professors in higher education, for instance. One person may also have different identities of the same level: for instance, one can simultaneously be a fan of several rock music bands or football teams. Not infrequently, identities happen to conflict: for instance, a Romanian supporter of CFR Cluj and CF Barcelona football teams may find himself at odds in the event of a Steaua Bucharest – Barcelona match. His choice may depend on the context: to support the team which is supported by the people he chose to watch the match with; or to support the Romanian team, if he is in a state of expatriation and he experiences homesickness; or, on the contrary, the Catalan team, if he is an immigrant in Spain etc. Whichever his decision may be, it is the result of certain personal choices, but also of the ties with the groups to which the person considers he belongs.

Often, identity characteristics are defined in relation to other groups and less through reflection on the traits of one's own group. Face to face with someone from group X, a member of group Y will observe the differences and will take them on as specific: we are like this, unlike X, who are different. Thus, those from group Y construct their identity based on the differences between them and other groups with which they get in touch. To a distant observer, the identity differences between X and Y groups can seem minor, just as one shared trait of the groups might seem to him worth noticing; on the contrary, group Y can neglect the respective trait, as long as it is met with the groups with which Y gets in contact.

Music can provide components for a group identity, just as dress, hairdo, diet, the economic system and many other such aspects do. The elements of a group's identity connected to music make up the musical identity. They comprise the entire music of the group or, rather, certain parts of it (pieces or musical genres), regardless of whether they were created or not by the group members, performed or not by them (and regardless of their being used by other groups);¹⁴ performance approaches acknowledged by the group as specific; particular traits (timbre, rhythmic formulas, motifs, harmonic sequences etc). Among these elements, one can also count discourses on the group's music; for instance, among the elements of Romanian national church music, one can find the myth

according to which the Romanian church chant is more humble and is better suited to prayer, as opposed to the Greek one, given to pomp;¹⁵ or the one according to which Anton Pann adapted the Greek chant by drawing it closer to the Romanian folk music.¹⁶

One must note that the identity elements are not necessarily recognized as such by the group's outsiders. Also, there can be identity elements shared by several groups. My research is not aimed at correlating the musical characteristics to a certain group, but it is interested in the manner in which each group considers that certain traits are its own, in the way it conceives of its own identity.

Orthodox musics in Transylvania

In 2012 and 2013 I carried out a field research study in cities, villages, and monasteries in Transylvania (Alba, Bihor, Cluj, Sălaj, and Sibiu counties). I attended services, recorded church music, took part in a 3-day pilgrimage to Nicula Monastery, and conducted interviews with chanters, priests and pilgrims. My main objective was to study the church music as collective identity mark. For achieving this, I had to distinguish between different kinds of music and to understand their norms and their relations with the concrete enactments.

In the Orthodox churches in Transylvania, one can find several types of music. I made the classification taking into account both the musical criteria, and the opinion of the chanters themselves. The prevailing music is the so-called *cunțană*, after the name of the priest Dimitrie Cunțan – or Cunțanu, according to the older spelling – the one who noted and edited (in 1890) the church chants which he would teach to his students at the Sibiu Seminary.¹⁷ The music from Cunțan's volume became a norm and gradually spread in the Transylvanian Orthodox churches.

The *cunțană* music has its origins in the Byzantine music, the latter being a monodic music,¹⁸ with its own notation system, and whose melodies fit one of the eight modes¹⁹ and one of the three genres: syllabic (a syllable usually lasts one beat), short-melismatic (a syllable lasts two beats) or long-melismatic (a syllable most of the times lasts eight beats).²⁰ During the 18th century and the first half of the 19th century, children from Transylvania could be found in the schools from Wallachia and Moldavia, where they learnt, among others, the Byzantine chant in Romanian. Upon returning to Transylvania, they would teach it in their turn, this time without

using the musical notation.²¹ For instance, Ioan Bobeș – the teacher from whom Cunțan learned orally the church melodies at the end of the 1850s – had studied Byzantine music at the Bucharest Seminary, as a student of Anton Pann during 1844-1848.²²

As the Metropolitanate and the seminary from Sibiu – founded by Andrei Șaguna in 1855 – developed and acquired prestige, the *cunțană* music evolved distinctly from the Byzantine chant in Romanian performed to the South and East of the Carpathians. A juxtaposition of the two musics has been attempted in the interwar period – after Transylvania’s annexation to Romania – and especially during the communist period, when the management of the Orthodox Church wanted the uniformization of church music throughout the country. Although the project of uniformization did not succeed completely, the standard repertoire promoted by the Patriarchate in Bucharest pervaded Transylvania at the time of communism and post-communism, at least for a part of the chants from the Divine Liturgy and especially in the city.²³

After the fall of communism, a revival movement of the Byzantine tradition took place. The chanters tried to bring back into use the 19th century repertoire and to come closer to the Greek style of performing, by way of which they could rediscover the old “authentic” Romanian church music.²⁴ In Transylvania, the revivalist trend is prevalent in monasteries, where a significant part of the monks were born or educated in Moldova, Muntenia or Oltenia or had the experience of Greece and of the Holy Mountain. Secondly, it can be found in some churches from university towns.

The Byzantine music (also called *psaltic*) is defined differently by the Transylvanians. For most of them (including the majority of chanters), the Byzantine chant, as regarded by the revivalist movement, and the uniformized chant from the communist period belong to the same category. On the other hand, the followers of the revivalist trend distinguish the two musics, both as far as the repertoire and the general sound are concerned, and the ornamentation and the musical scales.

Another music, called *Blaj*, is somewhat similar to the *cunțană* one. Before the Second World War, Sibiu was the seat of the Orthodox Metropolitanate of Transylvania, and Blaj – that of the Greek-Catholic Metropolitanate. The chant taught in Blaj and practiced in the united churches continued to be used also after the disappearance of the Greek-Catholic church in 1948.²⁵ Today, its weight is significantly diminished in comparison to that of the *cunțană* one. The Blaj version is employed

especially in the North of Transylvania, and by the more senior chanters; the youngsters from the former Greek-Catholic areas learn at the seminary or in college the *cunțană* music.

A special category is made up by the plurivocal choral music. It comprises pieces in several parts (usually 3 or 4, for male or mixed choirs), which are both harmonizations of the tunes from the above mentioned musics, and original compositions, generally tonal in character. The people I talked to seem to regard it as a unitary category; or, to be exact, they do not make within it the distinctions that they make between the monodic musics. Indeed, choral music has a special character and this is not only due to the musical features of the pieces from the repertoire. The choral music is performed only in some churches (especially in the urban and richer ones, which can afford to pay several choristers) and only at certain services and liturgical moments; it is sung from a score, and the improvisations are absent; the performers can be people with no connection to the parish or to the Christian faith, but with the ability to read the musical notes.

Two other special categories gather paraliturgical pieces: *pricesne* (sg. *priceasnă*) and carols (Rom.: *colinde*, sg. *colindă*). The former are relatively recent compositions (18th century or more recent, some composed even nowadays), with a stanzaic form and a simple melody. In church, they are sung during Divine Liturgy, at the time of the Holy Communion (hence the name *priceasnă*, from причастие (Sl.) = communion) or after the service is completed. Outside the church, they are sung in pilgrimages.²⁶ The carols are sung in church at the same moments as the *pricesne*, but only during the Christmas days and the 40 day fasting period that precedes the feast. They gather two distinct genres from the viewpoint of ethnomusicologists: *cântece de stea* (pieces for the Star boys' singing procession, written by the scholars of the 18th and 19th centuries, with texts about the Lord's Nativity, similar to the *pricesne* and the western noëls) and the *colinde* (anonymous peasant pieces, possibly pre-Christian, with frequently unreligious texts, which use a restricted gamut).²⁷ The distinction between the *cântece de stea* and the *colinde* is made only by ethnomusicologists; for the believers (including the chanters and the clerics) it is insignificant.

Identity in the Transylvanian church music

The interviews that I have conducted show that the Transylvanians indeed acknowledge a certain church music as being theirs and prefer it to others. The church musics do not merely reflect a personal or common preference, but are manifestations of identity and contribute to the construction of identity.

The preference for one church music or another and its connection to group identity can be detected only with some of the group members: few are those who are acquainted with the church music of other groups. Especially in the countryside, people know the music from the church they use to go to (provided they go to church regularly), but know very little about the music from the neighboring village or the nearby town. For instance, F. attends service every Sunday at the village church, and she did not happen to attend Liturgy somewhere else, except for the time she was hospitalized, when she went to service at the hospital church. F. asked me with surprise if the chant was not the same everywhere and said she did not watch the Trinitas channel, so she did not know what the chant was like in Bucharest. This is the reason for which most of the people I interviewed were current and former church chanters, people with the necessary abilities to notice the differences between chants and for whom these differences matter.

One of the identities most marked by the church chant is the Transylvanian one. The chanters often reply that their church music is the *cunțană* and often set it against the Byzantine music. Upon arrival in the S. village, the priest welcomed me by saying: "Where you come from, in Bucharest, the church chant is as in Suleyman", referring to a Turkish TV series about Suleiman the Magnificent, very popular in Eastern Europe. For many Transylvanian clerics, the church chant of Bucharest and of the Old Kingdom²⁸ – even more so the Byzantine revitalized one –, a chant that uses chromatic modes as well, melismas and a nasal tone, closer to the Greek one, is considered to be influenced by the Turkish music. The musical differences are only a part of the imaginary inventory of features that distinguish Transylvanians from the people in the Old Kingdom. The former consider themselves – and are considered as such by the rest of Romanians – more serious, more hardworking, more honest, more rational, more level-headed, more reliable than their southern neighbors, given to frivolity, idleness, easy gain bordering illegality, domestic squabbles and chatter. To put it differently, Transylvanians are more European, more

“German”, while the Wallachians and the Moldavians are Oriental, Balkan, influenced throughout history by the Turkish and Greek Phanariot domination.

The stereotypes regarding the differences between the Transylvanians and the Wallachians and Moldavians are also reflected in the features that the Transylvanians ascribe to their church musics. Thus, priest I., asked to characterize the *cunțană* music and the psaltic music, states that the former is smooth, with popular influences, performed „in a more *doină*-like way” (i.e. in a rubato manner), while the second is “shaken”, with Greek and Turkish influences. Naturally, the musical characteristics called forth are to a certain extent real; however, they also reflect the manner in which the interviewee conceives of the differences between Transylvanians as opposed to Wallachians and Moldavians: the former – more level-headed, with a smoother music, the latter – more agitated, like their shaken music. The first, true Romanians – *doină* (pl. *doine*), a musical genre in a rubato rhythm and with a free form, was and still is perceived as an identity badge for Romanians²⁹ – the latter, tied to the Orient.

Father I.’s view is consonant with the opinions of priest Gheorghe Șoima – who was in charge of the church music course offered at the Faculty of Theology in Sibiu during 1941-1976 –³⁰ published in 1945:³¹ “The differences that the Transylvanian church music nevertheless presents compared to the psaltic one are due partly to a slight cultural influence from the West, but mostly to the influence of folk music. [...] But it was undoubtedly not the dance music or the worldly one that influenced church music; rather, it was the melodies of our *doine*. [...] However, if on these occasions we like to compete for emphasizing as much as we can the beauty of the Romanian *doine* and even their national spirit (with some of them), why, when it comes to the influence they were able to have in Transylvania, on the church music, we become much fearful and consider this influence so baleful? It is, after all, about the fusion and symbiosis of two musical genres about which, considered separately, we always voice the most exquisite appreciation.”³²

The Transylvanians define their *cunțană* music by comparing it to the psaltic one, the same as the Transylvanian identity is defined in opposition to that of the people from the Old Kingdom (the opposition between two geographic regions, the opposition between periphery and center, and at the same time between Europeans and Orientals). But beyond this musical regional identity, there is also a common national identity. The same Gheorghe Șoima stated: “In fact, the church chant in Transylvania

is identical to the psaltic one in the Old Kingdom; with a few exceptions, the church modes can be reduced to the same musical scales and we can identify the same cadences." He also showed that the church musics contributed to the cohesion of the groups that practice them, particularly of the nation, and that the minor differences between the psaltic chant and the *cunțană* one, contributed to the national, common identity: "a uniform church music throughout the Romanian regions would be a factor of an even tighter national and Christian cohesion. But we all ought to admit that the actual differences between the church music from the various Romanian provinces are far from being so big and of such nature as to jeopardize the national and religious unity of Romanians."³³

The national and religious identities happen to be competing. Priest D. remembers a memorial service which the Sibiu metropolitan attended as well. The moment the priest started singing a heirmos, the psaltic version, the metropolitan stopped him, asking him to sing "our chants", namely the *cunțană* ones. A few years later, in a similar situation, the priest started the same heirmos in the *cunțană* version. This time, the metropolitan stopped him asking him to sing it in the psaltic version. Hence, the metropolitan found his identity in both types of chant (personally, or as a bishop of Sibiu), whichever the reasons for his incongruous behavior might have been. It is possible that the context (the deceased person, the people attending the service, the Bucharest directives, etc.) should have determined him to choose one chant over the other, emphasizing – in turn – one of the identities to the detriment of the other. Nevertheless, the prevalent one seems to have been the regional one, the *cunțană* chants being called "ours". Also another bishop, Andrei, former bishop of Alba Iulia and current metropolitan of Cluj, known for his preference for the *cunțană* music, urged the chanters to leave aside the psaltic music and to sing "our chants".

There are chanters who believe that the Byzantine chant is the church music par excellence of the Orthodox, and that it should be performed in Transylvania instead of the *cunțană* one. For them, the Orthodox identity is more important than the regional or national one: we are Orthodox, hence we must sing the music of the Byzantium. However, this view is not shared by all followers of the Byzantine chant. For instance, Father S., a monk at a monastery from the Alba county, considers that the choice of the church music is a personal matter: everyone is free to choose the music he/she likes, everyone is free to go to a church where he/she likes the chant. His personal choice is the Byzantine chant, but the reason is

not connected to putting forth a religious identity, it is rather a functional reason; the chant is connected to prayer, and experience showed him that the psaltic music is more suitable for prayer: "After I tasted the psaltic music, I cannot return to the others [i.e. choral and *cunțană*]." Also, according to Father S., the regional identity criterion should not take precedence when choosing the music: "Some say that this is how tradition goes with us [to sing the *cunțană* music]. But the tradition here was also to be Greek-Catholic. Should we then return to Greek-Catholic faith just because such was the tradition?"

The opposition Orthodox vs. Greek-Catholic exists in the imaginary of the Transylvanian Orthodox people, but it seems little present in the musical realm. If the priests sometimes characterize certain behaviors, the architecture or the painting of the church as Greek-Catholic, they do not do the same with the Blaj kind of music. Still, the Blaj chant can become a marker for the age and education identities. The young chanters from the former Greek-Catholic areas learn in school the *cunțană* music. Then, upon returning to their native village, they remark the differences between the music they learned and that sung by the local cantor. The music the youngsters sing helps them define themselves in relation to the others: their music, the *cunțană* one, is the music of the educated, of those who went to the seminary or to college. In opposition, in their eyes, Blaj is the music of the elderly and the music of the less knowledgeable ones.

Less to be expected perhaps is the presence of the European identity. I asked N., a chanter in a village near Alba Iulia, whether he would sing psaltic music in his church. He answered that, as far as he could see, the psaltic music is the future. The general tendency in nowadays society, N. explained to me, is that of integration. The church music undergoes a process similar to that of the European countries that formed the European Union and the differences between them are being effaced. It will be a music for the entire country, and that can only be the psaltic music. Moreover, the next step will be to have the same music for all Orthodox countries in Europe (including Russia). The European Union is for N. not only an example which serves to illustrate the comparison with the church chant. It is a territory in which he lives and which he sees becoming more important for him than Romania or the village in which he lives. And the psaltic music is not only the musical equivalent of the European Union, but it is, in his view, the future church music of the Orthodox in Europe. Declaring that he likes the psaltic music and that this will be the music

of the future, N. expresses his European identity and his trust in the future of the Union.

I have shown thus far how various musics express various identities – regional, age identities, etc. – and how the musical identities are built by comparing the music of the group to the music of the other. I will further investigate other matters regarding the connection between the group identity and the Orthodox church music in Transylvania. The *pricesne* and the carols are considered by the Transylvanians as having no connection to any regional identity, they can be sung by anyone, from anywhere. Nevertheless, the *pricesne* can express through their verse a certain local identity: for instance, in the *pricesne* sung in the pilgrimage at Nicula Monastery, the place of the monastery is clearly specified: “At the Nicula on the hill / In our beautiful Transylvania / In the thick of the woods / There lies Virgin Mary” or “Among us you sat / At Nicula in pristine place [...] / And you came to a forest / And built yourself a monastery / Up there, on Nicula hill / At the edge of the forest.”³⁴ Singing the *priceasnă* on their way, the members of the group of pilgrims express their belonging to the Nicula monastery, to which they feel connected and to which they come back periodically. In my opinion, there is a local religious identity generated by the important monastery in whose vicinity one lives (in this case, Nicula), and this can be sometimes expressed in the music.³⁵ Alongside this identity, the first *priceasnă* quoted also expresses a larger, Transylvanian identity (“our beautiful Transylvania”).

A few years ago when mass media were not so invasive, pilgrims from Derșida village were concerned to learn and bring home a *priceasnă* in every pilgrimage. If they liked a *priceasnă* they listened to at the monastery, they asked the singer to sing it again in order to learn its melody, and wrote down the lyrics. After returning home, they transmitted the song to the cantor of the village, who was supposed to chant it at the following Sunday Liturgy. In this way, the entire village took part symbolically in the pilgrimage and shared the experience of the pilgrims. The *priceasnă* became a way of gathering the village, an element of the regional and local religious identities.

The carols can throw a different light on the identity issue, beyond the common aspects they share with the regular chants. The second day of Christmas of 2012, right after the Divine Liturgy, in each of the two Orthodox churches from the center of Ocna Mureș town, a carol concert took place. In one of the churches, the concert was performed by a choir of the teachers in town, conducted by a Hungarian lady conductor, of

Reformed affiliation. The repertoire included Western tonal pieces, but also a Jewish song. The concert sent to a larger Christian identity, without distinction of denomination, a fact which was explicitly stated by the parish priest in the introduction to the concert. At the same time, the concert appealed to the urban multiethnic identity of the town: Romanians and Hungarians from Ocna Mureș gathered together for celebrating the Nativity of Our Lord.

In the other church, the concert was performed by an Orthodox student association, grouped around a priest from Oașa monastery from Alba County. The students came from several university centers in the West of the country (among them Cluj and Timișoara) and were originally from various regions in Romania and the Republic of Moldova. The choir was to go to several Transylvanian towns, sing in churches after service and then divide into smaller groups and go carol singing through the town. The repertoire of the concert was different from that in the first church: most of the carols were those made popular in the 1990s by the Christian Orthodox Student Association in Romania (ASCOR), taken from George Breazul's volume,³⁶ to which a few other carols were added, among which the most famous was the Byzantine one *Ἀναρχος Θεός* (translated in Romanian by Sabin Preda: *Cel fără-de-nceput*).³⁷ The music was performed in one part, accompanied by the drone borrowed from the psaltic chant. Many of the choristers were dressed in folk costumes; similar to the carols, the dress was from various regions of the country. The identity exhibited by this choir – both as attitude, dress and as music – was a national one, with roots in the nationalism of the first half of the 20th century. Hence, the *pricesne* and the carols, although they are not strictly connected to a certain group and can be performed by any community, they testify to the identity (identities) of those who choose them to be sung and of those in whose church they are sung.

Last but not least, the group identity is built with the help of the congregational chant. In many places, during Divine Liturgy, the believers sing together with the chanter and/or the choir. As I have shown above, many times they do not know the chant manner from other places and thus do not use the church music as a defining identity element which could be compared to other communities. Still, it becomes an identity element the moment someone tries to change it. For example, in H. village from the North of Transylvania, the newly arrived priest tried to replace the music traditionally used during Liturgy – which the community had learned aurally and sung with pleasure – with that which he had learned

in college. The chanter obeyed the priest's wish, but the regulars in church regarded the situation with displeasure, because the new pieces were unknown, it was difficult to memorize them quickly and they perceived them as foreign. In this case, the new music does not send to another clear identity, it is not the other's music,³⁸ but simply another music. However, it allows emphasis on the fact that the old music sung by the congregation has an identity role and consolidates the connection between the members of the community.

NOTES

- ¹ For a general presentation of Transylvania in the Hapsburg Empire see JELAVICH, B., *History of the Balkans*, vol. 1 (*Eighteen and Nineteenth Centuries*), Cambridge University Press, 1990, pp. 150-161, 321-327; HITCHINS, K., *The Romanians, 1774-1866*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1996, pp. 198-225; HITCHINS, K., *Rumania, 1866-1947*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1994, pp. 202-230.
- ² Demographic data (including the ethnic structure of the population and the correlation between ethnicity and religion) can be accessed on the website of the National Institute of Statistics: <http://www.insse.ro/cms/files/RPL2002INS/vol1/titulriv1.htm>. I calculated the percentages that totalize the data referring to the 10 counties in Transylvania according to the 2002 census, as they appear on the website of the Jakabffy Elemér Foundation and Media Index Association <http://recensamant.referinte.transindex.ro> (accessed June 28, 2013). The results of a more recent census (2011) are planned to be published by the National Institute of Statistics on July 4, 2013. The preliminary data which appeared in the press (see, for instance, <http://www.gandul.info/stiri/recensamantul-populatiei-primele-rezultate-cati-romani-sunt-cati-etnici-maghiari-si-cat-de-mare-este-minoritatea-roma-9200308>) shows that the differences between the 2002 and the 2011 data are insignificant, except for the case of the Roma population.
- ³ The proportion of the Roma in Transylvania is slightly higher than the country average. Probably the 3.2 percentage measured by the 2011 census is undervalued, but it is lower than the 10% put forth by some NGOs of the minority.
- ⁴ In 1930 there were approximately 800,000 of each Germans and Jews living in Romania (including Bessarabia and North of Bucovina, territories annexed to the Soviet Union in 1940). The number of Germans has decreased to almost 400,000 in 1956, and today it is lower than 40,000. The Jewish population counted approximately 350,000 at the end of the Second World War, and today it counts approximately 5,000 (see also GEORGESCU, V., *Istoria românilor. De la origini până în zilele noastre*, Humanitas, Bucharest, 1995, pp. 6-7, 207).
- ⁵ Today, the term *uniate* is considered derogatory by the international Catholic organizations. Nevertheless, the Greek-Catholic church in Romania is officially called *United with Rome*.
- ⁶ For an Orthodox perspective on the Uniatism see PĂCURARIU, M., *Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române*, vol. 2, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, Bucharest, 1994, pp. 289-317, 361-394. For a Greek-Catholic perspective, see PRUNDUȘ, S.A., PLAIANU, C., *Catholicism și ortodoxie românească*, Casa de Editură Viața Creștină, Cluj-Napoca, 1994, pp. 50-62 (<http://www.bru.ro/istorie/istorie>, accessed July 1, 2013).

- ⁷ Trinitas TV Channel run by the Romanian Patriarchy is distributed by all cable and satellite TV providers. There are several local radio stations which one can listen to online, under the auspice of Dioceses. Among these, the most influential in Transylvania seems to be Radio Renașterea of the Cluj Diocese.
- ⁸ YouTube is probably the most popular site where one listens to Orthodox music, followed by a similar website which originates in Romania: trilululu.ro. Also, many audio and video recordings can be found on the crestinordodox.ro platform.
- ⁹ The audio tapes have become obsolescent in the cities in Romania some 5-10 years ago. However, the cantor from the Derșida vilage (Sălaj county) listened to music on audio tapes and not on CDs in 2012.
- ¹⁰ Two examples of women employed as chanters are mentioned in GRĂJDIAN, V., DOBRE, S., GRECU, C., STREZA I., *Cântarea liturgică ortodoxă din sudul Transilvaniei. Cântarea tradițională de strană în bisericile Arhiepiscopiei Sibiului*, Editura Universității “Lucian Blaga” Sibiu, pp. 344, 360-361; Angela Beschiu, in Jina (Sibiu county), and Ana Goja, in Hălchiu (Brașov county).
- ¹¹ <http://www.inscop.ro/aprilie-2013-increderea-in-biserica-si-comportamentul-religios-predarea-religiei-in-scoli> (accessed July 13, 2013). In my opinion, closer to the truth is 5%, which I found reading an opinion poll around 2005 (unfortunately, I did not find it online for bibliographical reference). The question from the 2013 poll was “How often do you go to church?” and it is possible that the respondents also considered the mere entering the church for lighting a candle or saying a prayer as going to church.
- ¹² The rules are laid out in a book called tipikon (Rom.: *tipic*). One of the editions in use is *Tipic bisericesc*, Editura Arhiepiscopiei Ortodoxe de Alba Iulia, 1999.
- ¹³ SMITH, A. D., *Nationalism. Theory, Ideology, History*, Polity, Cambridge, 2001, p. 18.
- ¹⁴ For example, *You’ll Never Walk Alone*, a piece from a Broadway musical, became the anthem of the Liverpool football club. The anthem is sung before every match at home, by the supporters of the club who are on the stadium, and it has become a strong identity element. Wikipedia enumerates other 14 football clubs which subsequently took this piece and made it their anthem. Among these, three perform in the first German league, and three in the first Dutch division (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/You%27ll_Never_Walk_Alone, accessed July 13, 2013).
- ¹⁵ MOISIL C., “Romanian Church Music: Tradition and Revival”, in *The Past in the Present. Papers Read at the IMS Intercongressional Symposium and the 10th Meeting of the Cantus Planus, Budapest & Visegrád, 2000* (ed. László Dobszay), vol. 2, Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music, Budapesta, 2003, p. 94.
- ¹⁶ *Id.*, *Româniarea cântărilor*, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-31, 36, 43.

- 17 CUNȚANU, D., *Cântările bisericești după melodiile celor opt glasuri*, Editura Autorului, Sibiu, 1890.
- 18 Unlike Byzantine music, the *cunțană* one is not accompanied by drone (Gr., Rom.: *ison*).
- 19 The division in eight modes is a liturgical one. From a musical point of view, each of the eight modes contains several sub-modes.
- 20 I use the classification and the terminology from ARVANITIS, I., "The Heirmologion by Balasios the Priest. A Middle-point between Past and Present", in *The Traditions of Orthodox Music. Proceedings of the First International Conference on Orthodox Church Music. University of Joensuu, Finland, 13-19 June 2005* (ed. I. Moody and M. Takala-Roszczenko), University of Joensuu & The International Society for Orthodox Church Music, 2007, pp. 236-238.
- 21 STANCIU, V., "Manuscise și personalități muzicale din Transilvania în secolele XVII-XVIII", in *Byzantion Romanicon*, 3, 1997, pp. 77-78; BARBU-BUCUR, S., *Cultura muzicală de tradiție bizantină pe teritoriul României în secolul XVIII și începutul secolului XIX și aportul original al culturii autohtone*, Editura Muzicală, Bucharest, 1989, pp. 43, 51, 217-221; CATRINA, C., *Muzica de tradiție bizantină. Șcheii Brașovului*, Arania, Brașov, 2001, pp. 32-34, 73-76.
- 22 DOBRE, S., "Dimitrie Cunțan – repere biografice", in *Dimitrie Cunțan (1837-1910) și cântarea bisericească din Ardeal* (ed. S. Dobre), Editura Universității "Lucian Blaga", Sibiu, 2010, pp. 4, 9, 11-12; MOLDOVEANU N., *Istoria muzicii bisericești la români*, Editura Basilica a Patriarhiei Române, Bucharest, 2010, p. 363. The year 1849 given by Moldoveanu is wrong, as the seminary had been closed following the revolution in Wallachia in 1848. See also FRANGULEA, V., *Profesorul protopsalt Ion Popescu-Pasărea. Viața și opera*, Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, Bucharest, 2004, p. 24.
- 23 About the creation of a standard repertoire and the uniformization of the church chant see MOISIL C., "The Making of Romanian National Church Music (1859-1914)", in *Church, State and Nation in Orthodox Church Music. Proceedings on the Third International Conference on Orthodox Church Music, University of Joensuu, Finland, 8-14 June 2009* (ed. I. Moody and M. Takala-Roszczenko), The International Society for Orthodox Church Music, Jyväskylä, pp. 225-231. *Id.*, *Românirea cântărilor: un meșteșug și multe controverse. Studii de muzicologie bizantină*, Editura Muzicală, Bucharest, 2012, pp. 9-18, 174-185.
- 24 *Ibid.*, pp. 18-23.
- 25 The chants taught in the Greek-Catholic schools were published in CHEREBEȚIU, C., *Cele opt versuri bisericești. Vecernie. În felul cum se cântă la Blaj*, Cluj, 1930.

- 26 For the *pricesne* sung in the Transylvanian pilgrimages, see CRISTESCU, C., "Pilgrimage and Pilgrimage Song in Transylvania", in *East European Meetings in Ethnomusicology*, 1, 1994, pp. 30-43.
- 27 For the *colinde* and the *cântece de stea*, see HERȚEA, I., *Romanian Carols*, The Romanian Cultural Foundation Publishing House, Bucharest, 1999.
- 28 The Old Kingdom is the name given to Romania before the First World War, namely to the territories of Wallachia, Moldavia and Dobruja.
- 29 See also RĂDULESCU, S., *Peisaje muzicale în România secolului XX*, Editura Muzicală, Bucharest, 2002, pp. 15-16.
- 30 GRĂJDIAN V., "Oratoriul 'Octoiul de la Sibiu' al pr. Gheorghe Șoima, un monument muzical al ortodoxiei transilvănene", in *Preotul Gheorghe Șoima (1911-1985). Scrieri de teologie și muzicologie* (ed. V. Grăjdian and C. Grăjdian), Editura Universității "Lucian Blaga", Sibiu, 2010, p. 370.
- 31 Reprinted in *Preotul Gheorghe Șoima, op. cit.*, pp. 125-171.
- 32 *Ibid.*, pp. 163, 191. One should mention that in the Sibiu area, one does not find *doine* (in the acceptation the ethnomusicologists give to the genre), but only chants that are similar to the *doine* through their character rich in melismas and the rubato rhythm.
- 33 *Loc. cit.*
- 34 In original: "*La Nicula colo-n deal / În frumosul nostru-Ardeal / În mijlocul codrului / Șade Maica Domnului [...]*" and "*Între noi te-ai așezat / La Nicula-n loc curat / Și-ai venit într-o pădure / Și ți-ai făcut mănăstire / Sus în dealul Niculii / La marginea pădurii.*"
- 35 Naturally, belonging to a monastery is not done according to strictly geographic criteria, but, as in the case of belonging to other types of groups, it is to a large extent also a voluntary choice. For instance, in the case of the pilgrims from Derșida village, one part would go to the Nicula monastery, and another part to the Rohia monastery (Maramureș county), traveling together for a third of the trip. Belonging to a group would be kept throughout the years.
- 36 BREAZUL, G., *Colinde*, Editura Fundației Culturale Române, Bucharest, 1993.
- 37 The piece was recorded on several CDs by various choirs. The first recording is probably that of the Stavropoleos Group: Grupul Psaltic Stavropoleos, *Colinde vechi și Cântări la Crăciun și Bobotează*, Parohia Stavropoleos, 2004.
- 38 The new music may be considered „the priest's”, but the priest is a local, and the village does not regard him as an outsider.

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