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THE STATUS OF CHANTING CODICES IN THE SERBIAN CHANT TRADITION*

Abstract: The status of chanting codices, which is directly associated with the phenomenon of musical literacy, is examined in this paper by means of the examples of a few scarce neumed manuscripts that represent a primary source for the reconstruction of the Serbian music past. The following reasons have been stated in the Serbian musicological literature as an explanation for the lack of a larger number of preserved neumed books: 1) melodies were transmitted orally, 2) an intensive liturgical practice, in which chanting had a primary place and 3) historical circumstances due to which manuscripts were exposed to decay. For the sake of an objective evaluation of the probable level of chanting skill in the Middle ages in Serbia, the aforementioned reasons have been reconsidered and revised.

Keywords: codex with notation, chanting skill, chants, Anthologion, manuscript, Srbini, Stefan, Isaija, Nikola.

Taking over Byzantine patterns of the organization of liturgical life, the first Serbian Archbishop, Sava Nemanjić (c. 1174–1236) set forth high standards of liturgical *благољеније*¹ (i.e. grace and correctness in chanting) before the monks and clergy of the autocephalous Serbian Church. Coming closer to, or even surpassing, the Byzantine civilizational and cultural paradigm represented the core of the political ideology of all other members of the sacrosanct Nemanjić dynasty. They sought to achieve this through ventures in architecture, monumental painting, iconography and the applied arts, but also in the field of calligraphy, especially during the time of the kings Milutin (c. 1253–1321) and Stefan Dečanski (circa 1276/after 1284²–1331), but even more during the reign of tsar Dušan (1308–1355).³

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¹ V. Peno, “The Liturgical Typikon as a Source for Medieval Chanting Practice”, in: *Composition and Chanting in the Orthodox Church*, Proceedings of the Second International Conference on Orthodox Music, 4–7 June 2007, University of Joensuu 2009, 203–212.

² The year of birth of king Stefan Dečanski has been differently determined in historiography sources. V. A. Веселиновић, Р. Љушић, *Српске династије*, Нови Сад 2001; С. Станојевић, *Историја српскога народа*, Београд 1989³; В. Ћоровић, *Историја српског народа*, Београд 1989.

³ В. С. Новаковић, “Византијски чиновни и титуле у српским земљама XI–XV века”, *Глас Српске академије наука и уметности* 78 (1908), 178–279; А. Соловьев, “Греческие архонты в сербском царстве XIV в.”, *Византинистика* II/2 (1930), 275–287; В. Мошин, “Византиски утицај у Србији у XIV веку”, *Југословенски историски часопис* 3

The process of the Byzantinization of Serbian social and cultural life went on even after the glory of the Basileus's capital on the Bosphorus had started to tarnish. At the beginning of the 15th century, numerous Greek *archontoi* (sg. *ἀρχοντος*), monks and artists, striving to expand the glory and rich tradition of Byzantium beyond its narrowed borders, sought refuge in Serbia.

The presence of Greeks in the courts of Serbian despots Stefan (1377–1427) and Djuradj (1377–1456),⁴ who had been reared since their early infancy in the spirit of Romaic culture, had additionally intensified the need for liturgical services to be as magnificent as possible, like those in Constantinople. The fact that chanted services were taking place under the watchful eyes of professional musicians is confirmed by high ranks of those musicians we are familiar with today. Joakeim, monk of the Harsianites, probably Greek by birth, was a *domestikos* in Serbia,⁵ just as one of the three Serbian composers of the 15th century, Kir Stefan,⁶ was likely to have been. Apparently, Isaija the Serb, whose chants were included in the well-known Anthologion 928 from National Library of Greece,⁷ also held this highly esteemed title. Last but not least, it should not be forgotten that

(1937), 147–160; Љ. Максимовић, “Византинци у Србији Даниловог времена”, in: *Архиепископ Данило II и његово доба*, САНУ, Београд 1991, 19–28.

⁴ The role of Greek noblemen in the political and social life of Serbia is widely known. V. Б. Ферјанчић, *Деспоти у Византији и јужнословенским земљама*, Београд 1960; Ј. Калић, *Срби у позном средњем веку*, Београд 1994; М. Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић и његово доба*, Београд 1994; А. Веселиновић, *Држава српских деспота*, Београд 1995.

⁵ Miloš Velimirović was first to notice the title of Joakeim, monk of the Harsianites, in manuscripts, concluding that he had been active in the court of despot Djuradj Branković around 1453. Cf. M. Velimirović, “Joakeim Monk of the Harsianites Monastery and Domestikos of Serbia”, *Зборник радова Византолошког института XVIII/2* (1964), 451–458; А. Јаковљевић, “Јован (Јоаким) Харсијанит, монах и domestik Србије”, *Археографски прилози* 4 (1982), 63–81. New data on this domestikos may be found in: V. Пено, *Chanting codices in Serbian manuscript treasuries from the 15th to the 19th century*, an unpublished Doctoral dissertation defended in 2008 at the Faculty of Philosophy, Department of National mediaeval history, Belgrade, 169–171.

⁶ The title of *domestikos* was written beside Stefan's name in *Beogradska psaltika* – a manuscript no. 93 that was destroyed during the German bombing of the National library in Belgrade in 1941. Kosta Manojlović was the first to point to the fact that this manuscript contained chants by the Serbian *melodos* Stefan Domestikos. Owing to him, 12 pages of this unique medieval music document were photographed in 1937. Cf. К. Манујловић, “За трагом наше старе световне и црквене музичке уметности”, *Гласник српске цркве XXVII/9* (1946), 165–173.

⁷ It is reasonable to assume that the hieromonk Isaija, belonging to the circle of learned Serbian monks in an important calligraphic center of Matejče monastery, was actually also addressed in an epistle from an illustrious writer, a slaviced Greek, Dimitrios Kantakousinos, being called “honest among the priests” and “a domestikos”. V. В. Пено, “О Исаји Србину – творцу мелодија Атинског кодекса бр. 928”, in: *Theorie und Geschichte der Monodie Festschrift für Bozhidar Karastoyanov Anlässlich seines 70. Geburtstags*, Wien 2010, 263–274.

Manuel Doukas Chrysaphes (Μανουήλ Δούκας Χρυσάφης), a master of the art of chanting, a composer, a *daskalos* who compiled numerous neumed codices, on a long journey from Constantinople, over Sparta, Crete and Moldova, also visited Serbia, where he, as he himself wrote, composed two of his melodies.⁸

The scarcity of written music holdings, however, largely puzzles an objective researcher concerning the actual chanting skill not only in the medieval Serbia, but in other countries of the Byzantine Oikoumene (η Βυζαντινή Οικουμένη i.e. Commonwealth) within the broader region of the Balkans. The main concern is, namely, what the absence of notated books or, more precisely, their sporadic presence in the chanting tradition of the nations who, along with the Russians and Greeks, comprised the medieval Orthodox Oikoumene, tells us about their chanting traditions of that time. In other words, is the phenomenon of musical literacy closely related to the improvement of chanting skill, which had its primary place in liturgical services, and to what extent?

It is widely believed that the multiplying of chanting repertoire was of decisive importance for the commencement of a more systematic notating of ecclesiastical melodies at the end of the 1st millennium. Memorization of the melodies was aided by a reduced stenographic Paleo-Byzantine neume notation used for notating hymns.

Notated codices were apparently changing in purpose as chant developed, especially during the 12th century. Although still anonymous, the composers' production evidently increased.⁹ A technically more complex, melismatic, style was the object of particular interest among melodic chants, the interpretation of which demanded far more chanting skill than was needed for syllabic or moderately developed style. So while conventional elements of the music alphabet (such as Chartres or Coislin semiography) were entirely sufficient for the notation of plain melodies,¹⁰ the notation of melodically diverse and richer chants inevitably required more accurate, diastematic neumes.

⁸ The two in question are the Theotokion *Σὲ τὸ καθαρῶτατον* in the 4th mode and the *Kratema* in the *varis* mode, taken from codex 270 in Ksiropotamos monastery (ff. 123v and 167v), with notes: *επιήθη ἐν τῇ Σερβίᾳ* and *ποιηθὲν ἐν τῇ Σερβίᾳ*.

⁹ В. Пено, “О процесу настанка и функцији неумске књиге у византијској појачкој традицији – Прилог разматрању феномена музичке писмености”, *Зборник радова Византолошког института* 47 (2010), 149–160 + сл. 3.

¹⁰ Cf. O. Strunk, “The Notation of the Chartres Fragment”, in: *Essays on Music in the Byzantine World*, New York 1977, 12.

Nevertheless, the more explicit Middle-Byzantine semiography did not lose its immanent stenographic character. This neumatic feature was arisen from the very nature of the vocal tradition of ecclesiastical music.¹¹ Melodies were still being transmitted and learned in such a way that the *daskalos* used to chant to his disciples and they would, after listening attentively, repeat until they learned. Yet there are no grounds for assuming that long and melodically developed chants were easy to memorize in correct, that is, exact, form. It should not be expected or assumed that such compositions would have been regularly or occasionally repeated in liturgical practice without significant deviation from their original form.¹² Notation was, therefore, a sure way to preserve more demanding chants – with respect to their peculiarities – from alteration. At the same time, it also enabled skilled *psaltoi*, as well as those who were yet to master a higher level of chanting technique, to accomplish successful and consistent interpretations by reading the neumes correctly.

It should not be forgotten that the liturgical year comprises a considerable number of feast days, to the solemnity of which chanting contributes particularly. On such occasions, it was understood that, apart from regular plain and standardized chants, there were also to be found melodically developed kalophonic melodies in the chanting repertoire. However, without a neumatic pattern, chanters could not sing these. In other words, an elementary level of chanting expertise implies the ability to follow both the fixed and variable parts of services, including knowledge of the less complex but also diverse rhythmic-melodic chants of Octoechos, for which music notation is not necessary. However, the chanting heritage that included all-night vigils and even more solemn liturgies is almost unthinkable without kalophonia understood in the broader sense of the word, not as a composition technique typical of late-Byzantine ecclesiastical music but rather as a mastery of chanting.

The above-mentioned way of interpretation could certainly not be accomplished only through remarkable musical talent and exceptional vocal abilities of chanters. Neither has the traditional art of sound in liturgical services ever been exhausted through uncontrollable improvisations, possibly

¹¹ V. Peno, “Von der Sinoptischen bis zur Analytischen Neumatischen Notation – Am Beispiel des Sticheron von German Neon Patron”, *Музикологија* 7 (2007), 259–278.

¹² In truth, improvisation is characteristic of church chanting. However, chanting is also regulated or more accurately, limited by unwritten though generally accepted rules following the tradition of liturgical music. On this topic see more in: V. Peno, “Two Aspects of Utilization of Improvisation in the Orthodox Church Chanting Tradition”, *New Sound* 32 (2008), 33–43.

based on standardized melodic formulas of Octoechos.¹³ Just how important was obeying the rules regarding the creation and notation of new melodies is witnessed by Manuel Chrysaphes in his famous theoretical treatise entitled *Περὶ τῶν ἐνθεωρουμένων τῇ Ψαλτικῇ Τέχνῃ καὶ ὧν φρονοῦσι κακῶς περὶ αὐτῶν*.¹⁴ Indirectly, numerous Greek neumed manuscripts confirm the same. Specifically, the fertile production of music codices in the heyday of Byzantium speaks volumes about the fact that primarily those *melodoi*, chanters and music scribes whose names were written on the notated pages would have proof of their own position in chanting circles.

Three Serbian musicians and their melodies, from the period marked by Ottoman penetration into Serbian and Byzantine territory, found their place among an eminent pleiad of glorious Greek composers. Nevertheless, their actual contribution to improving Serbian chant practice in the course of the first half of the 15th century is obscure.¹⁵ The term “Srbin” (a or the Serb), following their names, justifiably implies that they belonged to mixed or, more likely, prevailingly non-Serbian community.¹⁶ Melodies by the Serbian composers, as it is widely known, first and foremost accompanied Greek text and were mostly found in Greek or bilingual Greek-Slavic music manuscripts.¹⁷ Apart from the Anthologion 928, whose attribution to Isaija

¹³ *Ibid.* V. also: Γ. Θ. Στάθης, “Αὐτοσχεδιασμός: Ὑπάρχει στὴ Βυζαντινὴ μουσικὴ;” in: *Τιμὴ πρὸς τὸν διδάσκαλον Ἐκφραση ἀγάπης στὸ πρόσωπο τοῦ καθηγητοῦ Γρηγορίου Θ. Στάθης*, Ἀθήναι 2001, 682–687.

¹⁴ Cf. D. E. Conomos, *The Treatise of Manuel Chrysaphes the Lampadarios: On the Theory of the Art of Chanting and on Certain Erroneous Views that Some hold about it*, Corpus Scriptorum De Re Musica II, Wien 1985.

¹⁵ Andrija Jakovljević, following the discovery of codex Lavra E–108, insisted on shifting the bottom-line dating of lives of Serbian composers Stefan and Nikola to the 14th century Cf. A. Јаковљевић, *Антологија са неумама из доба кнеза Лазара и деспота Стефана Лазаревића*, Крушевац 2004, 8. Certain inconsistencies regarding Jakovljević’s theory and the dating of the aforesaid codex were addressed by me in the paper: “Антологија са неумама из доба кнеза Лазара и деспота Стефана Лазаревића”, *Археογραφски прилози* 26–27 (2004–2005), 585–593, and in detail in the unpublished Doctoral dissertation, *op. cit.*, 123–175.

¹⁶ This hypothesis mainly concerns Nikola and Stefan. It is more probable that, while compiling the Anthologion 928, Isaija was writing down his origin bearing in mind Greek chanters who, as mentioned above, were in Serbia at his time and who might have used his autograph manuscript.

¹⁷ While Nikola and Isaija are associated with bilingual Greek-Slavic chants, Kir Stefan composed exclusively in Greek. Andrija Jakovljević claimed that Stefan was the author of one hymn in Slavonic, with the incipit: *Πομιλῆ με βοже*, in f. 10v in Anthologion Lavra E–108. However, the very facsimile of the manuscript does not confirm this assumption. There are no notes before the given hymn, neither in its heading nor in the following folios that could at least indirectly lead to Jakovljević’s conclusion mentioned above. Cf. Facsimile in: A. Јаковљевић, *op. cit.*, f. 10v.

the Serb may reasonably be doubted,¹⁸ there are no indications that Stefan and Nikola were scribes. There are also no elements that point to a Serbian scribe's hand having written down their hymns in manuscripts with Greek text. An exception is codex Lavra E–108.

Several scribes participated in the making of this codex, one of them being possibly of Slav origin, that is, Serbian. He wrote down some Greek and all of the Serbian-Slavonic hymns. Evidently less skilled than others participating in the making of codex Lavra E–108, as far as neumes are concerned,¹⁹ the anonymous scribe²⁰ was also not consistent regarding orthography, as the linguistic characteristics of Serbian-Slavonic hymns witness.²¹ His inscription though, did not contain any specific dialect elements that accompany colloquial speech, but he obviously attempted to draw closer to the Serbian redaction, that is, the Resava orthography, although he did not fully accomplish this task.²²

The given hypothesis – that the notation of structurally more elaborate chants was vital for correct interpretation in certain services, is supported by the fact that the hymns ascribed to the three Serbian composers mainly belong to papadike genre. This group of more complex chants, with regard to musical features, comprises the following Koinonika: *Въкъсите и видите, Аίνεῖτε τὸν Κύριον, Σῶμα Χροστοῦ*, hymn *Нина сили* and *Аллилуѡ* melody the composer of which is Kir Stefan, as well as Nikola's *Οἱ τὰ χερουβίμ* in the second mode, but also the majority of chants

¹⁸ Cf. V. Peno, Doctoral dissertation, *op. cit.*, 159–164.

¹⁹ His ductus appears as writing in haste, on account of which he was not able to follow scribe rules regarding the number of neumes in a line, the number of lines on a page and margins. Unlike the first scribe who is distinguished by a certain freedom, though with a controlled, restrained hand, the latter scribe organized the sequence of letters without any rhythm or balance. He did not observe caesuras between lines and letters, nor did he link letters or use ligatures; also, he frequently omitted headlines and initials. Therefore spatial relations given in different parts of the text do not leave an impression of clarity and consistency in composition; on the contrary, they emanate incoherence and haste. In addition, one must take into account the writing in shorthand which was used for majority of Serbian lines in Lavra Anthologion. Cf. V. Peno, *op. cit.*, 130–131.

²⁰ In a study in which he displayed the results of his examination of codex Lavra E–108 E 108, Andrija Jakovljević advanced a hypothesis about there being an autograph of a certain Ilarion, who left a cryptographic note: *Ἰλαρι(ν) πια σῖα* (an inscription on the bottom margin, on leaf 17v, under Greek neumed text. V. Facsimile in: A. Јаковљевић, *op. cit.*, 25. In the meantime, the author abandoned this notion since it was not clear what Ilarion could have copied and if he had participated in writing of Greek texts with notation (V. also 14). Yet, the shape of letters in the cryptographic text matches the corresponding Serbian-Slavonic texts it is therefore likely that they were written by the same person.

²¹ V. Т. Јовановић, “Језик српске црквене поезије у рукопису манастира Лавре бр. Е – 108”, in: A. Јаковљевић, *op. cit.*, 19–24.

²² He dithered regarding the norm in writing of the letter *jeri* (as he usually confuses it with “и”), *jat* (that he confuses with “е”) and the letter “е” in different positions, etc.

incorporated in the Athenian Anthologion 928. This manuscript was doubtlessly used in the church, frequently in all-night vigils of already largely accepted Jerusalem Typikon. There are mostly melodic variants of Polyeleos, selected festive psalms, anixantaria, pasapnoaria, Trisagion, Cherubic hymns and koinonika, that is, melopoetic genres chanted at Matins, especially during All-night service – *agripnia* – after which there follows the Liturgy.²³ Parts of the services for the Feasts of the Lord and the Theotokos (Twelve Great Feasts), as well as hymns for Feasts of Saints,²⁴ then antiphons, asmatic chants, kratemas, and particularly voluminous series of Alleluia melodies in various modes, show that whoever used the neumed book was a *psaltis* in a community where the art of singing was highly esteemed. He was expected to contribute, with his melismatic melodies, to the solemn atmosphere of long services, which were, judging by the hymn *Ton Despotin*, often attended by a bishop in charge. It is reasonable to assume that a would-be-chanter-scribe felt the urge to evade monotonous melodies that he regularly chanted on lines standardized by the Typikon, and thus used, on the basis of a certain pattern or by ear, to write down certain melodies he considered worth remembering, whenever he had an opportunity.²⁵ Finally, the fact that stichera for the Nativity, the Presentation of the Theotokos in the Temple and the Dormition of the Theotokos, as well as asmatic lines celebrating her, found their place between the covers of this neumed book suggests that the monastery to which the scribe belonged was dedicated to the Theotokos.²⁶ This is an additional argument in favour of the hypothesis that it is the Matejče monastery in question here, well known for its scribes, which celebrated the Dormition of the Theotokos as its patronal feast, and where Isaija was certainly a respected monk and *psaltis*.

The corpus of melodies for the Nativity of the Theotokos was certainly of importance to the Serbian scribe of codex Lavra E-108. The stichera: *Ω ΔΥΒΝΟΕ ЧДДО ИСТОЧНИК ЖИЗНИ* and *Ω ΔΥΒΝΟΕ ЧДДО ИЖЕ Ω НЕПЛОДВЕ ПЛОД*, both in the first mode, found their place on the pages of both codices and their presence must be put in correlation with the feast day that

²³ A detailed list of incipits v. in: A. Jakovljević, *Δίγλωσση παλαιογραφία και μελωδοι μιμογράφου του κώδικα των Αθηνών 928*, Λευκωσία 1988, 104–184.

²⁴ The following saints are mentioned there: St. John of Rila, Joachim Osogovski, Prochorus of Pčinja, Demetrios of Thessaloniki, Nicholas of Mira, John Chrysostom, Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, Theodosius the Great, Nestor, Ignatius, the Holy Martyrs Eustratius, Auxentius, Eugene, Mardarius, and Orestes.

²⁵ Numerous variants of melodies, especially those written on the manuscript margins, have not yet been thoroughly examined.

²⁶ D. Stefanović, having taken into account sticheraria for the Dormition of the Theotokos, was the first to point to the possibility that Isaija Srbin, who was a monk, compiled Anthologion 928. Cf. *Стара српска музика – примери црквених песама из XV века*, Музиколошки институт САНУ, Београд 1975, 23.

was specially celebrated in the community whence the scribes came. Whether it was Chilandar or, taken in a broader context, Mount Athos, where there were incessant invocations of the Mother of God for protection and help, or any Serbian monastery such as Matejče, cannot be claimed with certainty. Nevertheless, it is curious to note that both scribes, of the Athenian and Lavra Anthologion, had utterly peculiar criteria that governed their choice of chants with Serbo-Slavonic stanzas. Personal reasons were, it seemed, decisive in inspiring the compiler of Lavra E–108 to write down a melody for the sticheron to St. Sava *Үм ваперив такоже дѣховнима*.²⁷ This sticheron, as well as other hymns dedicated to Serbian saints, had yet to be written down in late-Byzantine neumes by musically literate Chilandar monks, in manuscripts of the 18th century.²⁸

Besides the Matejče monastery, chanting skill was also cherished in other Serbian churches, a fact reflected in one indirect but indicative phenomenon. Since the eighth decade of the 14th century, the scheme of the tri-conch was consistently implemented in Serbian church building. The broadening of space in front of the iconostasis by using side conches was devised so as to provide space for choirs participating in Liturgy. Although attempts of a similar kind had already been made in older churches, built before the mid 14th century,²⁹ a trefoil basis with *kliroi* (choir space) on the sides was probably adopted only when it was practically necessary. Had it not been for large choirs taking room in conches in front of the altar, the very space would have had no purpose. If the comprehensive education of chanters implied education in the domain of the theory of the Octoechos, mastering the rules of neumatic notations and memorizing a vast range of various chants, which demanded considerable time, then it is logical to assume that space for such learned musicians had to wait for these musicians, or that the founders of the church anticipated their advent. New patrons did not follow suit in churches of popular construction patterns, but undoubtedly did take into consideration the actual needs of the participants in Liturgy in their community.

Unfortunately, the lack of a larger number of Slavonic or at least bilingual Greek-Slavonic manuscripts does not provide grounds for a hypothesis that Serbian chanters acquired musical literacy and that they embellished

²⁷ V. facsimile in: A. Јаковљевић, *Антологија са неумама*, *op. cit.*, 14r–14v.

²⁸ V. Д. Стефановић, “Појање старе српске црквене поезије”, in: *О Србљаку: студије*, Београд 1970, 129–140; “Стихире Србима светитељима, неумски записи из хиландарских рукописа XVIII века у ноте пренео Д. Стефановић”, in: *op. cit.*, 457–469.

²⁹ Г. Бабић-Ђорђевић – В. Ђурић, “Полет уметности”, in: *Историја српског народа*, књ. II, Београд 1982, 166–168; v. also: М. Чанак-Медић и Ђурђе Бошковић, *Архитектура Немањиног доба I – цркве у Топлици и долинама Ибра и Мораве*, Београд 1986; В. Кораћ – А. Шупут, *Архитектура византијског света*, Београд 1998.

the splendour of services with the diverse kalophonic chants that became enormously popular during the 15th century. Moreover, musical literacy would remain a constant problem in the education of Serbian chanters. Greek *daskaloi*, coming to Serbia in the middle of 18th century at the behest of Serbian bishops,³⁰ were in charge of this task, but also the first Serbian musicians educated in the Western tradition, who in the middle of the following century commenced the transcription of melodies that, up to that time, had only existed in oral tradition. The inability to read notation resulted in the development of specific features in recent chant that themselves have become traditional.³¹ An erroneous belief that chanting skill does not require using notated books for reference, even when these are available, has unfortunately also entered Serbian tradition. Therefore, on the basis of everything above, it is not difficult to arrive at a conclusion as to the level of this tradition is.

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³⁰ V. Peno, “Η συμβολή της υστεροβυζαντινής ψαλτικής παραδόσεως και των Ελλήνων δασκάλων στην διαμόρφωση της νεότερης σερβικής ψαλτικής”, in: *Byzantine Musical Culture*, American Society of Byzantine Music and Hymnology, University Center for International Studies & Center for Russian and East European Studies of University of Pittsburgh, Athens 2009 (forthcoming).

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Весна Пено

СТАТУС ПОЈАЧКЕ КЊИГЕ У СРПСКОЈ ПОЈАЧКОЈ ТРАДИЦИЈИ (Резиме)

Током златног периода српске средњовековне културе (од средине XIII до половине XV века) подухвати на пољу архитектуре, монументалног сликарства, иконописа и примењене уметности, као и у домену писарске делатности, потврдили су да је византијски цивилизацијски модел, који је владарима светородне династије Немањић био трајни узор, у потпуности био достигнут. Бројни су, премда посредни, разлози због којих се може претпоставити да је и српска црквенопојачка уметност у истом раздобљу била на завидном нивоу. Па ипак,

нотиране појачке књиге, као главни извори за реконструкцију српске музичке прошлости, посве су ретке у нашим фондовима. Недостатак, тачније, спорадично присуство неумских зборника у српским рукописним ризницама, задуго је у домаћој научној литератури довођено у везу са усменим начином преношења црквених мелодија, са учитеља на ученике, са живом богослужбеном праксом, у којој црквено појање има своје примарно место, као и са историјским околностима у којима је уметничко, покретно и непокретно благо, бивало изложено уништењу.

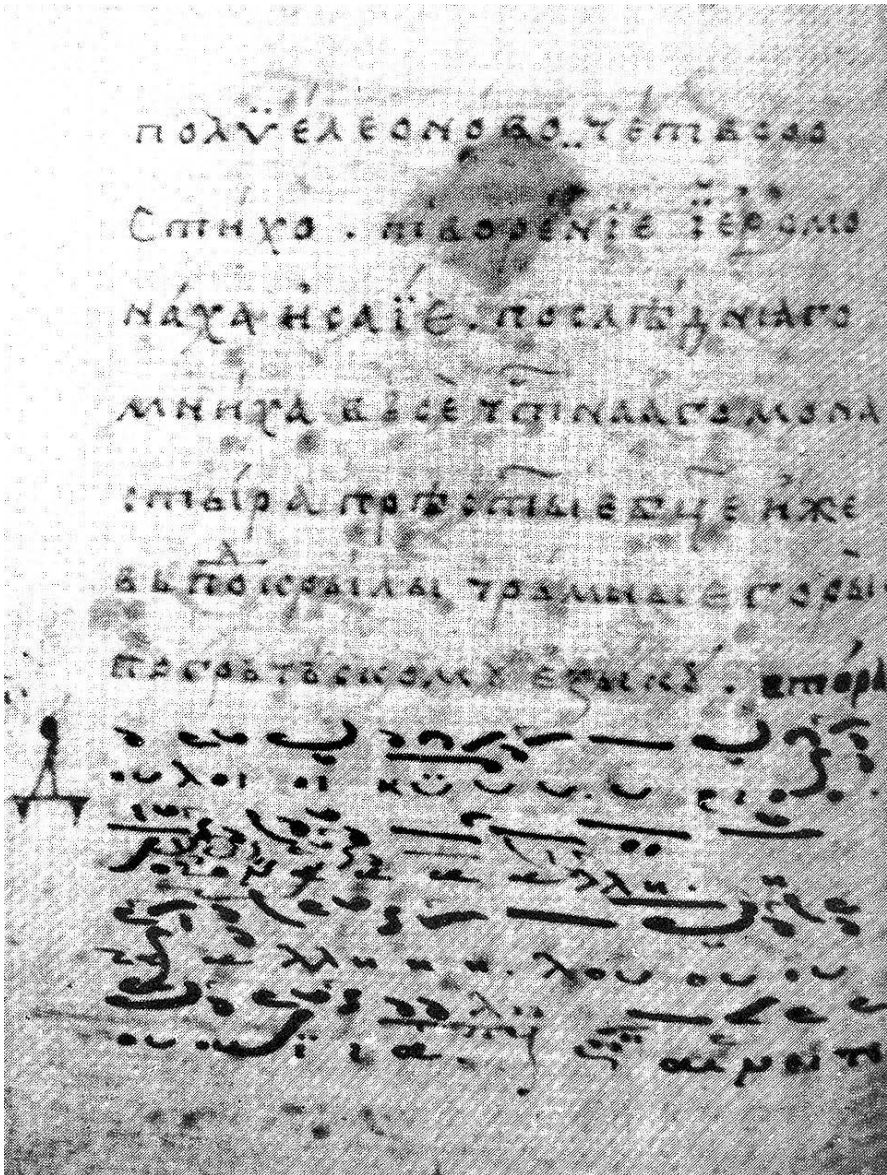
Наведени разлози су у раду стављени под лупу. Пропорционални однос између сачуване српске богослужбене – нотираних књиге (октоиси, минеји, псалтири и др.) и оне у којој су неумама забележени и текстови и мелодије за одговарајућа богослужења више него речито говори о томе да историјске околности никако нису могле бити пресудне за то што данас не поседујемо већи број музичких споменика средњег века. У појачкој традицији која није сведена на елементарни ниво појачке вештине, усмени начин преношења знања са учитеља на ученике никако није довољан да се у пракси примене сложенији напеви који би требало да прате свечана празнична богослужења. Другим речима, мелодијски репертар који подразумева виши ниво појачке технике и изразитије гласовне способности појача није могуће напросто меморисати. Неопходна је испомоћ у нотном – неумском запису како би интерпретација била доследна и тачна. Такође, богатство одређене појачке традиције огледа се и у бројним варијантама мелодија на исти текст, дакле, на стваралачку – композиторску продукцију, што већ у XIII, а нарочито током XIV и XV века потврђују грчки неумски зборници типа аколутеје, псалтике, антологије, матиматариона и др.

Освртом на постојеће изворе који сведоче о српској средњовековној црквеној музици у раду је размотрен статус појачке књиге у традицији која је за узор, а и у пракси имала свечана двојезична богослужења чији су учесници били и српски и грчки служашчи, као и српски и грчки архонди. Студија представља прилог сагледавању феномена музичке (не)писмености код Срба, али и модел за истраживања појачких традиција народа који су чинили византијски комонвелт, а у којима такође нема примарних музичких извора.

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