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THESIS SUMMARY

*New Testament biblical iode in the Christian
singing.*

Formal and identity demarcations

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The music in Christianity overcomes the classical definition “music is an art”, music is the most sublime speaking of man with God, through which the profound religious feeling is transposed in the mystical, apophatic tonality language. The Orthodox cult contains theological, esthetical and catechetical values. Orthodoxy is defined also through its cult, because its life is lived by the participation at its forms, traditions and institutions of cult. At the beauty of our liturgical cult, an essential contribution brings the specific Orthodox Church chanting from the melodic-modal and ideational point of view. It has a powerful effect upon the believer’s spirit. If music – specific feature of the human being and common to the people from all times and places – did not miss from the cult of any religion, in our Orthodox cult, especially, is by excellence a way of expressing the religious feeling, a form of prayer. Accompanying the prayer’s text, the music highlights profound states of the religious feelings that, in the read or reread simple text, it is not found a sufficient respiration adequately enough”. Music, like the other arts that also accompany and round the cult, represent the link that unites the actual national field with the spiritual-abstract one, creating that state favorable to the religious understandings full of mystery. Therefore, it is no surprise that music has been put in the service of the religious and cult feeling.

These short specifications represent the argumentative base of our PhD thesis and have the purpose to highlight the artistic value of the Christian cult in the audible, musical dimension. Basically, what we want is to highlight, through a careful and documented analysis, the fact that the music or religious chanting constituted a cultic way of life, an experience of being in community and communion with the others and in the same time an expression of Divinity.

Our research will focus exclusively on the New Testament Biblical texts from where we will try to demonstrate that in the religious life of the early Christian communities founded by the apostles, the chanting wasn’t a simple formal act of cultural expression, but a particular way of identifying in belief, membership and values with Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

The chanting is a specific feature to the human being and common to the people from all times and places. It is the most expressive, communicative art and in the same time the most full of effect upon the human spirit. By chanting, the man expresses also his joy, sorrow and longings» adventures and ideals. Especially for the simple man, who remains closer to the nature, the chanting is inseparable, as a way of expressing the feelings, relief and consolation. Nothing surprising, thus, if music was also placed, as the other arts, in the service of the religious feeling and cult. In temples, synagogues, churches, in places of gathering and prayer – any name they would bare – the believer has praised and chanted God under the form of psalms, of the religious hymns and of any kinds of chanting.

In the Christian conception, through the gift of religious chanting, the man is like the angels and the Saints, and do they really unceasingly offer glory to God (see Isaiah VI, 1-4; XXXVIII, 7; Luke II, 13; Revelation IV, etc.). It is therefore natural, that in the Christian cult, the religious chanting should occupy, since the beginning, a pretty important place. Especially the Orthodox Cult uses a rich, varied and precious production of sacred chants and hymns, of which some of a biblical origin (the psalms and some chanting, as the one of Virgin Marry, from Luke I, 46-55), and others – the most numerous – made up by different hymnologists and

composers (poets), Christians, from the 4th century before, as for example Roman the Composer (Sweet-singer) from the 6th century, Saint John Damascene (8th century), and others.

The research made on the Church's music of the first Christian centuries attracted the efforts of the liturgists, musicologists and historians, and biblical commentators, in the attempt of understanding of what era was the early Church's music composed and from where it came. There are still questions without an answer, and also questions that must be asked.

The distance in time and cultural differences make this research, of identifying and reconstructing the musical fibers of the Early Christian Church, a more difficult task. Although interest in the topic is increasing and its investigation becomes more and more sophisticated, essential characteristics of the music from the Early Church still remain to us unknown. For example, how does that music sounds? What melodic formulas were they using? How was the Jewish music? These are the most basic questions of the discussion about music in the first Christian centuries, so as to elementary characteristics of these music remain somehow unknown. Works related to this subject support frequently that the Christian Church of the first centuries was a community in which there were chanting, but this thing is proven difficult to be defined.

The information sources related to this topic are limited. Some need a lateral thinking to interpret the possible relevance which these sources may have for the subject, and this is a zone where the compared musicology played an important role. The musical texts are well kept in the Bible and in the literature afferent to it, but the way in which were used is unclear.

Finally, the discussion based on this subject is inevitably linked to the content and influences questions; the religious and cultural fund/fundament/background, which in the first phase is in a relation of opposition with the Christian Church, on which it was founded and evolved and has influenced surely the religious music.

It was written a lot about the religious cultic music both in its spatiality in the general religious horizon of the world, and also regarding the Christianity. But too little was revealed the fact that the religious chanting in the early Christian community life was a defining and identity element of this life. Practically, the religious chanting preceded the structured teaching in the theological background. Music was concomitant with faith, the belonging note at the Christic identity.

In the life of humanity, music has an overwhelming importance. Musician aestheticians are unanimous in recognizing that the expressive power of the music overcomes the one of the poetry, as of the other arts also, the depths – psychologically and metaphysically considered – from where it springs, being bigger. After Schopenhauer, the expressiveness of music is bigger than of the other arts, because while these talk from the appearance of the works, the music speaks from the substance itself. Astronomers state that the succession laws of the musical – melodic or harmonic – sounds, are the same that govern the harmonious movement of all the stars and constellations.

After Dimitrie Cuclin, the sound is only a bearer of “musical functions that compose the essence of music”. “The music is a revelation bigger than wisdom and philosophy”, was saying

the immortal Beethoven, and Beaumarchais says that: “Where the word ends, the music starts” and, continuing the idea, it says that: “What it cannot be spoken, is expressed by music”. It is therefore an ideal and unique Esperanto, impossible of being substituted through another expressing existent way. The associated word with an adequate music represent the possible spiritual manifestation complete way. The music adds to the word emotional profoundness, and the word borrows to the music intelligibility, because “the music is the language of the feelings” (Jules Combarieu), “is the bond that unites with the one of the feelings” (Beethoven), is “the educating art by excellence” (Plato). “Music – according to the philosopher Plato – is a moral law. It gives soul to the universe, wings to the thought, soaring to the imagination, charm to youth, life and joy to all things. It is the essence of the order, exalting the soul to all that is good, just and beautiful”. “The purpose of the music is to send light deep down into the human heart” (R. Schumann).

The Holy Scripture, Holy Fathers and great thinkers of the world amply prove that music exalts the human spirit towards God. That’s why, music, implicitly, with urgency and necessity, participates at the development of the divine cult with well determined functions.

The apostle of the nations places the cult music on the same level with the spoken prayer, considering them as being the same thing: “I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my understanding; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my understanding” (I Corinthians 14, 15).

And the Holy Fathers assign the music the power to exercise upon the human spirit a benefactress influence, favorable to the aspirations of the noble ones. “Nothing manages to exalt so much the spirit – writes Saint John Chrysostom – (...), to give him wings, to raise him over the earth, to loose the bonds of the body (...) as a vocal song or as a chanting inspired perfectly, composed rhythmically”. “The music moves the spirit and elevates it towards The one that created it”, states Nifon Ploieșteanul .

The music didn’t miss from the cult of any religion, the chanting being one from the forms of manifestation of the divine cult. “Long time the mankind knew only the art that had as object the transmission of the religious feeling. That’s how Plato, Socrates and Aristotle were, and also the prophets and first Christians”, shows Leo Tolstoy.

From the farthest past and till today we find music at all nations, because each nation sang, adorning the cult and developing in the same time the religious feeling – one of the most noble and constant. Given the intimate link between the religious chanting and the profound states of the soul, each religion adopted in its cult a suitable chanting to its principles of belief and moral. From the general heritage of the musical art, the cult of each religion chooses and utilizes what corresponds to its specific character, which is able to interpret as closely as it can its religious background towards practical and transcendental postulates.

Music remains the most adequate way through which the man expresses his most profound spiritual mood, of joy or sorrow, but especially his addiction of an almighty Being, of God. It gives birth, maintains and develops the religious feeling.

“Through chanting, the Christian truths enter in the depth of the heart”, shows Saint Augustine. Through the chanting addressed to the divinity, the Church manifests its gratitude towards God, for His benefactions. Through chanting, the Church unceasingly exalts God. The chanting strengthens the Church in hard times, and caress in good ones.

Since the early ages, Christianity recognizes the superiority of the music towards the spoken words: “The one that jubilates – states Saint Augustine – does not pronounce the words, but a joyful sound without words; it is the voice of the spirit lost in joy, expressing itself in all its powers, but without defining its meaning.” The music and text in chanting are therefore, inseparable in the conception of the Holy Fathers and of the church writers. In his work, *Questions and answers to the Orthodox*, composed at the end of the 4th century, Diodorus of Tarsus writes: “The chanting awakens in the spirit a burning wish for the content of the chanted hymn; it calms the passions that born from flesh, it banishes the bad thoughts that were suggested by the unseen enemies, it outpours in the soul to bear good fruits; those who fight with piety, makes them endure the most terrible trials; for the pious, it is a cure against the bad things of the earthly life”. Apostle Paul names the chanting “the sword of the spirit” (Ephesians 6, 17 and Hebrews 4, 12), because it is for the pious fighters a weapon against the unseen spirits; because the word of God fills the soul, when it is chanted and expressed – banishes the demons. All these give the pious soul the possibility to acquire, through the church chanting, virtues.

Among other roles and benefactions of the music, the Holy Scripture attributes to the music a therapeutic and calming function. Thus, in *1 Samuel 16, 23*, we read: “Whenever the spirit from God came on Saul, David would take up his lyre and play. Then relief would come to Saul; he would feel better, and the evil spirit would leave him.”

The central objective of this paper is the careful analysis of the religious chanting with direct reference at the life of the New Testament Christian community, where, for the first time the chanting becomes a references to the Christic cultic membership. That is why, we presented the methods, techniques and proceedings used in this scientific approach. Using as a point of reference the biblical scientific approach, I will use the methods specific to the research of this kind:

a) *Exegetical-hermeneutics method*: through which were interpreted in the biblical, missionary, dogmatic and pastoral perspective, the revealed text of the New Testament writings. The interpretation of the New Testament passages was realized on the base of the works of the Holy Fathers, Romanian theologians, but also on the works of the modern and contemporary theologians belonging to the Western space.

b) *Historical-critical method* through which was tried the contextualization of the religious music as an identity element of the Christian cult. Thus, it can be shaped a complex historical painting of the cultic correspondence between the Jewish music and the Christian one and of the Christian chanting particularities.

c) *Systematic method*, through which I looked to highlight the significance of the religious chanting in the early Church era.

From the musical point of view it is appreciated that the early liturgical Jewish and Christian universe has many common points, revealed and formulated thing – sometimes too insistent – in the same ideational content of numerous musicologists and liturgists, the chanting occupying a central place.

Egon Wellesz offers a coherent and general classification of the Christian liturgical chanting from the first ages of the first millennium, depicting the following forms:

1. Intone (with the two forms - antiphonal and responsorial) which comprises: the chanting of the psalms and odes (canticles);
2. The hymns (the chants of praise) formed of verses, stanzas and hymns, litanies (prayers), chants from processions;
3. The spiritual chanting: halleluia, the chants of praise.

In the conception of the same musicologist, the psalms (ψαλμοί), hymns, (ὕμνοι, the chants of praise) and the spiritual chanting (ὠδαί πνευματικαί) of which speaks Saint Apostle derives largely from the liturgical Jewish practice, and they are part of the elements specific to the early Christian ritual, foundation of the Byzantine one: the psalms of the Old Testament, hymns or church chanting and the melismatic chanting like halleluia, and about each one of them we will talk forward.

It is appreciated that at least for the initial period, the cohabitation of the two great religions (Judaism and Christianity) under the Synagogue's dome, was possible because of the existence of at least three common elements: 1. Reading and commenting the Holy Scripture, 2. Weekly and yearly liturgical cycle respected by both religions and 3. Reporting, differently indeed, at the same collection of hymns: David's Psalter.

Along with the three elements, the Mosaic and Christian liturgical services have also in common also the chant or chanting of psalms.

In general, it is considered that at all their meetings, the Christians sang. Conducted mostly in private spaces, (Check Acts 1, 13, 14; 2, 1, 46; 4, 23, 31; 10, 2, 30; 12, 5, 12; 20, 36 etc.) usually in houses of the Christians or Christianized dignitaries, the meetings of these communities were followed by a supper of which central point was the moment of Eucharist or the "breaking of bread" and in which the chanting and all that implies, was the main musical practice. Certainly that, at least until the 4th century, the night meeting (supper) will remain the most important musical manifestation of the new religion followers. This thing is indicated to us very clearly also in the New Testament where is specified the fact that the Savior Himself chanted both psalms (Ephesians 5, 19; Colossians 3, 16) and hymns, as it is the case at the "Last Supper". This fact happened after the last supper, when the Savior, accompanied by the holy apostles, walking in the Gethsemane Garden, sang the psalms (Matthew 26, 30; Mark 14, 26). Referring to this, Saint Nicetas of Remesiana says: "Who will doubt even of this kind of proof about the holiness of the psalms and hymns? When the one that is worshiped and praised by the heavenly powers, he himself is brought as testimony that he sang the hymns with his apostles".

Although a Jewish one by heritage, the Supper of God's Son together with the Holy Apostles will become a liturgical landmark assumed by the entire Christian world, because a

great part of the divine services, in the first three centuries, were composed from biblical lectures and psalms. The latter ones were sang in different ways:

- Symphonic, namely of the entire church assembly, by the entire nation, man and women;
- Antiphonal, namely that by two bands that were executing in turn the verses of the psalms;
- Refrainer, namely that by replaying the final of the verse, sang by a man, by the entire assembly or community;
- Responsorial, namely that by the takeover by the entire nation of the verse sang by the singer.

But what does singsong mean? In its essential lines, the singsong names the recitation or chanting by the soloist (legibly or performer) of one or more psalms, recitation interrupted from place to place by the answer of the Christians. This dialogue between the soloist and community seen as a whole was one of the most spread musical practices from the Christian communities. It must be specified the fact that, from the two entities involved in dialogue, the group of believers is the variable element.

The chanting of the psalms is one of the most important elements of the Liturgy, and in the Byzantine rite it can be grouped by three ways of execution:

- a) the psalm can be chanted by a soloist and the answer to be given, either by the entire community (responsorial chanting), either by the community divided in two choirs, answering alternatively (antiphonal chanting). The practice is specific, especially, to the cathedrals or parish churches (urban or cathedral rite);
- b) also, the verses of the psalms are recited without interruption, either by a soloist (the chant of meditation), either by the entire people (chant of community [κοινῶς ψάλλειν]). In the early situation (the chant of meditation), the reader was smoothly reciting or was chanting the verses of the psalms in their numeric order (the chant currente psalterio). This typology developed, especially, in churches, because the monarchs knew by memory the psalms;
- c) and finally, the verses of the psalms are recited alternatively by two equal groups (alternative chant). It is possible from this practice to have evolved the Byzantine choir with the two pews.

Taken from the Jewish rite, the responsorial chant has found a fertile ground, especially, in the monastic communities of which daily practice permitted them the assimilation of these texts, namely somewhere in the 3rd – 4th century.

In the responsorial chant of the psalms, the people, composing a single group, interrupt more than once, through an “answer”. The chant of the verses, executed by the soloist, at the Liturgy was bearing the name of responsorium for the Roman-Catholic service, and in the Byzantine rite is named prokeimenon. At origin, the Roman responsorium indicates a verse chosen from psalms to be used as answer, being written at the beginning of the psalm. This must be repeated by the nation after each verse by the soloist. At the Byzantines, the word prokeimenon (“situated before”), at origin was referring at the psaltic verse situated before the

psalm, serving as an answer. Ulterior, same as at the Roman rite, the term of prokeimenon has managed to designate the psalm together with its answer, and with the exception of Halleluia, the answer is always a verse chosen from the psalms.

A first situation is mentioned to us by Saint Athanasius the Great (295 - †2 May 373) which, during a dispute with the Arians where their own church was under siege by the heretics, ordered that the answer chanted by the community (υπακούειν) at a certain psalm that was read by a deacon, to be That His mercy is forever. Although he doesn't name it, it is possible to be one of the psalms 117 or 135.

Another way through which the responsorial chant was practiced in the Christian Church in its first days of existence, was that in which the reader was reciting the verses of the psalms and the community was answering either alone, either together with the soloist, chanting the ending of each verse (ακροτελεύτιον, ακρόστιχον). The situation we find it recorded both by the historian Eusebius in his Ecclesiastic Historia: "...one chanting the rhythmic text, and the others listening in silence and chanting with him only the words of the psalms", and also in the Apostolic Constitutions: "After there were made two readings, another one chants the psalms of David, and the people answer (υποψαλλέτω) with the ending of each verse (ακροστίχια)".

Simplicity, though, is an element that must characterize, equally, not only the chanting, in its whole, but also those who promote it: "The chanters must shine through humility, sobriety, chastity and all the other virtues that adorned the saints. Those who chant well do not need to stand out, and those who do not chant so well, must, rather, shut. The psalms mustn't be sang too quickly and with a high voice, nor in disorder, but clear and with the brokenness of the heart, so that the spirit of the ones that chant, to be fed and the ears of the listeners to be excited".

The responsorial chant of the psalms was in use even since Saint John Chrysostom, that was saying in his commentary in the first Epistle to the Corinthians: "And the psalm chants alone, even if all answer to it, their voice comes out as of one"; but, this way of execution of the psalms, by the opinion of Chrysostom, dates from a long time: "in the ancient times, for example, were all gathering in one place and were answering in community; this we do it also today".

The opinions of the Church's Fathers regarding the practice of the responsorial chant are confirmed by the handwritten reality. From the varied and complex forms of the Christian music and at almost a millennium since the first chanting of the psalms in the spirit of the new teaching, the handwritten tradition, through the Prophetologion of the 11th century, records a dialogue between the Anagnost and people at the antiphon of the first psalm at the Vigil Mass of the Nativity of the Savior, dialogue in which small psalm choruses called υποψαλμα or chanted answers, are intercalated after the verse of each psalm.

If in the dialogue between the reader/psalm and community, the latter one represents the variable element, at the antiphonal chant, the believers aren't anymore a unity but are divided in two groups that alternatively answer at one or two soloists through choruses that may have been a simple or triple halleluia, a phrase from the Bible or, more frequently, a verse or a stanza from an ecclesiastic creation.

In the Byzantine ritual the term antiphon (αντίφωνον) designates both the above situation, and also its chant unity between the psalm and the chorus/choruses. The alternative answer of the two groups or choruses implies also the existence of two choruses for the same psalm, of the second one was called “alternative answer” (το ανταποκρινόμενον).

The patristic literature remains, still, the most authorized source which attests the existence of the antiphonal chanting. One of the earliest mentions is offered to us by Theodoret of Cyrus (c. 393 - c. 466). He suggests that the first which divided the chanters in two choirs, asking them to chant the psalms (εκ διαδοχῆς) are Flavian († 404), bishop of Antioch and Diodorus (330 - 393), bishop of Tarsus.

By the information left from Tertullian, we find out that between the criteria that were made at the Christian cult from the 3rd century, the psalms were chanted alternatively, by two chanters. Of the use of this traditional kind of liturgical chanting in the 3rd century, remind us Clement of Alexandria and Origen.

Another important information which speaks, this time, about the origins of the antiphonal chanting, belongs to the historian Socrates (after 439) which records a vision of Saint Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, according to which the angels were singing antiphonal hymns towards the Holy Trinity, practice which was, ulterior, adopted by the bishop in his Church.

Indifferently of the fact that the origin of the antiphonal chanting may be searched in the musical occupations of the Christian communities or of the angelic hierarchy, the common denominator of the two references are the liturgical realities and musical practices of Antioch from the 4th mid-century. The acceptance of the Christian teaching as a state religion of the entire Empire has boosted, without a doubt, both the religious services and the musical development of them. The antiphonal chanting was part of the Church’s triumph, thing highlighted also by Saint Basil the Great in 375 in the excellent text from the epistle towards the clerics of Neocaesarea: “If our adversaries are asked about the cause of this incessant war, which they are leading against us, they speak of psalms and of a certain way of chanting. Towards the end of the night and before the sunrise, the people goes to the prayer house; he praises the Lord with the kneaded spirit, with repentance and a lot of tears, and after this prayer, made in silence, all rise for the chant. First, divided in two choirs, they chant alternatively, attentive at the understanding of the holy words, watching over their hearts, to remove any strange thought. After, leaving only to one person the care of singing the song, the others answer to him. And thus, the night flows in the variety of the chant, interrupted from time to time by the lonely prayer; yet, at the sunrise, all sing, in a single voice and in a single heart the psalm of confessing (Psalms 91: Good is to witness our Lord... N.B.). If this is the motive for which you want to apart from me, then you must apart also from the believers from Egypt, with the ones of the two Libyas, Thebaide and Palestine, with the Phoenicians, Syrians and Arabs, with the ones that live on the shores of Euphrates, in other words, with all those who like the holy vigils, prayer and common chanting.”

The consistency and clarity of this passage are extremely eloquent. The solidarity manifested by the Holy Father with so many tribes of the time indicate us a practice of the well-developed antiphonal chanting, and especially, generally accepted and generalized in the

Christian communities of the East at the end of the 4th century. Beyond the compelling image of the text, it must be observed still also the concern of the archbishop regarding the reaction of some believers that were not accepting to learn the psalms by memory to chant them alternatively. His effort of classification suggests us, indirectly, the fact that the antiphony wasn't accepted anywhere and immediately, shared attitude, partially, by the monotheistic world. The reaction of Abba Pambo, recorded by Gerbert in his well-known ecclesiastic *Scriptores* collection, at the "canons" and "troparia" chanting in the Churches from Alexandria, was, basically, a reaction at the antiphonal chant in favor to the responsorial one, simpler in essence.

Concluding the references above, we can state that the chant, in its antiphonal form, was introduced in the Christian cult to the 4th mid-century in the Antioch communities. Walking further, on the footsteps of the same patristic writers, we find that the alternative chanting type is a Syrian invention which was peddled by Saint Ephrem the Syrian in his fight with the Ariosophists. Historian Sozomen, a contemporary of Socrates, states that Ephrem took a part of their melodies and attached to them new texts, trying, thus, to combat the heretics at their own game.

Used both by Christians and heretics, the antiphonal chanting was taken in the same 4th century at Jerusalem, Asia Minor, Constantinople, and even in the Western Europe, in Milano, during Saint Ambrose (circa 339-397).

More than another poetical-musical form practiced in the apostolic times, the hymn was the kind which was claimed both from the Jewish tradition and the Pagan Hellenistic one. Let's remember that a part of the musical legacy of the first Christian generations was one from the public space, therefore non-ecclesiastic, thing which expresses their affinity and familiarization with the secular musical repertoires, especially, with the ones coming from the Greek world.

If initially, the hymn was promoted at different processions, religious holidays or agapes, thus, at the outskirts of the liturgical life, ulterior he began to enter the ecclesiastical space, becoming, therefore, "the new production of the religious Christian poetry" and, probably, the only music of purely Christian source until the beginning of the 3rd century. Practically, in the first centuries we assist at a competition between chant and hymnody, between what was preponderantly inherited from the mosaic world (the psalm) and what was to come on the Hellenic music popular line (the hymn). The orality, the improvisatory and preponderantly non-liturgical character of the proto-Christian hymnography, the song freedom of (ο μελοδός) composing both the text and also the music or to use the pre-existent musical models, starting, more or less, from the biblical text, made the hymn not to find itself, always, in the normative framework of the Church. Not even written by consecrated names like Clement of Alexandria, a part of these hymns couldn't occupy a privileged position in the liturgical framework.

The musical liberty of the hymns was, sometimes, doubled by the behavioral one. The Meletians sectarians in Asia Minor were accompanying the chanting hymns by clapping, dancing and even using idiophone tools, namely the bells. Similar attitudes were using also others opponents of the Church, especially in the Marcionite sect and some Syrian poets that were composing hymns with the heretic teaching, refusing systematically the traditional Psalter. Thus,

as O. Braun says, “the heretics have replaced Saint Peter with Marcion as prince of the Apostles, and instead of the psalms, they have written their own hymns”.

Therefore, the heretics didn’t invent the hymns but they are the first that used them as dogmatic fighting weapons and as means of propagation of the heresy among the masses, which determined the Church authority to elaborate canonic norms regarding the liturgical life, and determined the appearance of hymnography of Christian inspiration, through which to be fixed the righteous faith and to be transmitted amongst the believers with the help of chanting. Tertullian tells us that, in the 2nd mid-century, the Gnostics Marcian and Valentin, coming from Rome, began to spread their teaching among the Christians using hymns composed actually by them. The same method will be used later by the Gnostic Bardesan in Syria, which composed a multitude of rhythmic hymns, easy to remember and to execute, and his son and continuer of the heresy, organized itinerant choirs to spread the teaching. An important role had then Saint Ephrem of Syria († between 373 and 378), that was enjoying a poetic remarkable talent, doubled by a deep godliness. In his approach for the defense of the righteous faith, he will actually utilize instruments used by the heretics: the hymn and chanting. His example will be followed also by other fathers of the Church from other centers of the Christian world. The believer’s choirs, together with priests and bishops, were gathering for processions through the cities, singing hymns that were containing texts referring the faith truths contested by the heretics. About such a nation, initiated by Saint John Chrysostom at Constantinople, it is said it was net superior to the Arians ones.

The reaction of the ecclesiastical authorities manifested also in canons that referred exclusively at the church chanting. Thus, the canon number 59 emitted in the 4th mid-century (year 343) by the Council of Laodicea, was forbidding all the hymns of which texts were not according to the ones of the Holy Scripture, thing that constituted one of the arguments for which so few hymns survived from the beginning of Christianity.

The spread of the hymnody as the success won over three centuries, determined the Church – especially, the Eastern one – to change the initial incriminating attitude towards these creations. Their use in the Christological disputes, heretics and Christians alike, as a dogmatic and propaganda weapon, strengthen and perfected the hymn from the theological point of view, bringing it the liturgical consecration. The Church realized that their final prohibition would have seriously affected the Divine Service, losing, thus, a part of the beauty and ritual diversity which was about to form. Some decades later, the political guarantee of the Christianity gained in 312, will ensure the hymn, as otherwise, to the entire Christian ritual, a boost without precedent. The new hymnographic production will deny his Hellenic source, getting closer to the spirit of the chant and receiving, thus, the Church’s endorsement.

In parallel, the opinions of the Holy Fathers and church writers, in general, not only become more nuanced but offer the hymn priority and a certain parentage towards the chanting: the angels prefer the hymns instead of the psalms, was saying Saint John Chrysostom and Didymus the Blind tried to existentially delimitate the two musical forms: the man with a

practical life prefers a chant and the one that lives his life contemplatively (θεωρία) prefer the hymns.

In the end, the musical ideal followed with such passion by the Parents in the chanting of the hymns is fulfilled, with the possibility of being synthesized in the words of Saint John Chrysostom: “Either it is a weakened man of age or still young, that it has a rough voice, that ignores the rhythm totally, these won’t be considered as effects. What is asked is a modest spirit, an awoken spirit, a broken heart, a healthy judgement and a clear conscience; if you have these you will enter the holy choir of God and you would be able to sit alongside David”.

Regarding the architectural pattern of the hymn in the Eastern Church, it can be said it had a special history and evolution, net different of those of the poetic production of the Greek classicism. From the structural point of view, the hymns, mostly, are strophic, the organizational elements being the tonic accent of the word and the exact number of the syllables, and from the stylish point of view they can be divided in hymns with a predominantly syllabic character, as the troparion, canon, sticheron and kontakion, and melismatic hymns, with a melody preponderantly ornamental, as halleluiah is.

The tens of thousands of creations that have survived the ages, are an undeniable proof and argument which reflects the position occupied by the hymn in the Byzantine world. Henrica Follieri, in the six volumes of the collection *Hymnorum Initiate Ecclesiae Graecae*, draws a catalogue with the incipits of over 60.000 (!) Byzantine hymns, unfortunately the author only inventorying only the printed works. Surely, other thousands, or, tens of thousands remain hidden in the codices preserved in different libraries and archives of the world. If we think that many other hymns have disappeared because of history’s vicissitudes – one of them being the iconoclast dispute – we must recognize that the hymnography played a crucial role in perfecting the poetic adornment of the Christian ritual and, especially, of the Byzantine one.

The first millennium has big gaps, but, regarding the survival of the musical document, unfortunately, the handwritten history remembers only one hymn of which music was inspired from the chanting of the proto-Christian world. We talk about a papyrus created in the proximity of the apostolic centuries and which dates from the end of the third century. Discovered at Oxyrhynchus a city situated in the area of the Middle Egypt, in the second decade of the past century, the papyrus keeps a fragment from a hymn from the oldest music of Christian origin, hymn which was noted in the well-known alphabetic musical semiography from the Greek classicism time. From the musical point of view, this is written in the diatonic way on the modal structure of the hypolydian, in the ambitus octave, the problems of transcription appearing only at the rhythmic parameter. It seems that the hymn was destined of being interpreted by a soloist and the doxological formula *ὑμνοῦντων δ' ἡμῶν πατέρα χυιόν χάγιον πνεύμα* gives us the right to consider that this is dedicated to the Holy Trinity: “Chanting [praising] us the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, all the powers speak: Amin, Amin, power, praise”.

At the date of his discovery the fragment provoked intense speculations upon the origin and character of the liturgical music from the time of the first Christian centuries. The compared studies made by the specialists with other ancient musical documents have tried to see in this

fragment a proof of the influence of the Greek musical theory in the Christian cult. The unicity of this creation makes it however to be seen with extreme caution. Nowhere in the early Christian literature has existed any mention regarding the prohibition or notation adoption in ancient Christian literature or about the use of one or another from the ancient musical notations. This proto-Christian hymn is an extremely rare and unique case until today that was noted. On the other hand, the singularity of this fragment proves us that nor in the third century Egypt AC, the Greek notation was used and nor the melody of this hymn was characteristic to the early sacred music.

“The spiritual chanting”, which Saint Apostle Paul recommends the Ephesian Christians and to us after them for communion: “Speak to one another with psalms and hymns (praises) and songs from the Spirit...” (Ephesians 5, 19), Father Ene Braniște identifying and likening them with some fragments from the Revelation of Saint John, namely: the chant of the twenty four elders before the divine throne (Revelation 4, 11) or the praising chant of the Lamb, from the same vision (Revelation 5, 12 and the following) and appreciates that these must be the “spiritual hymns” (πνευματικοί), of which Saint Apostle Paul talks, urging the Christians from its time to sing along the psalms and other biblical hymns. Plus, Father Ene Braniște shows that these “spiritual chanting” were poetic products of the first Christians under the outpouring of the spiritual charisms, which their anonymous authors would sing in the cult gatherings from the early Church, some of them being probably strung even by the Saint Apostles in the epistles written by them to different communities.

However, the difference which Saint Apostle shows between the Christian chanting is only formal, their importance being even, and the recommendation of Saint Paul being actually the singing within as a specific feature to the human being and common to the people of all times and places. That’s why we will also pay attention to the Christian chant, indifferent of its form, because all forms, are equally inspired, useful and representative for the Christian cult.

The chanting is the most expressive art and the most full of effect upon the human spirit. Through chanting the human expresses his feelings of joy, sorrow, but also the pains, upsurges and ideals. It is no wonder, that music was put also, like in all other arts, in the service of the religious and cult feeling. In temples, synagogues, churches, in the places of gathering and prayer, whatever name they would bear, the people have praised and chanted God under the form of psalms, of religious hymns and chants of any kind.

If by word the man has the possibility to share to his peers all his thoughts, feelings and unrests, by chanting, the human being rises above these communications. By chanting, the man’s life garnishes, the heart is delighted, and its entire being is charmed, pleased, transported from the earth to the region where it dominates the beautiful, the sublime, the Godhead. Only so it is explained the fact that searching the past of the humankind, we find that in the entire place and time, the chanting was present in the cult of all people irrespective of faith, being a complex form of manifestation of the religious feeling.

In the first centuries of Christianity, the religious chanting had as model the synagogue chanting, to which joined, along the centuries, the musical influences of the other nations from

Asia Minor – Syria, Antioch, Armenia – and of the old Greek music. Once with the appearance and development of the Christian hymnography, in the religious chanting framework, was produced a certain synthesis, a more and more clear targeting, more stable, the religious music starting to gain personality, her center of creation and evolution being Byzantium, the capital of the Eastern Empire.

The collective chanting of the believers was cultivated in the early Church, for the consolidation of the Christian unity, as effective means of defending the righteous faith in doctrinal controversies and the spread of Christianity, being all the time however, an important form of expressing the love of God and His worshiping.

From the point of view of interpretation, we have certain proves for the collective chanting, starting with the first Christian centuries, as Tertullian assures us: “Each can sing to God from the Holy Scripture, or from his own imagination”, and Saint John Chrysostom says: “from the ancient times all were gathering and were singing sweet together; this is what we also do: women, men and young people, differ by age, but not by the way they sing, because the spirit of the singing, harmonizing the voice of each one, results a melody”.

At first, the Church “used a simple song, almost of the voice measure we use in current talk, and the crafted chant was introduced after – says Isidore of Seville – not for the spiritual Christians, but for the bodily ones, because these, not being sensitized by the objects of chanting, they could at least be of the pleasant sounds”. Thus, from the simple chant to the antiphonic ones of the first three centuries, it reached the responsorial chanting, reminded by the historian Socrates: “the chanter was intoning the psalms and hymns in a really pleasant melody, and the people was taking only the last part, namely “His mercy endureth forever, Halleluiah”.

There were left a number of references for the music of the first centuries in the notes of Saint Basil the Great, Nicetas of Remesiana – which insists upon the interpretation ethics, entering into details of vocal technique – Isidore of Seville, Saint Ignatius God Bearer, Nikephoros Kallistos, etc. They talk about the evolution of Church chanting, from the “simple chanting close to the voice measure as use in the current speaking” until the appearance of the antiphonic chanting which has its debut in the practice of Saint Ignatius God Bearer.

Evidently that these chants were made together with the other cult acts after a good ordinance in this regard, the ordinance of the Holy Liturgy in the first 3-4 centuries, as are describing to us the oldest testimonies and liturgical documents, which have come to us (The first extolling of Saint Justin the Martyr, Church ordinances etc.) portray as a continuum dialogue or answers exchange between the provost – bishop or priest – and deacon on the one hand and believers, on the other hand. All the prayers or moliebens, which the priest reads them today in silence – were spoken entirely aloud, also as the litanies, and the believers, that were listening with the proper attention, were all associating, with a single voice, through answers which otherwise were short and few in number – either confirming the end of the prayers in Amin, or therefore giving the exhortation to prayer, with the phrase “Lord have mercy” or “God Give”, after each paragraph of litanies. This explains the limited role of the psalm, chanter or anagnoste until the fourth-fifth centuries, and is very probable that only the typical development

of the Divine Liturgy through the sequential addition of new parts, hymns, rites and ceremonies has generated the growth of the chanter's role and the strengthening of his status by the coordinator, bandmaster and also soloist.

The development of the liturgical repertoire, both quantitatively and especially qualitatively, is a necessity for the secular music, which wasn't unknown for the Christians, but superior to the simple church music, close to the recitative ones. "The Church at first was using a simple chanting, close to the voice measure that we use in the current speaking, and the crafted chant was introduced after – says Isidore of Seville – not for the spiritual Christians, but for the bodily ones, because these, not being sensitized by the objects of chanting, they could at least be of the pleasant sounds". Thus, from the simple chant to the antiphonic ones of the first three centuries, it reached the responsorial chanting, reminded by the historian Socrates: "the chanter was intoning the psalms and hymns in a really pleasant melody, and the people was taking only the last part, namely "His mercy endureth forever, Halleluiah".

The Holy Fathers of the Church were in the same time fathers of the music, being composers of the hymns and chants from the Church. We only remember Saint Ignatius God Bearer, bishop of Antioch (+ 107), Saint Justin the Martyr and Philosopher (+165), Clement of Alexandria (+220) Ephrem of Syria (+379), Saint Athanasius the Great (+374), Saint Gregory of Nazianz (+381), Saint Nicetas of Remesiana (+414), Saint John Damascene (+749) etc. Under their guidance, the chanters couldn't come anymore unprepared in the Church and the Synod from Laodicea (367), through the canon 15, decides that only certain persons could handle the religious chanting: "It is not proper that beside canonic chanters that are allowed to be in the pulpit, and from there to sing, others to learn in the Church". Also it was solicited a special moral preparation of the chanters that were "celebrants" with the priest.

It seems that in the Church from Africa, the installment of the chanters was made by the bishop through the following words: "Vide, ut quod ore cantus, corde credas; et quod corde credis, operibus comprobes" (Find that what you sing from the mouth to believe in the heart also, to confirm in acts)".

It is proper to make some referrals to the notation chanting expressed graphically with the help of some used notation for the reading with a higher voice of the evangelical periscope, of the Apostle and of the Old Testament. From the writings of the second century of Christianity, it is seen, that "the readings from the holy books were made through readers that were sitting on a high place. If the notation – one of the oldest Byzantine notations – remain in manuscripts belonging to the 9th-14th centuries, from the quote remembered above, appears that the practice of the notation singing must be searched in the intone itself of the priest's prayers (proistos) and of the readings from the holy books, practice which coincides with the "breaking of the bread" ritual from the first Christian centuries. Either this brings us immediately the thought of recitative, which means the word expressing at the border between speech and song. The essence of the unitary thought, capable to enshrine the bond (indestructible in the vocal music) from the parameters essential to the spoken communication and what we call chant is an organic alloy between word and music in their together knead moment itself, thanks to the creative act. In the

moment of creation and of interpretation, the link makes so unitary the merging between the word and music that “the word will sing, and the music will speak in to the uplifting ones as ceremonial offering of prayer, praise and thanksgiving dedicated to God”.

Although the Christian Church services are structured Trinitarian and theanthropic (having a human-divine character), the liturgical chant was built more on the Christological aspect, that is best illustrated, which seems natural, if we think, that the entire Christian cult and in fact the Church itself, under all its aspects, is founded on the Incarnation and sacrifice of the Savior.

Actually is very difficult, if not impossible, to find in the liturgical books any chant without reference to the Savior. If we search carefully, even the chants dedicated to the Saints (in the Orthodox Church book, which indicates the religious services) implies always a reference to the Savior, to Which the Saints became followers. Let’s mention only the chants “Smooth light”, which is used since the second-third centuries and “Begotten” attributed to the Emperor Justinian (527-565). These underline the explicit expression of the Christological aspect, found in connection with the Trinitarian one, but also their age, and last but not least the special frequency of their liturgical use.

In the third-fourth centuries, there weren’t any church chanters in the meaning of today. All people from the churches sing at the liturgy, and only the development of the Divine Liturgy ritual by the sequential addition of new parts, hymns, rites and ceremonies generated the growth of the chanter’s role and the strengthening of his status by the coordinator, bandmaster and also soloist; the liturgical form gaining in the eyes of the people an aspect more and more complicated, more inwrought, determined the prayers, that were until then spoken by the servant priest, with loud voice entirely, to be red in silence, while the believers or chanters executed the new hymns, introduced in the cult. Only the ending of these prayers, namely the ecphonesis (and of course the litanies), as also the final prayer of the pulpit, made an exception from this rule, remaining to be spoken further with a loud voice, to direct the people’s chanting.

The fourth century had a definitive role in the formation of the Christian thinking, of the church cult and of the church chanting spread. To attract attention that the church services don’t have only a decorative character, in their compositions the Holy Fathers of the Church have often highlighted the theological character, in the dogmatic meaning, of the Orthodox liturgical chanting.

The thing is otherwise evident when taking into account the words of many songs that expose directly, as dogmatic – teachings formulation with a dogmatic, Christological and Trinitarian character, or looking at the pneumatology, soteriology, Mariology and other aspects of salvation. It even exists a category of chanting of chanting which are named dogmatic precisely in the virtue of their dogmatic content. Moreover, hymnology had from the start a more dogmatic character, being driven largely by fighting heretics. In these circumstances, the hymnology was transformed into a true dogmatic – doctrine reply, as we can learn from the texts of many church hymns.

The evolution of the chant through the introduction of the new hymnographic achievements in cult, troparia, kontak, canons, etc. and especially after the systematization of the new chants by grouping them on the eight ways of chanting, voices, the singing becomes more and more complicated and very hard to learn, and that is why at the Synod of Laodicea (367), through the canon 15, it is decided that certain persons could handle the religious chanting: “It is not proper that beside canonic chanters that are allowed to be in the pulpit, and from there to sing, others to learn in the Church”.

Historical, liturgical and canonical studies observed that the indication referring the chanters in this canon mustn't be absolutely interpreted as prohibition of the believers' chanting together, but more in the meaning of guidance by the chanter “of executing the believers' chanting as specialists or connoisseurs of the musical technique of the time”.

Also it was solicited a special moral preparation of the chanters that were “celebrants” with the priest. It seems that in the Church from Africa, the installment of the chanters was made by the bishop through the following words: Find that what you sing from the mouth to believe in the heart also, to confirm in acts”.

From now on, in the Church, the music goes on a path of development and perfection as also evolution. It is asked from the technical-interpretative point of view, quality and execution of the chants by certain rules. Canon 75 of the sixth Ecumenical Synod, indicate us the conduct of the singers in Church and also the manner of interpretation of the church chants, showing that it must be sang without “shouting or forcing the being to roar [...], but with much attention”. The canon also refers at the content proper to the chants and namely “the ones that to the Church [...] are adequate [...] [and] befitting”. Also, it is emphasized the moral spiritual and mystical dimension of the chanting when it is shown how “with much attention and humility, to bring chants to God the one who watches over the hidden ones”.

Also, Saint Nicetas of Remesiana warns: “the sound or melody must be sang in concordance with the holy religion, not to sound arduous, but to be shown the true Christianity of us, without being theatrical”.

The canon collections of the Orthodox Church contain more regulations with direct reference at the church chanting. Between the kept canons in the Church Tradition we remember also the canon 15 of fifth local Synod, from Laodicea, which recommends that in the Church must sing “only canonical chanters”. In a narrow interpretation, the canon seems to indicate only the chanters that may be called professionals or having a special status in the Church because of their special musical preparation. Because of that, in the Romanian Orthodox Church was put in discussion the problem of chanting together, it was searched a more authentic interpretation of this canon, in the meaning of a correlation with the entire Tradition of chanting in the Christian Church, especially that to some the chanting together, seemed like being the result of an external influence of the true spirit of the Orthodoxy.

But the conclusions of some pretty numerous studies, founded on patristic or historical measures, seemed quite clearly that may be considered “canonical” and the believers that, at a certain moment or other of the service, participate at the chanting. Starting with the inducement

of Saint Apostle Paul: “Speak to one another with psalms and hymns and songs from the Spirit” (Ephesians 5, 19), that evidently do not address only to some specialized chanters, and remembering from the many patristic testimonies in this regard only the one of Saint Nicetas of Remesiana, that was showing how it must be chanted together, it can be stated, that any believer is in the same time a chanter that brings praise to the glory of God, even if sometimes there were discussions regarding the women chanting in the Church or (less) regarding the children chanting.

On the other hand, the participation of the believers at chanting doesn't mean the cancelation of the specialized chanter post, that it can also be followed throughout the entire history of the Christian chanting and may be considered as being an integrating part from the Church's Tradition, mentioning only the fact that the biggest part of hymnography, and to a large extent to the songs included in the service books of the church is however the creation of some composers, hymnologists, etc., that had a special training, superior to the majority of the other believers, in the field of liturgical chanting, not to say, that very probable, usually this training was responding to also a devotion, talent or “grace” very special for chanting.

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