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From Myth to Reality: Stevan Stojanović Mokranjac and Serbian Church Music*

Od mita do resničnosti: Stevan Stojanović Mokranjac in srbska cerkvena glasba**

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IZVLEČEK

ABSTRACT

V prispevku se bomo osredotočili na zgodovinsko rekonstrukcijo dela Stevana Stojanovića Mokranjca na področju melografije (*melography*) in pedagogike srbskih cerkvenih napevov. O prestižnem statusu, ki ga je kot melograf (*melographer*) in strokovnjak za srbske cerkvene napeve pridobil tako v očeh svojih sodobnikov kot pri današnjih muzikologih in zgodovinarjih glasbe, je redko kdo podvomil ali ga obravnaval objektivno, zato sva

In this paper, we will focus on the historical reconstruction of Stevan Stojanović Mokranjac's work in the field of melography and pedagogy of Serbian church chant. Since the prestigious status he reached among his contemporaries, as well as musicologists and music historians of the recent past, both as a melographer and expert in Serbian church chant of his time, has rarely been questioned or objectively approached, we decided to reconsider

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** Prispevek je bil napisan v okviru projekta št. 177004 Srbske glasbene identitete znotraj likalnih in globalnih okvirov: tradicije, spremembe, izzivi pod okriljem Ministrstva za šolstvo, znanost in tehnološki razvoj.

se odločili ponovno pretresti nekaj prevladujočih interpretacij njegovih dejavnostih na tem področju. V ta namen sva temeljito raziskali arhivske vire in tisk od konca 19. stoletja naprej, pri čemer sva želeli kritično proučiti Mokranjčevo vlogo pri popularizaciji konceptov karlovskega in beogradskega sloga cerkvenega petja, njegove poskuse zapisovanja enoglasnih cerkvenih napevov, nazadnje pa še njegov pristop k poučevanju cerkvenega petja na Semenišču Sv. Save. Poudarili bova neskladje med ustvarjeno podobo Mokranjca kot nesporne avtoritete na tem področju in zgodovinskimi podatki, ki kažejo na pomen, ki ga je imel njegov simbolni (in socialni) kapital v procesu pridobivanja širokega pripoznanja.

some of the dominant interpretations of his activities in this domain. For that purpose, we conducted a thorough research of archival resources and press material from the late 19th century onward aiming at a critical examination of Mokranjac's role in the popularization of concepts of the Karlovac and Belgrade church chant styles, his undertakings in the documentation of monophonic church chants, and, finally, his approach to the teaching of chant singing in Saint Sava's Seminary. We will underline the discrepancy between the created image of Mokranjac as an indisputable authority in the field and historical data, which point to the significance of his symbolic (and social) capital in the process of gaining broader recognition.

Stevan Stojanović Mokranjac, who was considered a “mythical structure”¹ even during his life and the key figure of the Serbian musical canon, was the focus of Serbian musicological research more than any other Serbian composer.² Despite that, his compositional, melographic, and pedagogical work in the field of church music has not received a critical interpretation prior to this paper. The conflicting evaluations of Mokranjac's approach to musical folklore in his attempts to preserve traditional Serbian church chant were not considered in studies dedicated to this topic. During his life, rare critics of his entire work and even of his engagement in the field of church music remained on the margins,³ unlike many writers who promoted his preeminent position among the predecessors and contemporaries.⁴ The same situation is typical nowadays.⁵ In fact, the composer who was known as the founder of Serbian musical nationalism, conductor of the most important choral ensemble in the Serbian capital,

1 Vesna Mikić, “Our Mokranjac - Transitional Cultural Practices and the Work by Stevan Mokranjac,” *Mokranjac* no. 14 (2012): 2 (2-12).

2 Đorđe Perić, “Stevan St. Mokranjac's Bibliography,” in: Dejan Despić and Vlastimir Peričić, eds., *Stevan Stojanović Mokranjac - Life and Work*, vol. 10 (Belgrade - Knjaževac: Institute for Textbooks and Teaching Aids, Nota Publishing House for Music Editions, 1998), 253-408. Some newer literature on Mokranjac see in: Tijana Popović Mladenović, “The Reception of the Work of Stevan Stojanović Mokranjac in the Context of Contemporary Music Writings,” *Mokranjac* no. 13 (2011): 2-20; Biljana S. Milanović, *European Musical Practices and the Shaping of a Nation Through the Creation of National Art Music in Serbia in the First Decades of the 20th Century* (Belgrade: Faculty of Philosophy University of Belgrade, Doctoral Dissertation (manuscript), 2016), 5.

3 Dušan Janković, “Notated Church Chant,” *Delo* XIV, no. 50 (1905): 388-390; idem, “Serbian National Church Chant, I: the Octoechos, notated down by St. St. Mokranjac,” *Delo* XIV, no. 50 (1909): 113-117; idem, “The 25th Anniversary of Stevan St. Mokranja,” *Delo* XIV, no. 52 (1909): 246-250; certain stereotypes regarding Mokranjac's contribution in the field of church music were emphasized during the seventies by Petar Bingulac in his article “Stevan Mokranjac and Church Music,” in *Studies on the Work of Stevan Mokranjac*, ed. Mihailo Vukdragović (Belgrade, Department of Fine Arts and Music - Serbian Academy of Science and Arts, 1971), 13-31. Without any arguments, Danica Petrović, the editor of the studies on Mokranjac's church music in his *Collected Works*, tried to discredit Bingulac's polemics. See: Danica Petrović, “The Octoechos in Serbian Chant and in the Melographic Works of Stevan St. Mokranjac,” in St. St. Mokranjac, *Sacred Music - Octoechos*, vol. IV, D. Petrović ed. (Belgrade - Knjaževac: Institute for Textbooks and Teaching Aids, Nota Publishing House for Music Editions, 1996), xxv.

4 Roksanda Pejović, “Some Opinions on Mokranjac of the Critics from Past,” *Razvitak* VIII, no. 3-4 (1968): 74-77; Mirka Pavlović, “A Survey of Some Articles on Mokranjac in the Newspapers of Vojvodina at the End of the Last (19th) and the Beginning of This (20th) Centuries,” *Zvuk* no. 2 (1981): 54-61.

5 Some important works of this kind will be referred to in this paper.

the most famous Serbian cultural diplomat at the time of deep social and political changes in the Balkans, was also the first among the melographers of church chants. His written chants, known as the “Serbian national church chanting tradition”, became the basis for musical education in seminaries, as well as the official chanting material of the Serbian Church. Even today, “Mokranjac’s” chanting is a synonym for monophonic (and even polyphonic) Serbian church music practice.

As a result of the revitalization of religious life and traditional Serbian values in the 1990s, which contributed to a renewed interest in church music, a national church music project was initiated and, consequently, Mokranjac once again gained a prestigious position.⁶ Perhaps the impetus for such eulogizing of Mokranjac’s work in the field of church music came from the appearance of the so-called Byzantine psalmody in the Serbian Church.⁷ Under the “threat” of this type of singing tradition once rejected by Serbian music professionals who were educated in the West and who sought to emancipate Serbian national music, the myth of Mokranjac was revived. The stereotype of a national artist who saved the national church music tradition from “oriental” influences, i.e. who removed aesthetically inappropriate musical ornamentations from it and gave it a proper harmonic grounding, became an axiom in recently-published research. Mokranjac’s melographical work was again considered as long awaited and most successful,⁸ while Mokranjac himself was thought of as an “icon” of Serbian culture,⁹ protector of original and authentic Serbian musical identity,¹⁰ and the artist who recognized the value of church chants for artistic remoulding.¹¹

It is not possible to reject these views completely as being incorrect, but the entire narrative on Mokranjac requires a thorough critical reassessment. Therefore, in this paper we would like to re-examine 1) the process of Mokranjac’s melographic work on church chanting, particularly the frequently accentuated difficulties in its publishing, and 2) his role in the development of pedagogy of church music in Saint Sava’s Seminary in Belgrade.

* * *

In 1894, Stevan Mokranjac, as a member of the Commission of the Ministry of Education and Church Affairs of the Kingdom of Serbia, gave a negative opinion on

6 Vesna Sara Peno, *Orthodox Chanting in the Balkans in the Examples of Greek and Serbian Traditions. Between East and West, Ecclesiology and Ideology* (Belgrade: Institute of Musicology SASA, 2016), footnote no. 15–17, 161–164.

7 Jelena Jovanović, “Identities Expressed Through Practice of Kaval Playing and Building in Serbia in 1990s,” in Dejan Despić, Jelena Jovanović, Danka Lajić-Mihajlović, eds., *Musical Practices in the Balkans: Ethnomusicological Perspectives* (Belgrade: Institute of Musicology SASA, Department of Fine Arts and Music SASA, 2012), 183–202; Vesna Peno, “Tradition and/or Saint Tradition in the Current Liturgical Chanting of the Serbian Church,” *Bulletin of the Institute of Ethnography SASA* 63, no. 2 (2015): 433–450.

8 Predrag Đoković, “Influence of the Mokranjac’s Melographic Style on the Melographers of the Church Melodies,” *Mokranjac* no. 15 (2013): 2–17.

9 Ivan Moody, “Mokranjac, Culture and Icons,” *Mokranjac* no. 14 (2014): 2–6.

10 Vida Ognjenović, “An Attempt at Writing Acathistos to Mokranjac,” *Mokranjac* no. 9 (2007): 51–52.

11 Bogdan Đaković, “Serbian Orthodox Choral Music in the First Half of the 20th Century”, in Ivan Moody and Maria Takala-Roszczenko eds., *The Traditions of Orthodox Church Music: Proceedings of the First International Conference on Orthodox Church Music* (Joensuu: University of Joensuu and ISOCM, 2007), 174, (172–179).

the collection of church chants whose authors believed it would become an official textbook.¹² In the report for the Board of Education, signed by all members of the commission,¹³ it was stated that, among the Serbs, “since Kornelije Stanković, many have tried to notate our church melodies”, but “none of them appeared as serious followers”.¹⁴ The writing down of local variants of melodies had been carried out, as emphasized in the report, without precise criteria and critical comments, and mostly in an incorrect manner. The commission concluded: “All collections of this kind published until now can only be considered as attempts based on proper motives, but none of them, including Kornelije’s collection, is a result of critical and systematic work”.¹⁵

Pointing to the alarming state of singing practice in Serbian churches, the commission also recommended possible solutions. First, the entire oral tradition of church chanting ought to be written down all over again. This work was supposed to be conducted by the musicians of Orthodox faith. One of the main goals was to give an opportunity to students at the seminaries, so they would learn church chants from a credible source. Besides this, the project of professional melography had another significant purpose: to “standardize” the church chants or, in other words, to remove the “oriental ornaments”: “The singers perform melodies, each in their own way, and melographers, most of whom did not have skills and experience similar to that of Vuk (Karadžić, V. P. & I.V.), were not able to establish national chanting tradition or to gain a single follower”.¹⁶

Mokranjac, with his first and only published collection of church chants (at least in his lifetime), in which he removed “all the excessive decorations and vocal effects (...) from the throat” and “all those tasteless and old-fashioned ornaments from every note”,¹⁷ would be recognized as an expert in this field and given a chance already in 1894 to become the Vuk Stefanović Karadžić of Serbian music.

No matter how much the title of “new Vuk” was important to Mokranjac, the melographic work was not his primary activity because of other, socially more significant and respectable engagements. The affirmation of four-part choral music in the services of the Serbian Church was an important manifestation of the change of cultural, musical and national ideology in the 19th century, to which Mokranjac responded

12 This was a review of collection *Notated Church Chants*, edited by the priest Živko S. Branković and a Czech-born musician Vojteh Šistek. Cf. Anonymous, “From the Principal Educational Board,” *Nastavnik* (1894): 124–125; Anonymous, “A Review of the Manuscript on Church Chants Written by Živ. Branković and Vojteh Šistek,” *Prosvetni glasnik* XVI, no. 2 (1895): 139–140.

13 Members of the commission, led by Mokranjac, were the influential priest from Belgrade and the author of many editions of collection with “trile” Nikola Trifunović, priest Atanasije M. Popović, and the composer Josif Marinković.

14 Anonymous, “A Review,” 139.

15 Anonymous, “A Review,” 139. In new musicological literature, Mokranjac’s negative review of Kornelije’s work in church music melography has been completely (either on purpose or accidentally) ignored. On the contrary, his later opinion that “everyone who is involved in our Church music must very frequently turn to Kornelije’s work to seek and find advice” is commonly emphasized. This was his reply in 1907 to the Serbian Royal Academy, concerning the project of publishing Kornelije’s manuscript volumes of notated church songs. Mokranjac was appointed as a member of the commission for the review of the manuscript in 1901, but this positive review came only six years later. Pavlović, “Kornelije Stanković’s Manuscripts,” 167–169; Olivera Mladenović, “Stevan Mokranjac’ Participation in the Work of the Serbian Royal Academy of Sciences,” in *Studies on the Work of Stevan Mokranjac*, ed. Mihailo Vukdragović (Belgrade: Department of Fine Arts and Music – Serbian Academy of Science and Arts, 1971), 185–200.

16 Anonymous, “A Review,” 140.

17 St. St. Mokranjac, “Preface” in *Sacred Music – Octoechos*, in D. Petrović ed. (Belgrade – Knjaževac: Institute for Textbooks and Teaching Aids, Nota Publishing House for Music Editions, 1996), 4.

enthusiastically.¹⁸ As a conductor of the Kornelije Stanković Choral Society, the official choir of the Belgrade Cathedral Church since 1897, Mokranjac was able to gather the necessary literature. Owing to this fact, Mokranjac's faithful student and biographer Kosta P. Manojlović, marked this year as crucial in the context of his melographic work.¹⁹ Manojlović's claim that Mokranjac was active in this field for more than fifteen years was repeatedly referred to in many subsequent works without being examined.²⁰ In Mokranjac's manuscripts, however, there are no preserved autographs which could confirm this assumption. Certain facts from his professional biography cast doubts on his allegedly "committed" melographic and pedagogical work.

As a part-time teacher of "Church chant singing" which included the performing of sacred choral literature in the Belgrade Seminary,²¹ Mokranjac faced the damaging consequences of outdated methods of teaching church chanting,²² as well as the general musical illiteracy of the pupils. It all happened in 1894 – the year he wrote a negative opinion on the collection of notated church chants as a member of group of experts appointed by state officials. Until 1901, when he became a full-time teacher, he was not motivated to notate church chanting in a more systematic manner, for he was already focused on his work as a composer and a conductor. He put his creative energy and concentration into multipart choral compositions for the central church service – the Liturgy and, above all, into secular works²³ which made him famous both as a composer and as the conductor of the Belgrade Choral Society in Serbia and abroad.²⁴

Although Mokranjac's students and followers idealized his work in the domain of music pedagogy, the testimonies on the results of his attempts to advance general music education in the First Belgrade Lyceum,²⁵ as well as the Belgrade Seminary arouse scepticism. Even if the fact that he abandoned the position of professor of music in the Lyceum

18 Vesna Peno, "On the Multipart Singing in the Religious Practice of Orthodox Greeks and Serbs: the Theological-Culturological Discourse," *Muzikologija* no. 17 (2014): 129–154.

19 Cf. Manojlović, *St. St. Mokranjac*, 91.

20 P. Bingulac, "Stevan Mokranjac and Church Music," 17; Danica Petrović, "Preface," in Stevan Stojanović Mokranjac, *Sacred Music, General and Special Chants*, vol. V, D. Petrović ed. (Belgrade – Knjaževac: Institute for Textbooks and Teaching Aids, Nota Publishing House for Music Editions, 1998), xi.

21 According to Zorislava M. Vasiljević, Mokranjac was hired by the Belgrade's Seminary on many occasions: in 1891/1892, 1894/1896, and 1899/1900. The author did not refer to the source of this information. Zorislava M. Vasiljević, *The Struggle for Serbian Musical Literacy. From Milouuk to Mokranjac* (Belgrade: Prosveta, 2000), 35. However, Mokranjac was mentioned as a teacher of church chanting only in the sources from 1894–1895 and 1900–1901. Even Kosta Manojlović suggested that Mokranjac started working in the Seminary in 1901. Cf. *The Annual Report of the Belgrade Seminary for the School Year 1894/1895* (Belgrade: 1895), 6–7; *The Annual Report of the Belgrade Royal-Serbian Seminary, 1901/1902* (Belgrade: The State Publishing Company of the Kingdom of Serbia, 1902); Manojlović, *St. St. Mokranjac*, 90.

22 On many problems in the chanting classes due to the use of the collection of church melodies notated down in so-called *trile* and made by Nikola Trifunović see: The Archives of Serbia, A Report of the Head of the Belgrade Seminary no. 69 from 28th February, 1895; Pavlović, "Kornelije Stanković's Manuscripts," 163.

23 By 1901, Mokranjac has completed the entire *Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom*, ten *Garlands*, and many other church and secular compositions. At the same time, he was collecting folk songs from different regions (for example in Kosovo, 1896). In 1899, Mokranjac founded a School of Music in Belgrade in collaboration with Stanislav Binički and Cvetko Manojlović. Mokranjac was the first director of this school. Manojlović, *St. St. Mokranjac*, 65–88; Dejan Despić and Vlastimir Peričić, eds., *Stevan Stojanović Mokranjac - Life and Work*, vol. 10 (Belgrade – Knjaževac: Institute for Textbooks and Teaching Aids, Nota Publishing House for Music Editions, 1998).

24 Biljana Milanović, ed., *Stevan Stojanović Mokranjac (1856–1914). The Belgrade Choral Society Foreign Concert Tours* (Belgrade: Institute of Musicology SASA, Serbian Musicological Society, 2014).

25 The students of the First Belgrade Lyceum, educated in Western European notation, theory, and choral singing by Mokranjac, such as Josif Svoboda and Toša Andrejević, took part in Sunday and festal Liturgies in the city's Cathedral Church. Manojlović, *St. St. Mokranjac*, 72–73; Vasiljević, *The Struggle for Serbian Musical Literacy. From Milouuk to Mokranjac*, 181–182.

with resentment is not taken into consideration,²⁶ the opinion that he was generally not enthusiastic about working as a teacher/professor²⁷ is confirmed by Mokranjac himself.

The composer, whose work was already at the time considered as a core of the “national” music tradition, was hired in 1900 as a music teacher in the newly-founded Saint Sava Seminary in Belgrade.²⁸ Mokranjac’s engagement at this school is significant for the following reasons. First, it was marked by the definite abandonment of textbooks with trills.²⁹ Second, it encompassed his endeavours to improve knowledge of theory of music among the students. For the first time, this subject was taught in a greater number of classes at the expense of practical singing lessons. Mokranjac had written detailed reports on the activities of students in the classes of theory of music, unlike the reports on the classes for monophonic chanting.³⁰

It was clear that the goal of the new teacher was to raise the musical literacy of students, for which him, being an educated musician and not a church chant singer, was certainly more important.³¹ An interesting fact is that Mokranjac, unlike other teachers who wrote lists of recommended literature in their reports, did not mention any (at that time) available textbooks for the theory of music³² or any notated collections of church chants.³³ The initial zeal of this experienced and ambitious musician was, however, quickly lost in the reality of seminarian atmosphere.

By an official act of the Ministry of Education and Church Affairs, in 1902 Mokranjac was also appointed as a teacher at the Old Seminary. Nevertheless, in December 1902, Archimandrite Kirilo (Ružičić), the director of this school, informed the minister that Mokranjac was not fulfilling his duties. Without any previous notice, Mokranjac

26 The Belgrade press reported in detail on the “incident” at the Lyceum. Even Kosta P. Manojlović could not ignore the circumstances that provoked a conflict between Mokranjac and the school’s director. As is known, Mokranjac prolonged his absence from school, disregarding the rules and usual procedures so he could travel to Vienna and hear Anton Rubinstein’s concert. Manojlović, *St. St. Mokranjac*, 66. Zorislava Vasiljević attempted to interpret this case differently to depict Mokranjac as a victim; cf. Vasiljević, *The Struggle for Serbian Musical Literacy. From Milovuk to Mokranjac*, 241–245.

27 The view that Mokranjac’s teaching was not original and that he was not a good and responsible teacher was expressed by a composer, conductor, and a great expert on Mokranjac’s life and work Vojislav Ilić during the public lecture “Stevan Mokranjac as a teacher of sol-fa”, given at the symposium “Mokranjac Days” in Negotin in 1982. He pointed out the press articles that criticized Mokranjac’s work. Zorislava Vasiljević tried to dispute his opinion, claiming that Mokranjac, “as every other great man, had enemies among his contemporaries” and that their criticism was unfair. Cf. Vasiljević, *The Struggle for Serbian Musical Literacy. From Milovuk to Mokranjac*, 169–171.

28 From 1900 to 1903, there were two Seminaries in Belgrade: the Old Seminary that has existed since 1836, and the New Seminary of Saint Sava, founded in 1900. Cf. Monah Ignatije (Marković), *175th Anniversary of the Saint Sava’s Seminary in Belgrade* (Belgrade: Saint Sava’s Seminary, 2011), 103–104.

29 In April 1901, the Board of Education, which was under Mokranjac’s influence, decided to stop printing Trifunović’s textbooks, “since there are better ways to study church singing”. Cf. Anonymous, “The Work of the Principal Educational Board, Minute-book of the 784th Meeting from April 11th 1901,” *Prosvetni glasnik* (1901): 549.

30 *The Annual Report of the Belgrade Royal-Serbian Seminary, 1901/1902* (Belgrade: The State Publishing Company of the Kingdom of Serbia, 1901); Vesna Peno, “The Subject ‘Church Chanting with Church Rule’ in the Serbian Ecclesiastical Schools Until the First World War,” in *History and Mystery of Music. In Honour of Roksanda Pejović*, Ivana Perković Radak, Dragana Stojanović-Novičić eds. (Belgrade: Faculty of Music – Belgrade, 2006), 208–210.

31 Cf. Manojlović, *St. St. Mokranjac*, 91.

32 This fact was emphasized by Petar Konjović in 1956 (see the last edition of Konjović’s text from Mokranjac’s Collected Works). Cf. Petar Konjović, “*Stevan St. Mokranjac*,” in Despić and Peričić, *Stevan Stojanović Mokranjac*, 10; Roksanda Pejović, “Musical Publications of the Serbian Authors, 1864–1941,” *Muzikološki zbornik* XVII, no. 2 (1981): 101–110.

33 All we know is that Mokranjac asked for a copy of Tihomir Ostojić’s score which was considered the best anthology of old melodies from Karlovci in Vojvodina at the time. Even though he had a chance to perform Ostojić’s work with the Belgrade Choral Society, Mokranjac never mentioned that he was familiar with the work of the famous professor of literature from Novi Sad and an esteemed cultural worker.

simply did not attend classes.³⁴ After the correspondence between the minister and the rector, the “accused” teacher finally declared that he found the position of the director of the Serbian school of music more important than the post he had been given at the Seminary.³⁵ Angry at the fact that even a high-ranking state representative did not recognize the value of an institution that he had founded and governed on a voluntary basis, Mokranjac ended his letter with the following words: “I think that it would be in the best interest if the minister would relieve me (...) from the useless and pointless classes at the Old Seminary, thus granting me more time to lead and develop the school for future experts and artists (and the Ministry of Education itself should care about this), and also for the work that everybody rightly expects me to do”.³⁶

There are no further records on this case in the archives, but the reports from the Seminary prove that Mokranjac was not relieved from his service. However, these reports also reveal that Mokranjac rejected his ambitious plan to educate young Seminary students,³⁷ despite the exalted testimonies of Kosta P. Manojlović who attended it at the time.³⁸ Mokranjac himself noted that, in classes of church chanting, he taught students the chants from *Octoechos*³⁹ leaning on the notated versions. He emphasized the improvement that was reached, while noticing that it would be even greater if there were a printed textbook: “Two thirds of the time were lost because the students had to copy melodies into their notebooks that I had previously written down on the blackboard”.⁴⁰

Although he did not describe in detail the content and quantity of songs he mentioned in the report from 1903/1904, Mokranjac has probably notated certain chants from *Octoechos* by that time. Allusions to the time he spent on the process probably represented a strategy for the promotion of the book he was preparing. However, was the book indeed ready for printing or did Mokranjac’s claims serve as a justification for the postponement and the denial of his own responsibility?

Already in 1898, the church press announced that Mokranjac’s *Octoechos* was ready for publishing, which was a clear misinformation.⁴¹ Two years later, by the end of 1899,

34 Jelica Reljić, *Stevan Mokranjac 1856–1914 in the Funds and Collections of the Archives of Serbia* (Belgrade: The Archives of Serbia, 2014), 63–66.

35 Mokranjac did not fail to notice that the first school of music was financed by a private “corporation”, the Belgrade Choral Society, and not the state, and that he, as director, was not being paid by the Ministry of Education. Cf. Reljić, *Stevan Mokranjac*, 68.

36 Reljić, *Stevan Mokranjac*, 68.

37 The results of Mokranjac’s work during 1903/1904 were not as expected. Commenting on the taught curriculum, he asserted that most of the students did not have a talent for music which made the process of learning more complicated. Cf. *The Annual Report of the Belgrade Royal-Serbian Seminary, 1903/1904* (Belgrade: The State Publishing Company of the Kingdom of Serbia, 1904). In the reports for the following years, the full-time teacher, Mokranjac, and part-time teacher of church chanting, Milivoj Petrović, wrote nothing about their results.

38 According to Kosta Manojlović, Mokranjac had to “write chant after chant on the blackboard, holiday after holiday, while we were copying them in our notebooks. This continued for years”. Cf. Manojlović, *St. St. Mokranjac*, 92.

39 The *Octoechos* is one of the primary singing books used in Orthodox Christian worship.

40 *The Annual Report of the Belgrade Royal-Serbian Seminary, 1903/1904*, 46–47.

41 The writer of the text, Milivoj Petrović, who was later Mokranjac’s coworker at the Seminary and the deacon of Belgrade Cathedral Church, warned the public of the possibility of the introduction of the textbook by some “prečanin” (a person from Vojvodina) at the Belgrade Seminary. Therefore, Petrović’s article represented an attempt to prevent the Karlovci manner from entering the churches in Belgrade. Milivoj Petrović, “Our Church Chanting,” *Vesnik Srpske pravoslavne crkve* no. 1 (1898): 1054–1056; X, no. 4 (1899): 32–328. This was an artificial distinction between ancient singing from Karlovci and Belgrade-Serbian, i.e. Mokranjac’s singing. Cf. Ana Stefanović, “New Insights in the Comparative Analysis of Karlovac and Belgrade Church Chant Styles on the Examples of Octoechos of Kornelije Stanković and Stevan Mokranjac,” *Razvitak* no. 1–2 (1991): 83–90. The glorification of Mokranjac’s unpublished (but allegedly finished) *Octoechos* confirms the thesis that, in the context of monophonic church singing, there was rivalry between the clerics of the two regional churches by the end of the century despite the fact that they belonged to the single

the famous musician was granted absence from the First Belgrade Lyceum so he could “prepare *Octoechos* for publishing”.⁴² Although Mokranjac was relieved from teaching duties, he failed to complete the manuscript. Six years passed until, in December 1905, in the name of the Council of Saint Sava’s Seminary, the new rector, Stevan M. Veselinović, wrote to Metropolitan Dimitrije of Serbia about the necessity to “begin (sic!)⁴³ work on a notated textbook as soon as possible, so that the teaching of this subject (church chanting – V. S. P. & I. V.) should not be compromised.”⁴⁴ The request evidently produced no results, since neither the Council of Bishops nor the Ministry of Education and Church Affairs had the necessary means for the publication of Mokranjac’s textbook. Mokranjac’s estimation of the costs for the publishing of *Octoechos* was never found, and, therefore, it is hard to conclude whether it was too much for the budget of the Church and State, or whether there was simply a lack of interest on the part of officials who did not consider it urgent.⁴⁵

An interesting piece of information from other documents that refer to the preparation of *Octoechos* for printing indicates the fact that the problem was not only of financial kind.⁴⁶ In the rector’s second letter, written on November 23rd 1905, it was confirmed that funding had been acquired.⁴⁷ Once again, the public was informed that Mokranjac and protodeacon Kostić “have finished the notation of *Octoechos*, and that they are preparing to write down melodically more complex festive chanting”.⁴⁸ In the same year, the musician and critic Dušan Janković (1861–1930),⁴⁹ one of the rare critics of Mokranjac’s authority,⁵⁰ expressed his doubts regarding the quality of the announced but still unpublished textbook.

In the biography written after he was elected as a member of the Serbian Royal Academy of Sciences, it was mentioned that Mokranjac prepared *Octoechos* in 1905.⁵¹ The preface of the book (and probably the entire book) was completed in May 1908, when *Octoechos* was finally printed in a small number of copies.⁵²

Serbian Church and the tendencies of the Serbian elite to unite all the Serbs in Southern Europe. See: Peno, *Orthodox Chanting in the Balkans in the Examples of Greek and Serbian Traditions. Between East and West, Ecclesiology and Ideology*, 139–150.

42 He was absent during the second semester, from March until the end of the year; cf. *The Report of the King Alexander I Lyceum* (Belgrade, 1900), 65.

43 It remains unclear what exactly the words “beginning work” mean: the beginning of the preparation for printing or the beginning of printing?

44 The Archives of Serbia, Belgrade, the Ministry of Education, 60–3–1909, p. 1. According to Petrović, “Preface,” in Stevan Stojanović Mokranjac, *Sacred Music, General and Special Chants*, xii.

45 The last sentence seems less credible, since, in the given period, Mokranjac had an influential social position. Although he was not politically engaged, his role as a founder of a Masonic lodge, *Pobratim*, in 1891, whose members consisted of distinguished intellectuals and entrepreneurs, was of great importance for achieving his professional goals with the Belgrade Choral Society. Zoran D. Nenezić, *Freemasonry in Yugoslavia, 1764–1999* (Belgrade, 1999), vol. I, 235, vol. II, 272; Biljana Milanović, “The Attitude of the State Sphere Towards Choral Associations in Serbia and Kingdom of Yugoslavia,” *Muzikologija* no. 11 (2011): 224 (219–234).

46 Manojlović points out that Mokranjac paid the costs of the trip and accommodation of the singer Jovan Kostić who came from Požarevac. Nevertheless, as far as we know, Mokranjac was the only composer who received financial support from the Holy Synod of the Serbian Church for his works in the domain of church music. He was given a payment from both the Synod and the Ministry of Education for the repurchase of his *Liturgy* (1901). Reljić, *Stevan Mokranjac*, 61–62.

47 As the rector underlined in the letter to the Ministry “without this textbook (...) no real progress can be achieved in this subject”. The Archives of Serbia, Ministry of Education, letter from November 23rd 1906, 11.

48 Cf. Anonymous, *Večernje novosti* XII, 314 (1905): 2.

49 Cf. Dušan Janković, “Notated Church Chant,” 388–390. More on Janković see in: Aleksandar Vasić, “Janković, Dušan,” *Srpski biografski rečnik*, vol. 4, (Novi Sad: Matica Srpska, 2009), 280–281.

50 Janković, “Serbian National Church Chant,” 113–117.

51 Cf. St. St. Mokranjac, “Biography,” *Godišnjak Srpske Kraljevske akademije* (1905): 467.

52 The unofficial textbook for the subject *Church chanting*, printed in 500 copies, finally came to the attention of the Holy Council of Bishops, whose members unanimously agreed to give financial support to its author. In the reports made on *Church chanting* at the time, Mokranjac’s *Octoechos* is mentioned as a primary textbook.

Based on these facts, it can be concluded that, during his work at the Seminary in 1894, as Mokranjac became aware of the “danger” of the potential formal approval of the problematic textbooks from Karlovci in the curriculum of the Belgrade Seminary and arrived at the idea of writing down the chants of *Octoechos*. Although he mentioned his (un)finished book several times, as did his followers, the *Octoechos* was not ready for printing until 1905, or, more precisely, until 1908.

Nevertheless, Mokranjac had no trouble in publishing his second book of monophonic chants. It is not clear whether he wanted to convince Church leaders directly or with the help of state officials along with some influential individuals. It is also not known when exactly the second part of Mokranjac’s manuscript, the so-called *Strano pjenije*, was finished and presented to the Holy Council of Bishops. It is certain that Mokranjac was waiting for a response regarding the process of its printing, and the delays had clearly upset him. In a letter written on 16th May 1911 to an unnamed bishop, Mokranjac asked for help in procuring funds for the publishing of his work while threatening to dispose of the manuscript.⁵³ Finally, his collection of written chants received material support,⁵⁴ and a commission was appointed to review the manuscript, including the young composer Stevan Hristić.⁵⁵ For unknown reasons, the prepared autograph was kept out of the reach of the public by church officials,⁵⁶ while the lithographed edition was used in classes in 1914.⁵⁷

A detailed analysis of Mokranjac’s collections of church monophonic chants requires a separate study.⁵⁸ Instead of a conclusion, I shall point out the (un)fulfilled melographic tasks and criteria on which he wrote to the Board of Education in 1894. Mokranjac did not leave any testimony on the process of writing down church melodies in the Preface to his *Octoechos*.⁵⁹ There are also no data regarding the singers with whom he collaborated.⁶⁰ The procedure of the selection of the variants also remained unexplained. While not giving comments on the criteria he used for putting certain variants in the main text and others in the footnotes, Mokranjac obviously thought it acceptable simply to indicate the existence of various variants. However, he did give an indirect clarification of his methods and strivings. Traditional chanting with “outdated ornaments” among Serbian singers of church music was finally stylized and prepared for artistic elaboration. The great self-confidence of an experienced musician expressed in the section of the

53 In this letter Mokranjac asked for a quick decision of the Council of Bishops and, unless it was positive, warned that “with all pain and sadness (he would) burn the entire work,” see: Kosta Manojlović, “Preface,” in Stevan Stojanović Mokranjac, *General Chant* (Belgrade: The State Publishing Company of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, 1935), 2.

54 Mokranjac received 6,000 dinars according to the anonymous writer of the journal *Brankovo kolo*: Anonymous, “Mokranjac’s Church Chants,” *Brankovo kolo* no. 9 (1912): 287. Manojlović adds that Mokranjac was supposed to give 1,000 dinars to the members of the commission. Manojlović, “Preface,” 2.

55 There are still no findings that explain Hristić’s position in the commission or the reasons for the postponement of the publishing.

56 According to Manojlović, the manuscripts were last seen in the monastery of Studenica. Manojlović, “Preface,” 3.

57 The manuscript was lost during the First World War. Owing to Kosta P. Manojlović, the lithographed edition was prepared and published in 1920. Almost a decade later, in 1934, Mokranjac’s devoted student and faithful follower released this edition under Mokranjac’s name and entitled it *General Chant*. On Manojlović’s interventions, see his “Preface,” 3–13.

58 Except for Bingulac’s objective but still affirmative review, the reviews that followed conformed to Manojlović’s appraisals given in his *Commemorative Book*.

59 St. St. Mokranjac, “Preface,” in *Sacred Music – Octoechos*, vol. IV, 3–13. Except for this Preface, Mokranjac did not write any other text about church singing.

60 Although Mokranjac was familiar with Serbian church chanting, as Manojlović stated, he wrote down melodies by listening to good singers of the time including those who used the Karlovci variant. Mokranjac referred to his “informants” by their names and even described what they were singing. Cf. St. St. Mokranjac, “Preface,” 3.

Preface in which he proclaimed the longevity of his melographic work and predicted many followers cannot remain unnoticed. His commitment to artistic stylization, whatever its nature and results might be,⁶¹ came to the fore once again. Claiming that he had been a singer since his childhood and that church chanting tradition was familiar to him, Mokranjac tried to impose his own aesthetic norms upon that very tradition, creating what would become known as the “Mokranjac tradition”. Therefore, he gave *Serbian national church chanting* an undoubtedly European character, which was also an aim of many melographers before him. When it comes to professional expertise and the ability to transpose the melodies from oral tradition to written form, none of them was equal to Mokranjac, but there are certain similarities. Except for noting down the variants of the melodies in his collection, Mokranjac did not surpass his predecessors in any other elements of melographic work. In other words, Mokranjac himself ignored the very criteria he assumed to be necessary to evaluate a melographical process as adequate. This fact, however, did not provoke Mokranjac’s supporters to reconsider the sacrosanct position he has attained since his lifetime which continues to be reified in musicological research.

POVZETEK

Pogled na Stevana Stojanovića Mokranjca kot ustanovitelja srbske nacionalne glasbe, ki se je razvijal vse od poznega 19. stoletja naprej, so nenehno posredovale po interpretacije njegovih različnih dejavnosti na področju glasbe – od skladanja do raziskovanja srbskega cerkvenega petja, konservatorstva in pedagogike. Navkljub dostopnim zgodovinskim virom so številni raziskovalci Mokranjčevega dela utemeljevali svoja odkritja na nekritično raziskanih interpretacijah njegovih zgodnjih biografov in na zapisih njegovih gorečih privržencev. Posledično je redko kdo izkoristil priložnost, da bi Mokranjčeve raznolike podvige obravnaval objektivno. To se še posebej odraža v raziskavah njegove vloge pri raziskovanju in poučevanju srbskega cerkvenega petja. Zahvaljujoč njegovim sodobnikom in poznejšim zgodovinarjem glasbe je postal pogled na Mokranjca kot nesporno avtoriteto na področju cerkvenega petja aksiomatski. Vendar pa temeljita raziskava objavljenih arhivskih virov in medijskih poročil ter kritik in člankov razkrije številne zmote v prevladujoči pripovedi o Mokranjčevem delu na tem področju. Analiza zbranih podatkov med drugim kaže, kako mu je družbeni položaj – predvsem njegove tesne vezi z določenimi intelektualnimi krogi, pa tudi njegov ugled skladatelja, dirigenta in na nek način ‚kulturnega diplomata‘-, pomagal zasesti položaj najsposobnejšega strokovnjaka za

srbske cerkvene napeve. Mokranjčeva sodelovanje v komisijah, ki so nadzirale in ocenjevale prispevke s tega področja, mu je omogočilo, da je monopoliziral lastne poglede na tradicijo cerkvenega petja, hkrati pa marginaliziral nasprotne interpretacije. Njegov vpliv se je še povečal potem, ko je prejel simbolno in finančno podporo za objavo zbirke srbskih cerkvenih napevov, obenem pa je postal učitelj cerkvenega petja na Semenišču Sv. Save. Mokranjčeva vodilna vloga pri zbiranju, objavljanju, interpretiranju in poučevanju napevov je prispevala k širjenju njegovih ugotovitev in posledično k njihovi reifikaciji. Zatorej ne preseneča, da so ga promovirali ne le kot prvega ‚pravega‘ melografa in strokovnjaka za srbske cerkvene napeve, temveč tudi kot predanega pedagoga. V tem prispevku sva ustvarjene ‚mite‘ o tem nedvomno izredno nadarjenem in izvedenem glasbeniku ter dirigentu dekonstruirali s pomočjo primerjalne raziskave zgodovinskih podatkov, ki jih prej niso upoštevali. Ti podatki razkrivajo nepravilnosti v reprezentacijah Mokranjca na področju srbske cerkvene glasbe in njegovo delo zbiranja in objavljanja cerkvenih napevov, skupaj s poučevanjem petja na Semenišču Sv. Save, prikazujejo v novi luči. Čeprav so njegovi dosežki na tem območju zgodovinsko izredno pomembni, sva z najino raziskavo in analizo opozorili na najnost objektivnejšega pristopa ter ponovnega ovrednotenja dosežkov drugih tedanjih melografov.

61 Srdan Atanasovski, “From Folk Songs to the Garland: Mokranjac as a Composer,” *Zbornik Matice srpske za scenske umetnosti i muziku* no. 51 (2014): 135–152 (with a detailed review of existing literature on the given subject).