

ASPECTS OF CHRISTIAN CULTURE IN BYZANTIUM AND EASTERN CHRISTIANITY

Word, Sound and Image in the Context of Liturgical and Christian Symbolism

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THE “SERBIAN” SUNG WORD
A CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEMYSTIFICATION OF THE TERM
FOLK IN THE PHRASE *SERBIAN FOLK CHURCH SINGING* *

During the 19th century, monophonic church chanting in the Serbian Church received a complex name made up of the terms *Serbian*, *Orthodox*, *ecclesiastical* and *folk*. These epithets were never the subject of a thorough (ethno)musicological study, either in detail, or as a whole. Certain articles, although sporadically and without an analysis based on arguments, pointed out the uniqueness of the Serbian vocal tradition and the interconnection of ecclesiastical and folk music. Theological discourse concerning the validity or invalidity of a certain pleonasm (Orthodox-ecclesiastical) and a signifier of nationality (folk-Serbian) in this compound was completely omitted.

A thorough analysis of *Serbian folk church singing* should include various aspects, and each of these could be the subject of a separate study. However, I will dedicate my attention to the term *folk* and analyse it from the perspective of the “temptation of religious nationalism”,¹ which is more than relevant for the Orthodox nations in the Balkans during recent history. This, for musicology an apparently marginal phenomenon, becomes very important in certain historical, ecclesial, and socio-cultural circumstances.

It is well known that, despite the official universal ideology of a theocratic empire of Byzantium, peoples of the same faith in the Byzantine Commonwealth, whether peacefully or through war, constantly tried to gain political independence and autocephaly for their local Churches from the Roman Emperor.² The “national” Church became the status symbol of a Christian nation and an

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¹ Aleksandar Šmeman, *Istorijski put Pravoslavlja*, (M. Marković and B. Marković transl.), Cetinje: Atos, 1994, 317.

² Dimitrije Obolenski, *Vizantijski komonvelt*, (K. Todorović transl.), Belgrade: Prosveta & Srpska književna zadruga, 1991.

axiom of new Orthodox “theocracies”.³ This reality, shaped in a complex and centuries-long process, gave to Orthodox ecclesiology a dimension that was unknown to the tradition of the Holy Canons.⁴

The falling of the Slavic states under Ottoman rule meant that the autocephaly of their Churches was nullified.⁵ The Ecumenical Patriarch in Constantinople was largely responsible for this. Sharia Law does not differentiate between secular society and religious community, and thus the Ecumenical Patriarch became the millet-basha in the Turkish Empire; he became spiritual and ethnic leader of the entire Orthodox population. The continuity of “imperial”, i.e., Byzantine tradition was nominally preserved in this manner, corresponding to Greek “imperial-ethnic” ambitions. However, depending on the military and economic relations with the Porte, this would include the participation of other Orthodox nations in the Balkans throughout history.

Being submitted to “flesh and blood” in the last centuries of Turkish rule, the institutional Orthodox Church was less the agent of enlightening Christian ideals and more the symbol of national struggle.⁶ Many examples from the more recent history of local Churches confirm Schmemmann’s statement. The “Serbian case” is no exception. The idea of a so-called “Serbian faith” and “Serbian Orthodoxy” gained wide acceptance in Serbian ecclesial consciousness by the end of the 17th and the beginning of 18th centuries. The

³ Aleksandar Šmeman, *Pravoslavlje na Zapadu. Crkva - svet - misija* (M. Arsenijević transl.), Cetinje: Svetigora 1997, 117.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 107.

⁵ Concerning the Bulgarian patriarchate see: S. Stanimirov, *Istorija na Bulgarskata Crkva*, Sofia, 1925; N. Mizov, *Pravoslaviето v Bulgarija (teoretiko-istoričesko osvetljenje)*, Sofia, 1974; K. E. Skurat, *Istorija Pomesnih Pravoslavnih Cerkvej*, t. I–II, Moscow, 1994. Concerning the gradual decrease of the authority of Peć see: R. Grujić, *Skopska mitropolija. Istoriski pregled do obnovljanja srpske patrijaršije 1920.godine*, Skoplje: Manastirske štamparije, 1933, 72; Đoko Slijepčević, *Istorija Srpske pravoslavne crkve*, knj. 1, Beograd: Beogradski izdavačko-grafički zavod, 1991, 292-300. The first Serbian patriarch whose privileges were equal to those of Ecumenical patriarch was Makarije Sokolović. In 1557, he became the spiritual leader of Serbian people, the successor of the Serbian state and guardian of its traditions. The Patriarchate of Peć gained the prerogatives of state in the Ottoman Empire; cf. Mirko Mirković, *Pravni položaj i karakter srpske crkve pod turskom vlašću (1459-1766)*, Belgrade, 1965, 10, 16-17, 50. The ethnic principle was the key in determining the borders of Serbian Patriarchate. The Serbs were reunited in one state and in one national Church; cf. Stanoje Stanojević, *Istorija srpskoga naroda*, Belgrade: Napredak, 1926³, 207-208; Đ. Slijepčević, *op. cit.*, 309, 313. Despite the fact that Serbian Patriarchate was primarily national, all Slavic peoples of the Balkans, including both Serbs and Bulgarians, came under its jurisdiction. In addition to their Slavic origins, these peoples were united in common antagonism towards the Greek Church; cf. R. Grujić, *op. cit.*, 183-184. The legitimacy of the Orthodox Serbian nation and the Serbian Church was nullified in 1766, the reason being the Serbian alliance with Austria in the War of the Holy League (1683-1699). After Turkish retaliation and Serbian migration north from the Sava and Danube rivers to the territories of the Austrian Empire, Ecumenical Patriarch Samuel I (Σαμουήλ Χαντζερής) abolished the Patriarchate of Peć in the same year (cf. Đ. Slijepčević, *ibid.*, 435-477), as well as the Archbishopric of Ohrid. The Slavic “ecclesial nations” in the Balkans were once again absorbed by an “ecclesial monarchy” - the Ecumenical Patriarchate (cf. *ibid.*, 413).

⁶ A. Šmeman, *Istorijski put Pravoslavlja*, *op. cit.*, 323.

main propagators of the new ecclesial ideology were nominal Serbian patriarchs in Austria who fled from the Turks and led great migrations of Serbian people north from the Danube and Sava rivers. Although Greek bishops took over the bishoprics in their Serbian fatherland, Serbian ecclesiastical representatives kept their long titles, thus presenting their spiritual authority as being far greater than it actually was.⁷

In reality, their political engagement caused national pathos to overwhelm religious feelings. Being political leaders of the Serbian people, they thought that their principal duty in the new state was to secure for their refugee compatriots the rights to existence and promised, but hardly achievable, privileges.⁸ This task became evident even in the liturgical context. Besides regular services, Serbian churches in Austria prayed for the victory of “imperial weapons and the wellbeing of monarchy”, great events at the court were celebrated in liturgical services, and so on. The superiority of historical reality to eschatological reality became even more evident in the ecclesiastical arts. The events of national history were depicted on the walls of the newly built Serbian churches in Austria. Serbian fresco painting also reflected the somewhat imposed sympathies of Serbs toward their new – Austrian – emperor.⁹ His image, along with images of national heroes, was honored with a saintly halo. The ancient Orthodox catechism, which had been expressed in colours for centuries, suddenly became the textbook of history.

As for sacred music, national enthusiasm did not find a place within it. The Serbian singing tradition was transmitted orally and was of very low quality. According to the historical sources, a small number of clerics was able to sing during worship.¹⁰ On account of the efforts of Metropolitans Mojsije Petrović (1677-1730) and Vikentije Jovanović (1689-1737), singers were given the opportunity to engage with the post-Byzantine singing tradition. It is important to note that these bishops, the main agents of pro-western cultural tendencies in contemporary Serbian society,¹¹ tried to maintain

⁷ Dinko Davidov, *Srpska grafika 18. veka*, Novi Sad: Matica srpska, 1978, 49; idem (ed.), *Stematografija – Izobraženije oružij iliričkih*, Novi Sad: Galerija Matice srpske, 1972.

⁸ Miodrag Jovanović, *Srpsko slikarstvo u doba romantizma 1848-1878*, Novi Sad: Matica srpska, 1975, 248; Dejan Medaković, *Putevi srpskog baroka*, Belgrade: Nolit, 1971, 85-96; idem, “Srpska umetnost 18. veka”, *Istorija srpskog naroda*, t. IV/2, Belgrade: Srpska književna zadruga 2000³, 266.

⁹ Miodrag Jovanović, *Srpsko crkveno slikarstvo i graditeljstvo novijeg doba*, Belgrade - Kragujevac, 1987.

¹⁰ Gavriilo Vitković, “Izveštaj napisao 1733. Maksim Ratković, egzarh beogradskog mitropolita”, *Glasnik Srpskog učenog društva* 56 (1884): 117-325.

¹¹ Beautiful aristocratic castles and cathedral churches built by these bishops greatly reflected Russian and German artistic tendencies. The furniture in luxuriously decorated salons was made in the West. Engravings, paintings, church antimensia, and their personal portraits were made by most exalted Austrian artists. The newly-built residence of Metropolitan Mojsije Petrović in Belgrade, during the Austrian occupation, had a musical salon with two harpsichords made in France. The Serbian spiritual leaders tried not to lag behind Roman Catholic bishops even in their looks. See M. Kolarić, “Osnovni problemi srpskog baroka”, *Zbornik za likovne umetnosti Matice srpske* 3: 235-275.

the balance between Russian (i.e., baroque) and Greek (i.e., Eastern) influences in church art. The Cathedral church in Belgrade was the best witness to this trend during the 1840s. The services were celebrated by Serbian priests, Greeks sang, and Russians preached.¹²

Post-Byzantine psalmody¹³ was introduced to Serbs in the first half of the 18th century thanks to the Greek monk Anatoly who came from Vatopedi monastery, answering the call of Vikentije Jovanović, and established the singing school in Belgrade.¹⁴ Other anonymous Greek singers also transmitted their singing experience to Serbs. Until the end of the 18th century, the Serbian ear was inclined to the Greek way of singing. It became a sign of singing prestige and the basis for the tradition that would become national. The fact that “Greek singing was so widespread that Serbian singing was nowhere to be heard”, as Archimandrite Jovan Rajić wrote in his *History of the South Slavic Peoples*, seems to have been the cause of growing dislike for the “foreign singing”. It is not clear whether Rajić was writing about both Greek melodies and Greek language, or merely about the language of the chanting. It is clear, however, that both Rajić and his metropolitan, Stefan Stratimirović (1757-1846) had a different vision of a sung “Serbian” worship.

Stratimirović was known as a bishop who cherished good singers. However, during the four decades of his administration of the Serbian Church in Austria, he did nothing in the context of better musical education. Much better at that was his contemporary and his successor as the Serbian bishop of Buda, an educated bishop of Greek origin named Dionisije Popović (1750-1828).¹⁵ At the beginning of the

¹² Tihomir R. Đorđević, *Iz Srbije kneza Miloša. Kulturne prilike 1815-1839*, Belgrade, 1922.

¹³ It is worth noting that Greek authors, both those from the 19th century and later ascribe the epithet “Greek” (ελληνική) to the ecclesial music of the post-Byzantine epoch. Some musicologists ascribe it even to the early Christian period, thus defining the Octoechos system and the whole of Christian hymnography as Hellenic (cf. Antonios Alygizakis, *H oktaihia stin elliniki leitourgiki ymnografia*, Thessaloniki: Pournaras, 1985). In the imposing corpus of writings about sacred music in the Greek language, the terms Byzantine and Hellenic simply do not present a problem. National connotations of church music in the new history of Romanians and Bulgarians have been the subjects of studies by the Romanian musicologists Costin Moisil (“The Construction of Romanian National Church Music 1821-1914”, School of Music Studies of Philosophy Faculty, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Athens, 2012, doctoral dissertation, manuscript) and Nicolae Gheorghită (*Musical crossroads. Church Chants and Brass Bands at the Gates of the Orient*, București: Editura Muzicală, 2015), and the Bulgarian scholar Stefan Harkov (cf. “Nacionalnata ideja v bulgarskata crkovna muzika prez vrazhdaneto” in *Kultura, crkva i revolucija prez vrazhdaneto*, Sliven, 1998, 273-276; “Mnogoglasno peene i kulturna identičnost prez bulgarskoto vrazhdane”, *Bulgarsko muzikoznanie* 4 (2003): 84-91; “Crkovnopevečki školi - središča na bulgarskoto crkovno peene prez vrazhdaneto”, *Bulgarsko muzikoznanie* 3-4 (2007): 210-220).

¹⁴ Vesna Sara Peno, “The Post-Byzantine Psaltic Origin of Recent Serbian Church Chant”, *Journal of the International Society for Orthodox Music* 1 (2014a): 43-57 (see <http://www.isocm.com/resources/journal/index.html> Peno 2014).

¹⁵ About Dionisije Popović see: Petar Rimski, “Životoopisanie Dionisia ot Popovića pravoslavnog episkopa budimskog”, *Srbskij letopis* I (1857): 65-83.

second decade of the 19th century, Popović tried to print the chant books in the analytical – *new* – method, and in Slavonic. Being familiar with musical trends in Constantinople and Walachia, he recommended to Stratimirović a Romanian monk, Makarije, who had already prepared for his compatriots the basic neumatic collections in “Greek” notation and in the “Wallachian” language.¹⁶ Popović also proposed that this singer taught Serbs “the church singing common to the Church of Constantinople”.¹⁷

Stratimirović did not openly oppose Popović’s proposal,¹⁸ but he did not express a wish to realize it either. His blessing went in another direction. He ordered a Serbian archimandrite, later Bishop Jerotej Mutibarić (1797-1858) to shorten the long melismatic melodies that Serbian singers adopted from their Greek teachers. Although it is not known how Mutibarić accomplished this task (musical manuscripts from the time before and after Mutibarić were not preserved), many suppose that his reform is the basis of *Serbian folk church singing*.

The intolerance of Metropolitan Stefan Stratimirović towards foreign-style chanting is witnessed in the rulebook for the regulation of education in the Serbian seminary in Sremski Karlovci. This school was a centre for Serbian chanting, also known as “karlovačko”, for a long time, and a detailed plan for its work was set out in 1792 by Stratimirović and Archimandrite Jovan Rajić. Describing the teaching of chanting, the document expressly demands that no one “introduce foreign, rude singing”.¹⁹ By the end of a century which did not witness the birth of polyphonic church music, but which did witness the spread of Greek and the marginalization of Serbian chanting, it was quite clear which singing was considered *foreign*.

Care for an all-encompassing national integrity was the main marker of the life of the Serbian Church in the 19th century, both in Austria and in the Principality of Serbia. In Church circles, as well as among Serbs in general, Orthodoxy became more of a national than a theological category. The process of the revival and construction of traditional values also encompassed church singing. Despite casual gloomy reports concerning the state of chanting practice, the “Serbian melody” – an expression of “the national soul and the devout feelings of Serbian people”²⁰ – was excessively idealized

¹⁶ Titus Prolegomene Bizantine - muzică bizantină în manuscrise și carte veche românească, București: Editura Muzicală, 1985, 119-120.

¹⁷ The letter of Dionisije Popović, Bishop of Buda, to Metropolitan Stefan Stratimirović, written in Buda on June 18 1821. Archive of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts in Sremski Karlovci, Metropolitan-Patriarchal archive A 160/1822. The letter is quoted in Danica Petrović, “Opit za pečatane na nevmeni zapisi v Sremski Karlovci v načaloto na 19. vek”, *Bulgarsko muzikoznanie* 3 (1992): 72.

¹⁸ Archive of SASA, Sremski Karlovci, MP-A, 160/1822.

¹⁹ Nikola Gavrilović, *Karlovačka bogoslovija (1794-1920)*, Sremski Karlovci, 1984, 42.

²⁰ Kornelije Stanković, Foreword to *Pravoslavno crkveno pojanje u srbskog naroda*, (Vienna 1862), Novi Sad, 1994², 4.

with the development of polyphonic church music. An easily recognizable monophonic melody in the soprano part of four-part writing was enough for Serbian worshippers to legitimize this new musical expression in worship. The birth of harmonic singing in Serbian churches during third and fourth decades of the 19th century confirmed that the aesthetic needs of Serbian believers gained the advantage over the established poetics of sung prayer. However, paradoxically, the introduction of polyphonic church music caused a growing interest in traditional monophonic singing.

By the middle of the 19th century, the first Serbian musician who was educated in Vienna, Kornelije Stanković (1831-1865), began writing down hymns in five-line notation, harmonizing them in the process. In both these tasks, Stanković had the full support of Josif Rajačić (1785-1861), the bishop of all Orthodox in the Austrian Empire. This Serbian bishop served the Easter liturgy in 1844 at the Greek church of the Holy Trinity in Vienna, where the setting by the leading court musician, Benedict Randhartinger (1802-1893), was sung for the first time.²¹ Rajačić was inclined towards the ideology of the Enlightenment, and he was deeply convinced that harmonized choral music in worship would attract Orthodox believers. The rich musical life of Vienna, in which they actively participated, made what was sung in parishes simply boring. Citing these reasons in the responses to many letters from Constantinople, in which he as a local bishop was requested to abolish musical novelties and to return the traditional singing of the Greek Church in the services, Rajačić also mentioned problems that he considered far greater causes of discord in one body – the Church of Christ.²² Provoked by the glorification of “Greek faith and Greek psalmody” in the circular epistle of the Ecumenical Patriarch, Rajačić accused the bishops of Greek origin of being the main cause of the bad situation in the local churches of the Balkans, especially in Serbia and Bulgaria, their functions being blessed by the “holy throne of Constantinople”.

²¹ Randhartinger’s Liturgy was performed by a mixed choir in which most of the singers were Austrians, members of the Vienna Opera, and a minority of Greek singers who managed to learn European notation (cf. P. Formozzi, *Οι χορωδιακές εκδόσεις της εκκλησιαστικής μουσικής σε ευρωπαϊκή γραφή*, Thessaloniki, 1967, 21-22, 43). Concerning Rajačić’s role in the “installation” of polyphony in Vienna and the letters that he and the members of the Greek parish of St George exchanged with Ecumenical Patriarch Antim VI see Vesna Peno, “O višeglasju u bogoslužbenoj praksi pravoslavnih Grka i Srba – teološkokulturološki diskurs”, *Muzikologija* 17 (2014a): 129-154.

²² Rajačić mentions simony, the taxing of believers, the selling of sacred objects, and warns that “while truth, justice, and a clean conscience do not rule from the holy throne of Constantinople, the throne of Chrysostom, and while Serbs are not given Serbian, Bulgarians are not given Bulgarian, and Greeks are not given Greek, i.e. to every nation the bishop that speaks and preaches, advises and teaches in the national language”, the Ecumenical Patriarch has no right to impose himself as a true shepherd, the one who gives his life for his sheep. See the letter of Josif Rajačić, Archbishop of Orthodox People in Austria, to Patriarch Anthimos, written in Prešporok 1848, cf. Archive of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts in Sremski Karlovci, Metropolitan-Patriarchal archive A 293-1848.

The struggle over polyphony further moved Rajačić to support the inexperienced but extremely diligent Kornelije Stanković in creating a national identity for Serbian music. Support at the beginning of his composing career became true parental care. Being a witness of the difficulties that accompanied the reform of singing in Greek parishes and its final success, it is plausible that Rajačić pointed out to Kornelije the importance of his twofold mission. The young composer was supposed to accomplish for his compatriots the same thing as Benedict Randhartinger and Gottfried Preyer accomplished for the Greeks in Vienna at the initiative of John Chaviaras and Anthimos Nikolaidis. Beside the liturgical necessity of unifying the oral singing practice and preserving it from change by means of notation, Kornelije received a blessing from the Serbian patriarch to approach the church singing tradition as a composer. Even though the perception and interpretation of Serbian monophonic singing were conditioned by the act of personal composition, the “national identity” of Kornelije’s liturgy was never questioned. The monophonic melody that, as Kornelije wrote in the Foreword to his *Liturgy*, came out of the “national heart”,²³ was dressed in four-part harmony.²⁴

None of Serbian bishops publicly questioned the “national musical work” of Stevan Stojanović Mokranjac, a melographer of church chant and the first renowned national composer. In an announcement regarding the publishing of his first Liturgy based on folk monophony, Mokranjac wrote: “I know that the Serbian people as a whole needs art, especially that which is born within its territory and by which it prays to God. This is such a work. The real creator of its basis is the Serbian people. I borrowed it from the Serbian people, and now I return it to the Serbian people in humble artistic attire”.²⁵

The role of the people in shaping Serbian singing tradition was groundlessly connected to its origins. Although certain authors pointed out the Byzantine-Greek origin of Serbian chanting, some claimed that it was completely authentic; its roots being found in the ancient pagan past from which many customs were kept and Christianized afterwards.²⁶ Ones could read that Serbs, just like Greeks, had their own John of Damascus, Cosmas the Melodist, and Theodore Studite who composed Serbian

²³ Cf. Kornelije Stanković, *op. cit.*, 4.

²⁴ Kornelije could not renounce his “hard-won skill”, i.e. Western European musical education, justifying by it the harmonization of monophonic church chant. Cf. Fedor Demelić, “Kornelije Stanković”, *Letopis Matice srpske* xxxix (1866): 215-217. Being familiar with new musical trends in the Greek parishes of Vienna, he wanted to give his people something similar. He knew Randhartinger’s score very well. He even adopted some of its parts. Cf. Dimitrije Stefanović, “Prilog proučavanju notnih autografa, arhivskih i drugih dokumenata o Korneliju Stankoviću” in D. Stefanović (ed.), *Kornelije Stanković i njegovo doba*, SANU – Muzikološki institut SANU, Belgrade, 1985, 129.

²⁵ Stevan Stojanović Mokranjac, “Oglas povodom izlaska Liturgije iz štampe”, *Zastava* 22 (1901): 4.

²⁶ Vesna Peno and Ivana Vesić, “Srpsko crkveno pojanje u službi nacionalne ideologije”, *Muzikologija* 20 (2016): 135-150.

church melodies.²⁷ The Serbian character of church melodies was explained by the Serbo-Slavonic language in which church books were written during the Middle-Ages.²⁸ There were even illogical claims that the characteristics of folk church singing were affected by the language of the people (even though it was never used in church). The Serbian priest, singing teacher and melographer Jovan Živković reminds us in the foreword of his collection of church chants that “the Holy Orthodox Church allows every nation to celebrate God in its own language. The same thing could be said for church melodies. The unity with Ecumenical Mother-Church is preserved by one faith, one law, one worship, and by hymns with the same meanings, but in different languages and even in different melodies and different vernacular languages. The individual feeling of a person and of the whole nation is fully and clearly expressed only in the same language in which that people expresses its thoughts and in the melody that comes out of its heart and becomes dear to it”.²⁹

The instrumentalization of church singing and its incorporation into national ideology reflect the views by which the Serbian traditional spirit and uniqueness are highlighted in contrast to other singing traditions of nations of the same faith, or of completely different faiths. The emotional and aesthetic appeal that singing should possess in its social mission has the advantage over its ecclesiastical function in this case.³⁰ “The real Serb, raised and educated in a Serbian spirit and in Serbian Orthodoxy, enjoys best those church melodies that he himself created and shaped in accordance to his heart”, wrote the teacher of church chant and director of the Serbian gymnasium in Novi Sad, Vasa Pušibrk.³¹ The belief that “the singing of our people is far better than the singing of all other nations” also followed Kornelije Stanković during his composing career. The final goal, which he himself had decided, was to make his harmonization of Serbian melodies a universal repertoire in the worship of all Christian nations, both Orthodox and others.³² The above-mentioned Vasa Pušibrk ended his reflections on Serbian church singing with the judgment that, “without the slightest trace of chauvinism, we may

²⁷ Lazar Bogdanović, “Srpsko-pravoslavno pojanje karlovačko”, *Srpski Sion* 15 (1893): 231-233.

²⁸ Petar Despotović, “Starinsko crkveno pevanje”, *Karadžić* 5 (1900): 83-84.

²⁹ Jovan Živković, *Notni zbornik crkvenih pesama koje se poju na večernju, jutrenju, liturgiji i drugim bogoslužjenjima pravoslavne srpske crkve kao veliko pojanje*, Novi Sad: Parna štamparija Đorđa Ivkovića, 1908, v-vi.

³⁰ Vasa Pušibrk, “Srpsko pravoslavno crkveno pjenije”, *Stražilovo* 38 (1887): 600–602; idem, “Predlog Savezu srpskih pevačkih društava”, *Gusle* (1914): 69-79.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² F. Demelić, *op. cit.*, 210. John Haviaras had similar goal, although he was convinced that Greek monophonic melody in the quartet texture was ideal for Orthodox educations of Greeks and of all other Orthodox nations. See P. Formozzi, *op. cit.*, 40.

rightly claim that our singing is more beautiful and more important than Gregorian and than all kinds of national church singing of other faiths”.³³

Beside the examples of the contribution of the “popular” aspect to church singing, i.e., the contribution of church singing to national identity, an overwhelming need to unify the musical practice of the Serbian Church should also be noted. It was mandatory for all Serbian transcribers of church chant. The question as to why “Orthodox Serbs should everywhere sing *in the same way and beautifully*” was answered by the composer Isidor Bajić. “From the religious point of view”, says Bajić, “the importance of *beautiful* singing is not questioned, and from the national point of view the *identical* singing of all Serbs in all places should be one of those national ties that brings together our people, which is already torn apart and distracted by various elements and temptations”.³⁴

Some new research into *Serbian folk church chanting* has confirmed its late Byzantine origins, as well as its connections to the chanting that Greeks wrote down in the reformed neumatic system at the beginning of 19th century.³⁵ It was confirmed that the differences between various “national” singing variants in the Balkans are direct consequences of different types of notation – staff and neume – and of different methods in singing education.³⁶ The connection between Serbian ecclesiastical and folk melodies remains unclear. This very important subject, of which the creators of Serbian folk church singing from the 19th century and contemporary (ethno)-musicologists have said precisely nothing, deserves to be examined. Only with such an examination would an objective answer to the question of the validity or invalidity of the phrase *Serbian folk church singing* be possible. In accomplishing this task, the criteria should be ecclesiological and not ethnophyletistic arguments that have transformed, from the Christian point of view, the justified idea of nation and national identity into an inappropriate self-centeredness.

³³ Anonym, “Srpsko pravoslavno crkveno pjenije”, *Gusle* 10 (1912): 146-147.

³⁴ Isidor Bajić, “Naše crkveno pojanje”, *Brankovo kolo* 12-13 (1906): 397.

³⁵ Vesna Peno, *Pravoslavno pojanje na Balkanu u 19. veku - na primeru grčke i srpske tradicije*, Masters thesis defended at Academy of Arts - Novi Sad in 2000 (manuscript).

³⁶ Vesna Sara Peno, “The Tonal Foundations of Serbian Church Chant”, *Acta Musicae Byzantinae* iii (2001a): 21-29; eadem, “Stichira Melodies in New Serbian and Greek Chanting Based on Octoëchos” in M. Pislöger (hrsg.), *Theorie und Geschichte der Monodie*, Österreichische Byzantinische Gesellschaft und Institut für Musikwissenschaft der Universität Wien, Wien, 2001b, 24-42; eadem, “Tailoring of Texts Rather Than Melodies in the Serbian 19th and 20th Century Church Chanting” in T. Marković and V. Mikić (eds.), *Music and Networking*, The Seventh International Conference, Department of Musicology and Ethnomusicology, Faculty of Music, University of Arts, Belgrade, 2005, 211-220; eadem, “How Have Serbian Chanters Learned to Chant in Recent History”, Papers Read at the 12th Study Group - Cantus Planus, Lillafüred / Hungary 2004 August 23-28, Institute for Musicology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest, 2006, 893-906.

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