

## Прикази

## Reviews

### **Gordana Blagojević, *Η μουσική μεταρρύθμιση του 1814: μια εμπειρική-αφηγηματολογική προσέγγιση* [The musical reform of 1814: an empirical-narratological approach]**

Τμήμα Μουσικών Σπουδών της Φιλοσοφικής Σχολής του Εθνικού και Καποδιστριακού Πανεπιστημίου Αθηνών, «Εργαστήριο Βυζαντινής Μουσικολογίας», Αθήνα 2019 [Department of Music Studies of the Faculty of Philosophy of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, “Laboratory of Byzantine Musicology”, Athens 2019].  
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It is admittedly not an easy task for someone to evaluate properly and convincingly the work of an eminent colleague who is also well- and long-known to him. The reviewer may then be misguided (un- or subconsciously) by his feelings or sentiments, and so miss his target: an unbiased and well-balanced judgement. What is more, Gordana Blagojević, author of the work under review, has long been a spottable and distinguishable figure in the Greek academia and the reading public through her numerous participations in conferences organised in Greece and her equally innumerable admittances in Greek libraries and research centres. Yet, I will try, as the legendary Ulysses did, to shut my ears before the melodious sirens of intimacy and collegiality. But, I am afraid I will not be able, despite Roland Barthes’ insisting calls, to “kill” the author<sup>1</sup> in order to study unbiased her work per se: an impossible task!

Let me begin with the premise that Gordana’s work poses new challenges to the initiated as well to the lay reader. One is due to the author’s (or shall I say authoress’) female identity against an almost all-male-dominated musical genre: Greek ecclesiastical music, archaically called neo-Byzantine chant (although the term Byzantine is a neologism too!). Historically, women were rarely involved in composing and performing (let alone studying) Byzantine chant, although the few exceptions are worth mentioning and instructive: Kassia the nun and an almost queen (9<sup>th</sup> c.)<sup>2</sup>, and the anonymous daughter of Ioannis Kladas (15<sup>th</sup> c.), the last *lampadarios* or chorister<sup>3</sup> of Saint Sophia Cathedral in Constantinople (Brashier 2012). Yet, Gordana belongs to the new generation of musicologists cum musicians, who have recently managed to break this monopoly and open the “gates” of the masculine “city”.

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<sup>1</sup> Here I obviously allude to Roland Barthes’ seminal work, *The Death of the Author* (1967), where he insists on separating the author from his creation.

<sup>2</sup> See the CD production, *Kassia: Byzantine Hymns of the First Female Composer (c. 810 - 843/867)*, Diane Toulaitos (ed.), VocaMe/Michael Popp, Christophorus CHR77308 (2010).

<sup>3</sup> *Lampadarios* is in fact the leader of the left-hand choir in a Christian Orthodox church, an office still in use in modern-Greek ecclesiastical rite.

Following fervently (but not blindly) the precepts of modern anthropology and sociology, Gordana is eager to give voice to certain social groups, hitherto neglected by Greek researchers: female cantors, amateur musicians, and non-academic music teachers of neo-Byzantine chant. She then broadens her approach by linking (and likening) female participation to the general attitude of the Orthodox Church towards women, who are constantly excluded from priesthood, and have only recently been allowed to ascend the lectern following an increasing male indifference of church-going and subsequent lack of male choristers. Gordana is herself a chorister and can easily evaluate the new trends in church singing, since she has participated in concerts as well professional recordings in Greece, Serbia, and elsewhere. Besides, female-only Byzantine choirs have recently appeared in Greece though with substantial activity.<sup>4</sup>

Another “provocative” element of the work under review is the anthropological-ethnographic stance towards neo-Byzantine chant, humbly-called “empirical-narratological approach”, but in fact based on the author’s empirical research method by means of questionnaires distributed to various musicologists and musicians involved in neo-Byzantine chant in Greece and elsewhere. What the author seems to have attempted to do is get a contemporary response to neo-Byzantine chant, particularly to the so-called reformed notation and method, devised during the second decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century at the Greek Patriarchate of Constantinople by a group of cantors and music teachers. This group, which came to be labelled “the three teachers” (by the three most prominent members) discarded a great number of musical signs, inherited from the pre-15<sup>th</sup> century period, while re-interpreting others and adding new ones<sup>5</sup>.

Next to the signs, the three teachers introduced a modal theory that deviates considerably from the older tradition of eight *echoi* handed down in numerous treatises, called *protheoriae*, usually attached at the beginning of musical anthologies. This modal theory should not be considered a totally new invention, for it had begun to develop a century earlier under the influence of the Ottoman *makam*, a contribution of many nations including the Greeks<sup>6</sup>. What the three teachers did then was to internalize and organise these influences, by pointing to the melodic similarities of the much more numerous *makams* with the eight Byzantine modes (also divided into several sub-modes). Yet, the outcome of this syncretic system was not so refined, for it shook the authentic-plagal modal correspondence and generated other anomalies too.

Faced with this curious but workable system, Gordana’s treatment is calm, sober, and at times generous, at least towards the modern cantors’ understanding of the reformed notation. For, while she does not hide the differentiations and often fierce disagreements between various schools of musical interpretation, she tries to understand and explain their positions, however “unscientific” or unreliable they are. In this sense, she seems to have acted as a “peace negotiator” between them! She is also keen and able to transcend national boundaries, and compare the Greek, Serbian, Russian and other conceptions of the reformed system and the reformers, thus offering to the reader a panorama of the Christian Orthodox musical world and its way of thinking. Although

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<sup>4</sup> Women’s Byzantine Choir *Ai adousai*, led by Dr Sevi Mazera, was established in 2012 in Volos, and *Psaltries* choir, led by Nektaria Karantzi, was established in 2013 in Athens.

<sup>5</sup> For the reformed notation, see: Romanou 1990, 89–100.

<sup>6</sup> For the *makam* and its Greek reception in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, see: Plemmenos 2010.

not a comment to my favour, it is a pity that this dissertation was not written in the lingua franca of our times to enable access to an international public.

Having said that, I should rush to add that Gordana's Greek is impeccable: not only for a foreigner but even for a native speaker, since the linguistic quality of the modern Greeks, especially of the young generation, has diminished (and this is not a statement of my own). She is also able to master both forms of written Greek (purist and demotic), by inserting scholarly expressions (as is usual in modern academic writing), following the eternal principle of Greek "diglossia". Furthermore, as far as I can gather from her extensive publications and numerous lectures over academic conferences, her Greek (including the one she employs in her dissertation) is superb and of high standard. It could not have been otherwise, one might say, since Byzantine chant was originally written to accompany, nay "clothe" the medieval-Greek language, and was greatly influenced by its inflexions and other peculiarities.

Yet, Gordana's work is not about the supremacy of Greek language and culture (although this is not entirely avoided!) but neo-Byzantine chant which she approaches as a multicultural and global musical genre. Her trained ear, accustomed to music settings of Serbian hymns, is obviously capable to appreciate the subtle differences between the older Byzantine chant and its various Slavic adaptations, originally based on Greek rhythmical patterns devised by Cyril and Methodius in the 9<sup>th</sup> century (Valiavitcharska 2013, 143–157). Here I should note her regret for the abandonment of the "traditional" (that is, monophonic) Byzantine chant in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Serbian culture at the expense of Russian polyphonic music. It must not be accidental then that Gordana's mentor in Greece was the late Lycourgos Angelopoulos (1941–2014), a traditionalist cantor, composer and music teacher, who preached the revival of the older Byzantine (that is, pre-reformation) style and interpretation.

And this brings me to one of the main arguments of her dissertation, that being the importance and significance of the musical reform for the continuity of neo-Byzantine chant. Gordana openly describes this development as a rupture, almost an eclipse of the old school of Byzantine chant, which she believes was gone forever. This claim was first put forward by the late Simon Karas (1903–1999), and was soon adopted and promoted by his pupils (Angelopoulos included). Karas was not a professional cantor neither an academically-trained musicologist, but he managed to develop a coherent system of writing and interpreting neo-Byzantine chant that incorporated substantial elements from the pre-reformation period (as he understood it). Contrary to the three teachers, who tried (and partly managed) to create a sense of continuity in post-Byzantine chant, Karas discovered a gap and envisaged its abridgement.<sup>7</sup>

Karas' system can *mutatis mutandis* be described as an "invention of a tradition" (to recall Eric Hobsbawm)<sup>8</sup> since it was not based on strong evidence and soon turned to a fierce polemic against the "innocent" followers of the reformed method. While wisely avoiding taking sides, Gordana correctly brings in the evolution of musical printing, that changed the style of Byzantine notation, and contributed to the dissemination of neo-

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<sup>7</sup> For an English account of this issue, see <https://leitourgeia.com/2011/06/27/lycourgos-angelopoulos-simon-karas-and-byzantine-music-in-greece-during-the-20th-century/>

<sup>8</sup> In this seminal book, music is considered and examined as a typical example of "cultural break" in Wales (Morgan 1983, 50–62).

Byzantine chant to the lower strata of contemporary society. Actually, the revolutionary aspect of the reform should be sought after in this development, for musical printing was definitely a breakthrough. The printed book was cheaper than the manuscript, was rather easily acquired (through subscription), and became personalized (by the owner). Some minor musical signs may have been discarded, but who cared? That was made up by the dynamic and popularity of the new notation.

Another interesting (and well-stated) point has to do with the three teachers and their posterity in modern-Greek collective memory. Gordana is right to note that the three pioneers are relatively unknown to the average church-goer, particularly Georgios Chourmouziou, so-called Chartophylax or Archivist, ironically the most prolific of them! Chourmouziou (+1840) has indeed transferred to the reformed notation a large part of the pre-1453 repertoire. He has also long worked on his own, since Gregorios Levites, first cantor of the Patriarchate died in 1821/2, and Chrysanthos of Madytos (+1846) followed a separate career (as Bishop of Dyrachium, and later of Brussa). And yet, Chrysanthos is the best-known of the three, due to his authorship of two theoretical treatises expounding the rules of the reformed notation (Romanou 2010). Gordana daringly holds the official Church accountable for this neglect.

So, where is the real value of the musical reform, and subsequently, Gordana's contribution to its study? The answer may be given by another non-Greek and ardent admirer of neo-Byzantine chant: Eva Palmer-Sikelianos, the American-born wife of the Greek poet laureate, Angelos Sikelianos (1884–1951). In her autobiography (Anton 1993, 97–98), Eva speaks of her Hindu friend, Kourshed Naoroji, daughter of the first Hindu MP in England, whom she met in Paris. Discouraged by the fact that there was no Hindu notation, Kourshed was astounded by the precision of the reformed notation to preserve the details of her Hindu melodies. “You are singing my songs”, said to Eva who was playing on the piano the transcribed melodies. She then joined her to Greece to develop her skill of the notation. Like Eva, Gordana firmly believes in the universality of this music, which she has managed to show in her dissertation.

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## Фахрудин Кладничанин, *Печа*.

Нови Пазар: Академска иницијатива „Форум 10“, 2020, 190 стр.

Ретка су истраживања о муслиманским женама у Србији данас, било са становишта образовања и професионалног усмерења, било са становишта других идентитетских аспеката. Зато је емпиријски материјал сведочења муслиманских жена из Новог Пазара и околине, које Фахрудин Кладничанин представља у овој књизи, добар повод да се о њима прошире сазнања. Књига садржи личну исповест о скидању *пече* (црни вео којим се прекрива лице) двадесет муслиманки рођених у првим деценијама 20. века (1918–1938), на простору Новог Пазара и околине.

Структура књиге је следећа: Уводна реч (стр. 5–6); Закон о забрани ношења зара и фереџе из 1951. године (стр. 7–8); Предговор Свенке Савић (стр. 9–33); Животне приче жена (стр. 35–170); Рецензија Маргарете Башарагин (стр. 171–172); Речник мање познатих речи (стр. 173–180); Литература (стр. 181–182); Информације о аутору (стр. 173) и Табеларни приказ података о свим женама (стр. 185–188).

Након кратке Уводне речи, аутор наводи Закон о забрани ношења зара и фереџе из 1951. године, донет само неколико година након окончања Другог светског рата и почетка изградње социјалистичког друштвеног поретка у Југославији. Закон је донет неколико година након усвајања Декларације о људским правима у свету (1948), коју је и Југославија потписала, што је историјска повезница са оним што се догађало у свету. Аутор стога поставља следеће питање и покушава на њега да одговори: Како се Закон и Декларација међусобно укрштају?

У Предговору, Савић даје сумарни преглед друштвено-историјских околности у којима је донет овај Закон, појашњавајући вредности на којима је власт желела изградити нову државу, а то је политика једнакости полова и одвојеност државе од вере. Држава стога, како наводи, намеће атеистичку верску оријентацију женама. Читаоци имају прилике да посматрају слово Закона на делу, тј. „на терену“, међу женама у Новом Пазару и околини, што је путем анализе показано у два дела књиге. У контексту социјалистичке политичке и друштвене оријентације, Савић уводи читаоце у други део књиге, који чине лична сведочења муслиманки о чину скидања *пече* (*зара*, *фереџе*), ослањајући се на материјал који је аутор прикупио у књизи. Закључује да је основни утисак да су жене доживеле примену Закона као насиље на свом телу и свом избору одевања у јавности. Зато жене сведоче да је за њих тај законски оквир био трауматичан лични догађај у једном драматичном и релативно кратком историјском времену.