

**FLORIN BUCESCU, BIZANTINOLOGIE MUZICALĂ.  
STUDII ȘI ARTICOLE. LITURGHIA PSALTICĂ  
ÎN GLASUL AL III-LEA  
[MUSICAL BYZANTINOLOGY. STUDIES  
AND ARTICLES. PSALTIC LITURGY IN THE 3<sup>RD</sup> MODE]**

*Review\**

**Ph.D. ELENA CHIRCEV**

National Academy of Music "Gheorghe Dima" Cluj-Napoca

**Elena CHIRCEV**, musicologist-byzantinologist, publicist, habilitated professor at the Theoretical Faculty of the "Gheorghe Dima" Academy of Music of Cluj-Napoca, Department of Musicology. Ph.D. in Musicology since 1998, with a thesis in the field of Byzantine music. Participation in national and international symposiums. Numerous studies and articles published in professional journals. Published books: *Muzica românească de tradiție bizantină între neume și portativ* [Romanian Music of Byzantine Tradition Between Neumes and Staves], 1st and 2nd vol. (2002, 2nd edition 2013), *Amprente românești în muzica bizantină* [Romanian Imprints in Byzantine Music] (2013), *Mărturii și dialoguri despre muzica bizantină* [Testimonies and Dialogues about Byzantine Music] (2013). Editor at Radio "Renașterea" (1999-2013), regular contributor to the "Renașterea" magazine (since 2004), editor-in-chief of the "Intermezzo" journal (2008-2009) and of the bilingual journal "Lucrări de Muzicologie" / "Musicology Papers" (since 2009).



A renowned Byzantinist musicologist, ethnomusicologist, teacher and author of a valuable catalogue of nineteenth-century psaltic manuscripts<sup>1</sup> kept in Moldova<sup>2</sup>, Father Florin Bucescu<sup>3</sup> is also the author of a volume encompassing a

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<sup>1</sup> Florin Bucescu, *Cântarea psaltică în manuscrisele moldovenești din sec. XIX. Ghidul manuscriselor psaltice – Moldova, sec. XIX* [The Psaltic Chant in the Nineteenth-Century Moldovan Manuscripts. A Guide to the Psaltic Manuscripts – Moldova, the 19<sup>th</sup> century], vol. I, 204 p., vol. II, 621 p., ARTES, Iași, 2009. The book was awarded the Prize for Byzantinology of the Union of Romanian Composers and Musicologists, in 2010.

<sup>2</sup> The name refers to the province situated in eastern Romania.

<sup>3</sup> Florin Bucescu (b. 1936), a graduate of the Theological Institute of the Bucharest University (1957) and of the Conservatory of Music in Iași (1967), holder of a Ph.D. in Music from the National University of Music Bucharest since 2002 and former associate professor at the "George Enescu" University of Arts in

part of his work as a researcher of Byzantine music and as a chanter and composer. Entitled *Bizantinologie muzicală. Studii și articole. Liturghia psaltică în glasul al III-lea*<sup>1</sup> [Musical Byzantinology. Studies and Articles. Psaltic Liturgy in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Mode], the book completes the rich bibliography dedicated to the music of Byzantine tradition, in Romania.

As indicated by the title, the book consists of two distinct parts whose common thread is the Orthodox church music, passionately and skilfully practised and researched by the distinguished teacher. The section dedicated to Byzantine musicology includes seven studies and five articles published in specialized journals between 1995 and 2007. They reflect the author's favourite lines of research, which in the last three decades were focused on the musical manuscripts preserved in the Moldovan libraries, as well as on the contribution of the Romanian church singers to the perpetuation of the Byzantine musical tradition.

In 1995 – the year when, together with other university colleagues, he founded a Centre for the Study of Byzantine Arts and a specialized journal entitled “Byzantion”<sup>2</sup> –, Florin Bucescu published a study entitled *Manuscrisele psaltice ale lui Teodor Stupcanu* [The Psaltic Manuscripts of Teodor Stupcanu]<sup>3</sup>, in the first issue of journal. Although succinct, the text reflects, on the one hand, the author's passionate preoccupation with the study of the documentary funds preserved in the Romanian libraries, and, on the other, his desire to make known the meritorious contribution of the scholars from Iași, overshadowed for decades by the Romanian communist regime. At the beginning of the twentieth century, deacon Teodor Stupcanu, teacher at the “Veniamin Costache” Seminary in Iași, had arranged and adapted a rich repertoire of church songs for his students, totalling over 900 pages of music written in psaltic notation. 15 manuscripts of this repertoire are presented in Father Florin Bucescu's aforementioned study.

The passion with which he worked in order to detect and investigate musical manuscripts kept in public and private libraries was reflected in several other studies as well, along with, of course, the catalogue published in 2009. The volume herein under discussion contains two more studies: *Manuscrisele psaltice de la Biblioteca Mitropoliei Moldovei și Bucovinei* [The Psaltic Manuscripts from the Library of the Metropolitan Church of Moldova and Bukovina] and *Manuscrisul I/4 (grecesc) din fondul 2119 al Arhivei Naționale din Chișinău – document important pentru*

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Iași. Known for his research in the field of ethnomusicology, after 1990 he also carried out numerous studies in the field of Byzantine musicology.

<sup>1</sup> Florin Bucescu, *Bizantinologie muzicală. Studii și articole. Liturghia psaltică în glasul al III-lea* [Musical Byzantinology. Studies and Articles. Psaltic Liturgy in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Mode], edition supervised by Irina Zamfir-Dănilă and Viorel Bărlădeanu, ARTES, Iași, 2018.

<sup>2</sup> The journal “Byzantion”, renamed “Byzantion romanicon” in 1997, appeared under the auspices of the Centre for the Study of Byzantine Arts within the “George Enescu” Academy of Arts in Iași, which in 1977 became the “George Enescu” University of Arts in Iași.

<sup>3</sup> Republished in this volume on pages 95-99.

*a treia etapă a românizării cântărilor* [Manuscript I/4 (Greek) from Fund 2119 of the National Archive of Chisinau – An Important Document for the Third Stage of Romanianization of Church Chants]. The author's thorough training as a theologian and musician allowed him to often correct errors regarding the content or the dating of earlier manuscripts, as was the case with Manuscript I/4 (Greek) from Fund 2119 preserved in Chisinau.

Equally important for a better knowledge of the music of Byzantine tradition from Moldova is the study entitled *Stihira Cuviosului Paisie de la Neamț – cântare emblematică pentru spiritualitatea Moldovei* [Sticheron to Saint Paisie from Neamț – An Emblematic Church Chant for the Spirituality of Moldova]. Based on the study of this chant in nine manuscripts, the text emphasizes the importance of the school attached to the Neamț Monastery, the presumed place of composition of the sticheron.

One of the topics addressed in the scientific meetings organized in Romania during the last decade of the last century was that of the 1814 Reform of the Orthodox Church Music. A study by Father Bucescu on the preparation of the reform<sup>1</sup> draws attention to the close links between the Orthodox churches in the Romanian Principalities and the Patriarchate of Constantinople, which favoured the early spread of the reform in the Romanian space; the assertions are supported by relevant musical examples from the psaltic manuscripts kept in the libraries of Iași, which were studied by the author. The theme of the reform also transpires from the study *Rolul mitropolitului Veniamin și al Ieromonahului Macarie în afirmarea creației psaltice românești în Moldova*<sup>2</sup> [The Role of Metropolitan Veniamin and Hieromonk Macarie in the Cultivation of Psaltic Music in Moldova], an important study that reveals how the "New Method" was spread in Moldova and draws attention to the manuscripts written by Hieromonk Macarie during his stay in the area, as well as to his disciples who continued the activity of translation and adaptation of the Greek chants to Romanian texts.

The five articles that complete the first part of the volume give the reader the opportunity to become familiar with several Romanian personalities who have contributed to the study of the music of Byzantine tradition in the Romanian space: Gheorghe Ciobanu (1909-1995), Titus Moisescu (1922 -2002), Archd. Sebastian Barbu-Bucur, Ph.D. (1930-2015) and Gheorghe C. Ionescu (1920-1999). When mentioning certain festive events (such as the ceremony of awarding the title of *Doctor honoris causa* of the University of Craiova to Archd. Sebastian Barbu-Bucur, Ph.D.) or evoking some renowned researchers, Father Florin Bucescu would often also provide admiring portraits of his confrères, emphasizing the value of their research work.

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<sup>1</sup> *Pregătirea reformei hrisantice* [Preparation of the Chrysantine Reform], pages 13-32 in the book.

<sup>2</sup> See pages 84-94 in the book.

With a solid theological and musical training, a thorough knowledge of the church music repertoire and as a great keeper of the Romanian tradition which he followed assiduously in the musical manuscripts studied, professor Florin Bucescu provided his students from the University of Arts in Iași with an original study material: *Liturghia psaltică în glasul al III-lea* [Psaltic Liturgy in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Mode]. Published in 1997, the book was intended to “revive the psaltic repertoire of the students from the Orthodox Theological Seminary «St. Basil the Great» in Iași<sup>1</sup>. The simultaneous notation used (with neumes and on the staff) facilitates the access to this melodic version, in a mode that is very little sung nowadays. In 2006, a harmonized version for two and three voices was also published by the late composer Vasile Spătăreanu from Iași (1938-2005), which preserves the modal specificity of the song composed by Father Florin Bucescu. Its republication in this volume ensures the accessibility of this composition for the choral groups or ensembles from the churches in Western Romania, where the psaltic tradition is no longer preserved.

The book signed by the distinguished octogenarian teacher complements the Romanian bibliography dedicated to the Orthodox church music and to the musical manuscripts of Byzantine tradition with thoroughly documented studies, written with objectivity and passion. Recognized as a Byzantinist musicologist specialized in the research of the manuscripts kept in the libraries from Iași or written in eastern Romania, Father Bucescu knew how to synthesize and corroborate the information resulting from the study of the Byzantine musical manuscripts and to provide the readers with a wealth of information that opens new research perspectives to those interested in the field.

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<sup>1</sup> Florin Bucescu, *Liturghia psaltică în glasul III ga* [Psaltic Liturgy in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Mode Ga], Trinitas, Iași, 2006, p. 8.