

## Summary

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The present paper entitled *THE AXION IN THE ROMANIAN PSALTIC LITERATURE FROM THE 19<sup>TH</sup>-20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES*, is structured in three parts and aims the repertoire of one of the most important classes of Byzantine music composition: **the axion**.

From the introductory part I wanted to point out that the scientific step was based only on the class of liturgical songs entitled The Sunday Axion – It is true..., (known as You are worthy! or It falls as true!). I made this mention because, during the Orthodox Liturgy, there are sung other Axions, known as anti-Axions or Axions of Feast, which have different lyrics regarding the person of the Savior Jesus Christ and The Virgin Mary. As well, at The Liturgy of The Great Saint Vasile there are played special Axions such as “Enjoy Thee”, “From the Master’s Feast”, and “Do not lament for me, Mother”. These Axions of Feast are known in the musical psalmist literature through the effort and the skills of the great translator and composer Macarie Ieromonahul who remains an important personality of our culture from the beginning of the XIX century. The Axions of Feast and those special ones could be the object of another scientific research.

The base of this study is the research upon the background of Romanian and Greek-Romanian musical manuscripts from the XIX century, which contain Axions from the Romanian libraries, based especially on the ledgers from the Library of the Romanian Academy, the National Library, the Library of the Holy Synod, but also on the ledgers of some libraries from monasteries, such as: the Library of the *Stavropoleos* Monastery, the Library of *Lainici* Monastery, the Library of *Dintr-un lemn* Monastery and the Library of *Jitianu* Monastery, the Library of *Clocociov* Monastery, the Library of the Orthodox Theological Seminary “Saint Grigore Teologul” from Craiova.

The liturgical-musical meanings of the Axion preoccupied the musicians of this class of songs within the Holy Liturgy : Nicu Moldoveanu, Sebastian Barbu-Bucur, Vasile Stanciu, Nicolae Necula, who defined the Axion- - Αξιον εστιν ωσ αληθωσ, as being a hymn made for Virgin Mary , an hymn sung at the Liturgy of Saint Ioan Gură de Aur after the sanctification of the bread and wine, after the final part: “*especially for the Most Holy*”. The Axion has two parts: “ It is true...” and “You, who are most honest”. The first part is a later addition made after the X century by the Athonite Monks, according to a legend, a Holy intervention, it is made as a clarifying introduction of the initial text, and the second part is the first lyric of the 9<sup>th</sup> song from the canon of Holy Thursday’s Denia, composed by Maiuma in the VIII<sup>th</sup> century. Put together, they created the Axion. It is considered the usual Axion of Saint Ioan Gură de Aur Liturgy.

The research of the Axion was made only on a Romanian repertoire, in the musical notes referring to Jesus Christ.

The Axion Hymn is one of the most important Byzantine hymnography productions, alongside Trisagion, Heruvic and Quinone. The introduction of the reform for Jesus instead of the Notation of Cucuzel coincides with the resumption of the Romanization process started by Filothei Saint Agai Jipei in the XVIII<sup>th</sup> century; this process brought important names of the psalmic music from the XIX<sup>TH</sup> century : Macarie Ieromonahul, Anton Pann, Ghelasie Basarabeanu, Dimitrie Suceveanul and so on. The first composition of the Axion in the new sistima appeared, as Anton Pann confesses himself that he started to print at Bucharest a new Axiom written in Romanian even since 1819, as the director of the first psaltic typography in the world , under the direction of Petre Efesiul.

In the evolution of the Axion song, as well as for other liturgical-musical categories, in the first half of the XIX<sup>th</sup> century the Romanian psalmic songs were divided into three categories: 1) “translations by keeping the original Greek melodic line, 2) translations by adapting the melodic line to the Romanian spirit, 3) creations on Romanian texts”. While I was researching the creation of Romanian psalms encountered in the manuscripts from the XIX<sup>th</sup> century, I found out that one can find all the three categories in many of the psalms, as each of them was accurate, in a beginning phase, to the original Greek song, but due to the interpretation and the natural Romanian topic, at the end they created directly into the Romanian language.

**Chapter 1** of the paper entitled *The Liturgical tradition of the Axion* treats firstly what is necessary to know about the person who we venerate through this beautiful song, thi Person being Holy Mary who is “*more honest than the cherubims and more venerated than the Seraphims*”. In the sub-chapter *Virgin Mary – Mother of God*, there are pointed out solid arguments supporting the quality of being the Mother of God of the Virgin Mary, from who the Son of God took flesh. Mother of God was chosen to become The Mother of God. She lured the Great Creator on Earth through her pure life, through the denial of any sin, the mastery of all virtue, through a pure soul and through her totally spiritually advanced body; a union with God and an approach to God , an approach that excludes any word. Before the descent of the Holy Spirit, She was amongst us as a intercessor before God, not only raising her hands toward Him, but also giving Her life to Him as a prayer.

Hence, the Son of God took flesh from the Mother of God with her consent, for him to be bound to us. The birth from the Virgin, without the action of any men, is beyond nature, is the proof of his deity, showing that the nature is not the ultimate reality, but Him, who is beyond it and it’s maker. The virginity of Holy Mary is a sign of real humanity and of the deity of the Logos, which demonstrates that the Virgin Mary is truly the Mother of God. The flesh of Jesus Christ, taken from a pure virgin does not alter the reality of His humanity, but asserts his divinity.

To reject her quality of being the Mother of God would mean to deny the humanity of the word itself, to deny that Jesus Christ is the Son of God who took flesh from an intimate and eternal relationship with us mortals, taking our nature as His.

The fact that she is the Mother of God is the reason why we not only venerate her as a saint, but also over-venerate (*hyperdulia*). This hyperdulia is shown in the big number of prayers meant for her, in asking help directly from her, in the motivation of the ones we address to Him, for the fact that He was born out of her. She has an unique position in the church worship. She is above all sanctified human creatures and above angels. She is not identical to God and Jesus Christ-the Man. She is only human. But she is the human raised above all saints and more venerated than them, but without being worshiped as God and Jesus. The over honoring of Mother of God is, in essence, original from the Holy Gospel, because she was honored by Christians even during life, her individuality being associated with the one of Son of God and

being surrounded by the love and respect of the ones near Him. The Apostles had always shown a big care and faithfulness for the Mother of God, especially the Apostle Ioan de Dumnezeu Cuvantatorul, who took her by his side and care for her as for his own mother from the moment God spoke to him and said: “Here is your mother!”

The veneration of Virgin Mary in the Orthodox Church is made also through her invocation in prayers, the painting of her face in mural or wooden icons, the celebrations made in her name, the name “Mary” attributed to new born babies in Christian families.

Invoking the name of Virgin Mary is made not only in the prayers from the public cult, but also in the private prayers of the Christian.

In the public cult, in the litanies, a special demand invoking the Virgin Mary to which the people respond “*Most Holy Mother of God, have mercy!*” is found. All the prayers made for the Holiness of water, for the blessings everywhere, for a fruitful land have special parts addressed solely to the Mother of God. There are used stichera and tropes, canons and litanies dedicated to her. For example, at the Evensongs, the stichera known as “Dogmatica” refers to the mystery of incarnation, glorifying the Mother of God; at the Litia, one can hear the beautiful hymn “Mother of God”, in the Matins’ canons there is a number of special stichera glorifying the Mother of God, known as “of the Mother”. The honoring of the Virgin Mary is a special form to glorify the Lord, and the prophecy of Virgin Mary – “*Here, from now, all nations shall call me blessed!*” (Luke 1, 48) becomes real through all the celebrations dedicated to her, through the liturgical songs, through the icons that wear her face of Virgin and Mother, through all the churches, monasteries and cathedrals she protects.

In the sub-chapter Virgin Mary in liturgical hymnography we understand that the hymnography made for the Holy Mother of God was there from the early times in the Church and not because of the pagan influences and her development in monasticism, but as manifestation of the most pure Christian faith.

Hymnographers such as Saint Andrei Criteanu, Saint Roman Melodul, Saint Cosma of Maiuma or Saint Ioan Damaschin put in the Church’s cult songs dedicated to the Mother of God

outlining the image of a Church that incorporates in her body the Ecclesial pleroma: God praised in the Trinity, Mother of God, the Holy Angles, the Saints and the people.

The large number of songs made for Virgin Mary, songs that embrace all types of hymns , assumes regrouping them by some criteria. In Virgin Mary's dogmas and axions one can truly feel the dogma, the poetic truth and the religiousness. The theme of this songs is of a great meaning: Virgin Mary renewed the human race, through her the Son of God got flesh and saved our lives. From His love, He consecrated again the whole creation.

The Orthodox Church filled the church services with songs meant to praise the name of Virgin Mary, who was made divine abode. The Orthodox feels that Virgin Mary is by his side through his prayers when in need, but he especially feels the incommensurable and pure love for the one who saves him.

Plastic illustrations in the Romanian spirituality are the Christmas carols, concentrated on the dogma of incarnation, a point of convergence of the teotokology with Christology.

The history of the Sunday Axion is not very sure. Its origin starts with the second part of the hymn, "*You, who are more praised...*", composed by Cosma of Maiuma and forms the Heirmologion of the new song from the triod of the Holy Thursday Denia. After long research it was drawn the conclusion that Saint Cosma Melodul borrowed this expression from Saint Efreim Sirul, whose hymns started with "*More honorable than the Cherubim and beyond comparison than all angels*". The proof that this Heirmologion was used by Cosma Melodul does not exist. It is certain that he stood with the Matins to the moment of its official wholeness with the first part.

The Axion's completion was made in the monasteries of Saint Athos Mountain and its introduction as a song within the Holy Liturgy was realized, most probably, to the end of the Xth century.

In order to understand the genesis of the Axion, one has to have in mind the origin and role of the canon in the East Church, because it seems that the Axion was born from the corpus of a canon.

The Canon (κανων=rule), as it is defined in the Romanian Church Music Dictionary is a genre of religious poetry and songs used in the Matins, used in the second part of the divine service. The Canon is an important form of the iconographical poetry and develops an unique theme in its substance: the Resurrection of the Savior or other important events in His life, the honoring of the Virgin Mary or other saints. This is why we have the Canons of Resurrection, of the Cross, of Virgin Mary and of the Holy Trinity.

As regarding the position within the Holy Liturgy, the Axion is part of the Liturgy of the believers, being in the last part of the anaphora. The Sunday Axion has met the spread and diversity of musical expression. Although it is called a Sunday Axion, it is also sung in other days of the week, at the end of the Holy Liturgy. Usually, in regular days there are sung alternatives for working days, characterized by the reduction of the vocal runs so used during major celebrations; it is used a syllabic song, closer to the hymnological singing from which the Axion comes.

The whole Axion is a hymn of honoring Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, who is above all saints.

*“We honor you, Mother of God, ever blessed and most pure and Mother of our God. You, who are more honorable than the Cherubim and more glorious beyond comparison than the Seraphims; who, through pureness, gave birth, you, truly Mother of God, we magnify you.”*

The text of the Axion has in its expressions a small part of the Byzantine triumphant hymns, reminding us that the Mother of God is our kind “Empress”.

**Chapter II** of the paper entitled *The Musical tradition of the Sunday Axion* highlights the codex classes, the disposition of the Axion in psalmic manuscripts, showing all the composers who managed the repertoire of the Great Entrance from the Byzantine era.

Doing a research on composers works and on anonymous works, we notice not only that they include Axions of the most representative Byzantine, Greek and Romanian Protopsaltis, but also some less known composers from the music historiography. There are also Axions that are anonymous or probably assigned to a particular composer. Because we only treat the Sunday Cherubic Axion It is true/You are worthy/It falls as true, composed with a Christian notation, we

can say that the first Axions were translated and composed by Macarie Ieromonahul, Anton Pann and Chelasie Basarabeanul. Other well known Protopsaltis composed Axions we deal with in this paper: Nectarie Frimu, Iosif Naniescu, Varlaam Protosinghelul, Emanuel and Ioan Zmeu, the most known composers of the XIX<sup>th</sup> century, to I.P. Pasărea, Sebastian Barbu Bucur și Nicu Moldoveanu in the XX<sup>th</sup> century.

Also, there were discovered Axions composed by Greek authors such as Grigorie Protopsaltul, Dionisie Fotino, Hristodor Gheorghiu, and other anonymous, Axions translated into Romanian by Hieromonk Macarie, Anton Pann, Ghelasie Basarabeanu, Iosif Naniescu, Nectarie Protopsaltul and others. If at other liturgical songs, such as Cherubic, Polyeleos, Doxology and others we can find the Greek author as well as the Romanian translator, at Axions we rarely find the author or the translator. In a lot of manuscripts we can find a note that this is a Greek translation without a remainder of who translated whom.

From over 350 manuscripts I discovered 292 Romanian Sunday Axions, made in the name of Christ, on all eight Byzantine ways. Some of these creations are very beautifully composed, they are true masterpieces, loved by a lot of the contemporaneous church singers and who sing them in the liturgical cult of Saint Ioan Gura de Aur's Liturgy. These Axions are preferred now, as they were in the past, because they can be found in many manuscripts. An example could be the Axion composed by Macarie Ieromonahul in the third agem Syrian voice, Cherub Axions exists in 46 manuscripts from 350 researched. Also, another Axions of Macarie, made in the fifth voice exists in 48 manuscripts.

The most used voices in the repertoire of the Axion Hymn in the researched manuscripts are: the eight voice (64 Axions), the fifth voice (59 Axions), the first voice (42 Axions), the seventh varies voice (25 Axions), the sixth voice (35 Axions), the fourth voice (21 Axions), the third voice (15 Axions), the second voice (31 Axions). From the total number of compositions discovered, 20 are translations after Greek church singers, 207 are creations of Romanian composers, and 65 anonymous composers.

In this chapter, the presentation of the Axions was made after authors, in the order of the periods they were active, on voices, being presented the beginning of every Axions for an

recognition, their transcript on the guidonic notation or on stave, followed by the coded dates of the manuscript, the date of the writing of the manuscript, number of pages, the page where the Axion is found, the name of the copyist or the author.

To better observe the circulation of the Axion Hymns in the Romanian psalms manuscripts in the researched libraries, I made a synopsis of the Axions by composers in chronological order (Romanian and Greek composers), the name of the Axions as well as the source of the manuscripts and the typographies existent, and another table contains the total number of Axions.

From the two centuries that I researched, the most important manuscript remains *Antologhion*, followed by the *Liturgicon*, *Heruvic-Quinone* and so on., but I also came across Cherubic Hymn from *Miscelaneea*. *The Antologhion* contains the most important creations of the Byzantine rhythm, and especially, the musical repertoire of the most important mystery of the seven: The Holy Liturgy. This type of collection is the most important element, making the *Antologhion* the main objective of the copyists of those times.

If at the beginning of the XIX<sup>th</sup> century, the main objective was to translate some Greek songs, at the end of the same century, the Axions are translated more and more after the Romanian phonetic laws.

In the third chapter entitled *The musical analysis of some important Axions from the XIX-XX<sup>th</sup> centuries*, we have as an objective the analysis, through a tough selection, of six representative Axions, on different voices, all with different authors. It has to be remembered the fact that, unlike other hymns that have the name of the Greek author as well as the name of the Romanian translator attached by the copyist (as we can find in the Polyeleos, Doxology, Cherub and Quinones), in our case we had a problem of not knowing who the original version belongs to and neither the name of the Romanian translator. Another encountered issue was also the one of knowing the name of the original Greek author and the name of the Romanian translator (e.g. the Axions composed by Dionisie Fotino and translated by Anton Pann), but not having access to the original Greek version, so I could not approach a comparative analysis of all the creations I elected. It was very rare to find manuscripts and typographies where there is specified not only



the name of the original author, but also the name of the translator; this is how I found a version of the Axions made by Grigore Protopsalt and translated by Amfilohie Iordanescu.

In the musical analysis I focused on the way the Byzantine musical tradition is reflected upon the masterpieces, bounding the musical structure, according to the theory of the Byzantine music and its modulations. One of the most important things I focused on is the perfect blending of the text with the music, its role being to support and emphasize the meaning, for it to better penetrate the people's minds and hearts. The relation between the text and the song is viewed in double perspective: the musicality of the language and the consistency between the text and the music. For this, I divided the Axions in phrases to better emphasize the bound of the melody with the liturgical text.

During the analytical process, I focused on some aspects: **the analysis of the text**(the demarcation of the text by cadences), **the ethos of the voice, the scale of the voice, the melody-** its origin (translation- "Romanization" or original creation), the melodic ambitus (we will take into consideration the ranges starting with the third), the culmination, intervals and microtonal, the presence and the part of elements, the modulation; configuration aspects of the modal line, specific modal characteristics – pillar sounds, modulation by the modal context (transient modulation or authentic modular passage), **rhythm, tempo and agog** –stencil or atypical rhythm formulas, punctuation range: (caesura, cadences, atypical cadences);

For the musical analysis I chose six Axions from which two belong to Grigore Protopsalti: Axion sixth voice translated by Amfilohie Iordanescu (comparative analysis) and eighth voice translated by Macarie Ieromonahul, Anton Pann, Ghelasie Basarabeanu, Iosif Naniescu, Oprea Demetrescu and two anonymous versions (comparative analysis). The next Axions are intended for analysis and are composed by : Nectarie Protopsalti (voice one), Macarie Ieromonahul (Voice three, agem sirian), Anton Pann (voice five), Macarie Ieromonahul (voice seven).

In the biographical notes I listed also the circulation of the analyzed Axions in the source of the used manuscripts in the development of the second chapter of this thesis and those are: The library of the Romanian Academy (B.A.R.) and The Library of the Holy Synod (B.S.S.) ,

The Library of Stavropoleos Monastery (B.M.S.), The National Romanian Library (B.N.R.), The Library of Lainici Monastery (B.M.L.), The Library of Dintr-un Lemn Monastery (B.M.D.L.), The Library of Craiova Seminary (B.S.C.), as well as the existing prints.