

**„BABEȘ-BOLYAI” UNIVERSITY OF CLUJ-NAPOCA  
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**BYZANTINE CHURCH MUSIC TRADITION IN SINAIA  
MONASTERY.MONOGRAPHIC STUDY**

**THE DOCTORATE THESIS  
-SUMMARY-**

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**Keywords:** Sinaia Monastery, byzantine music, psaltic manuscripts, George Ucenescu, Dimitrie Suceveanu, Neofit Ivanovici, Naum Râmnicéanu, Varlaam Barancescu, Gheorghe Căciulă, Axion, Dionisie Romano.

The work „**BYZANTINE CHURCH MUSIC TRADITION IN SINAIA MONASTERY**” made as doctorate thesis under the guidance of Pr.Prof.Univ.Dr. Vasile Stanciu, is a presentation of cultural and musical life from this monastery, of the musicians monks who lived here and of the psaltic manuscripts in its library.

The work is divided into three main parts, preceded by an introductory part and followed at the end by the Conclusions. Each part is divided into chapters and subsections.

The introduction presents the research theme, indicating its importance, due to the impact of their discovery of new manuscripts belonging to famous protopsaltis like Dimitrie Suceveau, George Ucenescu, Gheorghe Căciulă, Naum Râmnicéanu, Varlaam Barancescu, of a manuscript in cucuzelian notation that belonged to Dionisie Romano, bishop of Buzau, of one monk protopsalti at Sinaia Monastery, unknown until today, but famous in his time who left behind six manuscripts, Neofit Ivanovici the Monk. Here are shown the codicological presentation rules of the manuscripts and draw attention to the features found in the greek text (lack of spirits and accents in many of the original texts, cyrillic consonants present in the greek words etc.).

This paper aims to outline one history, never written before, about the cultural life of the Sinaia Monastery, a brief presentation of monastic chroniclers, scribe or church music composers and also about the musical and cultural ties with Mount Athos and The Romanian Countries.

The first chapter, entitled „Sinaia Monastery-brief history”, begins with a brief listing of monographs and studies conducted until now that we have use in framing the introduction part of this paper, important for the location in time and space of Sinaia’s manuscripts. The position of the Monastery in the middle of the country facilitated the connections with all the three romanian regions, the manuscripts originate from Bucharest, Ploiești, Buzău, Iași, Brașov, Argeș, Vâlcea. Sinaia monks come from all the romanian provinces and they bring with them the specific cultural baggage, many come here from other monasteries of tradition (like the disciples of Saint Paisie from Neamt, as Naum Râmniceanu or Varlaam Barancescu) or they spend several years on Mount Athos, returning with experience acquired. Always located inside of the Metropolitan Ungro-Wallachia’s borders, this ensured the domination of the byzantine art, making its church music to remain that of the ancient psalts.

Sinaia Monastery history would be incomplete without remembering hermitages which preceded it, Saint Anne (XV century) and Saint Nicholas (XVI century), meanwhile disappeared. St. Anna’s hermitage gathers Sinaia’s monks with athonit monasticism, by its founders, refugee monks in these places way out of the Constantinople’s conquerors. Hermitage of St. Nicholas, destroyed by the austrians in 1788, make the transition tho the communal life, and one of the hieromonks from here had a vision which stood the old church of Sinaia Monastery and the cells surrounding. Many monastic toponymy from Bucegi Mountains shows a rich presence of monks since ancient times.

Then proceed to the presentation of Michael Cantacuzino’s construction, between 1690-1695, old part of the monastery with Assumption of Virgin Mary’s Church, Transfiguration Chapel, Take Ionescu’s tomb and the cells.

The Parvu Mutu’s painting of the church and the chapel, shape of the church (with apses in rectangular form) and her stonework, attract the admiration of visitors. This paper contains for the first time information about the names of artists who restored the painting of the small church and the chapel, after the fire of 1788: deacon Manole, Ioan, Tudorache, Stanciu si Hristea.

The great church, built between 1842 – 1846, and the museum, opened in 1895 (the first permanent exhibition of religious objects in our

country), each one has some brief presentation, being highlighted the icons of Parvu Mutu the Painter, The Holy Bible from Bucharest – 1688 – and the first psaltic writings in romanian, *Anastasimatar* and *Catavasier* by Macarie the Hieromonk.

The following is a brief overview of events that passed over the Sinaia Monastery, turkish, austrian and russian occupations, fire, relegations, the relationship with the royal family after Sinaia became the royal summer residence. Hierarchies are also remember, theirs names is related to our Monastery, Gherasim Rătescu from Buzău, Ilarie Teodorescu of Tomis, Grigorie Comsa, Andrei Magieru and Visarion Aștileanu from Arad, Irineu Mihălcescu, Mitropolitan of Moldavia, Calinic Argatu of Argeș - Muscel and Irineu Pop Bistrițeanul, all monks or temporary dwellers in Sinaia Monastery.

The subchapter *Sinaia Monastery's musical and cultural life* is divided in *Sinaia`s monks from the theological romanian culture* and *Cultural and musical links with other centers of church music*, both subjects were not treated until now. The first part is a presentation of Sinaia monks who have left behind them manuscripts and notes: Silvestru hieromonk, important copyist of the mid XVIII-th century, hieromonk Partenie, hieromonk Meletie, greek translator came from Neamțu with archimandrite Gherasim, future bishop of Buzau and with archimandrite Justin, who became abbot in Sinaia, the abbey Onufrie, Nifon, Serafim, the chroniclers Naum Râmnicianu and Doroftei Bertescu, Irineu Pop protosingelos and hieromonk Nectarie. Dometie Monk`s manuscript, *Albina (Bee/Apis)*, in 1820, is presented in more detail, because of its importance in studying the evolution of Scripture translation in romanian.

The second part presents the cultural and musical connections with Mount Athos, Greece, Russia, Serbia and The Romanian Countries, displaying religous objects, manuscripts and prints from all these regions, preserved today in the library and the museum of Sinaia Monastery. Cultural relations was achieved through the exchange of people, romanian monks who went in Athos or other places studying there the byzantine art and practiced on it when returning to the monastery, be it painting, sculpture or music, traditionally occupations of monks. From country, closer relationships were with Bucharest, the capital city of the country and metropolitan seat, with Ploiești, county seat, with Buzău, which had for a while jurisdiction over Prahova, with Brașov, which is just 40 km north and had a famous romanian school, with Neamț monastery, Moldova`s famous lavra. For the first time is reported the arrival in Sinaia of a few monks from Neamț, one of them became prior in Sinaia, another one bishop in Buzău and

other greek translator, who introduced Sinaia Monastery in the paisian spiritual rebirth, that Monasteries such as Cernica or Căldărușani, from the south of the country, have enjoyed.

The second chapter *Protopsaltis and composers of church music in Sinaia Monastery. Convent choir* presents the most important musicians from Sinaia, Naum Râmnicănu, Varlaam Barănescu and Neofit Ivanovici, which give them each a separate subsection, monastery choir also and to other less important protopsaltis, but mentioned for the first time in this paper.

*Protosingelos Naum Râmnicănu* (1764-1838), one of the most interesting figures of romanian monasticism of XVII and XIX centuries, was psaltic teacher, performer, theorist, historian, theologian and philologist. After Dionysius Ecclesiarch, representative leader of memorial chroniclers after 1800, Naum Râmnicănu end the list of the chroniclers from Wallachia. It also considered the last important representative of the old system of romanian chants before Hrisant, of the Filothei's tradition. He lived briefly in Sinaia Monastery, around 1810, but long enough to write his most important work *The Hronograph*. He carried on where he went one *Anthologhion* containing songs from Filothei's *Romanian Psalter*, but what was not known until now is that the Romanian Academy Library holds two other manuscripts having Naum's signature, gr. mss. no. 456 and 495, containing two *Irmologhioane*.

*Protosingelos Varlaam Barănescu* (1808 – 1894), monk at Sinaia Monastery since 1836, was an orator, writer and a talented rhymer, but especially an inspired composer of psalter music, one of the most important romanian ministers of church music in the XIX century. George Ucenescu, the most important transylvanian protopsalt, was his apprentice. The romanian – greek manuscript no. 4266 of Romanian Academy Library, coming from Sinaia Monastery, is not mentioned as belonging to Varlaam by any biographical work so far, but contains a song of Varlaam at pages 22-26, „Happy the man”, Tone 8, signed „Varlaam of Sinaia Monastery” and dated 1868 (when he was at Ghighiu Monastery, Prahova county), so is likely to be an autograph manuscript. Sinaia Monastery Library hosts other songs composed by Varlaam, in romanian manuscript no. 37 of Ivanovici, but no autograph manuscripts of protosingelos.

*Monk Neofit Ivanovici* from Sinaia (about 1812-1897) and his psaltic manuscripts represents one of the most important discoveries that this work brings, his name and his work was unknown until today. The more than 1600 pages of music, which are lagerly creations of his own, reveals a perfect psaltic connoisseur, a talented composer, greek music translator and

passionate copyist. Based on numerous notes we are able to establish many biographical data, following the lead of his life from teaching at Comarnic in 1839, passing through the famous career of music teacher on the Prahova Valley, in Băicoi, where he spent most of his life, until the entry into monasticism at Sinaia, where he completed his work. Compose and translate from 1839 until 1891, half a century devoted to church music.

*Other protopsaltis of XIXth and XXth centuries* were archimandrites abbey Paisie, Nifon Popescu and Dionisie Simionescu, Rafail the monk, Meletie the hieromonk, Ioanid Ieremia, Hristofor Diaconescu, Ioanichie, Arhimandrite Teofilact Dinu, Hierom. Justin Săvulescu, George Moldoveanu, Damaschin Popescu, Protos. M. Vasile, Roman Sorescu monk deacon, Varsanufie Bogatu monk deacon, Nicholas Petrescu the brother, all remembered for the first time in a scientific paper. Also in this subsection are presented notes of musical writings of choir and from the monastery library, especially the works of Macarie monk and Anton Pann, present in two or more copies. Dometian monk from Sinaia has been singing along with Varlaam protosingelos in Scheii Brasovului, and protosingelos Eftimie Mohor(1895-1962) is the author of a musical manuscript remembered in Sinaia Monastery's inventory in 1969, no. 3635, *Albina muzicală (Musical bee)*, conducted in 1916, but unfortunately that is no longer preserved. Among the Sinaia's monks who love psaltic music today we mention Archimandrite abbot Clement Popescu, which was noted by supporting the republication of one of the most used music books in romanian lectern „Holy liturgy's songs” by I.P. Pasărea in 1991, and by publishing the first volume of Suceveanu's Idiomelar, transliterated by arch.Dr. Sebastian Barbu-Bucur in 1992, so that on the title page write „Publishing by Sinaia Monastery”, and hierom. Nil Ursu, passionate copyist, who left to the monastery after his death in 1996 seven books with song in manuscripts, that he made when it was a seminary student of Neamț Monastery and also Victor Ojog's apprentice.

*Sinaia Monastery Choir*, the last subchapter, contains data about his early days from the late XIXth century, lists the membership of the choir since its establishment until now, the changes through which he passed at the same time as restoration of the big church, the two World Wars and the communist period. Founded in 1892, has until 40's children's choir, with benefits well appreciated by the romanian royal family and people of culture as I.L. Caragiale or Alexander Vlahuță.

The third chapter, *Psaltic manuscripts from Sinaia Monastery. Codicological presentation and musical analysis*, is the largest. Here are the detail, after all codicological rules, 19 psaltic manuscripts from XVIIIth

century, XIXth and early XXth century, held in Sinaia Monastery library, known only by the monks.

List of manuscripts is opened by monk Neofit Ivanovici's works, which has 4 psaltic books and 2 colligate printed manuscripts with Anton Pann, then follows those six wearing the signature or stamp of George Ucenescu, four are autographs, one with unknown author and manuscript no. 40 is most likely made by the moldavian protopsalti Dimitrie Suceveanu. Subchapter 3 presents manuscripts by other authors, like Ilie the Singer of Bucharest, Gheorghe Căciulă from Câmpulung Muscel, Ioniță Stoicescu-Logofețelul from Ploiești, then the greek manuscript no. 51, with cucuzelian notation, which was in possession of Dionisie Romano, bishop of Buzau - an eighteenth-century manuscript, then the one belonging to Glafira the nun and the other of protosingelos Teofan Anghilea of Neamt, colligate with the Anastasimatar. The presentation is completed by the manuscript no. 38, written by an anonymous copyist.

Together with the codicological presentation, I chose one music fragment from all the manuscripts, apart from that cucuzelian (musical notation with which I'm not familiar) and apart of the colligates, which containing no original songs. I transcribed fragments of these songs in modern notation and I have reviewed them briefly.

*Neofit Ivanovici's manuscripts*: the first is the manuscript no. 34, a 12 sheets hymn of 1847, signed with the name of Nicholas, in romanian language but with cyrillic characters. It contains Sunday's hymns, composed by Petru Lampadarie, unknown until now in our country, translated by Ivanovici from greek, but remained in manuscript.

Ms. no. 36 is an Antologhion with 421 sheets, which contains songs written by Ivanovici between 1848-1891, in romanian language with cyrillic and latin characters. Other authors are: Grigorie Lampadarie, Petru Lampadarie, Petre Vizantiu, Petre Efesiul, Grigorie Protopsaltis, Ștefan Popescu, Anton Pann, Dionisie Fotino, Nae Mateescu and Macarie hierom.

Ms.no. 37 is also an Antologhion, with 401 sheets, made by Ivanovici between 1874-1889, in romanian language with cyrillic and latin characters. As the previous one, contains valuable songs and also numerous notes, on which we could compile a biography of Neofit Ivanovici. The authors are: Ivanovici, Petre Efesiul, Anton Pann, Iosif Naniescu, Ioan protopsaltis, Gheorghe Criteanul, and other composers less known, Atanasie bishop of Râmnicu Vâlcea, Teodorit Sinadul bishop and Ioan Gherasim Gorjeanu. At sheets 5-9 we find an *Happy The Men (Fericit Bărbatul)*, tone VIII, by Varlaam Protosingelos of Sinaia.

Ms. no. 45 is another Antologhion, but smaller, with just 34 sheets, made by Ivanovici at beginning of its activity, in the 4th decade of XIXth century. Is written in romanian and cyrillic and contains several greek works. The Authors are Petru Lampadarie and Grigorie Protopsaltis.

The colligate manuscripts by Ivanovici with the books Păremisierul and Anastasimatarul of Anton Pann after 1847 contains just several songs, which the copyist has made to replace missing sheets from that two books, 4 sheets of Păremisier and 2 sheets of Anastasimatar.

The subchapter *George Ucenescu's manuscripts* shows him in a position of greek translator. Sinaia Monastery library store 5 documents and 6 manuscripts, including church music, which wears the signature or stamp of this great protopsaltis. The discovery of these manuscripts is particularly important as of Ucenescu it keep up until recently just one manuscript, that of Romanian Academy, no. 3497.

The manuscript no. 40 is an Antologhion with 448 sheets, probably made by Dimitrie Suceceanu, between 1850-1851. The composers are Gheorghe Paraschiade, Petru Lampadarie, Hurmuziu Hartofilax, Grigorie Lampadarie, Macarie hieromonk, Grigore protopsaltis, Daniil protopsaltis, Petre Vizantie, Gheorghe Criteanul, Petre Berechet and Petre Melodul. It belonged to George Ucenescu, whose stamp is shown on the title page. Is written in romanian language with cyrillic characters. The back sheet 231 make an important discovery: Epiphany Hymn, tone VI, known variant of Macarie hieromonk, but in greek and with a greek author: Petru Lampadarie. Immediately follows the translation of Macarie, identical with the greek one. Famous festal hymns(Axioane), considered hieromonk Macarie's masterpiece in the past 150 years, are only translations after Petru Lampadarie.

Ms. no. 41 contains songs at Holy Liturgy, in 78 sheets, made by Ucenescu, while was student at Anton Pann, in 1853, in Bucharest. The authors are Macarie hierom., Visarion hierom. and Iosif from Neamțu, Petru Lampadarie and Nichifor arhideacon. The text is cyrillic and greek, alternative, romanian scores being translations after greek ones, they precede. Only *The answers at Saint Basil Great Liturgy*, which contains the song *Father (Pre Tatal)*, tone VIII, at sheet 52, unlike the other songs of the manuscript, is not a translation (doesn't exists a similar greek version, at least in the same manuscript), which entitles me to say that is George Ucenescu's composition.

Ms. no. 42 is a chinoniar with 130 sheets, also made by Brasov's protopsaltis during the apprenticeship at Anton Pann, in 1851. Most hymns are here greek, accompanied by some romanians, which are not translations.

The authors are Grigorie Protopsaltis, Grigorie Lampadarie, Daniil Protopsaltis, Petru Lampadarie, Petru Byzantine, Grigorie Hurmuz, Visarion from Neamț, Petru Peloponisiul and Macarie Hieromonk.

Ms. no. 43 is another chinoncar, which contains also *terirems*, in 118 sheets. Made by Ucenescu in 1850, contains greek songs composed by Grigore Protopsaltis, Daniil, Petru Vizantie, Gheorghe Tadeu, Hurmuz, Nichifor Arhideacon, Gheorghe Criteanul, Ioan protopsaltis, Dionisache monk, Panaghiotu Halațoglu, Petre Lampadarie, Petre Peloponisiul and only one in romanian.

Ms. no. 44 is a antologhion with songs at the Great Vespers and Festal matins, composed by Macarie hierom., Iacob, Hurmuz, Silvestru hierom., Gheorghe Criteanul, Visarion hierom. of Neamț, in 100 sheets, written by Ucenescu in 1851. The text is written in cyrillis and greek, alternative, the romanian scores being translations after the greek, which they precede.

Ms. no. 50 is a copy made in 1840 of *Irmologhion Calofonicon* published by Grigorie Protopsaltis and Theodor Fokeos in 1835, with 207 sheets, in greek. On sheet 2 is the signature of George Ucenescu, but scores were not his handwriting. After songs like *irmos* and *terirems*, composed by Ghermanos Neon Patron, Petru Vizantiu, Gheorghe Criteanul, Damian hieromonk, Ioan Protopsaltis, Petru Lampadarie Peloponisiul, Balasiu Iereos, Daniil Protopsaltis, Petru Melodul, Anastasie the Patriarch of Jerusalem and Panaghiotu Protopsaltis Halațoglu, also has Festal songs in greek, without author, but we recognize the translated version of Macarie hieromonk.

The subchapter *Manuscripts by other authors*, begin with the presentation of manuscript no. 33, made by Ilie the Singer from St. Nicholas Vladica`s church in Bucharest. It has 311 sheets and is full written in greek, containing songs at Holy Liturgy, composed by Daniil protopsaltis, Petru Lampadarie, Petru Vizantiu, Grigore Lampadarie, Ioan Protopsaltis, Gheorghe Criteanul and Iacov Protopsaltis.

Ms. no. 35 is an antologhion with 80 sheets written by Gheorghe Căciulă at mid XIXth century. From him we keeps until now one single manuscript, the one of Pietroșița. There are song in romanian with cyrillic characters, *Mărimuri* attracting attention with their unusual melodic line. Pieces are made by Gheorghe Cantorul (Căciulă), Dionisake Peloponisiul (Dionisie Fotino), Anton Pann and Petre Efesiu.

Ms.no. 49 contains songs at Holy Liturgy composed by Petre Lampadarie, Grigorie Protopsaltis, Petre Efesiul, Petru Vizantiu, Ioan Protopsaltis, Daniil Protopsaltis, Iacob Protopsaltis, Gheorghe Criteanul and

it was made by Ioniță Stoicescu-Logofețelul from Ploiești in 1832 for Teofan hieromonk of Ghighiu Monastery, county of Prahova, in 275 sheets. The text is in romanian (cyrillic) and greek. Also contains Festal songs, in greek and romanian, without mentioning the author.

Ms. no.5 1 is the only one from Sinaia which contains cucuzelian notation. One entry points to bishop Dyonisius Romano as a copyist. It's a greek antologhion with 154 sheets, and the songs are made by Petre Vizantie, Ioan Cucuzel, Daniil protopsaltis and Petre Lampadarie.

Ms. no. 53 is a antologhion made by nun Glafira of Dintr-un Lemn Monastery at mid XIXth century, in romanian (cyrillic) and greek, in 242 sheets. Contains songs at Holy Liturgy, Matin and Vespers, composed by Petre Lampadarie, Grigorie Lampadarie, Daniil and Macarie hierom.

The manuscript colligate with *Little Practical Anastasimatar* of Nicolae Barcan is a small anthology, in 30 sheets, of which only 10 written by Protosingelos Teofan Anghilea from Neamț, between 1926-1927. The text is romanian, with latin characters. It contains songs by hierom. Visarion from Neamț and two Festal hymns, first made by Anton Pann and the second is a processing by Nectarie the monk.

Ms. no. 38 is an antologhion of the mid XIXth century, in romanian (cyrillic) and greek, with unknown author, in 371 sheets. Contains songs at the Great Vespers, the Matin and Holy Liturgy, composed by Petru Lampadarie, Hurmuz, Dionisake Moraitul, Grigorie Lampadarie, Petru Efesiu, Macarie hieromonk, Daniil Protopsaltis, Ioan Protopsaltis, Meletie Sinaitul.

The Conclusions of this paper emphasizes the news it brings: informations about the existence of the ordinances of the St. Nicholas Hermitage more than 100 years before the Cantacuzino's foundation, discovery the names of painters who restored the painting of chapel and the small church, the influence of Saint Paisie's cultural curent (paisianism), data about a music school in Sinaia at the mid XIXth century, links to other music centers, choir history, new names of protopsaltis, headed by the monk Neofit Ivanovici, author of more than 1600 pages of psaltic, 19 manuscripts unknown until now, four of them being autograph manuscripts of George Ucenescu, one of Dimitrie Suceveanu, one of Gheorghe Caciula and another with cucuzelian notation, and one made by the copyists Ioniță Stoicescu-Logofețelul of Ploiești and Ilie the Singer from București - who worked for Macarie hieromonk. More, we draw attention to the presence of two manuscript in Romanian Academy Library which belong to Naum Râmnicianu (gr. mss. no.456 and no.495) and other of Varlaam Barancescu (ms. gr.-rom.no. 4266), unknown until now. Annexes include facsimiles of

documents related to the history of Sinaia Monastery, royal decrees, requests for departures at Mount Athos, correspondence with the romanians of Athos, the wages of the monastery and the choir, from which we could learn monk and choir names, documents from the beginning of the choir etc.