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## Liturgical Musicology in Belarus: Pro et Contra\*

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Abstract. The article presents the field of musicological research, which was designated as "liturgical musicology" in the famous monograph by Ivan Gardner Liturgical Singing of the Russian Orthodox Church. The author provides various variants of the name of the object of study of liturgical musicology and emphasizes the development of research-related interest in the music of the Orthodox Church in its different regions. In a broad sense, "liturgical musicology" signifies musicological research in the field of the liturgical (church) chanting practice and liturgical (church) singing. In a narrow sense, this definition is interpreted as musicology the object of study of which is formed by musically sounded out (chanted) church (liturgical) canonical texts. The article presents an interpretation of the concept of "liturgical musicology" as a method of research, and also describes the operations of its application. Among the large number of research works by scholars in Russia and other countries, liturgical musicology is most vividly represented by the study of Ivan Gardner and the collective works of The Knight of Cantorial Ministry, Father Matthew (Mormyl) and Archpriest Michael Fortunato. Spiritual Testament.

The article examines a number of research works devoted to the study of the Belarusian liturgical singing practice of the Orthodox Christian tradition and presents a retrospective analysis of the development of Belarusian liturgical musicology. Russian and Soviet researchers laid the

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foundation of Belarusian liturgical musicology in the 19th and 20th centuries. They systematized the available historical and archaeological information about church singing in the Kiev Church Metropolis and provided characterization to Belarusian (Lithuanian) church music manuscripts. Present-day Belarusian scholars have reconstructed the history of the development of the national liturgical singing practice formed on the basis of the intonational reinterpretation of the Byzantine, folksong, Polish-Latin and Russian traditions; they have demonstrated its intonational independence and ethnic identity which is determined by the peculiarities of pronunciation of the consonants and the prosody of the sung text. The article provides characterization to the regional peculiarities of the liturgical singing practice and its influence on the formation of personality and examines the individual stylistic features of the musical work of cantorial and church composers which contribute to the diversity of the aural element of church worship. The author analyzes the works of Belarusian scholars in the context of the liturgical musicological method of research.

*Keywords*: liturgical musicology, the musical art of the Orthodox Church, Belarusian singing practice of the Orthodox Christian tradition

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Научная статья

## Литургическое музыковедение в Беларуси: pro et contra

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Аннотация. В статье представлена область музыковедческого исследования, которая в знаменитой монографии Ивана Гарднера «Богослужебное пение русской православной церкви» была определена как «литургическое музыковедение». Автор приводит разнообразные варианты наименования объекта исследования литургического музыковедения и подчёркивает развитие исследовательского интереса к музыкальному искусству православной церкви в разных её регионах. В широком понимании «литургическое музыковедение» обозначает музыковедческие исследования в области литургической (богослужебной) певческой практики, или богослужебного (церковного) пения. В узком значении эта дефиниция толкуется как музыковедение, предметом изучения которого является музыкально озвученный (распетый) богослужебный (литургический) канонический текст. В статье представлена

трактовка понятия «литургическое музыковедение» в качестве метода исследования, а также охарактеризованы операции его применения. Среди большого количества исследований российских и зарубежных авторов наиболее ярко литургическое музыковедение представлено исследованием Ивана Гарднера и коллективными трудами «Рыцарь регентского служения отец Матфей (Мормыль)» и «Протоиерей Михаил Фортунато. Духовное завещание».

Статья репрезентирует работы, посвящённые изучению белорусской литургической певческой практики православной традиции, и представляет ретроспективный анализ развития белорусского литургического музыковедения. Российские и советские исследователи заложили фундамент белорусского литургического музыковедения в XIX—XX веках. Они систематизировали исторические и археологические сведения о церковном пении в Киевской митрополии, охарактеризовали белорусские (литовские) певческие рукописи. Современные белорусские учёные реконструировали историю развития национальной литургической певческой практики, сформировавшуюся на основе интонационного переосмысления византийской, народно-песенной, польско-латинской и российской традиций; выявили её интонационную самостоятельность и этническую самобытность, что определяется особенностями произношения согласных и просодии пропеваемого текста; охарактеризовали её региональные особенности и влияние на становление личности; раскрыли индивидуальные стилевые черты регентского и церковного композиторского творчества, способствующие разнообразию аудиального ряда богослужения. Автор анализирует работы белорусских учёных в контексте литургического музыковедческого метода исследования.

*Ключевые слова*: литургическое музыковедение, музыкальное искусство православной церкви, белорусская певческая практика православной традиции

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The subject of the study of liturgical musicology is Orthodox Christian liturgical singing (Ivan Gardner, Germany; Vladimir Martynov, Russia), or church singing (the Russian researchers from the 19th and 20th centuries), liturgical church practice (Larisa Gustova-Rutso, Belarus), Orthodox Christian singing (Father Mikhail Fortunato, Great Britain — France), and the church singing practice (Father Alexander Kedrov, France). The development of the basic research vocabulary during the course of over a hundred years presents one of the testimonies of the undying interest in the musical culture of the Orthodox Church in the various geographical regions of its predominance and the relevance of the present work.

At the present time the practice of liturgical singing is studied primarily by medievalists, who disclose in early chant manuscripts a variety of new research issues — different editions of hymnographic texts in the church chant books of the Russian Old-Believers (Tatiana Kazantseva), [1] the correlation of separate utterances of the hymnographic musical text and the signs of unstaffed notation (Irina Gerasimova, Nina Zakharyina, Nadezhda Shchepkina), [2] the stylistic specificity of the art of early Russian church singing (Tatiana Vladyshevskaya, Galina Pozhidayeva), [3; 4] the intonational integrity of separate lines of chant music and the sources of separate texts from the practice of nonliturgical (tutorial) church singing (Natalia

Seryogina), [5] as well as variant readings and discrepancies in the manuscript music theory codices (Zivar Guseynova). [6] In addition, some researchers, making use of contemporary methods of music theory analysis, study the relevant versions of the pitch structure of the contemporary church music polyphony (Tatiana Starostina), [7] and also contemplate about the reception of the liturgical musical tradition in composers' original works (Tatiana Mdivani, Natalia Gulyanitskaya and many others). This type of research is of musicological and source studies character, although some scholars emphasize the pertaining of their work to the field of liturgical musicology. [8]

The conception of "liturgical musicology" signifies, in the broad sense of the term, musicological research in the field of liturgical (church service) singing practice, or liturgical church singing. In a narrow meaning of the word, the concept "liturgical musicology" means musicology the object of studies of which is the musically sounded (chanted) church (liturgical) canonic text.

The conception "liturgical musicology" was first applied by Ivan Gardner in his work *Bogosluzhebnoe penie russkoi pravoslavnoi tserkvi* [*Liturgical Singing of the Russian Orthodox Church*],¹ explaining it by the fact that church singing, or the liturgical church practice comprises a form of church service. According to Gardner, the foundations of Russian liturgical musicology were laid by Archpriest Dmitri Razumovsky and further developed by Stepan Smolensky, Vasily Metallov, Antonin Preobrazhensky,

Archpriest Ioann Voznesensky, Nikolai Uspensky and Maksim Brazhnikov.<sup>2</sup> An attempt (albeit, an ambiguous one) to unify together liturgical musicology and theology was made by Martynov.\*3 At the end of the 20th century and the first quarter of the 21st century a large amount of research was carried out by musicologists in Russia and other countries in the sphere of liturgical singing, however, we shall highlight those works which correspond to the conception of "liturgical musicology." In our view, it is the book Rytsar' regentskogo sluzheniya otets Matfei (Mormyl') [The Knight of Cantorial Service Father Matfey (Mormyl)],\* created upon the initiative of Nikolai Denisov and Archdeacon Nikolai Filatov, as well as the book and articles of Father Mikhail Fortunato.\*

In 2020 Denisov suggested the interpretation of the conception of "liturgical musicology," not only as an indication of the field of research, but also as a method of research, which when a researcher applies it, he must carry out the following operations (analyzing the musical compositions which comprise the repertoire of the liturgical singing practice): 1) to disclose the theological content of the church service (or of a part of it); 2) to elicit the quality of actualization of this theological content in music; 3) to present a characterization of the interpretation of this musical composition from the point of view of theological content. This methodological requirement is to a certain degree met only by Gardner's research work and the analytical musicological sections of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Gardner I. A. *Bogosluzhebnoe penie russkoi pravoslavnoi tserkvi* [*Liturgical Singing of the Russian Orthodox Church*]: in 2 volumes. Sergiev Posad: Moskovskaya dukhovnaya akademiya, 1998. Vol. 1. P. 16.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 22–23.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Here and onwards asterisks mark out the publications and authors whose data are presented in the bibliographical list placed at the end of the article. The list is compiled in alphabetical order.

aforementioned book Rytsar' regentskogo sluzheniya otets Matfei (Mormyl') [The Knight of Cantorial Service Father Matfey (Mormyl)].

The foundation of the development of Belarusian liturgical musicology was laid by Russian, Soviet and Ukrainian researchers Ioann Voznesensky, Dimitri Razumovsky, Vasily Metallov, Antonin Preobrazhensky, Vukol Udolinsky, Yuri Keldysh, Natalya Seregina, Vladimir Protopopov, Maksim Brazhnikov, Anatoly Konotop, Yuri Yasinovsky and Elena Shevchuk.

Voznesensky, after comparing Byzantine and Belarusian (Polish-Lithuanian) church music manuscripts, demonstrated peculiarities of their verbal and musical texts; Razumovsky presented a characterization of the five-line notation and the *partesny* style of singing which were formed in the Belarusian Undolsky oecumene, systematized archeological data about church singing in the Kiev Church Metropolis. Metallov and Preobrazhensky demonstrated and disclosed the role of Belarusian church fraternities in the development of the five-lined notation and the *partesny* singing. It must be noted researchers Russian traditionally attributed Belarusian landmarks of church singing to the southwestern Russian tradition of church singing, which is connected not only with the genetic connection between the Russian and the Belarusian liturgical singing, but also with the perception by the Russian society of the 9th and 10th centuries

AD of Belarusian lands within the Western region of Rus.<sup>4</sup>

Keldysh, studying the genesis of the canticle in Russian musical culture indicated its Polish-Belarusian origins.<sup>5</sup> Paleographic research of the Belarusian heirmologions carried out by Konotop, Yasinovsky and Shevchuk were conducive to the study of national song traditions of the Eastern (Byzantine) rite.6 Seregina brought into scholarly use examples of early Belarusian hymnography — the sticheron of the time period from the 12th to the 17th centuries consisting of prayer texts addressed to the reverend Evfrosiniya Polotskaya.7 Ukrainian historian Andrei Khoinatsky\* demonstrated the variability of the Orthodox Christian liturgical church singing practice in the conditions of the Greek-Catholic rite.

The definition of "Belarusian" in relation to the liturgical singing practice or its artefacts testifies not only of the regional belonging of any particular manuscript of church music, but also of the presence in the performance practice of intonational national coloration connected with the particularities of the pronunciation of the consonants and the prosody of the sung text.

The presence of the national element in the practice of Eastern Slavic Orthodox Christian liturgical church singing was noticed for the first time (in 1953) by Belarusian composer Nikolai Kulikovich (Kulikovich-Shcheglov). In 1964 British researcher Grigorii Pikhura (Guy Picardo),8

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Gustova-Runtso L. A. *Pravoslavnaya pevcheskaya praktika Belarusi (tipologiya i ispolnitel'skie stili): monografiya [The Orthodox Christian Church Singing Practice of Belarus (the Typology and Performance Styles): Monograph*]. Minsk: BGUKI, 2018. P. 20.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Ibid., pp. 20–21.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Ibid. P. 28.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Ibid. P. 21.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Guy Picardo had his works about Belarusian church music published under the pseudonym of Grigorii Pikhura (G. Pikhura).

basing himself on the works of Razumovsky, Voznesensky and Preobrazhensky, and also relying on his own analysis of church music manuscripts from the Francis Skaryna Belarusian Library and Museum in London, expounded the historical path of development of the Belarusian Orthodox Christian liturgical church singing practice, asserting the independence of its intonational tradition and indicating the territory of contemporary Belarus, Lithuania and eastern Poland as the place of its existence. The ethnic originality of the practice of Belarusian liturgical church singing confirms the presence in it of original chants, which has been shown in the research works of Konotop and Picardo (Pikhura).9

In Belarusian scholarship the interest in church service music appeared only in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. And the reason for the neglect of this sphere of research lies not only in the well-known vector of the Soviet ideological policy, but also in the fact that in the late 20th century the subject-matter diktat in the sphere scholarly research was withdrawn or eased. By no means unimportant is the fact that the BSSR (Belorussian Soviet Socialist Republic)<sup>10</sup> was designated as a zone of heightened atheistic propaganda, which was why Belarusian researchers were especially indifferent to the liturgical culture.

The "first portent," which opened up in Belarusian musicology the problem range of Orthodox Christian church singing practice was the research work of folklorist musicologist Larisa Kostyukovets *Kantovaya kul'tura v Belorussii* [*The Canticle Culture of Belorussia*], 11 published in 1975. This book opened up the peculiarities of the historical development of the non-liturgical (everyday) Belarusian Orthodox Christian church singing practice. 12 Kostyukovets asserted the idea of the ethnic originality of the Belarusian Orthodox Christian church singing practice, which became central in the field of research of Belarusian art studies.

After the laxation of the ideological pressing in 1988,<sup>13</sup> not only the liturgical church singing performance practice was revived (professional musicians began joining the congregational clergy choirs), but also composers' original liturgical compositions began to be written, as well. With the appearance of new chants set to canonic texts of the church (the Orthodox Christian, as well as the Catholic), they too underwent musicological research (in the form of musicological articles, diploma theses and course papers written by students of the Belarusian conservatory).

The Orthodox Christian church singing practice as a phenomenon of the Belarusian

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Gustova-Runtso L. A. Op. cit., pp. 21–22.

The article makes use of different variants of the name of Belarus: during the Soviet era the republic was called the Belorussian Soviet Socialist Republic (BSSR), or Belorussia; presently the country is called the Republic of Belarus, or simply Belarus. We label as Belorussian the territory inhabited predominantly by Belarusians, — contemporary Belarus and the area around Bialystok in Poland. The spellings proper for their time periods are used accordingly.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> The monograph *Kantovaya kul'tura v Belorussii* [*The Canticle Culture of Belorussia*] contains the material of Larisa Kostyukovets's dissertation for the degree of Candidate of Arts, which she defended at the Moscow Conservatory in 1978.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Larisa Kostyukovets worked under the guidance of Anna Rudneva, which inspired her pupil with paleographic research of manuscripts of church music artifacts.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> The year 1988 marked the 1000th anniversary of the Baptism of Rus.

national musical culture was previously presented by the author of this article (in 2001). To the first time a theoretical reconstruction of the history of the development of the Belarusian Orthodox Christian musical culture was undertaken. The leading component of the Orthodox Christian church singing practice is its liturgical constituent, whereas the pervasive and determinant element is expressed by liturgical singing, which presents a specific paradigm of musical culture, an element of Orthodox Christian church service, and carries out certain functional goals.

Present-day Belarusian musicologists study, first of all, the Orthodox Christian church singing tradition. The national conception of the Belarusian Orthodox Christian church singing was disclosed in a consistent manner by Larisa Kostyukovets, Irina Zhukovskaya, and Elena Sakovich on the basis of paleographic research works of manuscript compilations of Belarusian church singing specimens. Kostyukovets\* presented a characterization of the stylistic features of the Znamenny chant of the early canonic Belarusian Orthodox Christian liturgical church singing practice; Zhukovskaya\* revealed the genetic connection between the musical lexis of the Belarusian staff-notated irmola with the thetas and the melodic lines of the Znamenny chants and disclosed the connection between the verbal and the musical

liturgical text with the techniques from the field of rhetorics. Elena Sakovich\* proposed the version of the priority of the Belarusian Supraśl chant over the Kiev chant, which in our view is erroneous. The first brethren of the Supraśl Monastery, which was founded in 1498<sup>16</sup> — the Kiev Pechersk monks — brought the stable Kiev Pechersk tradition<sup>17</sup> to the Belarusian monastery. This historical fact refutes Sakovich's hypothesis.

Belarusian Orthodox Christian church singing practice is multicultural: its original features were formed because of the intonational reinterpretation of the primary source of Byzantine church music and the indirect influence of the folksong tradition;<sup>18</sup> within the framework of the Greek-Catholic liturgical culture (in the 18th century) a synthesis of the Eastern (Byzantine and early Russian) and Western (Polish-Latin) stylistic traditions was formed. In the conditions of the attempt to join together the Orthodox Christian and the Catholic churches which took place in Eastern Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries, the church singing tradition underwent the process of Europeanisation and folklorization, on the one hand, while, on the other hand, it was conducive to the conservation of separate stylistic elements of the early Belarusian liturgical singing, which were preserved up to the end of the 19th century. The synthesis of the musical intonations in the earliest chants

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> In 2001 Larisa Gustova defended her dissertation for the degree of Candidate of Arts on the subject of *Muzykal'no-pevcheskaya kul'tura pravoslavnoi tserkvi Belarusi* [*The Musical Church Singing Culture of the Orthodox Christian Church of Belarus*].

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Gustova-Runtso L. A. Op. cit.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> The Supraśl monastery was founded by the Novogrud army commander and marshal of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania Aleksander Chodkiewicz.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Gustova L. A. *Tserkovnoe penie. Belorusskaya pevcheskaya kul'tura pravoslavnoi traditsii* [Church Singing. Belarusian Singing Culture of the Orthodox Tradition]. Minsk: Harvest, 2013. 224 p.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Gustova-Runtso L. A. *Pravoslavnaya pevcheskaya praktika Belarusi...*, pp. 88–95.

of the Belarusian liturgical church singing practice is of great interest for Belarusian musicologists Natalia Dozhina,\* Tamara Likhach,\* and Lyubov Shpakovskaya.\*

Belarusian Orthodox Christian church singing practice presents a multifold phenomenon. Its typical features and stylistic originality are testified by the church vocal music compilations of the time period between the 16th and the 20th centuries, the ritual church chants and, most importantly, the relevant versions of the sound of professional and amateur church choirs and ensembles. On the basis of these and countless scholarly sources, the author of the present article carried out research, the results of which led to the defense of a doctoral dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Arts on the theme Tipologiya ispolnitel'skikh stilei belorusskoi pevcheskoi praktiki pravoslavnoi traditsii [The Typology of Performance Styles of the Belarusian Church Singing Practice of the Orthodox Christian Tradition (2016). She presented a systematic analysis of the Orthodox Christian church singing practice, proposed a new methodology for studying its types, categories, varieties and performance styles and, moreover, carried out a typological categorization of the performance styles of the Orthodox Christian church singing practice, presenting its liturgical and nonliturgical types, the old canonic, variegated canonic and generalized canonic varieties of liturgical church singing practice (the criteria for classification is formed by the level of adherence to the regulations, which is the canon), specialized and everyday (amateur), monastic, rural and urban (a variety of which is the cathedral style) congregational types of church singing practice (the criteria for classification are formed by the performers'

particular cultural types), as well as the ascetic and the representational (a variant of which is the *partesny*) performance styles, which present either the monophonic or the polyphonic interpretations of the verbal texts. In the context of the ascetic style, priority is taken by the verbal text, whereas the musical text is performed with a well-known share of improvisational manner. In the representational style, on the other hand, priority is taken by the musical text, which embodies a particular artistic idea.<sup>19</sup>

All the varieties of the Belarusian Orthodox Christian church singing practice are presented by church musicians who uphold it — psalm readers, choirmasters, singers and composers. Notwithstanding the fact that one of the most important attributive features of the Orthodox Christian culture is the conciliarity, which stipulates its anonymity, in present-day research of the Orthodox Christian church singing practice it becomes impossible to ignore and fail to identify the personality of the musician who is the interpreter of the canonic texts. The church musician maintains the heritage of the singing practice of the Church and promotes the diversity of the audial sequence of liturgy and the expansion of its possibilities. The individual stylistic features of the concertmasters' and church composers' musical activities have been demonstrated to the academic community by Tamara Likhach, Galina Osipova, Katsyaryna Charnova, Natalia and Gaplichnik. The methodology presented by Osipova\* makes it possible to demonstrate the diverse types of "historical-stylistic models" of compositional interpretation of canonic verbal texts. Charnova\* presented an analysis of choral works by contemporary

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Ibid., pp. 14–18.

Belarusian composers set to canonical texts by the Orthodox Christian church, and also the peculiarities of interpretation of ordinary and authorial church compositions by the leading Belarusian choirmasters.

Analysis of research works by Belarusian musicologists in the sphere of the Orthodox Christian church singing practice has shown that none of them represents to the fullest degree liturgical musicology in Denisov's interpretation. All of these works are united by an absence of theological analysis. But this phenomenon, which appears upon encounter to be a shortcoming (upon analysis of liturgical church singing practice), is compensated by the dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Arts by Nikolai Shimansky,\* in which the author interprets

the history of the development of early polyphony in the Western Christian tradition applying the method of theological analysis. However, in our opinion, these attempts are not sufficiently convincing. The theological method of analysis includes the confirmation of the substantiation of any research thesis by extensive quotations from the Holy Scripture and the works of the Holy Church Fathers. The absence of a systemic theological substantiation in the case of musicologists makes it possible to apply the method of theological-liturgical analysis. Nonetheless, the scholarly works which analyze the liturgical church singing practice in the context of church service may be related to the fullest degree to the sphere of liturgical musicology.

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