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Borislava Efimenkova's Research of *Northern Russian Lamentations* as the Beginning of the Ethnomusicological Science of the Gnesins' Institute*

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Abstract. The article is devoted to the research work by the famous Russian ethnomusicologist Borislava Borisovna Efimenkova (1933–1996) *Severnorusskaya prichet'* [*Northern Russian Lamentations*], which was published in 1980. The book has become a milestone in the scholarly work of the author herself, who has demonstrated herself as a mature and extraordinary researcher of Russian folk music. The fundamental nature of the research, the radical novelty of the methodology and the credibility of the scholarly results have provided this work with a groundbreaking character. It has become a reference study for music scholars, who have pursued structural and typological methods of research for many years, and has maintained this status to the present day.

The book includes a compilation of almost 180 examples of vocal lamentations from the Vologda region pertaining to funerals, recruitments and weddings (solo cries of the brides and cries sung by choral ensembles of girls). At the core of the monograph lies a detailed study of this phenomenon. Its goal is to present the local tradition of vocal lamentations as a holistic phenomenon endowed with a systematic organization. The *structural-typological method* has been chosen as the main research tool; its chief theorist and proponent in Soviet ethnomusicology of the second half of the 20th century was Eugeny Gippius, who had everted an immense influence on the formation of Efimenkova as a musicologist. In *Severnorusskaya prichet'* [*Northern Russian Lamentations*] Gippius's ideas of structural-systematic approach to the study of folk music have found its practical manifestation for the first time. A significant role in the study of the East Vologda region is assigned to the *arealogical method*. As the result of this, six published geographical maps have provided the first example of geographical mapping of Russian folk vocal lamentations.

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■ Научные школы в музыковедении ■

Научная статья

Исследование Бориславы Ефименковой «Севернорусская причеть» как начало гнесинской этномузыкологической науки**

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Аннотация. Статья посвящена исследованию известного российского этномузыколога Бориславы Борисовны Ефименковой (1933–1996) «Севернорусская причеть», увидевшему свет в 1980 году. Книга стала вехой в научном творчестве самого автора, заявившего о себе как о зрелом и неординарном исследователе русского музыкального фольклора. Фундаментальный характер, радикальная новизна методологии и убедительность научных результатов обеспечили этой работе прорывной характер.

Книга включает в себя собрание почти 180 образцов причитаний Вологодской области — похоронных, рекрутских, свадебных (сольные плачи невесты и ансамблевые плачи девушек). Её смысловой центр составляет развёрнутое исследование, цель которого — представить локальную плачевую традицию как целостный феномен, обладающий системной организацией. В качестве основного исследовательского инструмента избран *структурно-типологический метод*. Его главным теоретиком и пропагандистом в советском этномузыкознании второй половины XX века выступил Евгений Гиппиус, оказавший огромное влияние на формирование Ефименковой как учёного. В «Севернорусской причети» гиппиусовские идеи структурно-системного подхода к изучению музыкального фольклора впервые обрели своё практическое воплощение. Значительная роль при изучении

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восточновологодской причеты отведена *ареалогическому методу*, при этом опубликованные карты оказались первым опытом картографирования русского плачевого фольклора. На многие годы труд Ефименковой стал эталонным исследованием для учёных структурно-типологического направления и сохраняет этот статус и сегодня.

Ключевые слова: этномузыкология, Борислава Ефименкова, народные плачи, фольклор Русского Севера, география народной музыкальной культуры

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The year 1980 witnessed the publication of *Severnorusskaya prichet'* [Northern Russian Lamentations], a book by Borislava Borisovna Efimenkova, the associate professor at the Gnesins' State Musical Pedagogical Institute. Despite the fact that under the auspices of the Gnesins' Institute a number of interesting compilations had been published, particularly this new monograph established that point from which the school of ethnomusicology at the Gnesins' Institute has been formed, due to the fundamental character of issues raised in it, the novelty of the proposed solutions, and the convincing character of the scholarly results. At the present time it has become worthwhile to turn to this work, in order to comprehend its results anew from the positions of the cotemporary state of musicology, four decades later.

In a number of research works on folk music of its time period, Efimenkova's book has been highlighted by its bright originality. Its very subject matter — the music of folk lamentations — was already an original one.

During the Soviet period, this genre was largely neglected, whereas it continues to maintain a special position in the national musical tradition: “In many respects, lamentations are the crucial genre for understanding the genesis and the aesthetics of the art of the Russian folk song.”¹

It may be stated with certitude that if the book were not published in its entirety, but only in part, in the form of the collection of new documentarily fixated and deciphered lamentations, it would have, nonetheless, become a significant event. A compilation of almost 180 examples notated by Efimenkova from 1967 to 1976 during her expeditions to the eastern part of the Vologda region is the most large-scale compilation during the time of publication of Russian musical and poetical folk texts. With this publication, the traditions of publishing large-scale collections of northern Russian lamentations initiated by the famous compilation of Elpidifor Barsov² have been continued and advanced. (The significance of the editions of the music of northern Russian lamentations

¹ Efimenkova B. B. *Severnorusskaya prichet': Mezhdurech'e Sukhony i Yuga i verkhov'ya Kokshengi (Vologod. obl.)* [Northern Russian Lamentations: Interfluvium of the Sukhon and the Yug Rivers and the Upstream of the Kokshenga (The Vologda Region)]. Moscow: Sovetskii kompozitor, 1980. P. 3.

² *Prichitan'ya Severnogo kraya, sobrannye E. V. Barsovyim* [Lamentations of the Northern Region, Compiled by Evgeny Barsov]. Parts. 1, 2. Moscow, 1872–1882.

as important scholarly sources is indicated in Svetlana Tolstaya's work. [1])

A third of the examples in Efimenkova's book consists of lamentations over the dead, which, according to the researcher, is the system-generating genre of the local tradition of lamentations. Fifteen examples present lamentations over army recruits, which were already rarely encountered at that time. The third and largest part of the compilation is dedicated to wedding cries, both for solo voice and for vocal ensembles. It includes virtually the first publications of notations of extremely original forms of cries pertaining to northern Russian weddings, in which both varieties of nuptial cries (the bride's solo cry and the ensemble cries of the attendant girls), or the bride's cry together with a song, cry and chastooshkas (humorous folk rhythms), are combined simultaneously, sometimes, asynchronously.³

Nonetheless, the book *Severnorrusskaya prichet'* [*Northern Russian Lamentations*] extends far beyond the scope of a publication of a regional character. The author's plan was not limited simply to bringing new field data into scholarly use, or to showing the diversity of the forms of Vologda lamentations. The semantic pivot of the monograph is provided by its first section, which forms unfolded research. Its goal is formulated the following way: to present a local tradition

of lamentations as a holistic phenomenon endowed with systemic organization.⁴ The structural-typological method is chosen as the basic tool for research. Its chief theoretician and tireless proponent in Russian ethnomusicology in the second half of the 20th century was Evgeny Gippius, who has exerted an immense amount of influence on Efimenkova's formation as a music scholar.

In Gippius' interpretation, the structural-typological approach to studying folk music is considerably enriched by the ideas of a systematic approach. Therein lies his main difference from the structural method of the Ukrainian school and, in particular, of Kliment Kvitka, wherein the crucial element lies in the typological interpretation of a folk musical composition (see: [2]). In Gippius' understanding, the object of study for a musicologist is formed not by separate folkloric texts, but the musical tradition as a complexly arranged organism.⁵ Upon such a description, one of the crucial attributes, according to Gippius, is the systemic type — a model outlined by analytical means, which expresses the relationships between the various components of tradition. Tradition itself is perceived as a hierarchical structure demonstrating the interconnections of the revealed systemic types. These strategic aims were articulated numerous types by the scholar in the 1970s, particularly during

³ After five years after the publication of Efimenkova's book, a fundamental publication of Leningrad-based compilers *Russkaya svad'ba* [*The Russian Wedding*] came out, which also included examples of wedding cries of the Vologda Region. See: Balashov D. M. Marchenko Yu. I., Kalmykova N. I. *Russkaya svad'ba. Svadebnyi obryad na Verkhnei i Srednei Kokshen'ge i na Uftyuge (Tarnogskii raion Vologodskoi oblasti)* [*The Russian Wedding. The Nuptial Ritual on the Upper and Lower Kokshenga and on the Uftyug (The Tarnog District of the Vologda Region)*]. Moscow: Sovremennik, 1985. 390 p.

⁴ Efimenkova B. B. Ibid. P. 4.

⁵ Dorokhova E. A., Pashina O. A. Nauchnaya problematika issledovaniia E. V. Gippiusa [The Scholarly Problem Range of Evgeny Gippius' Research]. *Materialy i stat'i. K 100-letiyu so dnya rozhdeniya E. V. Gippiusa* [*Materials and Articles. Towards the 100th Anniversary of Evgeny Gippius' Birthday*]. Moscow: Kompozitor, 2003, pp. 29–34.

the period of the creation of the book on lamentations from the Vologda region.⁶ At the same time, the historical significance of the book *Severnorusskaya prichet'* [*Northern Russian Lamentations*] is that in this edition Gippius' ideas of the *structural-systemic* approach have obtained their practical expression for the first time. Articulated in the most general aspect, they have received their realization by concrete methods of analysis and generalization of the folk music material that were proposed by the author. At no time earlier and, in all likelihood, at no time later has structural systemic analysis received such consistent or uncompromising manifestation.

Efimenkova was guided by the essential notion of viewing in the musical material its "component composition." Thus, in a large quantity of lamentations of the interfluvial of the Sukhona and the Yug Rivers four functional varieties are highlighted, analytical procedures are carried out within each group, then the results are compared with each other. It has been discovered that only two varieties of the lamentation vocalizations possess structural independence and, hence, typological significance — the funereal and the wedding categories. They became the central types in the work.

Consistently realizing the principle of fragmentation of the components of the whole, the researcher applied for the first time the methodology of partite analysis of the rhythmic and melodic forms of the lamentation melodies. It must be acknowledged that this approach aroused a debate in the academic circles, which has continued subsequently for many years.

To what extent Efimenkova's approach (and, subsequently, that of the other ethnomusicologists at the Gnesins' Institute) towards the analysis of folk music material has contradicted the positions of the majority of Russian researchers, who have applied the method of the intonational-figurative semantic analysis of folk melodies, can be judged by the concise historical overview expanded in Svetlana Kosyreva's article. [3]

However, it was particularly Efimenkova's position which has made it possible to come up with the conclusion about the anonymity of these components of the melodies, and subsequently it has received confirmation by means of the most diverse folk music melody. The famous thesis that the "melodic and rhythmic types of the lamentation type are self-sufficient in relation to each other and enter into various combinations with each other,"⁷ formulated by Efimenkova in the present work, became at that time a genuine scholarly discovery, and is presently perceived as an axiom.

The demarcation between the permanent and the changeable elements of structure has made it possible to carry out the typological systematization of the material and to establish several levels of the system of melodies of the lamentations: the generic (typical), combining all the specimens of lamentations of the researched tradition, and the level of forms, sub-forms and individual manifestations. The understanding of the structural model of the folk music text as the correlation between the constant and the changeable elements has turned out, in the long run, to be especially relevant for the analytical description of multiple systems. (Examples of the latter may be observed in

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Efimenkova B. B. Ibid. P. 49.

the melodies of the main variety of wedding songs of one of the local Ryazan traditions [see: 4].) Each time the modeling of the structures is carried out separately for the rhythmical and melodic components in the melodies of each of the forms of the lamentations — the funereal and the nuptial. This results in two subsystems, expounded as tables.⁸

It is noteworthy that all of the discovered versions of the melodies are evaluated in the research work as being on the same footing and are not separated into the primary and the subsidiary, the initial and the resultant. It is doubtless that this circumspect authorial position, this aspiration to examine the material exclusively in a synchronous aspect has let itself be felt. This approach is especially strictly persistent in the section devoted to the analysis of funereal lamentations. At the same time, the musical forms of the wedding group cries are generally examined from the point of view of the transformations in them of the structural regularities of the lamentations for the dead and are evaluated as their “implementations” directed “to the side of song-type unfolding.”⁹ “All of them,” Efimenkova writes, “are based on the tradition of the local funereal cry, but they draw upon them in different ways. Tracing their connections is important not only for the typology of the wedding melodies, it would indicate at certain paths of the outgrowth of the song from the cry.”¹⁰ As we can see, typological research of the material, even upon strict adherence of the conditions of synchrony, does not exclude the possibility of its genetic interpretation.

At the present time, while evaluating the results of the research carried out, it is also worth turning our attention to separate arguable moments. In the list of wedding rhythm-forms the examples from the Higher Yug River (species 3) precipitate from the overall system. Since the rhythmization of the second segment in them does not correspond to the declared typical model (♩ ♪♪ instead of ♩ ♪ ♩), in our opinion, they ought to be considered to be versions of another rhythmic type. It is indicative that in the monograph, which generalizes the entire experience of the scholar’s work in the sphere of rhythmic analysis of folk melodies,¹¹ at the basis of the typology of the unequally segmented forms, to which the syllabic musical rhythmical forms of the Vologda cries also belong, it is particularly the continuance of the middle segment that is important — tritemporal, as in the typical model of the researched lamentations, or quatroporale, as in the aforementioned versions of species 3.

The absence of any typological commentaries to the cries for the recruits is seen as an aggravating fallacy. The obviously insufficient attention paid in the research to the important taxonomical level of the system of cries is perceived to be an even more substantial omission. The latter is indicated by the term “melodies” [“napevy”] and is understood as the result of the coordination of rhythmical and melodic specific versions of the types of lamentations. The exposure of their compatibility is the resultant of the research procedure, but it has turned out to

⁸ Ibid., pp. 47, 56, 67, 77.

⁹ Ibid. P. 77.

¹⁰ Ibid. P. 57.

¹¹ Efimenkova B. B. *Ritm v proizvedeniyakh russkogo vokal'nogo fol'klora* [Rhythm in the Works of Russian Vocal Folk Music]. Moscow: Kompozitor, 2001. 256 p.

be brought out beyond the framework and has not received due reflection in its text. In the outcome, the reader is introduced to the melodies of the cries (six funereal and five nuptial) in a rather unusual way — by two maps, moreover, placed extremely amiss in the book — in the very beginning, long before the analytical section of the research. Moreover, the melodies are characterized here only by their numbered areals and are not accompanied with any analytical explanations.

The key to the understanding of these maps lies in the titles of the rubrics in the compilation of lamentations: the Roman and Arabic numerals here indicate at the melodies' belonging to the corresponding rhythmical and melodic types. This helps us to figure out that in the cries for the dead the musical rhythmical forms of the first and second species may be combined with two melodic species, and the forms of the third rhythmic species — with one melodic species. In the wedding cries of eastern Vologda, the following combinations of musical structures appear: the melodies of the second rhythmic species are coordinated with two melodic species, while the melodies of two other rhythmic species (the first and the third) — with one, namely, the first. Unfortunately, the numerical codification of the cries on maps A and G, not connected in any way with the numerical indications of the musical structures, apparently, has served as the reason for numerous mistakes in the citations of map A in the text of the research.¹²

A significant role in the study of the Eastern Vologda lamentations is assigned to the *arealogical* method. The geographical

observations in the work are inseparable from the structural-typological explorations and serves as one of the methods of description and generalization of the material. Beyond all doubt, the arealogical perspective of this research has likewise appeared due to Gippius' influence: the persistent appeals for disclosing the areals and creating of special maps presents yet another one of his constant themes from the 1970s which affected him the most.

Towards the moment of the publication of Efimenkova's monograph, the experience of Russian ethnomusicology in the sphere of map compilation was essentially limited to the works of specialists from Western Ukraine, where the leader of the present direction at that time was Vladimir Goshovsky. *Severnorusskaya prichet'* [*Northern Russian Lamentations*] was the first ethnomusicological research of a brightly expressed geographical profile in Russia, while the six maps placed in the book became the first experience of mapping fixation of Russian folk music. Moreover, the techniques of map compilation and the interpretation of the areals are substantially different from those that were known at that moment.

Most unusual are the subjects of these maps: within the confines of the circumscribed region, the spread of both rhythmical and pitch-based forms is fixated (the Ukrainian specialists were preoccupied solely with the rhythmic aspects); both of them are projected on the map in their typological versions, sometimes even individual patterns are considered (before Efimenkova and still long after her work was published, the maps

¹² On p. 42, after the first musical scheme, the text in parenthesis “map A, areal VI” should be read as “map A, areal IV”; a similar mistake is present in the second paragraph on p. 55; on p. 44, in the second paragraph, the text in parenthesis “map A, areal IV” must be read as “map A, areal VI.”

reflected only the typical qualities of the melodies). Separate maps are devoted to the areals of the melodies, i.e., the coordination of the rhythmic and the melodic forms. In correspondence with the methodology of the structural analysis, the mapping is carried out separately for the genre varieties of the cries.

The resultant maps are distinguished by their complexity of performance and high information capacity, which was an absolute novelty, since nothing of the sort had existed at that time. Moreover, the maps commensurable in their quality and methodological rigor shall appear in the Eastern Slavic ethnomusicology at a very distant date — in all likelihood, only towards the beginning of the 21st century. These mapping projections are all the more remarkable that the region of the Russian North chosen for them and the genre of lamentations contradict the positions expounded in Gippius' major policy article where he recommended musicologists to engage in mapping the ritual songs of the western territories of the eastern Slavs.¹³ In the subsequent years, as we know, ethnographical mapping was developed particularly in that direction. As the result, Efimenkova's areal research remains unique up to the present day.

The areal aspect of the *Severnorusskaya prichet'* [*Northern Russian Lamentations*] is not limited to mapping. The work is permeated with geographical commentaries: all of the phenomena related to ritual, poetry or music are characterized from the position of their territorial association. Finally, what is remarkable, the geographical vector presents itself as the determining factor for the succession of the examples in the compilation, at times, even at the expense of the typological logic.¹⁴ Thereby, the lamentations for the dead and for recruits are given “in the order of their gradual advancement from the south... to the north,” while the wedding cries are presented in the opposite direction.¹⁵

The overview of Efimenkova's scholarly apparatus would be incomplete without the mention of the *complex* approach. The monograph's theoretic section received the title *Textological research*,¹⁶ but its content is much broader than the stated perspective and covers diverse aspects of the culture of cries. In separate chapters the ritual contexts of the lamentations and their position in the genre-related place of the eastern Vologda folk music tradition are provided with characterization, and the poetics of cries and their performance-related specific features are analyzed.

¹³ Gippius E. V. Problemy areal'nogo issledovaniya traditsionnoi russkoi pesni v oblastiakh ukrainskogo i belorusskogo pogranich'ya [Issues of Areal Research of Traditional Russian Song in the Regions of the Ukrainian and Belorussian Borderlines]. *Traditsionnoe narodnoe muzykal'noe iskusstvo i sovremennost' (voprosy tipologii): sb. trudov* [*The Traditional Folk Music and Contemporaneity (Questions of Typology): Compilation of Works*]. Executive editor M. Engovatova. Moscow: Gnesins' State Musical Pedagogical Institute, 1982. Issue 60, pp. 5–13.

¹⁴ The melodies of the cries for the dead are given in the following order of rhythmic types: I–III–II.

¹⁵ Efimenkova B. B. *Severnorusskaya prichet'* [*Northern Russian Lamentations*]... P. 88.

¹⁶ This heading, once again, refers the reader to one of Gippius' most significant works: Gippius E. V. *Sborniki russkikh narodnykh pesen* M. A. Balakireva [Mily Balakirev's Compilations of Russian Folk Songs]. Balakirev M. A. *Russkie narodnye pesni* [*Russian Folk Songs*]. Edited with an introduction, annotations and commentaries by E. Gippius. Moscow: Muzgiz, 1957, pp. 193–347.

To return to the question of the historical significance of *Severnorusskaya prichet'* [*Northern Russian Lamentations*], it must be stated that the book has become a landmark, not only in the scholarly work of the author herself, who has shown herself as a mature and extraordinary researcher of Russian folk music. The hitherto unseen level of scholarly comprehension of the material and the radical novelty of methodology has provided this work with a groundbreaking character. This research has served as a precedent, which has auspicated the new scholarly tradition of the Gnesin Institute. With this work, Efimenkova has defined the special personality of this school in Russian folk music studies, the circle of the main issues and the paths of its solution.

As for the genre of lamentations, *Severnorusskaya prichet'* [*Northern Russian Lamentations*] has undoubtedly enlivened the interest in it on the part of Russian researchers, which has not subsided even up to the present day. However, up till now, the representational publications of regional materials have remained in the single digits. We shall indicate two publications which have come out in the current century: the anthology of funereal-memorial and wedding cries of the Smolensk region, published by musicologists from the Gnesins' Academy¹⁷, and the compilation of lamentations from Novgorod prepared by Irina Korolkova.¹⁸ Academic works of this kind present the possibility of turning to a new problem range, for example, examining the genre in the context of the culture of cries in a large geographical region. [5]

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¹⁷ *Smolenskii muzykal'no-etnograficheskii sbornik. T. 2. Pokhoronnyi obryad. Plachi i pominal'nye stikhi* [*The Smolensk Musical Ethnographic Compilation. Vol. 2. The Funeral Ritual. Cries and Memorial Poems*]. Editor-in-chief M. Engovatova. Moscow: Indrik, 2003. 549 p.; *T. 4. Svad'ba dneprovskogo pravoberezh'ya: ritual i muzyka* [*Vol. 4. Weddings on the Dnieper Embankment: Ritual and Music*]. Executive editor O. Pashina. Moscow: Gnesin Russian Academy of Music, 2016. 925 p.

¹⁸ Korolkova I. V. *Novgorodskie prichitaniya: uchebnoe posobie* [*Novgorod Lamentations: Textbook*]. St. Petersburg State N. A. Rimsky-Korsakov Conservatory. St. Petersburg: Skifia-Print, 2017. 177 p.

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