

THE REVITALISATION OF CATHOLIC HYMNOLOGY AFTER THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ROMAN CATHOLIC BISHOPRIC OF SATU MARE (1804)

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The history of Sacred Music in the North of Romania has known several epochs. At the archaeological excavations in the region of Medieşu Aurit it has been discovered ceramics with the motive of peacock, considered one of the early Christian symbols dating from the III-rd century A.C. Even if a part of the inhabitants living here were Christians, we don't have data related to their music. It is said that at the arrival of the Hungarians in the IXth century A.C., they brought with them a Byzantine Bishop named Hierotheos. We don't have documents regarding to the music spread by him among the Hungarians settled down in our regions, his companions and supporters had surely been practising the oriental rite.

After the coronation of Stephen I-st the Sacred as king of Hungary (Christmas 1000 A.C.) and the achievement of Christianise, it is founded a Romano Catholic parish (1006 A.C.). We know this couldn't have been carried out without the substantial and human aid of the Occident. At the same time appears in the liturgy the occidental rite, namely the Gregorian music and with the establishment of schools by the parishes – the germs of musical pedagogy. In the first half of the IInd millennium, in the schools' programme an important place was held by music, *sacred music* (Fig. 1.) We know especially from Johann Sebastian Bach's biography that the children from confessional schools had to learn the songs which were to be sung at the service next Sunday in the church. Even in the XIXth century the main subjects at school remained: Reading, Writing, Counting and Singing.

Concerning the city of Satu Mare, the first proof of performing instrumental music in the church dates from 1535 when the Franciscan monastery had a *guardian, preacher and organist* in the person of **Buday János**. Was the organist practising polyphonically music or he was using the instrument only for the melodic line? We don't have a single document. In the XVIth century, the city of Satu Mare and the surrounding region become protestant. By the middle of the century, the Franciscans are also banished from the city, the later ones representing the last bastion of defence against the Reform. This time the inhabitants followed the Lutheran belief but later on the Calvinism has won. This fact has totally changed the musical style performed till then. With the triumph of Calvinism the choral spread out in Hungarian language.

In the XVIIth century, by the time of the Contra Reform initiated by Pázmány Péter prime archbishop of the Hungarian Kingdom, the Jesuits appear in Satu Mare and from the first years reopen the Catholic school. Knowing their special scientific and didactic schooling, we can assert they taught a high-level music in the College of Satu Mare too. In 1654 they were banished from the city but they return in 1660 and carry out a continuous activity until the abolishment of the order in 1773. They had been performing Gregorian music and sacred music which were in fashion. After the Jesuits, the College is taken over by the Paulins. They had been activating until 1786. Then, there already existed a numerous Catholic community in the city. Satu Mare was the first the city where the students of the XVIIIth century were singing Christmas carols on several voices. The people looked at them surprised. In this century the organ began to conquer again this region. After the colonisation of the Swabs, after the treaty of peace from Satu Mare (the 30th of April 1711), the Roman Catholic Church strengthens and at the end of the XVIIIth century it's build the new parish church. In this church there will be an organ and there will be employed an organist too. Of course, this event has influenced the music of the region. On the first hand, the size of the instrument developed in time.

The beginnings of Catholic religious music after the movement of Contra Reform

In the XVIIIth century, though in isolated form, the Roman Catholic parishes began to appear. In 1363 the Jesuits re-established the parish from Satu Mare, in 1687 that of Baia Mare, and in 1690 that of Baia Sprie. The next century is even more favourable; with the colonisation of the Swabs, the number of Roman Catholic parishes grows as follows: Căpleni (1729), Foieni (1720), Urziceni (1721), Moftinul Mare (1722), Carei (1723), Ferneziu (1729), etc. In this period the Roman Catholic Church was using the Latin. Besides the mass sung in Latin, the colonists brought with them the German religious songs performed at home. We know cases when they came with priest, the document doesn't mention psalm reader too. The vigil, the funerals, the Christmas carols, the processions on the occasion of the Cross' Day, the going round of the sown field, the processions of God's Day and those of the dedication day of the churches were as many occasions to sing in their mother tongue.

The reestablishment of the monasteries or the fact that the monks were entrusted with high level education will lay the foundations of the centres of religious music. This kind of colleges are that from Satu Mare, on the hands of Jesuits between (1634-1654; 1690-1773); from Baia Mare on the hands of Minorit monks (1687); the College from Carei (1724) and Sighetu Marmăției (1734) on the hands of Piarists. The teachers from these schools study in the cities of wide musical culture. We cannot omit the foundation by the Piarists of the printing house from Carei.

At the end of the XVIIIth century, one can notice the publication of a series of innovating printed books, of religious songs. So are: Amade László „Buzgó szívnek énekes foházkodási” (The singing prayers of an eager heart) in 1755, Deák-Szentes „Kéziratos énekgyűjtemény” (Collection of songs in manuscripts) in 1774, Bozóki Mihály „Katholikus kar-beli kótás énekeskönyv” (Catholic song-book with scores) in 1797 and the anthology of religious songs of Szentmihályi Mihály from 1798. We know that this time the teachers from schools were also the psalm readers of the communities.

The establishment and revitalisation of Catholic Hymnology

The XIXth century produces great changes in the spiritual life of the region. The 23rd of March 1804 was founded The Roman Catholic Bishopric of Satu Mare, ratified by the pope Pius the VIIth, on the 9th of August, the same year. The diocese included the counties of Satu Mare and Maramureș, Ugocea and Ung, stretched out from Vásárosnamény (nowadays in Hungary n.a.) till the Prislop Pass, and from Ujgorod (nowadays in Ukraine n.a.) till Carei. The first bishop was the baron Fischer István, who becomes in 1807 archbishop of Agria. It seems that the beginning of the diocese's activity was very difficult, the bishop staying more in Arduș where he was leading the construction of the bishopric's centre. The music from the churches in the first years was following the form of the XVIIIth century. In the autumn of 1804 bishop Fisher creates the secondary school of the bishopric, in 1806 the catholic gymnasium of 6 classes and this very year he starts the theological institute for the schooling of priests. It seems that this bishop had a very good strategy in order to raise the level of spiritual life. He changes several times the structure of the ...**protopopiate** and establishes new parishes.

Once archbishop of Agria, the baron Fischer sends a circular letter, on the 1st of January 1809 to the Swab parishes in which he recommends the daily uttering of the prayers „Tatal Nostru”, “Crezul” and “Bucura-te Fecioara” in Hungarian language, as well as the 5 commands of the church and the ten commands to be recited „semper hungaricae”, and while the priest is moving towards the altar, two boys or girls recite the catechism. At the prayers from the afternoon the priest was staying together with the parishioners and they were praying in a loud voice „ they were praying together in chorus in a loud voice for those who can't pronounce correctly in Hungarian the text of the prayers in chorus will learn perfectly”.

During our research we found book of rituals in several languages, Latin, Slovak and German which demonstrates that on certain occasions the dialogue between the priest and the believers was carried out in their mother tongues (Fig. 2.). The bishop Klobusiczky Péter organized the first synod of the diocese. He prescribed that for the processions of God's Day the Greek Catholic should read the evangel in the language of the community they serve. In 1823 from the bishop's donation it's built an organ with 20 registers in the bishopric's cathedral. That time this was a remarkable instrument. The technical execution might have not been very successful since in 1835 Karl Klöckner from Bratislava builds an instrument with two manuals and a pedalierhaving 25 registers, which had worked for almost a hundred years (the organ was changed in 1925 into a romantic organ, according to the taste of that period). Bishop Hám János had led the diocese for 3 decades (1827-1857) and had a remarkable activity. He moved the National School from Carei to Satu Mare in 1847. In this school functioned „the master's course” which in the school year 1856/7, at the bishop's proposal and with the agreement of the superior forums, is transformed in school with pedagogical profile (Preparandia), with duration of two years. The bishop brings several orders of monks. These orders had their specific psalm reading. In the afternoon the priests of the city had to gather at the cathedral for the common psalm reading. The building of the churches the Immaculate Conception (Misericorde sisters) and Calvaria is also tied to the name of bishop Hám János. In these two churches there were built two organs by the foreman from the county, Strosz István from Mérk.

Concerning the schooling from the schools with pedagogical profile, the professor Dr. Harach József of the Royal Academy of Music, wrote: „Nowadays graduate from the school with pedagogical profile psalm reader teachers who hardly know the musical notes, psalm readers which have to teach children to sing and assure the accompaniment with the organ of the crowd's singing. I do not exaggerate, is far too known the lack of elementary musical knowledge among the psalm readers from the country. The source of troubles is in the pedagogy and the method of the Preparandia.

Though at the end of the century one can notice an improvement, more time is dedicated to the study of the organ but it's mentioned the overcharge of the students with other subject matters. Another inconvenient is the great number of students per class, thus the time dedicated to each student being much reduced. In all the schools with pedagogical profile it's compulsory the study of violin too in order to teach laic music to children. The priest Tornay Ferencz pleads for teaching only the organ. This priest reveals the preliminary knowledge of those who apply for the Preparandia asserting that from 100 maybe 10 know more music than just reading the notes. Thus the student will get some theoretical and practical knowledge and will learn on his own initiative a couple of songs and some disordered chords at the piano or at the organ. So even the basic musical notions the student will learn at the school with pedagogical profile, he hasn't enough time for assimilating the notions of liturgy. He will memorize in four years a small prelude or a simple song for the exam and after that with the diploma in the hands he will leave the institute, search a job and he will find. Who will decide if he is prepared to get the job? Very often the members of the church community choose the candidate with the strongest voice, sometimes there are intellectuals in the commission too, but without the vaguest knowledge of organ accompaniment. Once the job obtained, the psalm readers find preoccupation at the school or in the house-keeping they were given to use. Nobody pretends perfecting courses and thus the psalm readers overwhelmed by the everyday cares they are no longer preoccupied by practising, by the quality of the music performed in the church.

In the state schools with pedagogical profile the problem is more difficult because in the same class there are students belonging to three or four confessions. This fact allows their schooling only in common general problems, the peculiarities of each liturgy each one will learn

individually. .

Here are the causes which reflect the situation of sacred music in the XIXth century. Though, one can find people who have worked having remarkable results. Their effort must be appreciated. We have proofs about the acquisition of scores, vivid interest for the new compositions of the time (Fig. 3).

By the middle of the century, in 1855, at Agria is published „Katholikus Egyházi Énektár” (The anthology of Catholic church songs) the text in the care of canonical Tárkányi Béla József and the musical part in the care of the brothers Zsasskovsky Ferencz and Endre who were organists and conductors as well. This was the basic book of the psalm readers till the middle of the XXth century. Even nowadays can be found some copies (it’s true that there were several editions and there are some songs which were not taken over in the books used today.)

Besides this book, a lot of songs and compositions circulated in manuscripts. The acquisition of a book for organ was quite expensive at the middle of the century. We have an anthology entitled „Vor und Nachspielen”, copied by Toth György at 15-th of November 1860, in Csenger (today in Hungary n.a.; Fig. 4).

In the classic and romantic epoch appeared worries and contradictions which led to internal discord. The cultivated music of the epoch wandered from the liturgy; meanwhile we ought to reveal the heroic attempts of the composer Franz Liszt to lay the foundations of an adequate modern ecclesiastic style. The result was the birth of a new ecclesiastical music based on the composers’ own compositions of inferior artistic class; the song of folk degrade with few exceptions, both from the theological, literary and musical point of view.

The rationalist texts imposed by Joseph the IInd namely those inspired from the catechism, in the XIXth century are replaced by texts full of sentimentalism called by the scientific literature Pietism. If in the Middle Ages the hymns reflect the adored divinity, now the text of the hymns reveal the feelings of the author. The interpreter expresses himself in these songs as it follows: „Heart of Jesus I love you” or „O, Holy Virgin towards you we’re heading”; or „As long as my heart beats, O Mary, it won’t stop a moment loving you”.

Their tender, commonplace melodies are penetrated by an aberrant romantic, pathetic sentimentalism which isn’t suited to the ceremony of the mass. The accompaniment is a chain of disordered simple chords which doesn’t respect any rule. These hymns have the taste of sentimental songs being the relics of ecclesiastical kitsch. These were usually specific for a community or a region, if the author had the material support he printed them, very often he sang them on his own. If the songs were liked by the community they learned them. We have a lot of such creations in our diocese.

Because of this started the reformist orientations from the end of the XIXth century like the Cecilianism and the revitalisation of the Gregorian song.

The choral and musical association called Holy Cecily from Satu Mare was founded in 1871 by the capelmeister of the cathedral, Josef Nitsch, bishop being Dr. Biró László. The aim of this association was the renewal of ecclesiastical music, putting it into concordance with the message of the liturgy, bringing back the devotion into the divine services. The promoters of this orientation had a special schooling, were carrying out an intense activity and they were spreading a very high quality music not only at the mass but also at the choral an organ concerts.

Outstanding musicians of the Diocese in its first century of existence Josef Nitsch

The most famous organist of our region was **Josef Nitsch**.

He was born in 1829, he got to Satu Mare in 1859 and he had been the conductor of the Roman Catholic Cathedral until his death in 1906. He was a friend of Franz Xaver Witt, the initiator of the Cecilianism. Together with the priest Haller Ernő from Satu Mare, he becomes

the promoter of this movement in Hungary.

He takes part very intensively in the foundation of the Cecilian society from Satu Mare in 1871 and he is one of the founders of the city's catholic casino. In his youth he wrote poems in German. He published articles about religious music in *Népiszkola* (Folk school n.a.) and in *Heti Szemle* (Weekly chronicle n.a.). He also published articles of pedagogy and about *sacred music* in other periodicals.

His compositions consist of preludes, graduals, offertories and religious songs.

Franz Liszt wanted to take him as professor at the Academy of Music from Budapest, but Nitsch remained faithful to the city of Satu Mare. For special merits he was decorated in 1904 with the **Golden Cross**. He died at Satu Mare in 1906.

Jörg József

Headmaster of the Primary school from Sighetu Marmatiei, for the 17th of January 1859 he composed a song of ceremony for the bishop Haas Mihály. According to the dedication from the first page, this song was performed by the chorus of the Holy Aliosie Society. His work, *Látta Isten* (God saw it) is composed for male choir for four voices, in C major, the first 16 measures in $\frac{3}{4}$ and the rest in $\frac{4}{4}$, tempo Andantino, it has a single stanza, the work has 29 measures (Fig. 5).

Méder Mihály

He was born in 1856. He came to Satu Mare in 1886. He was conductor and an autodidact composer; his remarkable talent brought him the deserved glory. Attracted by the beauty of the cathedral's organ (the remarkable instruments become the centres of gravitation around which develops an intense musical life), he studied near Josef Nitsch and becomes a very precious assistant of him in the musical activity carried out in the region.

He educated the song societies from Carei and Satu Mare which he had remarkable successes with at the national competitions.

The number of compositions is aprox. 25. The great part of them is works for male choir, partly original compositions, partly remaking from the folklore, the most of it from the Hungarian Folklore. Besides these he has an ample mass, for mix choir, Requiem, which was performed several times in the Roman Catholic cathedral where he was conductor too.

He died on the 21st of January 1907.

Pataki Stark Lajos

Roman Catholic priest he was a teacher at the Pedagogical secondary school. He was born in 1854; he was ordained as priest in 1877. He had worked for three years at the Bishopric centre. In 1880 he is appointed as teacher at the Royal Pedagogical Secondary School and preacher priest of the cathedral. In 1885 he is appointed as teacher at the Bishopric's Pedagogical Secondary School and from 1903 again at the Royal Pedagogical Secondary School. From 1903 he is also named headmaster of the Music School of the Canto Society from Satu Mare.

He composed:

Pastoral (9 Christmas carols: at 3 voices for children choir, at 4 voices for mix choir accompanied by organ (or harmonium, or piano).

Collection of Christmas carols, Cantata, Musical Transitions

Songs about Virgin Mary, vol. I and II.

Mass for Christmas.

Hofbauer Ignác

Roman Catholic priest, he lived in the second half of the XIXth century and the first

half of the XXth century. We didn't find data about his studies. He composed:

Mass for Christmas

Te Deum laudamus

Tantum ergo

He was the conductor of the Canto Society

The Canto Society

The Canto Society in the first quarter of century of his existence was the only promoter of song and music in the city of Satu Mare and had a special cultural and social impact. In 1880 the Society became member of the National Choral Association and this very year it participated at the national choral ceremony held at Cluj. The flag of the Society was inaugurated in 1882. At the choral competition from 1882 held at Debrețin it won the 1st prize, the prize being a piano, in 1884 at the festival from Miskolc it obtained the silver cup. At the competition of 1886 held at Pécs it won the gold medal, in 1888 at Szeged the silver laurel, in 1892 at Budapest it won a horn and at the ceremonies from: Fiume(1895), Budapest (1896), Arad (1898) prizes and honouree diplomas .

It gave concerts in the cities of Debrețin, Carei, Sighetul Marmației, Ujgorod, Oradea, Baia Mare, etc.

Dr. Láng Ferenc *Hildegarda* Editura Pallas Satu-Mare 1930

Dobszay László *A magyar népének* Veszprém, 1995

Tornyai Ferencz *Orgona és orgonálás az egyház szolgálatában* Győr, 1906