



## Mihail Berezovski, an illustrative composer for the choir liturgic music in Bessarabia of the pre- and interwar period

IRINA ZAMFIRA DĂNILĂ\*  
“George Enescu” University of Arts – Iași  
ROMANIA

**Abstract:** The present study offers a style analysis of choir musical creation for the Liturgy by the composer Mihail Berezovschi, a major personality of music from Bessarabia, active in the first half of the 20th century.

The monodic sources of the Liturgy, Vesper and Matin, as well as their adaptation are analysed. The findings indicate that Mihail Berezovschi is a continuer of the esthetics of the Russian school of choir composition regarding his own melodic inventions and the their harmonic adaptation. In terms of harmonization, his adaptations of psaltic music do not differ greatly from his original pieces, especially as they mainly resort to the main tonal steps in which the psaltic voice is rendered and less to the secondary steps; moreover, modulation is not accomplished through remote tonalities, but mainly through the tonality of the basic relative (major or minor, accordingly). Sometimes the harmonic version of the main tonality is used for harmonization, especially when the melody modulates in a chromatic voice (II, VI). As a rule, homophonic harmonization is preferred, while the harmonic pedal of the ison is absent, which normally accompanies psaltic chanting. The simplification of the ornaments, the tonal harmonic arrangement of the melodic contour along with the absence of the ison somewhat dispel the natural charm of the psaltic monody; for these reasons, Mihail Berezovschi's choir adaptations are closer to Western music for Liturgy of the harmonic choral than from Romanian choir adaptations of tonal writing for the Liturgy.

**Keywords:** Bessarabia, choral adaptation of the Liturgy, Mihail Berezovschi, stylistic analysis, psaltic monody.

### 1 Introduction

A new era of social, religious and cultural changes began in Romania after the Great Union of 1918, in Bessarabia as well as in the other regions of the country. The most important achievement of the Romanian territory beyond the Prut river was the reintroduction of the national language in administration, education and worship forms. The fact that the religious

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\* lecturer, PhD, dzamfira@yahoo.com

service could now be performed in Romanian had as a direct consequence a repertoire of pieces in this language, as the same pieces of this repertoire, prior to this moment, had been performed exclusively in Russian, at least in the churches of the great cities. This new circumstance stimulated the relatively few native composers to create new choral pieces for the religious



Imag. 1 Pr. Mihail Berezovschi

service; the most important among them was Mihail Berezovski (1869 – 1940) (Imagine 1). His talent was multivarious and was exercised in the didactics of music, in interpretation and composition. He had a sound musical education from schools in both Bessarabia and the capital of the Russian empire. He graduated the Theological Seminary in Kishinev and the Music School in Sankt Petersburg; he was then ordained priest at the Chişinău Cathedral, where he was first second, then first conductor of the Bishops' Choir; the musical quality of the ensemble was appreciated and recognized by important Romanian personalities, such as

George Enescu, Tiberiu Brediceanu, Gala Galaction (Ionescu 2003, p. 291-292). He also had a long and successful career as a music teacher in lay schools as well as in theological seminaries<sup>1</sup>.

The line of activity that was to bear a critical influence in his development as a composer was his position as of conductor of the Kishinev Cathedral Choir; in this position, he was acknowledged not only as well known performer, but also as the founder of the conducting school of Bessarabia. His predecessor had been Teodor Lvovschi, an important musical personality in Bessarabia<sup>2</sup>; Mihail Berezovski took over from him in 1891 as the second conductor and in 1904 he became the first conductor of the Cathedral Choir. Mihai Bîrcă was the second conductor between 1907 and 1911; as a performer and composer he had the chance to be trained under Berezovski's guidance and thus he contributed to the further development of the choir's repertoire by including religious pieces in Romanian (Danişă 2006, p. 18).

During the same period, the activity of the choir was particularly intense; just as the Metropolitan Choir of Iaşi did, the Chişinău Cathedral Choir took part in various musical events in Chişinău and other localities of

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<sup>1</sup> Boys' segregated Highschool in Chişinău, Eparchial School for Girls; he taught religious music at the School for cantors and the Royal Society of Music of Chişinău (Music School).

<sup>2</sup> He would eventually become the conductor of the famous Imperial Chapel of Sankt Petersburg.

Bessarabia (Cetatea Albă – Bender where they toured at the end of 1910); they also performed at the Coronation of King Ferdinand I and of Queen Mary in Bucharest (1922) and at the event organized to commemorate 100 years since Ludwig van Beethoven's death; on this occasion, the choir performed a much appreciated *Missa Solemnis*.

Following the famous composers A. Arhangelski, of the Imperial Chaple of Sankt Petersburg and Gavriil Musicescu, of the Metropolitan Church of Iași, Mihail Berezovschi also introduced female voices in the choir he was conducting, thus increasing its technical and expressive possibilities. One other consequence of this reform was the discovery, creation and training of exceptional female voices, such as that of the international singers to-be Maria Cebotari and Elena Basarab (nee Berezovschi).

Beside the performing and teaching activities, Mihail Berezovschi was also concerned with extending the repertoire of his choir, this time in Romanian, as the new political circumstances required after the Great Union. His most important achievements in this respect are *The Hymns of the Sacred Liturgy for a mixed male choir and three equal voices* (1922) and *The Hymns of the Vespers and Matins* (1927); in these pieces he restyled and arranged his own melodies as well as those of “the Church of Bessarabia”, i.e. melodies belonging to the psaltic Romanian tradition performed within the monadic service music in Bessarabia.

## **2 The analysis of the liturgical choral creations of Mihail Berezovschi**

In the first of these extensive pieces, the chants of the liturgy are presented in various voice arrangements, as well as in several melodic versions. They include a number of Axions of the various saints' days and also religious concerts (*Praise the Lord, My Heart Is Ready, Tell My Lord of My Ending, On the Holly Easter Day, Wondrous is God*); most of them belong to Mihail Berezovschi and to some to other Russian composers to a lesser extent. The composer makes in each case mention of the source of the melodies as well as of the author of the arrangement or harmonization; for this reason, beside his own melodic contributions inspired from Russian liturgy music and bore the influence of psaltic music as arranged and harmonised by Berezovschi, pieces written by established Russian composers are also included (Dimitrie Bortneanschi, Teodor Lvovschi, Vinogradov, P. Turceaninov). A smaller part consists of the Psaltic Romanian repertoire (*Antiphons I and II – 1st plagal mode, Antiphon II – 4th plagal mode, Come Let Us Worship – 2nd mode in a diatonic presentation, The Great Responses – 1st plagal mode, Out Father – 1st plagal mode by Anton Pann, Sunday's Axion – 1st plagal mode by Ion Popescu Pasărea*) and from Bessarabia's tradition (*Your Mercy to Us – 2nd mode*) or of other Orthodox Slavic peoples

(Serbian melodies – *The Great Responses, Sunday's Axion*). Some of the chants adopted from other composers or from other monodic sources appear with his own harmonisations or arrangements for voice (for instance pieces by Dimitrie Bortneanschi, G. Lvovschi, I. Solmin, A. Castaleschi).

In terms of harmonisation, Berezovschi uses almost exclusively homophonic elements of the classic tonal type. His *Liturgy* has a unified character precisely due to this simple, harmonic unpretentious adaptation consistently applied to the monodies. In the following section we will discuss a few of the most important pieces, which are distinct in terms of the influences of the melodies adapted for a mixed ensemble of four voices.

### 2.1 The First Antiphon *My Soul, Bless the Lord*

The psaltic traditional melody in the 1<sup>th</sup> plagal mode of the First Antiphon is adapted using the means of tonal harmonisation. In the Short Doxology, which is the first part, the musical writing is isorhythmic and uses relations of the main steps E minor, the tempered equivalent of the 1st plagal mode on *pa* (*D*) rendered in E (Figure 1).

Mi V I<sub>6</sub> IV II<sub>3</sub> I V<sub>7</sub> I<sub>6</sub> IV I II<sub>5</sub> I<sub>4</sub> IV<sub>6</sub> I<sub>4</sub> V<sub>7</sub> I

Fig. 1 First antiphon, bars 1-11

In the Antiphon, proper similar adaptation means are used, as well. In a vertical harmonic plane, at bar 22, a short modulation in F, the relative major of A minor, is used (Figure 2).

mi I V<sub>6</sub> I mi I<sub>6</sub> V<sub>6</sub> - Sol I V<sub>2</sub>

Fig. 2 First antiphon, bars 12-23

From bar 26 on, the tonality is C minor up to the final cadence which is perfect, authentic IV<sup>4</sup><sub>3</sub>-V-I (Figure 3).



Fig. 3 First antiphon, bars 35-43

❖ Besides the chord main steps, chords of the 2<sup>nd</sup> degree with the 1<sup>st</sup> inversion or with a seventh are used. Regarding the voice arrangement, the composer considers the need to observe the optimal voice compass that is comfortable for each voice. Some brief notes appear on the scores related to nuances. As a rule, the adaptation of the psalm melody contour, which is taken over as such from the Romanian repertoire, is well balanced; however, he resorts only to omophonic tonal, means that minimize the modal element specific of psaltic music.

## 2.2 Heruvikon no. 2

The first part of Berezovschi's Heruvikon no. 2 is an illustration of his compositional style. In using an original melody in C major, with a gradual scalar profile which is mainly specific to Western liturgy music, and also with a reduced number of small-sized melismas of no more than three or four sounds per syllable, the Heruvikon begins with a slow tempo, specific of this religious genre (Adagio).

In terms of form, the first part of Berezovschi's Heruvikon in C major, of Russian influence, is different form the psaltic heruvikons, which consist of phrase chains, which differ with respect to the musical material; the final one is commonly a repetition of the first phrase, as a reprise (especially in the case of the axions). Dissimilarly, Berezovschi's composition relies on a large stanza structure:  $A A' A_{var}$ , the last stanzas consisting of two symmetrical phrases each, according to the classical principle, where the first phrase is antecedent, while the second is consequent (Table 1).

Strofa	$A$	$A'$	$A_{var}$
Phrases	A B	A' B'	$A_{var}$ C
Bars	1-7 7-13	14-19 20-25	26-32 32-28
Tonal planes	Do Do~Sol	Do Do~Sol	Do Do~fa~Do

Table 1

The first stanza, (bars 1-13) consists of phrases A (bars 1-7) with the text “which on the cherouvim, which on the cherouvim” and B (bars 7-13) with the text ”mistically” (“cu taină”). The first phrase begins with a *pp* nuance on the alto voice, which performs an ascending gradual melody scalar profile starting from a middle register (with a less brilliant voice quality than that of the acute female voices and hence more suitable for the mystical sense of the prayer); it has a contrapuntal accompaniment of the tenor and is supported by the pedal on the tonic C of the bass. Starting with the 2nd bar, the soprano is introduced, which imitates the melody beginning of the alto at a fifth; the soprano, however, continues the main melodic contour in a diatonic manner characterized by small interval jumps (third, ascending fourth) solved in *gradualis* (Figure 4).

The image shows a musical score for 'Heruvikon no. 2, bars 1-5' by M. Merezvinski. The score is for Soprani, Alti, Tenori, and Bassi. It shows the vocal lines with lyrics and musical notation. The tempo is Adagio. The lyrics are: 'ca - rii pre he - ru - vimi, ca - rii, ca - rii pre'. The score includes dynamic markings like *pp* and *ppp*, and a fermata over the bass line in the first bar.

Fig. 4 Heruvikon no.2, bars 1-5

Some elements for counterpointing the melody in the other voices are present within the harmony of classical inspiration. The phrase A has an open cadence (at b. 6-7): C  $I^6_4-V_7$ . In the consistent phrase B, the composer uses mainly the methods of homophonic adaptation of the melody contour sung by the soprano in the same *pp* nuance to add expressiveness to the mystical sense of the religious text “Let us, who mystically represent” [the Herouvikon, author’s note]. On the harmonic level, at measure 9 a chromatic modulation is used in G major by introducing the leading note F#; thus the composer makes use of the chords for the secondary degrees (for instance, at b. 9-10 the relations G  $V_7-III_6-V_7-VI-II^6_5$  are used). Sentence B is in perfect authentic cadence to the new tonic G major  $I^6_4-V_7-I$ , the final chord being extended through a pause (Figure 5).

Fig. 5 Heruvikon no.2, bars 6-13

Stanza  $A'$  (b. 14-25), made of phrases  $A'$  (b. 14-19) and  $B'$  (b. 20-25)

represents the musical, almost identical resuming of the initial stanza  $A$ , however on a different text: "to the life-giving Trinity" ("și făcătoarei de viață Treimi").

The final stanza,  $A_{var}$  of the first part of *Heruvikon in C major* begins with a *ppp* nuance, with sentence  $A_{var}$  (b. 26-32), on the text "All worldly cares, worldly cares, now" ("Toată grija, grija lumească, lumească, acum"), hardly modified as to its melodic and harmonic line, comparatively with phrase  $A$ , discussed in the beginning of the study. From a dynamic perspective, mention should be made in this first phase of the dynamic arches written down on the score, evidencing the attention paid by the composer to an as expressive as possible illustration of the musical-literary text. The second phrase,  $C$  (b. 32-28), of the final stanza  $A_{var}$  is interesting by the change of the tonal planes, achieved by the composer by means of chromatic modulation. Thus, at b. 34, by the utilization of the dominant note accord and descending chromaticization of sound *re* (*D*), there occurs modulation at F minor tonality, the minor relative version of the A b major gamut. At b. 36, the basic tonality, C major, is re-established, the phrase being perfectly, authentically ending as C V-I (Figure 6).

Fig. 6 Heruvikon no.2, bars 34-41

The second part of the *Cherubic Hymn*, whose text is "That we may receive the King of all, invisibly escorted by angelic Hosts. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia", has the expressive indication *Maestoso* (accompanying the contrasting, more rapid tempo of this section of the cherubic hymns), re-establishing the typical structure, of "phrase chain" type, of the liturgical orthodox music. The dominant note of the musical development is, from the very beginning, a more varied approaching and utilization of the voices forming the assembly. Thus, the first phrase, D (b. 41-46), with the text "that we may receive the King of all", begins in a nuance of *f*, with the soprano voice; starting with bar 42, the interior voices also accompany it, in isorhythmic writing, the bass voice counterpointing to the main melody starting with the Auftakt of bar 43. In the second phrase, E (b. 46-53), the melodic line, with a more varied (ondulating, as well as with a zone of expressive *climax* at b. 50-51) intervallic profile is supported, in a contrasting *pp* nuance, exclusively by the feminine voices, in the relative A minor tonality, the soprano being subdivided, while the alto voice points out the harmony (Figure 7).

Fig. 7 Heruvikon no.2, bars 47-53

The final phrase, E (b. 54-59), of the *Cherubic hymn* outlines the "Hallelujah" jubilation, repeated for several times and sung in *tutti* in



homophonic isorhythmic writing, based on the main functions of the basic tonality, C major, in a nuance full of *f*, thus assuring a solemn, full of light ending to this "hymn of angels" (Figure 8).

Fig. 8 Heruvikon no.2, bars 53-59

❖ In *Heruvikon no. 2*, M. Berezovschi continues the tradition of the choral Russian music, resorting to the melodic source of occidental tradition, which he processes with preponderantly homophonic means, as a tristanza form, which does not follow the traditional pattern of the psaltic cherubic hymn.

### 2.3 The *It is truly met Axion*

The melodic line of this axion in the plagal of the first mode is taken over from the collection *Chants for the Liturgy* of Ion Popescu-Pasărea, a Romanian psalm singer and composer highly appreciated in the first decades of the XXth century, both in România and Bessarabia. If Teodor Teodorescu has artistically processed, almost in the same period, at Iași, this successful chrysantine monody, by means of polyphonic means, as a composition of severe vocal motet, the composer of Bessarabia, trained at the Music Academy of Sankt Petersburg, has constantly used, for embellishing the same melodic line, the composition methods of this school, of vertical accordic type, and consequently applying the principles of the classical-romantic tonal system.

No detailed analysis of the constitutive phrases of this *Axion* will be here made, the discussion will refer only to some modalities of representative processing characteristic to the composition style of M. Berezovschi.

In the first plagal mode, the original melodic line, the enharmonic scale on *pa* (*D*) is transposed, similarly with the processing of Teodor Teodorescu, with a higher second, on *vu* (*E*), leading to a modal structure which, transposed in a temperate mode, corresponds to the natural *mi* (*E*) minor tonality. In the first phrase, A (b. 1-8), the thematic incipit supported by the soprano is rhythmically imitated by the tenor voice, harmonically supported by

the bass voice. The compositional writing is vertically chordal, with some elements of melodic figuration to the tenor voice, making use of chains of accords on both the main and the secondary stages. For example, at bars 2-5, the following relations are present: E V# -2-I<sub>6</sub>-II<sub>7</sub>-I<sub>6</sub>-IV-I<sub>6</sub>-IV-I<sub>7</sub><sub>6</sub>-II<sub>5</sub>. The cadence of the first phrase is open, perfect, authentic: E I-IV<sub>6</sub>-V# (Figure 9).

Fig. 9 Axion, bars 1-9

In the following phrase, B (b. 9-17), with the text, "to bless Thee, Theotokos" ("să te ferim, Născătoare de Dumnezeu"), the same harmonic means are employed in the homophonic, simple score, the cadence being perfect, authentic: E I-V<sub>3</sub><sup>4</sup>-I (Figure 10).

Fig. 10 Axion, bars 10-17

Phrase C (b. 17-22), with the text "ever blessed" („cea pururea fericită”) brings an element of novelty in the harmonic plane, at b. 20, namely a brief modulating inflexion at the major relative, G major, of E minor. In phrase D (b. 23, 27) one may observe, in the incipit, utilization of the vocal unison, which outlines, for a brief time, the monody, after which the melodic line evolves in the scale of the 2nd chromatic mode, while, for its harmonization, the composer makes use of the melodic variant of E minor (Figure 11).

Fig. 11 *Axion*, bars 18-25

Return to the scale of the – basic – first plagal mode, transposed temperately in E minor (the eolian transposed on E) takes place in the subsequent phrase, E (b. 28-36).

❖ In the Sunday *Axion It is truly met*, no major changes in the modalities of omophonic processing occur, or in those conducting the voices, the soprano supporting the melody, the bass singer – the harmony, sometimes with figurative melodic developments, while the internal (alto and tenor) voices complete the harmonies. Equally, the composer is interested in the dynamic plane, as shown by the indications of nuances written down on the score, as well as in an expressive agogic, mainly in the end of some more important phrases for the economy of the work.

## 2.4 Other repertoire collections of Mihail Berezovschi

The other important collection of religious hymns of M. Berezovschi is entitled *The Hymns of the Vespers, of the Matins, from the Triodyon, of the Holy Eastern, Te-Deum and Church Dedication for mixed, man's and three equal voices, choir* (Berezovschi 1927). The last one includes the hymns of the mentioned religious services, in the vocal choir arrangements specified as early as the title. Especially interesting is that, unlike the previously published *Hymns of the Holy Liturgy for mixed, man's and three equal voices, choir, The Hymns of the Vespers...* make use, to a more significant extent, of melodies of Romanian psaltic origin, as they had been preserved and applied in Bessarabia, so that the Russian influence was manifested exclusively in their manner of processing, but not in the monodic musical material. The composition begins with the hymns of the Vespers, from psalm 102, *My Soul, Bless the Lord* followed by *Blessed is the man* in the plagal 4th mode, from psalm 1. Here is a brief fragment from this traditional psalm last mentioned, in the harmonic adaptation for four mixed voices of Mihail Berezovschi (Figure 12):

«FERICIT BĂRBATUL» No. 1. Glas al 8-lea

Melodiile sunt laute din Psaltilie prelucrate și scrise pe notațiunea liniară de Gavril Musicescu, Gheorghie

S. Dima și Grigorie Gheorghiu. Armoniz. Prof. M. Berezovschi.

Andante.

Fig. 12 *Blessed is the Man*, bars 1-7

One may observe that the melodic line belonging to the plagal of the 4th mode, on ni (C) is transposed a quint higher, on G, being required by necessities of vocal ambitus. The harmonic approach is simple, accordic, on the main functions of tonality G major, as it is actually considered – through temperate transposition – the Ionian scale of the plagal 4th mode (Figure 13).

Fig. 13 *Blessed is the Man*, bars 8-17

Also present is a variant of the hymn *Blessed is the man* for a choir of four mixed voices, belonging to the composer. Here is the first stanza of this work, reproduced in the following for putting into evidence the melodic novelty brought about by the composer, realized gradually, as a scale, on the basis of the *ascensio-descensio* rhetorical principle evolving as part of the do minor tonality. The vertical-accordic remaking is simple, not at all affected (Figure 14).

«FERICIT BĂRBATUL» opus Prof. M. Berezovschi,

Fig. 14 *Blessed is the Man*, C major, bars 1-22

There follows the presentation, on voices, of the Stichera of the Vespers – *Lord, we have cried unto You, Let my prayer rise unto You, Dogmatika, the Aposticha*, followed by those of the Matins, *God is my Lord, the troparion, the kathismata, the koinonikon Praise the Lord*, followed by the lauds of various feasts, *The Blessings of the Resurrection, the polyeleos By the Waters of Babylon* (written by Crupițchi), 1st antiphon, *The Resurrection of Christ* in the 3rd plagal mode (a Bessarabian melody), the stichera of the Great Lent *The Doors of Repentance* and *The multitude of my deeds* (in Russian style), *katavasia* (psaltic version), *Thee, who art more honorable* (in two variants – the first a psaltic one, the second – a "melody from Moscow" – in a recitative Russian style), *Pasapnoaria* (psaltic versions), *Theotokos, Great Doxology* (written by Arhanghelschi, but also the psaltic variant – in the 3rd and 4th plagal mode), followed by hymns from the period of the Tryodion and of the Great Lent, all of them arranged for four mixed voices, provided for the other types of assembly being only indications on the replacement of the vocal parts. In the collection of Berezovschi, representative for the church songs of psaltic inspiration of Bessarabia, the second voice shows the phenomenon of diatonization, obtained by cancelling of the increased second *A bemol-H*. This phenomenon may be also met in Bukovine, another probable influence of the Occidental music. There follow some examples, namely fragments from *The Troparion of Resurrection* and the troparion *Resurrection of Christ*, both in the 2nd plagal mode, the form of the 2nd mode (Figures 15 and 16).

Fig. 15 Troparion of Resurrection *The Angelic Powers*, plagal of the 2nd mode – fragment (M. Berezovschi)

Fig. 16 Troparion *Resurrection of Christ* – plagal of the 2nd mode – fragment (M. Berezovschi)

In this ample collections of hymns, the monodic psaltic source has been preserved most faithfully, being nevertheless treated with means of elementary harmonic tonal processing, of obvious Russian influence, which demonstrates the powerful impact of the Russian liturgical music upon the Romanian music of Bessarabia, especially in the most representative church choirs. In the country, as well as in the Romanian monasteries of Bessarabia, traditional psalm books of Byzantine origin has been also preserved.

There exist proofs that, in the urban ecclesiastical seminaries, such as, for example, The Theological Seminary of Kishinew, Romanian psaltic music was also included in the curriculum, at least in the period between the two world wars, when the Romanian language had been reintroduced in church. In this respect, a documentary evidence is to be found in the third publication of Mihail Berezovschi, *Lord, we have cried unto You, the stichera, the dogmatika, God is my Lord with the troparia of Resurrection on eight modes, according to the melodies of the Bessarabian church* (Chişinău, 1940). Written down here are, in the Occidental semiography which uses the stave and key of C (as, actually, in the Gregorian music), the stichera of the Vespers and of the Matins, for male voice, in the monodic variant. The hymns are therefore "recomposed", recreated by the author starting from the written and oral tradition of the psalm book from this region of Moldova. For example: *The Troparion of Resurrection – 1st mode*, by Berezovschi and *The Troparion of Resurrection – 1st mode, "made uniform"* by N. Lungu (Figures 17 and 18).



Fig. 17 Troparion of Resurrection, 1st mode, monodic version (M. Berezovschi)



Fig. 18 Troparion of Resurrection, 1st mode, monodic "uniform" version (N. Lungu)

In the first variant, the troparion of 1st mode, written down in a C key on the third line, is transposed from *pa* (D) into *ke* (A). The first two cadences (on G, respectively D) are identical in both variants; the text-music ratio,

preponderantly of syllabic nature, is present in the two examples, in spite of certain differences referring to melismata, as well as to the intervallic construction of the melodic lines.

From the divine service of the Matins there are mentioned only the troparion *God is My Lord* and the *Troparia of Resurrection in the eight tones*. Illustrated in the following is the contour of the melody of Berezovschi for *Troparion of Resurrection* in the 2nd mode, transposed from *di* (G) into *ni* ( $C^1$ ), where the chromatic scale is diatonized, through elimination of the specific increased second, *Ab-H* (in  $Db^1-E$  transposition) (Figure 19).

Fig. 19 Troparion of Resurrection – 2nd mode, monodic version (M. Berezovschi)

The diatonization phenomenon is also intervening in the melodies of voice VI, transposed a fourth higher, from *pa* (D) on *di* (G) – for example, the sticheron *Lord, we have cried unto You*, in the 2nd plagal mode (Figure 20).

Fig. 20 The sticheron in the 2nd plagal mode, monodic version (M. Berezovschi)

The only observation to be made referring to this troparion in the 2nd plagal mode is that the second increased characteristic is annulled, which leads to a scale similar to the 2nd chromatic mode present in the Romanian folklore (Figure 21).





Fig. 21 The modal scale used in the 2nd plagal mode in Bessarabia

❖ This limited collection of monodic creations of composer Mihail Berezovschi provides important explanations referring to the preservation of the musical psaltic tradition, even in the severe historical conditions Bessarabia had to face.

### 3 Conclusions

One of the conclusion of the present study is that Mihail Berezovschi is a successor of the aesthetics developed by the Russian school of choir composition, with reference to the melodic inventions of his own and to their manner of harmonic processing. As to harmonization, the arrangements of psalm music do not differ too much from the original creations of the composer, maybe only by the fact that they generally resort to the main stages of the tonality in which the psalm voice is transposed, and less to the secondary stages; also, modulation involves no remote tonalities, but, usually, the tonality of the relative (major or minor, according to each case in part). Sometimes, applied for the sake of harmonization is the harmonic variant of the basic tonality, especially when the melodia modulates in a chromatic voice (II, VI). Generally preferred is the harmonization of omophone type, the harmonic pedal of the accompaniment – which usually accompanies psalm songs, evidencing and valorising them – being absent. Simplification of ornaments, the harmonic tonal clothing of the melodic line and the absence of accompaniment affect negatively and make the beauty specific to psalm monodies disappear, which explains why the choir arrangements of Mihail Berezovschi are much closer to the Occidental liturgical music, of the harmonic choir type.

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