Arhid. Sebastian Barbu-Bucur, *O versiune muzicală inedită a Prohodului Domnului în limba română*, ediție îngrijită și studiu introductiv de Cătălin Cernătescu [An Unpublished Musical Version of the Lord's Lamentation from the Romanian Tradition. Edition and Introductory Study by Cătălin Cernătescu], Basilica, București 2021, 228 p., ISBN: 978-606-29-0427-2

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A posthumously-published volume of the late Professor and Archdeacon Sebastian Barbu-Bucur's scientific works would surely attract the attention of a wide public, musicologists, historians and theologians, academics and churchmen alike. Prospective readers should be cautioned that this volume, which contains two parts, is intended for an audience already informed about church music and hymnography. The two parts – although not so delimited within the volume – are actually two separate studies conducted by two different authors. One is by Prof. Barbu-Bucur, and the other is the introductory study by Dr. Cătălin Cernătescu of the National University of Music in Bucharest. The volume's two parts are almost equal in length. Together, they showcase the difficult work of decoding one of the most elaborate versions of the liturgical-poetical composition, called *The Lord's Lamentation* or *Epitaphion Hymn* service for Holy Saturday Matins, into modern, Western musical notation. With this edition, the little-known and under-valued musical manuscript "catches its voice" and provides access to an entire universe of sound that is much less familiar to us today. In addition to his scientific acumen, the editor of this true intellectual work invites us to pull back the curtain and view Professor Barbu-Bucur's research methodology by letting us look at a few pages containing the calligraphy of the "reputed master," considered by Cătălin Cernătescu as "the vector of Romanian Byzantine musicology." (p. 6)

My attention here, however, is directed rather to the part preceding the edition of the *Epitaphion Hymn* transcribed by Sebastian Barbu-Bucur, namely the first part, the consistent study written by C. Cernătescu. Although it is added within the volume as an "introductory study," the 104 pages dedicated to the history of the *Epitaphion Hymn* are worthy of attention by clerics, theologians, historians and the faithful. The verdict is clear: this study is the most comprehensive and in-depth exploration of the *Epitaphion Hymn's* history in Romanian and international literature. There is still no other study as thorough and based on primary literary and histori-

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cal sources as this one. With its publication, research in the field has taken important steps forward, and the author deserves all our appreciation.

Beyond the volume's relevance for musicologists, I would like to draw the attention of theologians, priests and especially liturgists to the relevance of this study to the history of the *Epitaphion Hymn*. Among Byzantine liturgical literature, we rarely find historical studies of such breadth and accuracy on this particular topic. Before highlighting certain details, of course from the particular perspective inherent in a short review, I would say that the author's great merit lies in these facts: 1) he works directly with the liturgical and musical manuscripts of the Triodion, 2) he tenaciously, accurately and impartially traces the history of the *Epitaphion Hymn* as far back as possible on the basis of known sources, and 3) he opens up new avenues of research and provides very valuable insights by looking at the musical manuscripts with their different versions of the *Epitaphion Hymn* in the wider context of liturgical manuscripts and liturgical art. At the end, the study provides an impressive list of the manuscripts researched, musical prints, and a secondary bibliography, including the most recent, also unpublished doctoral dissertations on hymnography and many other volumes issued mainly in the Greek-speaking world (p. 95–104).

The results of Dr. Cătălin Cernătescu's research on the *Epitaphion Hymn's* history refute the hypothesis that the author of the Prologue is St. Theodore the Studite: "the erroneous attribution occurred when some Romanian scholars of the early twentieth century took over a piece of information lacking substantiation from the works of George Papadopoulos (Athens, 1890)." (p. 11) The author updates the existing information and demonstrates with concrete data from manuscript sources and monuments of liturgical art that the *Epitaphion Hymn*, in the form we know today, was developed in the fourteenth century – five centuries after St. Theodore the Studite (p. 35f.)

Regarding the authorship of the stanzas, the position of Archimandrite Pangratos from Vatopedi Monastery is worth noting here. He states: "how many manuscripts of the Triodion, so many authors of the *Epitaphion Hymn*" (p. 39). Interestingly, some manuscripts of the Triodion provide the names of the authors who wrote the *Epitaphion Hymn's* stanzas. These names include Byzantine authors from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, such as Nil Diasorinos, metropolitan of Rhodes (fourteenth century), the monk Ignatius, abbot of St. Demetrios Monastery in Jerusalem (fourteenth century), or Manouil Matthaios Gavalas, metropolitan of Ephesus (fourteenth century). Of course, there are also obviously incorrect attributions in Byzantine liturgical manuscripts, such as the name of Nikiforos Vlemmydis (1197–1272), but such information has already been labeled by Greek scholars as 'pseudo-paternity', a common phenomenon in the medieval context. (p. 40)

Another very relevant observation for those interested in the evolution of liturgical worship, and in particular the *Epitaphion Hymn*'s history, is the comparison of the oldest manuscripts from a quantitative point of view. As a hymnographic work composed by several authors, crystallized in a form polished over time, the manuscripts testify to a practice that varies greatly (p. 42): some manuscripts offer the *Epitaphion Hymn* with 170 stanzas (ms. *Gr. Sinai* 753 of 1421), while others contain only 94 stanzas (ms. *Gr. Grigoriou* 48, from the 15th century). Between these two examples there is a wide range of variants of the *Epitaphion Hymn*, which ceased with the printing of the first Triodion in Venice in 1522.

However, the author is not satisfied with these historical references and begins researching the possible literary sources of the *Epitaphion Hymn*. Dr Cătălin Cernătescu follows the path of patristic homilies with a "pronounced emotional character, identifiable also in the Lord's Proclamation" and goes as far as the well-known homily of Meliton of Sardis (†180). In addition to the homilies of several Byzantine authors, Cernătescu also brings to our attention apocryphal literature as an important source of the *Epitaphion Hymn* (*Acta Pilati, the Gospel of Nicodemus*), the canons of the Mother of God's *threnetikos* (mourning), as well as some medieval dramatic works for religious theatre, attested in the thirteenth century, as well as the *megalinaria* [laudes] of St. Catherine (p. 25–27).

All this historical information and, above all, the author's exploration of the many possible sources of the *Epitaphion Hymn*, lead us to the conclusion that this hymnographic composition is most probably the newest piece in the liturgical book now called Triodion. Simultaneously, it is a piece with an undoubted "career," since it has become "emblematic" for the entire liturgical period dedicated to Holy Friday and Saturday (p. 93).

According to the above, the volume edited by Dr. Cătălin Cernătescu, and especially the substantial introductory study, remain a cornerstone in the field of historical study of Byzantine hymnography. In addition, by exploring the *Epitaphion Hymn*'s multiple literary sources, Cernătescu opens up new avenues of research that deserve the attention of specialists. I would add here a particular note, which I regret not to have found in the historical study: the topic of anti-Judaic elements within the *Epitaphion Hymn*, since it is precisely this hymnographic text that has been the main liturgical service invoked for several decades in academic discussions regarding the anti-Judaism of the Byzantine rite. In addition to this point, the homilies of the authors mentioned as possible sources of the *Epitaphion Hymn* (Meliton, Ephrem, Theodore the Studite, etc.) are at the same time discussed as sources of patristic anti-Judaism, and I would argue that precisely this red thread

of an anti-Jewish animus is a characteristic of the *Epitaphion Hymn* – an element that cannot be ignored and deserves discussion. This is not to say that the *Epitaphion Hymn* is a wholly anti-Jewish work, not at all, but that by tracing the presence of those elements in the hymn and the preceding literatures, one might more easily and perhaps more accurately identify the possible sources of this composite hymn. The noticeable differences in the manuscript tradition could lead research towards new questions such as: Which are the earliest troparia? In which manuscripts do anti-Jewish elements appear? Are they conditioned by a certain time period or a certain theological-political context?

The fact that this volume, of a remarkable scientific quality, brings into historical discussion one of the most frequently used and beloved liturgical services of the Orthodox Liturgy, and is published by *Basilica* Publishing House, can only be commendable for the Patriarchal Publishing House. Thus, on the one hand the Church offers to the researcher the legitimization and encouragement of the ecclesiastical authority, and on the other hand the researcher adds to the ecclesiastical authority more scientific authority and academic acumen, a much desired and necessary symphony in our days.