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The Graeco-Slavic contacts in hymnography: the case of metropolitan Serafim of Bosnia

ABSTRACT: The paper presents unknown or not sufficiently known materials related to the Metropolitan Serafim of Bosnia, who became known in the Orthodox music history in connection with the co-called Yale-fragment. The focus of the author's study is a musical manuscript from the library of Rila monastery (Bulgaria), which contains two inscriptions with the name of the Metropolitan Serafim. The analyse of the manuscript testified about the close contacts between Slavs and Greeks on the Balkans in music and respectively, in hymnography.

KEYWORDS: church music, Balkan Orthodox music, pre-chormusian notation, musical anthology, musical repertory of the 18th and 19th centuries.

The Metropolitan Serafim of Bosnia became known in the field of Orthodox music history according to the so-called Yale fragment, discovered by the distinguished musicologist Prof. Miloš Velimirović at the library of Yale University in 1964 [Stefanović 1966: 67-88]. The importance of this discovery threw a new light on the Graeco-Slavic contacts in the development of Balkan Orthodox music and revealed new paths of their investigations in terms of both music and musicians or people involved in music.

The main part of the fragment (eleven sheets of paper) contains thirteen chants in mode 1 for Saturday Vespers. The text is written in Slavic with Greek letters, that is, a kind of Greek phonetic transliteration. The notation is late-Byzantine of the second half of the 18th century. There is a rubric in Greek at the beginning (f. 1r) revealing the contents that reads (ill. 1): "Αναστασιματριον συν ωεω αγιω οπερ ετοιισθη σεις την σλοβαρικην διάλεκτον παρ τοθ μουσικολογιωττου κθρ Πετρου λαμπαδαριου τοθ Πελοποννησιου κατ το τοθ παλαιοθ αναστασιματαριου υφος δι αιτησεως τοθ πανιερωττου Μητροπολιτου αγιου Μποσνας κυροθ Σεραφειμ επ ωφελεια τ[]σλοβαν [] δία ψυχικον αθτοθ μνημοσυνον" ("With Holy God — Anastasimatarion (Voskresnik), which was set to music in the Slavic dialect by the most learned musician, kyr Petros Lambadarios of Peloponnese, according to the order of the old Anastasimatarion, at the request of the

Very Reverend and Holy Metropolitan of Bosnia, kyr Serafim, for the use of the Slavs and for the memory of his soul”).

In this contribution I shall present unknown or not sufficiently known materials related to the Metropolitan Serafim of Bosnia. As Miloš Velimirović pointed out, very little is known about this interesting person. The focus of my study is

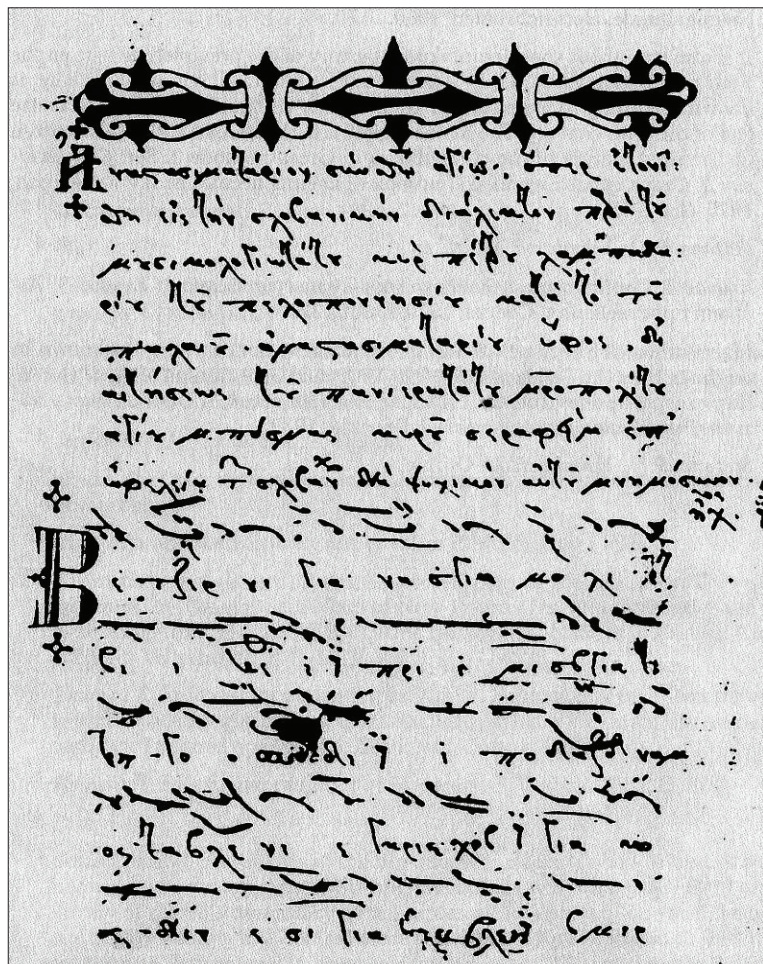


Illustration No1. 1. Yale fragment, second half of the 18th century, f. 1r: chants from the Anastasimatarion (Voskresnik).

a musical manuscript from the library of Rila monastery under the signature 6/59, which contains two inscriptions with the name of the Metropolitan Serafim. Rila monastery, which is located in the southwestern part of Bulgaria, is the biggest monastery in the country and one of the biggest monasteries on the Balkans with a very rich library. The musical manuscripts preserved in it from the 18th and 19th centuries only are more than 100.

The manuscript 6/59 originates from the 18th century. It is of the Akolouthiai-Anthology type. This type, as is already well known, was compiled at the end of the 13th and the very beginning of the 14th century according to the revised Jerusalem or Neo-Sabaitic Typikon. For the first time chants for Vespers, the Orthros, and the three liturgies were included in it. The manuscript 6/59 is written in Greek in late-Byzantine notation. The two inscriptions, in which the name of Metropolitan Serafim is read, are in Slavic and seemingly written by him. Both of them are dated. The inscription with the earlier year is written on the second to last folio. It reads: “1779=марта м[есе]ца 30. купишь сию псалтикиицу азъ грешный митрополитъ Босан[с]ки Серафимъ” (“1779 March 30. I, the sinful Metropolitan Serafim of Bosnia bought the whole chant book”). The other inscription is on the inside of the front cover written two years later. We read: “Сія псалтикия Серафима митрополита Дабробосанскаго въ монастыра рылскаго ѡбретающагося: 1781” (“This chant book belongs to the Metropolitan Serafim of Bosnia who is now in Rila monastery: 1781”).

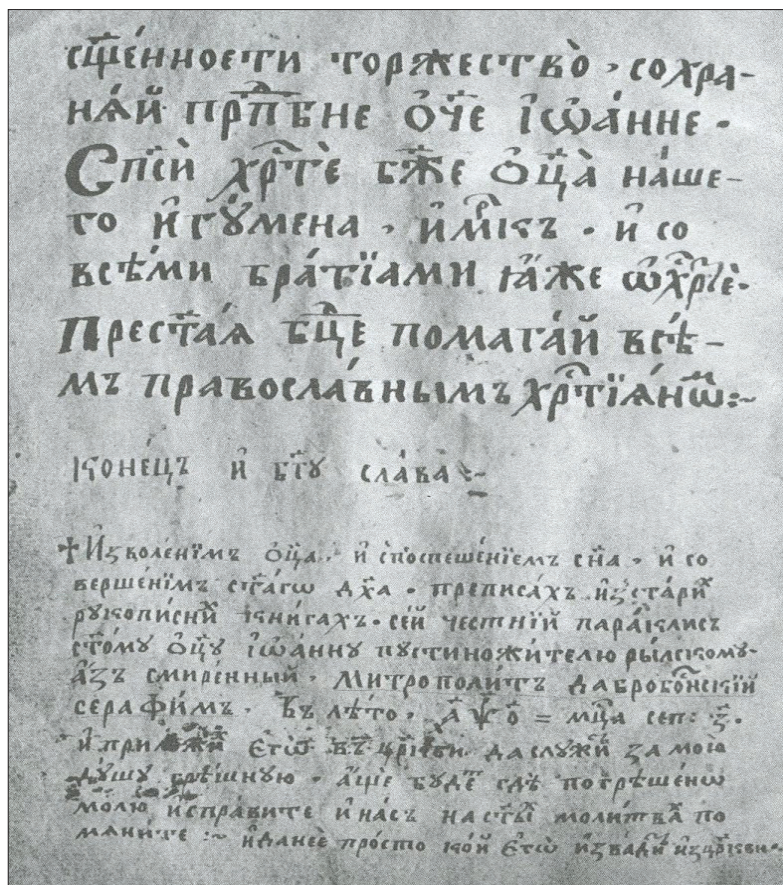


Illustration No 2. Manuscript Rila 66, Paraklis of St. John of Rila, 1770, f. 16v (second half of the sheet): the inscription of Serafim.

Who was Serafim and what do we know about him? Miloš Velimirović stressed that his personality is “a mystery as to whether he was a Greek, a Serb, or a Bulgarian” [Stefanović 1966]. According to some Serbian sources, the name of Serafim referred to as Metropolitan of Bosnia is attested for the first time in 1766, the year when the Pech Patriarchate of Serbia was abolished and the Serbian church became a domain of the Constantinopolitan Patriarchate. Serafim’s name appears in a petition according to which the Serbian bishops “requested” the Constantinopolitan Patriarchate to annex the domain of the Serbian Patriarchate. The appearance of Serafim’s name in such a document gave reasons to Serbian historians to conclude that Serafim was not a Serb [Stefanović 1966]. Velimirović argued that Serafim was not a Greek: if he had been a Greek, according to him, he would have favored the use of the Greek language. Serafim’s request for creating chants in Slavic does not support his Greek origin.

According to some Bulgarian sources, Serafim was Bulgarian, born in the town of Razlog or Bansko in southwestern Bulgaria about 1705 [Писахме 1984: 391]. Hieromonk Hierotej of Rila, Serafim’s contemporary, gave evidence about him in an inscription found written in the margin of the pages of an *Oktoechos* printed in 1715 in Moscow [ibid.: 301]. The evidence goes back to the year 1753 when the monk Serapion was elected abbot of Rila monastery. Serapion served four years as abbot. In 1757 Pech’s Patriarch Cyril II visited Rila monastery. He proclaimed Serapion a prelate. Serapion was sent to the Stip eparchy, which had a temporary seat of the metropolitan in the town of Kujstendil. After that Serapion was appointed metropolitan of the Dabrobosnia eparchy, which had its seat in the town of Bosnia. He was renamed Serafim. According to some documents, Serapion-Serafim remained in this appointment six years — from 1766 to 1772 [Душанић 1939: 53-63]. After that he settled in Rila monastery spending the rest of his life devoted to literary work. It is not known when exactly Serafim settled at the monastery. An inscription left by him on f. 16v in the manuscript *Paraklis of St. John of Rila* shows that in 1770 Serafim was at the monastery. We read (ill. 2): “... Преписахъ из’ стари[х] рукописни[х] книгахъ... азъ смиренный, митрополитъ Дабробо[са]нскій Серафимъ. Въ лето аѡо м[е]с[е]ца сеп[тември]: 3...” (“...I, the humble Metropolitan Serafim of Dabrobosnia copied this book from the old ones in 1770, September 7”) [Спространов 1902: 1/36; Райков 1986: 108]. It is assumed that Serafim died at Rila monastery at an old age about 1800. As it can be seen by the inscriptions, Serafim has always signed himself as a Metropolitan of Bosnia, even in his last years when he was already in Rila monastery.

It is not by chance that Serafim sent his request for Slavic chants to Petros Lambadarios of Peloponnese (d. 1777 or 1778), as the Yale fragment evidences. Petros was his famous contemporary, one of the most distinguished musicians during the second half of the 18th century. He was a composer, theorist, singer at the Great Church in Constantinople, and teacher in the second music school, which was founded by the Constantinopolitan Patriarchate in 1776 [Stefanović

1966]. His activity outlines a new era in the development of Balkan Orthodox music. The manuscripts from his time compared to those from prior to 1770 display differences in codicological, palaeographical, and musical aspects. I take as a provisional dividing year 1770 because at that time the activity of Petros Lambadarios and of the other musicians of his circle had already been widespread. I shall point out quite briefly some changes in the musical repertory, which are related to the aim of this study.

The investigation of musical manuscripts up to 1770 reveals several layers of repertory [Куюмджиева 2003]: *firstly*, a traditional one¹, which contains anonymous chants with designations showing different musical traditions: “old” and “new”, “urban” and “monastic”, “soloistic” and “choral”, etc.; *secondly*, an old-composed layer with pieces from the 14th- and 15th-century composers such as John Koukouzelis, John Glykis, Ksenos Koronis, John Lampadarios Kladas, Manuel Hrysaphis, etc.; and *thirdly*, a newly-composed first layer with pieces from the 17th- and 18th-century composers (up to 1770) such as Hrysaphis the New, Balasios Hiereos, Petros Bereketos, German of New Patras, etc. Since 1770 one more (fourth), a newly composed second layer appeared. It contains first of all works by Petros Lambadarios, Petros Byzantios, Jakovos Protopsaltis and many others from the generation of the last quarter of the 18th and the very beginning of the 19th century. These composers developed further the trends of Balkan Orthodox music laid out by the former generation of composers from the second half of the 17th century up to 1770. They established as a basic compositional procedure the “exegesis”, that is, the interpretation of the chants by means of using a more analytical notation when writing them in manuscripts². Unlike the former generation of composers who applied this procedure only to some chants like trisagion nekrosimon, Petros Lambadarios and his contemporaries applied it to the whole chant repertory.

The musical anthology with the cited inscriptions of Serafim represents an exquisitely written manuscript in a small pocket size. According to its palaeographical characteristics, the manuscript must have been written before 1770. It contains 288 folios of a repertory in Greek of the abovementioned layers up to 1770. It starts with the Preliminary psalm 103 Ανοιξαντος σου (Отвержну руку Твоею) in mode plagios 4 for the Great Vespers. There is a rubric, which says that it was composed “by different authors, old and new” but there are neither names, nor any other designations. Maybe the composers of these chants became so popular at the place where the manuscript was compiled that there was no need for their names to be written down. I identified the chants as works of the composers from the 14th and 15th centuries: John Koukouzeles, John Lampadarios Kladas, Ksenos Koronis, and so on. After the Preliminary Psalm follows the evening psalm 140:1,2 Κυριε εκεκραξα (Господи, воззвах) designated as “μεγᾶλον κεκραγαριον”

¹ This term and the following are according to: Williams 1968.

² About the exegeseis see Stathis 1979: 177-228.

performed on Saturday Vespers as well (12r); it is given in eight modes; then follow theotokia dogmatika for the same service and pasapnoaria (*Всякое дыхание*, ps. 150:6,1) also in eight modes for Sunday Orthros (21r). After them are written chants of the Akathistos service for the Holy Theotokos performed on Saturday Orthros during the fifth week of Lent in mode plagios 4 (41r): the resurrection morning troparion *Θεος Κύριος (Бог Господ)*, the troparion *Το προσταχθεν μυστικος (Повеленное тайно)* and the kontakion *Το υπερμαχω στρατιγω (Возбранной воеводе)*. The latter is designated as “Ποίημα ἀρχαῖον ψάλλεται δὲ δυχορον” (“work old, sung by the two choirs”). Then follow chants for the Orthros of the Holy Week in mode plagios 4: *Ἀλληλουια — Ἴδου ο νυμφιος (Се жених грядет) — Ὅτε οἱ ενδοξοι (Егда славни ученици)* (44r). They are succeeded by the melismatic versions of pasapnoaria by different composers in different modes performed at the Orthros before the Gospel (46v), the eleven morning Gospel stichera with the traditional rubric ascribing them to the Emperor Leo VI the Wise, “μελισθεντα” by John Glykis Protopsaltis, Manuil Hrysaphis (59r), a doxology by different authors (77r), trisagion for the Holy Cross by Manuel Hrysaphis in mode 4 (98v) and trisagion nekrosimon designated as “ἐξήγητον” in mode plagios 2 (99v). The author or the interpreter of the latter trisagion is not given. I identified it with the work of Balasios Hiereos from the second half of the 17th century. In some manuscripts (for instance, Rila 6/19 from 1731, f. 248v) is said that Balasios has interpreted this trisagion according to one sung in Athens and known under the designation “Ἀθηναῖον”. The trisagion is followed by two chants of the special prelate service in mode baris/plagios 3d: *Τον δεσποτην (Владику и священоначалнику)* designated “ἀρχαῖον” and *Ἀνωθεν (Свыше пророцы)* by John Koukouzelis : also: “εντεχνον” (skiled, 102r-v). After them are included polychronia or wishes for a long life (105r) followed by chants for the three liturgies: of St. John Chrysostom with cheroubika and koininika by different composers, of St. Basil the Great and of the Presanctified Gifts (110r-214v). After them is written down the sticheron for Easter *Ἀναστασεως ημερα (Воскресения ден)* in mode 1 (214v). Again, the author is not given. I identified him with Manuel Hrysaphis of the 15th century. After this chant are included kalophonikoι hirmoi by Petros “Γλυκυ Μελόδι”, that is, Petros Bereketos of the second half of the 17th century designated “πανηγυριοί” (solemn, 231v). The manuscript ends with some chants that are written by another hand: the resurrection troparia, called “ευλογιαρια” in mode plagios 1, performed on Sunday Orthros (*Благословен еси, Господу*) (279v) and two cheroubika songs. The first one is in mode 1 by Petros Byzantios (284r) and the second one is in mode plagios 1 and is in Slavic. The rubric written in Greek, reads (286r): “Ποίημα κυρ διωνυσίου ιερομούχου του εκ Βελεστίνου” (“a work by kyr hieromonk Dionisij of Veles”).

Petros Byzantios, to whom the first cheroubikon is ascribed, is a composer from the generation of Petros Lambadarios, that is, he belongs to a generation later than the one whose works are included in the main part of the manuscript

presented. Thus, the other hand, which has written last pieces, is later than the one in which the main text is written. Last pieces are written as an addition. They are written in the same exquisite manner as the basic part of the manuscript. The two cheroubika songs — by Petros Byzantios and Dionisij of Veles — are written outside of the main cheroubikon repertory included in the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom. The cheroubika in the Liturgy are by authors from the second half of the 17th and 18th centuries up to 1770. The question is raised: where were the last pieces at the end of the manuscript written down — in Rila monastery when the manuscript had already been purchased by the Metropolitan Serafim, that is, after 1779, or before that time?

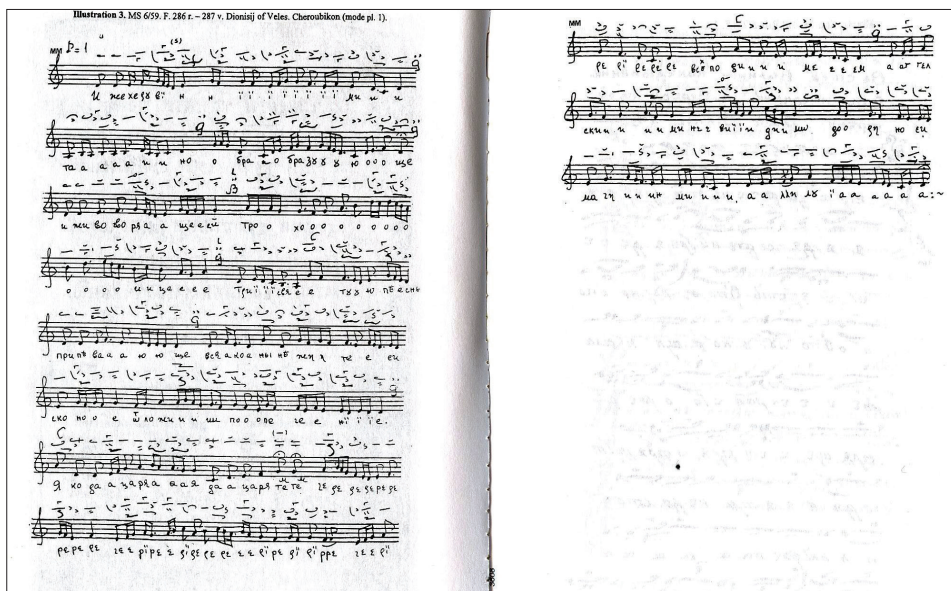


Illustration No 3. 3. Manuscript Rila 6/59, Anthology, second half of the 18th century, f. 286r: transcription of the cheroubikon song by Dionisij of Veles (transcription by S. Kujumdzieva).

Observing once again the authors of the two cheroubika songs, I would say the following. Petros Byzantios is one of the most famous musicians of the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century. His popularity is comparable to that of Petros Lambadarios. About Dionisij, however, we know nothing: up to now his name has not been encountered in any other musical manuscript. The rubric cited above refers to him as a hieromonk. That shows that he held a high rank. Only one Dionisij with a high rank from the second half of the 18th century is revealed [Иванов 1931: 173]. He was a bishop and prepared a Graeco-Slavic Dictionary in town of Veles. The Dictionary is preserved in a manuscript in the National library “Sts. Cyril and Methodius” in Sofia. It has the following title: “This Dictionary was written by my hand, a humble prelate and the former metropolitan of the town

of Stip, Dionisij of Byzantium. Greek and Slavic, 1803”³. This Dionisij was the metropolitan in the town of Stip until 1788 [Иванов 1931: 173]. It is a question of whether he and Dionisij of Veles is one and the same person⁴. It is possible that Dionisij of Veles was Dionisij of Byzantium, if we interpret the nickname “Byzantium” as a synonym of “Orthodox”, that is, in the service of the Orthodox Church. Dionisij and Serafim could have known each other: they worked in neighboring places — the towns of Stip and Veles. Besides, there was a close relationship between the town of Veles and Rila monastery: the latter founded a school in Veles [Кънчов 1970, 226].

The cheroubikon in Slavic is of the ordinary kind of cheroubika songs sung in the liturgy during the Great Entrance when the Holy Gifts entered the altar (Ill. 3). Both parts of it are written down: *Иже херувими* and *Яко да царя* (*That who mystically – That we may raise on high the King of all*). There is an *Alleluia* at the end. There is also a *terirem*, a passage with meaningless syllables sung to cover a certain liturgical time at the beginning of the Great Entrance. It is inserted after the words *Яко да царя* as was the practice of the late-Byzantine time from the 14th and 15th centuries onwards⁵. The melodic phrases are comparatively short⁶. They are composed of a limited number of formulas⁷. The melody as a whole is a simple one. To my knowledge this cheroubikon is the only notated cheroubikon in Slavic among the entire cheroubikon repertory composed during the time of the second half of the 17th and the beginning of the 19th century (up to the establishment of the New Method after 1814 in the Balkan Orthodox music): all of the cheroubika of that time are written in Greek in the known Slavic and bilingual Graeco-Slavic manuscripts from Rila, Hilandar and other monasteries⁸.

The chants in Slavic appeared systematically notated in musical manuscripts after the Metropolitan Serafim’s appeal to Petros Lambadarios. Miloš Velimirović suggested that the Yale fragment was written about 1770 [Stefanović 1966]. Ac-

³ “Настоящаго сіе речникъ вписася со руку мене смиреннаго архiereя и митрополита бившаго щипсакаго Діонісія Византійски. Гречески и словенски аог ѣ.”

⁴ Someone Dionisij Hieromonk of the Simonopeter monastery on Mount Athos is known as the writer of the following musical MSS: 6/18-6/19 of the library of Rila monastery, which represent two parts of the same Anthology written in 1731; see also manuscript Dohiariou 334, a Mathematariou from 1762 [Σταθη 1975: 392]. It is a question of whether this Dionisij has anything in common with our Dionisij of Veles.

⁵ About the cheroubika of the 14th and 15th centuries see Conomos, 1974 [about the cheroubika of the 19th century see Куюмджиева 1980].

⁶ Most of them end on d, one of the basic tones of mode plagios 1. The melody moves between this tone and f, the other basic tone of mode plagios 1 [for the basic tones of the Byzantine music see Floros 1980: 70].

⁷ They are intoned in the range of seventh. Only in the *terirem* does their range reach an octave.

⁸ It is also true about the cheroubikon repertory of the previous age — from the 14th century onwards. Only a neumated incipit in Slavic of this chant is known according to MS Athens 928, a bilingual Anthology from the end of the 15th century. The Slavic incipit is neumated on f. 93r. It is written on the right margin of the cheroubikon in Greek in mode 2 [Стефановић 1974: 67-75, III].

According to the above cited inscription in the manuscript *Paraklis of St John of Rila*, Serafim could have been at Rila monastery in September of the same year. It is quite possible that he send his appeal to Petros Lambadarios from there. The handwriting of the last pieces in manuscript Rila 6/59 resembles very much the one in manuscripts written with certainty in Rila monastery by the end of the 18th and/or the very beginning of the 19th century: the bilingual Graeco-Slavic Anthology Rila 5/78 and the Slavic Hirmologion 1268 of the National library “Sts. Cyril and Methodius” in Sofia (ill. 4).

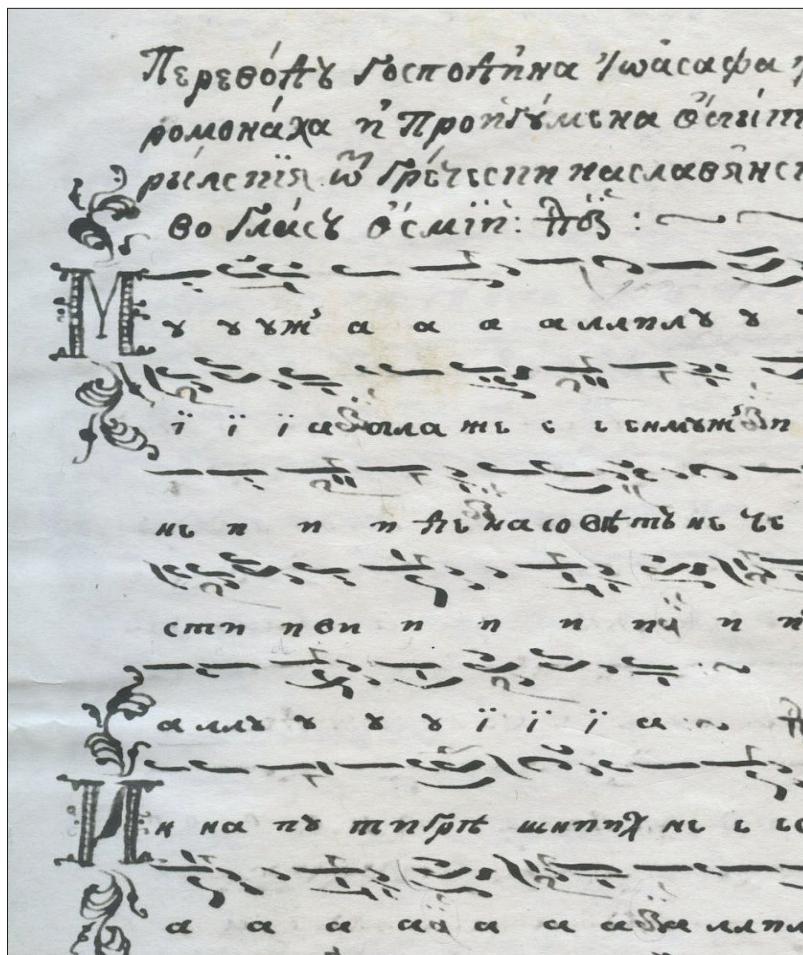


Illustration 4. Manuscript Rila 5/78, Anthology, end of the 18th or the very beginning of the 19th century, f. 1r: Great Vespers, first kathisma, psalm 1 — “translation” by Joasaph of Rila.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that the musical Anthology of the Metropolitan Serafim of Bosnia is one more proof about the great role that he played in the process of adopting the new Church-Slavic language for the Balkans to the

musical repertory of the second half of the 18th century. It is not by chance that a piece in Slavic was included in his book. Hence, the cheroubikon in Slavic might have been inserted after manuscript 6/59 was purchased by Serafim and recorded in Rila monastery. The question of who wrote it, Serafim himself or another writer, remains open for now. What is sure is that Serafim's appeal for creating a repertory in Slavic was heard. Pieces in Slavic written in late-Byzantine notation for most of Vespers, the Orthros, and the three liturgies appeared in manuscripts originating from Rila monastery and from monasteries on Mount Athos where the Slavs prevailed like Hilandar, Xenophontos and Dionisiatos⁹. Some of them are linked with the names of Hieromonk Makarij of Hilandar and Hieromonk Joasaph proabbot of Rila. The name of Hieromonk Dionisij of Veles now has to be added to them. No doubt these pieces were performed in the churches, or, applying the words of the Metropolitan Serafim in his message to Petros Lambadarios, they were used by the Slavs in their worship. All this outlines one more clue about the close contacts between Slavs and Greeks on the Balkans in music and respectively, in hymnography.

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