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**ПРАВОСЛАВНО ПОЈАЊЕ НА БАЛКАНУ НА ПРИМЕРУ
ГРЧКЕ И СРПСКЕ ТРАДИЦИЈЕ
- између Истока и Запада, еклесиологије и идеологије -**

ORTHODOX CHANTING IN THE BALKANS IN THE EXAMPLE OF GREEK AND SERBIAN TRADITIONS.

Between East and West, Ecclesiology and Ideology

by Vesna Sara Peno (Весна Сара Пено)

Institute of Musicology of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Belgrade 2016

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The parallel comparison between the two Orthodox musical traditions presented by Vesna Sara Peno in her new book is very impressive. Although separate facts from the musical history of both countries (Greece and Serbia) are well known, presented in parallel they reveal to the reader a new picture and give explanations of some phenomena of the contemporary state of Orthodox church music. The study focuses mainly on the period from the end of the 17th to the beginning of the 20th century, but the results obtained reflect the state of Orthodox chanting in the present century. And this is not surprising as the author of the book Vesna Sara Peno is not only a well established musicologist, but an Orthodox chanter and founder of the St Kassiana female monophonic choir in Belgrade.

The book is the result of many years' work. The idea was formed during research in archives and research centres as well as in meetings with colleagues from different countries. The study is a part of a large-scale project of the Institute of Musicology of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts in Belgrade under the title: *Идентитети српске музике од локалних до глобалних оквира: традиције, промене, изазове* [Identities of Serbian music from local to global frames: traditions, changes, challenges] supported by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development in the Republic of Serbia.

The study was provoked by two common stereotypes which have become widespread in Serbia since the 19th century: the first concerning the perceived decadence of post-Byzantine church music which had become alien to the Serbian spirit, and the second concerning the Serbian folk church chant (Karlovačko pjenije), rather distinct from other Orthodox chants because it had been shaped by the Serbian *ethnos* since its inception. Following this path, the book focuses on two “neuralgic” points in the historical reality of the Orthodox Church: according to the author they are “religious nationalism” and the “pseudomorphosis of Orthodoxy”.

The study raises the very complicated question of what the relationship between liturgical music and ethnic nationalism might be. In the Age of Enlightenment an idea took hold of the mind of Europeans – the idea of national identity based on a unique national spirit called *esprit des nations* by Montesquieu and Voltaire, and *Volkgeist* by Herder and Hegel. Under the influence of that idea many changes occurred on the Balkans and particularly in the field of Balkan Orthodox music. During the era of national and many other ideologies, the Greeks and the Serbs projected the numerous ideological attitudes that fill the pages of this book.

But the significance of this study goes far beyond knowledge concerning Greek-Serb melodic connections. The book discusses issues that are common to the Balkan Orthodox nations and are no less relevant to the rest of the Orthodox world. In my native Bulgaria for example, till today a question more than a century old is still alive: "Which is the true Bulgarian Orthodox chant?". Drawing on archives and documents as well as her experience as a chanter, Dr Peno shows how Balkan Orthodox music entered into a new epoch in which many challenges appeared. Combining history, theology, and musicology, she creates an informative and important study: a book that is worth reading.

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