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# A Sticheron for the Feast of the Dormition of the Mother of God[1]

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The sticheron **Єгда преставление** (Ὅτε ἡ μετάστασις) is a hymn in honour of the Dormition of the Mother of God. The author of the text is probably Byzantios, but the identity of the translator from Greek to Church Slavonic is unknown. The verbal text contains both narrative and dramatic elements: the first part describes the apostles gathered at the deathbed of the Mother of God; the second part is a direct speech from the mouth of the Apostle Peter, in praise of the Virgin.

> When the Translation of thine immaculate body was being prepared, the Apostles surrounded thy deathbed and looked on thee with dread. And as they gazed at thy body they were seized with awe, while Peter cried out to thee with tears: 'Immaculate Virgin, I see thee, who art the life of all, lying here outstretched, and I am struck with wonder; for in thee the Delight of the life to come made His dwelling. But fervently implore thy Son and God that thy City may be kept safe from harm.'[2]

## The history of settings of the text

This sticheron appears in numerous chant manuscripts and editions. It exists in different melodic renditions: Znamenny, Put and Demestvenny chants, and polyphonic arrangements of them. The only musical setting of Byzantine origin may be found in manuscripts dating from the 11th to the 14th century.[3] In the late 15th or early 16th century a new setting was created, probably connected with the change from the Studite to the Jerusalem Typikon. According to the former, **Єгда преставление** is to be sung as a sticheron in the aposticha,[4] in the 2nd position, after Psalm 50.

The earliest copy (Prichud. 97, fol. 228v) published by S. Frolov[5] demonstrates a composite version of the sticheron: the first part has a Znamenny melody, the second, without neumes, is marked as *dem[e]stv[o].* (See **Figure 1**) In Russian chant books no stichera have Demestvenny melodies, except the stichera after Psalm 50; the selection of such stichera forms a special part of the Demestvennik. This copy using *demestvo* is perhaps the beginning of this tradition.

1 This research was supported by the Russian Foundation for Basic Research (RFBR) grant № 17-34-00023 (Monodic hymns to the Mother of God on the Great Feasts of the 11th-17th centuries: Greek-Slavonic parallels).

2 http://www.monachos.net

3 I am thankful to N. Schepkina who shared the results of her current research with me. She compared Byzantine copies with palaeobyzantine and Old Russian neumes and concluded that they contain the same melody.

4 Пентковский А.М., *Типикон патриарха Алексия Студита в Византии и на Руси*, М., Изд-во моск. патриархии 2001, 361.

5 Фролов С.В., "Из истории демественного распева", *Проблемы истории и теории древнерусской музыки*, *Л.* 1979.

This manuscript contains one more version of the hymn (fol. 243v–244). Its first part differs from the initial version by just one formula. The second part is notated with Znamenny neumes up to the words **но оубо пречистаѧ**; thereafter the text includes no neumes. The set of neumes is unique, and has no analogies either with Znamenny or with Demestvenny rospev. Only one detail can assist in researching this: in the second part of the hymn, the abbreviation of the word *pochin* ("поч") is written thrice. This is a term used in polyphony (literally "beginning"), it signifies that one voice begins to sing before the others (the neumatic notation has no sign for a rest, and the term suggests a rest). Thus, one may conclude that the multipart version of this fragment existed at the earliest stage of the history of setting this text, although it was not fixed completely until the early 17th century.

The first full copy of the second part of the sticheron is found in a Demestvennik of the early 17th century, NMM, f. 283 No 15, fol. 38v. (**Figure 2)** The chant book contains a series of choir voices: *demestvo, put, verkh* and *niz* written one by one. In addition, the *put* voice is found in a manuscript of the same period, RGADA, f. 188 No 1696, fol. 12v. These are manuscripts in Demestvenny notation.[6]

Finally, there is a copy of the second part of the hymn in a manuscript from the first half of the 18th century (GIM Mus. 564, f. 169–173) using Kievan linear notation. It is a score with the inscription "po 50-m psalme stikhira s poloustikha" ("after Psalm 50 from half-way through the verse") (**Figure 3**).

It is difficult to compare music written with different notations (Znamenny, Demestvenny and five-line notation). But one can begin with a comparison of the verbal note *pochin* in notated sources (the earliest copy, Prichud. 97/1, uses no polyphonic terms) and the positions of rests in the five-line copy. All the sources contain the term *pochin* or *pochin demestvom* before the words **Ѡ дѣво** (the very beginning of 2nd part); in the five-line score the *demestvo* voice begins, while the other voices are silent. At the word **ноубо**, Prichud. 97/2 corresponds with Mus. 564, at the word **молисѧ** Prichud. 97/2 probably agrees with NMM (there is no term *pochin* in the Demestvennik, but the repetition of the word **молисѧ** in the *demestvo voice* shows the same technique). Therefore, it is probable that a composite version of the sticheron existed in the late 15th–early 18th century in a number of variants.

The composite version became the basis of monostylistic chants.[7] In the 16th century, the first Znamenny version was created. The composition of the first part is the same as in Prichud. 97/2, and the second part of the sticheron is furnished with Znamenny neumes. The first Znamenny version exists in manuscripts from the early 16th to the mid-17th century.

The Putny version emerged in the 1570s, and is based on the Znamenny version. In the 17th century the Put version became the *cantus firmus* of the multipart Strochnoe setting. In the middle of the 17th century the sticheron was completed in Demestvenny style, of which all the voices but the *demestvo* are preserved in manuscripts.

The second Znamenny version appeared in the 1570s, at the same time as the Putny version. It is preserved in manuscripts and editions from the 16th–19th centuries. In the 18th–19th centuries many variants of this version were created, both in the Synodal tradition and among the Old Believers. Some manuscripts contain two or three variants.

## The reconstruction of the composite setting

I tried to reconstruct a composite setting of the sticheron **Ѳгда преставленіе.** The task was to reconstruct the setting as it was conceived by an unknown Russian master in the late 15th–early

6 Following V. Beliaev (Беляев В. М., *Древнерусская музыкальная письменность*, M. 1962), I consider Putny and Demestvenny neumes and Kazanskoe znamia to be the same notation. I use term Demestvenny here because of the *rospev* under discussion.

7 For a history of these versions see Zakharina N., "A Sticheron for the Feast of the Dormition of the Mother of God", *Unity and Variety in Orthodox Music: Proceedings of the Fourth International Conference on Orthodox Church Music. University of Eastern Finland. Joensuu, Finland. 6–12 June 2011.* [Joensuu] 2013, 212–229.; Беляев 1962.

16th century, which is the basis of all the later versions. Such a reconstruction is a very difficult and interesting task because it confronts one with a series of problems.

## Problems of reconstruction

First of all, the number of sources is rather scant. There is no copy of a completely notated composite setting. A decoding of the first and second fragments of the hymn must to be based on different manuscripts. I chose the earliest notated copies from the following manuscripts: the first Znamenny part from IRLI, Prichud 97/1 (late 15th–early 17th century); the second Demestvenny part from NMM, f. 283 No 15 (early 17th century). Nevertheless, none of the sources that can be involved in the reconstruction fully coincides with the reconstructed neumatic text.

There is no full score of the Demestvenny part. It is possible that the musical language changed from the 15th to the 17th century.

None of the copies of the setting has cinnabar marks indicating pitch. It is known that Russian neumatic notations (both Znamenny and Demestvenny) are readable with cinnabar marks, which were standardized and appeared in all the musical manuscripts in 1669 and were explained in *Izvyescheniye...*, the theoretical work of Alexander Mezenetz. Musical records of previous epochs require deciphering. The retrospective method is the most reliable: if the researcher has two copies of a hymn, one without cinnabar marks and other with them, if the neumes of the first are like the neumes of the second, he can read the earlier copy without hesitation. The more sophisticated version of this method uses melodic formulas or patterns. Mediaeval melodies are built up from stable formulas. Russian 17th-century musicologists made catalogues of musical formulas (*Kokizniki* and *Fitniki*), and researchers of the 19th and 20th centuries (Metallov, Brazhnikov, Kruchinina and others) created collections of Znamenny formulas with their variants using materials from mediaeval theoretical works and chant books. One can find Znamenny formulas in these researchers' work or directly in mediaeval theoretical work.

## Reconstruction of the first part

The earliest copy became the basis of the reconstruction of the first, narrative, fragment of the sticheron. All types of Znamenny formulas are used in this fragment: *popevki*, *litsa* and *fity*. Enigmatic, *tainozamknenny* (secret and locked) forms of melismatic formulas are used.

Manuscript RGB f. 304 No 450 is written with two types of notation: Znamenny with cinnabar marks and Kievan (so-called *dvoznamennik*) staff notation. The sticheron **Єгда преставленіе** from this manuscript was published by G. Pozhidaeva.[8] It represents the second Znamenny version of the setting. All the formulas of the earliest copy but one are used in this version. When the second Znamenny version was created, the formulas were redistributed. Such formulas as and are placed on other words. According to Brazhnikov's catalogue of melismatic formulas[9] *litzo* changed its graphics but not its melody.

One formula, the *fita* on the word **слезами,** exists only in the first Znamenny version, which was not written with cinnabar marks. We can find the *rozvod* (deciphered form) in the Monk Christofor's work on musical theory *Kliuch znamennoy* (Key to neumes). Christofor included two Znamenny versions of the hymn in his Sticherarion, and explained complex graphics with simple neumes (*rozvod*). Unfortunately, the neumes of the *rozvod* have no cinnabar marks either, but this form makes deciphering easier, because fragments of the *rozvod* can be found in other *fity*, written with cinnabar marks, for example, in Brazhnikov's catalogue.

8 Пожидаева Г. А., *Певческие традиции Древней Руси*, М. 2007, 503-508. The indication of mode in this copy is wrong: it says 2nd instead 6th, but this scribal error does not influence the reading of the neumes.

9 Бражников М. В., *Лица и фиты знаменного распева*, *Л*., 1984.

## Reconstruction of the second part

Reconstruction of the second fragment is much more difficult. The basis of the reconstruction is NMM, f. 283 № 15, early 17th century, four voices written one by one. The first step was to make a preliminary neumatic score. I believe that in the majority of cases the words are to be sung synchronously. Demestvenny notation includes a sign Э. The precise meaning of this sign is not known, but in scores using this notation it appears in all the voices simultaneously. In five-line scores it is ignored or replaced by a bar. Thus, this sign can help us to coordinate the voice parts. Verbal notes also serve as points of synchronization.

The main source uses Putno-Demestvenny neumes. A significant feature of such notation is the use of *priznaki* (small dashes), which show melodic movement, ascending or descending.[10] Using manuals of Demestvenny notation, created by Razumovsky, Kalashnikov, Pozhidaeva and others one can read the signs more or less correctly. Demestvenny neumes show melodic figures and rhythm, but not pitch or the exact duration of sound. The latter is clarified in multipart scores.

The next step was to find patterns (formulas) over the course of the hymn. The Demestvenny melody consists of formulas used in another hymns. Unlike the theory of Znamenny *rospev*, that of Demestvo has left us no catalogues of formulas, and the number of readable sources of this chant is extremely narrow. Of about ten Demestvenniks now preserved, only one is a four-voice score with cinnabar marks, RNB Pog. 399. E. Smirnova created vocabulary of multipart Demestvenny formulas using this Demestvennik.[11] Using Smirnova's collection, I identified some formulas of the hymn, deciphered and coordinated fragments of the sticheron (formulas I, IV, partially II, VIII in fig. 9). This also helped me to coordinate neighbouring fragments more precisely. In addition to formulas from Pog. 399, I tried to find Demestvenny formulas in other manuscripts and hymns. Only the sticheron **Благовѣствуетъ Гаврiилъ** (Today Gabriel announceth) in RNB Q.I.189 contains a small fragment.

I then searched for formulas in the five-line score Mus. 564. To use a source with staff notation successfully one ought to have a preliminary deciphering of the music, as has been done in this case. Comparison of the preliminary score and the score from Mus. 564 shows that only the general form and melodic lines of *demestvo* and *niz* in the final formula are the same, but the main part of the hymn is different. (**Figure 4**)

Finally, I tried to find similar fragments in the reconstruction of liturgical drama "The Play of the Fiery Furnace" published by P. Terentieva.[12] **Єгда прєставлєнiє** and **Wгнм гашєнiє** from the Play of the Furnace have fragments in common, but unfortunately only the *niz* voice of the latter hymn is preserved in manuscript RGB, f. 37 No 364, fol. 325–337, without cinnabar marks. Small fragments from other chants of the Play of the Furnace were found on the words **всячє(скиχо), во неи жє, ч(во).**

After this a large fragment of music still remained, which I could not find in any other source. It was therefore time to use additional Demestvenny sources. As was mentioned above, in the middle of the 17th century, the monostylistic Demestvenny setting of the sticheron was created on the basis of the second Demestvenny part.

An additional source is a copy of a Demestvenny setting of the hymn: the so-called "divided (*delennaya*) score" of *put* and *verkh* in manuscript GIM Sin. pevch. 151, fol. 134v–137. It helps coordinate the *verkh* and *put* voices. The *niz* voice is found in manuscript RGB f. 37 No 364, fol. 189v–193. The *demestvo* voice was not found.

The "divided score" is furnished with cinnabar marks. Special cinnabar marks indicate mutations or modulation: part of the melody is a whole tone lower in comparison with the standard pitch level of the Church Gamut. (**Figure 7**)

10 It should be noted that Znamenny notation uses an alternative system of *priznaki*.

11 Thus far unpublished; it is hoped to publish this work in the future.

12 *Пещное действо*, Сост., реконструкция гимнографии и статьи Полины Терентьевой, М., 2015.

Four fragments contain the term *zakhvat verkh* (in abbreviated form ). The common meaning of this term is the same as *pochin*, with a small difference: *pochin* is used at the beginning of a chant, *zakhvat* (literally "catch") within the chant.[13] Both mean that one voice (usually the *verkh* or *demestvo*) begins to sing earlier than the others. But in the case of our hymn it breaks a word: consequently, it does not mean a rest, and must have another meaning. Probably on the word **боудоущиѧ** and on the word **неприкосновеноу** the term indicates a situation in which the *verkh* reaches b-flat immediately, while the *put* and *niz* do so later. On the words **оубо** and **сыноу** the term is not useful. It was perhaps used because of the similarity of the Demestvenny melodies with these formulas.

At the end of the reconstruction I filled in the remaining fragments using logic and imagination.

## Analysis

Thus, a masterpiece of Old Russian chant is before us. It was not very popular, perhaps because of its difficulty. It required a professional choir – the Tsar's Singing Clerics, Patriarchal Singing Clerics or the choir of a local church hierarch. The NMM collection of manuscripts where Demestvennik f. 283 No15 is preserved is a part of the Tsar's Singing Clerics' collection. Another part is kept in RGADA, where the *niz* voice is found. The origin of the other manuscripts is unknown. We may conclude the hymn belonged to the repertoire of the Tsar's Singing Clerics.

As noted above, the first part of the sticheron uses the Znamenny melody, the second the Demestvenny multipart chant. Such a setting is extremely rare. Among hundreds and thousands of Old Russian chants there are five hymns using a stylistic change from Znamenny to Demestvenny *rospev*. The collation of Znamenny and Demestvenny styles is used in an answer to the bishop's question **Кто есть сей царь славы,** in the sticheron for the Annunciation **Благовѣствуетъ Гаврiилъ** and in the sticheron in honour of Metropolitan Peter on the model of **Єгда прєставлениє.**

The composite setting of the sticheron **Єгда прєставлениє** is very expressive in terms of mediaeval art. A rather objective narration is set to monodic chant; the direct speech of a single hero is reproduced as multipart choir singing. As N. Ramazanova has mentioned, "A personal element is more often expressed in hymns for choral performance, an objective element in solo hymns".[14] Such a composition lies fully within the principles of Old Russian art, such as, for example, the "inverted perspective" of the Old Russian icon.[15]

Probably there is some influence of the Byzantine kalophonic style in this sticheron, but not directly. When a Byzantine author created a kalophonic setting, he used a rearrangement of the poetic text to arrive at a different text form.[16] Kalophonic stichera are characterized with extremely melismatic musical lines and the use of repetitions of syllables, words or lines and of interpolated *kratemata*. Anagrammatism or anapodism on the part of the sticheron Ὦ παρθένε ὁρῶν σε τρανῶς / **Ѡ дѣво виждуѧ ѩсно** is found in the Byzantine manuscripts Ἰβήρων 964 (1562), fol. 175 v–177;[17] BAN RAIK 30 (late 16th c.), fol. 292 v–295;[18] Ἰβήρων 991 (1670), fol.

13 Богомолова М. В., "История бытования термина «захват» в рукописных источниках XVI–XX вв.", *Вестник ПСТГУ V: Музыкальное искусство христианского мира*, Вып. 1 (4), 2009, 17–26.

14 Рамазанова Н.В., "Об иерархии жанров в древнерусской службе XVI–XVII вв." *Источниковедческое изучение памятников письменной культуры: Поэтика древнерусского певческого искусства: Сб. науч. тр.*, СПб. 1992, 159.

15 Флоренский П. А., "Обратная перспектива", *Избранные труды по искусству*, М. 1996.

16 See Kritikou, F., "Kalophonic Settings of Stichera Idiomela in Byzantine and Cypriot Tradition: Points of Convergence and Divergence", *Unity and Variety in Orthodox Music: Proceedings of the Fourth International Conference on Orthodox Church Music. University of Eastern Finland. Joensuu, Finland. 6–12 June 2011*. [Joensuu] 2013, 83–99; Садокова В. В., Калофоническая стихира: поэтика жанра, Автореф. дис. канд. искусство-ведения, М. 2006.

17 On the manuscript, see Stathis Gr., *Ταχειρόγραφα Βυζαντινής Μουσικής, Άγιον Όρος* III, Athens 1993, 680–685.

18 Герцман Е. В., *Греческие музыкальные рукописи Петербурга*. СПб. 1999, т. 2, 90–115.

292v–293v, 297–298v,[19] together with other kalophonic compositions on various sections of the text.

An unknown Russian musician divided the text in a different way. In the earliest copy the entire text is used in its usual form, from the beginning to the end. In the Demestvenniks the second part of text is written (from the words **Ѡ дєво**) without any anagram. Repetitions of words and syllables are used, for example **но оубо оубо.** Sometimes the singer pronounces part of word, then stops and then sings the whole word. Examples are: **жи... живота; моли... молисѧ; нє... нєприкосновєноу**. Such repetitions, called word-break (*slovoobryv*), are used in Russian folk song. In this sticheron *kratemata* are not employed, but the technique is applied in another sticheron, **Благовѣствуєтъ Гаврiилъ.** A significant feature of kalophonic style is its melismatic musical line. The Demestvenny melody is very long, with up to twenty neumes on one syllable, a successor of Kondakarian chant. Thus, the Russian composer knew the technique of kalophonia and used some of its methods.

The musical form is achieved by repetitions of formulas. The Znamenny part has a neumatic type of chant: one neume to one syllable. The structure of the fiest section is based on persistent repetitions of the *popevka voznos:* This formula is repeated three times consecutively and then once at the end of fragment. The *popevka kulisma* is repeated twice. The melismatic formulas *litsa* ;  and *fity* ;  concentrate at the end of fragment preceding the Apostle Peter's words.

Znamenny formulas are situated in cadential lines, except for *truba*  in the very beginning of the line.

Demestvenny formulas may be situated in any part of line. There are ten repeated formulas in this part. Practically each word is furnished with a formula. In Russian musical theory, Demestvenny formulas have no names, so it is convenient to indicate them with roman numerals. In the following scheme only the *demestvo* voice is given. (**Figure 9**) The Demestvenny style has a peculiar polyphonic texture based on three simultaneous lines of independent melody. The *demestvo* is a cantilena melody of wide ambit, the *put* uses sounds of long durations forming the basis of the composition, *niz* is the virtuoso voice, and finally the *verkh* a variation of the *put*. The divided score (*put* and *verkh*) shows that distribution clearly.

Combinations of voices give rise to dissonance, which is a characteristic feature of early Russian polyphony, both Strochnoe and Demestvenny styles. Quasi-chordal harmonies are based on a trichord c-f-g, c-d-e etc. The final harmony of a minor triad is used exclusively in the Demestvenny style.

It is my hope that the reconstruction of this outstanding piece will take its place in the repertoires of vocal ensembles. My work is not free from mistakes, and I write, like the mediaeval scribe: "Еже где описался, не клените, но поите исправливая" ("If I made any error, do not curse but correct it as you sing").

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IRLI Prichud. 97, late XV–early XVI c. Description: Фролов С. В., "Старейшая певческая рукопись Древлехранилища Пушкинского дома", *Труды отдела древнерусской литературы, Л.* 1976, т. 31, 384–386.

NMM f. 283 No 15, 1606–1612. Description: *Духовная среда России: Певческие книги и иконы XVII–начала XX веков*, авт.-сост. М. П. Рахманова, М. М. Красилин, М. 1996.

RNB KB 665/922, 1604, written by Christofor. Description and publication: *Христофор. Ключ знаменной, 1604, Памятники рус. муз. искусства*, вып. 9., М. 1983.

RGADA f. 188 op. 1 No 1696, 1606

RGB f. 304 № 450, late 17th c.

RGB f. 37 No 364, 1645–1652.

GIM Sin. pevch. 151, last third of the 17th c.

GIM Mus. 564, 1st quarter of 18th c.

RNB Pog. 399, late 17th c. Description: *Колинько* (Ефимова) И. В., "Памятник русского многоголосного певческого искусства в собрании М.П.Погодина", *Источники по истории отечественной культуры в собраниях и архивах отдела рукописей и редких книг: Сб. науч. тр., Л.* 1983, 54–64.

RNB Q.I.189, Prazdniki, late 17th c.

## List of abbreviations

BAN Библиотека Российской Академии наук, Russian Academy of Sciences Library

IRLI Институт русской литературы Российской Академии наук (Пушкинский дом) Institute of Russian Literature (the Pushkin House), Russian Academy of Sciences

NMM Национальный музей музыки National Museum of Music

GIM Государственный Исторический музей, State Historical Museum

RGADA Российский государственный архив древних актов, State Archive of Ancient Acts of Russia

## FIGURES

**Fig. 1**
IRLI Prichud. 97.
From the article: Фролов С.В. 'Из истории демественного распева', in Проблемы истории и теории древнерусской музыки, *Л.*, 1979.

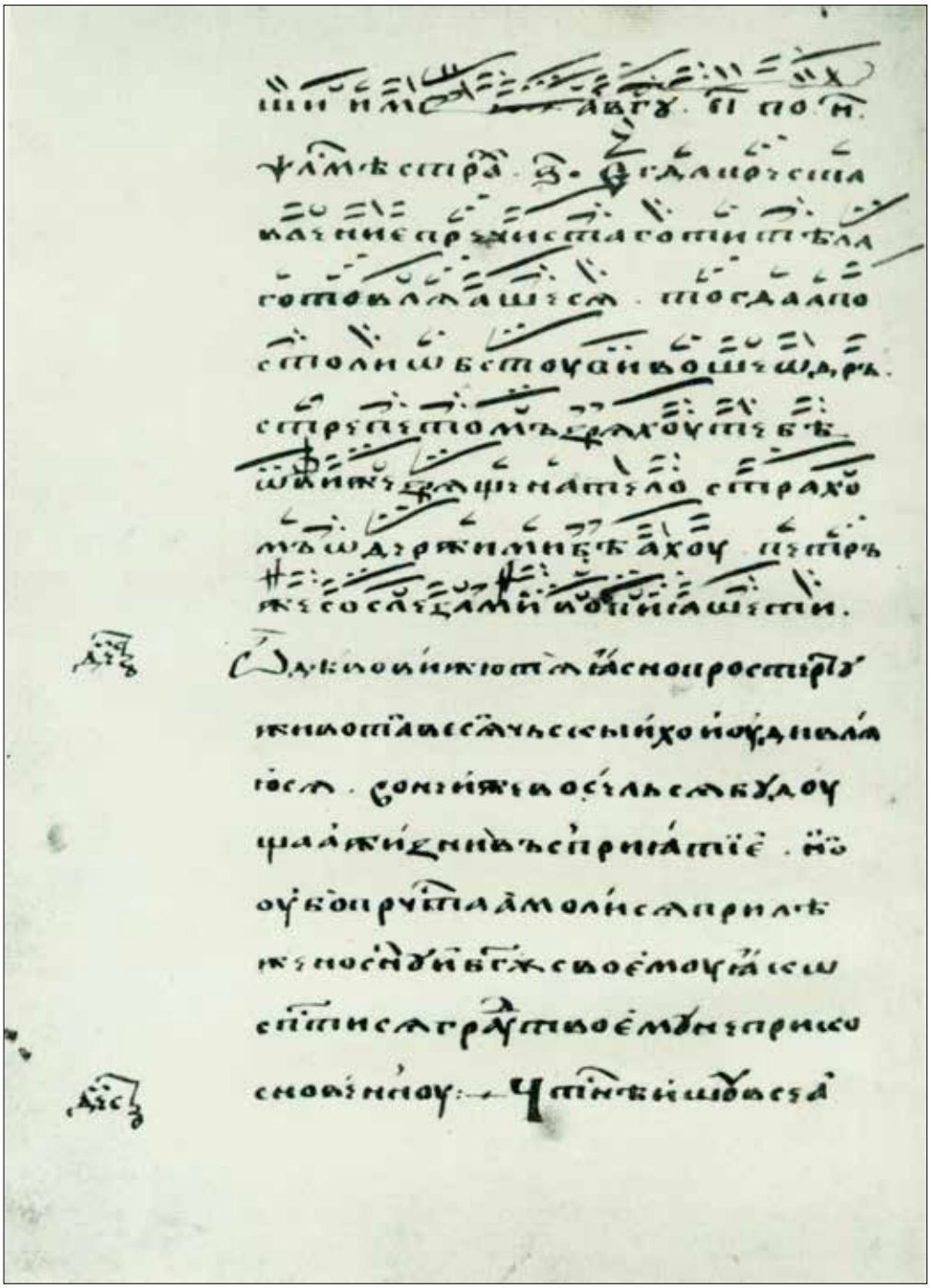

**Fig. 2 a–p**
NMM f. 283, No 15, fol. 38 об., 39

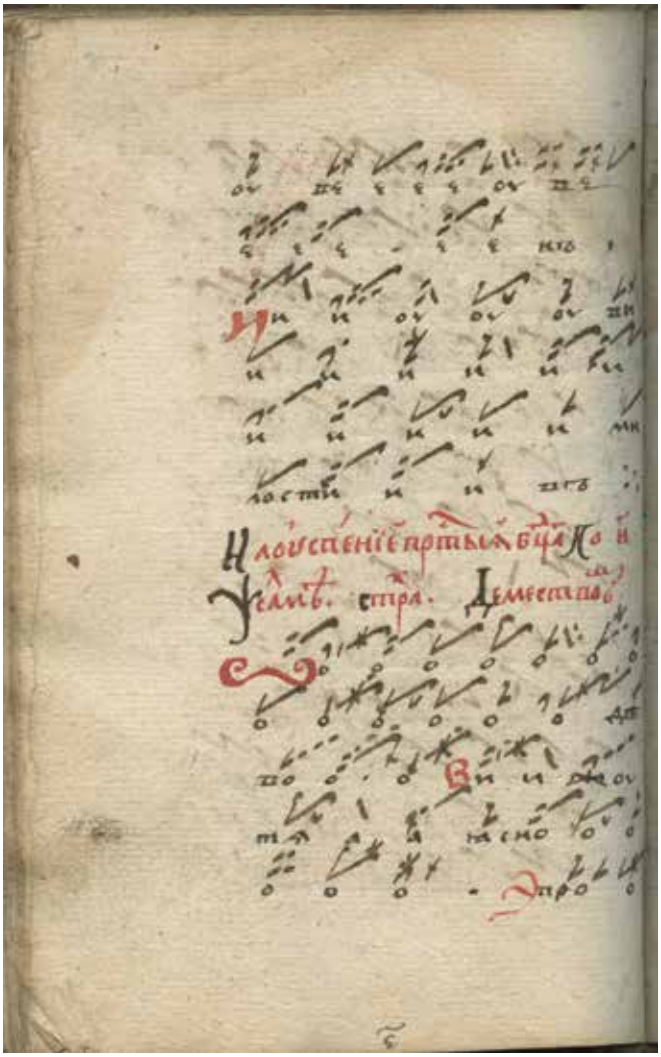

**Fig. 2 a–p**
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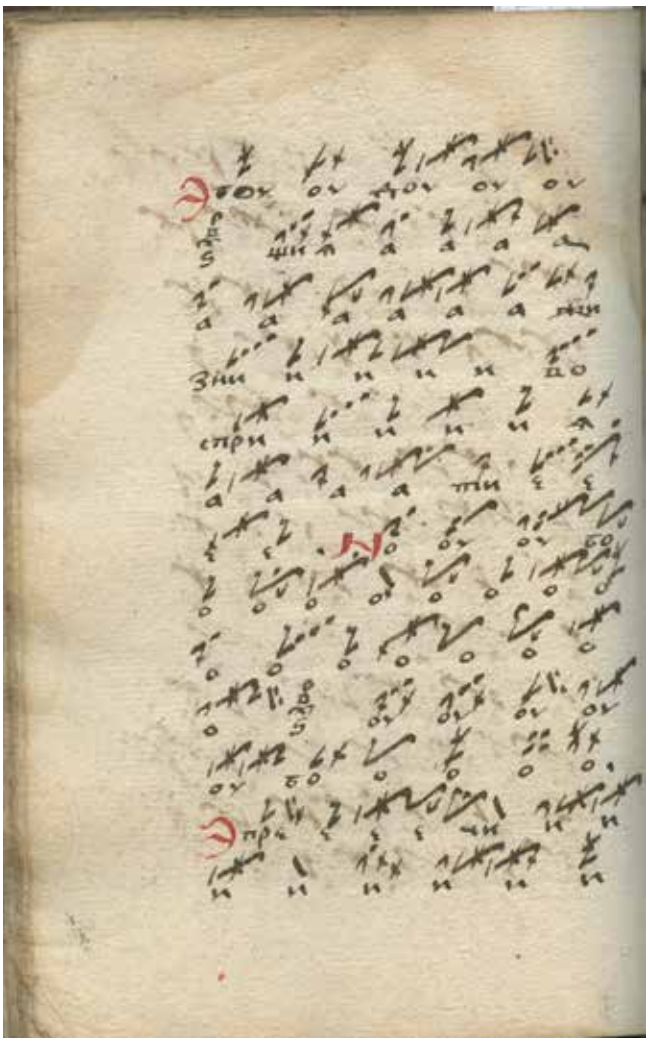

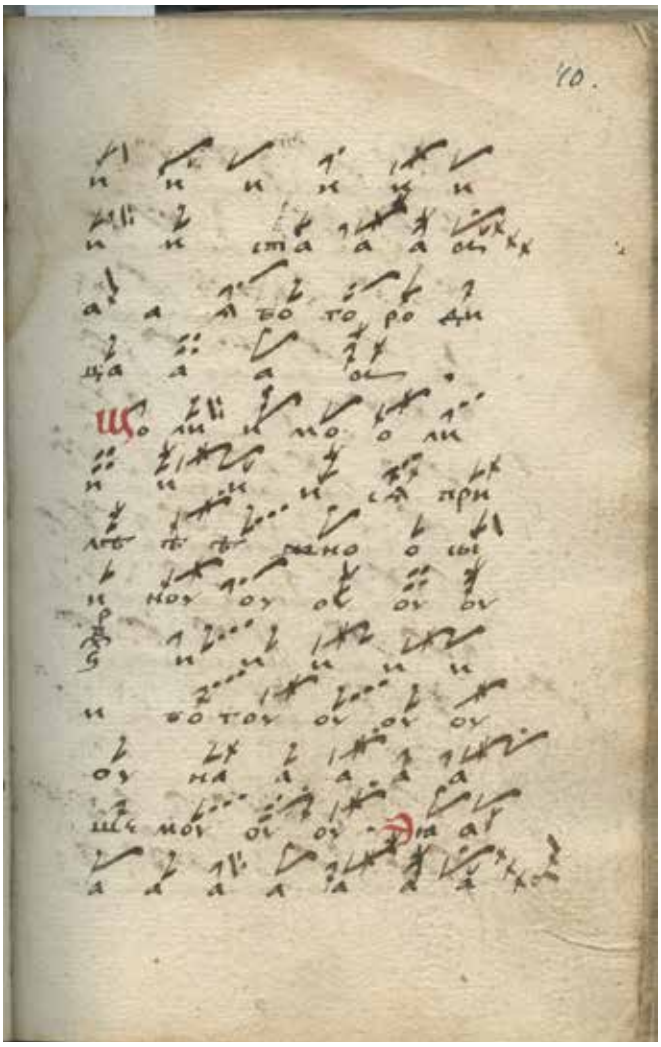

**Fig. 2 a–p**
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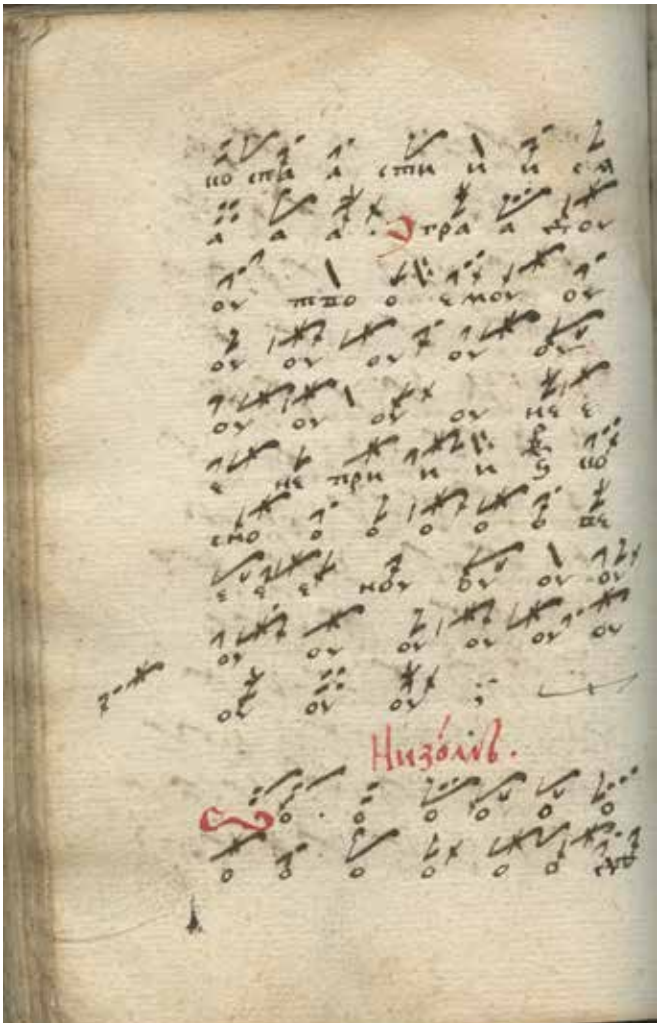


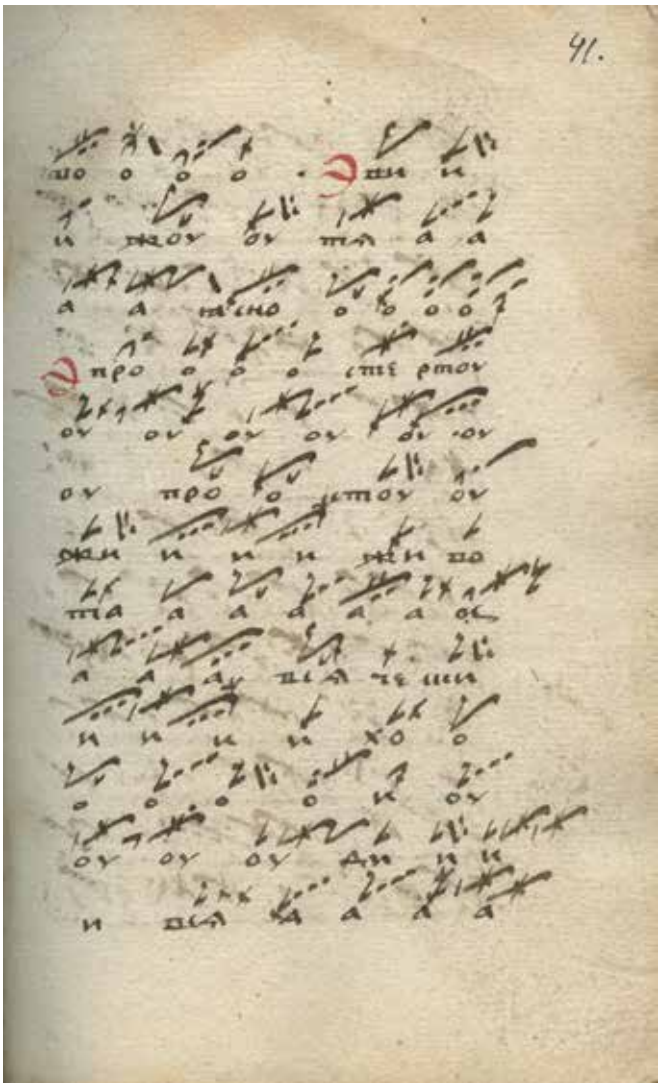

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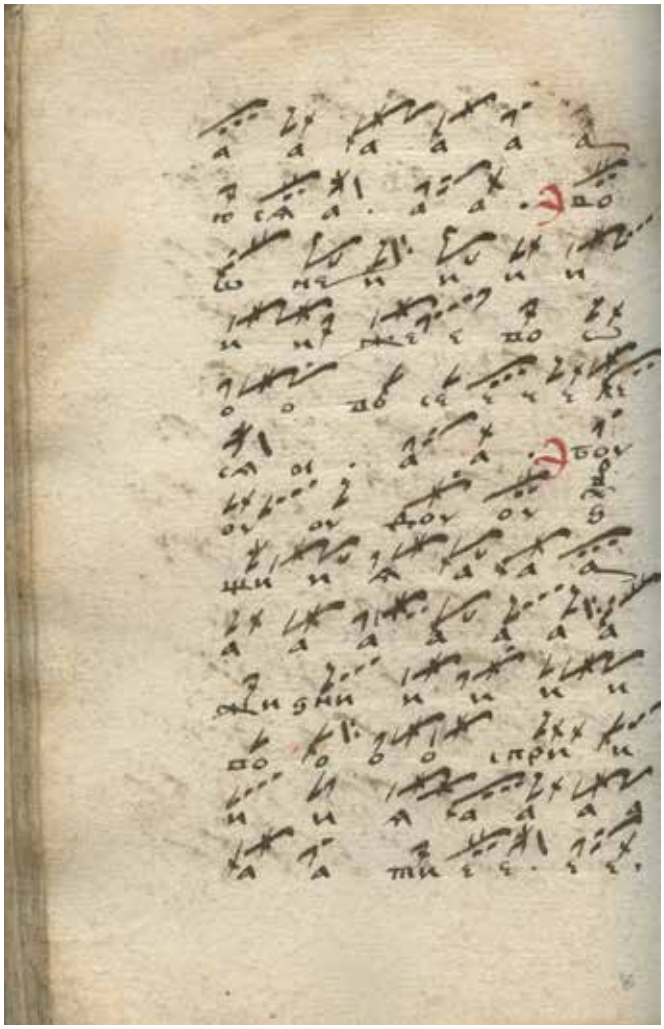
NMM f. 283, No 15, fol. 41 об., 42



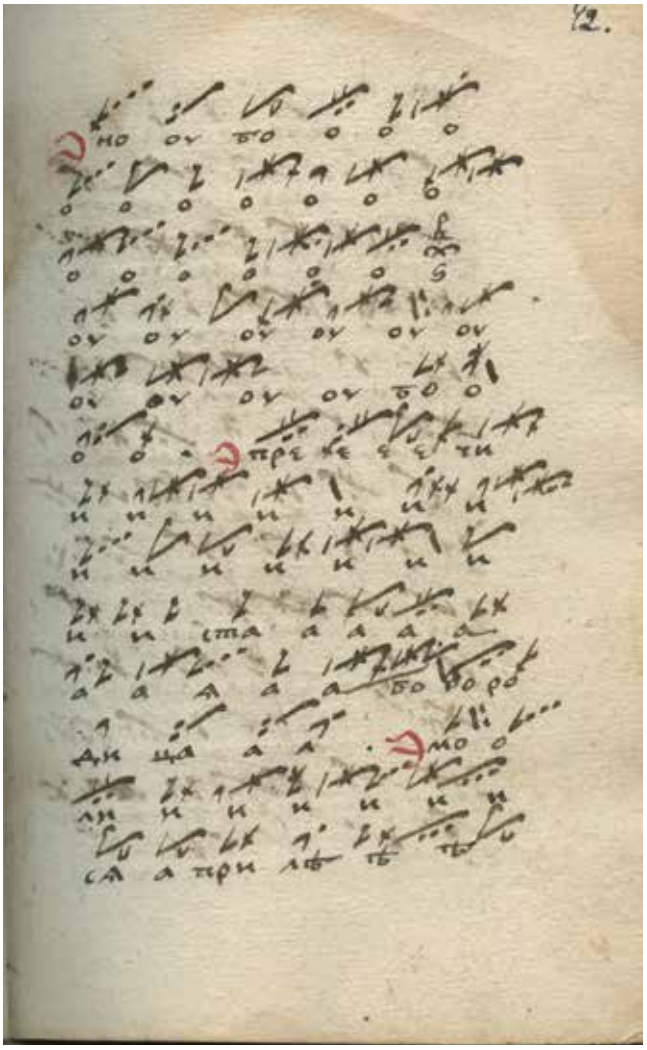


**Fig. 2 a–p**
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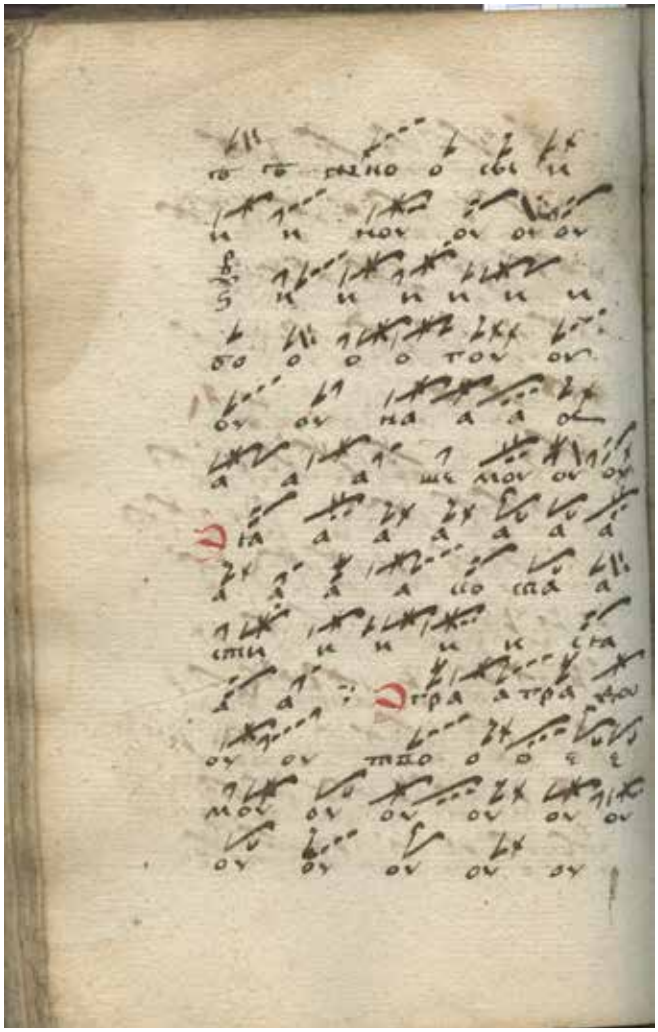

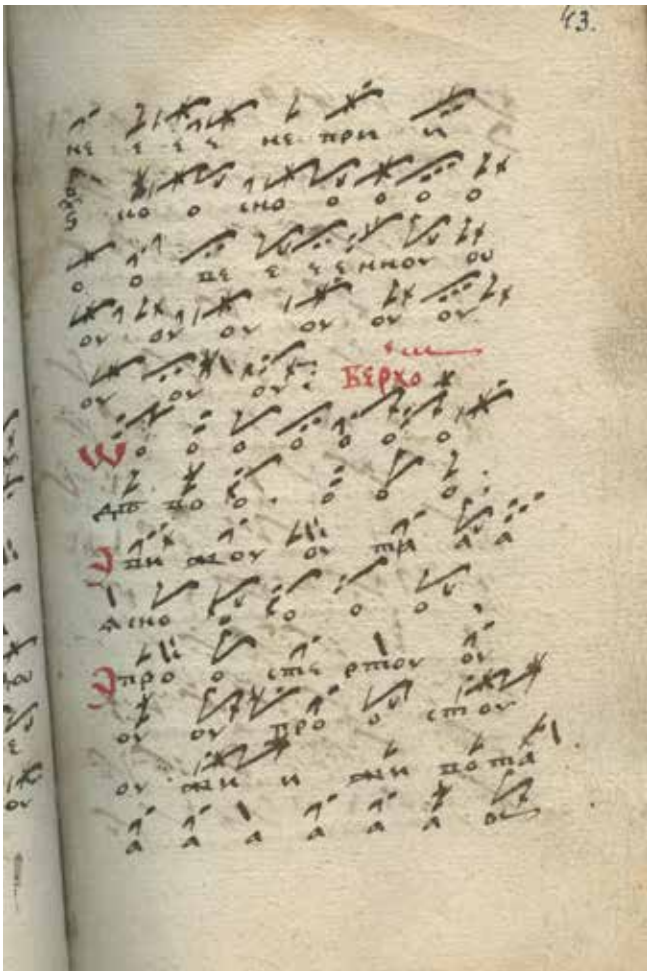

**Fig. 2 a–p**
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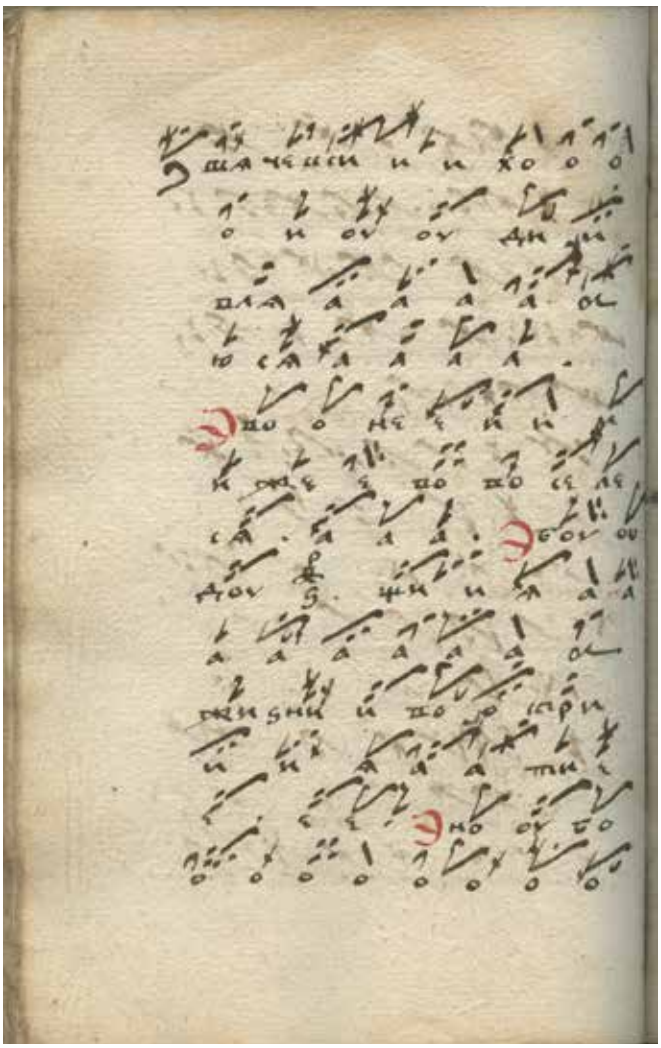


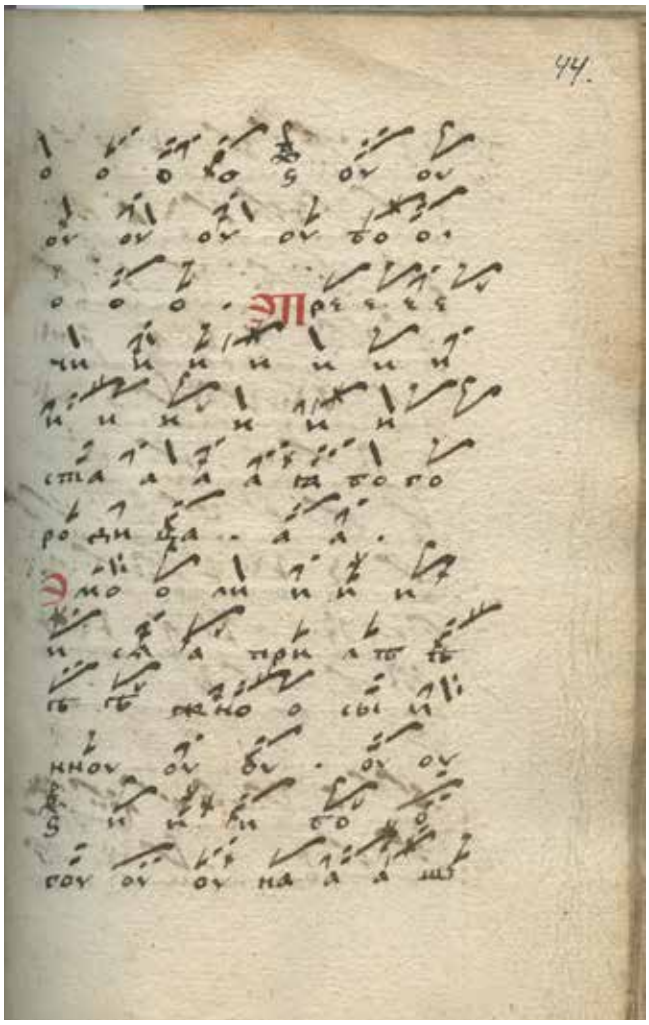
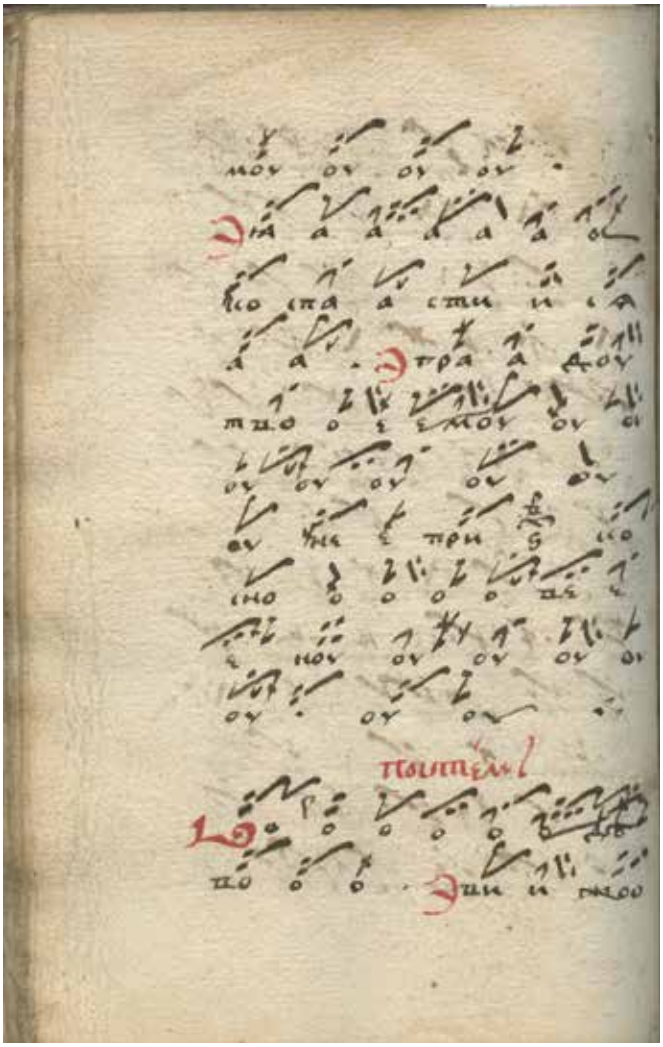


**Fig. 2 a–p**
NMM f. 283, No 15, fol. 44 об., 45



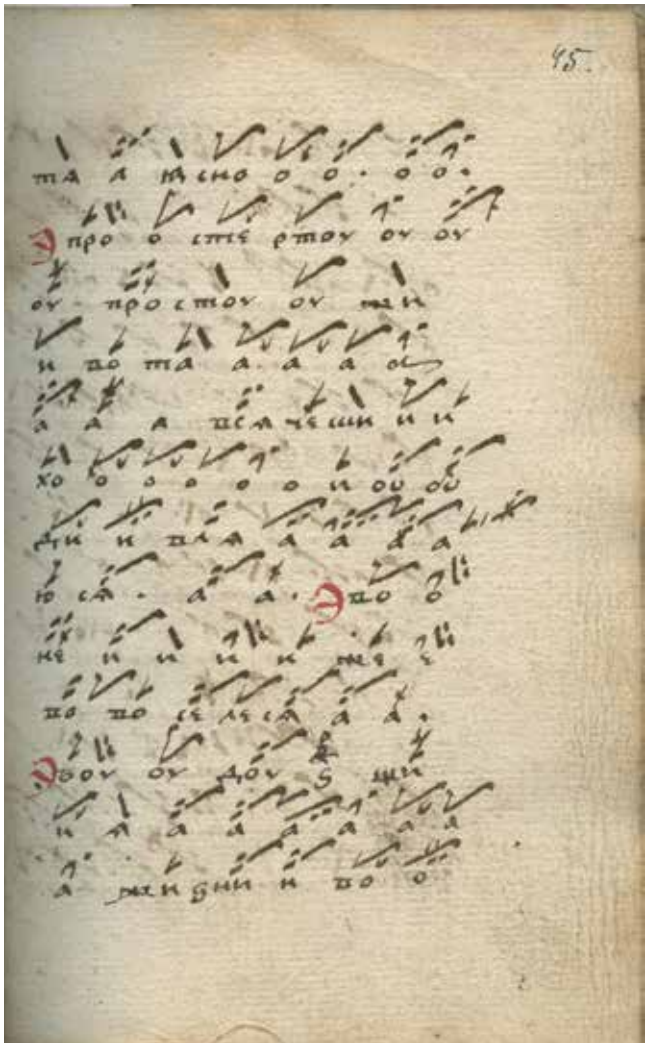


**Fig. 2 a–p**
NMM f. 283, No 15, fol. 45 об., 46

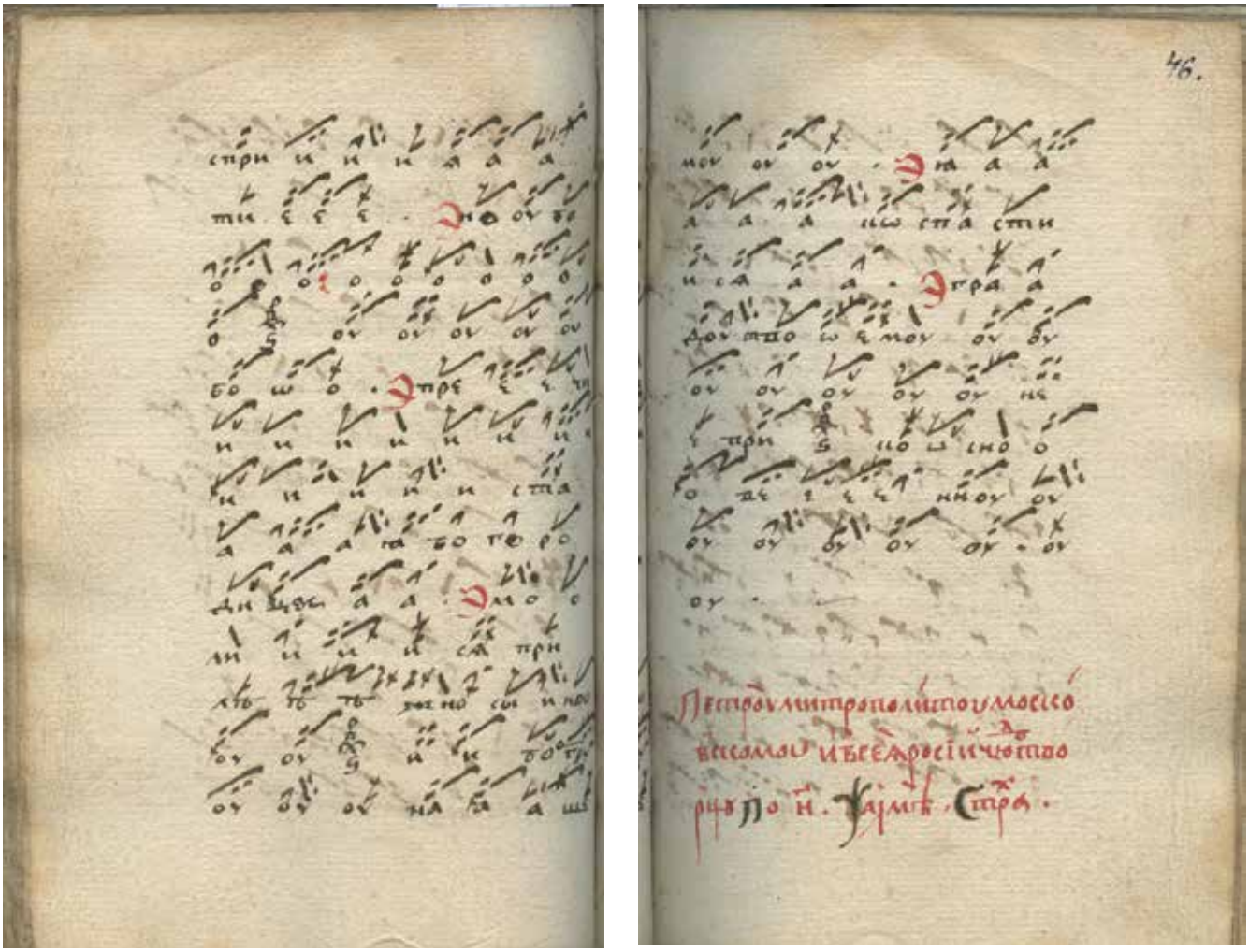


**Fig. 3**
GIM Mus. 564 Title of 2nd part of the sticheron

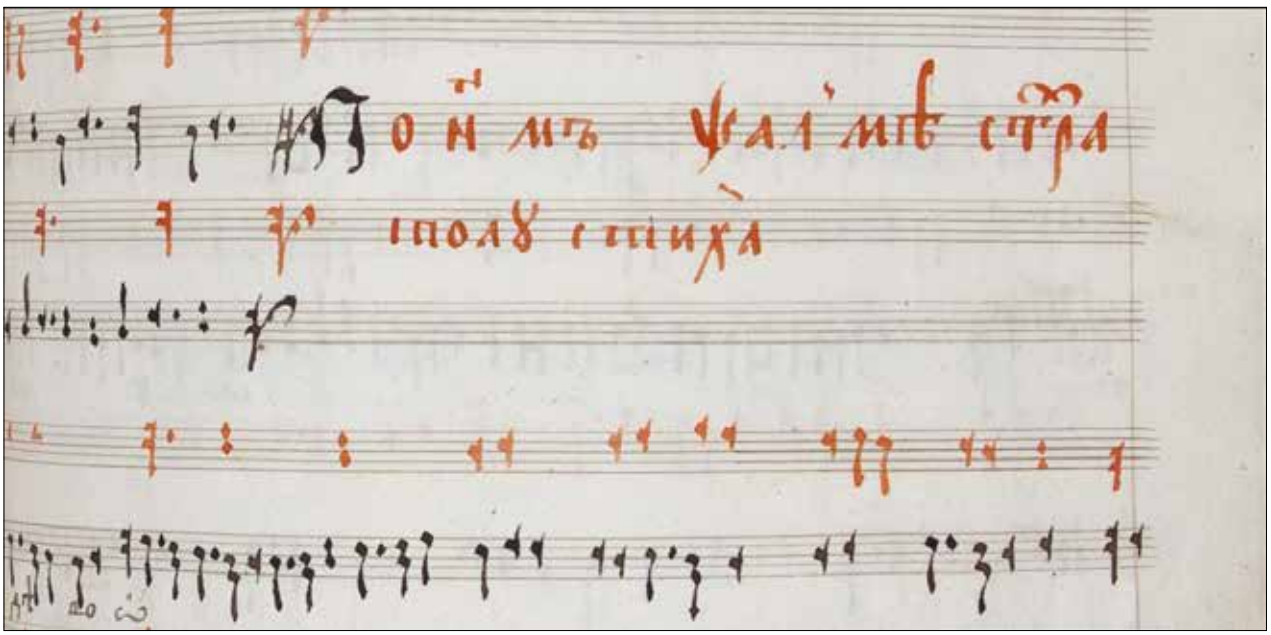


**Fig. 4**
GIM Mus. 564 Final formula

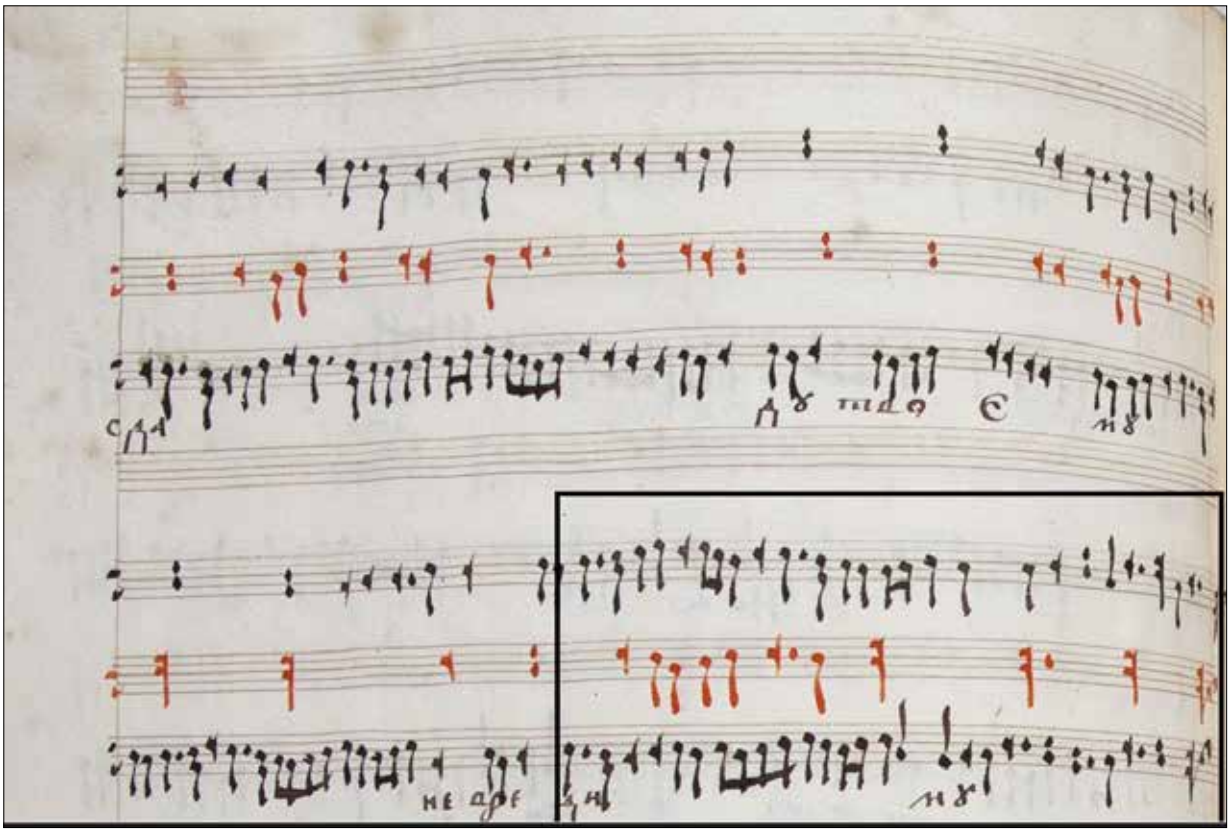
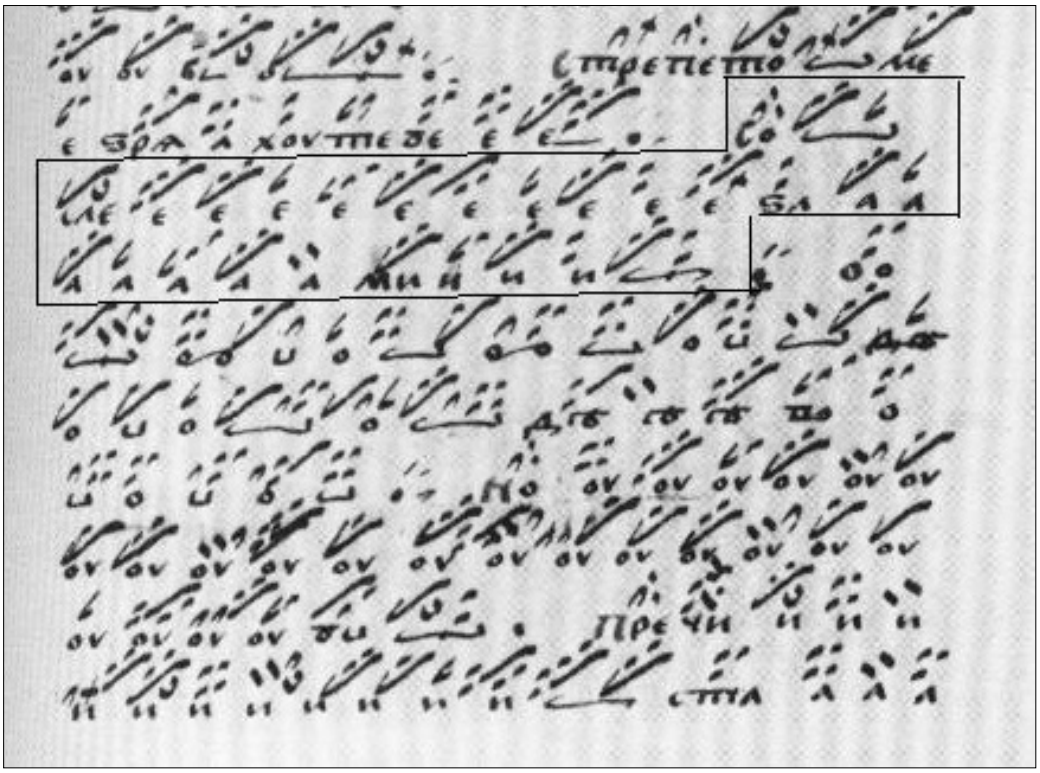


**Fig. 5**
RNB KB 665/922 Kluch Znamennoy by Monk Christofor. From Христофор. Ключ знаменной, 1604, М., Музыка, 1983, Памятники рус. муз. искусства, вып. 9.



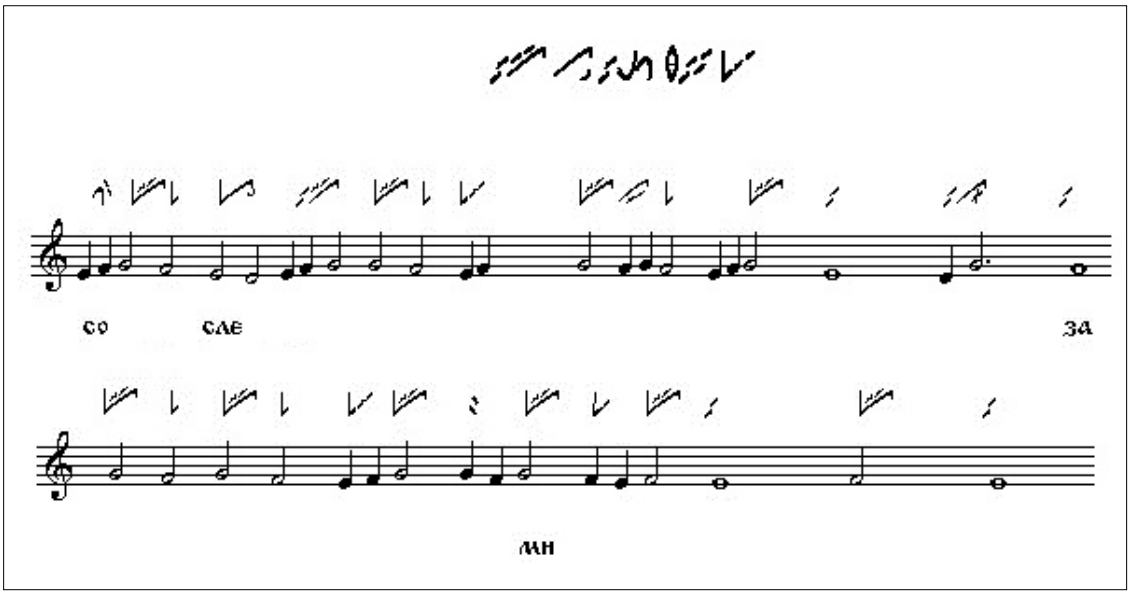



**Fig. 6**
Deciphering of fita according to Christofor's rozvod

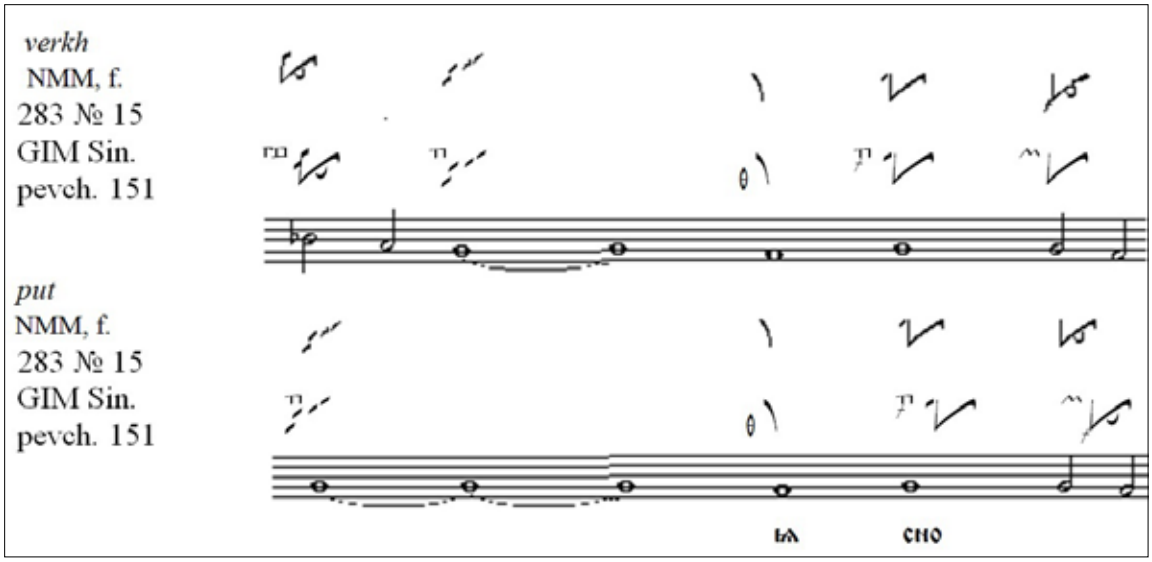



**Fig. 7**
Fragment with mutation

**Fig. 8**
Musical form of 1st part

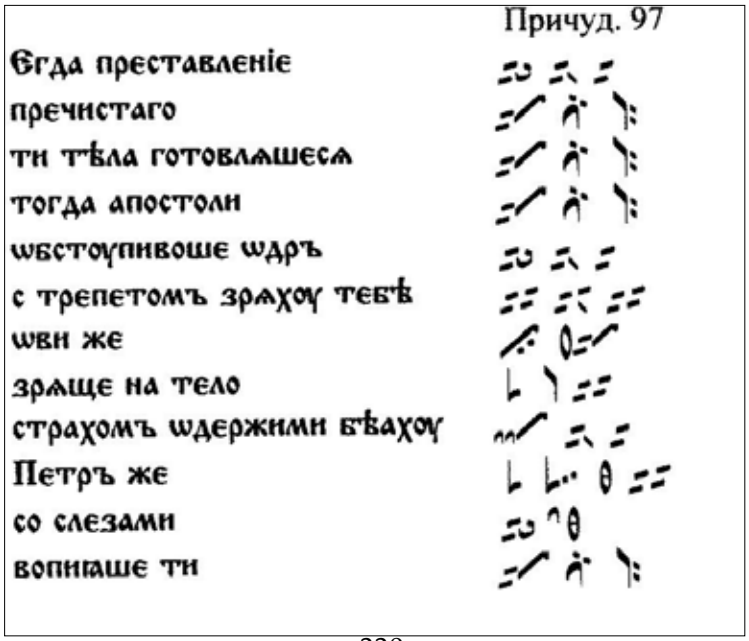
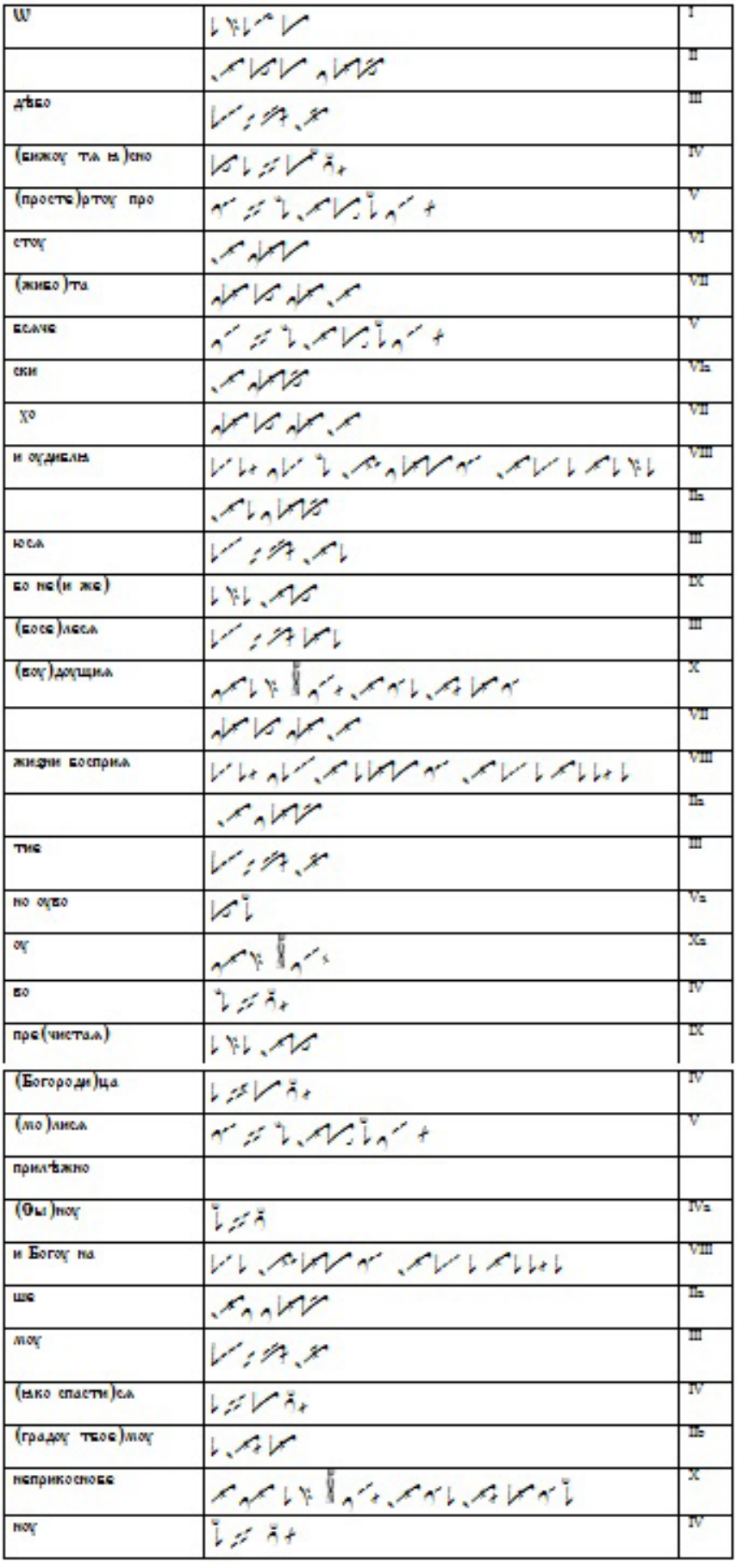
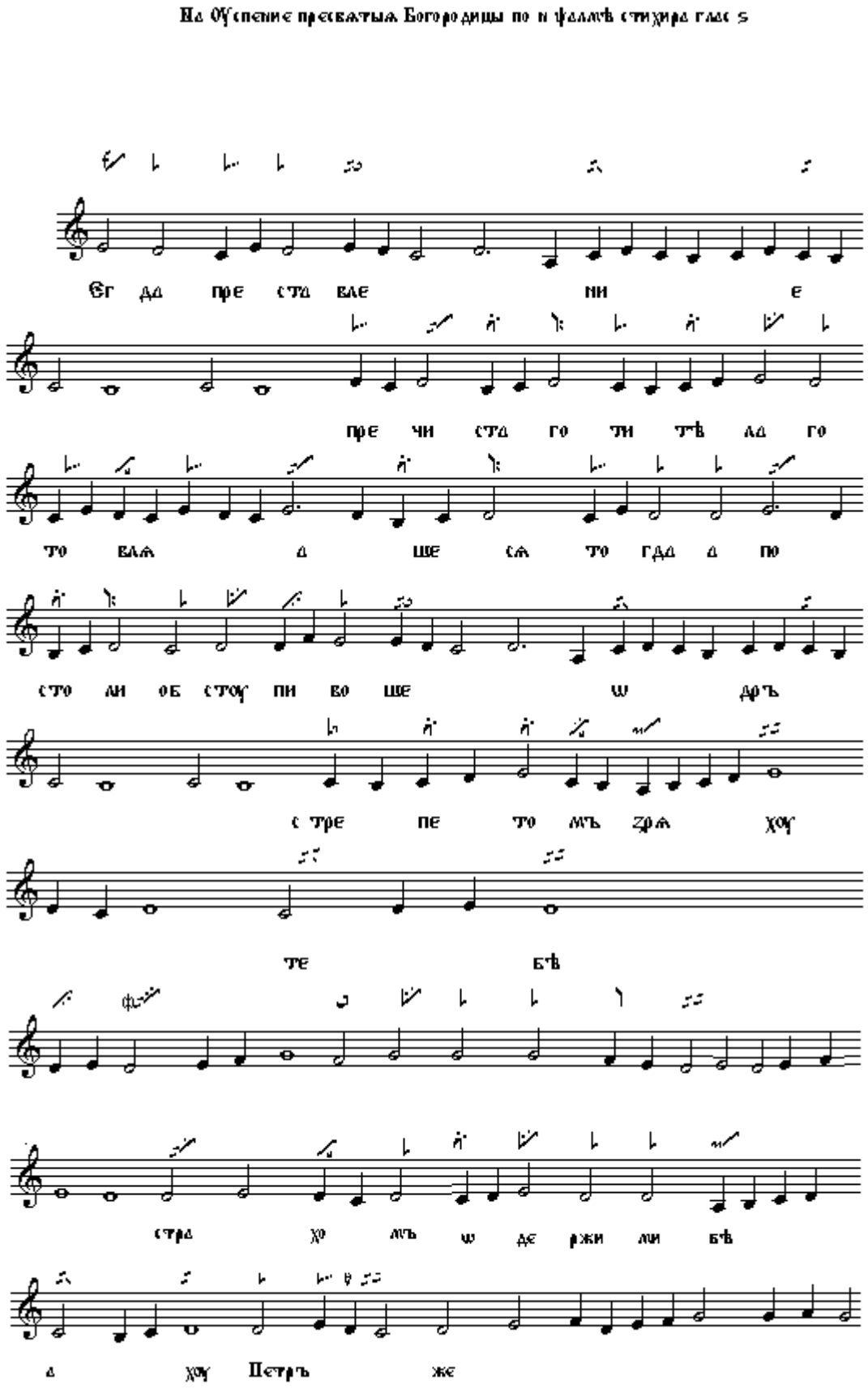
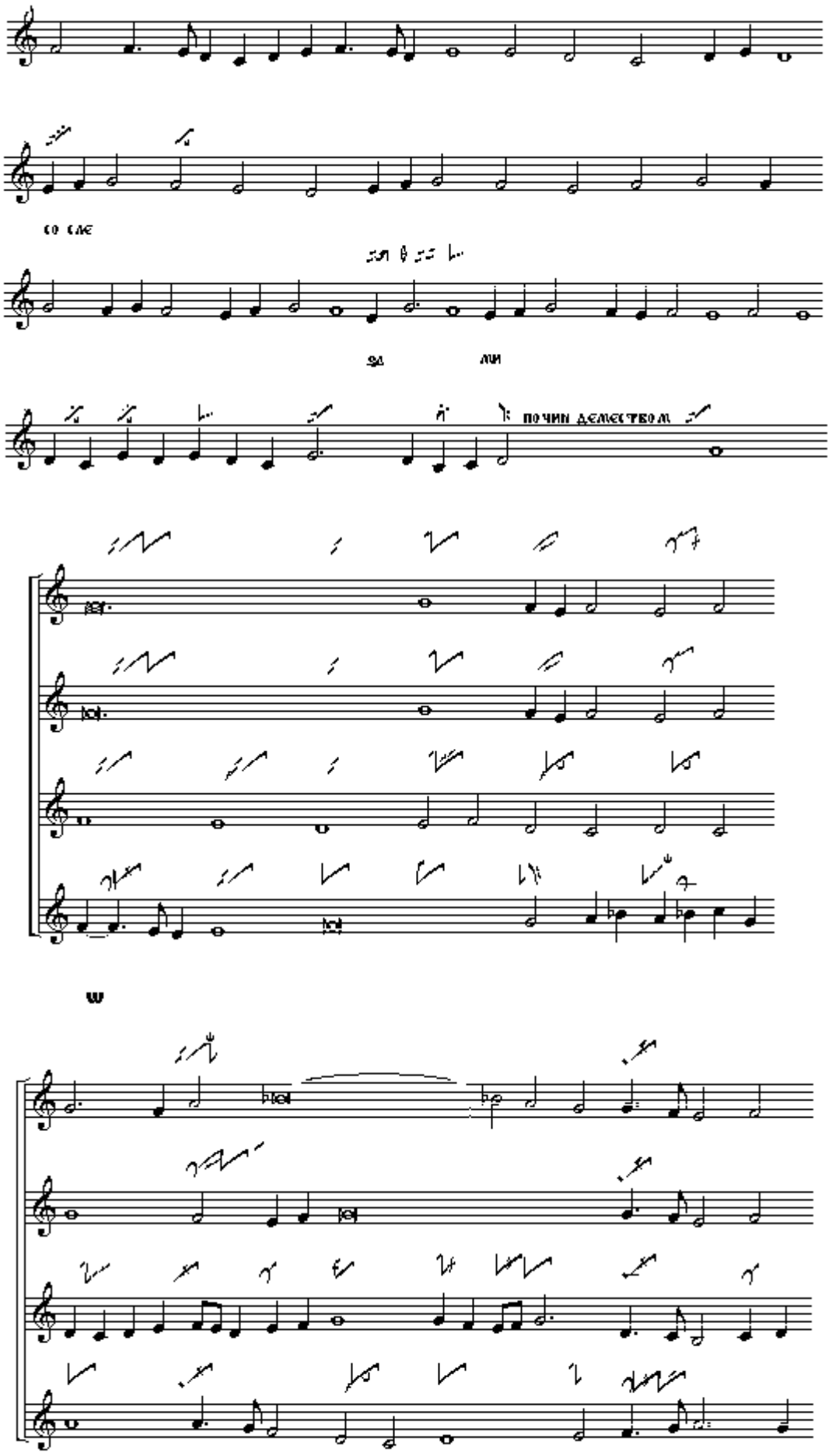


**Fig. 9**
Musical form of 2nd part



## RECONSTRUCTION

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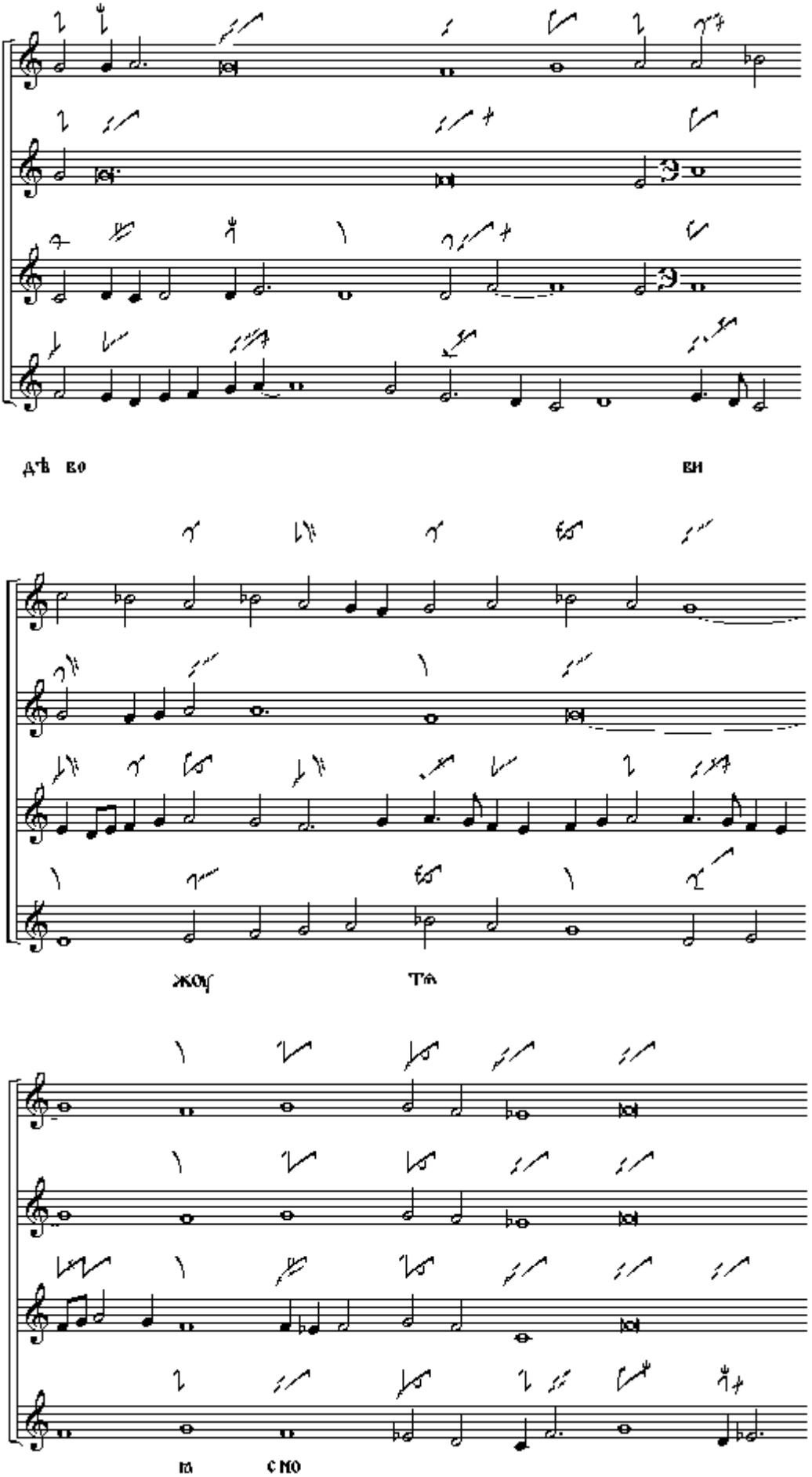

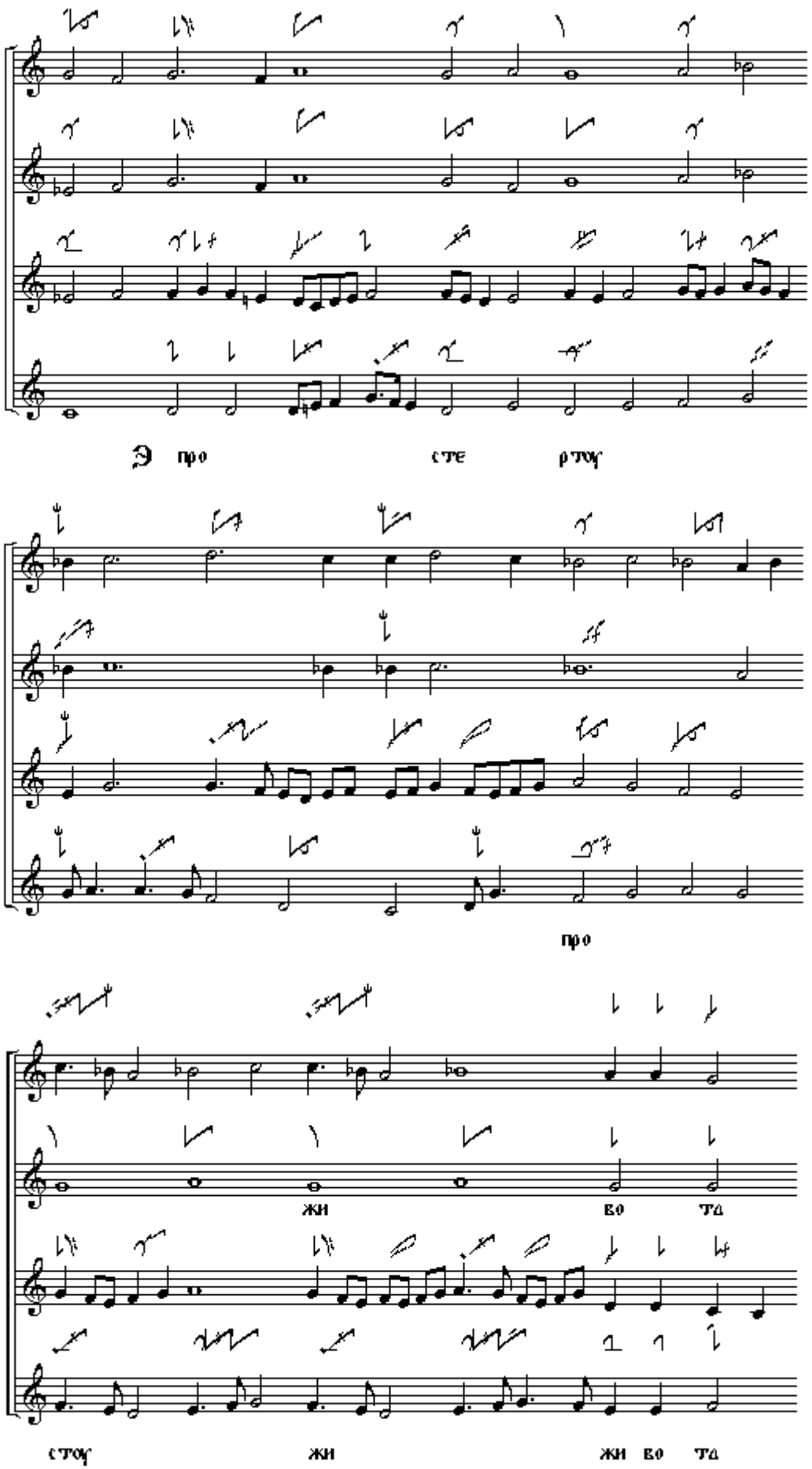
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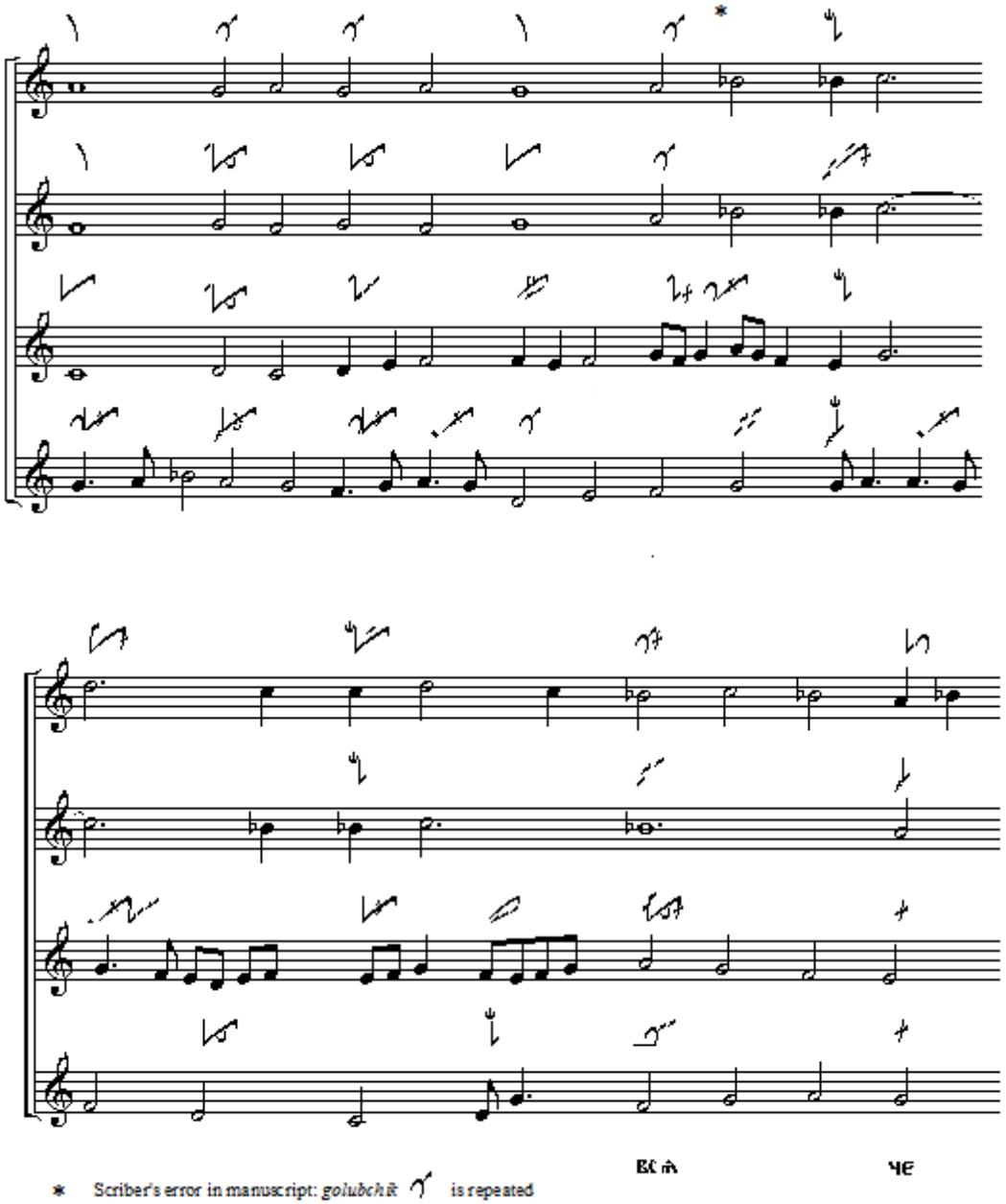
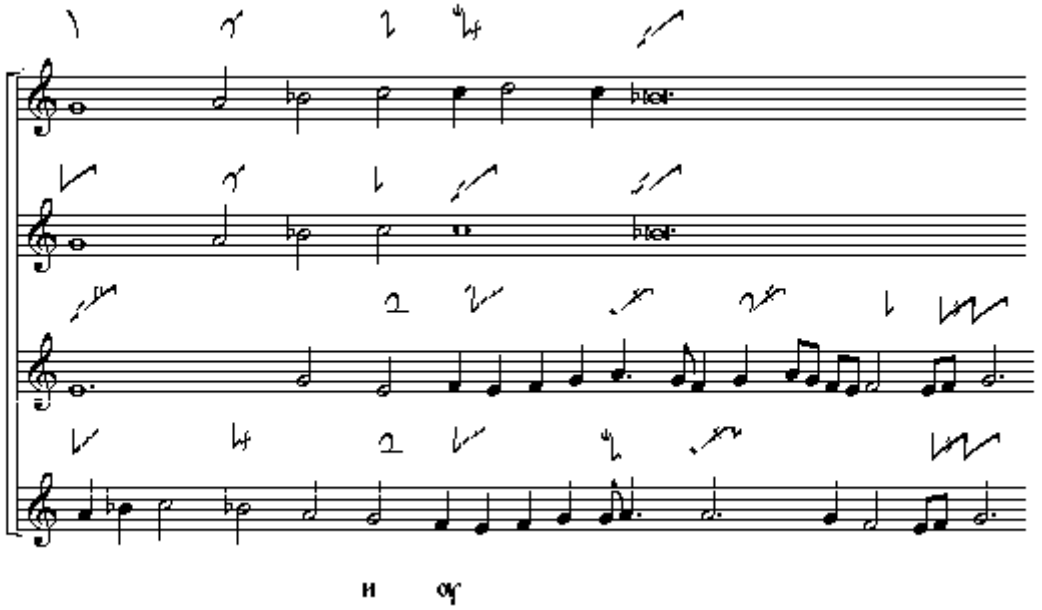
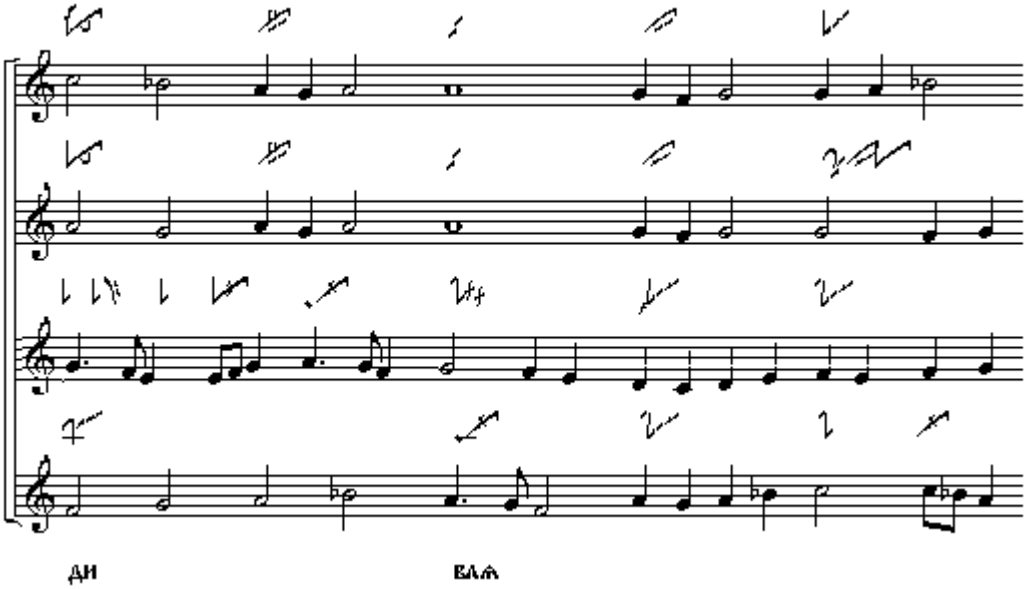
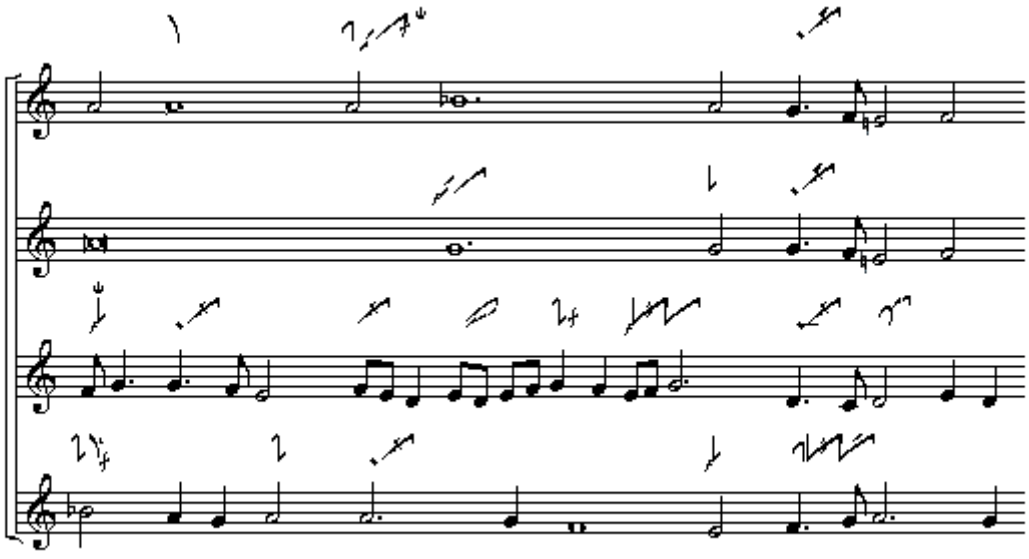
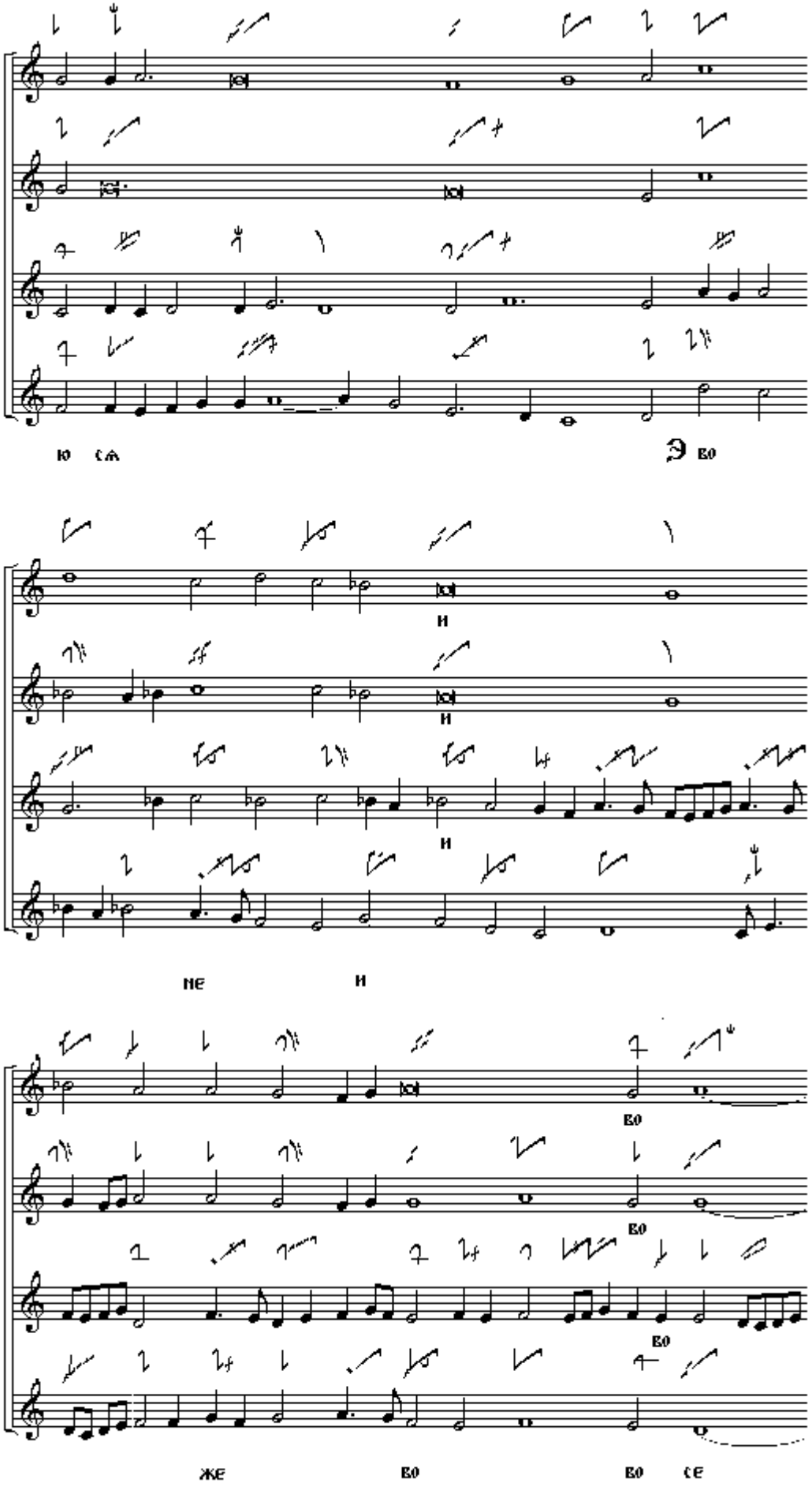


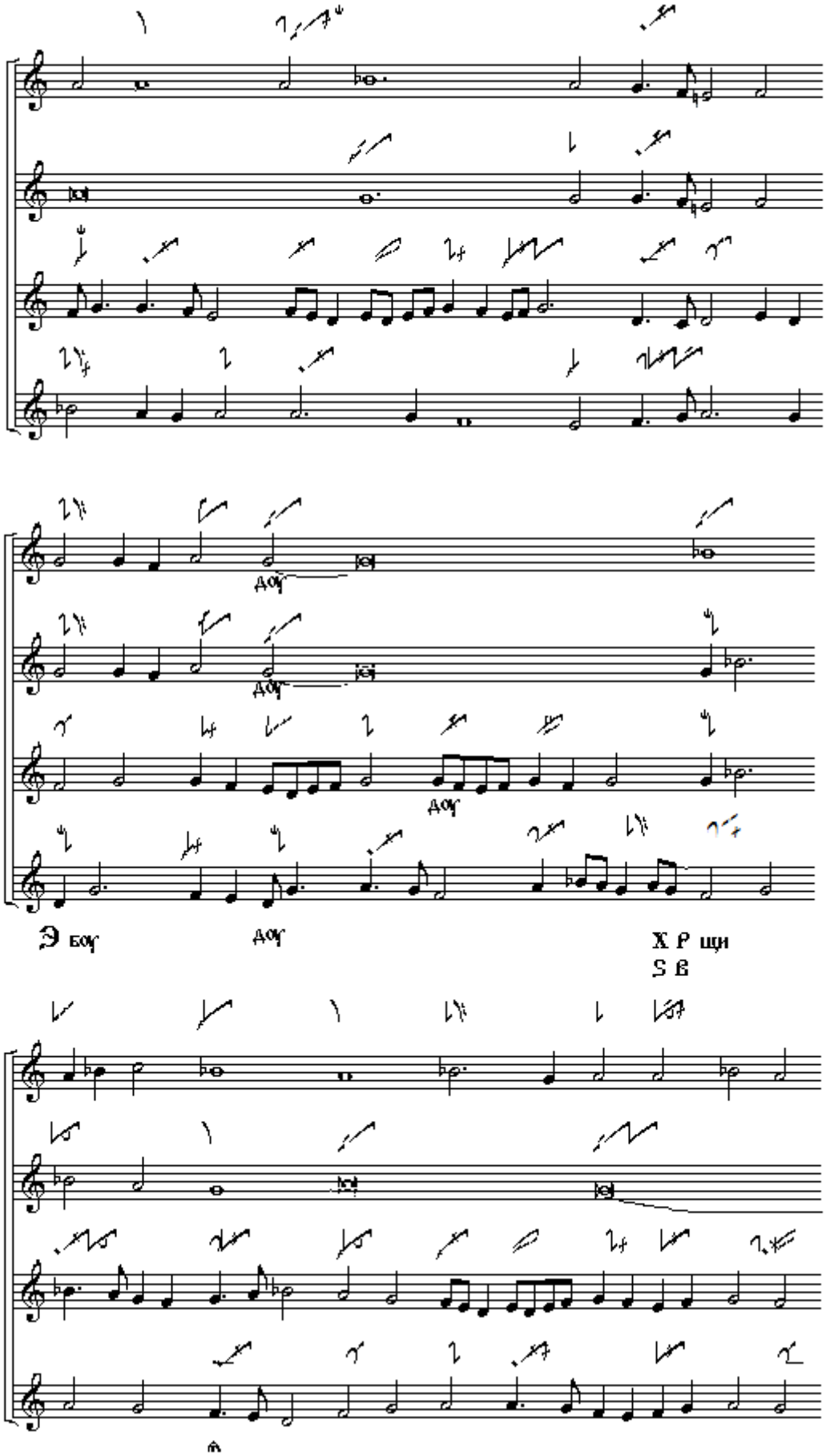
* Scriber's error in manuscript: *golubchik* is repeated







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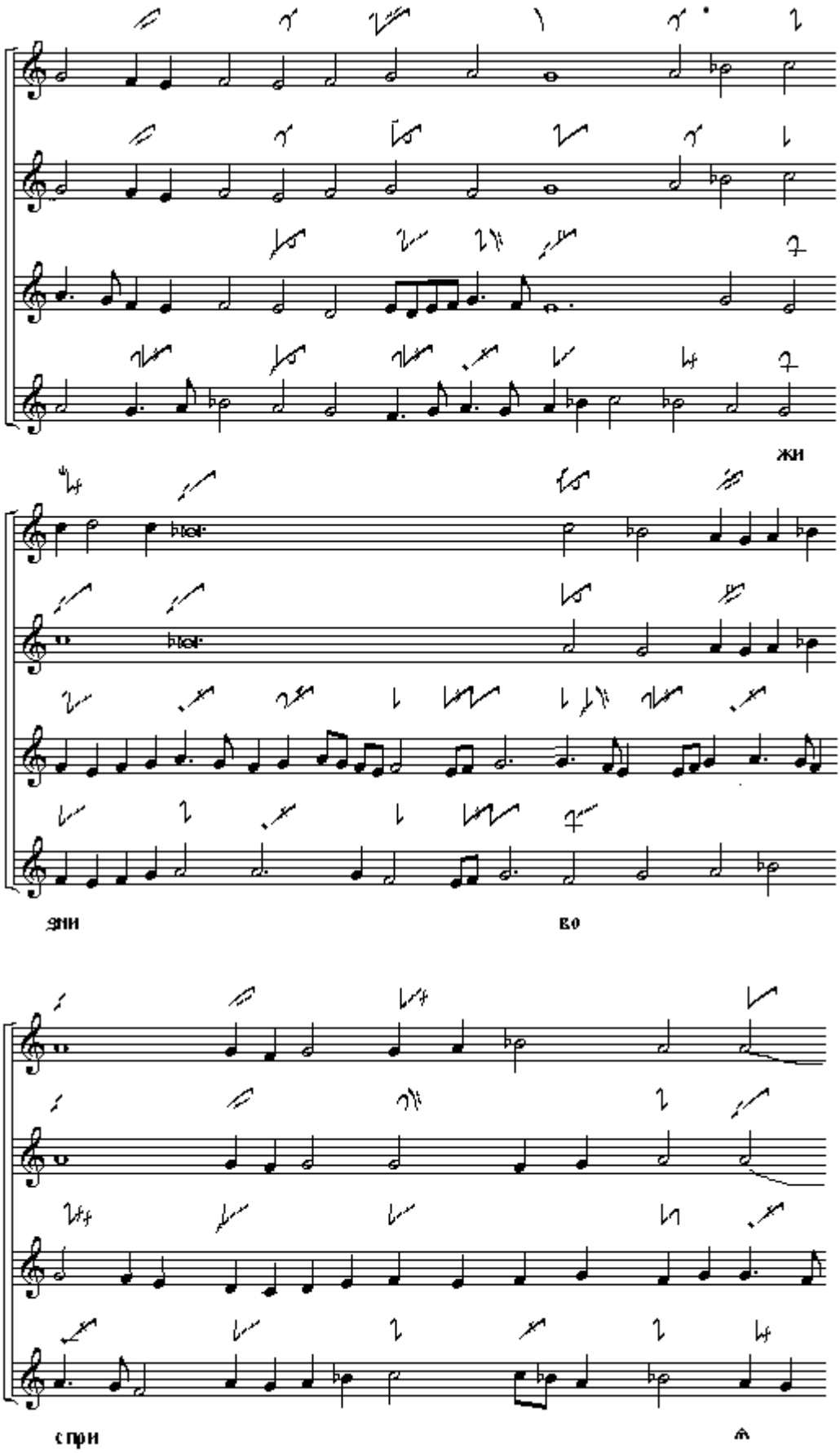
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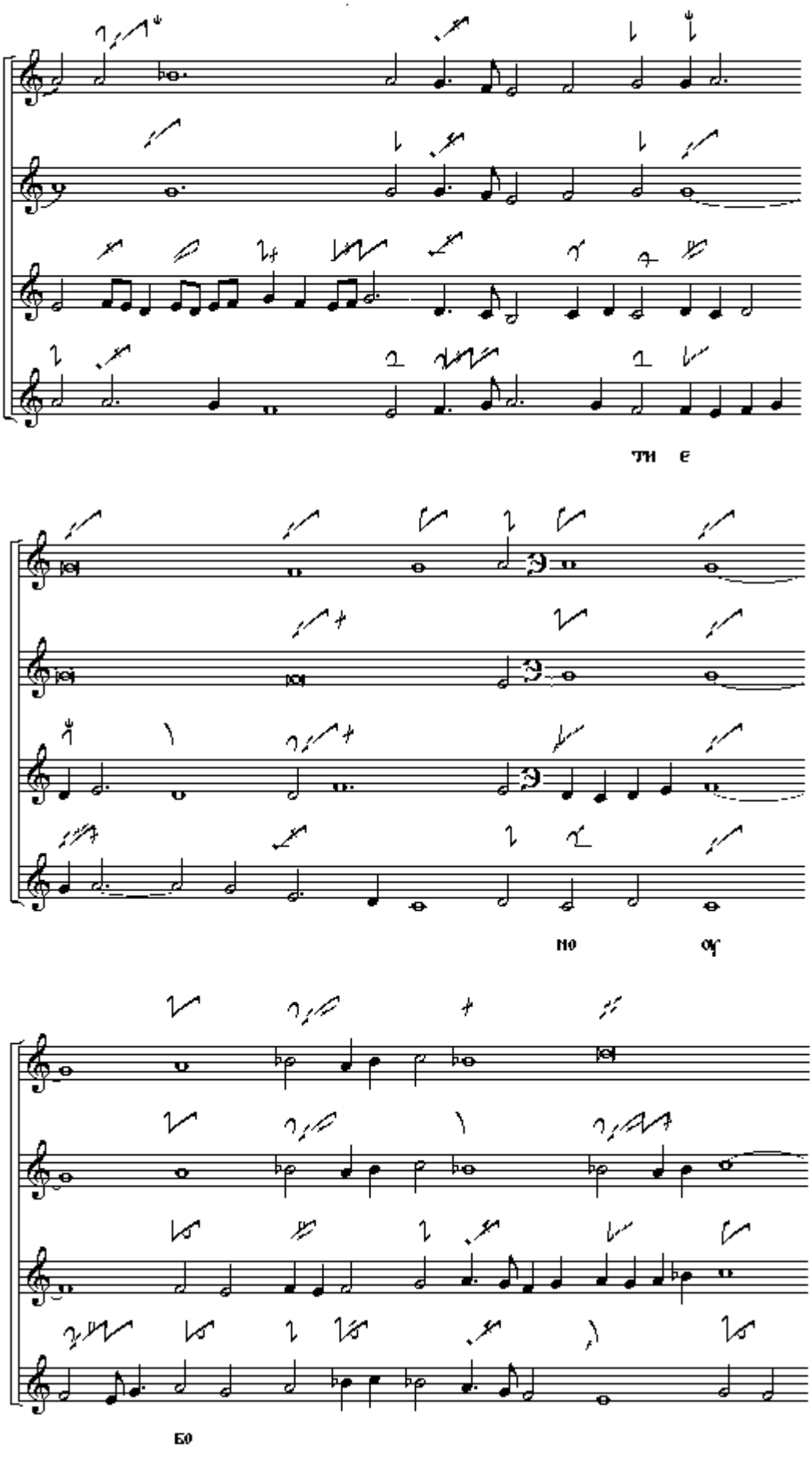

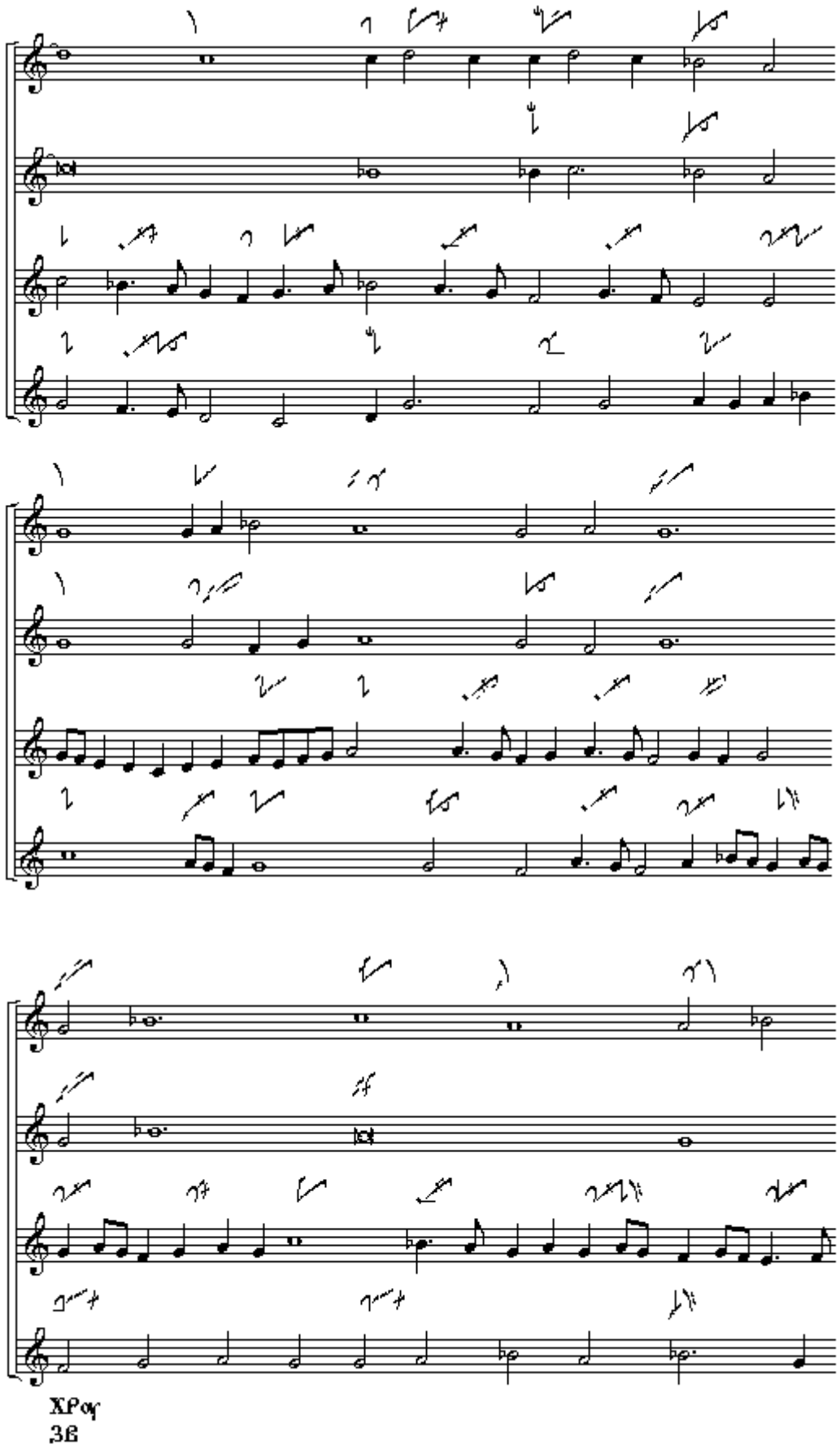

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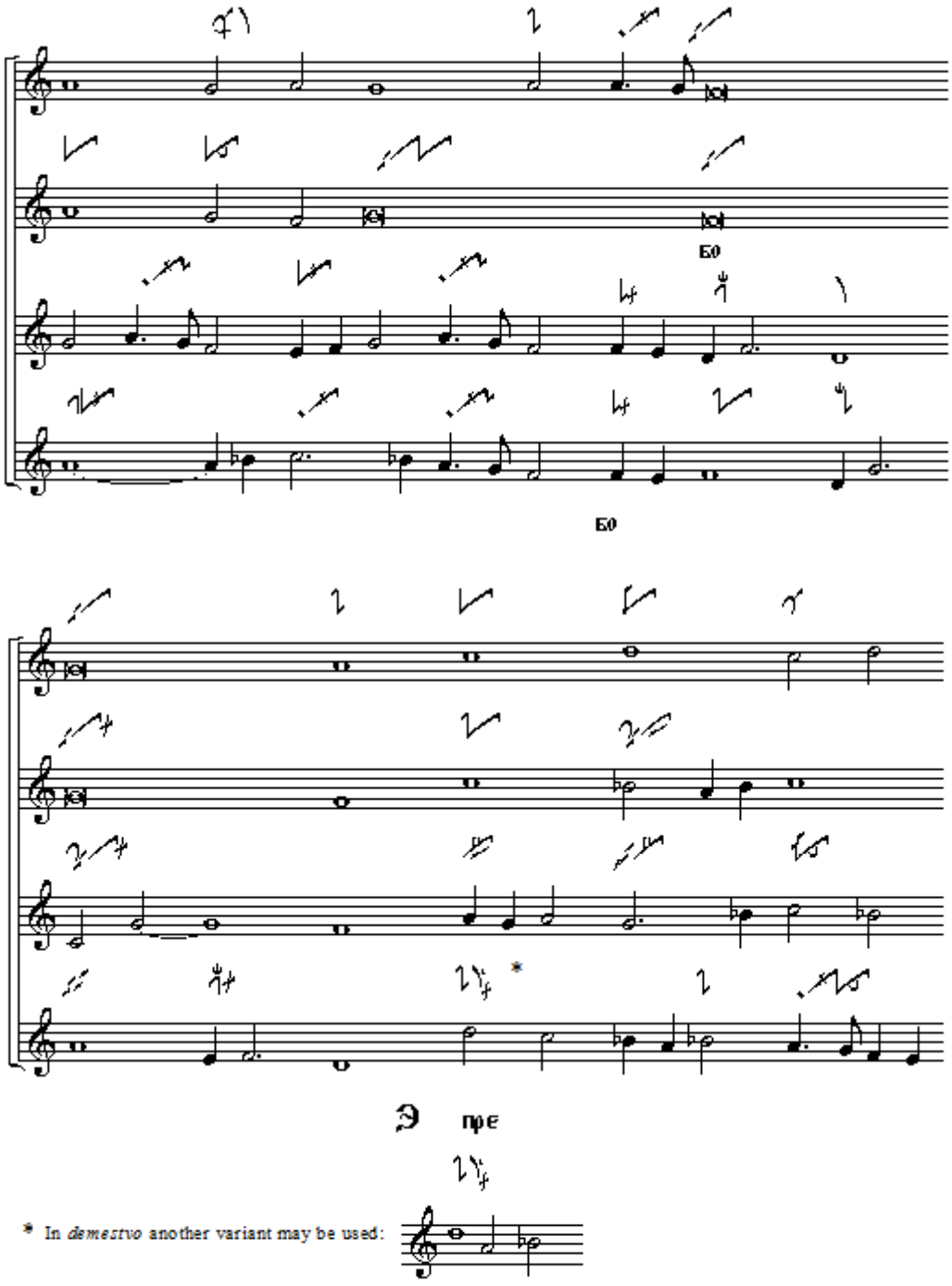
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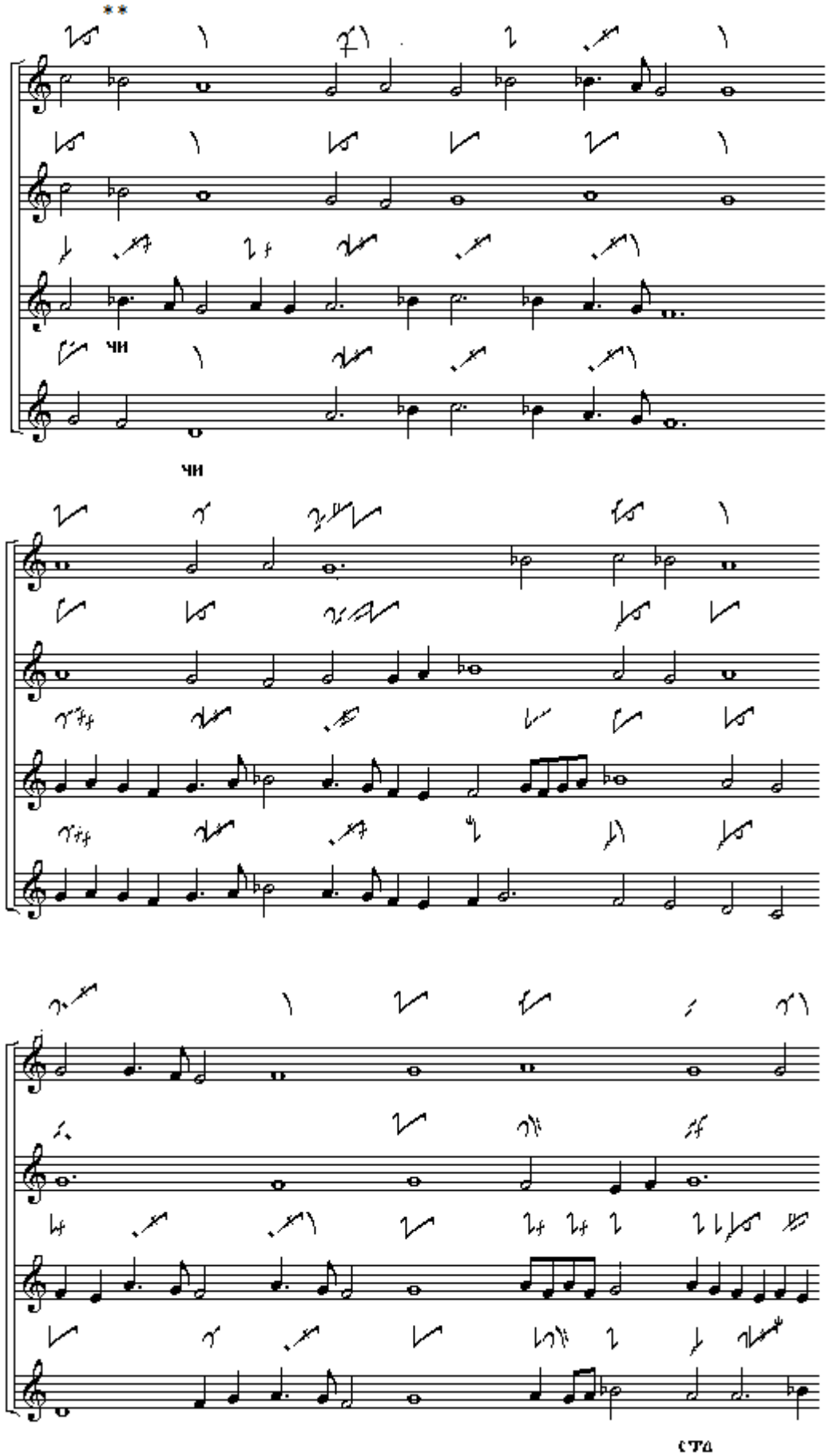
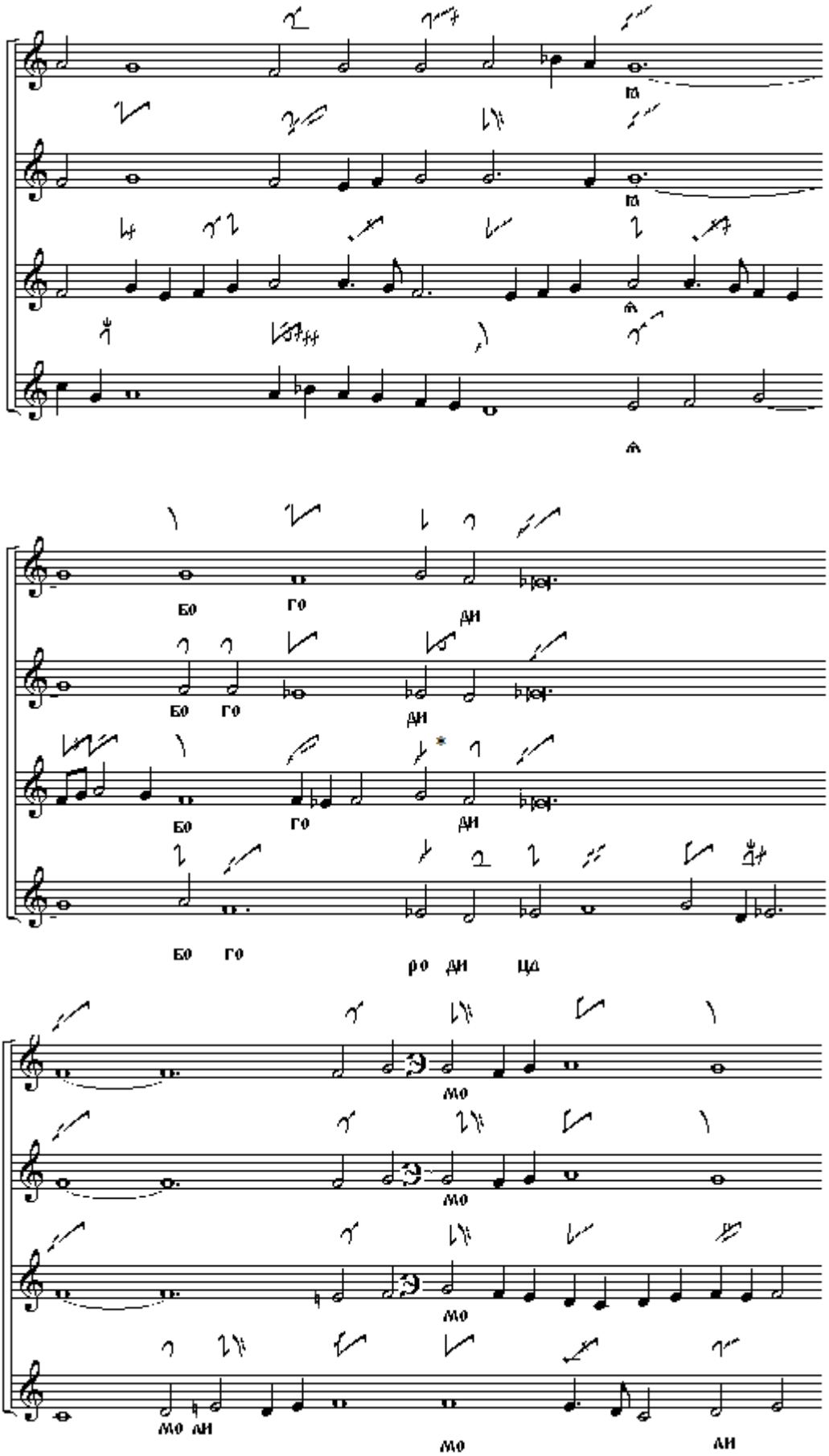
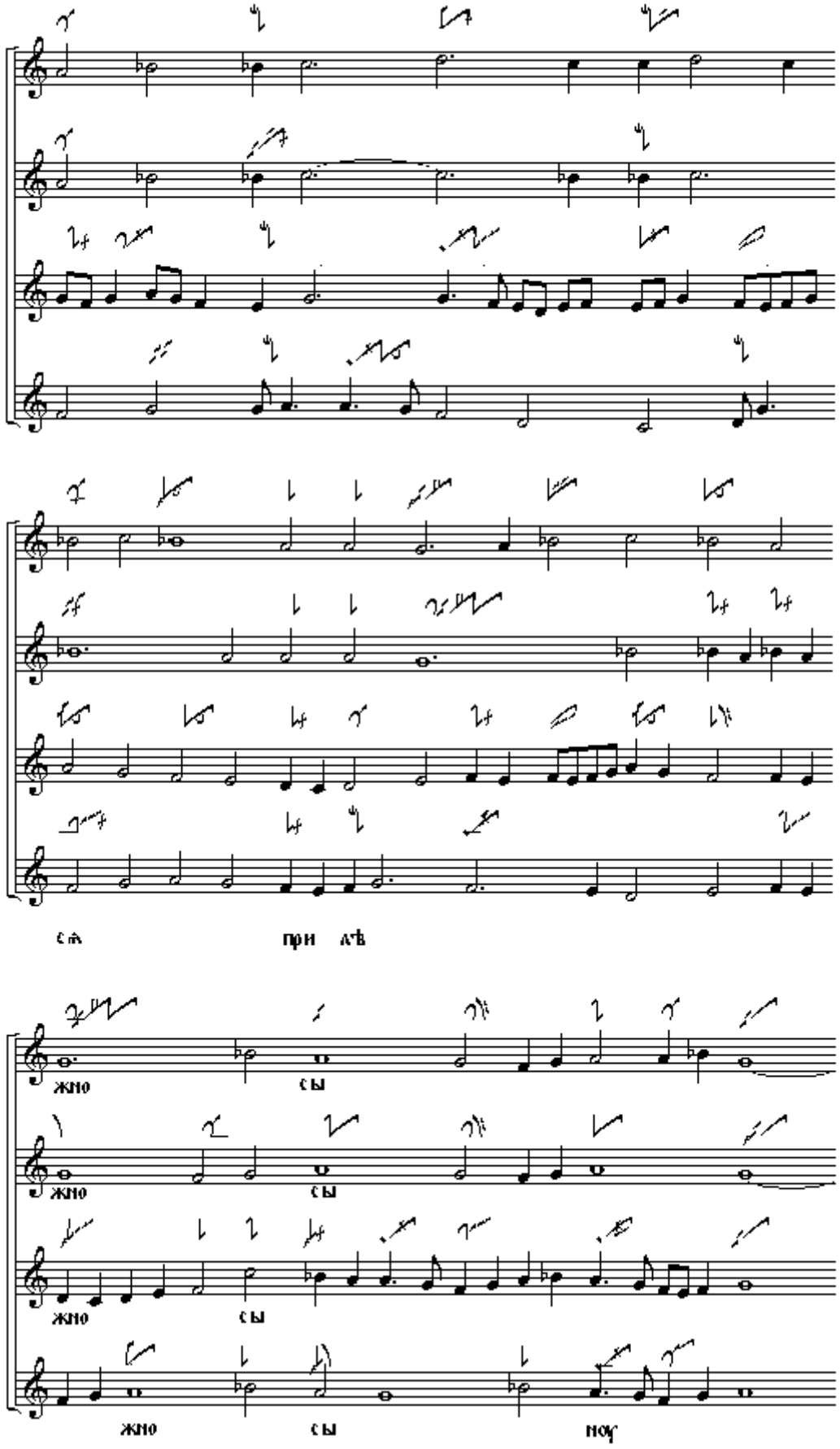
* In *demestvo* another variant may be used:




**The top *priznak* probably is scriber's error. In the similar fragment on words во неизже *kriuk* with low *priznak* is used




* Probably a low *priznak* isn't correct. In the same fragment on the word ясно ясно the top *priznak* is used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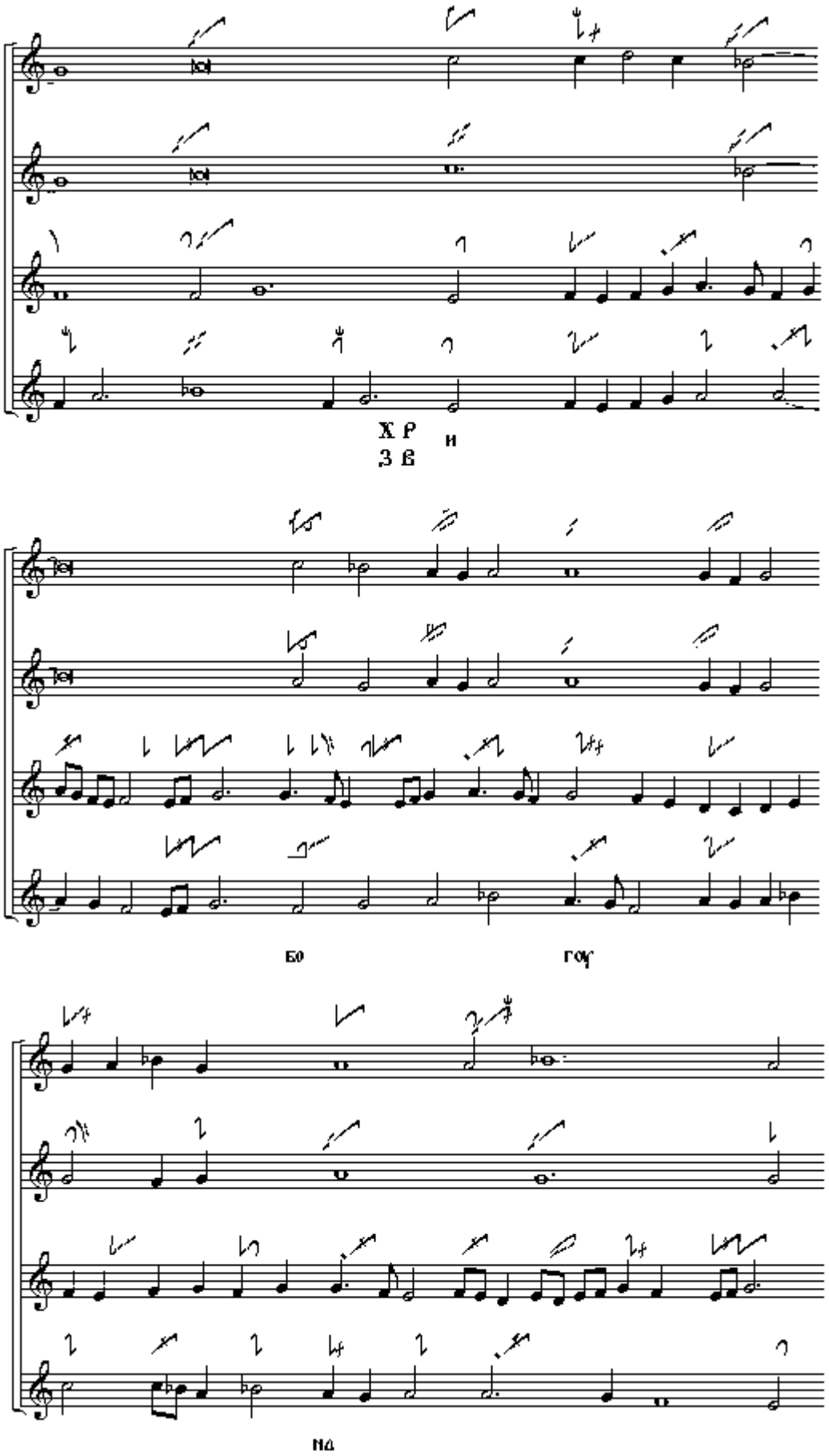
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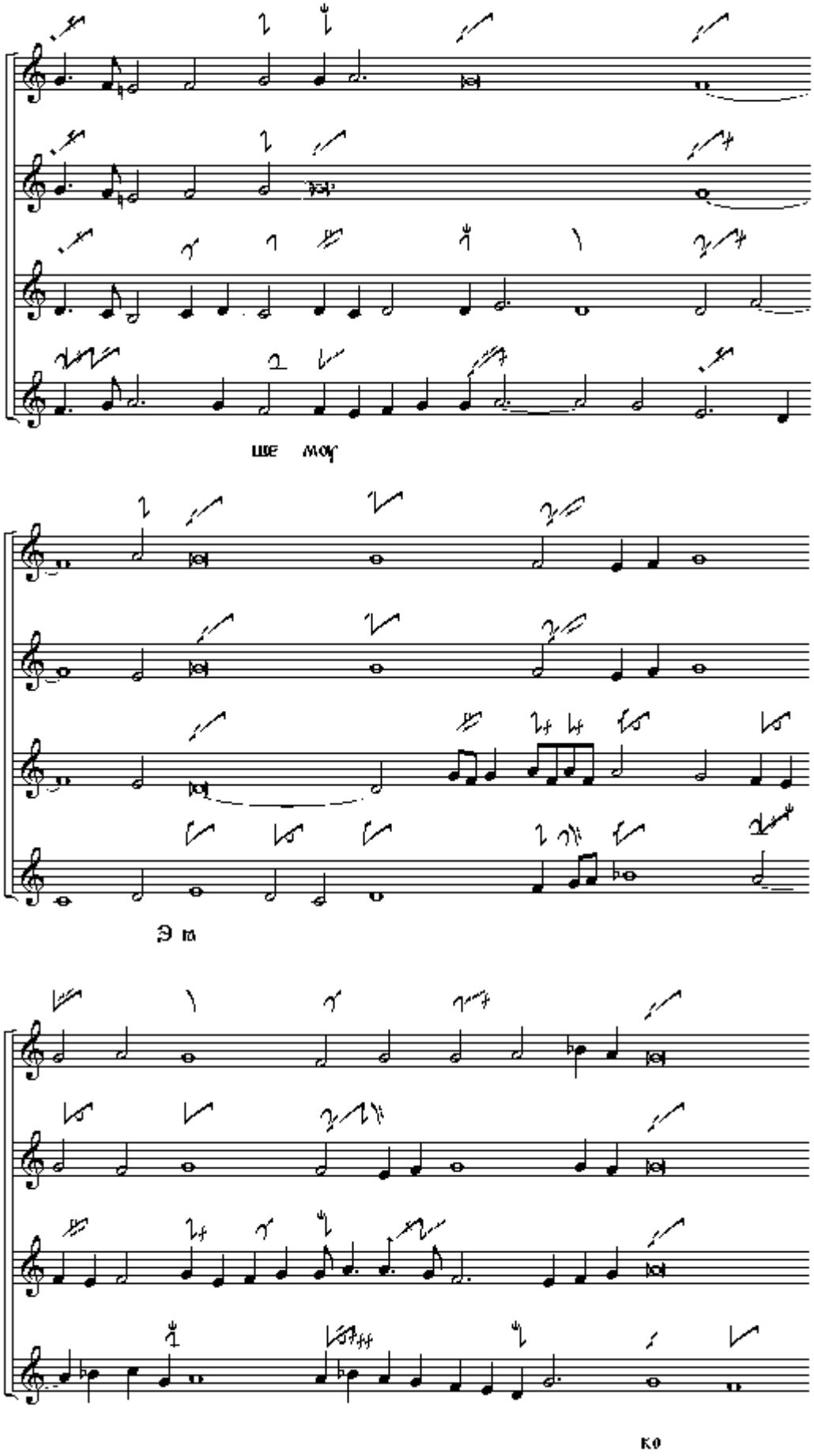

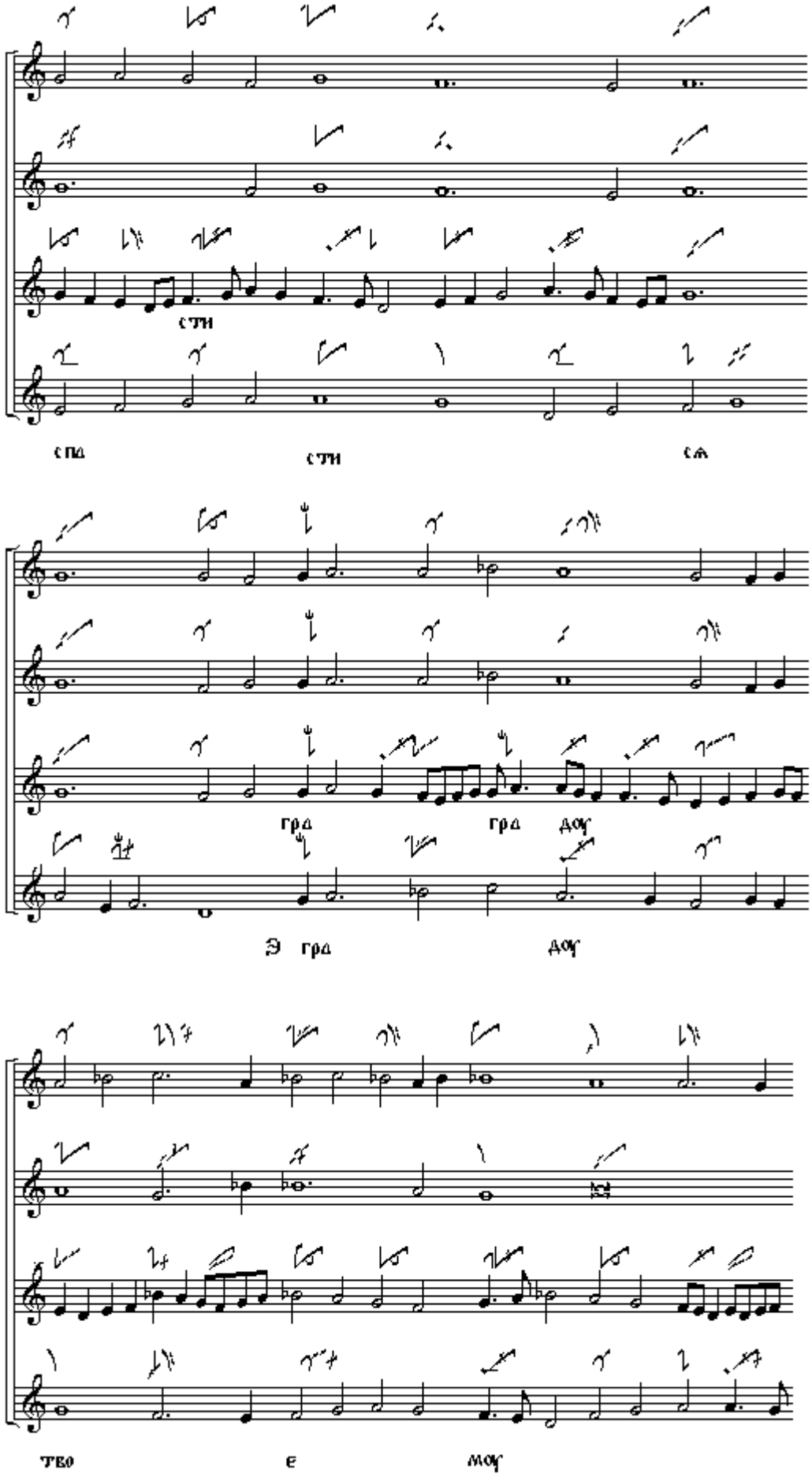

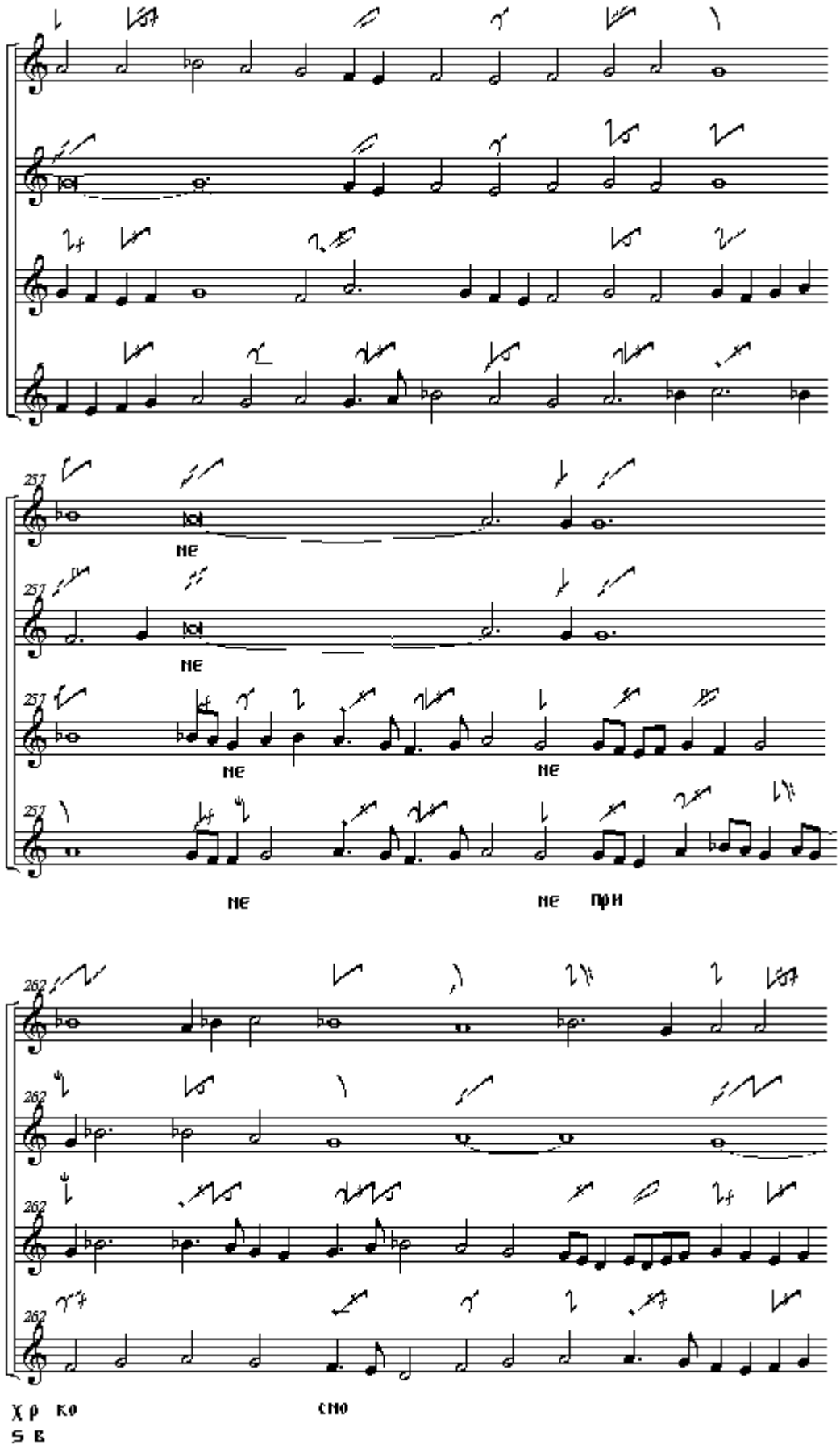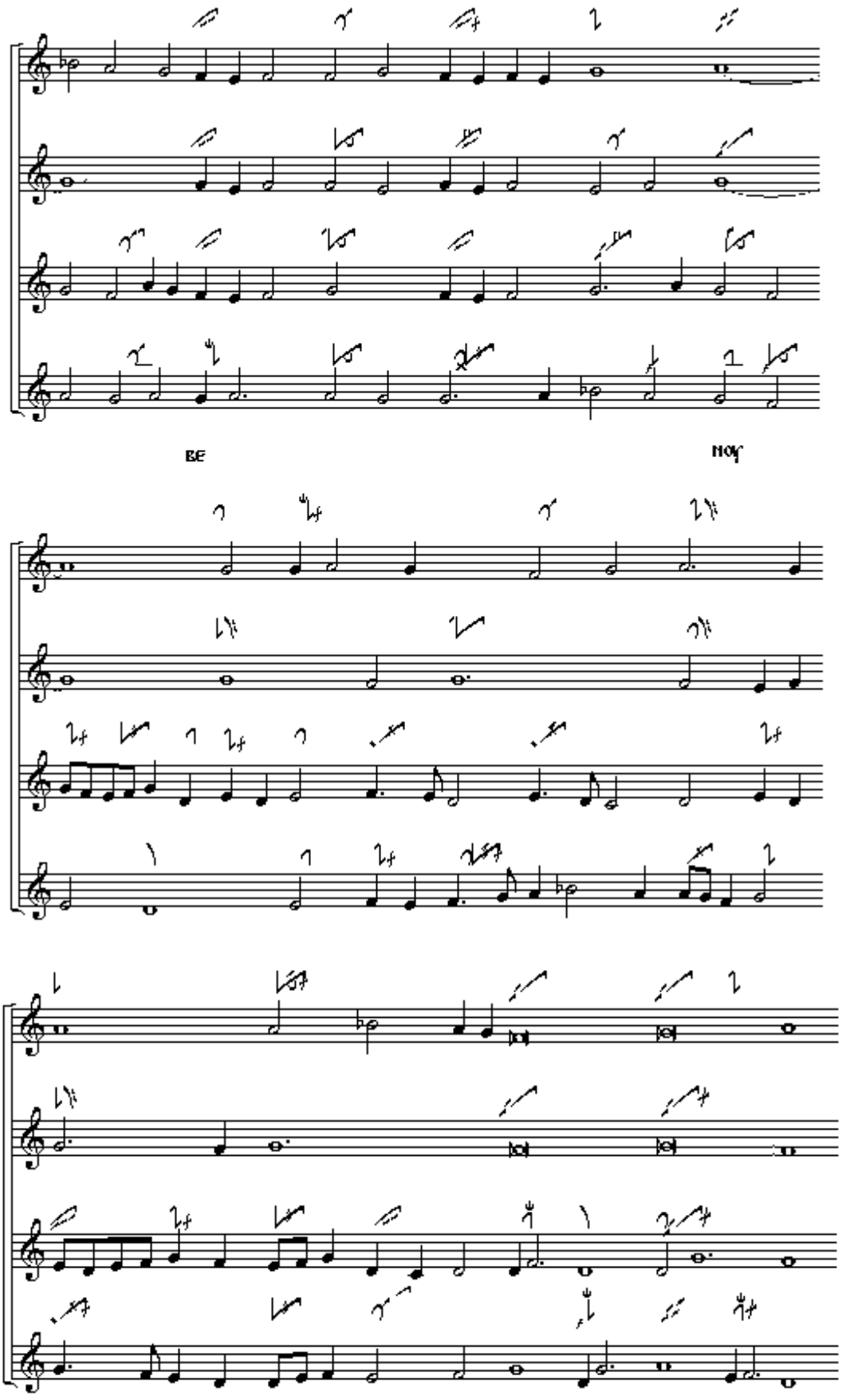
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