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MUSICAL DIMENSIONS OF QUALITY JUDGEMENTS IN LITURGICAL TRANSLATION[1]

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Abstract

The paper is dedicated to the issues of how translation quality assessment can deal with the musical aspects of liturgical praxis. It is not limited to the matters of melody and isosyllabism (which partially overlap with the theory of verse translation), but it has also to cover the issues of functionality, perception and reception (which are integrated in translation sociology and criticism). The study consists of three foci: singability and melody (isosyllabism and local chants, collective and individual creativity), historicism (hidden interpretations, functional censorship) and phonetic and semantic prosody (problems of subjectivist perception, churchly interventions, modulations of poetic texts for liturgical use). The problem of relay translation looks very unusual: although all liturgical texts came from the same language (Patristic Greek), vernacular believers receive their national texts which were translated via the mediating language (Latin or Church Slavonic, or even more languages). The main text of the analysis is the Paschal Troparion (in the Greek, Church Slavonic, Ukrainian, Polish, and English versions), but observations over other various

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liturgical texts are included. The juxtaposition of the Roman and Byzantine Rites shows how great the role of vocal music is in both rites and how attentively the ecclesiastical authorities cherished the sacred music for the propaganda of ecumenical moral dogmas.

Keywords: *liturgical translation, vocal music, Eastern Christianity / Orthodoxy, Western Christianity / Roman Catholicism, Paschal Troparion.*

Sand smells spring,
Concrete smells war
In the city of Mary,
In Mariupol, in 2022.

1. Introduction.

In translation studies, musical problems were not a frequently regarded topic, but it was not a neglected one, either. Its range of topics remained in the limits of resolving problems of poetic translation where translators attempted at reuniting – and compromising – sense and melody. These ideas were not always constructive for religious singing, but it is good to revise what from today's theory of musical translation is applicable to liturgical praxis and how it can be used for assessing translation quality.

The main principles of musical translation greatly overlap those of poetic translation because their essence is the problem of transferring 'beauty' – i.e. aesthetic categories of the poetics of a genre and a text – from the source culture to the target culture. The researchers have contributed to the investigation of musical rearrangement in translation (Apter, Herman, 2016), the social function of music in interethnic relations (Susam-Saraeva, 2015), the interpretational significance of music in translations (Desblache, 2019).

Current theoretical views help reassess relations between liturgical praxis and its musical realization. The basic questions, which should be answered in the context of translating any liturgical text anew, can sound as follows:

1. What is a singable translation in liturgical praxis?
2. If the original represents the Other for target readers, is it the same in the domain of liturgical praxis?
3. Where is the space of a translator's individuality in liturgical translation?
4. Do different musical patterns evoke the same feeling for the same text?
5. What is the role of historicity in religious hymns?
6. Are there any 'unimportant' words which can be omitted in translation?
7. Can liturgical verbal culture offer some space to taboos, forbidden words and political correctness?
8. Is the liturgical melody an artefact of a national culture or a commodity of theological expansion?
9. Is the role of vocal music the same in the Byzantine and Roman Rite? If yes, is it the same in originals and in translations?

2. Aims and Objectives.

The **objective** of the paper is to analyse how contemporary theory of music translation can be applicable to liturgical texts. The popular view is that the melody rules the text, and this approach is true in the world of popular songs and music hits. The essential feature of religious hymns in translation is to keep the original dogmas unaltered. Another question is if the theory of musical translation is the same for Byzantine and Roman liturgical texts.

The methodological value of this paper is to identify music-driven criteria for assessing the quality of liturgical translation as well as to reconsider the successfulness and completeness of applying them from the viewpoint of translation criticism.

The object of the study is the liturgical text whose musical values are accepted in general, but they stay in the shade of discussions over its dogmatic accuracy. The material of this study consists of various liturgical texts and observations along with special attention to the Paschal Troparion in the Greek, Church Slavonic, Ukrainian, Polish and English versions.

3. Results.

3.1. Singability and melody.

The singability of earlier liturgical texts did not typically depend on the rhythm and rhyme, since the aesthetic power of these chants was created by melisma instead of strict syllable repetition. The combined prosody of the language and the text generated a unique melody favoured by the local liturgical tradition of a given language, but a new melody usually emerged in a different local and lingual liturgical tradition. This is why religious singers know a lot of musical patterns of the same hymns (like Byzantine / Greek, Bulgarian, Ukrainian (Kyivan and that of Halychyna), Georgian etc.). The very Paschal Troparion is sung in different languages according to different melodies, and it is rarely sung in two languages according to the same musical score (though occasional attempts are made).

In the historical perspective, at first, the text was adjusted to the original Greek melody, but isosyllabism is impossible to keep in various languages. The Paschal Troparion can be divided into lines according to our contemporary vision of a stanza. This stanza will look like this:

Χριστὸς ἀνέστη ἐκ νεκρῶν,	3 stresses	8 syllables
θανάτῳ θάνατον πατήσας,	3 stresses	9 syllables
καὶ τοῖς ἐν τοῖς μνήμασι,	3 stresses	9 syllables
ζωὴν χαρισάμενος!	2 stresses	7 syllables

The Greek pattern has the structure of 8+9+9+7 syllables (=33 syllables) with three stresses per line and two stresses in the final line. The number of syllables drastically differs between the Greek text and its translations:

Greek pattern	8+9+9+7=33 syllables
Church Slavonic pattern	8+6+6+5=25 syllables
Ukrainian pattern	7+6+5+5=23 syllables
Polish pattern	6+6+6+3=21 syllables
English pattern 1	6+6+7+4=23 syllables
English pattern 2	6+6+6+6=24 syllables

It is easier to compose a separate melody for the cited translations, and a difference can be regulated in a melismatic way, though it is surprising that the Polish text is the shortest one.

The tonic system of versification is manifested triumphantly in the Octoechos where eight tones, composed by St John of Damascus and crystallized during the Middle Ages, help interpret the meditative power of churchly hymns according to melodies whose essence was majestic (Tone 1), modest (Tone 2), tempestuous (Tone 3), combining joy and sadness (Tone 4), tranquilizing for atonement (Tone 5), generating attentiveness and mourning (Tone 6), asking for mercy (Tone 7) and glorifying (Tone 8). This system entered the foundations of the plain chant of Eastern Christianity and the Gregorian chant of Western

Christianity. For translation, the tonic versification allows for modifications with the length of the melodic phrase by incorporating additional syllables. This is why melismatic singing and repetition are always good options, if the original textual structure is not so important.

So, what could save the situation with the translation of the Paschal Troparion is the numbers of stresses if it is identical in all the texts. However, it is not:

Greek pattern	3+3+3+2 stresses
Church Slavonic pattern	3+3+2+2 stresses
Ukrainian pattern	3+3+2+2 stresses
Polish pattern	3+3+2+1 stresses
English pattern 1	3+3+3+2 stresses
English pattern 2	3+3+2+3 stresses

Tonic singing fails, because a lost stress stands for a couple of syllables in the structures of the translations, and in real time, it is an easily-detected audible sensation. In Ukrainian liturgical texts, the two-stress syntagma was accepted well, and this produced conditions for the arising of a new melody.

As of today, in the Western and Eastern Churches, religious melodies are mainly regulated in graduals and hirmologions. Thus, if there is an aim of transferring the whole local liturgical tradition into another language, isosyllabic and equirhythmic matters do matter. In this perspective, the foreign-language listener will 'hear' the implementation of the foreignization strategy. The very culture of ecclesiastical singing is regarded as a cultural commodity of a specific church, and it is popularized among believers who do not speak the original language of this national or local liturgical tradition any more (like Orthodox and Greek Catholic diasporas in the US and Canada who still want to keep the national traditions of their churches and liturgies).

The historical tradition of liturgical praxis shapes a new social attitude of a religious community in the dichotomy "Own"–"Other". The overall mission of Christian evangelizers was to create one "Own" world (read: mentality) out of a myriad of ethnically "Other" worldviews. The musical history of the Liturgy provides enough data to make quite contradictory conclusions: on the one hand, the centralized ecclesiastical authorities endeavoured to keep the singly standard (the 'typical edition' of the Gradual in Western Christianity); on the other hand, they could not control and limit the efforts oriented at believers which were to popularize the Liturgy. In societal parameters, the very inability of limiting control generated the emergence of local chants (in Eastern Christianity). In individual parameters, it left enough space for unique and original perception of God's Word and transferring It into musical scores.

The Eastern hymns were accepted very favourably in the Slavonic world, while there are facts of poorly acquiring Western hymns in Asian countries (Arrington, 2021, pp. 2–3). The musical problem even caused trouble for the very mission of evangelization, as their primary Christian meaningfulness was transformed in favour of Western hegemony. The introduction of local musical melodies into Christian hymnography resolved the problem of reception. Conversely, the Gregorian chant was sought to be preserved as an integral unity in translation. Attempts of localizing it have been made, but the success is rather partial: "The adaptation of Gregorian chant into common languages does not quite entail a local culture's unfettered control over how to arrange translations, particularly because the Catholic Church seeks to preserve the integrity of the chant" (Cho et al., 2021, p. 13). The approach of closely following the melodies of the Gregorian chant means for a translator that s/he will have to deal with it more as a poetic text than a strictly dogmatic piece. The experience of Polish

translations of Roman Catholic hymn proves the inevitability of lexical substitutions and play with synonyms (see more: Bodzioch, 2015, pp. 57–67).

3.2. Historicism.

Two basic principles of approximation and compensation, which are often associated with poetic translation and considered to be successful principles, may be discarded by theologians and liturgists. Any substitution can bring heresy, and that happened in the past. In the 4th century, the general philosophy of the Liturgy changed: the eschatological focus on the future resurrection and salvation was shifted to the historical focus on commemorating Jesus' entrance to Jerusalem, Last Supper, crucifixion and resurrection. In that way, symbolism was turned into narration and didactics (Taft, 2014, p. 43). Not only does the Liturgy bring hope, but it also teaches by historical examples.

In the earlier period of liturgical translation, domestication never played a major function, but simultaneously, it was always present not only on the prosodic level, but also on the lexical one, as well. However, this presence is not open, but conversely, it is hidden in the spheres of perceptional substitution. The lexeme "μνῆμα" is a sample of hidden realia: on the one hand, it denotes very abstract 'tombs'; on the other, funerary rituals and things are extremely conservative and genuine. Definitely, a great dissimilarity exists between Byzantine and Israeli 'tombs': the numerous ideas of a coffin, lot, location shape the originality of every national culture of funeral.

This is why there is even a dubious option what an average listener will think about: a coffin, a sepulchral structure or a burial place. In Ancient Greek, this lexeme denoted both a burial place and a coffin, though Patristic Greek along with the relevant correspondents in Church Slavonic and Polish knows it as a tomb (place with possible constructions over it). Meanwhile, in Ukrainian, "гріб" designates both a grave and a coffin. Thus, although the Paschal Troparion refers to the dead people, i.e. those ones in their graves, the bright image of the deceased people laid in coffins easily pops us and at once evokes a number of additional associations. The substitution of "гріб" for "могила" would not change the melody greatly, but the veneration of the special churchly style blocks the use of a less dubious variant.

It is amazing how interpretation can arise via the way of musical performing. The Last Judgement has been depicted with different images, whose function can be either to accentuate on human sins and the deserved punishment (like in the Book of Zephaniah) or to highlight God's mercy and give more hope to humans (like in the Epistles of the Apostle Paul). The sequence "Dies irae" whose initial lines originate from the verses in the Book of Zephaniah is part of the Office for the Dead and some commemorative masses. In the official Gregorian chant, it is sung in such a sighing mode which gives believers an opportunity to reconsider their sinful behaviour on the earth. The musical variations of the Requiem by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Giuseppe Verdi contain stormy fragments which were to frighten believers and exhaust their emotional power. The major tool of manipulation was not the language, but the music. In Western Christianity, Latin existed to guarantee the common ground and way of perception: "In sacred music, a long tradition of translation into Latin [was] controlled by the Church establishment, which only changed in the 1960s. Texts were essentially intended as instruments of support for this liturgy" (Desblache, 2019, p. 184). For this reason, the Gregorian chant performs the official functions, when other variants are tolerated, but not allowed to enter the liturgical use.

The generic names of hymns – like antiphons, katabasias, responsories and all others – are also historical, and they used to mean a special practice associated with a hymn: an antiphon was sung by two parts of the choir in turns; a katabasia was performed when two

parts of the choir were going to meet for a final hymn; a responsory was a refrain of the Scriptural reading. The very word 'troparion' means a repetitive hymn: the Paschal Troparion is sung thrice and several times during the Liturgy and the festal period. Most of these meaningful names are only names of hymn genres, though it is difficult to call them 'genres'. In historical reconstructions of the Liturgy, these hymns enlarge their meaningful loading, but these practices are rather extraordinary and rare cases.

The liturgical reforms cause revisions of known and authoritative texts. In the sequence "Dies irae", the reform of the Second Vatican Council (1960s) substituted the proper name of Mary Magdalene for the general term "sinful woman". However, in a translation for the Anglican Missal (1921), the proper name had been omitted much earlier. This act of substitution might have been regarded as a translation licence, but in the text of this religious authority and in the post-Vatican text, it is already a deliberate change of historical attitude with catechetic consequences (meaning the all-covering mercy of God).

3.3. Phonetic and semantic prosody.

The musical domain of liturgical translation is not free from subjectivist prejudices. In the private discussion of choosing between "віки віків" and "віки вічні", I have heard that the sound combination "чн" is not harmonious. Meanwhile, nobody questions if the same combination in the phrase melody "вічная пам'ять" (equivalent to "requiem aeternam"; literally: "eternal memory") is harmonious or not. This judgement discloses the space of subjective intentions and manipulations.

The subjective aural capabilities of believers motivated the church authorities react in order to avoid heretical misjudgements: "In the fourteenth century and right through the Counter-Reformation period for instance, the Roman Catholic Church pushed for bans on vocal compositions that obscured the intelligibility of the words in sacred music. This led to a stricter polyphonic style, characterised by two or more voices singing simultaneously and epitomised by Roman Renaissance composer Palestrina's religious pieces" (Desblaces, 2019, p. 147). Actually, singing is an important part of co-participating in serving the Liturgy, but various combinations of musical voices do contribute to interpretation of the massage. The Orthodox prayer for the dead "Αἰωνία ἡ μνήμη" ("Eternal memory") sounds more solemn and even fearful if sung by adult men, while young boys' and women's voices give it the shade of less fatality.

The relations between text and music in Slavonic hymnic translation did not escape researchers' attention. A. Filonov Gove remarks: "This might be called the 'semantic' or 'expressive' relationship between music and text. It is a vast realm, in modern music encompassing such things as musical climaxes (crescendoes, high notes, large intervals, melismas, and the like) written to coincide with the high points of the text (key words or significant names, exclamations, words with strong affective properties, the resolution of suspense in a narrative, poetic images, etc.); or shifts to the minor mode coinciding with dolorous utterances; or staccato rhythms representing excitement; or strong downbeats – emotional force, and so forth" (Filonov Gove, 1988, p. 214). This observance refers to the above-mentioned tone system of the Octoechos, but the amount of data is still scary to voice any suggestions about the real implementation of the emotional power of songs. Thus, according to the Triodion, the Paschal Troparion is sung in Tone 5 which should evoke a wish for atonement, while the Easter mood triggers much more majestic reverberations and interpretations.

The easiest way to judge about success in interlingual translation would be again the structural coincidence of the high points of the text and the scores. Otherwise, reception is blurred by the typical folk or popular melodies for various emotionally-interpreted motifs.

This idea is reiterated by A. Filonov Gove who states that "if it could be determined that matching musical formulae to textual meaning was a practice in the composition of Byzantine hymns and that such relationships were perceived by the Slavic translators, we would have the basis for yet another explanation regarding word-for-word translation of the Slavic hymns" (ibid.). Nowadays, this question is still unanswered, and it is logical to track that foreign melodies were brought to be acquired, but gradually they failed, and new local melodies started serving the original emotional aim.

In the theoretical perspective, the topic which might be interested in research is music as a mode of intersemiotic translation. The sequence "Dies irae" is performed differently for churchly use and for musical requiems: in the stanza "Rex tremendae majestatis", the initial "Rex" is repeated in Mozart's version, but not in Verdi's. The translation, in which the first word is not a one-syllable word, will not fit the musical pattern of one composer, but will fit that of another composer.

4. Conclusions.

Nowadays, all translation strategies depend on the choice if the translator intends to preserve and transfer the praxis of a specific local or national liturgical tradition. Actually, the basic purpose of evangelization has retreated, as most believers who could request for new translations, are already Christians. This is why the translator faces the problem of transferring the aesthetic heritage of this liturgical tradition. In the cultural perspective, rhythmical patterns have become an inseparable part of national liturgical traditions, and they boost national presentations of the identity of Christian texts which have moved from "Other" foreign literature to "Own" national heritage.

Melody is a valid point of consideration from the viewpoint of textual translation assessment. It can be regarded as a macro criterion, i.e. a very general focus of attention which will be sectioned in numerous lesser points of comparison and contrast. In translation history, a hymn generated a melody, but its translation generated a new melody which will generate a new textual form of a hymn if there is a wish to preserve the new melody. Musical history knows a lot of cases of similar situations: in Eastern Christianity, this is how the local – or better say: national – chants were produced and became a genuine part of its national culture; in Western Christianity, this is the case of professional music where composers experiment with popular hymns with adding musical interpretations to the well-accepted textual association and extending them.

Historicism is another macro criterion for liturgical text assessment. Although sacred history is generally known, but it contains an immense amount of hidden theological and historical realia. The ethnomusical criterion for measuring the emotional power of melodies in the foreign original and the local translation sounds extremely good in theory, yet it is easier for the practical critic to opt for a reliable structural criterion (the pattern of textual and musical high points).

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APPENDIX: Texts of the Paschal Troparion

Χριστὸς ἀνέστη ἐκ νεκρῶν,	3 stresses	8 syllables
θανάτῳ θάνατον πατήσας,	3 stresses	9 syllables
καὶ τοῖς ἐν τοῖς μνήμασι,	3 stresses	9 syllables
ζωὴν χαρισάμενος!	2 stresses	7 syllables 8+9+9+7=33
Хрїстосъ воскресе изъ мертвыхъ,	3 stresses	8 syllables
Смертїю смерть поправъ,	3 stresses	6 syllables
и сущимъ во гробѣхъ	2 stresses	6 syllables
животъ даровавъ!	2 stresses	5 syllables 8+6+6+5=25
Христос воскрес із мертвих,	3 stresses	7 syllables
смертю смерть подолав,	3 stresses	6 syllables
і тим, що в гробах,	2 stresses	5 syllables
життя дарував!	2 stresses	5 syllables 7+6+5+5=23
Chrystus powstał z martwych,	3 stresses	6 syllables
śmiercią podeptał śmierć	3 stresses	6 syllables
i będącym w grobach	2 stresses	6 syllables
życie dał!	1 stress	3 syllables 6+6+6+3=21
Christ is risen from the dead,	3 stresses	6 syllables
Trampling down death by death,	3 stresses	6 syllables
And upon those in the tombs	3 stresses	7 syllables
Bestowing life!	2 stresses	4 syllables 6+6+7+4=23
Christ is risen from the dead,	3 stresses	6 syllables
Trampling down death by death,	3 stresses	6 syllables
And to those in the tombs	2 stresses	6 syllables
He is restoring life!	3 stresses	6 syllables 6+6+6+6=24

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Анотація

Статтю присвячено питанням, як перекладознавчий аналіз може розглядати музичні аспекти літургійної практики. Аналіз не обмежується питаннями мелодії та ізосилабізму (які частково збігаються з теорією віршового перекладу), але також має охоплювати питання функційності, сприйняття та рецепції (які інтегровані в соціологію та критику перекладу). Дослідник виокремив

три блоки питань для розгляду: співучість і мелодійність (ізосилабізм і місцеві наспіви, колективна та індивідуальна творчість), історизм (приховані інтерпретації, функціональна цензура) і фонетико-семантична просодія (проблеми суб'єктивістського сприйняття, церковні інтервенції, видозміни поетичних текстів для літургійного вжитку). Проблема опосередкованого перекладу виглядає дуже своєрідною: хоча всі богослужбові тексти походять з однієї мови (патристичної греки), вірники, які моляться народними мовами, отримують свої національні тексти, які переклали через мову-посередник (латинську або церковнослов'янську, чи навіть ще іншу мову). Основним текстом для аналізу є тропар Пасхи (у грецькій, церковнослов'янській, українській, польській та англійській версіях), але враховано і спостереження над іншими різноманітними богослужбовими текстами. Зіставлення римського та візантійського обрядів показує, наскільки велику роль має вокальна музика в обох обрядах і як уважно церковна влада берегла духовну музику для пропаганди екуменічних моральних догм.

***Ключові слова**: літургійний переклад, вокальна музика, східне християнство / православ'я, західне християнство / римо-католицизм, тропар Пасхи.*