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Tonal Space in Terms of Practical and Theoretical Approaches in Westernised Choral Idiom in Russia from 1670s to mid-18th Century

ABSTRACT

Background

A wave of cultural migration in 1650-1670s from Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and Cossack Hetmanate established the new westernised church polyphonic idiom in form of motets/concertos and service cycles in a largely traditional society of Russia with its own developed types of neumed church polyphony. The new idiom flourished until mid-18th century and, on the periphery, remained practised even in the 19th century. During last decades, manuscript and archival studies considerably enriched the picture of this idiom. Analysis of this music offered by Russian scholars is mainly performed within the big narrative of music history evolution, which evokes magistral concepts: strict counterpoint, as promoted in Russia by Sergei Taneev, functional harmony and tonality-modality dichotomy as interpreted by Iurii Kholopov. They are well integrated into modern Russian musical educational system and often understood as quasi-universal and, thus, instrumental for analysis of music of the 17th-18th centuries. See, among other studies, Protopopov 1987, Klimenko 2009, Plotnikova 2014. Attempts to 'authentic' analysis are based on references to Mikołaj Dilecki's — active in the 1670s-early 1680s — theoretical writings. However, their interpretation often suffers from the same approach. Reading his texts through the lenses of concepts foreign to him — see, for example, Lyzhov, Dmitrieva 2016 — makes Dilecki look rather like underdeveloped academical writer. Seeming discrepancy between analytical results and their objects stimulates looking in other directions.

Dilecki certainly presents the most developed compositional theory among Eastern Slavs and yet its use as the main interpretive tool seems problematic. His open involvement into Catholic discourse was hardly popular with, and even perceptible to, composers with purely Orthodox/Uniate background. In his own music Dilecki follows certain rules which seem important for tonal clarity, although he never discusses them in his handbooks. His writings, well known in Russia, didn't affect much local compositional theory. The local type of compositional manual, "Examples of creation", is a kind of florilegium, which consists of excerpts from music of renowned authors or written specially for students's use. Devoid of any theoretical commentary, it reveals most basic orientation on imitation of existing musical models — see '*Obraz ucheniia*'. This raises a question

of appropriate methodology for the interpretation of the repertoire under consideration.

Aims and repertoire studied

The research is aimed at understanding compositional activity as a dialogue of practical imitation of a given idiom and its theoretical reflections on the basis of westernised choral polyphony and theoretical writings circulated in Russia from 1670s to mid-18th century.

Methods

The study is based on historically oriented analysis, which uses original discourses and procedures, revealed in contemporary writings on musical composition, facilitated by modern conception of tonal type and modelling. It is also important to consider musical practise in its cultural environment.

Implications

For Eastern Slavs in Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, application of Slavic liturgical texts to polyphonic music with Western roots was a sign of their cultural integration within Polish-Lithuanian society. The very use of common musical idiom didn't necessary mean the incorporation of sophisticated forms of musical theory. It is important to note, for this study, that Eastern Slavic liturgical tradition didn't develop anything compatible with Western mode/tone theory. Slavic chant analogue *glas* — the term, coined as a translation for Greek echos — never received description that would address the issues of cadence, beginning, etc. Therefore, the adoption of tone/mode theory by Orthodox/Uniat musicians could be rather expected within the realm of direct Catholic influence: on the territories with notable Catholic presence, i.g. in places like Lviv and Vilnius, and in Catholic institutions.

Musical theory of Mikołaj Dilecki reveals such Orthodox/Uniate – Catholic dialog. He wrote a handbook first in Vilnius in Polish c.1675 — now lost — during his studies at the Jesuit Academy. He focuses on composition in Church Slavic, while he heavily relies on Catholic practise, including instrumental forms. He presents two *tony*, Ut and Re. They are governed by the final cadence and the first chord and have ethnic characteristics, merry and sad, respectfully. Dilecki describes two circles of fifth, for Ut and Re *tony*, as

an organists's skill. In solmization, the change of hexachord should follow cadences, which show the place of Ut and Re. The third ethos, mixed, is revealed by change of *ton* and its interaction with rhythm. His two-tone theory blurs as he often names the third ethos the third *ton*.

Dilecki moved to Russia about 1677, where he wrote other versions of his handbook in 1677 and 1679. Western choral idiom in Russia was formed by musicians mainly from Orthodox Cossack Hetmanate, for whom Catholic discourses and practises were of little interest as such. Local musicians reworked Dilecki's ideas in most practical way. The difference between two *tony* in the beginning of a composition shrank to the difference between two *rozdachi golosov*. A conductor identified one of two possible initial chords of a piece to give singers appropriate pitch and solmization syllables: *rozdacha veselaia* (merry distribution) and *rozdacha pechalnaia* (sad distribution) — see '*Chin kako podobaet uchitisia*', 22r-23v. Ethos is important. '*Grammatikiia kratkago izlozheniia*' describes three categories of notes: merry, sad and horrible. Compilative '*Bukvar*' contrasts merry, sad and mixed *glasy* according to musical art with eight *glasy* according to church order of chant. Scale is used to classify pieces in a compositional handbook, a part-book and to name it — see respectfully '*Obraz ucheniia*', 64v-66r, Part-book, 1r and following, the title of Vasilii Titov's '*Sluzhba bemuliarnaia*' means 'One-flat Liturgy'. '*Obraz ucheniia*' reveals practical way of writing music. Imitation of good examples, writing 'like this and that' seem more important for this culture than elaborate and structured procedures.

This paper features mostly analyses of compositions in G without accidentals — for short, G ♮ — tonal type. I consider three points: presentation of tonal type in the first period — fragment until the first cadence, — dissemination of cadences within composition and preparation of the last cadence. It seems important for Dilecki to establish the *ton* in the beginning of a piece. He outlines the tonic and the dominant and prefers real answer in fugues, which finely suites his G ♮ type. The first cadence mostly happens on the tonic in both imitative and chordal beginnings. G cadences are either the most important, or occur no less frequently than C ones in the course of a composition. His colleagues in Russia often followed a different path. Tonic might appear just as the first chord in a chordal opening. Sticking to the tonic and the dominant is not so strict in initial fugues. The first cadence is often in C. C cadences might prevail within a composition. The last cadence in G can turn up without apparent preparation after cadences in C or even D ♮. Composers construct the whole piece as a succession of appended periods. Their choice follows a number of considerations, including text representation and employing sufficient contrasts. Some types of music can be associated with a particular tonal type. Initial fugue is mainly in G ♮, C ♮ is characteristic of trumpet-like passages and joyish polychoral imitations. All this makes the tonal profile of a piece rather a resulting picture than a pre-

compositional plan. Two things serve as unifying factors: the scale and the ethos. In some pieces, if we judge by the beginning and the final cadence, there is no unified tonal centre. Thus, Titov's '*Dnes' Khristos na Iordan priide*' starts in G ♮ and ends in C ♮, while anonymous '*Nebesa ubo dostoino*', on the contrary, starts in C ♮ and ends in G ♮. The concept of modulation can hardly explain these cases, as the pieces clearly follow all procedures of tonally 'unified' pieces. For Titov, appearance of the 'tonal' chord in the beginning is sometimes merely a reference to tradition and not the factor of tonal profile. Both examples can be classified within local categories of merry music and *dural'nyi* — without accidentals — scale. In music of Dilecki and Titov one can identify the difference of their discourses: conscious adherence to the ideas of tonal clarity and unity vs practical adherence to musical idiom.

It raises a question to what extent tonal clarity and unity are natural factors of this music and to what extent they are imposed by culture of thinking. It provokes thinking about functions of practical attitudes and their reflections for music-making and importance of discourse in sustaining tradition. While the subject of study is music in Russia, its understanding as a migrated and self-oriented idiom casts light on certain forms of musical culture in the West. Unsophisticated discourses and practises, brought to Russia by secondary provincial musicians, were always in danger under pressure of more cultivated forms in their original place.

Keywords

musical cognition, musical theory, tonality, tonal types, modality, musical modelling, structure, music in Russia, seventeenth century, eighteenth century

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