

Forerunners and Pioneers: Research of Traditional Rural Singing in North Macedonia from 1861 till 1967

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Abstract

From the very beginnings of music collecting by aural transcriptions during the Ottoman rule in 1890s until 1967, when a generational shift opened a new phase of study in Yugoslav Macedonia, traditional rural singing was the main topic of research for music collectors and professional ethnomusicologists in North Macedonia. Its specific melody structures and performance contexts made it a strong marker of ethnic Macedonian identity. From 1890s until the Ottoman retreat in 1912, there were only a few music-collecting fieldworks conducted and several short note collections were published. In the interwar period, Serbian and Bulgarian ethnomusicologists conducted most of the research in North Macedonia. Aural transcribing and publishing of note collections was much more intensive than in the Ottoman times. Research was mostly focused on analyses of melody structures. Also, there was a discourse about high aesthetic value of traditional North Macedonian songs. After the Second World War, ethnomusicology rapidly developed in Yugoslav Macedonia. The Institute for Folklore in Skopje was founded in 1950. Two pioneers of North Macedonian ethnomusicology, Živko Firfov and Vasil Hadžimanov, made the first fieldwork expeditions and established the systematic research of traditional rural singing. They intensively promoted North Macedonian music on the Yugoslav and world ethnomusicological scene.

Keywords

Traditional Rural Singing, North Macedonia, Late Ottoman Period, Interwar Period, Early Socialist Period

1. Introduction

This paper focuses on two topics: the development of ethnomusicology in North

Macedonia and the importance of research on traditional rural singing in North Macedonian ethnomusicology from its beginnings until the late 1960s. I attempted to outline the key research aspects in three time periods: (1) the Ottoman period, from 1861 until 1912, (2) the interwar period (1918-1941), when North Macedonia was a part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, and from 1929 the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, and (3) the period from 1944, when the new federal unit of Macedonia (today the independent Republic of North Macedonia) was created within the socialist Yugoslavia, until 1967, when a generational shift in North Macedonian ethnomusicology symbolically opened a new phase of research. In my analysis, the term “forerunners” is used to describe local music collectors and foreign ethnomusicologists in the first two above-mentioned periods, *i.e.* from 1861 until 1941, while the term “pioneers” refers to professional North Macedonian ethnomusicologists in the third period, *i.e.* from 1944 until 1967.

The main reasons for the distinction between forerunners and pioneers are the differences in political situation in North Macedonia, which had a huge impact on research. Before the Second World War, either during the Ottomans or in the interwar period, North Macedonia did not have any autonomy. On the other hand, the formation of the post-war socialist Macedonia enabled a high degree of political autonomy, which was reflected in establishment of numerous scientific and cultural institutions. All of this facilitated more organised research in all disciplines, including ethnomusicology. This is also noticeable in ethnicity of researchers. In the Ottoman period and between two world wars, the researchers were mostly from Serbia and Bulgaria. After 1944, dominant researchers became North Macedonian ethnomusicologists. However, in case of some researchers, this is not a clear-cut distinction. For example, the afterwar pioneers of North Macedonian ethnomusicology Živko Firfov, Vasil Hadžimanov and Aleksandar Linin started collecting songs as young enthusiasts in the interwar period, while Firfov even published his first article in 1939 under the surname Firfović. Still, most of their work was done after the war.

A complex issue of shaping of Macedonian nation and its state in the 19th and the first half of the 20th century reflected in several ways on the development of ethnomusicology in North Macedonia. From that time until today, the question of ethnic and national identity of the dominant Slavic population who consider themselves ethnic Macedonians has remained very sensitive. There are ongoing disputes with Greece and Bulgaria regarding the country’s name and ethnic identity. In the 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s, tensions occurred between ethnic Macedonians and a large Albanian ethnic minority in North Macedonia, but the situation has improved since 2001.

The three periods discussed here, the Ottoman, the Yugoslav monarchist and the Yugoslav socialist one, were different in many respects, especially in regard to the techniques and intensity of aural and sound recording of traditional songs, as well as ethnomusicological research theory and methodology. From the very beginnings of ethnomusicological work until the end of the Second World War,

researchers often studied both rural and urban singing. However, during the socialist period, ethnomusicologists were mostly dedicated to traditional rural singing.

It should be noted that it is often difficult to distinguish whether certain note transcriptions from the Ottoman and the interwar periods refer to rural or urban singing. The researchers at that time often recorded the singing of the inhabitants of North Macedonian towns, although their primary focus was on rural singing. They did not write any details about the differences between these two types of singing¹. However, it seems that in those days, there were two styles of traditional urban singing. The first monophonic style, which developed under strong Ottoman influence, was characterised by “oriental” scales with augmented seconds in each tetrachord as well as numerous melismas (Simonovski, 1959). The second style was performed in major mode, as monophony or diaphony in parallel thirds or as three- or four-part homophony. The structure of songs was symmetrical, while rhythmic pulsation was steady. Regarding melodic lines and harmony structure, it was similar to the singing style of North Mediterranean sailors (Primorac, 2018: pp. 41-46; 54-57). Most likely, that style arrived to North Macedonian cities through the port of Thessaloniki. Also, similar songs in terms of melody structure were brought by ethnic Macedonians who lived in various European countries². Both styles, the Ottoman-influenced and the West European-influenced were characterised by North Macedonian asymmetrical and symmetrical rhythmic patterns, and many songs were performed in free rhythm. Also, the majority of urban songs had a wide range, gradual melody development and dynamic nuancing (Jovanov, 2012: p. 131; Dumnić, 2013: pp. 89, 91).

In terms of methodology, in the interwar period and in the socialist times, the researchers in North Macedonia were more dedicated to detailed analyses of melody structure, which was similar to general trends in Central and Eastern Europe (Elschek, 1976: p. 28; Tilley, 2018: pp. 956-959). Instead of discussing the aspects of melody in detail, I will summarise them here. My primary objective is to stress the data on social, cultural, psychological, aesthetic and acoustic aspects of traditional rural singing.

2. Forerunners in the Ottoman Times

From the 1850s until the First Balkan War in 1912, when the Ottoman rule ended, the political and social circumstances in today’s North Macedonia were complex. It was the time of the rise of North Macedonian and Bulgarian nationalisms, which at first acted together. However, from 1870, and especially from 1878, these two nationalisms were partially or completely separated, particularly in light of disputes between the followers of two Orthodox churches, the Bulgarian Exarchate and the Constantinople Patriarchate. Furthermore, IMRO (Inner Macedonian Revolutionary Organization)³ was founded in 1893. They organised and prepared the

¹The situation was similar in neighbouring Kosovo (Dumnić, 2013: pp. 83-85).

²The situation was similar in Serbia (Dumnić Vilotijević, 2019: pp. 47-48).

Ilinden Uprising against Ottoman rule in 1903. At the same time, social circumstances were rather complex due to still existent feudalism and poverty on the one hand, and the rise of bourgeoisie and the increased number of individuals who obtained university education abroad, on the other (Lory, 2005: pp. 165-188). This is the context in which traditional and popular music in North Macedonia was performed.

The beginnings of North Macedonian folklore studies and ethnology can be traced to the publication of one extensive textual collection of North Macedonian folk songs in Zagreb in 1861. The authors were brothers Miladinov, Dimitar (born in 1810) and Konstantin (born in 1830). The collection also included the descriptions of customs and other genres of folklore. Since the collection was published in the Austrian Empire, the brothers Miladinov ended up in Ottoman prison, where they died in 1862. Their followers were their brother Naum Miladinov⁴ (1817-1895), Kuzman Šapkarev (1834-1909) and Marko Cepenkov (1829-1920). In one of his letters, Konstantin Miladinov expressed a wish that the texts should be accompanied by melody transcriptions. The three followers shared his wish. Šapkarev admired the work of Croatian and South Slavic ethnomusicologist Franjo Kuhač (1834-1911), who transcribed nine traditional songs in North Macedonia in 1868. Kuhač published these songs in the five-volume collection *South Slavic Folk Songs (Južno-slovenske narodne popievke)* (Kuhač, 1878-1881, 1941; Ortakov, 1984: p. 349; Linin, 1999: p. 197; Lory, 2005: p. 179).

Songs collecting in North Macedonia⁵ developed in the 1890s thanks to seven local music collectors: Todor Gavazov, Aleksandür (Aleksandar) Konev (b. 1867), Georgi Lüzhev (L'žev) (b. 1866), Todor Netkov, Georgi Smichkov (Smičkov), Ivan Klinkov and Angel Bukureshliev (Bukurešliev) (1870-1950)⁶. They published their note transcriptions in the *Journal for Folklore, Science and Literature (Sbornik' za narodni umotvoreniya, nauka i knižnina)*, a journal based in Sofia. All articles of the above-mentioned collectors were published in Skopje in 1962 in the book edited by Živko Firfov and Metodija Simonovski. A major problem in aural transcribing was North Macedonian traditional asymmetrical rhythms (Firfov & Simonovski, 1962: pp. 28-30). Ivan Klinkov found the best solution to this problem by recording 5/8, 7/8 and 9/8 metres (Firfov, 1964: p. 28).

One of the most prominent Serbian composers, Stevan Stojanović Mokranjac (1856-1914), was collecting traditional songs of ethnic Macedonians in 1894 in Skopje and Thessaloniki (Milanović, 2014: p. 214). He also faced problems with

³In Macedonian language: *Vnatrešna makedonska revolucionerna organizacija (VMRO)*.

⁴Several sources on the Internet state that Naum Miladinov was the first North Macedonian folk music collector. However, while researching this topic at North Macedonian archives and libraries, I have not found any proof for this claim. Firfov and Simonovski state that this is an unsubstantiated presumption (Firfov & Simonovski, 1962: pp. 28, 31).

⁵The first collectors of traditional songs texts and melodies in South Slavic countries were mostly folklore aficionados, inspired by Romanticism's interest in traditional songs. Some of them were composers (Dumnić, 2013: pp. 83-84, 86).

⁶I was not able to find all biographical data for these collectors.

asymmetrical rhythms while he was composing two of his famous *Rukoveti* (*Garlands*), the *Seventh Rukovet* (1894) and the *Fifteenth Rukovet* (1909), which are choral suites of traditional songs for a mixed choir from North Macedonia (Firfov, 1964: p. 29).

It is believed that Atanas Badev (1860-1908) was the first researcher who thoroughly studied North Macedonian traditional music, focusing on its metric and rhythmic features. In the Scientific Archive of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences in Sofia (signature 197k), there are several Badev's note transcriptions of traditional songs from North Macedonia. In 1904, at the Second Congress of the Music Union in Sofia, Badev presented a very well-received paper about issues regarding North Macedonian traditional metro-rhythm. This paper was supposed to be published, but it was lost (Firfov, 1964: p. 172; Didenko, 2018: pp. 129-130). Based on some reports, Živko Firfov suggests that Badev created a rather large collection of North Macedonian folk songs, which he gave to the Ministry of Popular Enlightenment of Bulgaria, but this collection was also lost (Firfov & Simonovski, 1962: 32). Gjorgji Gjorgjiev (Gjorgjiev, 1998: pp. 73-75, 2012: pp. 14-15) speculates that the reason behind this negligence was the fact that Badev did not emphasise enough the Bulgarian identity of North Macedonian music. Gjorgjiev believes that Badev was persecuted for the same reason. He even suggests that Badev's paper from 1904 was appropriated and plagiarised by Bulgarian musicologist Dobri Hristov (1931) in the introductory text in his collection of folk songs from North Macedonia⁷.

The first known phonograph recordings of traditional songs in North Macedonia were done by Léon Azoulay in the village Kožle near Skopje from 1902 until 1904. The performer was Dimitri Kučkov (Veličkovska, 2022: pp. 140-142).

The period between 1903 and 1918 was marked by instabilities, uprisings and wars in North Macedonia, so there were no research activities.

3. Forerunners in the Interwar Period

The interwar period was characterised by strong, mutually opposing Serbian and Bulgarian nationalisms and very unfavourable conditions for ethnic Macedonians. Serbia annexed North Macedonia, considering it to be Serbian southern province. In Bulgaria, there were widespread political and cultural activities aimed at incorporating North Macedonia into its "mother country" Bulgaria. Within a large South Slavic kingdom, which recognised only Serbs, Croats and Slovenes as constitutive nations, the situation in North Macedonia was significantly different compared to the late Ottoman period. The new government initiated certain economic innovations, such as roads construction and draining of swamps, but also introduced a brutal repressive apparatus and began Serbianisation of Slavic Macedonians. Still, several important scientific and cultural institutions were founded

⁷The legendary story about Atanas Badev's paper is one of the examples of political frictions between North Macedonian and Bulgarian ethnomusicologists, until recently reflected in research of North Macedonian traditional music.

in the interwar period in North Macedonia, especially in Skopje⁸. Under Bulgarian occupation 1941-1944 most of these institutions continued their activities, although they worked with reduced intensity and they employed many ethnic Bulgarians instead of previously employed ethnic Serbs (Lory, 2005: pp. 184-186).

Vladimir Đorđević (1869-1938) researched in North Macedonia in 1925. In 1928, he published a note collection with traditional songs from North Macedonia, the most extensive one in the interwar period (Gjorgjiev, 1997: p. 85). Đorđević pointed out the difference between ancient rural music and newer urban music, which was affected by foreign influences (Đorđević, 1928: pp. XIII-XVI). Živko Firfović⁹, who states that melodies of some rural singing genres are often in free rhythm and that not many researchers study them, warns that Vladimir Đorđević did not recognise typical North Macedonian asymmetrical rhythms, and therefore, numerous time signatures in his book are incorrect (Firfović, 1939: pp. 72-73, 1964: p. 29).

Kosta Manojlović and Miloje Milojević also wrote about North Macedonian traditional singing. **Kosta Manojlović** (1890-1949) researched in North Macedonia and Kosovo in 1923. He wrote three very similar articles that examine various characteristics of melodic lines, polyrhythm, range, tone rows, frequency of augmented seconds, composition, etc.¹⁰ He notes that polyrhythm in dance is less present in Kosovo compared to North Macedonia. He also notes that these regions abound in rural ritual songs (Manojlović, 1925a: pp. 139-144, 174-177, 1925b: pp. 90-94, 1937: pp. 972-977).

Miloje Milojević (1884-1946) researched in western parts of North Macedonia. He also analysed aspects of melody (melodic lines, asymmetrical rhythms, range, etc.). He falsely states that North Macedonian singing is completely monophonic (Milojević, 1928: pp. 31-38, 1933: pp. 235-245, 1939: pp. 444-446)¹¹.

The essay of **Vojislav Vučković** (1910-1942), based on the research of Vasil Hadžimanov in the Tikveš area in the interwar period, was posthumously published after the Second World War (Gjorgjiev, 1999: p. 95). In regard to melody structure, he studies rhythm, melodic lines, tone rows and forms (Vučković, 1955: 183-189).

Vlajko Vlahović (1908-1992), who was a Bitola Clerical High school teacher, wrote in 1938 a very informative article about traditional singing in the Bitola area.

Beside the aspects of musical structure, the five abovementioned Serbian researchers

⁸The Faculty of Philosophy was founded in 1920. The journal *Bulletin of Skopje Scientific Society (Glasnik Skopskog naučnog društva)* was published from 1925 until 1940. After the Vardar banovina, as one of the monarchist Yugoslavia's provinces, was established in 1929, a few museums and the regional Archive were founded in Skopje. The University was founded by the Bulgarian occupational authorities in 1943-1944 (Ristovska-Josifovska, 2017: p. 39).

⁹The surname of North Macedonian ethnomusicologist Živko Firfov between two world wars was Firfović.

¹⁰In his article on the wedding in Debar and Župa, where he recorded with phonogram, Manojlović published fifteen note transcriptions and a brief musicological analysis (Manojlović, 1935: pp. 62, 73-77).

¹¹Milojević also thinks that instrumental music is mostly monophonic (Milojević, 1928: p. 31). Relying on contemporary theory of tone psychology, Milojević described the music of North Macedonia, Kosovo and south-east Serbia as "full of pain." (Dumnić, 2013: p. 91).

address certain psychological, aesthetic, social and cultural characteristics of North Macedonian traditional songs. They stress that these songs are exceptionally beautiful in terms of melody and rich metrorhythmic patterns. The songs' texts are mostly lyrical, often melancholic, with frequent motifs of sadness and unhappy love. Due to these aesthetic characteristics, traditional music in North Macedonia was considered more impressive than other traditional musics of South Slavs¹² (Manojlović, 1925a: pp. 138, 180, 1925b: pp. 88, 95, 1937: p. 972; Milojević, 1928: pp. 22, 38, 1933: pp. 245-246, 1939: pp. 441-446; Vlahović, 1938: p. 86; Vučković, 1955: p. 189).

In the interwar period, the so-called *kafana* (i.e. inn) music (*kafanska muzika*) was becoming very popular, thanks to live performances, radio and gramophone records. *Kafana* singers (*kafanski pejači*) sang new songs, as well as traditional ones. Ethnomusicologists were rather concerned about the spread of *kafana* music. They warned that it would cause the disappearance of traditional songs. At best, if traditional songs survive, they will be influenced and corrupted by *kafana* singers' incorrect and tasteless interpretations (Manojlović, 1925a: pp. 138-139; Đorđević, 1928: p. XVIII; Vlahović, 1938: pp. 91-92). In 1939, young North Macedonian ethnomusicologist Živko Firfović writes about this topic in detail. He states that *kafana* and radio singers, male and female, interpret traditional songs inaccurately, especially in terms of melody, and that many song collectors transcribe these wrong interpretations. Firfović also notes that “stars”, as he ironically refers to *kafana* singers, fail to instill the right emotions into their singing. Instead, they exaggerate with their own “wrong” emotions and compromise the beauty, uniqueness and wholeness of the songs. They force their own singing abilities and singer tricks, without respecting traditional melody-embellishing techniques. Not only their diction and accentuation of words are incorrect¹³, but they also distort rhythm and song lyrics. *Kafana* orchestras replace old microtonal instruments with tempered guitars, mandolins and accordions. In conclusion, professional style of popular folk music, which evolved in different directions in the socialist period, started developing in the socialist period. This style probably became the most popular musical expression in North Macedonia (Firfović, 1939: pp. 69, 73-74).

Many researchers stress the problems of aural transcribing and phonographing of music. Kosta Manojlović points out the necessity of phonograph field recordings in North Macedonia, and hopes that the state will encourage and support financially new researchers there (Manojlović, 1925a: pp. 177, 180, 1925b: pp. 94-95). Vladimir Đorđević stresses that most note transcriptions in North Macedonia are

¹²For example, Miloje Milojević states that North Macedonian traditional song represents “the richest source of our musical nationalism, racially most typical, a source with most intensive feelings, an inexhaustible source.” (Milojević, 1939: p. 446) Živko Firfović shares this opinion (Firfović, 1939: p. 70).

¹³Kosta Manojlović states: “as all music circles have confirmed, our imperial south stands in the first place because the melodies of its songs are the expression of the most delicate and most beautiful feelings. There is nothing profane, carousing nor revelling in these songs, which is often overlooked by certain people who, by singing them in a Gypsy way, distort their rhythmic and melodic beauty.” (Manojlović, 1937: p. 972) After the war, Đorđe Karaklajić, the editor of Radio Belgrade, expresses similar opinion. He states that pop-folk singers with their affectation often diminish the value of folk music (Lajić Mihajlović & Dumnić, 2015: p. 216).

inaccurate (Đorđević, 1928: p. XIV). Ludvík Kuba regrets that just a few transcribers have worked in North Macedonia and no phonograph recordings have been done. He mentions that Vladimir Đorđević unsuccessfully applied for state support for his research (Kuba, 1927: pp. 25, 76). Živko Firfović stresses that many researchers transcribe the singing of *kafana* and radio singers, and completely neglect traditional ways of performance of North Macedonian songs. Many transcribers are amateurs, while professional transcribers also make major mistakes, especially in rhythm and accentuation (Firfović, 1939: pp. 69-71).

Still, in the 1930s, several Yugoslav and foreign researchers made phonographic recordings in North Macedonia (Matija Murko, Milman Parry, Gerhard Geseman, Borivoje Drobnejaković, Dušan Nedeljković, Mitar Vlahović and Kosta Manojlović) (Gjorgjiev, 1968).

Fridrih Troj¹⁴, professor of philosophy and pedagogy in the pre-war and post-war Yugoslavia, published a very interesting study *on musical sensibility of South Serbians, Šumadinians and Montenegrins (O muzičkoj osetljivosti Južnosrbijanaca, Šumadinaca i Crnogoraca)* in 1931. Troj relies on ethnopsychological research of philosopher and ethnologist Dušan Nedeljković, who pointed out “southern sensibility” of “South Serbians”¹⁵ (Nedeljković, 1929: pp. 1, 22-39). Nedeljković’s conclusions were based on earlier anthropogeographic research of Jovan Cvijić¹⁶. In his experimental field research, Troj used three devices: Hipp chronoscope, metronome and gramophone. He interviewed 265 North Macedonians (“South Serbians”), 126 Šumadinians and 134 Montenegrins, making sure that a third of the interviewees were farmers, a third tradesmen and a third artisans. This way he included urban, as well as rural male populations. To each interlocutor, Troj reproduced records with music from his native region. In order to show their attention to the music they were listening, the interlocutors were supposed to squeeze the chronoscope handle. Troj concluded that North Macedonians had shown the most sensitivity to music. A much less intensive reaction was shown by Šumadinians, while Montenegrins showed even less attention than Šumadinians. According to Troj, North Macedonians also showed a significant rhythmic talent. For them, monotonous metronome beating did not make sense if a melody was not paired with it, particularly a dance melody. For these reasons, Troj concluded that North Macedonians were the most musical. This way, he just confirmed the already existing stereotypes (Troj, 1931: pp. 3-5, 8-12). For example, in the interwar period, some ethnomusicologists claimed that North Macedonians possessed an extraordinary musical talent (Manojlović, 1925a: p. 177)¹⁷. This concept of

¹⁴I could not find Troj’s biographical data. The German transcription of Troj’s name is Friedrich Troy. However, in all of his publications (in both Cyrillic and Latin script), he uses Serbian spelling, Fridrih Troj.

¹⁵In Serbian national discourse in the interwar period, North Macedonia, Kosovo and southeast Serbia were considered as one region, called “Serbian South”.

¹⁶Cvijić’s ethnological research was mostly focused on creating stereotypes about various regional and ethnic groups in the Balkans (Živković, 1997).

¹⁷Later, in socialism, a stereotype about North Macedonians’ musicality spread all over Yugoslavia, and a stereotype about the lack of musical talent of Montenegrins also spread (Wilson, 2015: p. 102; Jerkov, 2013). I also heard a few times that Šumadinians were not very musical.

differences in collective musicality, rather common in the interwar period, was later abandoned in ethnomusicology¹⁸. Even Troj cautioned that his methodology was rather new and that it could be unreliable. His research should be viewed in the context of development of scientific disciplines which originated in the German-speaking area of the time, namely characterology, ethnopsychology and experimental psychology. The first two disciplines studied stereotypes, but not in a critical way. Very often, they confirm existing stereotypes and even create new ones. For this reason, many social scientists and psychologists consider these disciplines pseudoscience (Medar-Tanjga & Pandurević, 2018: p. 182).

Three music collectors, Pancho Mikhaylov (Pančo Mihajlov), Yosif Cheshmedzhiev (Josif Češmedžiev), and Kosta Tsurnushanov (Crnušanov), who were born and raised in North Macedonia moved to Bulgaria in the interwar period. Each of them published a collection of North Macedonian traditional songs. All three expressed Bulgarian national identity, and they intensively worked on aiding ethnic Macedonians in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, *i.e.* the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. They helped them not only in cultural activities, but they also acted politically, because for them North Macedonia was a Bulgarian province. That is why Bulgarian ethnomusicologists consider these music collectors ethnic Bulgarians, while a few influential North Macedonian ethnomusicologists, such as Gjorgji Gjorgjiev (Gjorgjiev, 2012: p. 15) and Rodna Veličkovska (Veličkovska, 2008: p. 16), consider them ethnic Macedonians.

Pancho Mikhaylov (1891-1925) was an active soldier against Ottoman army. He was also a guerilla warrior against Serbian army and police in the fight for annexation of North Macedonia to Bulgaria. In 1923, musicologist Mihail Arnaudov (Arnaudov, 1924: p. X) received Mikhaylov's manuscript with folk songs and edited it. Petūr Zavoev helped him with editing the songs and the book preparation for the press. It is not known why this collection, published in 1924, is often mentioned as one of the most important ethnomusicological collections, considering that only 15 songs (out of 467) have note transcriptions¹⁹. For the remaining songs, only lyrics are provided (Mikhaylov, 1924).

Yosif Cheshmedzhiev (1890-1964) was a professional musician, who transcribed songs and published a book in 1926. Nikola Dzherov helped him edit the book. He also wrote a brief introductory text without detailed ethnomusicological analysis (Cheshmedzhiev, 1926).

Kosta Tsurnushanov (1903-1996) was a promotor of Bulgarian national politics. Based on aural transcribing of songs in North Macedonia in the interwar period, as well as on transcribing of songs of North Macedonian emigrants in Bulgaria after the war, Tsurnushanov published a song collection in 1956. The book was edited by musicologist Petūr Dinev (Tsurnushanov, 1956).

Dobri Hristov (1875-1941) was a Bulgarian musicologist. In 1931, he published a collection of 66 songs which he transcribed from North Macedonian

¹⁸One of the earliest and most noted articles criticising this concept was Mantle Hood's article on bimusicity from 1960 (Hood, 1960).

¹⁹Songs 73, 84, 90, 95, 109, 334, 401, 403, 404, 407, 410, 413, 415, 438, 461.

emigrants in Bulgaria. In the introductory study “Macedonian Bulgarian folk songs” Hristov writes a detailed analysis of asymmetrical rhythms in North Macedonian traditional music, focusing on measures, forms, metres and syllables. He compares these structures with examples from other countries, mostly in Asia, and discusses possible origins of asymmetrical rhythms. He notes that the most popular round dance in Bulgaria, “rūchenica”, has metro-rhythmic pattern 2 + 2 + 3, and it is rather fast, while the most popular North Macedonian “oro” has 3 + 2 + 2 pattern, and it is performed much slower. Metro-rhythmic pattern 3 + 2 + 2 is common in Greece and Turkey (Hristov, 1931: pp. 1-35). Gjorgji Gjorgjiev holds that Hristov’s introductory study is the first important study in the field of North Macedonian asymmetrical rhythms (Gjorgjiev, 1997: pp. 85-86). Aleksandar Linin notes that this is the first study about relations between verses and melody in North Macedonian traditional music and poetry (Linin, 1999: p. 197).

Traditional singing was also studied by two ethnomusicologists who were not from South East Europe. They were both impressed by North Macedonian traditional music. Czech ethnomusicologist **Ludvík Kuba** (1863-1956) visits North Macedonia in 1925 and in 1927 (Markl, 1968: pp. 120, 123). Very soon, he realises that multiethnicity in all urban and some rural regions lead to emergence of various specific music styles and genres. Still, in this environment, Slavic Macedonians managed to maintain their own musical identity, permeated by various foreign influences. Differently from Serbian ethnomusicologists, in the light of his own Panslavism, Kuba does not regard North Macedonian music as the most fascinating (South) Slavic music (Kuba, 1927: pp. 25-27, 76-79). Still, he notes that North Macedonia is “a very interesting, splendid mosaic, a Slavic field decorated with foreign ornaments. It is lively coloured, very effective marble.” (Kuba, 1927: p. 27) He comes to a few incorrect conclusions. For example, Kuba holds that singing in North Macedonia, either individual or collective, is always monophonic²⁰. As he did not hear spontaneous group singing in urban and rural taverns, he states that individual singing is more common as people usually sing to themselves. Kuba comes to similarly mistaken conclusions when he writes about traditional instruments (Markl, 1968: pp. 120-121). He is surprised by the large presence of western (major) melodies, even in most distanced villages, but he also notices oriental influences, especially the presence of augmented seconds²¹. He states that in towns, there are orchestras with violins, mandolins, clarinets, drums and cymbals, which, especially during wedding ceremonies, play loudly in major mode in the range of fifth. Kuba (Kuba, 1927: pp. 26, 79, 81) stresses that in the future more research should focus on the entangled relations between urban and rural songs, not only in North Macedonia, but in all Slavic countries (Markl, 1968: p. 122). In 1928, Kuba published a modest collection of traditional songs from North Macedonia in his edition *Slavdom in its singings* (*Slovanstvo ve svých*

²⁰Miloje Milojević also writes that all North Macedonian folk singing is monophonic (Milojević, 1928: p. 31).

²¹Vojislav Vučković comes to similar conclusions for the Tikveš rural region. He notes that traditional music there contains both eastern and western elements (Vučković, 1955: p. 186).

zpevech) with 27 music transcriptions (Kuba, 1928; Markl, 1968: p. 120). Finally, in 1932 Kuba published a travel book from North Macedonia (Kuba, 1932).

Belgian musicologist **Ernest Closson** (1870-1950) cooperated with Vladimir Đorđević. In 1920, Closson published an article about Serbian folk melodies based on Đorđević's published material collected mostly in central Serbia (Closson, 1920). After that, Đorđević asked Closson to write an introductory study for his collection of North Macedonian songs published in 1928. In this introductory study, Closson analyses genres and various characteristics of melody: tone rows, modes, intervals, rhythm, melismas and other. He is particularly interested in the so-called "Gypsy scale" with augmented seconds and in western-style polyphony. According to Closson, the main features of Slavic, and especially North Macedonian songs are melancholy and naïveté. The songs are contrasted to oriental rhythm and metre diversity and to rich ornamentation (Closson, 1928: pp. XIX-XXXI). Gjorgji Gjorgjiev states that Closson's detailed analysis of tone rows is especially valuable (Gjorgjiev, 1997: pp. 84-85).

Among foreign researchers, a special place belongs to **Józef Obrębski** (1905-1967) from Poland, who was one of the first social and cultural anthropologists in Europe. He researched in 1932-1933 in the region of Poreče in western part of North Macedonia. In his research of religion in rural community, Obrębski discusses an important role of women in performing of rituals, especially in lamenting. Therefore, his descriptions of the context of traditional rural singing are very important as a secondary source (Obrębski, 1977: pp. 11-14).

Finally, two of the postwar pioneers of North Macedonian ethnomusicology, Vasil Hadžimanov and Živko Firfov, started collecting and transcribing traditional music in the interwar period. Since this was the time of Serbian political and cultural repression and Bulgarian propagandistic and aggressive cultural politics, they faced many problems because they did not consider the songs they collected and researched neither Serbian nor Bulgarian. Also, Hadžimanov had to change his last name to its Serbian version—Hadžimanović, and Firfov into Firfović. In 1937, Hadžimanov refused to entitle his collection of North Macedonian traditional songs as Serbian ones, so the collection was not published. In 1942, Bulgarian editors interrupted the show on Radio Skopje while he was singing, explaining that he sang songs from North Macedonia that were arranged in Serbian manner (Gjorgjiev, 2012: pp. 16, 30). In academic year 1938/1939, Živko Firfov was expelled from the Music Academy in Belgrade²². Still, in 1939 he managed to publish an article discussing the problem of relation between popular (*kafana* and radio) music and traditional music (Nikoleski, 1988: p. 76; Gjorgjiev, 1998: p. 75, 2012: pp. 15-16; Kostikj 2002: pp. 12-13).

4. Pioneer Phase 1944-1967: The Time of Institutionalisation

²²There is also an anecdote about Firfov's encounter with Nikolaj Velimirović, Serbian bishop in Ohrid from 1920 until 1936, who was canonised as a saint of Serbian Orthodox Church in 2003. Velimirović allegedly beat Firfov with a stick and demanded that Firfov stopped his fieldwork because he thought better persons should do that job (Kostikj, 2002: p. 13).

The outcome of the Second World War was the creation of Macedonian unit within the Yugoslav socialist federation. The Slavic population of North Macedonia—ethnic Macedonians—were mostly very enthusiastic when People's Republic of Macedonia, as one of Yugoslavia's republics, was created. It was considered as confirmation of their national distinctiveness. This political process was followed by the foundation of various institutions, organisations and activities of modern national state, based on Western European and Soviet models (Trpeski, 2020: pp. 12-18; Smyth, 1986: pp. 228-263). The foundation of various institutes, faculties, state cultural institutions and media was going on surprisingly quickly and efficiently (Lory, 2005: p. 188).

Relatively small in terms of size and population compared to the neighbouring countries and without a distinct tradition of nineteenth-century national Romanticism in elite culture and humanities, North Macedonia built its national imagery by glorifying the heroes who gave their lives for the freedom of the nation, especially those from the beginning of the 20th century until the 1940s. However, at the same time, traditional rural and urban culture, and especially music, were praised as foundations of national identity (Stardelov, 1997: pp. 9-10; Sachs, 1975: pp. XXXI-XXXII; Ristovska-Josifovska, 2017: pp. 32-33; Didenko, 2020: p. 160).

A lot of attention was given to folklore, which was considered an expression of ethnic Macedonian uniqueness. The Institute for folklore was founded in 1950. In the Institute's structure, ethnomusicology and ethnochoreology have always been highly regarded. On the other hand, stylised traditional music production was developed within newly founded cultural and media institutions, such as professional folklore ensemble *Tanec* and Radio Skopje. This was the time when various folklore manifestations were organised. Amateur folklore ensembles were founded in towns, and folklore groups in villages. Many groups were called *cultural-artistic societies* (*kulturno-umetnički društva*) (Wilson, 2015: pp. 20-21; Didenko, 2019; Stardelov, 1997: pp. 6-7; Ortakov, 1999: p. 339; Stojkova Serafimovska, 2008: p. 24; Ristovska-Josifovska, 2017: p. 40). After many successful presentations on folklore scene²³ and due to strong development of music industry, almost all types of North Macedonian traditional music and dance became very popular in Yugoslavia and Bulgaria.

Although it never gained media popularity, traditional rural female singing of ethnic Macedonians, especially collective ritual singing, has been chosen as one of the central research topics in North Macedonian ethnomusicological research from the 1950s until today²⁴. During the past seven decades, this singing was slowly disappearing from live practice. The decrease in its performances occurred simultaneously with increased urbanisation/deruralisation, industrialisation and

²³For example, the first performances were at the concerts organised during the fourth congress of *The International Folk Music Council* in Opatija in 1951.

²⁴The research preference for rural ritual songs was present since the interwar period. Serbian researchers of the time, Vladimir Đorđević, Miloje Milojević and Kosta Manojlović, thought that rural songs were more valuable than urban ones, which were also transmitted orally. Although urban music was recorded in published and unpublished collections, it was never thoroughly researched. Since Macedonian and Serbian ethnomusicology have closely cooperated since the interwar period, this research tradition is still present in both countries. (Dumnić, 2013: pp. 86-89, 95).

²⁵Today, instrumental rural music is more popular than singing mostly because it is an accompaniment for numerous attractive round dances.

the development of popular music²⁵. By researching and promoting rural singing, ethnic Macedonian scholars emphasised their Slavic identity, knowing that very similar singing is common in south east Serbia and large parts of central- and southern-western Bulgaria. The curious structure of traditional rural ritual singing, interwoven with mythology and magic, and performed mostly by women (in some regions in two-part drone singing with frequent interval of second, which is deemed as consonant), with its archaism went deep into pre-Slavic and pre-Balkan ancientness (Wilson, 2015: pp. 19, 101-102, 290-291; Jovanov, 2012: p. 133).

For these reasons, urban song, which combines foreign eastern and western influences, was not a primary research topic for North Macedonian ethnomusicologists (Jovanov, 2012: pp. 131-132; Dumnić, 2013: pp. 86-89). The so-called *narodna muzika* (folk music), which is also called *kafanska muzika* (inn music) and, in some occasions, *starogradska muzika*²⁶ (old town music), is a specific vocal-instrumental musical expression. Until the 1950s, this music was closer to urban than to rural culture. During socialist era, the “folk song” became the most popular musical style all over North Macedonia, and it is still very popular today (Sachs, 1975: pp. 184-197; Wilson, 2015: pp. 289-291). However, ethnomusicologists did not dedicate a lot of attention to this music. North Macedonian folk song is characterised by very specific musical and poetic aesthetics: interweaving of asymmetrical and symmetrical rhythms, which is suitable for dancing, attractive melodies, equal presence of major and minor scales, appealing lyrics, which are understood by most South Slavs, etc. (Jovanov, 2012: pp. 131-133). For these reasons, North Macedonian folk song became fairly popular in other South Slavic states. As a North Macedonian brand, it is listened to and performed even today from Slovenia to Bulgaria. (Wilson, 2015: p. 102)

Different types of North Macedonian traditional and popular music have been a part of regional Balkan music. They are closely related primarily to neighbouring Balkan Slavic countries Serbia and Bulgaria. This is especially the case with traditional rural singing, which is the main focus of this research. Still, many other North Macedonian singing styles and genres are related to Greek and Albanian ones. However, the music exchange between North Macedonia, Greece and Albania is almost non-existent, apart from strong influences on the musics of ethnic minorities, for example, the influence of Albanian music on the music of the Albanian minority in North Macedonia. On the other hand, the music exchange of North Macedonia with all former republics of Yugoslavia, which are independent states since the 1990s, has remained intensive. There are many aficionados of Macedonian music in all of these countries. The exchange with Bulgaria is rather delicate. While there are many admirers of Macedonian music there, due to political disagreements between North Macedonia and Bulgaria, the musicians rarely meet and exchange their experiences.

Before analysis of various researchers' contributions, I will briefly mention major musical characteristics of traditional rural, mostly female and group, singing. It is based on melodic modes which are referred to by the term *glas* (voice). There

²⁶Marija Dumnić Vilotijević (2019: pp. 41-46) writes about the same topic in Serbian music history.

are two types of melodic modes: (1) *kratak glas* (short voice) which is characterised by syllabic structure and specific North Macedonian asymmetrical and symmetrical rhythms, and (2) *dug glas* (long voice), which is characterised by melismas and free rhythm. The main aesthetic component of *dug glas* is loud, penetrating sound, especially if the singing is performed outdoors. Specific timbre and small ranges, which usually do not extend over the interval of fourth are also important. Antiphonic singing in two groups is rather common. Melodic lines are waving, and beginnings of songs, refrains and endings are specifically shaped. Various melodic embellishments include caesuras, mordents, cries, clucking sounds, glissandos etc. Microtonality also appears occasionally. Polyphonic songs are mostly characterised by two-part drones, especially in eastern parts of North Macedonia. However, it should be noted that monophonic and diaphonic singing are mutually related all over North Macedonia. Heterophony is also rather common. Intervals of seconds appear frequently. They are usually created by overlapping the voices or singing in parallel seconds. All these characteristics make North Macedonian traditional rural singing similar to Balkan Slavic singings in neighbouring Serbia and Bulgaria, but also in more distant parts of Bosnia and Hercegovina, Montenegro and Croatia.

Most ethnomusicological research in the pioneer phase was carried out in the Institute for folklore. In 1950, Metodija Simonovski, who was only 23, was the first melographer employed by the Institute. He researched traditional singing, and his main duty was tape recording and aural transcribing. In 1953, he was joined by Živko Firfov, one of two founders of North Macedonian ethnomusicology. At the same time, Vasil Hadžimanov, the other founder of the discipline, worked at Radio Skopje and conducted intensive ethnomusicological collecting and research. The cooperation of Firfov and Hadžimanov lead to important results in research, especially in the study of traditional rural singing. Firfov's assistants were Metodija Simonovski, and later Aleksandar Linin, who started working at the Institute in 1958 (Gjorgjiev, 1998: pp. 75-78). In order to understand their work, it is necessary to overview their biographies²⁷.

Živko Firfov (1906-1984) started collecting songs in 1923. After completing Music school in Belgrade in 1931, he started studying at the Music Academy in Belgrade in 1937, which he had to abandon in the following academic year due to political reasons. Firfov became a prominent composer in the 1930s. At the beginning of the Second World War in 1941, the Bulgarian government sent him to Sofia to complete a "social course". He was active in Yugoslav Partisans in 1944, where he was assigned to organise cultural events. The government of the newly created Yugoslav Macedonia employed him at Radio Skopje in 1945. There, he established and conducted a program of folk music, as well as two newly-formed orchestras: *Čalgija ensemble* (*Čalgijski ansambl*) and *Folk orchestra* (*Narodni orkestar*). He encouraged the creation of amateur choirs for art music in Skopje. He was one of the founders and the

²⁷Even though biographies might seem dull and monotonous, I think they are very useful for explaining the development of a small discipline and a special area within that discipline, such as North Macedonian ethnomusicology and the study of traditional rural singing.

first artistic manager of *Ensemble for folk songs and dances Tanec* (*Ansambl za narodne pjesme i plesove Tanec*), established in 1949. In 1948, Firfov transcribed music in the Kumanovo region, which was the first ethnomusicological fieldwork in socialist Macedonia. Firfov was also one of the founders of the Institute for folklore in 1950. Employed at the Institute in 1953, he was the Institute's manager from 1957 till 1962. After that, he returned to Radio Skopje and established and lead several music groups, among which there were a few female vocal groups of refugees from Aegean Macedonia. Firfov used to go to Canada where he gave lectures on traditional music to North Macedonian emigrants and published note recordings in émigré publications. An active participant of various conferences in Yugoslavia and abroad, he was a member of National Committee for folk music at UNESCO and a corresponding member of the International Folk Music Council (IFMC) (Didenko, 2020: pp. 154-162; Nikoleski, 1988: pp. 75-79; Ortakov, 1999: pp. 339, 341; Vančov Nikoleski, 1995: p. 78; Kolovski, 2019). Firfov was not a very prolific writer. He published three collections of folk songs. Firfov was the sole author of the first collection from 1953, while he coauthored the second one with Metodija Simonovski and Risto Prodanov in 1959, and the third one with Metodija Simonovski in 1962 (Firfov, 1953; Firfov *et al.*, 1959; Firfov & Simonovski, 1962). In 1978, Gjorgji Donevski published a collection of traditional songs from Aegean Macedonia based on Firfov's transcriptions (Donevski & Firfov, 1978: p. 7). In 2023, two more folk songs books from Firfov's private collection were published. The editors of these books are Dimitrije Bužarovski and Trena Jordanovska (Firfov, 2023a, 2023b). Firfov published seven articles on traditional rural singing (Firfović, 1939; Firfov, 1951, 1952, 1958, 1960a, 1960b, 1964).

Firfov's most prominent work on rural singing dates back to 1958. At the 5th Congress of the Union of Folklorists of Yugoslavia (SUFJ) in Zaječar and Negotin, he presented a paper on collective vocal musicking in North Macedonia. In this paper Firfov presented a specific monophonic and diaphonic traditional rural singing in North Macedonia to academic community for the first time. Firfov stresses that loud singing outdoors is common in rural tradition. Group female singing is the most distinct, especially the diaphonic and the drone one. Women sing almost all ritual songs. Also, they sing other genres, such as lyric songs and ballads, more often than men. Firfov points out their antiphonic singing style and characteristic cries. Although it is very difficult to understand the lyrics of these songs, because of the loud performance manner and voice articulation, they are aesthetically, in terms of lyrics, of high quality. In rural tradition, which is completely different from the urban one, there are no obvious foreign influences (Firfov, 1960a: pp. 211-214). After analysing the sound recordings, Firfov concludes: "Based on my own years-long experience [...] a thought comes to our minds that the most original aspect of Macedonian folklore was foreseen. And that is our rural music tradition, *i.e.* old, local, collective musicking."²⁸ (Firfov, 1960a: 212) Therefore, according to Firfov, the future research should focus on this music expression. In a way, this Firfov's wish was fulfilled. After his article, in relatively short period of time, three North Macedonian ethnomusicologists presented their

research on traditional rural singing, especially on diaphonic drone singing, at the congresses of the Union of Folklorists of Yugoslavia from 1962 till 1970. Their papers were published in the congresses' proceedings from 1963 until 1972. Similarly to Firfov, Vasil Hadžimanov (1963) presented musical analysis and ethnographic data of St. Lazar's songs, while Gjorgji Smokvarski (1968) presented a detailed musicological analysis. Based on these three articles, especially the Smokvarski's one, Aleksandar Linin (1972) developed further this topic. This way, the phenomenon of North Macedonian traditional rural singing was very well presented to the readership of the proceedings of the Union of Folklorists of Yugoslavia congresses. It should be mentioned that this association, founded in 1952, had an immense importance for the development of North Macedonian ethnomusicology²⁹. Congresses of the Union were a window to the world for Yugoslav ethnomusicologists. The possibility to publish short critiques, and sometimes longer articles in the SUFJ congresses proceedings and in the SUFJ journal *Narodno stvaralaštvo - folklor*, which was published quarterly, facilitated a good presentation of their work in Yugoslavia and elsewhere, in Eastern and Western political blocks, as well as in non-aligned countries (Ortakov, 1999: p. 339; Gjorgjiev, 1998: pp. 75-76, 1999: p. 97; Lajić Mihajlović & Dumnić, 2015: p. 118).

Vasil Hadžimanov (1906-1969) attended music school in Belgrade before the Second World War. He completed music high school in Skopje in 1955. In the interwar period he graduated from law school and obtained a master's degree in pharmacology. He was a prominent radio singer of traditional North Macedonian songs in Zagreb and Belgrade. In 1944 Hadžimanov was in Yugoslav partisans. Immediately after the war, he worked as a teacher at music school and as a folk music editor at Radio Skopje. In cooperation with Živko Firfov, he organised numerous ethnomusicological projects. Hadžimanov started collecting songs in 1927 in the Tikveš region. Later, he collected a great number of songs all over North Macedonia. For decades, he contested the transcription of asymmetrical metre 7/8 as symmetrical metre 8/8, which some transcribers practiced in order to make it more similar to Western European common rhythmic style. In his papers, he researched traditional rhythms, tunes, instruments and instrumental music. From 1948 until 1969, Hadžimanov (1953-1956, 1960a, 1962, 1964a, 1968a) published eight collections of popular folk songs based on his own transcriptions. The first collection (Iljoski et al., 1948), containing only songs' texts, he coauthored with

²⁸The same phenomenon is present in Croatia in the 1920s and 1930s. It is analysed by Naila Ceribašić (2003) in her book about history and ethnography of the public practice of folk music in Croatia. The first part of the book's title is very similar to Firfov's thought: *Croatian, Peasant, Old and Local (Hrvatsko, seljačko, starinsko i domaće)*. Almost all North Macedonian ethnomusicologists from the Second World War until today hold that traditional rural singing is one of the most original markers of North Macedonian national uniqueness.

²⁹The Society of musical folklorists of Yugoslavia (*Udruženje muzičkih folklorista Jugoslavije*) was founded in 1952 at the congress in Pula. It was renamed into Association/Union of the Societies of the Folklorists of Yugoslavia (*Savez udruženja folklorista Jugoslavije*) at the second congress held in the village of Mrtvanjski Stanari at the Bjelašnica mountain in 1956 (Palčok, 1958: p. 5; Lajić Mihajlović & Dumnić, 2015: pp. 109-114) In academic circles this Association was known in English as Union of Folklorists of Yugoslavia, and that is the name we use in this article.

Vasil Iljoski and Vera Kličkova and published in 1948. Hadžimanov (1960b, 1961, 1963, 1964b, 1964c, 1965, 1966, 1968b, 1968c, 1969) also published ten papers on traditional singing. He lectured at open universities (*rabotnički univerziteti*) and edited many radio shows on Radio Skopje. He spoke German, French and Russian. As a member of the International Folk Music Council (IFMC) and Society of Ethnomusicology (SEM), he was in contact with many prominent ethnomusicologists in Yugoslavia and abroad. He was elected a member of Folklore Committee of IFMC in Bratislava in 1966. Hadžimanov sent audio recordings of North Macedonian traditional multipart songs to IFMC and UNESCO. From 1958 until 1968, he attended nine conferences in Yugoslavia, mostly congresses of the Union of Folklorists of Yugoslavia, as well as nine conferences abroad (West Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Israel, Hungary, Romania, USSR and Belgium). His private collection is kept in the Archive of the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts (Gjorgjiev, 2012: pp. 16-56, 77-81; Ristovski, 1968; Golabovski, 1970; Novakovska, 2005: pp. 36-37; Martinoska & Ivanov, 2023: p. 31).

The most prominent Hadžimanov's work regards recording of laments in their authentic context after the Skopje earthquake on July 26th, 1963. Hadžimanov regularly visited the main Skopje cemetery Butel, starting in the days following the earthquake and ending on the first anniversary of the earthquake in 1964. This was an extraordinary and unique research endeavour. He recorded female laments at funerals and memorial services. The families of the deceased usually provided their biographical data and gave him permission to record. However, due to the delicacy of this project's circumstances, he sometimes recorded secretly. He intended to publish a book about female laments, but had to abandon this idea due to illness. After Hadžimanov's death, ethnomusicologist Gjorgji Gjorgjiev planned to complete the book but gave it up because he could not emotionally handle the laments' gruesomeness. Ana Martinovska and Žarko Ivanov experienced similar feelings while they were writing the book in 2023 (Gjorgjiev, 2012: p. 50; Martinoska & Ivanov, 2023: pp. 5, 6, 27-33, 63).

Hadžimanov published a brief article on laments in 1964 in Macedonian and in 1965 in French. He also gave lectures on that topic at congresses in Budapest in 1964 and in Bratislava in 1965 (Gjorgjiev, 2012: 50-54, 77). In the article, Hadžimanov first describes the process of recording. Then, he writes an ethnomusicological analysis of very unique aspects of laments' melody structure. For example, he discusses unarticulated screams, cries, wails, coloraturas, glissandos, sforzandos, pauses, chromatic movements, atonalities, unusual cadenzas, free rhythm, complex rhythmic forms that are developed freely and elastically, etc. (Hadžimanov, 1964c: pp. 1020-1023).

In 2023, folklorists Ana Martinovska and Žarko Ivanov published a monography in which they analysed all Hadžimanov's recordings and notes about laments, including his transcriptions of music and text, non-transcribed recordings, photographs, descriptions of the recording process and reprint of his study from 1964. Hadžimanov's laments emerged in the context of natural catastrophe with

countless victims, which created immense emotions and liberated an unusual artistic creativity of wailing women. The main performers are adult women. Besides individual laments, group laments are also common. This way other women show support to a grieving woman and lamenting is additionally intensified. The performance of laments is very dramatic. There are short breaks in which women cry, wail, recite laments. Wailing women hit their own faces and pull their hair. In case of professional wailing women, as well as in case of bereaved women, experience, talent and ability to improvise lead to increased aesthetics of laments and gradation of emotions (Martinoska & Ivanov, 2023: pp. 6-21, 30, 37, 9-41, 57, 60-64) With this extensive folkloristic analysis, Martinoska and Ivanov attempted to research scarcely known genre of laments, by exploring the aspects of trauma, lyrical, intimate and symbolic narratives, poetics style and semantic features, performance style and personality of performers, as well as other specific characteristics which had not been analysed before. Hadžimanov's unique material proved to be very valuable for multidisciplinary research.

Although Živko Firfov worked first at Radio Skopje, and then at the Institute for folklore, and then again at the Radio, while Vasil Hadžimanov was employed by the Radio all the time, these two talented "patriarchs" of North Macedonian ethnomusicology were very similar in some respects, and at the same time each of them had some specific traits in individual work. Neither of them graduated from music academy, especially not in ethnomusicology. However, both were passionate songs' collectors and transcribers. They published song collections and wrote articles, in which they presented results of their fieldwork, analysed melody structures and discussed music in general. Besides research, Firfov was mainly active in applied ethnomusicology as initiator, organiser, manager and producer. As an employee and manager of the Institute for folklore, he organised systematic collecting of note and sound recordings of traditional music in the country. On the other hand, Hadžimanov was a great promotor of traditional music in North Macedonia through his lectures and radio shows. Simultaneously, he intensively promoted North Macedonian traditional music on Yugoslav and world scene. As a polyglot and skilful communicator, he cooperated with many prominent ethnomusicologists in Yugoslavia and abroad whom he met at conferences of ethnomusicological societies SUFJ, IFCM and SEM. Firfov also attended congresses. Listening to lectures of their colleagues and exchange of opinion with them helped them to enrich their knowledge. Gjorgji Gjorgjiev states that the most productive scholarly activities of Firfov and Hadžimanov were between 1960 and 1964. Besides, Gjorgjiev stresses that 1953 was also an important year because both the first Firfov's and the first Hadžimanov's collections of traditional songs were published, as well as a similar book of their Serbian colleague Miodrag Vasiljević (Gjorgjiev, 1999: pp. 95, 100).

Metodija Simonovski (born in 1927) was employed by the Institute for folklore as a very young researcher, just after the Institute was founded. He worked there from 1950 until 1965 as a field sound recordist and note transcriber. Later, he

started working at Radio Skopje. Simonovski transcribed numerous traditional songs. Even though his research oeuvre is not extensive, it is significant in the research context of the time. He assisted Živko Firfov and coauthored with him two important monographs of aural transcriptions of North Macedonian traditional songs (Firfov *et al.*, 1959; Firfov & Simonovski, 1962). Simonovski (1959, 1960, 1961, 1962) published four well-received articles in the journal *Sound (Zvuk)*, which were reprinted in the monograph *Music on Macedonian Soil (Muzikata na počvata na Makedonija)* in 1999. These articles discuss the relations between traditional beliefs and music, traditional music terminology, problem of refrain in traditional songs and oriental influences on North Macedonian traditional melodies. Simonovski was very knowledgeable in ethnology and linguistics. In his articles, he quotes literature that deals with music in Asian countries, such as Syria and India, or ancient civilisations, such as Antique Greece, Roman Empire and Byzantium (Gjorgjiev, 1999: pp. 98-99; Didenko, 2020: p. 161).

Aleksandar Linin (1908-1998) graduated in music at the Pedagogical Academy in Skopje in 1952. From 1945, he worked at Radio Skopje. Linin started collecting songs in the interwar period. He was employed by the Institute for Folklore as assistant in 1958, and worked there until his retirement in 1974. He was one of the founders of ethnoorganology and ethnochoreology²⁹. He also researched traditional rural singing. Considering that he published his first article in 1967, his academic contribution is part of the next research phase of North Macedonian traditional rural singing, so it will not be discussed here (Golabovski, 1999; Angelov, 2015: pp. 357, 359, 364).

From 1940s until 1960s North Macedonian traditional rural singing rarely draw attention of **foreign researchers**.

Serbian ethnomusicologist **Miodrag Vasiljević** (1903-1963) published his book of traditional songs from North Macedonia in 1953. The material for the book were his note transcriptions from the fieldwork in North Macedonia in the interwar period, as well as transcriptions of songs of ethnic Macedonians who lived in Belgrade after the war. A great part of Vasiljević's interwar collection was destroyed during the Belgrade bombing campaign in 1941 (Vasiljević, 1953).

Bulgarian-American ethnomusicologist **Boris Kremenliev** (1911-1988) published a book *Bulgarian-Macedonian folk music*. In terms of its contents and methodology, the book is very interesting and innovative for its time. However, as the title implies, the book carries a political message. Essentially, Kremenliev holds that ethnic Macedonians are a subgroup of Bulgarian nation. He states that there are no ethnological differences between the peoples of Bulgaria and North Macedonia. From the point of view of folklore, political borders defined by various peace accords are artificial. However, in the book he mentions North Macedonia and ethnic Macedonians only a few times. The book contains only four examples of music from North Macedonia (Kremenliev, 1952: pp. VIII, 43, 66, 78, 141, 159). That is why we cannot say that this book is about rural singing in North

²⁹These disciplines were later further developed by Borivoje Džimrevski and Mihailo Dimoski.

Macedonia. It is about Bulgarian singing in general.

In 1955, the Institute for Folklore invited Danish ethnomusicologist **Birthe Traerup** (1930-2022) to join the research of traditional rural singing in the regions of Maleševo and Pijanec in eastern part of North Macedonia, at the border with Bulgaria. In 1961, she conducted the same research in two villages in Razložko in Pirin Macedonia, together with eminent Bulgarian ethnomusicologist Stoyan Dzhudzhev. Traerup published the results from these two field trips in 1970. The book is a note collection with various musicological analyses. In his review of Traerup's book, Jerko Bezić criticises the fact that she did not study social and cultural aspects of singing, which she herself mentions in the introduction. Still, Bezić notes some innovative aspects in Traerup's analysis (Traerup, 1970: p. 9; Bezić, 1971: pp. 309-310). She was mostly focused on North Macedonian, Bulgarian and Serbian literature, but she also quoted a few German authors. Although she researched traditional rural singing in North Macedonia in the 1960s, she published the book in 1970, so her influence is mostly felt in the following research phase.

5. Conclusion

From the very beginnings of research in the end of the 19th century, and especially since the Second World War, traditional rural singing has been the main topic of research for music collectors and ethnomusicologists in North Macedonia. This singing has drawn interest because it is characterised by specific melody structures and performance contexts. Furthermore, it is a strong marker of ethnic Macedonian identity. From 1861 till 1967, the research passed through three very different historical phases in which the intensity of research and methodologies were changing.

During the Ottoman times, in the 1860s and 1870s, North Macedonian folklorists were very enthusiastic about collecting traditional songs texts, but there were no researchers who would make aural transcriptions of melodies. Until the Ottoman retreat in 1912, only a few music-collecting fieldworks were conducted, and several short note collections were published. However, no research papers were written.

In the interwar period, Serbian and Bulgarian ethnomusicologists conducted research in North Macedonia. Also, North Macedonian ethnomusicologists Živko Firfov and Vasil Hadžimanov started their research at this time, as well as Czech researcher Ludvík Kuba and Belgian researcher Ernest Closson. Aural transcribing and publishing of note collections was much more intensive than in the Ottoman times. Research was mostly focused on analyses of melody structures. The most noted works are Dobri Hristov's analysis of asymmetrical rhythms and Ernest Closson's paper on tone rows. Fridrih Troj conducted an experimental ethnopsychological research about North Macedonians' musicality. Among other topics, there was a discourse about high aesthetic value of traditional North Macedonian songs. Several ethnomusicologists were concerned about the

rise of popularity of *kafana* music, considering *kafana* songs less valuable. Also, they thought that *kafana* singers interpret traditional songs inaccurately.

After the Second World War, ethnomusicology rapidly developed in Yugoslav Macedonia due to a special status of traditional music as one of the sources of Macedonian ethnic identity. The Institute for Folklore in Skopje was founded in 1950. Four pioneers of North Macedonian ethnomusicology, Živko Firfov, Vasil Hadžimanov, Metodija Simonovski and Aleksandar Linin, made first fieldwork expeditions and established the systematic research of traditional rural singing. Two foreign researchers, Serbian ethnomusicologist Miodrag Vasiljević and Danish ethnomusicologist Birthe Traerup, joined them. The pioneers inaugurated the “sanctity” of fieldwork. Visiting villages, recording of traditional singing and instrumental music, interviews and observations have remained unquestionable segments of methodology in North Macedonian ethnomusicology. Firfov’s and Hadžimanov’s systematicness in that field influenced all future researchers, which lead to creations of marvellous archive collections containing thousands of sound recordings and note transcriptions of traditional music from all parts of North Macedonia. They also opened the door to research of various topics, many of which are still of interest nowadays.

In the end, I will briefly comment on the development of research of traditional rural singing in North Macedonia from 1967 until nowadays. From the late 1960s until the end of the 1990s local ethnomusicologists with university education whose main research interest was traditional singing were active in North Macedonia for the first time. Although urban folk song with instrumental accompaniment was becoming very popular during socialist times, the research focus of ethnomusicologists was almost exclusively on rural singing, especially ritual and group singing. It was very similar in the 1990s, when North Macedonia became an independent republic and when capitalist system replaced the socialist one. From the 1960s until the 1990s researchers conducted tape recordings of songs and interviews with performers in the villages all over North Macedonia. This was followed by note transcriptions and thorough analyses of sound structures. The results were compared with related sound structures in the Balkans and among Slavic peoples. The main aim was to broaden knowledge about ethnogenesis of ethnic Macedonians from prehistory until modern times and the course of development of rural singing through its long history.

The end of the 1990s was marked by the spread of digital technology, which lead to larger projects of digitalisation of analogous archive recordings. It also enabled new digital and video recordings in the field. The Internet facilitated communication with researchers all over the world. However, from the beginning of the 21st century until today, there have not been any major changes regarding topics and methodology in North Macedonian ethnomusicology. Traditional rural singing, which is disappearing very fast, is still the most researched type of vocal music. Still, compared to previous periods, the researchers are now more interested in typologisation, classifications and systematisation of various song

collections. Ethnographic data also have a significant role in research. Just a few researchers focus on older and newer urban singing and its styles and genres. They mostly use methods of music anthropology. In the 21st century, the research of Albanian minority in North Macedonia is very intensified. Finally, I should mention that several foreign researchers, mostly from North America, conducted fieldwork in North Macedonia since the second half of the 20th century until today. Their studies are focused on research of music through the lens of social and cultural anthropology, sociology, philosophy, aesthetics, psychology and gender studies.

In conclusion, the dedicated work of forerunners (1861-1941) and pioneers (1944-1967) has left an important trace on all generations of researchers in North Macedonia. Their note collections and publications are very important contributions to ethnomusicology. The forerunners were mostly foreigners who had a solid understanding of specific features of Macedonian culture and rural singing, as well as urban singing, which is often overlooked. On the other hand, pioneers researched their own ethnic and national heritage and promoted it on the global scene. To this day, North Macedonian ethnomusicology relies on the foundations created by the forerunners and pioneers.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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