

## **Music and Dance in the Scene the *Mocking of Christ* in the Mural Paintings of the Churches in Moldavia, Romania, During the First Half of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century**

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**Abstract:** *The period of time encompassed between the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century and the first half of the following one represented a stage in which the Byzantine culture flourished exponentially in the Romanian Principalities, as a consequence of its migration to the North of the Danube, after the shock caused by the Ottomans in the year 1453. One of the directions in which the Byzantine influence was very powerful, leaving a visible imprint until nowadays, was the art of church painting. The canon of Byzantine painting referred to a complex series of images largely inspired from the Biblical text, as well as from the hagiographic texts and even from daily life. One of the favourite succession of images in the Byzantine art, entitled by specialists The Passion Cycle, reunites sequences referring to the arrest, the trial and the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. The Mocking of Christ represents one of the paintings which includes important contemporary aspects of the moment in which the scene was painted, in addition to the transposing in colours of the facts which took place in that context. Such aspects were music and dance, but also the ceremony in which these were included, thus offering a very important source of information about the way that period of time “looked like” in terms of sound and choreography. Not only South of the Danube, where the scene appears in the entire area of Byzantine culture and influence, but also later, North of the river, the Mocking of Christ reunites the same constituent elements, but still different in their essence, according to the time and the region where they appeared. These elements show the musical and choreographic specificity of each and every country or region, facilitating for us today a better understanding of this cultural branch. The ten scenes of the Mocking in the church frescoes in Moldavia, achieved in the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, to which we shall be referring here, represent a certain proof of the existence of a solid artistic culture in Moldavia, comparable to the ones of the neighbouring countries, and in accordance with the model “dictated” by the West, especially in what regards the musical instruments used at the Court, around the sovereign, as it happened in our case.*

**Keywords:** The Mocking of Christ, music, dance, musical instruments, frescoes, Moldavia, Romania.

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## Introduction

The end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century represented for Moldavia a blooming period, experienced in many aspects, largely due to the long and glorious reign of Stephen the Great. The fall of Constantinople in 1453 represented a time of crossroads for the world, with a strong impact on the entire Europe, especially the Orthodox region. Starting at this crossroads, the Orthodoxy sprung from the Byzantium which moved its epicentre from Constantinople, which is now occupied by the Ottomans, to the Orthodox countries around it. Among the most important ones were also Moldavia and Wallachia. The rulers of these countries, just as before 1453, set themselves up as protectors of the holy places, like Mount Athos or the Sinai Peninsula, supporting, first and foremost financially, the existence and development of the monasteries there. Due to these reasons, but also due to others, the Byzantine culture, especially the religious one, had a strong impact on the Romanian Principalities, which is very easily seen in the mural painting of the churches.

The beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century is marked by the ending of Stephen the Great's glorious reign (1457-1504), a time in which the building and painting of churches in the Byzantine style continues. Now two important boyar foundations are built, about which we shall speak further. After this, two shorter reigns occur, the reign of Bogdan the Blind and the one of Ștefăniță Vodă, which were also marked by certain important foundations. The next stage is a very important one for the Byzantine art in Moldavia – the reigns of Petru Rareș (1527-1538 and 1541-1546). During this time, many of the churches built by Stephen the Great and also those founded by Petru Rareș himself were painted, while the art of Byzantine painting developed and reached new heights.

## Sources and content of the *Mocking of Christ* scene

The painting of churches, according to the Byzantine tradition, also meant observing a certain canon. The craftsmen, both the local ones and the ones coming from other places, used to know very well how a church had to be painted. They used to take their inspiration from the Byzantium, most likely through the South-Slavonic connection. The Byzantine principles also meant, among other things, the illustration of the cycle the *Passions of Christ*, divided into several sections, from which one is called the *Mocking of Christ*, a scene inspired by the Biblical accounts referring to the arrest and the trial of Christ by the Jews and by Pilate. In this scene, various eclectic elements are reunited; in addition to the Gospel accounts, also intrusions from the *Old Testament* appear, from the Book of Job, as shall be seen further.

In the case of the scene the *Mocking of Christ*, the Biblical verses refer to the arrest and mocking of Christ by the Jews, but also by the Romans, starting with the preliminary stage of the trial and peaking with the trial in

front of Pilate. The trial through which Jesus goes is a double one; the first one, that of the Jews, is done out of religious reasons, and the second one, the one of Pilate, as a representative of the Roman Empire in Israel, is done out of political reasons. The Jews, as a religious authority, mocked Christ because he had claimed to be the Son of God (John 5, 18), and the Romans, as a secular authority, did it for the statements according to which He considered Himself king (Mark 15, 2). For this reason, they adorned Christ in an ironic manner, parodying the crowning ceremony, but also the symbols of royalty: the scarlet colour, the crown and the sceptre, by giving Him a scarlet robe, a crown of thorns and a cane staff. Then, bowing in front of Him, they jeered at Jesus, saying “Hail, King of the Jews!”, striking him, spitting on Him, humiliating Him and asking Him to prophesy who had hit Him<sup>1</sup>. Parodying the behaviour meant for a king, they kneel in front of Jesus, and then they strike Him on the head. Both these details belong to the image in which Jesus is being crowned with a thorn crown, after having been submitted to the trial by Pilate, and after Pilate gives him to the Jews, not having found Him guilty. All these facts are described in the Biblical text written by Matthew 26, 67-68; 27, 27-31; Mark 14, 65; 15, 17-19; Luke 22, 63-64 and John 19, 2-3.

Similarities, regarding the scene the *Mocking of Christ* illustrated in the West under the influence of the Byzantine art, have been also found between medieval representations of the sufferings and the mocking endured by Job, especially on behalf of his friends, and the representations of Christ’s mocking, these two aspects being correlated also with the life and struggles of Francis of Assisi. Thus, the western representations of the *Mocking* stem from three sources of inspiration<sup>2</sup>, these having also, most likely, a model coming from the Byzantine Empire, which was not kept to the present day.

Moving from the Biblical source of the scene to the concerned details in this text, we can see one of the reasons for which also musical instruments appear in the Byzantine representations of the *Mocking*, which are many and various, not only a horn (shofar), as it is the case for the representations in the Latin space, like the painted cross in Sta. Chiara, San Gimignano, probably the year 1261. This reason is given by the fact that the Biblical text of the *Old Testament* often makes a connection between the music of instruments and the devotion to God<sup>3</sup>. Therefore, because Jesus was saying about Himself that He was the Son of God, and the Jews did not believe Him, mocking Him, the

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<sup>1</sup>Anne Derbes, *Picturing the Passion in Late Medieval Italy: Narrative Painting, Franciscan Ideologies, and the Levanti*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge New York, 1996, pp. 94-95. In Luke 23, 11, the *Gospel* text says that Jesus was dressed with a shiny piece of cloth, not with crimson, and this aspect was captured in the illustration of the *Mocking of Christ* at “Saint Nicholas” church in Dorohoi and at Probota Monastery. In all the other scenes mentioned by us, Jesus is wearing crimson.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibidem*, pp. 101, 107-112.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibidem*, p. 105.

artists caught the moment and transposed it by representing Christ “adorned with the royal symbols”, accompanied by different instrument players, belonging to different musical categories, playing for Him as for a god and king. In all these representations they catch both the Jews’ trial and their vision on the facts on the one hand, that is the religious reason of the mocking, namely Christ-God (John 18, 36), as well as the worldly perspective of the Romans, on the other, that is Christ- the king (John 18, 37). However, in the *Old Testament* music had also another meaning, that of ridicule and mockery, according to the *Lamentations of Jeremiah* 3, 14: “I have become a laughingstock to all my people, their mocking song all the day”, or according to *The Book of Job* 30, 1, 9: “But now they mock me, men younger than I, whose fathers I would have disdained to put with my sheep dogs. And now those young men mock me in song; I have become a byword among them”. This is why these texts, especially the one of Job, seem to have influenced and inspired artists, because in some of the Byzantine representations of the *Mocking* there is also a group of children or young people who dance, most likely in an ironic and savage manner, if we take into account the painting details, while being accompanied by the music of those with musical instruments. Within the same frame, we can see that Job answers to his friends like this: “They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance. They take timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ”. (Job, 21, 11-12)<sup>4</sup>. The juxtaposition in the same image of musical instruments and dancers may represent an allusion to Job’s struggles, taking into account that he was seen as a foreshadowing of Jesus Christ<sup>5</sup>.

In addition to the reasons for the “composition” of Christ’s image in which he is mocked, placing together in the same picture firstly the facts mentioned in the *New Testament* referring to Jesus’s trial, and secondly overlapping Job’s image from the *Old Testament* and identifying the Messiah with him, but also with Francis of Assisi, in the Byzantium, the artists had also another source of inspiration, that is the ridicule and the parody of certain imperial or religious ceremonies. Examples of parodies and ridicules of certain ceremonies by the Byzantine artists, captured in *The Life of Basil I* from the 10<sup>th</sup> century, or in Skylitzes’ history from a century later, have as their purpose the demonizing of emperor Michael III, out of political reasons – in an attempt to justify his assassination by his successor, Basil I – because he must have supposedly ordered a certain jester called Groullos to be ironically named patriarch, and his friends to be metropolitans, in order to satirize and amuse at the expense of religious ceremonies, while walking in a procession and singing obscene and offensive songs accompanied by the sacred melodies. Moreover, the participants to this cortege were hopping like

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<sup>4</sup>Cf. *Ibidem*, pp. 105-106.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibidem*, p. 105.

satires in the sounds of cymbals and other musical instruments. The same elements can be found also in later reports of the simulated imperial rituals, from which dancing and music are not missing<sup>6</sup>. Another example of parody of the Byzantine ceremonies can be found in *The Chronographia* authored by Michael Psellus, the one who tells about an event which took place during the reign of emperor Constantine IX, during a rebellion, when he presented himself to the mutineers in all his imperial glory, in order to dismiss the rumours about his death. Nevertheless, the mutineers organized a similar ceremony in which they ridiculed the emperor, using music and hilarious dances<sup>7</sup>. Another parody is described by Niketas Choniates, the one who tells about the 1149 fighting between the Byzantines and the Venetians, when the latter ones capture the ship of emperor Manuel I and adorned it in a pompous manner, placing there an Ethiopian man as emperor, ridiculing and making racial allusions to the emperor. As well, the same historian describes also the splendid parade to which emperor Andronicus has been submitted, carried through the city together with a cortege meant as a parody of the imperial cortege<sup>8</sup>. All these simulated ceremonies have a certain recurrence, recognizable in the use of musical instruments, probably playing them in a loud and disharmonious manner, in the use of acclamations with offensive texts, in interpreting naughty songs and in dancing. In this respect the Byzantine art has been impacted by this type of parody, especially in the case of the mocking of Christ, when the Biblical texts which we have mentioned can follow the pattern found in the parodies of the imperial Byzantine parodies, as Jesus had been submitted to a similar treatment<sup>9</sup>. This is how they came to the insertion of certain elements not mentioned in the *Gospels*, like musical instruments and dancing, but which are mentioned in the *Old Testament*, especially in the *Book of Job*, as we have reminded. Besides this, the introduction of musical instruments and dancing may be due to the inclusion by the artists of certain contemporary elements, thus making us assist to one of the few cases in which the Byzantine art assimilates and reflects contemporary social elements<sup>10</sup>. Moreover, the scenes of the *Mocking*, which we shall mention again, are tightly connected with the parodies of the Byzantine ceremonies from the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, period which has been labelled as one of “realism” in what regards the illustration of costumes and accessories within Byzantine religious art, a

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<sup>6</sup>Henry Maguire, *Parodies of Imperial Ceremonial and Their Reflections in Byzantine Art*, in Alexander Beihammer, Stavroula Constantinou, Maria Parani, edit., *Court Ceremonies and Rituals of Power in Byzantium and the Medieval Mediterranean. Comparative Perspectives*, Brill, Leiden•Boston, 2013, pp. 417-419.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibidem*, pp. 420-421.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibidem*, p. 421.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibidem*, p. 423.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibidem*, pp. 423-424.

reality which most probably had expanded over daily life, catching certain aspects, as we shall also notice from the images<sup>11</sup>.

Going further, the oldest image preserved from Byzantine art, which illustrates the scene of Christ's mocking, dates back from 1299 and can be found in "Saint Nicholas" church in Prilep, Northern Macedonia. Here we can notice a group of musicians, two of whom are playing large horns or rudimentary variants of the trumpet, while other two are playing a certain type of flute and cymbals. The next such representation chronologically speaking is the one from "Saint Nicholas" Orphanos church in Thessaloniki, Greece, which has been painted approximately between 1310-1320 (**Fig. 1**).



**Fig. 1:** "The Mocking of Christ", in "Saint Nicholas" Orphanos church, Thessaloniki, Greece

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<sup>11</sup>*Ibidem*, pp. 426-427.

This scene seems to have its roots in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, when the emperor used to appear on a bandstand in the sounds of musical instruments<sup>12</sup>. Here we can see, next to those who are playing two rudimentary trumpets (buisine), drums, cymbals, as well as an idiophonic instrument in the shape of sticks, with which one produced sounds by striking them against each other, also the person who is striking Christ on the head with a cane stick, the ones who are kneeling in front of Him (*Cf.* Matthew 27, 30; Mark 15, 18-19), and the soldiers (*Cf.* Matthew 27, 27; Mark 15, 16), in accordance with the biblical accounts.

The most remarkable representation of the *Mocking*, belonging to the late Byzantine art, is the one painted between 1316-1318 in “Saint George” church in Staro Nagoročino, Northern Macedonia (**Fig. 2**).



**Fig. 2:** “The Mocking of Christ”, in “Saint George” church in Staro Nagoročino, Northern Macedonia

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<sup>12</sup>*Ibidem*, p. 424.

Here the scene is richly illustrated; the musical instruments are more numerous than in the previously mentioned examples: horns/trumpets, flute, drum and cymbals. Moreover, now the dancers also appear. They are two young men dressed in long-sleeved garments, which is the same kind of clothing encountered in the secular Byzantine art, presenting scenes of daily life<sup>13</sup>. This aspect helps us understand once more that artists, at least in the case of illustrating this scene, used to get inspiration from their surrounding reality at the time when those frescoes were achieved.

Besides the scenes of the *Mocking* reminded so far, and other similar ones, but each of them with its own particularities, can be found also in “Saint George” church of the Polog Monastery, Northern Macedonia, painted around 1343-1345; in the “Saint Archangel Michael” church of Lesnovo Monastery in Northern Macedonia, painted around the year 1346, then in the church of Dečani Monastery in Kosovo, painted around 1350; in “Saint Mary” church in Kotor, Montenegro, the 14<sup>th</sup> century; in “Saint Heraklion” church of “Saint John Lampadistis” Monastery in Cyprus, the 14<sup>th</sup> century; in “Saint Demetrius” church in Boboshevo, Bulgaria, painted around 1488; in the church of the “Holy Cross” in Plantanissa, Cyprus, painted around 1494; in the church of Stavronikita Monastery in Mount Athos, painted around 1545, and, most probably in other places. Within the Russian space, we can find this scene painted on an icon which dates back from the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, and is hosted now at the Museum of Architecture in Novgorod.

In what regards the dances and their characteristics, appearing in the various representations of the *Mocking*, these differ from case to case, depending on the specific of the place but also on the painted details like garments or choreographic movements. In the entire Medieval Europe, and not only then, there were ensembles of rudimentary performers who used to travel and entertain people with their music, dances and acrobatics. These were named jugglers in the West, while in the East, in the Slavonic world, especially in the Russian space – “skomorokhs”, and in the Orient and the Muslim world they were called “köçek”<sup>14</sup>. Their art was simple and based on a type of music using musical instruments which were of very little performance and refinement. Their costumes were also simple, and the choreography used to contain folk dances, gruesome and sometimes obscene dances, sometimes making use of masks, generally representing animals. They would also have with them trained animals, usually bears, which had a great impact on the public.

While remaining in the sphere of Byzantine art and of the representations for the scene called the *Mocking of Christ*, we can notice that

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<sup>13</sup>*Ibidem*, p. 425.

<sup>14</sup>Arzu Öztürkmen, *Performance, Iconograph, and Narrative in Ottoman Imperial Festivals*, in Barbara Sparti, Judy Van Zile, edit., *Imaging Dance. Visual Representation of Dancers and Dancing*, Georg Olms Verlag, Hildesheim, Zürich, New-York, 2011, pp. 81-82.



the images which represent also the dancers illustrate them having large costumes with long sleeves, as we can also see in the painting at Staro Nagoročino (**Fig. 2**), as the street performers were in Macedonia. They were not well seen by the church, being considered propagators of immorality. However, they were appreciated by the people, reason for which we can find them in this scene. Some of these we can often find painted on the walls of churches, usually for illustrating psalm verses, including in the Romanian Principalities. The first such representation known in the Orthodox world is the one in the church “Saint Sofia” in Kiev, painted in the 11<sup>th</sup> century<sup>15</sup>. Their dances are ostentatious, full of joy and energy, opposing the Christian precepts, ridiculing and offending without restraint, while their moves were falling under what the Biblical texts called “ὄρχήσις”. “Ὁρχήσις” referred to individual dances or movements, and come in a certain opposition to “χορεία”, another Biblical term which refers to movements or dancing in a group<sup>16</sup>. The culture and art of the Middle Ages contains many examples where acrobats, jugglers and skomorokhs are represented in the scene of Salome dancing for Herod – for example – suggesting through their movements passion and sin. These performers present that entertaining and cheerful side, which is sometimes exaggerated or uncontrolled, aspects which have become thematic materials in the cycle called the *Passions of Christ*<sup>17</sup>.

### **The Mocking Christ scene in the churches of Moldavia**

In what regards the churches painted in the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century in Moldavia, in which the *Mocking of Christ* scene has been noticeably kept from the ensemble of the passions cycle, they present the illustration of the scene in a somewhat different manner, from case to case, offering many details about the music and the dance caught by the painter, which are at the same time testimonies of everyday life for those times, as we shall see. There are as well churches in Moldavia in which the scene of the *Mocking* is represented, and they date back from a time period before the 16<sup>th</sup> century, all these being foundations of Stephen the Great, but also some which date from the second half of this century, all with their particularities. Thus, the churches to which we are referring in this text are: “Saint Nicholas” church of “Saint Nicholas” Monastery Bălinești, Suceava County (**Fig. 3**), foundation of Ioan Tăutu, built and painted between 1501-1505<sup>18</sup>; “The Beheading of Saint John the Baptist” church of the monastery with the same name, in Arbore, Suceava County (**Fig. 4**), foundation of Luca Arbore in

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<sup>15</sup>Cf. Sonja Zdravkova Djeparoska, “Performance and Religion: Dancing Bodies in Macedonian Orthodox Fresco Painting”, in “Arts”, 10 (4), 88, p. 8.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibidem*, pp. 8-9.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibidem*, p. 10.

<sup>18</sup>Ștefan S. Gorovei, “Un tablou votiv și o necropolă familială. Biserica logofătului Tăutu de la Bălinești”, in “Analele Putnei”, No.1, 2015, pp. 12-19.

1503 and painted in the following two years<sup>19</sup>; “Saint Nicholas” church in Dorohoi, Botoșani County (**Fig. 5**), founded by Stephen the Great in 1495, but painted between 1522-1525<sup>20</sup>; “The Descent of the Holy Spirit” church of Dobrovăț Monastery, Iași County (**Fig. 6**), one of the last foundations of Stephen the Great (1504), painted during the reign of Petru Rareș, in 1529<sup>21</sup>; “All Saints’ Day” church of Părhăuți Monastery, Suceava County (**Fig. 7**), founded by Gavriil Troțușan in 1522 and painted between 1530-1531<sup>22</sup>; “Saint Nicholas” church of Probota Monastery, Suceava County (**Fig. 8**), founded by Petru Rareș in 1530 and painted in 1532<sup>23</sup>; “The Dormition of the Mother of God” church of Humor Monastery, Suceava County (**Fig. 9**), founded by Toader Bubuiog in 1530 and painted in 1535<sup>24</sup>; the “Annunciation” church of Moldovița Monastery, Suceava County (**Fig. 10**), founded by Petru Rareș in 1532 and painted in 1537<sup>25</sup>; the “Saint Demetrius” church in Suceava (**Fig. 11**), founded by Petru Rareș in the year 1535 and painted between the years 1536-1538<sup>26</sup> and “Saint Nicholas” church of Râșca Monastery, Suceava County (**Fig. 12**), founded by Petru Rareș in 1542<sup>27</sup> and painted in the same period, with the mentioning that some of the paintings, among which also the scene of the *Mocking*, have been renewed according to the original models in the year 1827<sup>28</sup>.

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<sup>19</sup>I. Caproșu, “Biserica Arbure”, in “Mitropolia Moldovei și Bucovinei”, no. 1-2, 1976, pp. 404-419.

<sup>20</sup>Carmen Cecilia Solomonea, Alina Budianu, *Biserica “Sfântul Nicolae” Dorohoi – efectele acțiunilor factorilor biotici și abiotici la pictura murală*, in Sorin Iftimi, Aurica Ichim, Lucian-Valeriu Lefter, coord., *Simpozionul Național “Monumentul – Tradiție și viitor”*, 10<sup>th</sup> edition, vol. 2, Iași, 2008, pp. 491-492.

<sup>21</sup>Voica Maria Pușcașu, Nicolae N. Pușcașu, *Mănăstirea Dobrovățului. Monografie arheologică și istorică*, printed under the blessing of His Eminence Pimen, Archbishop of Suceava and Rădăuți, Mitropolit Iacov Putneanul Publishing House, Suceava, 2012, pp. 15-16.

<sup>22</sup>Pr. Ilie Gheorghită, *Biserica din Părhăuți*, in Prof. Dr. Vasile Drăguț, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Corina Nicolescu, edit., *Monumente istorice bisericesti din Mitropolia Moldovei și Sucevei*, The Metropolitanate of Moldavia and Suceava Publishing House, Iași, 1974, p. 164; Alexandru Prelipcean, *Mănăstirea Părhăuți, 500 de ani (1522-2022): de la citorie boierească la citadelă monastică*, Crimca Publishing House, Archdiocese of Suceava and Rădăuți, 2022, p. 13.

<sup>23</sup>Tereza Sinigalia, *Mănăstirea Probota. Biserica “Sf. Nicolae”* (<http://www.medieval.istoria-artei.ro/resources/Probota%2C%20programul%20iconografic%2C%20Tereza%20Sinigalia.pdf>), pp. 3, 52.

<sup>24</sup>Ecaterina Cincheza-Buculei, “Pictura pronaosului bisericii Mănăstirii Humor”, in “Attitudes and Research in Art History. Fine Arts”, new series, tome 4 (48), 2014, p. 183.

<sup>25</sup>Corina Nicolescu, *Mănăstirea Moldovița*, 2nd edition, Meridiane Publishing House, Bucharest, 1967, pp. 8, 12.

<sup>26</sup>Paraschiva-Victoria Batariuc, “Din istoria bisericii «Sfântul Dumitru» din Suceava”, in “Historia Urbana”, vol. 16, 2008, pp. 65, 75.

<sup>27</sup>Narcis Crețulescu, *Istoria Sfintei Mănăstiri Rîșca din județul Suceava*, Fălticeni, 1901, p. 28.

<sup>28</sup>Prof. Dr. Vasile Drăguț, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Corina Nicolescu, edit., *Monumente istorice bisericesti din Mitropolia Moldovei și Sucevei*, The Metropolitanate of Moldavia and Suceava Publishing House, Iași, 1974, p. 199.



**Fig. 3:** “The Mocking of Christ”, in “Saint Nicholas” church of “Saint Nicholas” Monastery Bălinești, Suceava County (photo: Eduard Rusu)



**Fig. 4:** “The Mocking of Christ”, “Beheading of Saint John the Baptist” church of “Beheading of Saint John the Baptist”, Arbore, Suceava County (photo: Eduard Rusu)



**Fig. 5:** “The Mocking of Christ”, in “Saint Nicholas” church in Dorohoi, Botoșani County (photo: Eduard Rusu) (photo: Stelian Ciurciun)



**Fig. 6:** “The Mocking of Christ”, in “The Descent of the Holy Spirit” church of Dobrovăț Monastery, Iași County (photo: Eduard Rusu)



**Fig. 7:** “The Mocking of Christ”, in “All Saints’ Day” church of Părhăuți Monastery, Suceava County (photo: Eduard Rusu)



**Fig. 8:** “The Mocking of Christ”, in “Saint Nicholas” church of Probota Monastery, Suceava County (photo: Eduard Rusu)



**Fig. 9:** “The Mocking of Christ”, in “The Dormition of the Mother of God” church of Humor Monastery, Suceava County (photo: Eduard Rusu)



**Fig. 10:** “The Mocking of Christ”, in “Annunciation” church of Moldovița Monastery, Suceava County (photo: Eduard Rusu)



**Fig. 11:** “The Mocking of Christ”, in “Saint Demetrius” church in Suceava (photo: Eduard Rusu)



**Fig. 12:** “The Mocking of Christ”, in “Saint Nicholas” church of Râșca Monastery, Suceava County (photo: Eduard Rusu)

### **Musical elements**

To highlight even more the two elements under discussion here – music and dance – in the representations of the scene the *Mocking of Christ*, in the ten cases in Moldavia considered so far, we shall proceed to the identification and detailing of every illustrated music genre, the same way that we shall do also in the case of the dances, establishing, as far as it is possible, also a connection between dance and music.

As we have already noticed, in the art of Byzantine mural painting, both in the world of Byzantine influence and in the Western world (but which has its roots in this case in the Byzantium), the scene of the *Mocking*, part of the *Passion Cycle*, is built on the Biblical story, first and foremost on the New Testament, but also on the Old Testament. This happened because of the echo *The Book of Job* had in the Middle Ages, Job's suffering being compared to that of Christ. From all these, the most important aspect here is the degree of authenticity and „dailiness” as source of inspiration for painters. One must take into account that in the examples from the South of the Danube, which we have researched, especially in the case of those achieved around the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the degree of resemblance between art and reality in the case of clothing, musical instruments and dancing, is very high, this entire period representing a time in which realism influenced very much the art of Byzantine mural painting. This is why our attempt has as purpose to highlight, through corroboration with other categories of sources, the musical and choreographical reality of the time period when the paintings were achieved, as much as it can be re-established, in the same way we have already done in other situations, when we are referring to some of the mural paintings in the churches in Romania.

From the *Gospels* we notice that Jesus was betrayed by Judas and surrendered in the hands of the Jews, who were trying to find Him guilty and kill Him (Matthew 26, 57-68), taking Him afterwards to Pilate to judge Him. Here, the soldiers take Him in front of the Praetorium and dress Him up with the symbols of royalty, mocking Him and parodying the coronation ceremony: “Then the governor’s soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers around him. They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand. Then they knelt in front of him and mocked him. “Hail, king of the Jews!” they said. They spit on him, and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again”. (Mathew, 27, 27-30. Cf. Mark 15, 16-20; Luke 23, 11; John 19, 2-3). These verses are also illustrated in all the scenes of the *Mocking* in our examples and, despite the fact that some details are missing from certain scenes (for instance the kneeling of the soldiers), all the important elements, taken into account by us here, can be noticed in all the cases. In every group of soldiers there are also instrument players who play different types of trumpets and drums, even if



the accounts of the *New Testament* do not mention anywhere the presence of any type of music. However, the explanation for this consists in the fact that the Romans have parodied the ceremony of the coronation, and music could not be absent from a coronation, especially taking into consideration the tight connection between music and political power, as well as the fact that in the Middle Ages, when these paintings appear, but also in the immediately following period, music represented one of the main means through which a sovereign manifested his political power. Furthermore, as we have seen in the case of the *Mocking* scenes from the South Slavic area, the imperial and even the ecclesiastical ceremony have often been parodied, thus influencing also the mural painting. In this context, the instruments painted in our country only reflect the musical reality from the princely Court of Petru Rareș, reality which matches not only the information from the written sources, but also the fashion of the time, especially the Western one.

More precisely, in our examples we encounter two categories of music – the official one and the one for entertainment, which was tightly connected with dancing. The official one is in its turn divided into two distinct subdivisions – the military music and the music of the city, of the princely court. The military music was the music which served only the sovereign, the one that accompanied him on the battlefield, effectively contributing to the conduct of hostilities through the various sound signals necessary for the military manoeuvres, as well as for highlighting the person and the power the sovereign represented in front of his subjects and especially in front of his enemies. Outside the battlefield, the military music, next to the one of the city, was a component of various retinues and processions of the sovereign, accompanying him and marking his presence with sound whenever he travelled<sup>29</sup>. The musical instruments for this music were the trumpet and the timpani, and this was valid for the entire Western Europe. However, in Eastern Europe also cymbals were used in the military music before the timpani and later concomitantly with them. They had been taken from the Ottoman military practice and can be noticed in Dobrovăț (**Fig. 6**) and Râșca (**Fig. 12**). The presence of cymbals in these paintings makes us believe that in this period the cymbals used to replace sometimes the timpani, probably until the establishment of the “ritual formula” made of trumpet and timpani. The cymbals also appear in the South of the Danube, in some of the reminded examples (Thessaloniki, Kosovo, Staro Nagoročino, Lesnovo, Polog and Cyprus).

The timpani, which have become so specific for the Western military music and then for the art music, are introduced in the West through the Hungarian military musical practice, with the occasion of the wedding

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<sup>29</sup>Eduard Rusu, *Muzica și puterea politică în Moldova și Țara Românească, secolele al XV-lea – al XVIII-lea*, The “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University Publishing House, Iași, 2021, pp. 87-103.

embassy sent in 1457 by Ladislaus the Posthumous to France. In their turn, the Hungarians have taken the timpani from the Ottomans through the military conflicts between them<sup>30</sup>. In this situation, taking into account the fact that the timpani appear painted in Moldavia in the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, and in Wallachia, in all probability, even a century earlier, at Cozia, we believe that the presence of the timpani in the military music of the Romanian Principalities is at least concomitant with the one of the Hungarian Kingdom and previous to the West. This aspect is very important in the economy of the subject, because one can see the “trajectory” of this instrument from the Orient to the Occident, even though the timpani had been known to the Europeans even earlier, in the time of the Crusades, in smaller versions (kettledrum) and used in other contexts than the military one. The timpani were used in the battle always in pairs, carried on each side of the horse. In the scene the *Mocking of Christ* they appear at Bălinești (**Fig. 3**), Arbore (**Fig. 4**), “Saint Nicholas” in Dorohoi (**Fig. 5**), Dobrovăț (**Fig. 6**) and Humor (**Fig. 9**).

The contact between Europeans and Orientals through the Crusades facilitates also the evolution of trumpets – the most important military musical instrument – which have existed also in Europe for centuries, but through this contact their aspect is modified, and new sonority is being created, depending on the purpose for which they were used. The scenes of the *Mocking* in Moldavia, similar to Wallachia, restore several trumpet types, with multiple uses and sonorities. Such a trumpet, the one also named “right trumpet”, appears at Bălinești (**Fig. 3**), Moldovița (**Fig. 10**), “Saint Demetrius” in Suceava (**Fig. 11**) and Râșca (**Fig. 12**). These trumpets have been mostly used in the military music of the chivalry or in special contexts when they accompanied the sovereign in certain places.

If we look at the other kind of official music, we know that the music of the city meant to be that ever-present music of the city or town, where the sovereign’s residence used to be. This music served for sound signalling the possible dangers or the different stages or events during a day, playing from the towers or buildings with the role of observation. Furthermore, it used to be present, next to the military music, to all the manifestations which had the sovereign in the centre, highlighting his attributes and grandeur. It was usually played mainly by trumpets and drums, but which were different from those belonging to the military music. In addition, they used oboes, zurnas, bagpipes and flutes. These aspects are recognizable also in the Romanian Principalities, according to the written sources, confirmed also by the visual ones like mural painting, including the scene of the *Mocking* in our examples.

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<sup>30</sup> Curt Sachs, *The History of Musical Instruments*, W. W. Norton & Company Inc., New York, 1940, p. 329; Jeremy Montagu, *Timpani and Percussion*, Yale University Press, New Haven•London, 2002, pp. 42-43.

The sound signaling of the important moments and events used to be done in the West mainly through the trumpet and the drums. This trumpet had the shape of the letter “S” and was used between the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century and the 17<sup>th</sup> century, being an evolved instrument in terms of shape and sound, as compared to the military straight trumpet, which generated more acute sounds. In the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the two curls which gave the trumpet the shape of the letter „S” overlap, thus resulting a trumpet similar to the present one<sup>31</sup>, called “clairon” or “clareta”<sup>32</sup>. These modifications occur as a result of the evolution of the technology of metal processing, but also due to the necessity to reduce the dimensions of the instrument, to make it more easily manoeuvrable<sup>33</sup>. However, the “S” trumpet continued to be used in the Romanian Principalities until late, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, one piece of evidence being again the church painting, especially the one in Wallachia. Both models are to be recognized also in our paintings, in the scene of the *Mocking*. The “S” shaped trumpet appears at Dobrovăț (**Fig. 6**) and Humor (**Fig. 9**) and the “clareta” appears at Bălinești (**Fig. 3**), Arbore (**Fig. 4**), “Saint Nicholas” in Dorohoi (**Fig. 5**), Părhăuți<sup>34</sup> (**Fig. 7**), Humor (**Fig. 9**), Probota (**Fig. 8**) and Moldovița (**Fig. 10**).

The other instrument representative for the city music was the double membrane drum, an instrument with a very large spreading area and with multiple uses. This type of drum appears also in the paintings from the South of the Danube, at Staro Nagoročino, Polog and Lesnovo in Northern Macedonia, at Platanissa in Cyprus, but also in Moldavia, at Arbore (**Fig. 4**), Bălinești (**Fig. 3**), “Saint Nicholas” in Dorohoi (**Fig. 5**), Dobrovăț (**Fig. 6**), Părhăuți (**Fig. 7**), Humor (**Fig. 9**), Probota (**Fig. 8**) and Râșca (**Fig. 12**). They also appear in Wallachia in several places. However, a very interesting aspect related to this drum is the fact that not only by the South Danube examples, but also by those in Moldavia, the drummer is represented as being on the move, while rhythmically supporting the dance of the young people, aspect which can only make us believe that this drum was used also in the dance music.

Another instrument belonging to the city music, present throughout the whole Western area, in the East, but also in our region, is the “surla” or “zurna”. The surla belongs to the family of medieval oboes, it is made of

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<sup>31</sup>Cf. Anthony Baines, “The Evolution of Trumpet Music up to Fantini”, in “Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association”, Vol. 101 (1974 -1975), p. 7; Curt Sachs, *op. cit.*, p. 328.

<sup>32</sup>Francis W. Galpin, *Old English Instruments of Music. Their History and Character*, second edition, Methuen & Co. Ltd., London, 1911, pp. 199-206.

<sup>33</sup>Elisa Gerolimetto, *La tromba nella musica veneziana del XVII secolo*, [Magistrali biennali], Padova, 2019, p. 25.

<sup>34</sup>As the *Mocking of Christ* scene from Părhăuți Monastery is hard to decipher because of degradation, within this text we shall refer only to the musical instruments which we can distinguish. After the restauration it will be possible to see clearly also the other elements of the scene.

wood, and it generates acute sounds. In Moldavia, the instrument has been attested even since the time of Stephen the Great, through the mentioning of Mircea Purcel the surla player<sup>35</sup>, and it appears in the scene of the *Mocking* at Bălinești (**Fig. 3**), Arbore (**Fig. 4**), Dobrovăț (**Fig. 6**), Humor (**Fig. 9**), Probota (**Fig. 8**) and very probably at “Saint Nicholas” in Dorohoi (**Fig. 5**). It is to be noticed in the case of the surla represented in our examples the fact that the surla-player holds the instrument with both hands, especially because the surla was designed with holes for making the sounds, unlike the trumpet players, who hold the trumpet, in most of the cases, with only one hand, because the trumpets did not use to have such orifices or plugs as they have today. However, in certain cases, the straight trumpets are held with both hands, but at the inferior part, not at the middle, due to the dimensions and the weight which were greater than in the case of the other trumpets mentioned here. Going back to the matter, initially we labeled the surla at “Saint Nicholas” in Dorohoi (**Fig. 5**) to be a straight trumpet, while we guided ourselves by colour and form, but when noticing better the dimension and the holding manner, we believed that it is rather a surla.

In addition to these three well-known and documented instruments, the music of the city used to include sometimes, according to circumstances and preferences, also other instruments, as the bagpipe, represented at Bălinești (**Fig. 3**) and Arbore (**Fig. 4**), or different types of flutes, all these being used also in the dance music, for which reason it is quite difficult to establish their purpose based on the here mentioned paintings.

Moving on to the entertainment music, the one which accompanies the dance of the young people or the children in the scene of the *Mocking*, we may notice a great variety of instruments, reason for which we consider that the entertaining music in Moldavia at that time, especially the one at the Court of the sovereign, was a diverse one. As we have mentioned earlier, the double membrane drum, the bagpipe and some flutes have been certainly used also in the dance music, having as proof other dance scenes painted in our churches, separate from the *Mocking* one, while the same idea emerges also from the written sources. But the most often used instruments in the dance music of that time period in the entire Europe and especially in the Orient were the different types of drums, mentioned as being dance music, starting with the biblical text, the main information sources for the painters. These are tambourines or “daires”, single membrane drums or “bendirs”, made to resonate with a stick or the hand, while the instrument players also perform dance movements. Thus, the tambourine or daire appears in the *Mocking* scene at Arbore (**Fig. 4**) and Moldovița (**Fig. 10**), and the single membrane drum or bendir at Probota (**Fig. 8**) and Moldovița (**Fig. 10**).

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<sup>35</sup>*Documenta Romaniae Historica*, A. Moldova, vol. III (1487-1504), prepared by C. Cihodaru, I. Caproșu and N. Ciocan, The Academy Publishing House of the Socialist Republic of Romania, Bucharest, 1980, doc. 168, p. 306.

With the exception of these drums, we also have two exceptional cases: one encountered at Bălinești (**Fig. 3**), which we have discussed on another occasion<sup>36</sup>, where a combination of drum and flute appears, instrument called in the West “*tabor-pipe*” or “*recorder*”, representing an instrument preferred by the Western medieval dance music, especially the one for the street dance. The second case, which is more difficult to identify and catalogue, is encountered at “*Saint Demetrius*” in Suceava (**Fig. 11**), where there are two dancers holding two species of drums, which seem to have a metal membrane or surface, and which is also slightly curved. One of them is beating the drum with the palm of the hand and the other one with a stick. This drum, uniquely represented in the Romanian space from what we have known so far, can be that instrument called “*hang*”, which may explain certain old phrases maintained in the Romanian language: “*a ține hangul*” (to hold the hang), “*a bate hangul*” (to beat the hang) și “*a bate în tingire*” (to beat the pan), which make one think of dancing, of keeping the rhythm of the dancers with the help of this instrument. As well, another tambourine or *timbrel*<sup>37</sup>, made only of small metal plates, which generate sounds by clashing, is represented in “*Saint Nicholas*” church, Dorohoi (**Fig. 5**).

Excepting the drums, the rhythm of the dance could be maintained by means of other musical instruments, such as castanets, depicted at Bălinești (**Fig. 3**), or other similar ones named “*clappers*”, represented by two specially made sticks, which produce sounds while being hit against each other, used like castanets in dance music. These are painted at “*Saint Nicholas*” in Dorohoi (**Fig. 5**) and at Humor (**Fig. 9**).

### **Choreographic elements**

Moving from the music suggested by the musical instruments depicted in the scene of the *Mocking* to the dances interpreted on this music, we face a problem even more difficult to solve than it might seem at the first sight. Identifying dances is a meandering matter, because of their multitude, even if we only take into account the fact that Dimitrie Cantemir states that only a certain category of dancers, called in Romanian “*călușari*”, knew how to dance over one hundred different dances (“for they have more than one hundred rhythms and games to match them”<sup>38</sup>), without considering also the other dancers in the country.

If the dances represented in the scene of the *Mocking* in the South of the Danube have been labeled as dances performed by that category of street

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<sup>36</sup>Eduard Rusu, “*Muzica în Moldova lui Ștefan cel Mare. Certitudini și ipoteze*”, in “*Analele Putnei*”, Year VIII, No. 1, p. 247.

<sup>37</sup>“*Timbrel*” represents the English term for this instrument, used even since the Middle Ages. Cf. Christine Ammer, *The Facts On File Dictionary of Music*, Facts On File, Inc., New York, 2004, p. 421.

<sup>38</sup>Dimitrie Cantemir, *Descrierea Moldovei*, translation after the Latin original by Gh. Guțu, The Academy Publishing House of Socialist republic Romania, Bucharest, 1973, p. 315.

artists – jugglers or skomorokhs – the ones who most often used to ridicule and parody dances from the high society, certain ceremonies or even popular dances, going up to identifying them and their moves as being one specific to the Macedonian dances, as we could notice in the case of the fresco in Staro Nagoročino (**Fig. 2**), the dances in the Moldavian examples, considered altogether, have a distinct aspect, not encountered in other cases, and this is given by the handkerchieves held by the dancers in their hands. Worthy of mentioning is also the fact that in the depiction at “Saint Demetrius” in Suceava (**Fig. 11**), the dancers dance with drums not with handkerchieves in their hands, which may suggest that this is a different dance than the one with the handkerchieves.

The dance with the handkerchief has been located in the Romanian territories by the foreign travelers, who describe them as being group dances, performed especially by women, but also by men and women combined, contrary to the ones in the scene of the *Mocking*, as the latter ones seem to be individual dances, performed only by boys.

The dance with the handkerchiefs, named by Franz Joseph Sulzer “the Greek belt”<sup>39</sup>, is the same or very similar with the dance called “romeika”, the one which, according to James Dallaway’s account, has been performed entirely by women since 1784, and only the leader of the group shakes a handkerchief in her hand<sup>40</sup>. The same dance is located also at the Russians, in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, also performed by women and also with white handkerchiefs in their hands, as Adam Olearius<sup>41</sup> tells, but as well in the Ottoman Empire, where it was danced in the Christian communities<sup>42</sup>, the dances being popular ones and performed in groups<sup>43</sup>.

Paul Henry stated that the dances with the handkerchief in the *Mocking* scene in the church frescoes from Moldavia are a faulty interpretation of the long sleeve dances from Staro Nagoročino (**Fig. 2**), statement rightfully labeled by Ion Solcanu as wrong, because images of the handkerchief dance appear also in other places South of the Danube, in approximately the same time period, like Lesnovo, but not in the *Mocking*

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<sup>39</sup>Cf. Fr. J. Sulzer *în Dacia cisalpină și transalpină*, translated and taken care of by Gemma Zinveliu, The Music Publishing House of the Composers and Musicologists Union in Romania, Bucharest, 1995, p. 132.

<sup>40</sup>*Călători străini despre Țările Române*, vol. X, part II, taken care of Maria Holban, Maria M. Alexandrescu-Dresca Bulgaru, Paul Cernovodeanu, Publishing House of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest, 2001, p. 1216.

<sup>41</sup>Philip Ross Bullock, *Women and Music*, in Rosslyn Wendy, Alessandra Tosi, *Women in Nineteenth-Century Russia: Lives and Culture*, Open Book Publishers, 2012, pp. 120-121.

<sup>42</sup>Ignatius Mouradzea d’Ohsson, *Tableau Général de l’Empire Ottoman*, tome quatrième, second partie, Paris, 1791, p. 428. See also Filippou Filippou, George Mavrides, Stella Rokka, Ivoni Harahoussou, Theodossia Harahoussou, *La femme et la danse dans la société grecque traditionnelle et contemporaine* ([www.fcomte.iufm.fr/ejrieps/ejournal4](http://www.fcomte.iufm.fr/ejrieps/ejournal4)), no. 4, p. 57.

<sup>43</sup>Danica S. Janković, Ljubica S. Janković, *Serbian Folk Dance Tradition in Prizren*, în „Ethnomusicology”, Vol. 6, No. 2 (May, 1962), p. 117.

scene, as it has been erroneously stated, but only in the scene of “The feast of the seven lepers cured by the Archangel Michael”. The depiction of the handkerchief dance, in both geographical spaces, is merely a transfer of a choreographic reality of that time period<sup>44</sup>.

Interesting is the fact that this handkerchief dance, in a different form than the one suggested in the *Mocking* scene, appears in the painting in Moldavia at Cetățuia Monastery in Iași, for instance, as being a group dance, performed by girls/women. The images correspond to the later depictions in the written sources, reason for which we tend to believe that the dancers, usually two, from the *Mocking* scene, attempt an allusion, a caricature of the real handkerchief dance from the choreographic repertoire of the country, contemporary with the making of the frescoes. If we take into consideration also that these dancers were very probably the correspondents of the jugglers in the West and of skomorokhs in the East, that is the players and the conjurers mentioned in the Romanian written sources, the ones who ridiculed and satirized real life aspects, we can state that dances in the *Mocking* scene are nothing more but parodic versions of real life, just as it happens today with the various games and dances performed around winter holidays, which reflect real life aspects in a comic, amusing manner, even though people nowadays find it harder to identify them. In fact, the terms in Romanian for “buffoonish” or “buffoonery” (“caraghios”, “caraghioslâc”) are common in the Romanian sources, always used for describing entertainment scenes from the princely court, both in Moldavia and in Wallachia. Another idea which can lead us to the thought that the dances in the *Mocking* scene aim at ridiculing and parodying reality is given by the fact that normally the handkerchief dance was performed by women, while here are the ones who dance are always young men or even teenagers, as they appear also in the example from the *Book of Job*, reminded above. Let us also keep in mind that Dimitrie Cantemir describes the “călușari” as being disguised in women’s clothing and carrying swords in their hands<sup>45</sup>, which means coss-dressing existed also in the Romanian society.

In the Byzantine Empire and then in the entire Balkan area, the dance/dances with handkerchiefs or scarves are very common, specific to various communities and events. They are performed mostly by women and rarely by women and men. The scarf is a clothing item known even since the Antiquity, indispensable to women. In Christianity, the scarf has been a clothing item always worn by women, especially during occasions related to the public divine service and the clothing modesty preached by the Holy Fathers. In time it has become also a luxury piece, made of expensive

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<sup>44</sup>Ion I. Solcanu, *Artă și societate românească (sec. XIV-XVIII)*, Encyclopedic Publishing House, Bucharest, 2002, pp. 159-160.

<sup>45</sup>Dimitrie Cantemir, *op. cit.*, p. 315.

materials and decorated with precious gems, worn by high society women<sup>46</sup>. In this respect, the lack of reference to exclusively masculine dances, having as accessory a handkerchief or a scarf, makes us believe that the dances from the *Mocking* scene are only a satire and a parody of the feminine dances, in accordance with all the other constituent elements of the scene. Moreover, the most suitable ones to accomplish this thing are no others, but the players mentioned in the written sources, always together in accounts of music accompaniment.

One must necessarily take into consideration also the battle of the Church against dances, because through them various sins could appear, while distracting the attention from prayer and piety. Through dancing people remained connected with the pagan customs and traditions, which were fought against by the Church, keeping the idolatrous superstitions, while the dance movements were considered to be hedonistic and obscene elements, leading to fornication. At the same time, the Church was promoting the “humble” dances, the ones which were performed in religious ceremonies or similar contexts<sup>47</sup>.

Very important elements for at least guessing the character of the music on which the young men with handkerchiefs are dancing, are the musical instruments which appear in the same paintings. The common element for all the scenes where the dancers appear is the drum, both the double membrane drum and the daire or tambourines, held even by dancers in their hands. Furthermore, it is very intriguing that in all the cases in which the double membrane drum appears near the dancers, the drummer is always caught in movement, not in a static position like the other musicians. This aspect makes us believe that he used to dance together with the dancers, like it happens nowadays with the drummers in the groups of carolers. These movements are today merely reminders or parodies of certain traditions or customs from the past. Returning to the drummer’s movements, we must take into account that he used to keep the rhythm for the young men’s dance, just as they themselves are doing in the scene at Moldovița (**Fig. 10**), when they are holding drums in order to keep the rhythm by themselves.

In what regards the other musical instruments appearing in these scenes, we must establish a delimitation between those of the official music, the military music and the city music, as they belong to the picture suggested by the *Gospel* texts, while those regarding dance music are based on texts of the *Old Testament*. Thus, speaking about the dance music, we may also

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<sup>46</sup>Cf. Magdalini Parcharidou, *Interpreting the Female Dances of “Ainoi” (Laudes) in the Post-Byzantine Painting*, in Sophia Germanidou, edit., *Secular Byzantine Women. Art, Archaeology, and Ethnography of Female Material Culture from Late Roman to Post-Byzantine Times*, Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, London•New York, 2022, p. 170.

<sup>47</sup>Konstantinos Dimopoulos, “Are Sergiani Dances Female Byzantine Dances? Common Features in Different Periods”, in “International Journal of Education and Social Science Research”, Vol. 4, No. 3, May-June, 2021, pp. 371-372.



notice other instruments specific to this context, like the instrument called the tabor-pipe from Bălinești (Fig. 3), one used mainly for this music, the different castanets or sticks for keeping the rhythm, as in Bălinești, “Saint Nicholas” in Dorohoi (Fig. 5) and Humor (Fig. 9), but also the bagpipe, when it served for dance music, illustrated at Bălinești (Fig. 3) and Arbore (Fig. 4), as well as various species of drums, which appear in the majority of the scenes.

### Conclusions

The *Mocking* scene from the *Passion Cycle* contains a very important source of information about the Romanian musical past, which is in agreement with the written sources, these two leading, maybe in a surprising way, to the music specific to the West, placing Moldavia in the same sphere of influence, at least from a musical and choreographic point of view, despite some ideas not in accordance with reality, but strongly rooted, which deny the Romanian Principalities orientation and development, even when regarded only from certain perspectives, according to the Western principles.

Music and dancing have been the main ways of reaching recreation and entertainment in all times and this is why they are so diverse. At the same time, they have also been parodied, quite often, with the purpose of obtaining an even greater cheerfulness or for mocking and laughing at certain aspects or elements of everyday life. This is why, in the case of illustrating the *Mocking of Christ* scene from the examples brought here to attention, the parody and the ridicule made out of Christ’s coronation represent the central idea which is the foundation for “making” the scene, with all the transformations and influences appeared in terms of time and space. We believe that the reflection of everyday life in this case is eloquent, and the multitude of specific elements which mark the differences from one region to another or from a certain time period to another is precisely the strongest argument to consider that in the depiction of these scenes many elements of everyday life have been caught, elements which were contemporary with the moment of painting. Although, on a first evaluation one cannot highlight many distinct elements when comparing the *Mocking* scenes in the south of the Danube and the ones in Moldavia, for instance, still, after a closer approach, the differences start to appear clearer and in accordance with the musical and choreographic character of each and every region. Moreover, the most notable differences are between Moldavia and Wallachia, the most important example being the lack of dances in the latter case, aspect which makes us believe that in Wallachia a different model for the illustration of the *Mocking*<sup>48</sup> scene has been followed, even though we know that such dances have existed here as well.

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<sup>48</sup>I mention that I have seen only a part of the *Mocking* scenes in Wallachia, and dancing was not represented in any of them.

**List of figures:**

**Fig. 1:** “The Mocking of Christ”, in “Saint Nicholas” Orphanos church, Thessaloniki, Greece

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Thessaloniki\\_Agios\\_Nikolaos\\_Orfanos\\_%28%CE%86%CE%B3%CE%B9%CE%BF%CF%82\\_%CE%9D%CE%B9%CE%BA%CF%8C%CE%BB%CE%B1%CE%BF%CF%82\\_%CE%9F%CF%81%CF%86%CE%B1%CE%BD%CF%8C%CF%82%29\\_%2814.\\_Jhdt.%29\\_%2832907880607%29.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Thessaloniki_Agios_Nikolaos_Orfanos_%28%CE%86%CE%B3%CE%B9%CE%BF%CF%82_%CE%9D%CE%B9%CE%BA%CF%8C%CE%BB%CE%B1%CE%BF%CF%82_%CE%9F%CF%81%CF%86%CE%B1%CE%BD%CF%8C%CF%82%29_%2814._Jhdt.%29_%2832907880607%29.jpg)

**Fig. 2:** “The Mocking of Christ”, in “Saint George” church in Staro Nagoročino, Northern Macedonia

[https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Frescos\\_in\\_St.\\_George%27s\\_Church\\_%28Staro\\_Nagoricane%29\\_0101.jpg](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Frescos_in_St._George%27s_Church_%28Staro_Nagoricane%29_0101.jpg)

**Fig. 3:** “The Mocking of Christ”, in “Saint Nicholas” church of “Saint Nicholas” Monastery Bălinești, Suceava County (photo: Eduard Rusu)

**Fig. 4:** “The Mocking of Christ”, “Beheading of Saint John the Baptist” church of “Beheading of Saint John the Baptist”, Arbore, Suceava County (photo: Eduard Rusu)

**Fig. 5:** “The Mocking of Christ”, in “Saint Nicholas” church in Dorohoi, Botoșani County (photo: Eduard Rusu) (photo: Stelian Ciurciun)

**Fig. 6:** “The Mocking of Christ”, in “The Descent of the Holy Spirit” church of Dobrovăț Monastery, Iași County (photo: Eduard Rusu)

**Fig. 7:** “The Mocking of Christ”, in “All Saints’ Day” church of Părhăuți Monastery, Suceava County (photo: Eduard Rusu)

**Fig. 8:** “The Mocking of Christ”, in “Saint Nicholas” church of Probota Monastery, Suceava County (photo: Eduard Rusu)

**Fig. 9:** “The Mocking of Christ”, in “The Dormition of the Mother of God” church of Humor Monastery, Suceava County (photo: Eduard Rusu)

**Fig. 10:** “The Mocking of Christ”, in “Annunciation” church of Moldovița Monastery, Suceava County (photo: Eduard Rusu)

**Fig. 11:** “The Mocking of Christ”, in “Saint Demetrius” church in Suceava (photo: Eduard Rusu)

**Fig. 12:** “The Mocking of Christ”, in “Saint Nicholas” church of Râșca Monastery, Suceava County (photo: Eduard Rusu)

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