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MUSICAL WORKS OF SERBIAN COMPOSERS STEFAN  
AND NIKOLA THE SERB FROM 14<sup>th</sup> C — BILINGUAL  
ANTHOLOGY OF GREAT LAURA (E—108)

While researching music manuscripts in the Greek Monastery of Great Laura on Mt. Athos, during July of 1981, I ran across a rare bilingual neumatic Anthology (containing a part of Serbian Sticherarion at the beginning) with the names and unknown compositions of two Serbian composers: the Protopsaltis Stefan the Serb and Nikola the Serb. Their previously composed works in our and foreign historiography musicology had been connected with the beginnings of written music in medieval Serbia. During the last thirty years, numerous articles have been written regarding these composers.<sup>1</sup> On the basis of these studies, Stefan and Nikola were active during the middle of the 15th Century<sup>2</sup>.

First, a few words concerning the Anthology. It is catalogued as E—108 in the monastery's library and contains a unique example of Serbian musical practice toward the end of the 14th Century. As surprising as it may seem, this Anthology has been described in S. Efstratiadis's Catalogue of Laura as a »17th Century Anthology«<sup>3</sup>. It is for this reason that this unique musical monument has esca-

<sup>1</sup> D. Stefanović, *Izgoreli rukopis br. 93 beogradske Narodne biblioteke...*, Bibliotekar XIII/5, Beograd 1961, 379—84; Idem, *The Serbian Chant from the Fifteenth to the Eighteenth Centuries*, Musica Antiqua Europae Orientalis I, Bydgoszcz 1966, 14—63; L. Cernić, *Rukopis Stefana domestika*, Bibliotekar 1—2, Beograd 1969, 61—83; A. E. Pennington, *Stefan the Serb in Moldavian Manuscripts*, The Slavonic and East European Review 122, London, Jan. 1973, 107—12; A. Jakovljević, *Hronologija atinskog rukopisa 928 i vizantijski Kinonikon kira Stefana*, Zvuk 2, Sarajevo 1973, 165—73.

<sup>2</sup> Đ. Sp. Radojičić, *Književna zibvanja i stvaranja kod Srba u srednjem veku i u tursko doba*, Novi Sad 1967, 252. Further bibliography in fn. 11.

<sup>3</sup> Σ. Εἰσπρατιάδου, Κατάλογος τῶν κωδικῶν τῆς Μεγίστης Λαύρας Paris 1975, 85.

ped eyes of other scholars and has not been used in any of the musicological or philological studies!

Besides the works of these Serbian composers, the Anthology also contains several notated unknown Serbian works for various Feasts which had not been previously mentioned in medieval manuals.

MS. Laura E—108 has 87 folios, written on paper 23×15 cm. with nine watermarks (not including some fragments) in the following patterns: kite, moon with a cross above, tower, bird, bow and arrow, unicorn, and anox. Five watermarks (kite, bird, bell, unicorn and ox) are *identical* versions and the remainder are very similar with the published watermarks of the last decade of the 14th Century, according to the *Catalogue* of Vl. Mošin<sup>4</sup>. The ox watermark was not used on paper after 1386; consequently, this dates the manuscript before 1386. As such, it represents the oldest preserved bilingual Greek and Serbian musical manuscript with the notation of Joannis Koukouzelis. Thus the chronology of this musical Anthology is derived primarily from the watermarks and not from the shape of the Greek and Slavic letters. With this methodology the manuscript is dated more accurately, for dating manuscripts from the shape of letters frequently leads to errors. As with other manuscripts of the 14th Century, the shapes of the neumes are similar. By using this method of watermarks, a new date is derived which differs from the original date in the Catalogue.

In the Anthology two compositions were copied by Stefan the Serb: one Whitsunday Koinonikon (Psalm 142, 10, *Pentekostarion*, p. 19) in Greek, Mode Varys on f. 16r. The Koinonikon has the following inscription in red ink: ТВОРЕНІЕ ПРОТОСАЛТА СТЕФАНА СРЪВНИНА (»the work of Stefan the Protosaltis the Serb«). On f. 10v, the signature of the composer is simply СЪЪФАН. It is placed above the composition in Old Slavic ПОМНАШН МѢ НОЖЕ -а *Sjedalen* (Gr. *Kathisma*) of the Oktoechos for Monday in Mode II (the modal signature in the manuscript is not clear). The name of its composer referred to the same person, the Protosaltis Stefan the Serb, from f. 16r. The beginning of this composition has faded because of humidity and this definitely presents problems for transcribing into Western staff notation.

Nikola the Serb is the composer of a Serbian Sunday Theotokion-completely unknown work<sup>5</sup> with the upper margin inscription: ТВОРЕНІЕ НИКОЛАЇ СРЪВНИНА (»the work of Nikola the Serb«). As we know, Nikola's previously discovered Cherubic Hymn in Greek has

<sup>4</sup> V. Mošin—S. Traljić, *Vodeni znakovi XIII i XIV vijeka*, I—II, Zagreb 1957.

<sup>5</sup> New version of text in Russian printed Menaion, 1968: ГЛАГЪДЪ, Inc. ПРЪИЗРИ НА МОЛѢНІА ТВОИЪХЪ РЪВЪХЪ.

been transcribed and published by D. Conomos<sup>6</sup> and D. Stefanović<sup>7</sup> from MS Nat. Lib. of Athens 928 (ca. 3/4 of the 15th Century). Like all other Slavic texts, the text of Nikola's Theotokion in the Laura manuscript *ПОДАЖДА СТЕФЕНЪ СКОНИ РАВОМ ВЪСЕНЕПОРЧНАМЪ* in Mode IV (f. 12r+v) belongs to the Serbian redaction.

With these works of the composer Stefan, I personally think, that we can identify the Protopsaltis Stefan the Serb as the same person as the Domestikos Stefan the Serb (composer and conductor of the right choir in the church) whose works were included in the burned Anthology of the Belgrade National Library MS 93 (a Serbian Cherubic Hymn, and a bilingual Koinonikon for the Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts)<sup>8</sup>. As we know, Stefan's compositions in both languages were discovered in various manuscripts of the same type of the 15th and 16th centuries, such as:

1. Nat. Lib., Belgrade MS 93 (15th c.) ff. 287v—288r; f. 288r. Anthology.
2. Nat. Lib., Athens MS 928 (3/4 15th c.) ff. 140v—141r. Anthology (with a part of Serbian Sticherarion).
3. Nat. Lib., Athens MS 2604 (1464 A. D.) ff. 208v—209v. Anthology.
4. Lib. of Leimon, Lesvos MS 257 (1527 A. D.) ff. 240r—241v; ff. 255v—256r. Anthology.
5. Central Lib. Iași MS. I. 26 (1545 A. D.) ff. 107v—110v. Anthology (with a part of Moldavian Sticherarion).
6. Lib. of Roum. Academy MS 283 (1550 A. D.) ff. 105r—106v. Anthology.
7. Lib. of Putna MS 54/576 (first part from 1/10 of the 16th c.; second, 15th c.) ff. 35v—36r /NB/.
8. Lib. of Putna MS 56/576 (—Putna B) (15th c.) ff. 255v—256r. Anthology.
9. Lib. of Ecclesiastical Museum, Sofia MS 816 (middle of the 16th c.) ff. 97v—98v. Anthology.
10. Univ. Lib., Leipzig MS Slave 12 (3/4 of 16th c.) ff. 28r-30r. Anthology.

In all these manuscripts, which contain *terminus post quem* for the period of Stefan's activity, only five compositions in Greek and bilingual Greek and Slavic were composed<sup>9</sup>: one very melismatic variation on the text *Ἐξαθήσεν ἀπειραντι...* (see *Zvuk* 2, 1972, pp. 170—71) and four Koinonika in various Modes<sup>10</sup>. None of these Anthologies contain the two aforementioned compositions from Laura's Anthology. On the basis of the photocopies from MS 93 of the Nat. Lib. of Belgrade, some scholars have decided that

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *Byzantine Trisagia and Cheroubika of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*, Patriarchal Institute for Patristic Studies, Thessaloniki 1974, 207, 210—11.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *Stara srpska muzika*, Posebna izdanja Muz. Instituta SAN, knj. 15/I, Beograd 1975, 68—73.

<sup>8</sup> D. Stefanović, *Izgoreli...*, Bibliotekar XIII/5, Beograd 1961, 379—84.

<sup>9</sup> See A. E. Pennington, *Stefan the Serb...* 107, 108; Eadem, *Seven Akolouthiai from Putna*, Studies in Eastern Chant IV, Crestwood, N. Y. 1979, 124.

<sup>10</sup> See article of D. Stefanović, *The work of Stefan the Serb in Byzantine Music Manuscripts*, Musicological Annual XIV, Ljubljana 1978, 13—18.

Stefan's period of activity falls in the middle of the 15th Century<sup>11</sup>. According to my opinion, the Belgrade Anthology may or may not have been written then. The composer Stefan has been identified as the »Domestikos Stefan from the city of Smederevo«<sup>12</sup> (the capital city of medieval Serbia). It is the opinion of these scholars that during this period Stefan copied manuscripts without notation for the Serbian ruler Lazar Branković (1446—56; reign: 1456—58) and his older brother Grgur, the sons of King Đurđe Branković (who died 1456)<sup>13</sup>. I shared the same doubts of Anne Pennington concerning her identification of the copyist »Stefan the Domestikos« as »the Domestikos kyr Stefan the Serb«<sup>14</sup>. On the basis of the »new« Anthology from Laura Monastery, there is no doubt that the composer Stefan the Serb is one person and »the Domestikos Stefan« who worked for Branković's dynasty in Serbia, is another. The activity of composer Stefan has now been solved because the Anthology from Great Laura contains a *terminus ante quem* for Stefan in relation to all the other manuscripts with notation which were copied after his death.

In the Laura Anthology, the Greek Koinonikon of the Protopsaltis Stefan the Serb has been and will continue to be compared to his other works. A comparison shows that the melodic-rhythmical phrase in the third line (f. 15r) is identical to his compositions in MSS Putna, Sofia and Leipzig, although these compositions were written in various Modes<sup>15</sup>.

Nikola the Serb has previously been identified as Nikola Spančević of Mlado Nagoričano, near Kumanovo (Macedonia)<sup>16</sup>. At his home, a codex was written by Vladislav Gramatikos in 1456—57<sup>17</sup>. This identification, however, also appears to be inaccurate for the period is too late for Nikola's activity. On the other hand, the fact remains that his Cherubic Hymn from Athens Anthology 928 (ca. 3/4 of 15th c.) was composed in Greek and his Sticheron in the Laura Anthology, in Slavic. This shows that Nikola was indeed bilingual, as was Stefan. Moreover, they both possessed an excellent knowledge of the theoretical aspects of Byzantine notation. In the Laura Anthology, the composition of Nikola the Serb

<sup>11</sup> Đ. Sp. Radojičić, *Srpski kompozitor petnaestog veka*, Politika № 182, Beograd 1962, 7; D. Stefanović, *Izgoreli...*, 384; Idem, *New Data About the Serbian Chant, Essays in Musicology in Honor of Dragan Plamenac*, ed. by G. Reece, Pittsburg Univ. Press 1969, 328, fn. 8; L. Cernić, *Rukopis Stefana domestika*, Bibliotekar 1—2, Beograd 1968, 79., S. Đurić-Klajn, *Serbian Music through the Ages*, Beograd 1972, 36.

<sup>12</sup> See works mentioned in fn. 11.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. fn. 12.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. *Music in Sixteenth-century Moldavia. New Evidence*, Oxford Slavonic Papers XI, 1978 82.

<sup>15</sup> D. Stefanović, *The works of Stefan the Serb...*, 15.

<sup>16</sup> Đ. Sp. Radojičić, *Književna zbivanja...*, 252; Đ. Trifunović, *Dimitrije Kantakuzin, Stara srpska književnost*, Beograd 1965, 491.

<sup>17</sup> See fn. 16.



has not been completed for there is no modal signature at the beginning.

The Anthology of Laura E—108 also contains a valuable inscription in Slavic in which the ruler Stefan Lazarević is mentioned (Lazarević of Serbia 1389—1427, received title of ruler — the »despotis« — in 1402 in Constantinople)<sup>18</sup>. The inscription in which Stefan Lazarević is mentioned is placed in the left side margine,

f. 29v, and reads:  $\bar{\epsilon}$   $\bar{\epsilon}$   
 ЕЛѢУѢТ ВОМБ. НѢХѢ ТѢЛЮБНВОМБ ГНБ МН ДЕСПОТБ СТЕФАНБ.

$\bar{\kappa}$   $\bar{\varsigma}$   $\bar{\Delta}$   $\bar{\eta}$   
 ... ? АВНЫ ГПОСТВАТИ НГБМЕ АІДАНА? СМѢНОМЕ... This inscription was pla-

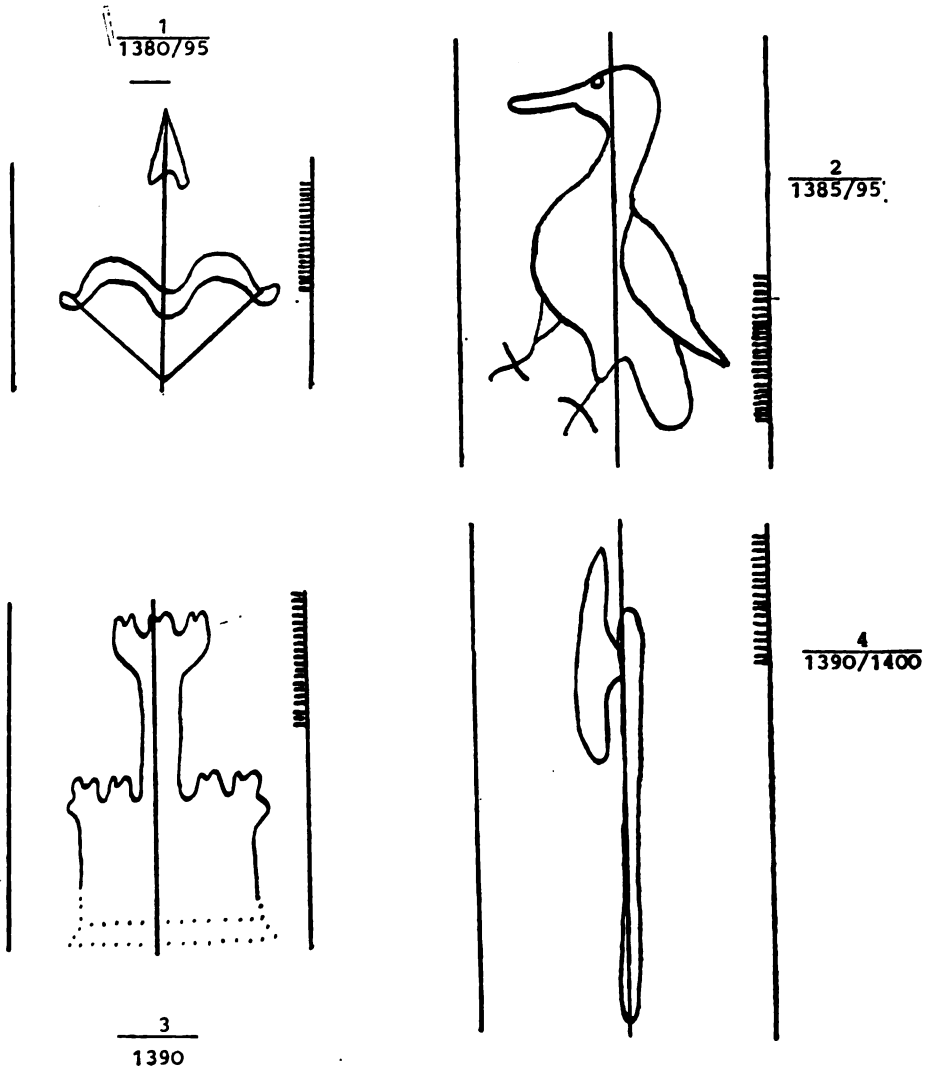
ced on a piece of paper perhaps some years after it was originally copied. This is an indication that Nikola and Stefan were composers of the ruler Stefan Lazarević and not of the Branković's dynasty. It is uncertain as to whether this Anthology was used liturgically in Serbia or in some monastery on Mt. Athos. Written by Ilarion (according to a Slavic »kryptograph«, f. 17v), the manuscript also contains a composition in honor of St. Sava, the first Archbishop of Serbia and the founder of Chilandar Monastery on Mt. Athos dating from the last decade of the 12th Century. The term »Serb« has been added to their names in order to describe their nationality since, in all probability, they lived among Greek monks on Mt. Athos. If we speculate that they were both middle-aged when the Anthology was copied, then Stefan and Nikola were born ca. 1360<sup>o</sup>—70<sup>o</sup>, a period when Serbia was ruled by the kings Vukašin (1366—71) and Lazar (1371—89). The results of the examination of the Laura Anthology show that this document is concurrent with the dates of these composers. Both were contemporaries of the famous byzantine composers discovered in the Anthology: Ioannis Kladas (second half of the 14th c., not later than the first 30 years of the 15th c.) and Ioannis Doukas Laskaris of the same period. In other words, this is the period after the death of the most famous Atonite Maistor Ioannis Koukozelis-Papadopoulos, or Ioannikios Koukozelis (monastic name).

We are led to conclude that Stefan and Nikola were the oldest Serbian and Southern Slavic composers from whom two new compositions were preserved in the Laura's Anthology E—108. Their other composed works were known among Slavs (Serbs) and Roumanians in the Middle Ages and later but also in the Byzantine Empire, because they were written and sung in both languages: Greek and Slavic. This is of the great importance to the history of Old Serbian music, for the composers' works comprise rare material. Consequently, we no longer believe that Serbian medieval music was preserved only in fragments and historical sources but also in a unique and rare notated manuscripts used by Serbs

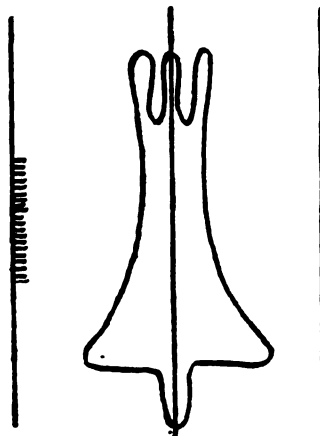
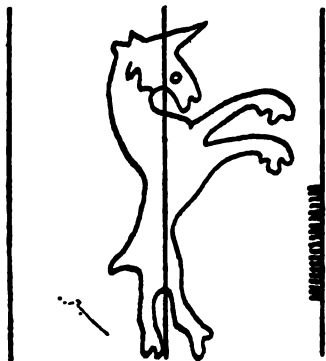
<sup>18</sup> G. Ostrogorski, *Istorija Vizantije*, Beograd 1959, 516.

during the period of the Despot Stefan Lazarević. Because of its exceptional significance in our futur musicological and philological research, the Laura Anthology E—108 will soon be edited in the form of a critical facsimile edition.

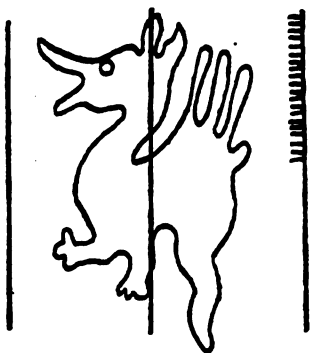
Watermarks in Cod. LAURA E-108



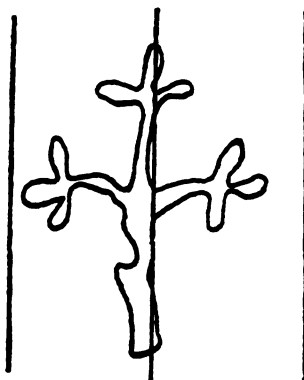
$\frac{5}{1396}$



$\frac{6}{1396-7}$

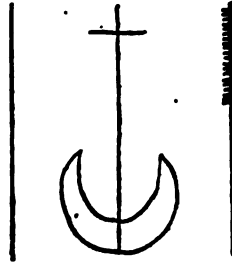


$\frac{7}{1390/1400}$



$\frac{8}{\text{vers } 1400}$





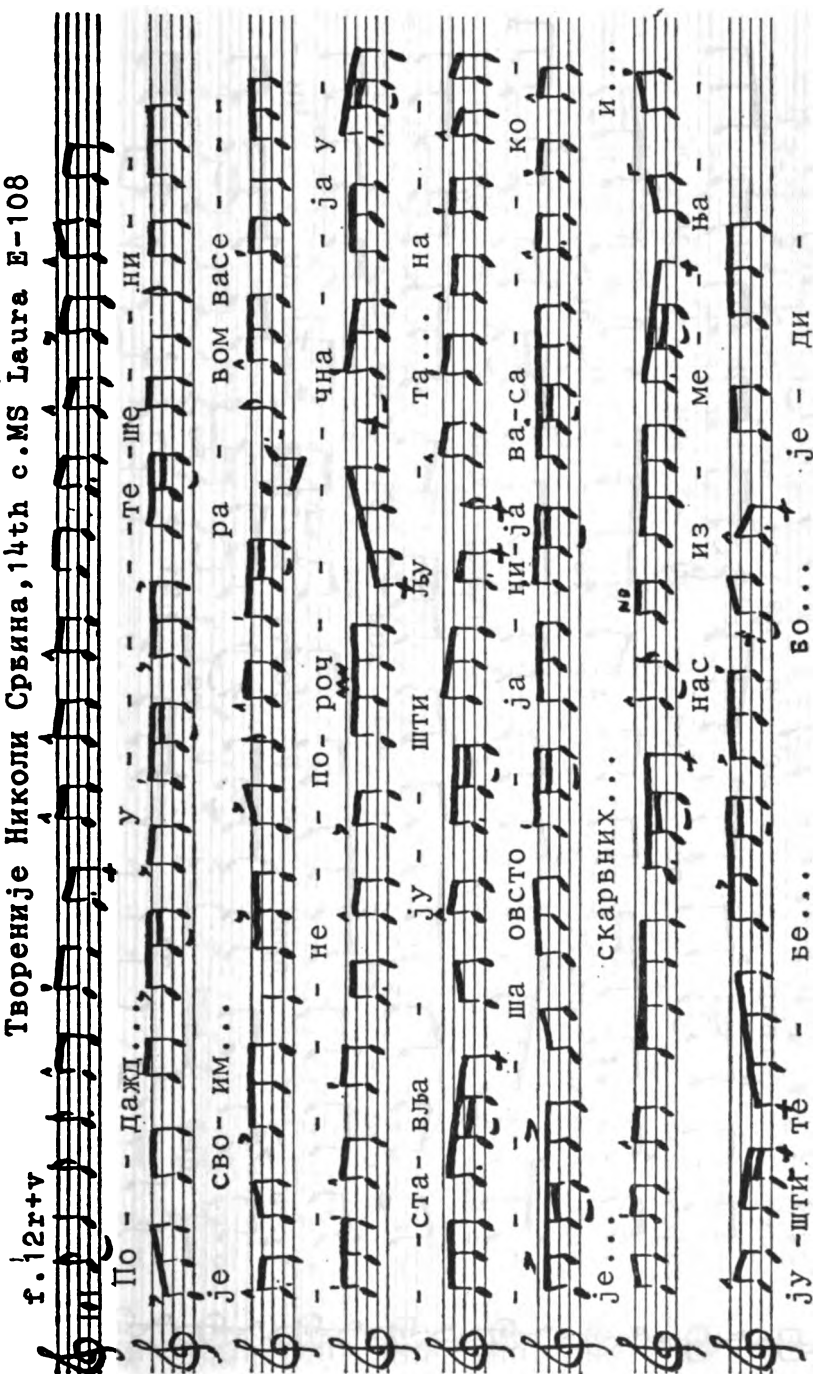
9  
1404 (?)

### твореніє никблї. сръвіна

Поодаждь ѿтешеніє своимь ракомъ. въ сенепороучнаѣ. ѿста-  
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насъ изменяющимъ тебе ко единѣ твърдо и извѣсно шенока-  
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то то

## Твореније Николи Србина, 14th с. MS Laura E-108

f. 12rtv



По - дажд... у - те - ше - ни -  
је сво - им... ра - вом ва се - -  
не - по - роч - - чна - ја у -  
- ста - вља - ју - - шти ју та... на - -  
ша овсто - ја - ни - ја ва - са - - ко -  
је... скарвних... и...  
ју - шти. те - бе... бо... је - ди -

ну... твар - до и из -  
 вје-сно... ос - но - ва - ни - је...  
 и - ма - ми... тво - је...  
 - са - сту - - пле - ни - је...  
 сте - жа - хом да не... по -  
 сти - дим - се... Вла - ди - чи -  
 - це... те - мау - ве...  
 при - зи - ва - ју - ште...  
 по - та - шти се...

на у мо - - - је... ни - је...  
 и - - - же... те - ве  
 вер - - - но ва - - - ши - - - ју -  
 штих ра-ду- - и - се вла- ди - чи - - це ва - -  
 сех по - мо - - штнице ра - - - до -  
 - сти и - - - кро - - - ве , ду - шам...  
 на-шим, ти и ти и ти и ти и ти и ти и ти  
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ри ри ри ти ри ри ри ри ри ти ти ри ри  
 ри ри ти рири то о о то ро ро то то то те ре  
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 те ре ре то то о о то о и то о о о  
 то о то то о то о то о то о то о  
 то то..

Transcription of the text in MS Laura E—108, f. 12r+v.



... I C N E N H I C O S I ... S L B S N H

12

... ШЕ НИ І С С С С В О Н Н Н Н  
 Н Н М Е Д Е Б О М Е С С С С С С С С С С С С  
 С С С П О С О О О Ч Н Д Д М . Y Y  
 ... С П Д Б А М А М У Ч И Н І Л И Y Y Y  
 ... Ш Д Ш Б С Т О М Ш Н І М  
 ... К О О С С С С С К К В Н  
 ... Н Н Н Н Н Н Н Н Н Х Н Н Н Н Н  
 ... С В Н Ш М С Е Н М Д Д Д  
 ... П Е С С С В С С С В О .  
 ... Х Н Ш Y Y T B B C O M H H H  
 ... Н Н Н Н Н Т В К Н О . Ш Ш Ш К Н О  
 ... Н Т І С С Х С Н Н Н М М М Н Н  
 ... Т В О . . . К С С С С С Д Д С Т Y Y  
 ... П Д К Е Н Н С С С С С С С С С С  
 ... Х Д Д Д Х О М Д І П С С С П П  
 ... С П Н Н Н Ш Н Н М С С С С С С С С С  
 ... Н Н Ч Н Ч С С С С С С С С С С С  
 ... С С С П Н Н Н Ш Н Ш Д Д М

Plate I. The earliest known record of a Serbian composer. From bilingual MS Laura E-108 (end of the 14th c.), f. 12r with the above inscription: »Tvorenije Nikoli Srbina« (»The work of Nikola the Serb«).



**МУЗИЧКА ДЕЛА СРПСКИХ КОМПОЗИТОРА СТЕФАНА И НИКОЛЕ  
СРБИНА ИЗ XIV ВЕКА — ДВОЈЕЗИЧНА АНТОЛОГИЈА МОНАСТИРА  
ВЕЛИКА ЛАВРА (Е — 108)**

Рад се односи на двојезични (грчки и црквенословенски) неумски зборник — антологију светогорског манастира Лавре Е — 108 који је С. Еустратијадес у свом Каталогу рукописа манастира Лавре датирао у XVII век. Јаковљевић је у овом зборнику открио део српског стихира и непознате композиције два српска композитора: Стефана Србина и Николе Србина. На основу водених знакова Јаковљевић датира овај рукопис у време пре 1386. године. Тврди да ослањање на облик грчких и словенских слова приликом датирања често доводи до грешака, али истиче да су облици неума слични оним у другим рукописима XIV века. Јаковљевић у наставку сматра да је могућа идентификација протопсалта Стефана Србина из овог зборника са доместиком Стефаном Србином и наводи девет у којима се налазе Стефанова позната дела.

С обзиром да су дела Стефана и Николе забележена у зборнику који се сада датира у другу половину XIV века, Јаковљевић закључује да су ово најстарији српски и јужнословенски композитори.