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Influential hymnographer, folklorist Anton Pann’s remains reburied with honour: We owe him many church hymn books printed in Romanian



The remains of Protopsaltis Anton Pann were reburied last week in a new tomb at St. Stylianos – Lucaci Church in Bucharest. Our culture owes him numerous church hymn books printed in Romanian.

“He was a chanter at many churches in Bucharest. He chanted at many monasteries in Wallachia and Transylvania. He wrote enormously for the period in which he lived and was equally famous in church chant, which, at the request of Metropolitan Dionisie Lupu, he translated into Romanian, being co-opted by a special committee designated by the metropolitan. However, he was only 23 years old at the time,” the patriarchal auxiliary bishop Varlaam of Ploiesti recalled on June 6, 2023.

His Grace celebrated the Divine Liturgy and performed the reburial service at the Bucharest church, where Anton Pann chanted in the last part of his life.

“He was thus already recognised as a great personality in the field of music and composition.”

The hierarch recalled that Anton Pann was the era’s influential philologist and folklorist.

“He was a teacher at the first seminary established in the first half of the 21st century here, in Bucharest. He worked as a translator, translating church hymn books from Greek. He wrote poems, prose, stories, so his personality is one of the greatest of his time,” the patriarchal auxiliary bishop noted.

Rev. Stelian Ionașcu recalled that Anton Pann sang at the age of 10 in the Chisinau Cathedral Choir.

Anton Pann was an apprentice in music and the printing art of Peter Ephesios, who

printed the first hymn book in Bucharest with church musical notation in the world (1820).

“In 1823, in order not to be in competition with him, Macarie the Hieromonk is forced to go to Vienna and print the first three books of church chant in Romanian,” explained Fr Ionascu, who is also a professor at the Faculty of Orthodox Theology in Bucharest.

Other volumes dedicated to church music in Romanian followed. “From him, we have inherited our church music as it has evolved to the present day, and his spirit has inspired many,” Father Stelian Ionașcu emphasised.

The tomb of the writer and composer Anton Pann was relocated and refurbished as part of the rehabilitation project of St. Stylianos church, which entered, starting in 2020, an extensive process of restoration, consolidation and renovation. The bones were placed in a carved wooden reliquary.

The liturgical responses were offered at the chant stand by members of the “Tronos” Byzantine Choir of the Patriarchal Cathedral, led by Archdeacon Mihail Bucă.

Anton Pann (1796 – 1854) composed the current National Anthem of Romania (“Wake up, Romanians!”).

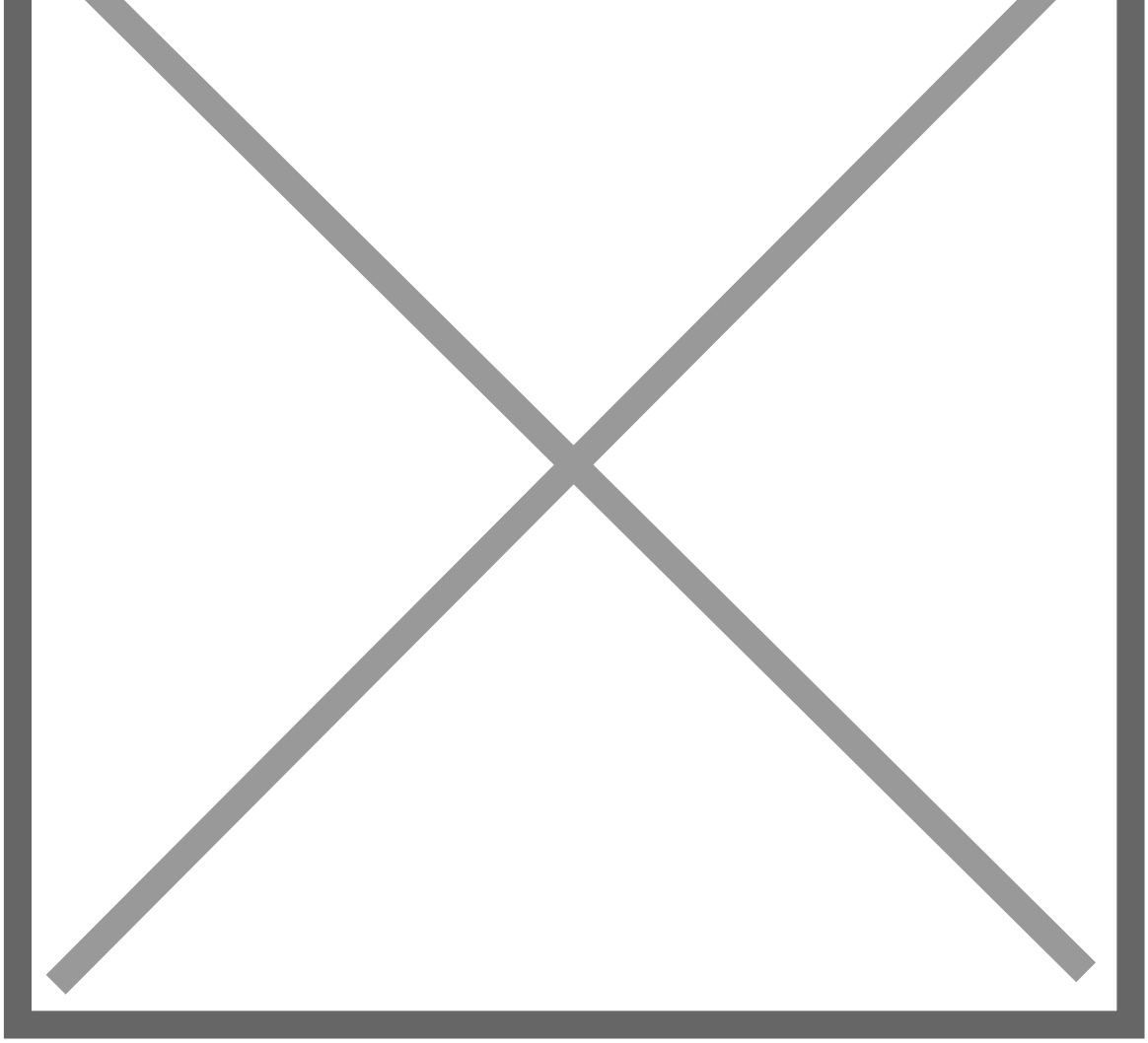
Mihai Eminescu described him in one of his poems as “clever as a proverb”.

Lucian Blaga dedicated a play to him, and Alfred Mendelsohn an operetta. Several of his works were adapted into the Byzantine Easter and Christmas Oratorios of the composer Paul Constantinescu.

The Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church declared 2023 a Commemorative Year of hymnographers and church chanters.

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