

Old Bulgarian music – the vocation of being a scholar

Svetlana Kujumdzieva

Elena Toncheva's name is primarily associated with the field of old Bulgarian music in its centuries-long development – the Middle Ages, the Renaissance and the New Age. The disciplines of Byzantine, Slavic and, in particular, old Bulgarian music belong to this field. The main object of research is church music: its history, theory, notational systems, provenance, archaeography, paleography, semiography, liturgy and theology. It is emphasized that Elena Toncheva was the first Bulgarian scholar specially trained in the field of old music. Here she paved the way: she built its scientific foundations, developed its important themes and problems, restored quite of its music, etc. For the study of old music, Elena Toncheva received one of the most prestigious prizes in humanities – the Herder Prize. Her whole life was dedicated to science, which was not just a job, but the meaning of her existence, her cause – from the beginning of her scientific career to the end. She managed to outline the entire history of the old Bulgarian music, to discover many unknown original sources, to reveal early layers of its development, to point out the richness and beauty of its sounding music, to build a school of talented medievalists. Her work continues to be a challenge for every researcher because she does not provide ready answers. This certainly fulfills one of the main purposes of scientific work – to provoke and captivate, to be a starting point for further studies. And this is the vocation of every great scholar.

Keywords: *Old music, Orthodox music, distinguished medievalists*

Acad. Svetlana Kujumdzieva
Bulgarian Academy of Sciences;
e-mail: svetk90@hotmail.com