

A Morphological Study of the Song Per Se in the Repertoire of Aromanians, Meglenoromanians, and Lipovan Russians in Dobrogea

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Abstract: Dobrogea can be considered a good example when it comes to the cohabitation and identity preservation of each ethnic group. Accepted in the midst of the compact mass of the majority group, the minority ethnic groups of Dobrogea have a culture and way of life which they assert both inside and outside their communities. For the traditional cultures of Dobrogea, the song per se represents the folkloric genre which is the most resilient to the transformations generated by a prolonged existence in an allogeneous region and by attempts at incorporation into the majority culture. We will analyse six representative songs per se selected from the traditional repertoire of Aromanians, Meglenoromanians, and Lipovan Russians in Dobrogea with the aim of ascertaining whether it is possible to draw a clear line between the types of morphological elements found in the songs of each ethnic group.

Key-words: song per se; Aromanians; Meglenoromanians; Lipovan Russians; isometry; musical morphology; folklore

1. Preliminary background information

Dobrogea has always been a region with a heterogeneous demographic structure. It has provided favourable conditions for all socio-professional categories willing to adapt in an amalgamated region, where the assimilation process has been milder. “*The ethnic groups which settled into this geographical area featuring different landforms - waterways to facilitate sailing and haulage, forests, good land for agriculture -*”² were integrated gradually and nowadays all of them see this region as their place of origin.

The capacity for synthesis of the multicultural space that Dobrogea constitutes has contributed to harmonising all the identity differences and has created veritable models of cohabitation. Today, aside from the Dacoromanians, who represent the majority ethnic group, numerous minority groups live in the region, of which the present study mentions Aromanians, Meglenoromanians, and Lipovan Russians. The relative self-containment of these ethnic groups has enabled them to assert their identity and to perpetuate community practices along the centuries.

This study is based on the fieldwork I have conducted in Dobrogea, more exactly in towns and villages in the counties of Constanța and Tulcea, in the midst of the above-mentioned ethnic groups, and aims to determine whether it is possible to draw a clear line between the types of morphological elements found in the songs of each ethnic group. The songs per se under analysis are considered representative for their communities, as they are known and performed by the entire community. The main research methods I have employed in order to carry out my proposed scientific enterprise were the direct observation and the interview, the information thus obtained being digitally recorded (audio, photo, and video).

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² Ionescu, I. Gr. 2008. Dobrogea Euxinos. in Dobrogea - model de conviețuire multiethnică și multiculturală [Dobrogea - a Good Example of Multi-ethnic and Multicultural Cohabitation]. Constanța: Muntenia publishing house, p. 86.

2. A synoptic presentation of the ethnic groups in the study

The ethnic layout of the Balkan Peninsula underwent dramatic changes after the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913, during which population exchanges took place between the Balkan states. The build-up of political tensions, the lack of a substantial and representative intellectual elite of Balkan Romanians, and the precariousness of life contributed to the Aromanians' and Meglenoromanians' decision to make their way towards Romania. After 1913, Romania declared itself willing to receive all Romanian speakers within its borders. According to V. Coman, *"between 1925 and 1933, approximately 5,000 Aromanian and Meglenoromanian families immigrated into the counties of Durostor and Caliacra. They would continue to arrive in small batches until 1938."*³

Notes on Aromanians and *"on the Latin origin of their language are found in the 17th century in the writings of chroniclers (Steward Constantin Cantacuzino, Miron Costin), as well as in the following century in Hronicul vechimei a româno-moldo-vlahilor (The Chronicle of the Ancient History of the Romano-Moldo-Wallachians) (1717) written by Dimitrie Cantemir."*⁴

Historians and linguists claim that, *"based on the historical evidence, Romanianism appeared all over the Balkan Peninsula and expanded from the Danube to Continental Greece, the Aegean Sea, the Adriatic Sea, and Istria. These Romanians were both the result and the perpetuators of an ample evolution process of eastern Romanity."*⁵

Aromanian communities, with their patriarchal way of life, were seen as impenetrable and conservative by those in their proximity. Having *"shepherding as their main occupation, these isolated and relatively closed groups perpetuated with particular vigour the customs and songs they inherited and created along the centuries."*⁶

The current musical repertoire of the Aromanians of Dobrogea comprises poetic-musical creations of an archaic nature which correspond to the ritual moments that unfold during the wedding and funeral ceremony, songs per se, lullabies, doină⁷ songs, ballads, and dancing music.

*"Aside from the Romanians in the Balkan Peninsula, known today under the name of Aromanians, there is another small population, living in a region north of the Gulf of Salonika, which shares the same origin as Romanians everywhere and is known under the name of Meglenoromanians or Romanians of Meglen."*⁸

In the hope of a peaceful existence spared of the distress and want which they faced in their native lands, the Meglenoromanians emigrated into Romania in the early 20th century, first to the Quadrilateral, then to Cerna commune in Tulcea County. They never forgot their language, their native places, the two migrations, certain customs and traditions, even though some did fall into oblivion (traditional dress) or underwent certain changes (the song repertoire, the rituals).

By studying the Meglenoromanian repertoire of songs per se, I have concluded that most of the current repertoire of the ethnic group in Cerna commune is in their own dialect.

³ Coman, V. 2008. Considerații privind împrietărirea și încetățenirea meglenoromânilor în România în perioada interbelică [Considerations regarding the Granting of Land Ownership and Citizenship to the Meglenoromanians in Romania during the Interwar Period] in Hrisovul - Anuarul Facultății de Arhivistică [The Charter - Annual of the Faculty of Archivistics], XVI (2008)-new series, Bucharest: Editura MAI publishing house, p. 124.

⁴ Saramandu, N. 2003. Studii aromâne și meglenoromâne [Aromanian and Meglenoromanian Studies]. Constanța: Ex Ponto publishing house, p. 41.

⁵ Zbucea, G. 1999. O istorie a românilor din peninsula Balcanică sec. XVIII-XX [A History of the Romanians in the Balkan Peninsula from the 18th to the 20th Century]. Bucharest: Biblioteca Bucureștilor publishing house, p. 14.

⁶ Oprea, G. 2002. Folclorul muzical românesc [Romanian Musical Folklore]. Bucharest: Editura Muzicală publishing house, p. 604.

⁷ T.N.: Traditional Romanian lyric song.

⁸ Capidan, T. 2007. Meglenoromânii [The Meglenoromanians]. Craiova: Fundația Scrisul Românesc publishing house, p. 33.

This suggests that families have always preserved a purely Meglenoromanian repertoire which has been passed on orally up to present times. Once bagpipe (gaida) players disappeared - the bagpipe being the sole instrument specific to the Romanians of Meglen -, the song repertoire underwent a gradual adaptation to other instruments borrowed from the Quadrilateral from Turkish ethnics (the tambur) and Bulgarian ethnics (the flute, țigulkă, kaval). The versions performed today by the Meglenoromanians of Cerna are the result of adapting the musical repertoire to these instruments capable of replacing the bagpipe (gaida). All the folk music created by Meglenoromanians, from modes to vocal emission, was due to that particular instrument, so that its replacement with others caused disturbances which led to the disappearance of certain dance songs and melodies from the musical repertoire.

Nowadays, Meglenoromanian songs per se are going through a period of intense transformation which concerns both their creation and performance. All these changes show that tradition has not died out, but is adapting to the circumstances dictated by society and progress.

The Lipovans are “*an ethnic group of Slavic origin which settled in the eastern parts of our country while fleeing from the tsarist authorities who persecuted them for their religious convictions. In the second half of the 17th century, new reforms were introduced into the Russian Church which sought to replace the old books and practices with their Greek equivalents.*”⁹ In order to carry out the transition to the new rites, “*Tsar Aleksey Mikhailovich made use of force and even resorted to burning all those who had refused the reforms at the stake.*”¹⁰ Wishing to “*continue to pursue their moral and religious aspirations, the Starovers (Russian Old Believers) found themselves forced to leave their ancestral lands and settle into foreign territories.*”¹¹

Some of them made their homes in “*Dobrogea, a region which was under Turkish rule until 1878.*”¹² The fact that they were guaranteed the right to “*practice their religion and granted certain benefits determined them to settle in less welcoming regions, far from their native lands.*”¹³

The ethnonym “*Lipovan, born in Dobrogea more than two centuries ago, indicated the fact that a person belonged to an ethnic and religious group that was well established among the multitude of peoples in Dobrogea.*”¹⁴ My interviewees informed me that, after 1989, the phrase “Lipovan Russians” was adopted, thus defining their ethnic identity in relation to other nationalities at home and abroad.

Although they found themselves in a social and cultural environment different from their own native one and were subject to acculturation, Lipovan Russians maintained their customs, traditions, language, and dress, but especially their faith. Following the research I conducted among the ethnics in Sarichioi and Slava Cercheză, in Tulcea County, I concluded that the musical repertoire is being preserved and perpetuated, both within the family and at community celebrations, as a way of remembering their origin. The most vigorous musical genre of the Lipovan Russians is the song per se, which is capable of adapting to the influences and transformations brought about by the decline of the patriarchal way of life.

⁹ Tudose, P. 2015. Rușii lipoveni din România - istorie și actualitate [The Lipovan Russians of Romania - History and Current Situation]. Bucharest: Comunitatea Rușilor Lipoveni din România publishing house, p. 12.

¹⁰ Jora, R. 2014. Folclor muzical-coregrafic al rușilor lipoveni din Județul Tulcea [Musical and Choreographic Folklore of the Lipovan Russians in Tulcea County]. Constanța: Ex Ponto publishing house, pp. 41-42.

¹¹ Ipatiov, F. 2001. Rușii lipoveni din România. Studiu de geografie umană [The Lipovan Russians of Romania. A Study in Human Geography]. Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană publishing house, p. 29.

¹² Tudose, P. op. cit. p. 14.

¹³ Tiuliumeanu, M. 2015. Cazacii din Dobrogea: o istorie uitată [The Cossacks of Dobrogea: a Forgotten Piece of History]. Bucharest: Editura Militară publishing house, p. 121.

¹⁴ Tudose, P. op. cit. p. 71.

3. A morphological analysis of the song corpus

We will submit the following folk songs per se to a comparative analysis: “Mi sculai unî tahina” (I woke up one morning) and “Cît ti voi” (I love you so) from the Aromanian repertoire; “Trecui ăn sus, trecui ăn jos” (I went up and down the road) and “Z’dusi feata la apu” (So went the girl to fetch water) from the Meglenoromanian repertoire; and “Да зряш моя зореника” (My dawn) and “Да василь ты мой, василёчик” (Basil, my basil) from the Lipovan Russian repertoire. We will highlight the types of morphological elements present in these traditional creations with the aim of determining whether they can be clearly distinguished from one another.

“Mi sculai unî tahina”/ “I woke up one morning”

Moderato ♩=100

Mi scu - lai u - nî ta - hi -
na, le - le Mi scu³ - lai u - nî
ta - hi - na, Trap - şu'an
drep - tu la vru - ta mea, le - le
Trap - şu - an drep - tu la vru - ta mea.

“Mi sculai unî tahina” is a love song. The young Aromanian wakes up early in the morning and heads towards the home of the woman he loves, whom he finds sleeping. The melody has a *crusic* structure (all phrases begins on the first beat of a measure) and fits into the Aeolian mode. The tempo is Moderato, at 100 M.M. the fourth, while the rhythm is giusto-syllabic (it belongs to vocal music and is resulted from the fusion between musical sound and word). The pattern of the lines of the text is octosyllabic, forming a fixed architecture of the binary AB type. The two musical phrases are ample, while the register is predominantly acute, which determines the song’s ambitus of a perfect octave. The ornaments, which are attached to the pillar notes, are simple and double anterior appoggiaturas. The syllabic chorus *le, le* featured at the end of the first and third line is

independent and serves as an ornamental chorus. The inner cadence, placed at the caesura, is realised on the third step of the mode through a descending major second. The final cadence is realised on the first step of the mode, though a leap of a descending perfect fourth.

“Cît ti voi”/ “I love you so”

Moderato ♩ = 120

Di cân - du ias - ti ie - ta Dor -
lu di hoa - râ-ii greu Pri a - co-lo iu's duți ar - mân - lu Si'i
1. dat di Dum-nid - ză 2. dat di Dum-nid - ză Hei,
cât ti voi - - cât ti voi - - Lea hoa-ra ar mâ - neas - că
Ar - mâ - nii pri iu âs du - câ ei - - Nu ari s'ti a - gâr-șeas-că

The song “Cît ti voi” evokes the village as a primordial space in the memory of the Aromanians, never to be forgotten by them no matter where fate may lead them. Childhood memories are presented in an emotional manner, and so is the universe of daily activities derived from shepherding, which was the main occupation of this people whose history has been so turbulent.

As far as the mode is concerned, the melody, which also serves for dancing, fits into the Aeolian mode on D.

The anacrusic structure, through its incipit formula, contributes to the impetus required in preparation for the dance steps. The tempo is Moderato, at 120 M.M. the fourth, which is characteristic for Aromanian circle dances. The rhythm is giusto-syllabic and the pattern of the lines of the text is octosyllabic. The two musical phrases, A and B, determine the fixed binary architecture of the melody. The foremost quality of the melody is its accessibility. Perhaps the lack of ornaments contributes to the memorising and assimilation by the young

generation of this song per se, which is performed with great pleasure at various gatherings or artistic manifestations of this ethnic group. The ambitus is of a minor nonave. The pseudo-stanza which results from the repetition of the first melodic phrase (made up of four lines) has a thematic chorus which makes up the second phrase. The candences, both inner and final, are realised on the first step of the mode, through a descending major second.

“Trecui ăn sus, trecui ăn jos”/ ”I went up and down the road”

Presto ♩=176

Tre cui ăn sus ma - mo

tre cui ăn jos Ia u - nă

fea - tă ma - mo Ăn trem șă

de ma - mo Pri gaci ve ze

The song “Trecui ăn sus, trecui ăn jos” presents the story of a young Meglenoromanian who wishes to get married. He tells his mother about his attempts to win the affections of a girl whom he saw sewing on a balcony. The lad is disappointed that the young woman shows no interest and tells him that he should better die than get married. Unintimidated by the girl’s suggestion, the young man firmly informs his mother that he will not give up marriage.

The crusic melody also serves for dancing. The mode is a minor pentachord. The subtone and the second step, which play the part of piens, contribute to the amplification of the pentachord into a hexachord with a subtone.

The tempo is Presto, at 176 M.M. the eighth. The rhythm is aksak and the pattern of the lines is octosyllabic. It is according to this pattern that the hexasyllabic lines undergo an isometric adaptation. This reveals that fact that the text is an older creation and precedes the melody.

The lack of ornaments contributes to the flow of the melody and makes it easier to memorise. From an architectural point of view, the song has a fixed form of a binary AB type. The extreme sounds, the subtone (the note C) and the note on the sixth step (B flat), which mark the climax, make the ambitus a minor seventh.

The disyllabic chorus *mamo*, which completes the ending of the hexasyllabic lines, contributes to the isometric adaptation to the melody’s octosyllabic pattern.

The inner cadence on the third step of the mode, realised through an ascending leap of a perfect fourth, coincides with the caesura placed at the end of the first phrase. This caesura is marked with the aid of the fermata.

The final cadence, preceded by a crenelated melodic movement, is realised on the first step of the mode, through an ascending major second.

“Z’dusi feata la apu”/ “So went the girl to fetch water”

Allegro ♩=168
(2+2+3+2)

Z'du - si fea - ta la a - pu

Z'du - si lu - di du - pu ia

La - să-mi mă - ri fea - to tu,

Si-ts li ză - port stom - ni - li

The text of the song per se called “Z’dusi feata la apu” depicts an ordinary moment in the lives of Meglenoromanians. The members of the community upheld precise rules as to human relations. Young couples were only allowed to hold hands if they were engaged. This was known to the whole community. The girl’s vexation is justified, as the young man who accompanied her to the spring broke the rules by squeezing her hand and thus breaking the ring on her finger.

The melody, featuring a crusic structure, is performed at a quick, Allegro tempo, at 168 M.M. the eighth, and also serves for dancing. Its mode is a major pentachord, with the notes *B flat* and *A* in the low register, so that the ambitus of the melody is of a minor seventh.

The appoggiaturas, which are found in the first two melodic rows, are simple, anterior and ascending. The rhythm is giusto-syllabic and the poetic text has been adapted isometrically to fit the octosyllabic pattern of the melodic row.

The architectural form of the melody is fixed, of the ternary type - A, B, C, Av –, the two phrases in the period being subject to repetition. The cadences, both inner and final, are realised on the first step of the mode through repetition.

“Да зряш моя зореника”/ “My dawn”

Andante ♩=96

Да за - ряш мо - я зо - ре - ни - ка,
 Да за - ряш мо - я бе - ла - я.
 Ой лё - ли ой да лё - ли,
 Да лё - лиш мо - и лё - шень - ки.
 Да че - гош ты на - де - ла - ла,
 От - ца мать раз - гне - ва - ла.
 Ой лё - ли ой да лё - ли,
 Да лё - лиш мо - и лё - шень - ки.

The song “Zorile mele de zi” is a sad one, its poetic text resembling that of a wailing song. From the very beginning, the lyrics depict a dramatic scene. In his despair, a young man

grieving for the loss of his parents holds the bright, white dawn accountable for the fact that he is about to become an orphan. He entreats his mother, who is lying on her deathbed, to give him one last coin and show him what path he should follow in life. The folk creator compares the death of one's parents to a stone being thrown in the water never to be seen again. In the final stanza, the burden of a parentless existence, and in a foreign land at that, is compared to the weight of the stone. We can deduce that this song per se belongs to the old stratum and was brought to Dobrogea during the time of the emigration of the Starover Russians, who were under religious persecution in their native lands.

The mode of the song is a minor pentachord. The tempo is Andante at 96 M.M. the fourth and the rhythm is giusto-syllabic. The pattern of the lines is octosyllabic and the architectural form is fixed, of the ternary type, namely AA ν BC. The note C2, which serves as *pien*, consolidates the pillar note B, while it contributes through its emancipation to expanding the ambitus into a minor sixth. The lack of ornaments confers accessibility and fluidity to the melody. The inner cadences are realised on the third step of the mode through a descending and ascending major second. The final cadence is realised on the first step of the mode through repetition.

“Да василь ты мой, василёчик”/ “Basil, my basil”

Moderato $\text{♩} = 120$

Да ва - силь ты мой, ва - си - лё - чик,
Да ра - зор - ли - вый мой цве - то - чик,
Ой, лё - ли, мой цве - то - чик,
Дай вай лё - ли, мой цве - то - чик.
Пер - вым ча - сым я са - ди - ла,

Пер - вым ча - сым я са - ди - ла,
 Ой, лё - ли, я са - ди - ла,
 Дай вай лё - ли, я са - ди - ла.
 Дру - гим ча - сым по - ли - ва - ла,
 Дру - гим ча - сым по - ли - ва - ла,
 Ой, лё - ли, по - ли - ва - ла,
 Дай вай лё - ли, по - ли - ва - ла.

In the poetic text of the song “Busuioc, busuiocul meu”, the folk author tells us the story of a young girl who plants basil. In all the traditional cultures of Dobrogea, this plant is considered to be sacred and to have a purifying and apotropaic effect. It is seen as “the plant of love and fertility”, because it helps girls see their intended in their dreams. From the very beginning, the stages through which this plant endowed with magical qualities comes to life are enumerated. In the “first hour” the girl planted the seed, in “the second hour” she watered it, and in “the third hour” she picked the basil and tied it into a bunch to be taken into the house. It is known that basil preserves the qualities it is endowed with if it is sown before dawn. Before leaving the place where all the action of the song took place, the girl asks the geese not to wake her parents, so that her deeds should not be revealed.

The song has a crusic structure, while its text evokes a patriarchal atmosphere characterised by the simplicity of life in the distant past. Its mode is a major pentachord. It is

performed at a fast tempo, namely Moderato, at 120 M.M. the fourth. The rhythm is giusto-syllabic and the pattern of the lines is octosyllabic. The architectural form of the melody is fixed, of a binary AABBV type, with the two phrases in the period being repeated. Due to the absence of ornaments, the melody is accessible and fluid. The ambitus of the song is a perfect fifth. The inner cadence is realised on the third step of the mode through repetition. The final cadence is realised on the first step of the mode, also through repetition.

4. Conclusions

The analysis has revealed the existence of morphological elements of the same type in varying proportions in the songs per se of each ethnic group, which leads to the conclusion that it is impossible to draw a clear line between them from a morphological point of view.

The arguments justifying this statement can be summarised as follows:

- **the pattern of the lines is octosyllabic** for all the songs analysed;
- in all the songs under analysis, **the final cadences are realised on the first step**;
- **archaic modes** present in the songs “Trecui ăn sus, trecui ăn jos”, “Z’dusi feata la aru”, “Да зряш моя зореника” and “Да василь ты мой, василёчик”;
- the songs “Mi sculai unî tahina”, “Trecui ăn sus, trecui ăn jos”, “Z’dusi feata la aru”, “Да зряш моя зореника” and “Да василь ты мой, василёчик” have a **crusic structure**;
- the songs “Trecui ăn sus, trecui ăn jos”, “Z’dusi feata la aru” and “Да василь ты мой, василёчик” feature **fast tempos**;
- the songs “Mi sculai unî tahina”, “Cît ti voi”, “Z’dusi feata la aru”, “Да зряш моя зореника” and “Да василь ты мой, василёчик” have a **giusto-syllabic rhythm**;
- **the architectural form** of the songs “Mi sculai unî tahina”, “Cît ti voi”, “Trecui ăn sus, trecui ăn jos” and “Да василь ты мой, василёчик” **is binary**;
- the songs “Mi sculai unî tahina” and “Cît ti voi” feature **an ambitus of an octave and a nonave**, while the songs “Trecui ăn sus, trecui ăn jos” and “Z’dusi feata la aru” feature **an ambitus of a seventh**;
- **ornaments** are present in the songs “Mi sculai unî tahina” and “Z’dusi feata la aru”;
- the songs “Mi sculai unî tahina” and “Trecui ăn sus, trecui ăn jos” feature a **disyllabic chorus**;
- **the inner cadences are realised on the third step** in the songs “Mi sculai unî tahina” (stepwise melodic movement), “Trecui ăn sus, trecui ăn jos” (through ascending leap of a perfect fourth), “Да зряш моя зореника” (through descending major second) and “Да василь ты мой, василёчик” (through repetition);
- **evolved modes** in the songs “Mi sculai unî tahina” and “Cît ti voi”;
- **an anacrusic structure** for the song “Cît ti voi”;
- **slow tempos** for the songs “Mi sculai unî tahina”, “Cît ti voi” and “Да зряш моя зореника”;
- **an aksak rhythm** for the song “Trecui ăn sus, trecui ăn jos”;
- **a ternary architectural form** for the songs “Z’dusi feata la aru” and “Да зряш моя зореника”;
- **an ambitus of a sixth and a fifth** in the songs “Да зряш моя зореника” and “Да василь ты мой, василёчик”;
- **a lack of ornaments** in the songs “Cît ti voi”, “Trecui ăn sus, trecui ăn jos”, “Да зряш моя зореника” and “Да василь ты мой, василёчик”;
- **a thematic chorus** in the song “Cît ti voi”;
- **the lack of a chorus** in the songs “Z’dusi feata la aru”, “Да зряш моя зореника” and “Да василь ты мой, василёчик”;

- *inner cadences realised on the first step* in the songs “Cît ti voi” (through stepwise melodic movement) and “Z’dusi feata la apu” (through repetition);
- *final cadences on the first steps* in the songs “Mi sculai unî tahina” (through leap of a descending perfect fourth), “Cît ti voi” (through descending major second), “Trecui ăn sus, trecui ăn jos” (through ascending major second), “Z’dusi feata la apu” (through repetition), “Да зряш моя зореника” and “Да василь ты мой, василёчик” (through repetition).

For each of the ethnic groups within the scope of this research, the creations analysed can be considered veritable marks of identity. Nowadays, all those who approach the culture and traditions of peoples that share a multi-ethnic space need to take into account the two characteristic aspects of the today’s world: globalisation and national identity.

Out of a desire not to lose their identity, the communities of Dobrogea chose to reassert themselves by promoting their language or idiom, their music, traditions, and all their community practices.

The vitality and capacity to adapt of songs per se are qualities which have contributed to their maintaining and asserting themselves in the cultural space of Dobrogea along the decades.

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