

## The importance of traditional dance music in asserting the cultural identity of the Greeks from Dobrogea

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**Abstract:** *Dobrogea, the oldest province in all Romanian lands, is a unique ethnocultural landscape, characterized by the original contributions of each ethnic community. The variety of cultural identities results, on the one hand, from the continuity of the Romanian local element and, on the other hand, from the existence of minority groups. In the context of territorial proximity, cultural exchanges took place that determined in time a process of acculturation, but also the formation of distinctive frames of manifestation of each ethnic group. The existence of this ethnocultural mosaic determined the creation of close ties between Romanians and the mother nations of these nationalities, an aspect that determines the enrichment of Romanian cultures as a whole.*

*For the Greeks from Dobrogea, dance music is an important part of the traditional music repertoire. The dance connects the participants with the community to which they belong, as well as asserting a strong cultural identity in the Dobrogean allogeneic space.*

**Keywords:** *Greeks from Dobrogea; ethnic group; folklore; dance music; community;*

### • Introductory remarks

Dobrogea, considered a fertile territory since antiquity, with fields that were an attraction for Greek settlers who arrived as early as the sixth century BC, was a square of land bounded on the south by a row of hills (the current Bulgarian border), at north and west by the Danube and east by the Black Sea. The riches transported on the Danube were considered by the Greeks the biggest attraction.<sup>2</sup>

When the Greeks colonized the shores of the Black Sea, they pursued strategic and economic considerations. First of all, a defensive position was sought (acropolis, peninsula, island) and secondly, the presence of some agricultural lands was taken into account. Colonization or colonization expedition was organized by cities that had the necessary resources and means of transportation, and it was joined by participants (families) from smaller nearby cities.<sup>3</sup>

The archaic era was characterized by the phenomenon of Greek migration from the cities of mainland Greece, caused primarily by population growth and declining available arable land. As a result, groups leaving the metropolis by sea set up colonies on the shores of the Eastern Mediterranean and the Pontus Euxinus (Hospitable Sea)/Black Sea.<sup>4</sup>

On the Romanian Black Sea coast, the Greeks founded in the 7th and 6th century B.C. four colonies. Those from Miletus (the Aegean coast of Asian Turkey) established the cities of Histria/Istria and Tomis/Constanța and those from Heraclea Pontica (Pontic coast of Asian

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<sup>2</sup> Boardman, John. *Greeks overseas*. 1988. Bucharest: Meridiane Publishing House. pp. 321-322

<sup>3</sup> Buzoianu, Livia. *Greek civilization in the western Pontic area and its impact on the native world (VII-IV centuries BC)*. 2001. Constanța: "Ovidius" University Press, p. 196

<sup>4</sup> Bitoleanu, Ion, Rădulescu, Adrian. *History of the Romanians between the Danube and the Black Sea*. 1979. Bucharest: Scientific and Encyclopedic Publishing House, p. 41

Turkey) the colony Callatis/Mangalia.<sup>5</sup>

Most of the Milesian foundations in the Pontic basin have a predominantly commercial orientation from the beginning.<sup>6</sup>

The Greek colonies Histria, Tomis and Callatis contributed to the change in the appearance of the Dobrogean territories, which were considered points of reference for a magnificent evocation of the characteristics of a long-gone civilization, but which has managed to transmit to this day the echo of remarkable achievements, the political and social field of his time, as well as in the field of culture, arts, war strategies, architecture and medicine.<sup>7</sup>

The Greek settlers, in contact with the native populations, had to adapt to the living conditions in the western - Pontic area, to face common dangers and to satisfy the common economic interests.<sup>8</sup>

If from a historical point of view the Greek colonies at Pontus Euxinus have been researched by historians, archaeologists and linguists, from a musical point of view no research or extensive studies have been carried out on traditional musical creation or aspects related to musical genres, organology, dances, rituals or costumes.

This paper starts from the hypothesis that only by collecting, transcribing and analyzing on a scientific basis the traditional dance music of the Greeks from Dobrogea can we contribute to the preservation and perpetuation of a community identity practice still vigorous, but sensitive to the changes imposed by the dynamics of society and to external influences. Among the factors that can contribute to the gradual loss of group identity we will mention acculturation, globalization, mixed marriages, etc. In the last thirty years, in the Dobrogea area, the conditions for the preservation, development and affirmation of the identity of national minorities have been created and maintained, through unions, artistic associations, publications.

The subjects were selected according to the chosen topic and as research methods we opted for both indirect methods (bibliographic research, analysis, synthesis) and direct methods (semi-directive interview, conversation, observation). The information obtained was recorded digitally (audio and video) and will be disseminated to all those interested in the musical repertoire of the Greeks in Dobrogea.

### • **The Greeks from Dobrogea - historical and ethnocultural considerations**

Currently, the estimated number of Greeks in Romania is 3,897, which represents 0.02% of Romania's population. Most of them live in Bucharest, Tulcea, Constanța, Brăila, Galați, Hunedoara, Bacău, Dolj.<sup>9</sup>

Our history reveals the permanent presence of the Greeks in the Carpatho-Danubian-Pontic area. No other people, closer or farther from our borders, is equal to the Greek contribution in terms of the influence exerted on the Romanians, on the benefits gained from a coexistence inaugurated in the Hellenistic era and extended today to transnational societies.<sup>10</sup>

As we have already mentioned, the presence of strong proto-Greek communities on the current territory of Romania is attested starting with the 7th century B.C. on the western shore of the Black Sea. This is where the first Greek colonies were born, in Histria, Tomis and

<sup>5</sup> Bitoleanu, Ion. Adrian, Rădulescu. *op. cit.*, p. 43

<sup>6</sup> Buzoianu, Livia. *op. cit.*, p. 199

<sup>7</sup> Bitoleanu, Ion. Adrian, Rădulescu. *op. cit.*, p. 44

<sup>8</sup> Buzoianu, Livia. *op. cit.*, p. 220

<sup>9</sup> Nicoară, Toader. *History and traditions of Romanian minorities*, Rural Education Project, Ministry of Education and Research, 2005, p. 34

<sup>10</sup> Nedelcu, Mioara. *Minorities - The time of affirmation*, 2003. Iași: TipoMoldova Publishing House, p. 10

Calatis, all located on the current territory of Constanța County.<sup>11</sup>

Greek cities in the north and northwest of the Black Sea throughout their existence have maintained more or less intense political, economic, cultural, and religious ties, not only with each other, not only among themselves, but also with cities in the rest of the Pontic basin, with many centers in the Aegean-Mediterranean area and at the same time they were centers of the spread of ancient life forms to the neighboring populations, thus enduring and constantly exerting a double influence in terms of irradiating the elements of culture and civilization.<sup>12</sup>

Later, during the existence of the Roman Empire and then of the Roman-Byzantine Empire, the presence of a Greek element in the borders of Romania today is less visible, but not completely absent. Starting in the 17th century, the Ottoman Gate will decide to govern Wallachia and Moldova through the Greek rulers of Fanar. Heirs of the Byzantine spiritual heritage, cultivated and rich, the Phanariots will play an important role in the history of the Romanian countries. Many historians see Phanariots as "active agents of civilization."<sup>13</sup>

After 1821, following the national liberation movement of the Greeks from the Ottoman Empire, the Phanariot rulers were removed from power and replaced by earthly lords. In Greater Romania, after 1918, the Greek communities were extremely strong. The Greeks had their schools, churches, cinemas, places of social protection, and banks. The tolerance of the authorities and of the simple Romanians was maximum, between Romanians and Greeks no conflicts of any kind are known in history. A large number of Greeks arrive in Romania immediately after the Second World War, leaving their country of origin due to political persecution.<sup>14</sup>

The organization of Romanian citizens belonging to the Greek minority in our country is the Hellenic Union of Romania (founded in Bucharest in 1989). It aims, with the help of the territorial communities, to "defend the right to preserve, develop and express the ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity" of its members. For this, the Union has set up Greek language classes or sections so that in Bucharest, Brăila and Constanța, since 1999 it has been operating within the Romanian education system, mixed classes with teaching in the Greek language.<sup>15</sup>

The vice president of the Greek community in Constanța, Dr. Mihnea Hagiu, informed me that an important task of the community is to organize various cultural events every year. These include the celebration of the national days of Greece and Romania, October 28 (Oxi! day)<sup>16</sup>, the religious holidays of Easter and Christmas, the festivals of Greek folk music, dance or poetry.

At present, the Greeks, together with the other ethnic groups established over time in the Dobrogea area, consider this territory as the original one.

The Greeks have always preferred to live in urban areas, where the population is characterized by social heterogeneity. We are dealing with "modernized" inhabitants from an educational and professional point of view, who adapt to multiethnicity and interculturality, defining coordinates of urban life. Here are some of the consequences of adapting to urban life

<sup>11</sup> Nicoară, Toader. *op. cit.*, p. 34

<sup>12</sup> Cojocaru Victor, Relations between Greeks and "barbarians" north and northwest of Pontus Euxinus reflected in three decrees from the Hellenistic period. 2004, Bucharest, Romanian Academy Publishing House, Journal of Archeology of Moldova, vol. XXV: pp. 145

<sup>13</sup> Nicoară, Toader. *op. cit.*, p. 34

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 35

<sup>15</sup> <https://uniunea-elena.ro/> accessed March 12, 2022

<sup>16</sup> This day is celebrated in remembrance of the moment when the then prime minister of Greece, Ioannis Metaxas, refused to let the Italian troops enter Greece's border on October 28, 1940, during the Greco-Italian War. Following this, Metaxas's refusal became famous around the country and the people came out to the streets, shouting "Oxi!" (which means "No!" in Greek). This is remembered as a brave decision by Metaxas and is believed by millions of Greeks to be a heroic act.

over time: ethno-traditional abandonment, inter-ethnic cultural otherness, acculturation, bilingualism and cultural reciprocity. The revival of ethno-cultural belonging to the Greek world has been achieved in the last thirty years by using the mother tongue at school, ethno-religious attachment, traditional costume, ethno-choreography, ethno-traditional revitalization.

The Greeks owned cafes, confectioneries, groceries, bakeries, shops, tobacconists, in the urban centers of Dobrogea or were involved in commercial activities with grain, or in navigation, being sailors, pilots, boatmen or shipowners. However, in the county Tulcea, in the village of Izvoarele (formerly called Alibeykoi), lives in the valley of Taița the only rural Greek community. They were engaged in agriculture, animal husbandry and handicrafts (blacksmithing, carpentry, fur, tailoring, brickwork). According to bibliographic data, the Greek community in Izvoarele was founded by Greeks from Aspros (Akdere), former fighters in the war for Greek independence.

Regarding the contemporary identity of the Greeks in the urban areas of Dobrogea, the important role of institutions such as ethnic associations and traditional dance ensembles should be mentioned. Even though traditional dances are an integral part of community life, and their practice leads to the assertion of a strong cultural identity, acculturation also threatens this ethnic heritage. Efforts are being made by local organizations in the Dobrogean Greek community to encourage the transmission of dance to younger generations. In dance ensembles, young people learn dances from different regions of Greece, such as Macedonia, Crete, Epirus, Thessaly or the Peloponnese. From the vice-president of the Greek community in Constanța, Dr. Mihnea Hagi, I found out that dance instructors are invited annually to Greece to learn the dances in the most authentic way possible, so that later they can implement them in the ensembles they coordinates them.

The members of these ensembles have costumes that have been reconstructed from photographs that are mostly in personal archives. The multitude of costumes and the richness of the dance repertoire demonstrate the geo-cultural diversity of the dance suites. These ensembles represent the community at folk festivals or various national and international cultural events.

Among the factors that currently maintain the ethno-cultural belonging of the Greeks to the community are the use of the mother tongue, religious ethnonymy, ethno-history, traditional clothing, musical repertoire and ethno-choreography.

For the Greek community in Dobrogea, the awareness of the ethnic heritage attenuated the uprooting by elaborate ritualization of every aspect of their lives, from traditional costume to moral code. Folk costumes and traditional dances are true resources of ethnographic representation. The role of the traditional costume is to ensure the "cultural survival" of the community, and ethnic clothing is symbolically reinvested in festivals or artistic events.

For all ethnic groups in Dobrogea acculturation has two dimensions: the first is related to maintaining the cultural heritage and the second to adapting to the local context. We can say that this bicultural identity is present in all ethnic groups with different origins that identify with a strong cultural heritage, but are also integrated into the main cultural flow, represented by the Daco-Romanian culture.

We can list exogamy, identity mobility, acculturation, bilingualism and cultural reciprocity as phenomena of relative disarticulation of the Greek community in Dobrogea. Another aspect that can lead to the fragmentation of the community is the controversies present mainly in rural areas, regarding the celebration in the old style or in the new style. Affected by this dichotomy are various aspects of community life. For example, the caroling ritual is currently performed according to the actors' belonging to one of the two calendars (Julian or Gregorian). If we take into account mixed marriages, perceived as the abandonment of an

"identity strategy" and acculturation, the situation is complicated, appearing individual, family or community situations in which it is celebrated in both new and old style.

Today, the traditional organology of the Dobrogean Greeks includes the following musical instruments: violin, buzuki, clarinet, percussion instruments and keyboards.

Folk costume and dances are resources of ethnographic representation, and folk costume has a special role in the "cultural survival" of the community. I will describe the most common Greek folk costume from us but also from Greece. It is about the costume worn in the mainland of Greece, more precisely from Attica. It gained popularity during the War of Independence in 1821. The Attica men's costume is actually a city costume, the basic element of which is the *fustanella*/skirt, which has many triangular pleats gathered and caught at the waist; *vraka*/wide pants; *gileki*/ waistcoat embroidered with gold thread, whose sleeves are cut and fastened on its back, to facilitate movements; *poukamiso*/wide-sleeved shirt; *tsarouhia*/big black tassel shoes.

The Attica costume, worn by women, contains: *poukamiso*/white cotton shirt, embroidered with colored silk thread; *mindari*/white or black jackets that can be long or short, often made of wool; *fousta*/white skirt; *bodia*/apron embroidered with thread of different colors; on the head the women wear *skufoma*/white kerchief which has on the edges also white tassels handmade; on the neck the women wear the *botonia me abrakamboi*/gold chain with coins.<sup>17</sup>

- **The relationship between modern society and tradition**

The modern society in Dobrogea shows a positive and proactive attitude towards the existing ethnic communities on its territory. In the amalgamated environment of Dobrogea, when we talk about the cultural identity of the Greeks, we must take into account the language, the system of values, the beliefs, the traditions, the customs or the behaviors of this community. The intangible cultural heritage of the Greeks, the result of anonymous and collective creations, has historically defined cultural identity, being associated with the history and memory of the community. In order to maintain their own specificity, the Greeks kept in the collective memory certain social practices and a musical and choreographic repertoire containing older creations (brought from their places of origin) as well as newer creations (imported from their country of origin).

For this community, cultural identity is the element of cohesion within the social group and allows each individual to show a sense of belonging to the group with which they identify based on common cultural features.

The Dobrogean Greeks are practical, enterprising, hardworking people, united on a collective level and followers of the spirit of self-help. The Greeks from Dobrogea validate and reaffirm their authentic cultural values on any occasion. As arguments of their social identity we mention the celebration of the historical heroes of the people, the recollection of the moments of historical-cultural foundation. They are proud of their achievements and their good financial condition is reflected in the appearance of the home, in the way they spend their holly days, calendar traditions or rites of passage. The latter impress not only with ceremoniousness and sumptuousness but also with the preservation of habits as reflections of archaic thinking.

Like all Orthodox Christians, the Greeks adhere to the customs associated with the Easter holidays - fasting, egg browning, the preparation of lamb entrails (*maghirița*), the service of the Resurrection, followed at dawn by the baking of lamb - and also Christmas - the preparation of cakes, caroling, decorating the Christmas tree, etc.

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<sup>17</sup> <https://uniunea-elena.ro/> accessed March 12, 2022

The winter holiday season, which runs from Christmas Eve to the Epiphany, is full of religious significance and important holidays for all ethnic groups. Christmas is a time of joy for all members of the community, who celebrate with music and dance both with family and friends.

Another holiday, which takes place on the first day of the new year, is the cutting of the pie of Saint Basil the Great, called "Vasilopita". In this pie the housewives introduce a coin. The head of the family, in the presence of the whole family, slices the pie and divides it according to a certain ritual. The first slice, given to the patron saint of the family, is placed in front of the icon depicting the saint. The second slice is for the house, and then one slice is given to each member of the family, from the oldest to the youngest. It is believed that whoever finds the coin in his slice will be lucky all year round.

As Orthodox Christians, the Greeks mark the celebration of the last day before the beginning of a fast. The fasting period, which lasts seven weeks, begins with "Clean Monday" and ends with "Great Saturday." It is customary for the youngest members of the family to kneel before the older ones and apologize for all the inconvenience and inconvenience they have caused. Only in this way will they enter with their "pure" souls during Lent. The clean Monday marks the beginning of the 48 days of Lent and the Holy Week/"Megali Evdomada". The fasting period ends with the feast of Easter, "Lambri or Pasha", considered the greatest holiday of the Greek Orthodox. On the Saturday before Easter Lent, Greeks go to church and commemorate the deads. It is the Sabbath of the Dead or "Psihosavato"/"Saturday of Souls " when, after the religious service, the faithful are offered koliva (a funeral cake).

On March 25, the Annunciation and the National Day of Greece are celebrated. On this occasion, a church service is held for the Virgin Mary and the Archangel Gabriel.

Another important religious holiday for the Greeks in Dobrogea, which takes place on August 15, is the Assumption. Members of the community go to church where they take part in the liturgy. If we look at it from the perspective of religious affiliation, there is now a fragmentation of the community, due to discussions related to the celebration in the old or new style.<sup>18</sup>

Recently, in the contemporary Dobrogea society the preference for festive events is noticeable, in contexts paternalized by institutions, where music becomes an organizing element of the festive program. Such situations frequently occur in the case of church feasts, celebrations occasioned by historical and cultural events when dance, folk music or other, performances are realized on stage. These holidays have lost their original meaning and are performed and perceived as a purely spectacular moment.

Institutionalization, festivalification, tourism development and the need for cultural consumption often lead to reconfigurations or takeovers of rites in institutionalized forms. Even so, performing these rites on stage can emphasize the pride of belonging to a group and adherence to a set of values internalized by that group.

- **Morphological and syntactic analysis of dance music**

Even though ethnic cultural conservatism is now losing ground in favor of entertainment-based cultural forms or productions designed to an internationalized aesthetic standard, traditional dance is still an affective and active contribution to the oral culture of Dobrogean Greeks, through which the basic values of the community are transferred to the younger generations.

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<sup>18</sup> <https://uniunea-elena.ro/> accessed March 12, 2022

And in the case of the Dobrogean Greeks, the ethno-traditional revitalization goes through a process of "selective retraditionalization". At the community level, dance, even if it has re-entered the practice in its stage version, facilitates the integration in the community, the social interaction through the participation of young people in a group activity that requires coordination and collaboration.

The interviewees told me that in their native places, young Greeks used to learn how to dance within the family, at work gatherings or dancing events, having as finality the community events. Participation in dance, a factor of community cohesion, required compliance with organizational rules - participation according to age, social and civil status of participants, protocol rules.

Because their purpose is to perform at festivals or shows, the traditional dances of the Dobrogean Greeks can now be considered cultural-media products with real emotional benefits. The context of cultural transmission through the stage experience diminished the importance of the relationship between traditional dance and its learning moments. Dance, as a form of individual expression of certain skills and abilities relevant to the definition of community membership, has become "internationalized", becoming a form of collective expression, coordinated and confirmed by instructors trained each year in the country of origin in order to preserve choreographic style and authenticity. We can see how the dynamics of the society contributed to the replacement of the intimate learning framework with the institutional patronage, the rehearsals taking place in a room intended for learning and under the guidance of dance instructors.

The repertoire of dances practiced by Greek communities in Dobrogea is characterized by the richness and variety of figures and improvisations. The multitude of occasions in which it is played and the predilection for solo choreographic moments demonstrate the vitality of this category and its preservation within the community.

Traditional dances are lively, varied in music and choreography, and the dance steps and body swings are graceful. The dancers hold their hands, shoulders or belts, depending on the dance they perform, and the dance steps and the movement of the arms are synchronized. Among their neighbors of other nationalities, the melody and choreography of the dances give the Greeks originality among the communities with which they live.

Here are some of the dances performed by the Greeks from Dobrogea, to which I will add the information received from the interviewees, regarding their origin:

- Kalamatianos - the name of the dance comes from the beautiful silk handkerchiefs made in Kalamata, a town in the Peloponnese, famous during the Byzantine Empire for the silk produced;
- Tsamikos - dance from Epirus, danced by boys who show off their talent in performing complicated choreographic movements;
- Karagouna - dance from the Thessaly region, which was originally a girls' dance, but nowadays it is also danced in pairs;
- Hasapiko - or the butcher's dance is a traditional dance from Constantinople, dating back to the Middle Ages and mimics a sword fight performed by the Greek butchers' guild;
- Hasaposerviko - represents the fast version of the Hasapiko dance;
- Sirtaki - a combination of Hasapiko and Hasaposerviko (it is the most famous Greek dance which, unlike other Greek dances from the countryside, has its origins in city taverns.

Out of the traditional dance repertoire, I have selected for analysis the dances Reditikos/ Ροδίτικος and Ballos/ Μπάλλος. In both dances, the orchestral rhythm is generated by the pulsations of the incisos, as the accents stand out in successions that reveal a preference for the binary rhythm.

## Roditikos/ Ροδίτικος

Andante ♩ = 78

The musical score is written in treble clef with a 4/4 time signature. The tempo is marked 'Andante' with a quarter note equal to 78 beats per minute. The key signature contains one sharp (F#). The score consists of ten staves of music. The first staff begins with a 4/4 time signature. The music is primarily composed of eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together in groups. There are several slurs throughout the piece. The final staff includes a trill (tr) over a note. The piece ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.



The first dance hails from the island of Rhodes (in the Aegean Sea), which is home to a rich traditional music repertoire. Roditikos/ Ροδίτικος can be performed both in pairs and in a closed circle, the steps being in perfect accord with the tempo - andante - at 78 M.M. the quarter. The instruments providing the accompaniment are the violin and the daire.

The melody rhythm is binary and divisive, taking diverse forms, with a symmetrical pattern and sequences having a total value of eight. The subdivisive values are grouped around the accented sound and it is noteworthy that the first sound of each inciso acquires a delimiting accent, which is intended to bring together the entire group. It is also worth noting that the division of the time units gives rise to isometric rhythmic formulae.

From an architectural point of view, the melody of the Roditikos/ Ροδίτικος dance is fixed, of the quarternary type. It contains six musical phrases: ABACDA and a codetta at the end of the melody, which serves as a conclusion. Even though a codetta - which has a measure - is added to the last phrase, one notes that the value of eight of the rhythmic sequences is preserved. The melody of the dance, constructed by means of the identical or varied repetition of narrow melodic-rhythmic cells, is in accordance with the rhythm of the steps.

The mode is the chromatic 3 (E<sub>1</sub>-F<sub>1</sub>-G<sub>1</sub><sup>#</sup>-A<sub>1</sub>-B<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>2</sub>-D<sub>2</sub>-E<sub>2</sub>). F<sub>1</sub> and G<sub>1</sub>, with their double tonality (F<sub>1</sub>/F<sub>1</sub><sup>#</sup> and G<sub>1</sub>/G<sub>1</sub><sup>#</sup>), which play the part of piens consolidating the pillar notes G<sub>1</sub> and A<sub>1</sub>, respectively, are particularly noteworthy. Among the other pillar notes of the melody there are: D<sub>1</sub>, E<sub>1</sub>, G<sub>1</sub><sup>#</sup>, A<sub>1</sub>, B<sub>1</sub>.

The melody has a crenelated outline, combining the stepwise melodic movement with leaps of ascending perfect fourth E<sub>1</sub>-A<sub>1</sub> and A<sub>1</sub>-D<sub>2</sub>, descending perfect fifth B<sub>1</sub>-E<sub>1</sub>, and minor seventh. The climax of the melody occurs on E<sub>2</sub>.

The ambitus is a perfect twelfth (A<sub>1</sub>-E<sub>2</sub>), such a broad span being frequently encountered in dance melodies.

The melodic notes - anterior simple and double appoggiaturas, trills, and glissandos - further enrich the melodic line.

The inner cadences of the dance melody Roditikos/ Ροδίτικος are realized on the first step of the mode, except for the second phrase, the cadence of which is on the ascendingly altered second step - F<sub>1</sub><sup>#</sup>. The final cadence, occurring at the end of the codetta (C), on the first step as well, concludes the musical period.

While the cadence of phrases A, B, and D is realised through repetition, the one of phrase C is realised through a leap of descending perfect fifth; however, in the last A phrase, the one containing the codetta, the cadence is realized through a descending minor second.

According to the interviewees, the second dance, Ballos/ Μπάλος, is typical for the music of the Aegean islands and is aimed at the young. They recounted that the strict rules that had to be observed for any of the other dances did not apply to this one and that participating in this dance was a good opportunity for young men to win the favour, affinity, or love of young women.

### Ballos/ Μπάλος

**Moderato** ♩ = 91

The image displays a single system of ten musical staves, each containing a line of notation for a traditional Greek dance from Dobrogea. The notation is written in a single treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The music is characterized by a mix of rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, often grouped in beams. Many notes are connected by slurs, indicating a continuous melodic line. The piece concludes with a final flourish on the tenth staff. The overall style is typical of traditional folk music notation, focusing on the melodic contour and rhythmic structure of the dance.





This dance piece synchronises the orchestral rhythm and the dance rhythm per se, in order to make the choreographic moves stand out.

The tempo is moderato, at 91 M.M. the quarter, in accordance with the cheerful nature of the dance melody. The rhythm is binary and divisive, with sequences having a total value of eight.

It is worth noting that the rhythm becomes a cohesion factor for the choreography and music, the subdivisive values being grouped around the accented sound, which brings together the entire group. For this dance melody as well, dividing time units gives rise to isometric rhythmic formulae.

The ornaments, anterior and posterior simple appoggiaturas, alongside the glissando, enrich the melodic line. They are realised at descending and ascending intervals of minor and major second, intervals of ascending major third, of descending perfect octave, and of descending perfect fifth, respectively.

In terms of architectural form, this dance melody is fixed, with a ternary pattern (ABAvCAv). There are six musical phrases, which coincide with the melodic rows. The motifs in the phrases match the duration of two measures in terms of their unfurling and are repeated in an identical or varied form. To the difference of the first phrase, the second one (B) brings new tonal material, the melody being enriched by the posterior simple appoggiaturas.

With a melody pertaining to the high register, the fifth phrase (C) is distinguished from the other two (A and B).

The division of time units gives rise to isometric rhythmic formulae, which are repeated almost identically, thus forming an isometry.

The ambitus, a perfect eleventh (C<sub>1</sub>-F<sub>2</sub>), testifies to the instrumental origin of the melody.

The tonality the dance melody is composed in is F major. The pillar notes are C<sub>1</sub>, F<sub>1</sub>, G<sub>1</sub>, A<sub>1</sub>, B<sub>1</sub>, C<sub>2</sub>.

The melody has a crenelated outline, combining stepwise movement with leaps of major and minor third, perfect fourth, major sixth, perfect fifth, and perfect octave. The climax of the melody is marked by the note F<sub>2</sub>. The perfect eleventh ambitus (C<sub>1</sub> - F<sub>2</sub>) is frequently encountered in dance melodies.

The occurrence of melodic notes - anterior and posterior simple appoggiaturas and glissandos - attached to the pillar notes enriches the melodic line.

Both the inner cadences and the final cadence of the dance melody Ballos/ Μπάλος are realised on the first step of the mode. One should point out that, in the fifth phrase, the cadence occurs through a leap of descending perfect fourth F<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>1</sub>, while, in the last phrase, the final sound is brought by a leap of major sixth C<sub>1</sub>-A<sub>1</sub>.

## • Conclusions

Following the research, we can conclude that for the Greek community in Dobrogea, traditional dance is the most resistant cultural heritage, which contributes to the conceptualization of group identity. It is an activity in line with both the heritage identity of individuals and the values of the wider social context in which they live.

The traditional dance of the Greeks from Dobrogea, not absent from the big holidays of the year and from community events can be considered a true school of social, moral and patriotic education. It is currently the main artistic manifestation endowed with educational virtues by the intrinsic value of its message but also by attracting future bearers of this complex form of artistic expression.

We can say that dance music, part of the traditional musical repertoire present in the practice of the Dobrogean Greeks, contributes to the formation of borders and to the establishment of differences between communities, so as to generate devotion and national identification in an allogeneic environment.

The morphological and syntactic analysis of the two dance melodies has revealed the following:

- the construction of the melody is based on the repetition or combination of narrow rhythmic cells, in accordance with the rhythm of the steps;
- the rhythmic cells may bear different appearances and values, depending on the time unit that they are based on (the quarter);
- melodic notes, appoggiaturas, trills, and glissandos are means of enriching the melodic line;
- the melody exhibits a zig-zag profile, combining the ascending melodic movement with the descending one and the interval leaps;
- a predilection for the divisive binary rhythm;
- a high number of melodic rows (six);
- simple periods, with a symmetrical or asymmetrical physiognomy, following a ternary or quaternary pattern;

- the construction of the melodic stanza employs the codetta and concluding rhythmic-melodic motifs realised through a leap of ascending or descending perfect fourth (C<sub>1</sub> - F<sub>1</sub> or F<sub>1</sub> - C<sub>1</sub>) at the end of phrases;
- the instruments that ensure the accompaniment are the violin and the daire;
- the dancers' moves are performed at varying speed, using either dance steps of limited amplitude, usually kept close to the ground (for women) or leaps of considerable amplitude (for men);
- arm and body movements are intended to accompany foot movements.

The musical repertoire under our study is of real importance for:

- knowledge of the traditional intangible heritage of the Dobrogean Greek community;
- understanding the musical folk language, the process of creation and circulation of traditional dance music;
- scientific understanding and interpretation of the processes and phenomena that take place in contemporary traditional creation;

If we look at the practical-applicative side of the material collected, transcribed and analyzed, we can also take into account the importance of its use in the didactic music field.

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