CLASSIFICATION OF FOLK MUSIC MATERIALS SPECIFIC PROBLEMS

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Andra Daniela PĂTRAȘ was born in 1988 and she began the study of music, playing violin and vocal singing at the School of Music "Sigismund Toduță" in her hometown, Cluj-Napoca. She continued her musical training at the "Gheorghe Dima" Academy of Music in Cluj, graduating with a Bachelor's degree (2012) and a Master's degree (2014), in the field of Musicology. During her studies she took part in numerous scientific events and competitions, her research being awarded and published. Starting with 2012, she works as Musical Secretary at the Cluj Academy where she had the opportunity to work in organizing teams of prestigious artistic events. She is currently a Ph.D. student at the same institution (she received an Erasmus scholarship at Universität für Musik und Darstellende Kunst, Graz, Austria), since 2017, beginning her teaching activity as an associate doctoral student at the Academy of Music (The Faculty of Theoretical Studies) and at "Babeș-Bolyai" University (Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences). Ever since she was a student, Andra Pătraș has shown her curiosity and interest in the field of Ethnomusicology, being a member of Ensemble "Icoane", she has participated in actions of collecting musical folklore from the ground, skills that naturally converged towards the doctoral research in the same field.

ABSTRACT

The specific problems of folk music classification are presented from two perspectives: a diachronic perspective (a short history of the classification models initiated and reinvented by researchers over time) and a synchronous one (related to the technical aspects/operations involved in the analysis of the laws of construction of this music). Based on the analysis of different parameters, inferences can be made about the melodic types, typological styles of a dialectal territory, the connections between the old and the modern layers of a genre etc., with such information forming the basis for ethnomusicological studies.

Keywords: classification, typology construction, systematization, research methods, classification models

1. Classification criteria in folk music

The main purpose of collecting and transcribing the collected material is to safeguard the immaterial musical heritage for posterity through publication (collection, archiving, transcription). These stages must be followed by the classification of the material, which is a key stage in the scientific research work. A logical organization of the material was considered in the case of most collections, based on criteria that varied over time (some of which are not related to the musical aspect). With the development and refinement of the folklore method, the classification criteria began to be established for each individual material, after the analysis of all the parameters (architectural structure, rhythm, melody, cadences, refrains, versification).

A unitary method is quite difficult to elaborate, as each researcher has his or her own views, supported by arguments. Thus, it has been found that a sample of songs can dictate the ordering rules, and that there is no single valid method of classification. What applies in one case may not apply in the case of another musical material and vice versa.

The musical typological classification, as an indispensable research tool, has been one of the preoccupations of international ethnomusicology. Through it, new information can be put into circulation, which can form the basis for various theoretical studies: the establishment of the melodic types, of the typological composition of certain areas, of the connection between the old and the new layers of a genre, etc. Researcher Ileana Szenik believes that in organizing a material, the solution was the logical elaboration of general models of relationships with different degrees of generality and the prefiguration of the combination possibilities in the given system of relationships.[1]

Of foremost importance in the classification of folk songs is the analysis and comparison of the constituent elements, arranging the melodies based on certain identical elements and highlighting the dissimilar elements, without losing anything essential from the distinctive features of the analysed melodies. These analyses are possible based on the identification of the similarities and dissimilarities of the melodies belonging to a particular genre. In fact, the distinctive elements represent the key to classification, and according to the 'general to particular' principle, the detection of the differences and similarities dictates the ordering.

[1] Ileana Szenik, *Tipologia melodică folclorică în lumina variabilităţii şi stabilităţii* [Folkloric Melodic Typology in the Light of Variability and Stability], in *Studii de etnomuzicologie* [Ethnomusicology Studies], volume I, MediaMusica, Cluj-Napoca, 2008, p. 4.

In the book *Cântecul. Tipologie muzicală* [The Song. Musical Typology], which deals with issues of classification and typology, Speranța Rădulescu came to the following conclusions[1]:

- Classification is a logical, deductive and strictly musicological undertaking, oriented from the general to the particular, as well as an ethical manner of approach, in which the researcher analyses the material and sets the criteria for the differentiation of the results. The criteria adopted can also be used for extra folkloric musics; the order of these criteria does not allow any deviation, and the mistakes that may occur cannot be corrected along the way. With the help of classification, one can determine the belonging of the songs to a particular genre, which is an important step towards typology construction.
- Typology construction is an ethnomusicological approach, empirical in all its stages (commonality of variants, model extraction, type construction) and which depends on the specific attributes of the music it organizes. In the first stage, the typology construction process eliminates the musical texts that have no variants (they cannot generate models, being constructed in an improvisatory manner), given that types are obtained solely from variants.

Regarding the systematization of a musical material, it is carried out based on its concrete structural properties[2].

The Romanian researchers have based their classification/typology construction systems on a set of common rules, formulated by Speranța Rădulescu as follows[3]:

a) a typology must definitely propose a unification of variants;
b) a typology is the result of a typological classification. Its basic capacity to determine the grouping of variants is beyond any suspicion; a possible failure may compromise only the criteria, but in no case the method as such;
c) the typological classification must be the perfect resonator of the distinctive structural properties of the material it is processing, in this case of the musical genres. This premise, however, has an undesirable, though accepted consequence, namely that genre typologies will inevitably be different in terms of approach and its results. It is therefore assumed that they will show resistance to a possible attempt of corroboration into a general systematization of Romanian folk music.

The differences[4] between classification and typology construction identified by Speranța Radulescu can be illustrated by the following synoptic table:

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[1] Speranța Rădulescu, *Cântecul. Tipologie muzicală* [The Song. Musical Typology], Editura Muzicală, Bucharest, 1990, p. 118.
[2] *Ibidem*, p. 115.
[3] *Ibidem*, 117.
[4] *Ibidem*, pp. 124-127.

	CLASSIFICATION	TYPOLOGY CONSTRUCTION
1	Deductive approach - from the general to the particular	Empirical approach - most of its stages are based on this principle - can also be called inductive
2	Ethical approach - objective research	Predominantly emic approach - subjective research, based on the researchers' cultural background
3	Strictly musicological approach - based on the structure of melodies	Ethnomusicological approach - also based on what other researchers or informants have said
4	The criteria adopted (architectural form, cadential system, sound system, melodic profile etc.) are applied to the material under study	Depends on the specific qualities of the music
5	Implies a lower dose of subjectivity	Implies a higher dose of subjectivity
6	It is a system of belonging to a musical genre	It does not determine a clear-cut identification of the pieces
7	An auxiliary to typology construction	It does not help classification
8	Represented by a graphic schema, a tree etc.	Represented by groups

Speranța Rădulescu has elaborated her own typology construction system, which, briefly put, would recommend the following steps: the empirical juxtaposition of the variants with easily detectable repetitive elements; the extraction of the unvaried model deduced from the variants; the comparison of the model with other musical texts from the body of songs of interest, thus attracting other variants. The model is then adjusted after the new composition and receives other variants, which leads to a musical type and a class generated by the model. The reconstruction of the model can be considered complete when the attraction of new variants no longer affects it. The process is repeated by identifying other models and thus, other melodic types. Once the types are established, a correlation is attempted with the intention of highlighting the mechanism of circulation, creation and transformation of the variants. Speranța Rădulescu has called these ramifications 'phylogenetic series' and 'derivation series'. The properties of the types become criteria for alignment in series, and so the global systematization is shaped as a dense network whose types meet through numerous connections. Speranța Rădulescu's method of typology construction is an attempt to provide a typological classification based on the principle 'from the particular to the general', with high chances of applicability.

2. Contributions in the field of classification

Following below is a detailed presentation of a few classification models used by our predecessors.

2.1. Béla Bartók

In his days, Béla Bartók offered a complex classification model. First, he transposed the musical material to *g* as the common final tone. He continued with a breakdown by genres and then focused on the parameters of the musical text: the metro-rhythmic structure, the form, the cadence tones and the range, ranking them according to their degree of relevance and considering them as criteria of a series of classifications. With respect to cadences, both final and internal, they start from scale degree 1 when ascending and from scale degree VII when descending[1], which, with respect to the division of the musical material, shows a tendency to gather the variants close to each melodic type and to create a coherent image of the material. He gradually perfected the system until he developed the form used in his posthumous work *Rumanian Folk Music*.

Although this is not an actual typological systematization, it constitutes a typologizing turn, the results of which yielded positive outcomes through the contributions of later researchers[2]. In this respect, each of them tried to conceive their own typology construction systems based on the criteria of Bartók's classification, trying to reinvigorate his classification with the advanced theoretical ideas put forward by Brăiloiu. The most compelling systems are those developed by Paula Carp[3], Ileana Szenik and Lucia Iștoc. The last two authors have imagined classifications based on criteria derived from the analysis of parameters such as pitch relationship – sound system, range, melodic course, cadences (parameters ignored by Bartók, who placed great emphasis on rhythm and rhythmic formulas).

2.2. Speranța Rădulescu

In the course of her work at the "Constantin Brăiloiu" Folklore Institute, Speranța Rădulescu tried to develop certain strategies of identification of the age of the sound material collected, using classification among other working methods. In the typological systematization of the folk song she took the following steps:

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[1] Researchers have adopted Béla Bartók's system of labelling the scale degrees with Arabic numerals starting from the first scale degree upwards, i.e. 1, 2, 3 etc. and with Roman numerals, downwards: VII, VI, V etc. In the analytical part of this paper we will use the same system. The system is also broadly presented in Tiberiu Alexandru's book, *Béla Bartók despre folclorul românesc* [Béla Bartók, on the Romanian Folklore], Editura Muzicală, Bucharest, 1958, p. 45.

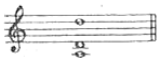
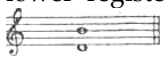
[2] Speranța Rădulescu, *Cântecul. Tipologie muzicală* [The Song. Musical Typology], Editura Muzicală, Bucharest, 1990, p. 117.

[3] In the book co-written with Alexandru Amzulescu: *Cântece şi jocuri din Muscel* [Songs and Dances from Muscel].

- the division of the material by genres;
- the transposition of all the melodies to *g1* as the common final tone;
- the analysis of the musical parameters: metro-rhythmic structure, architectural form, row cadences, range;
- classification (based on the above parameters).

2.3. Paula Carp

Paula Carp made a special contribution to the theoretical research of the musical folklore by finding a unification principle in song notation[1]. In the study *Notarea relativă a melodiilor populare pe baza integrării lor într-un sistem organic* [The Relative Notation of Folk Melodies Based on Their Integration into an Organic System] she insists on the transcription of the melodies in a unique system that will enable the determination of their common elements as well as of those that differentiate them from a melodic point of view. This system will facilitate[2]:
- the characterization of the genres, regional dialects and styles;
- the research of the variation phenomenon, the process of melodic evolution and of the act of creation;
- the establishment of criteria for the classification of melodies.

The melodies transposed based on these criteria lead to the positioning of the variants and of the melodic elements in different places in relation to one another: below, above, or completely or partially overlapped. Here we can speak of a comparison with a conventional pitch as a starting point, so that between a melody and its variant, between a melodic type and another type, certain elements shift while others stay in place. Thus, the mechanism of melodic evolution can be emphasized by visualizing the common and different melodic elements. A situation of this sort occurs in the following example[3]: if we place a melody within the octave d^1 - d^2, and the final tone is d^1, another melody, related to the first, will automatically place itself within the same octave but having the final tone e^1; a third one will have the same final tone d^1 but its range will be a fourth wider in the lower register:  ; a fourth melody will be different both in range  and in its final tone e^1.

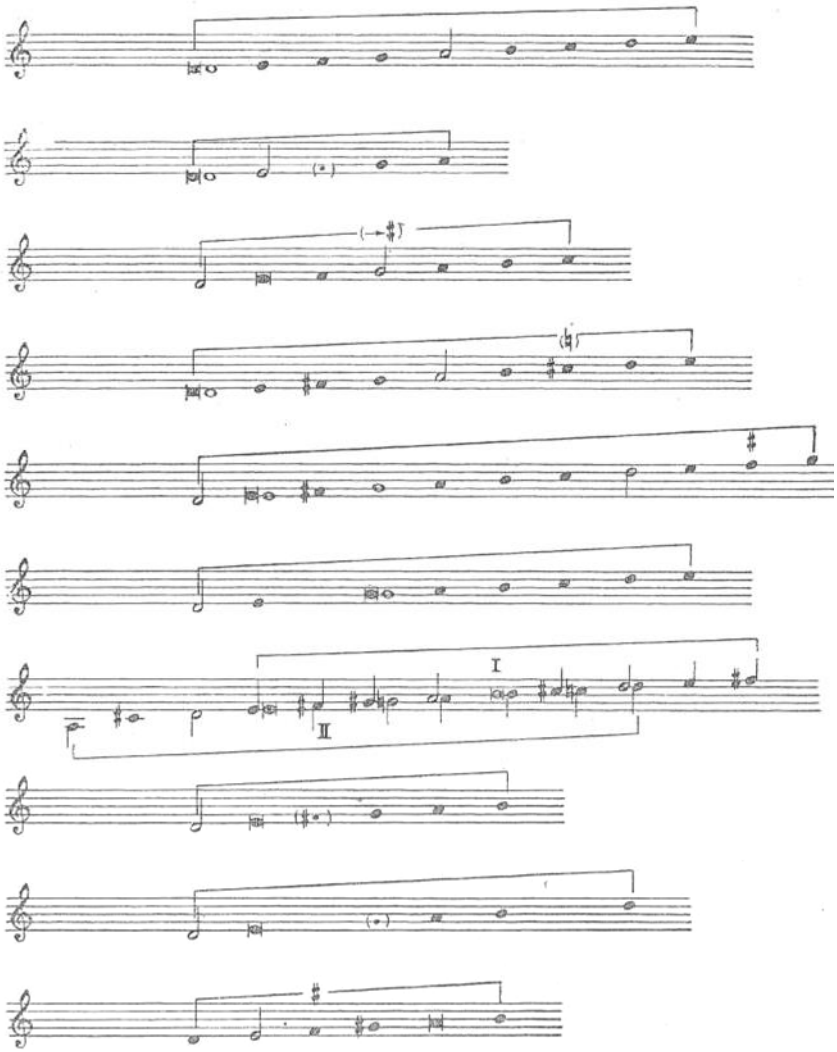
The process of comparison of the melodies resulted in the development of a theoretical scale in which the various types of our folk melodies are placed on

[1] Paula Carp, *Notarea relativă a melodiilor populare pe baza integrării lor într-un sistem organic* [The Relative Notation of Folk Melodies and Their Integration in an Organic System], in *Revista de folclor* [The Journal of Folklore], No. 1-2, vol. 5, Bucharest, 1960, p. 7.

[2] *Ibidem*.

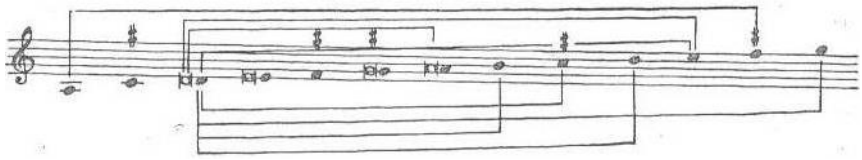
[3] *Ibidem*, p. 12.

certain fragments[1], by virtue of their relatedness[2]. Based on the incidences on the same notes it was possible to extract the schemata that show: the range, the scale, the cadence notes, the final sound of the melody and the fundamental of the scale. The following schemata resulted, notated one under the other in order to facilitate the vertical observation of all these incidences:



A schema that works for both vocal and instrumental music represents the unitary framework in which all the most dissimilar melodic variants and types can be encountered[3], being represented synthetically as follows:

[1] Segments of the scale.
[2] Paula Carp, *Notarea relativă…, op. cit.*, p. 13.
[3] *Ibidem*, p. 20.



Contact surfaces are thus created, which are the expression of the organic connection of the melodic types from the point of view of the relative range and final tones[1]. The research led to the two final notes *d* and *e* (less often *g* and *a),* often used by contemporary researchers as well (mostly in vocal music).

The criteria underlying the classification in the volumes *Cântece și jocuri din Muscel* [Songs and Dances from Muscel] (1964) and *Cântecul propriu-zis din Muscel* [The Song Proper from Muscel] (2007) were:
- the relative range;
- the cadence system;
- the melodic contour;
- the architectural structure;
- the modal fluctuations of the scales.

The book *Cântecul propriu-zis din Muscel* [The Song Proper from Muscel] contains the incipient idea of a fundamental criterion used in the current method of melodic typology construction – the criterion of the melodic profile, subsequently perfected by Ileana Szenik. In the study *Elaborarea unei metode de clasificare a melodiilor populare* [Developing a Method of Classification of Folk Melodies][2], she raises the problem of systematization, imposed on the one hand by the numerical quantity of the materials in the archives, organized based on the lexical method, and on the other by the accumulation of the theoretical results (the principles of typological classification). The following issues are addressed here:
- the general scale and transposition;
- the hierarchization of the cadence pitches of a melody;
- the determination of the melodic course of each row;
- the determination of the melodic course over the entire melodic stanza;

2.4. Ileana Szenik

In order to be able to follow as many aspects of the unfolding of folk melodies as possible, Ileana Szenik started from the place held by the initial formulas in the economy of the song, the internal and cadential caesuras (with the latter having an essential role in defining the character of the melody), the scale in which it is written, the modal character, the state (major or minor), the melodic

[1] *Ibidem*.

[2] Study published in *Lucrări ştiinţifice ale cadrelor didactice* [Scientific Papers of the Academic Staff], volume I, "Gheorghe Dima" Music Conservatory, Cluj-Napoca, 1975, pp. 239-253.

course and especially the position of cadences. The model of the general profile is a first step in identifying the melodic type, to which are added all the constituent elements that are as close to it as possible.

The progression of the cadence formulas generates several types of profiles, where all the other elements play an important role (for example, if the incipit is in the higher register, a descending line will follow, or if the incipit is in the mid-range, then it may either gradually move towards the higher register, or descend, outlining a narrower range, the possibilities of combination are varied). Sometimes the architectural structure is essential in determining the profile (repetitions, transpositions, sequences). We can identify three significant elements in the unfolding of the melody: the incipit; the culmination[1]; the placement of the internal caesuras and of the final cadence. Graphical contours are thus formed which can be represented as: descending, arched (ascending-descending), ascending (less frequently, most often due to moving the final tone to a higher octave; it is not characteristic of the Romanian folklore), concave (plagal), or unilinear. These basic models consist of smaller units that can combine and influence the general profile. The following categories have resulted from this approach[2]:

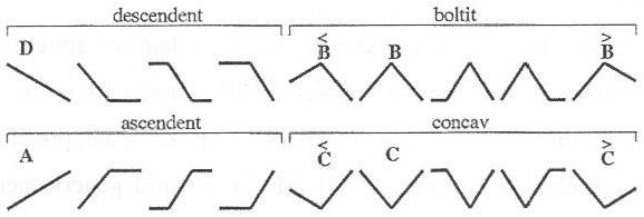
a) Melodies with a *unilinear* general profile – all the melodic rows cadence in the lower register, while the individual rows may have different contours.

b) The *descending* model is realized if before the end row, at least one of the rows cadences in the middle or higher register, or moves downwards. Multiple combinations may occur.

c) The condition for an *arched* profile is the presence of at least one cadence in the middle or higher register between two lower-register cadences; it often occurs in the *combined-arched* variant.

d) The *concave* profile, where in certain melodies composed in *plagal modes*, the register can move from the middle, to the lower and then back to the middle register (it occurs very rarely).

Represented graphically, the models look as follows:



[1] By *culminating point* we understand the passage in which the melodic tension becomes conspicuous and which usually coincides with the highest note, being emphasized rhythmically and dynamically.

[2] Ileana Szenik, *Studii de Etnomuzicologie* [Ethnomusicology Studies], vol. I, MediaMusica, Cluj-Napoca, 2008, p. 13.

The inclusion of the melodies into one of these profiles is possible due to the realization of the relative transposition that creates a favourable context for the comparative analysis.

The following elements are considered in the classification process[1]:
- the melody with its elements: melodic row, refrain, amplified row etc.;
- melodic profile;
- metro-rhythmic organization (tempo);
- culminating point (positive or negative, of the range);
- the model of the profile (of the cadences);
- the sound system;
- the architectural structure;

Concluding note

In dealing with classification, we have followed the historical thread, starting from B. Bartók, who developed a definable classification system: he divided the collected pieces by genres, then took into consideration the structural parameters of the melodies and ordered them by using capital letters for folk genres, numerals for melodic types and then the same numeral but different lower-case letters for their variants. During the inventory process of the folk music collections we have also identified classification systems based on literary themes, where the musical parameters are not taken into account. Speranța Rădulescu brought an important contribution with her studies, explaining certain aspects related to classification and typology construction. Paula Carp's relative notation system has facilitated the comparison and classification of melodies based on their relatedness, placing them in relation to the others, a system taken up and perfected by Ileana Szenik.

In conclusion, a sample of melodies can generate their own classification rules, with no single method holding more validity over another.

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