

MUSIC TRANSFER AND CULTURAL CONTACT: ROMANIAN POPULAR SONGS IN THE REPERTOIRE OF THE SAXONS FROM THE SECAȘE VALLEY

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SUMMARY. The Secașe Valley is an ethnographic area populated by different ethnic groups, the most numerous being the Romanians, Saxons, Hungarians, and Roma. Starting from field recordings of Romanian music performed by Saxon peasants from this region, we aim to contribute to the topic of inter-ethnic musical exchange in Transylvania. The songs borrowed by the Saxons from their Romanian neighbors are diverse, ranging from ritual songs, ballads, lyric songs representative for the area, to dance songs, romances, and other modern creations. We concluded that the Saxons thoroughly absorbed the style of traditional Romanian music not only from their own villages, but also from a wider area that goes past the Secașe Valley and into the neighboring regions. This allows us to claim that, as an ethnic minority, the Saxons were involved in a process of acculturation. The cultural strategy adopted by the Saxon community was the integration within the dominant culture, but without abandoning its own musical patrimony.

Keywords: Transylvanian Saxons, Secașe Valley, cultural exchange, inter-ethnic relations, acculturation, Romanian folk songs, Southern Transylvania

1. Romanian influences on the traditional Saxon music

The Secașe Valley (or The Land of the Secașe) is a distinct ethnographic area in the Southern Transylvania that partially overlaps with the Secaș tableland, bordered by the Mureș, Vișa, Târnava Mare rivers and the Cindrel Mountains in the South. This territory is included nowadays in the Sibiu and Alba counties, and it consists of 75 villages, grouped in 22 communes, and one small town (Miercurea Sibiului). The region is populated

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by different ethnic groups, the most numerous being the Romanians, Saxons, Hungarians, and Roma. The Saxon community, colonized on these lands since the XII century, had dominant politic, economic, and cultural positions until the Great Union of 1918, when Transylvania became a part of Romania. In the latter decades of the twentieth century, large numbers of Saxons emigrated to Germany and their presence in the Secașe Valley (as well as in all Transylvania) was drastically diminished.

The traditional music of the area was not intensively collected or researched². In the 1960s, researchers Helga Stein and Hanni Markel from the Folk Archive of the Romanian Academy Institute from Cluj-Napoca made field recordings with Romanian and Saxon music and literature in a few Secașe villages: Ungurei, Păuca, Boz, Vingard, and Gârbova³. These villages, except for Gârbova, have been included, since the Hungarian conquest of Transylvania, in a single administrative unit (Alba County or, from the eighteenth century, the Lower Alba County) placed under the rule of the Hungarian nobility⁴. The peasant in these communities, both Saxons and Romanians, were serfs, owing produce and work to the owner of the land⁵.

Although this region was inhabited by multiple ethnic groups, the attempts to study the folkloric interactions between them were very few.⁶ As a way to address this deficiency, in this paper we intend to analyze the Romanian songs collected from Saxon peasants by Stein and Markel in 1963, 1964, and 1965. To start with, the cultural contact between the two ethnic groups at the level of folk songs is hard to find. Although they lived together for centuries and an intense cultural exchange can be documented for other areas of their folk culture, the Saxons did not seem to borrow anything significant from the songs

² Ioan Popa and Ioan Sârbu are the authors of a collection titled *Țara Secașelor. Folclor literar-muzical* (The Land of the Secașe. Literary and musical folklore), Astra publishing house, Blaj, 2000.

³ In the institute's archive there are also recordings from late 1950s, made by Ioan R. Nicola, with two informants from Roșia de Secaș and Ohaba, two villages of the area with a majoritarian Romanian population.

⁴ Eugen Străuțiu, *Etnie și conviețuire interetnică în sudul Transilvaniei. Experiența Țării Secașelor* (Ethnicity and interethnic cohabitation in Southern Transylvania. The experience of the Secașe Land), Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2012, p. 12.

⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁶ Helga Stein has a paper about the laments of Saxons and Romanians, "Von siebenbürgisch-sächsischen und rumänischen Totenklagen am Zeckesch, Kreis Mühlbach" (Despre bocetele săsești și românești de pe Valea Secașului, raionul Sebeș/On the Saxon and Romanian laments from Valea Secașului, Sebeș district), *Journal of Ethnography and Folklore*, 1-2 (2015), pp. 57-90. There is also Eugen Străuțiu, *op. cit.*, but his approach is historic/ethnographic, trying to describe the major ethnic groups in the region, without paying much attention to the way in which the respective cultures interacted.

of their Romanian neighbors, nor crosswise⁷. Ethnomusicologist Gottfried Habenicht offered a detailed explanation for this phenomena⁸. When comparing a Saxon and a Romanian song, both from Banat, he showed how these are elaborated on different, even incompatible, structural principles: performance (group vs individual), melody (harmonic/vertical vs monophonic/ horizontal), scales (functional major/minor vs modes), metric structure (divisive vs non-divisive, parlando giusto, parlando rubato), verse structure (variable vs fixed). Established on such different structural premises, the Saxon and Romanian folk music had almost no common ground on which to build contact or exchanges⁹. Moreover, Habenicht argued that, due to these differences, the Saxons did not absorb Romanian folk song in their repertoire, except for some fashionable pop songs or some patriotic songs.

The problem of the Romanian influences over the Saxon music is an old topic of discussion. In his first volume (1931) dedicated to the Saxon folk music, ethnomusicologist Gottlieb Brandsch expressed his surprise about the limited impact that the Romanian and Hungarian music had on their Saxon neighbors. Of all the songs in his collection, he suggested a presumable Romanian borrowing for only six of them¹⁰. These are all dance melodies built, with one exception, on pentachordic scales and have a simple time signature (2/4). The following song¹¹ (Der Kukuk af dem Nassbum sass/ The cuckoo was sitting on the walnut tree) was collected by Brandsch in 1905 from Şona (Schönau), Alba county, and has the most distinguishable Romanian characteristics: the melody is built by the repetition of a small melodic cell and its pentachordic scale is centered, for the most part of the song, around G, but the final cadence is on E. Brandsch's informant mentioned that the song was also performed by the Romanians.

⁷ The cultural exchange was much more intense between the Romanians and the Hungarians, especially in the Transylvanian Plain, where each group influenced, in various degrees, the instrumental dance music of the other group.

⁸ Gottfried Habenicht, "Die Frage deutsch-rumänischer gegenseitiger Volksliedeinflüsse im Banat. Ein musikethnologischer Beitrag", *Jahrbuch für Ostdeutsche Volkskunde*, tome 21 (1978), pp. 20-45. Translated from German by Sanda Ignat as „Problema influențelor muzicale reciproce germano-române din Banat. O contribuție etnomuzicologică” (The issue of reciprocal German-Romanian musical influences in Banat. An ethnomusicological contribution), *Studii și comunicări de etnologie*, Sibiu, vol. XXXV, 2021, in press.

⁹ Nevertheless, Habenicht mentions that some mutual interference can be found in more recent folk song species with a literate origin such as the Christmas songs (*cântece de stea*).

¹⁰ Gottlieb Brandsch, *Siebenbürgisch-deutsche Volkslieder*, vol. I: *Lieder in siebenbürgisch-sächsischer Mundart*, Sibiu: Kraft & Drotleff, 1931.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 170.

Der Kuk-kuk af dem Naß-bùm sâß, der Kuk-kuk af dem Naß-bùm sâß, et
 kâm e Rên en mâcht en naß, et kâm e Rên en mâcht en naß.

The image shows two staves of musical notation in a treble clef with a common time signature (C). The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes. The lyrics are written below the notes, with some words like 'et' and 'kâm' appearing at the end of phrases. The first staff ends with a double bar line, and the second staff continues the melody and lyrics.

**Der Kukuk af dem Nassbum sass, collected by Gottlieb Brandsch,
 Şona (Schönau), Alba county, 1905**

A few decades after, Karl Fisi talks about a surprising characteristic of some of the Saxon songs: unlike the traditional German songs, that start in a minor mode and end in a major one, these are following the opposite trajectory (as in Brandsch's example), ending with a minor cadence, aeolic most of the times. For Fisi, this is a trademark of the traditional Romanian music from Southern Transylvania and its presence within the Saxon music allows him to assert that, although few, there are certain influences between Romanian and Saxon music.¹²

2. Romanian music in the repertoire of Saxon peasants: characteristics and analysis

As the recordings from the Folk Archive of the Romanian Academy Institute demonstrate, Romanian folk songs are not entirely absent from the repertoire of the Saxon peasants. In this archive we found 56 Romanian songs performed by a number of 22 informants.¹³ As Habenicht mentioned, some of these songs are borrowed not from their Romanian neighbors, but from the urban popular music that was widely disseminated through radio and TV. Nevertheless, the Saxons from Păuca, Ungurei and Vingard also performed, some with impressive abilities, songs that belong to a Romanian peasant oral tradition. Thus, the materials collected from these villages can

¹² Karl Fisi, „Elemente modale în cântecul popular săsesc” (Modal elements within the Saxon folk song), *Studii și comunicări*, Sibiu, 1980, p. 203.

¹³ There were also a few bilingual songs, with lyrics alternating from Romanian and German, some of them displaying strong Romanian influences. We didn't include them in our analysis because they are the subject of a paper by Sanda Ignat, „Cântece de dragoste bilingve ale sașilor transilvăneni” (Bilingual Love Songs of the Transylvanian Saxons), *Studii și comunicări de etnologie*, tome XXXIII, Sibiu, 2019, pp. 211-238.

be divided in two broad categories, based on their origin and/or age. First, there are the songs that circulate orally within the rural communities and that originated before the beginning of the twentieth century. Secondly, there are specimens with either rural or urban origin (in the latter case the name of the composer or the date of creation might be available), but which are more recent creations, occurred in the twentieth century, when the Romanian villages experienced a process of gradual modernization. In the first category we find folk songs (both occasional and non-occasional) that belong to what is usually considered “traditional” Romanian music, such as one funeral song (*verș*), two ballads and 20 lyrical songs (*cântec propriu-zis*). In the second category we grouped the melodies that fall under the designation of “modern”: one Christmas song (*cântec de stea*), 9 dance songs and 23 literate songs and romances. Summing up, we have 23 songs in the “traditional” category and 33 in the “modern” category¹⁴.

We explored the possibility of a correlation between the age of the informants and the type of repertoire they absorbed, assuming that younger informants were inclined towards the modern songs, while the older informants preferred the traditional ones. For the songs in the traditional category, we have 13 informants with ages between 16 and 73, while for the songs in the modern category we have 19 informants with ages between 16 and 80. The average ages are 38,76 for the former and 43,15 for the latter category. Therefore, we can assume that there is no correlation between age and repertoire. Of all the informants, 13 performed songs from both categories while 9 performed only modern songs. In both these groups the age varies from teenagers (16, 19), young adults, middle-aged and elders (70, 73, 80). Two of the oldest informants (Demeter Martin and Gockesch Maria) sung only modern songs.

For this paper, we will take a closer look at the repertory from the “traditional” category, namely the lyrical songs. We choose to focus on these creations because their presence among the Saxon community demonstrates a substantial cultural contact between Saxons and Romanians from the Secaș Valley. Although this contact did not result in the mixing of the two musical idioms and it did not generate hybrid compositions, it was powerful enough as to determine some of the members of the Saxon community to learn the Romanian songs with all their intricacies and peculiarities.

¹⁴ The terms “modern” and “traditional” are used here only with the purpose of a suggestive denomination for the two categories. As there is no established definition for what a traditional and a modern repertoire is within the Romanian ethnomusicology, we use the terms to refer to a presumed age and origin of the songs.

The 20 lyrical songs that we discuss here have the distinctive characteristics that are found in the Romanian peasant music from Southern Transylvania. This feature places the Secașe region within a wider ethnographic area, whose music past researchers have named the Southern Transylvanian dialect.¹⁵ The songs are composed of three or four melodic lines, to which, in a few cases, a short refrain of two or three syllables is added between the last and the penultimate line. Most of the songs are built on pentatonic scales, the most common being D-E-G-A-B. The melodies that use this scale (or hexachordic and heptachordic scales derived from it) have a distinctive unfolding: they start in a major mode centered around G and, in the last melodic line, they modulate to a minor mode centered around E, which is also the final note. To describe this pattern, researchers defined it as a major-minor system¹⁶ or as tonal bicentricity¹⁷. The following example is a song that displays this melodic unfolding from major to minor. It is representative for the folk music of Southern Transylvania, with variants from Sibiu and Alba counties, but also for Sub Carpathian Wallachia (Argeș county) and Northwestern Romania (Sălaj and Bihor counties, the latter collected by Bartók in 1909).¹⁸

¹⁵ For Béla Bartók, the Southern Transylvanian dialect is present in the Sibiu, Hunedoara and lower Alba counties. He calls it also the phrygian cadence dialect. See "Der musikdialekt der Rumänen Hunyad", in *Zeitschrift für Musikwissenschaft*, Leipzig, 1920, Romanian translation by Constantin Brăiloiu as „Dialectul muzical al românilor din Hunedoara” (The musical dialect of the Romanians from Hunedoara) and published in Béla Bartók, *Scieri mărunte despre muzica populară românească* (Small writings on the Romanian folk music), Bucharest, 1937. For Ilarion Cocișiu, the Southern Transylvanian dialect has two centers of intensity - Făgăraș and Hunedoara. Placed between them are the regional styles from Sibiu and part of Alba counties and from the valley of Târnava Mare River; Ilarion Cocișiu, „Despre dialectul muzical ardelean”, in Ilarion Cocișiu, *Contribuții la etnomuzicologia românească din prima jumătate a secolului XX* (Contributions to the Romanian ethnomusicology of the first half of the 20th century), edited by Constanța Cristescu, Charmides, 2014, pp. 64-169).

¹⁶ Ilarion Cocișiu, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

¹⁷ Doina Haplea, *Folclor instrumental românesc din Transilvania* (Romanian instrumental folklore from Transylvania), Arpeggione, Cluj-Napoca, 2005, p. 67.

¹⁸ Speranța Rădulescu, *Cântecul. Tipologie muzicală: I. Transilvania meridională*, (The song. A musical typology: I. Meridional Transylvania) București, Muzicală, 1990, p. 193.

E.g. 2

Mult mă-ntreabă inima

MG 801If
Cul. Helga Stein
Tr. Th. Constantiniu

Bogesch Kath, 47 a.
Vingard, jud. Alba
5.07.1963

Mult mă-n-trea-bă i - ni - ma, Mult mă-n-trea-bă i - ni - ma,
Do - ru - mi-e de ci - ne-va, ___ măi!

The musical notation is in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. The tempo is marked as ♩ = 152. The melody features a mixolydian scale (G-A-B-A-G-F-G). The first line contains two phrases of the song, each with a triplet of eighth notes. The second line continues the melody with a triplet of eighth notes and ends with a double bar line.

**Bogesch Katherina, Mult mă-ntreabă inima, IAFAR, MG 801If,
collected by Helga Stein, Vingard, Alba County, 5.07.1963**

Another pentatonic scale used as a frame for a few songs is G-A-C-D-E (usually extended upwards with an F). In this case, the melodies have a single tonal center (unicentric), G. This note acts as the root of a mixolydian scale, but the final note is always the second scale degree (A).

E.g. 3

Mai am o zi și mă duc

MG 1024IIp
Cul. Hanni Markel
Tr. Th. Constantiniu

Kepp Regina, 27 a.
Păuca, jud. Sibiu
23.12.1964

Fo-ie ver - de ___ foi de nuc, ___ Foa-ie ver-de_ foi de nuc,_
Mai am o zi și mă duc. ___

The musical notation is in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. The tempo is marked as ♩ = 176. The melody features a mixolydian scale (G-A-B-A-G-F-G). The first line contains two phrases of the song, each with a triplet of eighth notes. The second line continues the melody with a triplet of eighth notes and ends with a double bar line.

**Kepp Regina, Mai am o zi și mă duc, IAFAR, MG 1024IIp,
collected by Hanni Markel, Păuca, Sibiu County, 23.12.1964**

The three-line songs have a principal caesura after the second line, while the four-line songs usually have two principal caesuras, one after the first line and the other after the third line (there are also a few cases in which there is only one caesura, after the second line). What most of these songs have in common is the placement of the principal caesura a whole tone beneath the final note (D for the bicentric songs with a final E and G for the unicentric songs with a final A). The final cadences are either in aeolian or in phrygian modes.

The rhythmic systems used in these songs are the same as those characteristics for the lyrical song throughout the country, namely *parlando giusto* (a determinate duration corresponds to each syllable) and *parlando rubato* (syllables have different duration, determined by the length of the underlying melisma). In practice, these two systems are rarely used exclusively within a song. Most often, they coexist, as can be observed in the following example, where the rubato character of the third line and the subsequent refrain contrast with the measured rhythm of the rest of the song¹⁹:

E.g. 4

Nu mă da, maică, departe

MG 798IIg
Cul. Helga Stein
Tr. Th. Constantiniu

Gegesch Ag, 34 a.
Vingard, jud. Alba
30.06.1963

A-ia, hai, Nu mă da mai-că de-par - te, Nu mă da mai-că de par - te,
Să vin cu de-sa - gii-n spa - te,
Hai, hai, hai, Să vin cu de-sa-gii-n spa - te.

**Gegesch Agneta, Nu mă da, maică, departe, IAFAR, MG 798IIg,
collected by Helga Stein, Vingard, Alba County, 30.06.1963**

¹⁹ This song has many variants in Transylvania (Maramureş, Sălaj, Bistriţa-Năsăud, Hunedoara, Sibiu, Alba, Covasna counties), in Subcarpathian Wallachia (Argeş, Gorj, Mehedinţi counties), but also in Moldova (Vaslui county) and Southern Romania (Dâmboviţa County) (see Rădulescu, *Cântecul*, p. 227). We also have another variant from a Saxon informant, Maria Hütter from Păuca, with the same text and structure, but more pronounced rubato character.

In all their structural details, the Romanian traditional songs performed by the Saxons are identical to those performed by the Romanians from the Southern Transylvania. Now we will examine the performance style of the Saxon informants, and for this reason we will compare a Romanian and a Saxon variant for two songs. The first one, *Când era badea-n Cindrel* (a well-known song from the area, referring to the Cindrel Mountains at the Southern border of the Secașe Valley²⁰), was collected in Vingard from three informants: Gegesch Agnetha, Arsu Cornelia and Ștefan Randt. Below, we have the variants performed by Gegesch and Arsu:

E.g. 5

Când era badea-n Cindrel

MG 799Ilu
Cul. Helga Stein
Tr. Th. Constantiniu

Gegesch Ag, 40 a.
Vingard, jud. Alba
3.07.1963

Când e-ra ba dea-n Cin - drel, Când e-ra ba dea-n Cin-drel,
Cu drag mă du - ceam la el, Cu drag mă du-ceam la el.

**Gegesch Agneta, Când era badea-n Cindrel, IAFAR, MG 799Ilu,
collected by Helga Stein, Vingard, Alba county, 3.07.1963**

²⁰ A few other variants of this song were collected by Ioan R. Nicola and published in his collection *Folclor muzical din Mărginimea Sibiului* (Musical folklore from Mărginimea Sibiului), București, Muzicală, 1987.

MG 800If
Cul. Helga Stein
Tr. Th. Constantiniu

Când era badea-n Cindrel

Arsu Cornelia
Vingard, jud. Alba
4.07.1963

$\text{♩} = 72$

Când e - ra ba - - - dea-n Cin - drel, ___

Când e - ra ba - - - dea-n Cin - drel, ___

Cu drag mă du - - - ceam la el, ___

(i) Cu drag mă du - - - ceam la el.

**Arsu Cornelia, Când era badea-n Cindrel, IAFAR, MG 800If,
collected by Helga Stein, Vingard, Alba county, 4.07.1963**

Comparing the two, we can see that they have a similar melodic profile (the main differences being the first note in the first and second melodic lines and the internal caesura at the end of the third line) and the same tonal (bicentered) and rhythmic (*parlando rubato*) patterns. Both performers use a similar degree of ornamentation, and both apply it in a comparable manner at the same moments in the melody. In Gegesch's version, the lines three and four, although related, are noticeably different in terms of melodic shape. This aspect differentiates it from the other version and adds a plus of variation to it.

The other song is *Mă mir, pădure, de tine*, performed by Bogesch Kath from Vingard (1963) and by an unknown informant from Sibiel (1959), a village from the neighboring ethnographic region Mărginimea Sibiului.

E.g. 7

MG 799II
Cul. Helga Stein
Tr. Th. Constantiniu

Mă mir, pădure, de tine

Bogesch Katherina, 47 a.
Vingard, jud. Alba
2.07.1963

$\text{♩} = 120-126$

Mă mir, pă - du - re, de_ ti - ne, Ce pă-mânt ne - gru te_ țî - ne,
Hai, hai, hai, hai, și-al meu dor,
Mă-nă ba - deo bă - di - șor, Hei Miș-ca și_ cea_ Iam-bor.

**Bogesch Katherina, Mă mir, pădure, de tine, IAFAR, MG 799II,
collected by Helga Stein, Vingard, Alba County, 2.07.1963**

E.g. 8

FAM 18454
Cul. Paula Carp, G. Habenicht
Tr. Ioan R. Nicola

367. Mă mir, pădure, de tine

Sibieli, Sibiu
14.08.1959

Mă mir, pă - du - re, de_ ti - - ne,
Ce pă - mânt ne - gru te_ țî - - ne.
Hai! hai! hai! hai! ș-al meu dor,
hai! Mă - nă bo - ii bă-di - șor, Cea! Miș - ka și hai! Iam - bor.

**Mă mir, pădure, de tine, IAFAR, FAM 18454,
collected by P. Carp and G. Habenicht, Sibieli, Sibiu County, 14.08.1959**

With a refrain that spans the length of a melodic line (7 syllables), this song is probably no older than the end of the nineteenth century or the beginning of the twentieth century.²¹ Again, the differences are minor: the Sibiel variant has a slightly more ornamented refrain, while the Vingard variant has a more melodic variation in the first two melodic lines. One noticeable difference is the final cadence which, in the first example, due to the presence of an F natural next to the final E, shifts the modal frame of the last two lines from aeolian to Phrygian. The Phrygian cadence was considered, since Bartók, a distinctive trait of the Southern Transylvanian musical dialect and its use here demonstrates that the Saxons thoroughly absorbed the style of traditional Romanian music not only from their own villages, but also from a wider area that goes past the Secașe Valley and into the neighboring regions.

It is difficult to speculate on the Romanian repertoire's degree of dispersion within the Saxon community. But, from the sample of songs that we have at our disposal, we can suggest at least two categories of people that were interested in learning and performing Romanian songs. The first one is the category of the musically talented individuals, with an interest in other forms of musical expression and with the ability to familiarize themselves with a different musical vocabulary. One such example is Georg Wagner from Păuca, the singer who performed the greatest number of Romanian songs (13). His repertoire was diverse and comprised lyrical songs (that we included in the "traditional" category), dance songs, marches, and romances (included in the "modern" category). Wagner's performances of lyrical songs are masterfully, his vocal abilities allowing him the use of long and elaborated melismas that are specific for the older strata of the peasant music:

²¹ The typical form of the lyrical songs does not include a refrain. Its use is a sign of the transformations that the genre underwent since the beginning of the twentieth century.

E.g. 9

Maico, de când m-ai născut

MG 1041IIa
Cul. H. Kirschlager
Tr. Th. Constantiniu

Wagner Georg, 49 a.
Păuca, jud. Sibiu
30.05.1965

$\text{♩} = 180$

(i) Mai-co, de când m-ai născut, măi!

Un pi - - cior să mi-l fi rupt, măi!

Când m-ai dus la bo - te - zat, mă!

Să-mi fi rupt și ce - lă - lalt, măi!

**Wagner Georg, Maico, de când m-ai născut, IAFAR, MG 1041IIa,
collected by Hanni Markel, Păuca, Sibiu County, 30.05.1965**

On the other hand, the number of modern songs from his repertoire surpassed the songs in the other category (8 to 5). We claim that, due to his musical abilities, he was able to absorb whatever song he enjoyed, regardless of its technical difficulty or its social origin.

The other category of Saxon peasants interested in Romanian songs was the youth. They too were interested in a variety of musical styles and, consequently, amassed a mixed repertoire. From two teenage girls (Stefani Katherina, 16, and Hütter Maria, 19) we have a ritual funeral song (*verș*), a lyrical song and a dance song. It is worth noting that, except for the funeral song that was performed in unison, the other two songs were harmonized for two voices moving (for the most part) in parallel thirds, as it was customary for the Saxon songs. This choral approach demonstrates that the Saxons were not only borrowing Romanian songs, but they were also transforming some of these songs to adjust them to their own aesthetic taste. The following song has variants in other Transylvanian villages (Mureș, Alba, Sălaj, Covasna, Cluj). Ethnomusicologist Speranța Rădulescu suggests that it belongs to the

category of what she calls conventional songs, songs with a clear scholarly and extra-folkloric origin/influence²². This would explain its relative melodic simplicity that made it suitable for a harmonic rendition.

E.g. 10

Vară, vară, primăvară

MG 1024Ile
Cul. Hanni Markel
Tr. Th. Constantiniu

Stefani K. (16), Hütter M. (19)
Păuca, jud. Sibiu
19.12.1964

$\text{♩} = 160-168$

Va - ră, va - ră, pri-mă-va - ră, Va - ră, va-ră pri-mă-va - ră,
Toa - te plu-gu-ri-le a - ră, Toa - te plu-gu-ri - le a - ră.

K. Stefani and M. Hütter, Vară, vară, primăvară, IAFAR, MG 1024Ile, collected by Hanni Markel, Păuca, Sibiu County, 19.12.1964

The same choral approach was used by other informants for a Christmas song (*Cântec de stea*) and for a few romances that, due to their more recent and literate origin, can be easily performed in this manner.

3. Acculturation and exchange

After this structural and stylistic analysis, we want to end our paper with a discussion about the ethnic relations between Romanians and Saxons as they appear from our song sample. A privileged community until the nineteenth century, the Saxons were, nevertheless, an ethnic minority, both in Transylvania and, later, in Greater Romania. At the time when these recordings were made (1963, 1964 and 1965), their numbers started to decrease, and their cultural influence slowly faded. In this context, we can ask if the presence of Romanian songs in the Saxon's repertoire was a sign of their acculturation, of their gradual absorption within the culture of the majority ethnic group? The research on acculturation has described this process as occurring in all multi-ethnic societies and as generating two major

²² Rădulescu, *Cântecul (The Song)*, p. 109, 186-187.

issues that individuals and groups have to address in their daily encounters: cultural maintenance (the extent to which cultural identity is considered important) and contact and participation (the extent to which individuals interact with other groups or remain primarily among themselves).²³ Thus, acculturation can manifest in four distinct forms: assimilation (when cultural identity is not maintained and when closed interaction with other cultures is pursued), separation (the opposite of assimilation, when interaction with others is avoided and the conservation of the original culture is of primordial importance), integration (when there is an interest in maintaining one's original culture while in contact with other groups) and marginalization (when neither conservation nor cooperation is pursued, often for reasons of political oppression and marginalization)²⁴. When it comes to music traditions, the degree of acculturation is determined by the vitality of the competing cultures, the tolerance of the dominant culture towards the values of the non-dominant culture and the degree of disparity between similar aspect of culture such as musical style²⁵.

Judging by the recordings made in just four field research campaigns, we can conclude that the Saxon traditional music from the Secașe Valley had a moderate vitality: the repertoire was diverse (containing many genres such as songs, ballads, children's songs, mourning songs (*bocete*), wedding songs) and numerous (some members of the community, such as Gegesch Agneta, being able to remember and perform an impressive number of songs). As the recordings attest, most of their repertoire was of German origin: either transmitted within the community or, as Gottfried Habenicht explains, borrowed from a common German repertoire or from the Viennese creations that were very influential in the territories of the Hapsburg Monarchy²⁶. Along this segment we can see a relatively small number of Romanian songs, a mark of the interaction with the dominant culture. Drawing from the above theoretical distinctions, we can argue that, in the 1960s, the Saxon communities from the Secașe Valley were going through a process of acculturation and that their overall strategy was one of integration. The importance given to the perpetuation of their own culture is apparent in the great number of Saxon songs, both occasional and ritual, that circulated at that time within the group. But this perpetuation did not mean the prohibition of cultural contact, of participating in the larger social network.

²³ J. W. Berry and D. L. Sam, „Acculturation and Adaptation”, in John W. Berry, Marshall H. Segall and Cigdem Kağıtçibasi, *Handbook of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, vol. 3, Allyn & Bacon, 1997, p. 297.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 297.

²⁵ George List, “Acculturation and Musical Tradition”, *Journal of the International Folk Music Council*, Vol. 16 (1964), p. 18.

²⁶ Habenicht, “Problema influențelor...”.

Of course, integration as an acculturation strategy might have not been adopted by all the members of the Saxon community. The distinction between acculturation as a collective phenomenon that pertains to the culture of a group and as a change in the psychology of the individual must be considered here, because not all the individuals were equally involved in this process²⁷. As we have mentioned above, the youth and the musically gifted were the members of the non-dominant group that performed most of the Romanian repertoire. Their integration approach of acculturation might not have been shared by other members of the group and even their own strategy might have changed according to different social contexts.

The contact between the two cultures did not seem to affect the music of the Saxon community, partly because of its disparity in terms of style with the songs of the dominant population²⁸. This allowed it to maintain a relative vitality and prevented the emergence of any form of hybridization²⁹ between the two musical idioms. Understood from a musical point of view, the integration strategy adopted by the Saxon community is a boundary negotiation of its ethnic identity. As Fredrik Barth demonstrated, “ethnic distinctions do not depend on an absence of social interaction and acceptance”³⁰. According to him, the sharing of a common culture is the result of ethnic boundaries and other forms of social differentiation. From this point of view, the primary object of investigation “becomes the ethnic *boundary* that defines the group, not the cultural stuff that it encloses”³¹. Thus, the existence of Romanian songs within the Saxon community does not imply the weakening of the latter. Cultural interchange can take place without major consequences as long as the socially relevant factors that are diagnostic for group membership are not affected.

If we take into consideration the origin of the Romanian modern songs in the repertory of the Saxons, we can suggest that the influences these rural communities absorbed were not necessarily coming from the Romanian peasants that they lived with in the same villages, but from a music industry based in the urban centers, and active at a national level. The romances, the

²⁷ Berry and Sam, *op. cit.*, p. 294.

²⁸ Alan Merriam, in a paper not dissimilar to that of Habenicht cited above, concludes that „we should expect an interchange of musical traits and ideas between two cultures in which the systems have a considerable number of characteristics in common, while we should not expect interchange between two cultures in which the musical systems have little in common.” Allan P. Merriam, “The Use of Music in the Study of a Problem of Acculturation”, *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 57, Issue 1, 1955, p. 34.

²⁹ George List describes hybridization as the meeting and mingling of two music of great vitality that produces a recognizably new and equally vital musical style or genre. George List, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

³⁰ Fredrik Barth (ed.), *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries. The Social Organization of Culture Difference*, Little, Brown & Company, 1969, p. 10.

³¹ *Ibidem*, p. 15.

marches and the literate songs that were performed in these recordings were the product of a modern system of music production that involved composers, lyricists, instrumental ensembles, recording studios, record companies, and so on. In Romania, such an elaborate system was well established in the interwar period, a time when most of our informants were children, teenagers, or young adults. The other important segment of the modern repertoire were the dance songs, creations that appeared at the beginning of the twentieth century. Some of them were the outcome of the peasants' creativity, but most of them were created by the *lăutari* (professional rural and urban entertainment musicians) that performed them in the bars and restaurants of the cities. These songs were subsequently regulated and intensely promoted by the communist regime through a nationwide network of folk singers, instructors, music and dance ensembles, contests, festivals, and so on.

In the end, the Romanian songs that were most popular among the Saxon minority were the result of a complex system of music production, an industry responsible for most of the of the country's musical output. Seen from this perspective, the musical acculturation of the Saxon communities was a process that involved the integration of a traditional rural culture within a larger, national and more or less uniform urban and modern culture. The same cultural shift was happening at the same time in the Romanian village communities. The Romanian peasants were themselves receptive to the new forms of musical expression and started to add them to their own repertoire of songs. Given this context, we can conclude that both Romanian and Saxon village communities were involved in the same acculturation process as non-dominant groups, trying to integrate themselves into a national, dominant, culture that was widely disseminated and possessed an undeniable appeal.

4. Conclusions

The aim of this paper was to contribute to the underexplored topic of the interchange between the music of the Saxon and Romanian peasants from Transylvania. We showed that, when living in the same villages and having the same social status, the Saxons can add different Romanian songs to their native repertoire. The borrowed songs are diverse, ranging from ritual songs, ballads, lyric songs representative for the area, to dance songs, romances, and other modern creations. This variety demonstrates that (at least) some members of the Saxon community were receptive to both the old, traditional songs, and to the new and fashionable songs that circulated on the radio, in restaurants and ballrooms. But the most important thing to notice is the performative style of the Saxon informants: their variants of the

local, traditional lyrical songs are indistinguishable from the Romanian variants. This allows us to say that some Saxons from the mixed villages of Valea Secaşelor were fluent in two distinct musical languages.

Besides a technical analysis, our intention was to provide a sketch of the musical life of the Saxon community from the Secaşe Valley in the early 1960s. Starting from the Romanian and Saxon music collected from Boz, Vingard, Păuca and Ungurei, we showed how an ethnic minority was involved in a process of acculturation. The cultural strategy adopted by the Saxon community was the integration within the dominant culture, but without abandoning its own musical patrimony. If we consider the larger number of modern songs collected in these villages, we can suggest that this acculturation process would not end in transforming the Saxon peasants into Romanian peasants but would result in the integration of the peasant culture, both Saxon and Romanian, within a homogenized and standardized mass culture of modern industrial societies.

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