

ROMANIAN CHOIRS FROM SEBEȘ-ALBA

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SUMMARY. The present study provides an overview of the musical life of the Romanians in Sebeș, with a deeper insight into the choral work performed by them in the late 19th century and the first half of the 20th. The existence of the four choir groups presented here is related to the names of institutions or associations under the patronage of which they functioned: the Sebeș Orthodox Parish, the Astra Division of Sebeș and the “Sfântul Gheorghe” Association. The material is compiled, to a large extent, from documents belonging to the funds of *Astra*, *the Sebeș division* and the *Orthodox Parish of Sebeș* preserved in the Romanian National Archives, Alba County Branch.

Keywords: choir, archive, Sebeș, document, parish, conductor, concert.

Introduction

Relatively much has been written about Sebeș, and various issues have been touched upon: the geographical surroundings dominated by Râpa Roșie, the main historical monuments (the Evangelical Church, the church of Saint Bartholomew Abbey, the fortress of the ten towers), the history of the various communities (such as the Saxon one). In spite of this, none of the works dedicated to the aforementioned topics has thoroughly addressed the cultural life and, particularly, the musical life of this region. Given this fact, conducting a study of this type becomes imperative, being supported by at least two arguments. The presence of the Saxons, whose intense musical activity has received wide recognition, offered the other co-inhabiting ethnic groups an impetus for multiplying and diversifying their musical activities. We must also mention that the Sebeș area provided the musical world with such leading figures as Carl Filtsch, Augustin Bena, Sorin Vulcu and Felician Fărcașiu. It goes without saying that such names could not come from a musically arid environment.

The present study is part of a more ample research intended as a monograph of the art music of the Sebeș-Alba region.

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Choir singing has a powerful social impact, helping to achieve cohesion, both inside the music group, among its members, and between the group and the audience. In areas marked by ethnic diversity, choral activity often becomes a way of conserving and asserting the identity of each of the co-inhabiting ethnic groups. Ever since its establishment, the town of Sebeș was a meeting place of several civilizations. Founded by German settlers in the twelfth century, the settlement enjoyed the contribution of a Romanian community whose members became ever more numerous and more eager to assert themselves. This presentation is an argument for the fact that, all through history, this community has known how to assert its identity and unity, among others by means of a rich choral activity.

Chronologically speaking, this material refers to events occurring at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth. It has been compiled to a large extent from documents preserved in the funds *Astra, the Sebeș Division and the Orthodox Parish of Sebeș* in the National Archives of Romania, the Alba County Branch². Beside the archive documents, I have also referred to the few works available which contain information on the musical life of the researched area. In elaborating the material I have come up against difficulties due to the lack of precision or to the total lack of information on certain essential aspects such as the temporal delimitation of the period in which a certain choral group carried on their activity. Therefore, we must restrict ourselves to the chronological listing of documentary references on each of the choirs which performed in Sebeș.

The Ploughmen's Choir

The establishment of the *Ploughmen's Choir*, one of the oldest Romanian choirs in Sebeș, is connected to composer Gheorghe Dima, who supported, together with the members of the Songs Reunion from Sibiu, two concerts in Sebeș in 1884 and 1888. The effect of these concerts remained in the memory of the Romanian inhabitants of the town for a long time, so that, in 1890, when a teacher's position became vacant in the *Romanian elementary school*, one of the conditions of the contest was that the candidates to this position be connoisseurs of the score and good organizers of choirs. In exchange for the fulfilment of these requirements, the elected teacher would receive from the parish committee an extra income of 100 crowns³.

The contest was won by Nicolae Todea, who proved he possessed all the extra qualities needed by forming a four-voice mixed choir made up of ploughmen, craftsmen and intellectuals. Initially named *Corul Plugarilor / Ploughmen's Choir*, it was reorganized in 1891 as the *Songs Reunion*. The

² We have used the acronym ANRSJA in our presentation.

³ According to Ion Raica, *Sebeșul (Sebeș)*, Ed. „George Barițiu”, Cluj-Napoca, 2002, p. 302.

activity of the *Songs Reunion* did not confine itself to the territory of Sebeș, so that the group undertook various trips to neighbouring towns such as Alba Iulia, Orăștie and Miercurea Sibiului⁴.

On June 26 (July 8) 1894, 11 choir singers confirmed by a receipt the fact that they had received the remuneration due to “the ploughmen members of the church choir for the performances so far effected with the choir”⁵ (**appendix 1**). The total amount meant for the choir members was decided upon in the meeting of the parish committee of June 24, 1894, when, beside the choir members, the choir conductor, the teacher Nicolae Todea⁶ received the same payment.

In 1898 the choir singers received their remuneration in two instalments, the payment being confirmed by two receipts signed by five, respectively six of the members⁷. We hold no information on the choir conductor’s salary in the year 1898, but the next year’s documents are more enlightening. Thus, according to the budget of the parish of Sebeș for the year 1899, the teacher-conductor had an annual salary of 550 florins. We must point out that the conductor’s responsibilities were part of the duties of one of the teachers in the Orthodox Church school, and the incomes deriving of the two activities were merged⁸.

The minutes of a parish meeting from the year 1900 records that a special wage was set for the teacher Nicolae Todea for founding an adults’ choir (ploughmen). On accomplishing this request, the parish committee meeting of June 13, 1893 allotted him an income of 555 florins per year⁹; on June 24, 1894, the same committee divided the amount of 50 florins into 25 florins for the conductor and 25 for the choir. The parish synod of February 12, 1896 set an annual income of 50 florins for the conductor and 30 florins for the choir singers. After the teacher Nicolae Todea fell ill and could no longer attend to the choir, the parish synod decided in its meeting of June 2, 1897 to allot an income of 100 florins to the teacher who would instruct the school choir *in songs* and would conduct the adults’ choir. Following a contest,

⁴ Ion Raica, *op. cit.*, p. 303. There is discordance between Ion Raica’s assertions and the information contained by the documents. The said author speaks about the establishment of a *mixed choir*, while documents of the year 1894 mention a *men’s choir* consisting of ploughmen.

⁵ ANRSJA, the fund of the *Orthodox Parish of Sebeș*, file 1/1894, unnumbered. The sum received by the choir singers was 25 florins. We point out the fact that, even though Ion Raica recorded that Nicolae Todea established a mixed choir in 1890, all the 11 signatures on this receipt belong to men.

⁶ *Ibidem*, file 1/1894, not numbered.

⁷ *Ibidem*, file 1/1898, not numbered. The choir members received from the church the amount of 30 florins, in two installments, one of ten (April) and the other of 20 florins (June).

⁸ According to Ion Raica, *op. cit.*, p. 302.

⁹ The information in the document is somewhat confusing, as it mixes the teacher’s and the conductor’s incomes. In this case, 500 florins is the teacher’s salary and the other 50 the conductor’s remuneration.

teacher Ioan Pavel was chosen and rewarded with 50 florins for “proposing the songs” in the school and 50 florins for conducting the adults’ choir¹⁰.

Nicolae Todea stayed behind the choir’s stand until 1897, when another talented conductor, the teacher Ioan Pavel, took over the group. In 1901-1904 the group was conducted by teacher George Henția, being then taken over by Octavian Mureșan, who remained behind its stand for four years, until 1908. During 1908-1918, the leader of the choir was the teacher Nechita Luculeț. After World War I the group was revived by the teacher Nicolae Lupu, who managed to bring under his wand numerous intellectuals and young men, the ensemble thus turning into a youth choir¹¹.

Ion Raica records that the choir repertoire of the inter-war period included choral pieces such as: *Deșteaptă-te, române, Tricolorul, Pui de lei, Imnul Unirii, Hora Unirii, La arme, Latina gintă, Tudor Vladimirescu, Cine trece Oltul mare, Peste deal la nana-n vale, Negruța de la Crișana, Hai feciori să doinim iar, Dusu-sa bădița sus, Toarce lele, toarce, toarce*. The high percentage of patriotic songs may be explained by the enthusiasm generated by the Great Union of December 1, 1918. The same author mentions that in the year 1929, in Petrești, a choir contest was organized on the inauguration of the village’s culture house, where the ploughmen’s choir from Sebeș was awarded the first prize¹².

The ploughmen’s choir was re-founded by teacher Petru Opincariu in 1933 and was active without interruption for 14 years, until 1947¹³.

The Choir of the Sebeș Division of Astra

The Sebeș Division of Astra was established in the year 1870, following the decision made a year before by the general assembly of the association in Șoncuța Mare. The new administrative division – the fourth of the 60 that would be formed later – included *the seat of Sebeș, the seat of Orăștie* and Miercurea, as well as other communities in the Alba County. On June 14, in Orăștie, the first assembly of the new division took place¹⁴. In the year 1889, almost 30 years later, its structure underwent changes: the towns Orăștie and Miercurea were separated, Sebeș and other 24 neighbouring localities remained inside the division¹⁵.

¹⁰ ANRSJA, the fund of the *Orthodox Parish of Sebeș*, file 1/1900, not numbered.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, pp. 302-303.

¹² Ion Raica, *op. cit.*, p. 307.

¹³ *Ibidem*. Ion Raica’s remark is ambiguous here. He speaks about the *re-establishment of the ploughmen’s choir*, without mentioning when such a choir existed in Sebeș before. The only ploughmen’s *choir* he speaks about is the one established by Nicolae Todea in 1890, which was not a men’s choir, but a mixed one. In these circumstances, we can not speak of a *re-establishment of the men’s choir*, but rather of a *reactivation of the the ploughmen’s choir* in a different hypostasis, that of a men’s choir.

¹⁴ Ion Raica, *op. cit.*, p. 282.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 284.

The association for the literature and culture of the Romanian people - Astra performed an intense activity in cultivating the moral and intellectual values of the Romanian people, music being one of its interests. The thematic lectures organized by this association were often accompanied by musical events, so that choral groups had to be established in order to support these educational enterprises¹⁶.

In an annual report of the Sebeș *division* of *Astra*, preserved in the archive fund pertaining to year 1908, “the singing reunion established in 1893”¹⁷ is mentioned. A similar document in the file of year 1935, mentions a number of three choirs functioning at that time within the division, indicating the number of members and the conductor as well¹⁸:

- a) Sebeș – mixed choir (16 men, 24 women), conducted by prof. Nicolae Lupu;
- b) Săsciori – men’s choir (24 members), conducted by teacher Simion Oprean;
- c) Răhău – men’s choir (30 members), conducted by teacher Dumitru Muntiu.

The records of the years 1941-1942 contains scarce information on music issues, being confined to the number of choral groups extant at the time, namely six¹⁹.

Whereas the annual reports approaching a larger period of time present information in a very succinct manner, the minutes, due to the small size of the phenomenon they record, offer details of high importance for the subsequent research. The minutes of the general assembly of the Sebeș *division* of *Astra* held in Răhău, on July 4, 1943, contains information which completes the picture of the musical activity conducted by this association. Among information of administrative nature, references to musical moments are intercalated: the choir of the culture society sings the pieces *Bine ați venit* and *La șezătoare*, Miss Brădilă sings *Clujule*²⁰. The typed minutes of another assembly meeting are much more detailed in describing the musical moments: “the general assembly, the program of which included songs performed by the men’s choir and the mixed choir from Răhău, *doinas* and national songs performed by Mr. Ioan Fulea, a clerk and student of the Conservatory, recitals and songs performed by high school pupils, both boys and girls, from the locality of Răhău” [...]”²¹.

¹⁶ Lectures of an outstanding intellectual level were held during the inter-war period through the contribution of the representatives of the “University Branch in Cluj”, who took many trips to Sebeș. According to Ion Raica, *op. cit.*, p. 284.

¹⁷ ANRSJA, *Astra* fund, file 1/1908, p. 15.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, file 1/1935, not numbered.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, file 1/1942, not numbered.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, file 1/1943, p. 4.

²¹ *Ibidem*, file 1/1943, pp. 184, 226.

The cultural soirees, one of the events characteristic of *Astra*, represented a very good occasion of presenting national values by means of music as well. The program of such an event, organized on July 18, 1943 in the village Răchita comprised several musical moments (choirs) intercalated among other activities²² (**appendix 2**).

A concert poster preserved in the Sebeș *Astra* fund gives a highly suggestive account of the repertoire of the association's choir. The conductor's name – Nicoale Botezan – is unknown in the musical life of Sebeș, but he may have conducted one of the choirs in the neighbouring localities²³.

In order to cope with the large number of activities to which they were invited, the choir of the Sebeș *division* of *Astra* benefitted from the support of other people and institutions. A document has been preserved in this respect, whereby the association thanks the engineer Traian Roman for providing transportation for the group members²⁴.

The Sfântul Gheorghe Choir

The establishment of this choir is connected to the name of the *Sfântul Gheorghe* Society of the youth, whose purpose was "the development of the religious-cultural, social and civic life of its members"²⁵. According to the statute of this society, the above mentioned purpose could be reached by various means, but, considering the theme of our research, we shall pay attention to the musical ones alone. Thus, in chapter two, third passage of the statute, reference is made to "the participation of the talented in church choirs"²⁶. Passages 11 and 12 of the same article stipulate that the *Sfântul Gheorghe* Society organizes "cultural soirees with declaiming, singing, theatre and dancing", managing the dancing and the parties of the youth²⁷. Regarding the society members, they were "all the young men and girls of 15 to 24 years, respectively all who are yet unmarried, who fulfill their duties towards the Society and lead an exemplary life"²⁸. The statute we have referred to was approved in the meeting of April 26, 1924 of the Parish Synod of Alba-Iulia and Sibiu, presided by the metropolitan of Transylvania, Nicolae Bălan Ph.D.²⁹.

²² *Ibidem*, file 1/1943, p. 189.

²³ *Ibidem*, file 1/1944, not numbered. Since the quoted document offers no information on the choral group, we must accept the hypothesis that it may not refer to one of the *Astra* choirs. The only argument that justifies its use in the material dedicated to the *Astra* choir is its presence in the archive fund corresponding to this association.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, file 1/1944, p. 93.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, file 1/1925, p. 287.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, file 1/1925, p. 287.

²⁷ *Ibidem*, file 1/1925, p. 287 overleaf.

²⁸ *Ibidem*, file 1/1925, p. 288.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, file 1/1925, p. 290 overleaf.

20 years later, on April 23, 1944, the same forum approved the revised and completed Statute of the *Sfântul Gheorghe* Society, which although it keeps, in general, the organization form established in 1924, it also adds certain modifications. Therefore, according to article 6, only young men (boys) can be members of the Society, the girls having their own association, called *Anastasia Șaguna*. The musical activities organized by the society remain the same: choral singing, cultural gatherings with singing. The important information offered by this document is that there is also a *Sfântul Gheorghe* Society of pupils in middle schools³⁰.

The minute of the general assembly on April 13, 1927 of the *Andrei Șaguna Association of orthodox clergy*, Sebeș division, mentions the following: “especially the *Sfântul Gheorghe* Societies should hold conferences, lectures and catechizations and they should also create a church choir” in order to raise the standard of the liturgic service and attract believers in the church³¹.

Since the same year dates a note, from January 6, mentioning the sum of 750 lei paid by the members of the *Sfântul Gheorghe* choir in exchange for certain services³². Even if the document is not very clear, we can assume that it is the equivalent in lei of a certain amount of wine purchased by the choir members from Ioan Blândeia.

On October 7, 1933 Nicolae, the metropolitan of Transylvania issues a circular note which, in the section devoted to religious societies, mentions: “It would be good that the *Sfântul Gheorghe* would practice not only church songs, but to also organize choir activities for national holydays. These are necessary for processions, national festivities and pilgrimages³³. Furthermore, societies are recommended to buy a flag, recommendation to be accomplished in Sebeș in the following years.

The report on the activity of the priests in Sebeș-Alba in 1933 contains several references regarding our research. The document, dated January 15, 1934, mentions the mixed choir of the *Sfântul Gheorghe Society*, also indicating the name of the organization’s president, namely priest I. Lazăr³⁴.

Though at first sight, the life of a choral ensemble protected by the church would seem devoid of tensions and misunderstandings, in reality it was not always like that. This is proven by a grievance by which members of the *Sfântul Gheorghe* choir signal the use of certain “inappropriate and unjust words” addressed to them at the parish meeting on March 25, 1933. Beyond the obvious character of the document, its text contains numerous references to the activity of the choir. We present in the following lines a fragment which synthetically displays the most important accomplishments

³⁰ *Ibidem*, file 1/1947, p. 10.

³¹ *Ibidem*, fund *Asociația clerului ortodox „Andrei Șaguna”* („*Andrei Șaguna*” Association of the Orthodox Clergy), external years 1923-1936, 1919-1931, 1931-1932, not numbered.

³² *Ibidem*, fund *Parohia Ortodoxă Sebeș (Sebeș Orthodox Parish)*, file 1/1925, p. 314.

³³ *Ibidem*, dosar 1/1933, not numbered.

³⁴ *Ibidem*, dosar 1/1934, not numbered.

of the choir: “We have sung in the church, ever since 1925, every time the occupation permitted. At the blessing of the church we pleased His Holiness and the church council of the time showed their gratitude in writing on our performance. Other times we pleased specialists. We wished to present ourselves in a dignified manner to strangers at national holydays. We have arranged and contributed to concerts; we sung at the blessing of churches from the area, always only with the desire to bring at least a small contribution to the beauty of the divine service and to the good name of this town. We have only pursued beauty and good in all our manifestations”³⁵ (**appendix 3**). The document is signed by 25 members of the choir and conductor Nicolae Lupu. A note made later by arch-priest Vasile Oană signals “the settling down in good understanding” of the conflict.

The general report on the activity of parish priests in Sebeș-Alba in 1935 mentions the participation of the choir in the inauguration of the Cultural house in Cioara, where they gave answers during the *Holy Liturgy*³⁶. The document by the same name in the following year acknowledges that the mixed ensemble *Sfântul Gheorghe* participated in two religious festivals and gives answers during the *Holy Liturgy*³⁷.

A much better chronicle can be found on the production organized by *Sfântul Gheorghe* ensemble of Sebeș young men on December 26, 1937. With choral pieces and a theatre play followed by dancing in the program, the manifestation aimed at collecting funds for the institution *Straja Țării* to build a crucifix in Sebeș³⁸.

The general report in 1938 on the religious moral of the Sebeș-Alba parish mentions with gratitude the “sacrifice made for the holy church by our choirs – *Sfântul Gheorghe* choir and at funerals the choir of Romanian craftsmen”. Both the conductor of these choirs, prof. Nicolae Lupu, and their members are addressed acknowledgements on this occasion³⁹.

We have mentioned, along our incursion in the musical past of Sebeș, several organizations which also had musical preoccupations among their activities. Although, from an artistic point of view, there was often competition among them, collaboration was not excluded. We certify this by a production of the *Sfântul Gheorghe* choir of the youth in Sebeș at the *Astra Society*, on December 25 and 26, 1938. The resulted income was to be donated for the building of a monument honoring Prince Mihai Viteazul (in Engl. Michael the Brave)⁴⁰, on the camping site of Sebeș⁴¹.

³⁵ *Ibidem*.

³⁶ *Ibidem*, file 1/1936, not numbered.

³⁷ *Ibidem*, file 1/1937, not numbered.

³⁸ *Ibidem*.

³⁹ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁰ N.tr.

⁴¹ *Ibidem*, file 1/1938, not numbered.

That same year, *The mixed choir of young men* in Sebeș collaborated with the local *National Orthodox Society of Romanian Women* for the organization of a concert on March 25. For “the enhancement of choral forces” an invitation was sent to Miss Lenica Bota to participate in the rehearsals of the choir. The document mentions that rehearsals began on Saturday, February 27, 1938, at the primary school in Sebeș⁴².

Most often than not, documents refer to choirs in a generic way, without mentioning their members. Sources indicating the names of the choir members are rare, and so are those detailing the activity of each one of them. Therefore, the choir members whose activity is documented can be considered privileged. Such a person is Elisaveta Lie, school teacher at the Children’s school no. 1 in Sebeș, whose activity is mentioned in a certificate from September 12, 1938 by arch-priest Vasile Oană. The above mentioned document states that she “had, as a school teacher, a religious and moral activity, taking active part, as a member of the *Sfântul Gheorghe* church choir, in all cultural religious manifestations of our holy church”⁴³. On November 19, 1945, Elisaveta Lie asks for a document to attest her activity in the religious associations *Sfântul Gheorghe* and *The Women’s Reunion*, in order to obtain a higher didactic title⁴⁴. The certificate states: “she was a member of the local *Sfântul Gheorghe* Religious Association, participating in the church choir [...]. ... she organized, on different occasions, with kindergarten children, several religious and cultural productions. These productions comprised theater plays, operettas, songs and declamations”⁴⁵.

A similar document was issued on January 8, 1941 for school teacher Maria Oltean, attesting the fact that she had activated in the *Sfântul Gheorghe* choir since 1938. It is worthy to notice that, besides the signature of arch-priest Vasile Oană, the certificate also bears the signature of conductor Nicolae Lupu as well as the stamp of the *Sfântul Gheorghe* Society⁴⁶.

Simion Radu, school teacher at the State Primary School in Sebeș, was another member of the above mentioned choir. A certificate was issued on his name on December 21, 1946, stating that he “has activated and continues to activate as a member of the *Sfântul Gheorghe* Romanian Youth Society in Sebeș, while being also a valuable member of the religious Choir”⁴⁷.

The reports on the activity of the *Sfântul Gheorghe* Youth Society in Sebeș are very valuable to our research, as they often refer to its musical activities. The report for 1938 mentions the following: “[the society] has a

⁴² *Ibidem*.

⁴³ *Ibidem*, file 1/1938, not numbered.

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, file 1/1945, p. 221.

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*, file 1/1945, p. 222.

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*, file 1/1941, p. 8.

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, file 1/1946, p. 262.

mixed choir and answers in the liturgy on Sundays and holydays. The Society's choir participates in national holydays, as it is the choir called upon by religious and civil authorities on such occasions. They have organized a successful religious festival and theatrical production. The society has been reorganized into three sections: young intellectuals, craftsmen and ploughmen, who collaborate, having a single leading committee⁴⁸. The same information, apart from the organizational structure, can also be found in the report for 1940⁴⁹, while the homonymous document in 1941 also refers to the funds of the association: they disposed of a fund of 37.000 lei gathered from the organized manifestations⁵⁰. The following year, the funds increased to 40.000 lei⁵¹.

Beginning with 1942, the activity of the *Sfântul Gheorghe* youth circle in Sebeș decreased considerably, continuing only by the activity of the choir conducted by prof. Nicolae Lupu⁵², the same situation being signalled in 1947⁵³. According to the latter document cited, the above mentioned choir "gives the answers in the Liturgy and organizes concerts and festivities". Since 1947, two lists mentioning the members of the choir were kept, one of them also giving their addresses. It is worthy to mention the fact that the two lists are quite different, especially with respect to the number of members, but also to their names⁵⁴ (**appendix 4**).

The School Teachers' Choir

This is one of the choirs whose activity is strongly connected to the *Astra* organization, therefore all the documents we identified are part of the archives of *Astra, Sebeș division*.

A minute dated June 26, 1936 mentions a "cultural festival" organized in Sebeș with the participation of the School Teachers' Choir, conducted by school teacher Ioan Goția. The program encompassed several choral processing⁵⁵ (**appendix 5**). The choral recital was accompanied by poetic moments, being interrupted by a conference with the theme "Astra – Past, Present and Future", held by arch-priest Vasile Oană. The cultural event ended with dance music performed by the Cenușer orchestra.

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*, file 1/1939, p. 105.

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, file 1/1941, p. 112.

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*, file 1/1942, p. 52.

⁵¹ *Ibidem*, file 1 /1943, p. 73.

⁵² *Ibidem*, file 1/1948, p. 140.

⁵³ *Ibidem*, file 1/1947, p 90.

⁵⁴ *Ibidem*, file 1/1947, pp. 281 and 282. Although the second document does not mention the name of the choir, we have reason to believe that both documents refer to the same choral ensemble. To support this affirmation we present the following arguments: 1) both documents mention that the ensemble "is affiliated to the orthodox church in Sebeș"; 2) most of the names of choir members appear in both lists, including the name of the conductor, Nicolae Lupu.

⁵⁵ *Ibidem*, fund *Astra*, file 1/1936, not numbered.

The minute of another *Astra* general assembly, held on Monday, June 29, 1936, at 3 o'clock PM, in Pianul de Sus, acknowledges the performance of the School Teachers' Choir in Sebeș. The repertoire comprised religious, national and heroic pieces and at the end of the concert "endless rounds of applause rewarded the initiative of the school teachers from Sebeș to present to the people the priceless treasures of Romanian music"⁵⁶. According to the custom, the performance was divided by a lecture on "The national idea and the Romanian soul" by lawyer Ioan Postescu, Ph.D. from Sebeș. An important documented mention presents school teacher Ioan Goția, conductor of the School Teachers' Choir, as a secretary of the *Sebeș Division of Astra*.

An anniversary moment such as the celebration of 75 years of *Astra*, could not be celebrated more beautifully than with a choral concert. The School Teachers' Choir participated, of course, conducted by Ioan Goția. This event is mentioned in an official request made by the president of the Sebeș division of *Astra*, Arch-priest Vasile Oană, asking the Alba prefect for permission to organize a cultural festival. The request also includes the program of the festival: "concert given by the School Teachers' Choir from Sebeș, recitations and a conference on the subject *Cultural Astra – Past, Present and Future*. The concert will be followed by dancing"⁵⁷.

Conclusions

The Romanian community of the 19th and 20th centuries Sebeș led an intense musical life, manifested also in the form of choral activity. The decisive incentive in creating the first local choral ensembles was given by composer and conductor Gheorghe Dima. The concerts he had held here, conducting the Songs Reunion choir from Sibiu, raised the enthusiasm of the Romanian community, persuading it to arrange for the establishment of its own choral ensembles.

The existence of the four choral ensembles presented is tightly connected to the names of the institutions which patronized them: the Sebeș Orthodox Parish, the Sebeș Division of *Astra* and the "Sfântul Gheorghe" Association.

The portrait of each choral ensemble resulted from the chronologic presentation of documents referring to it. In the most part, they were financial documents (receipts, situations of income and expenses, minutes stating donations to support the choirs), but we were also able to identify lists of the choir members, reports on their activity and even concert posters. Aside from the archive sources, where it was possible, we also referred to the few publications approaching the researched subject.

⁵⁶ *Ibidem*.

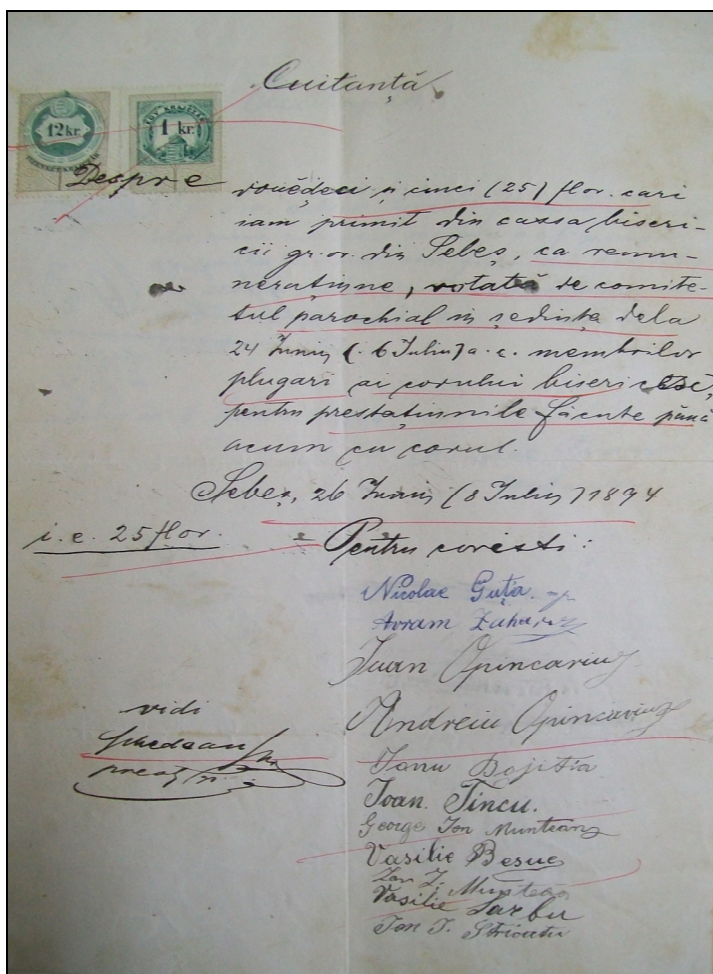
⁵⁷ *Ibidem*.

Although established at the initiative of the Romanian community in Sebeș, the above mentioned choral ensembles also performed in other cities. Each one of them travelled to neighbouring localities, therefore contributing to the cultivation of taste for choral music.

By the information presented here, we believe we have brought additional arguments in order to include the town of Sebeș among the centres with intense and fruitful musical life.

APPENDIXES

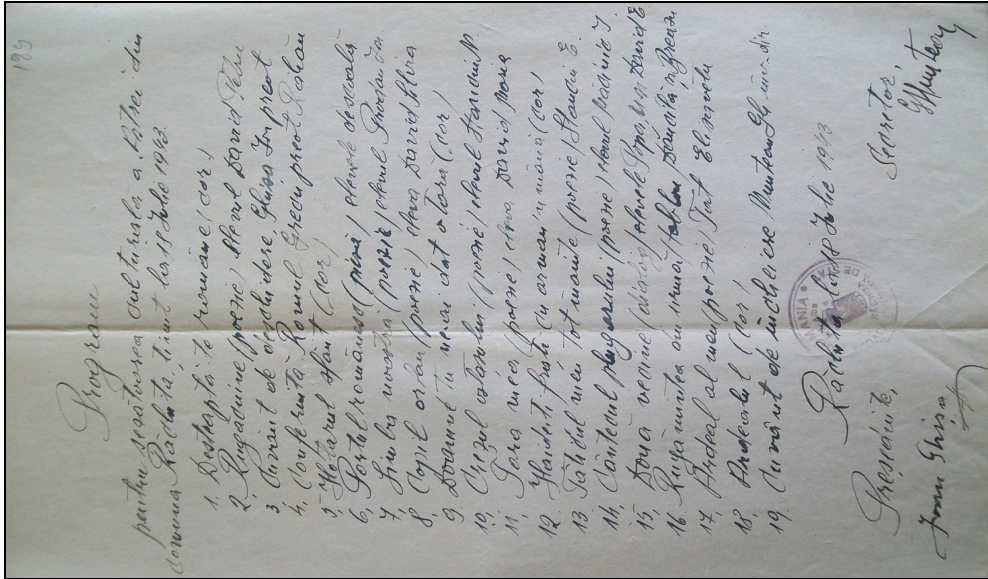
Appendix 1



Receipt attesting that the members of the Ploughmen's choir received a sum of money

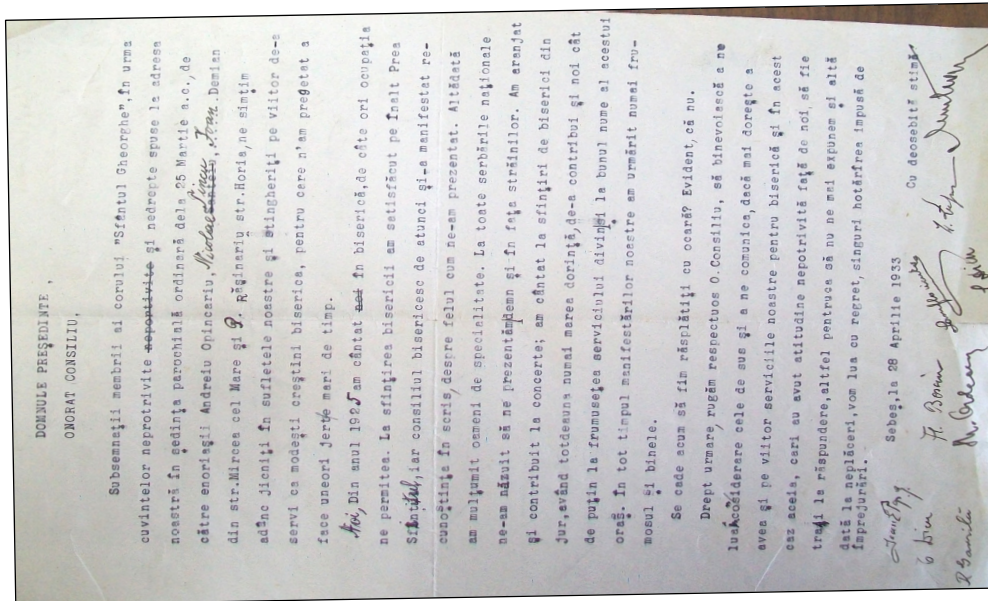
Appendix 2

The program of a cultural gathering organized by Astra Association



Appendix 3

The grievance of the members of the Sfântul Gheorghe choir addressed to the Parish Council



The names and addresses of the members of the *Sfântul Gheorghe* choir

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Arhiepiscopia ortodoxă - română Sebes - Alba.

Nr. 215/1947.

T a b l o u,

de membrii corului Sf. Gheorghe de pe lângă biserica ortodoxă-română din Sebes-Alba.

Nr. crt.	Numele și prenumele	Domiciliul		Profesiunea	Observații
		Strada	Nr. casei		
1.	Besoiu Ana	Vasile Moga	39	funcționară	
2.	Cărocăni Ana	" "	20		
3.	" Maria	" "	20		
4.	Chirilă Nicolina	Gorosi			
5.	Lupșe Rafila	Popa-Lazar	67		
6.	Pienar Rafila				
7.	Ștefi Maria				
8.	Ștefișă Dorica				
9.	Trifu Maria	Popa-Lazar	94		
10.	Moga Firița				
11.	Dămian Rafila	Moroca	26		
12.	Besoiu Elisaveta	" "	79		
13.	Dămian Ana				
14.	Bosian Ioan	" "	26		
15.	" Petru	" "	26		
16.	Mășinariu Iftenie	I. Onoșou	62		
17.	Reftes Ioan	Chilărași	62		
18.	Herlea Ieronima	T. Vladimirescu	1		
19.	Măda Treian	Grivița	13		
20.	Măda Ioan	" "	13		
21.	Chiriac Constantin	Ștefan c. Mare	19		
22.	Îngu Nicolae	I. Paraschiu	14	dirijor de cor.	

Sebes - Alba, 7 Noiembrie 1947.

Arhiepiscopia ortodoxă-română Sebes-Alba,

Bret Zambreson

1. arhiepiscopia Sf. Gheorghe a trimis un e-mail funcționar
 în 1936 despre un fel de ambianță din cor.
 Bret Zambreson

Activity report of the Sebeş Division of Astra including the program of a festival organized in Sebeş

a./ Sebeş-Alba.

S'a organizat în Sebeş un reușit festival cultural, cu concursul Corului învaștorilor din plasa Sebeş, sub conducerea D-lui Inv. Ioan Coșia din Sebeş, - cu următorul program:

1. Gh. Dima: „De tine se ducură” - Corul inv. din plasa Sebeş.
2. Gh. Coșbuc: „Stejiniș Vodă” - recitări, - D-l V. Zărenghea.
3. I. Vidu: „Răsănit din Crișana” - Corul inv. din plasa Sebeş.
4. N. Oancea: „Leahă mândră” - " " " " "
5. T. Brediceanu: „La bezătoare” - " " " " "
6. A. Castaldi: „Sen'tore vitejii” - " " " " "
7. C o n f e r i n ț ă : „Ce a fost, ce este și ce vrea să fie „Astra”. - Conferențiar P.C.S. Prot. Vasile Oană.
8. V. Militaru: „Mama” - recitare, - D-l Gh. Breazu, în
9. Lectură: Fragment din romanul D-lui V. Zărenghea „Valca cu plopi; ce va apare în curând. A citit autorul.
10. .. „Bravii străbuni” - Corul inv. din plasa Sebeş.
11. N. Ieremia: „Din Poiana Vadului” - " " " " "
12. N. Oancea: „Foaițe verde de trifoiu” - " " " " "
13. I. Vidu: „Grânele vara se cõe” - " " " " "
14. O. Lipovan: „Marș revizionistilor” - " " " " "

D a n s Orchestra Genșer.

b./ Cercurile culturale au organizat în această zi serbări în satele din desșertămint, arătându-se poporului „Ce a fost, ce este și ce vrea să fie „Astra”.

Partea artistică a fost susținută de către elevii școlilor primare.

6. - Iunie 20, 1936. Sebeş-Alba.

Festival cultural dat de către Corul Academiei Teologice din Cluj, sub conducerea D-lui Profesor Dr. Vasile Petrașcu.

Corul a executat cântări religioase, populare, naționale și eroice.

Ca acest prilej P.C.S. Dr. Sebastian Stanca, consilier școlar Cluj, a ținut o conferință cu subiectul: „Pagini din trecutul orașului Sebeş”.

III. Avera desșertămintului.

Depuneri rămase după aplicarea legii conversiunii..	Lei..... 6827. -
Numeraș.....	"..... 3878. -
6 acțiuni la Astra Cinegrafică.....	Lei 1000..... ..6000. -
T o t a l	Lei..... 15705. -

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