

## THE INSTANCES OF AN ARCHAIC MELODIC PATTERN IN CAROLS

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**SUMMARY.** Starting from the findings of previous studies, which have proved the long existence of the melodic category, in which the finale is situated on the fifth step of the six-cord scale, in this paper, the investigation is expanded onto the instances taken by this phenomenon in the repertoire of Romanian carols. The songs are grouped into general profile patterns. Groups and subgroups are constituted, on the basis of correlating the following criteria: architectonic patterns, sound structure and pitch of final cadences. From the findings, it follows that the finale on the fifth step is just one of the possibilities. Despite the variety of instances, there is a tight connection amongst the different melodic categories, due to the use of elements of common musical language.

**Keywords:** general profile patterns, groups, subgroups, types, architectonic pattern, final cadence.

In the melodies of Romanian carols, ethno musicological research has noted the location of the final cadence on the fifth step, as a distinctive trait. The studies we are referring to insist on the presentation of melodic patterns ending with a leap or an ascending line, placing the finale on the fifth step of the six-, seven-cord module of major stance. Amongst the comparative examples, one can also find songs from Byzantine and Gregorian music, proving the long existence of this particularity. The same studies also contain a historical argumentation, in which the authors refer to the pre-Christian ritual oral practice, to which the structures discussed belong as well, representing the source of certain Gregorian and Byzantine songs.

Gheorghe Ciobanu<sup>2</sup> quotes melodies of Romanian carols, in comparison to Bulgarian melodies and intonation formulas with a similar profile from Byzantine and Gregorian music<sup>3</sup>. In the end, he states his hypothesis, according

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<sup>2</sup> Ciobanu, Gheorghe, *Elemente muzicale vechi în creațiile populare românești și bulgărești*, (Old musical elements in the Romanian and Bulgarian popular creations), in: *Studii de muzicologie (Musicological Studies)*, Vol. I, Musical Edition, Bucharest, 1965, 385-399.

<sup>3</sup> The intonation formulas specific to each *eh* "...fulfilled a mnemonic function – the Byzantines called them *enechema*, sometimes *epechema* or *apechema*, while the Latins referred to them as *noane*." Ciobanu, Idem, 395.

to which, in the case of these similarities "... it is a matter of common source: the Geta-Tracian world; [...] it is not a matter of influence of one people on another, but of a common basis."<sup>4</sup>

While seeking the origins and the spread of the melodic style to which belong the secular wishing chants sung by Hungarians, as part of the winter cycle's traditions, called "regös-ének", Janka Szendrei<sup>5</sup> follows the same pattern of unity, while enriching the comparisons through the expansion of the geographical area (Romanian carols, Bulgarian and Greek songs, Byzantine intonation formulas, Gregorian songs, as well as several examples from Western Europe). His ultimate finding is that the centre of intensity and spread was in the musical culture of South-Eastern Europe, and long ago, it was probably common to the entire Mediterranean area, from where it may have spread to the rest of Europe.<sup>6</sup>

From the typological classification of the carols' melodies, it has resulted that the general profile pattern in which the melodies presented in the abovementioned studies are included actually constitutes no more than a part of the typological group which is to be described next.<sup>7</sup> We shall observe, on the one hand, the unity comprised in the use of similar or comparable melodic entities, and on the other hand, the diversity emerging from the structure of the strophes, with an effect on the general profile pattern, in the modal structures and the pitch of cadences.

## 1. General Characteristics

1.1. In the process of defining *general profile patterns*, the decisive entity is the melodic line with a concave or ascending drawing, which leads to the cadence situated on a step from the medium or acute segment of the ambitus (with a provisional title, they can be named *suspended cadences*). In every type of strophe, this line is preceded by a curved or descending line which, most frequently, crosses the medium-acute segment of the ambitus (patterns A1, B1, C1), and more seldom, descends to the grave segment

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<sup>4</sup> Ciobanu, Idem, 399.

<sup>5</sup> Szendrei, J., *Zur Frage der Verbreitung der Regös-Melodien*. In: *Studia musicologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, Tomes IX., Fasc. 1-2, Budapest, 1967, 33-53. In connection to the genre in discussion, it has to be mentioned that it is scarce, and it has been collected from only a small area in Western Hungary, Transylvania and a few localities from Covasna County; most songs occur in a non-strophic form, based upon motif repetitions, the literary text is secular and it contains refrains.

<sup>6</sup> Szendrei, Idem. 44 and 50.

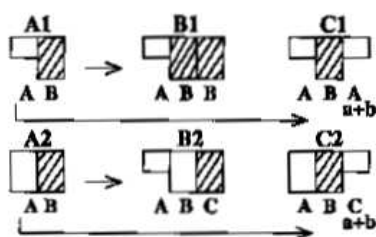
<sup>7</sup> Szenik, Ileana, *Tipologia melodică a colindelor (The Melodic Typology of the Carols)*, in: *Studii de etnomuzicologie (Ethno Musicological Studies)*, vol. II, Media Musica Edition, Cluj-Napoca, 2008, Supragroup 02, p. 25.

(patterns A2, B2, C2). Hence, a linear contrast (firstly descending, then ascending) is formed between the composing entities.

The general profile patterns are represented by using rectangles, each corresponding to a certain melodic line (figure 1; at the concave/ascending lines, they are striped, while the empty ones depict lines with a curved or descending contour; the differences in the position within the ambitus are shown at the lower level of the rectangles).

The general profile patterns, in correlation to the architectonic pattern of the strophe – which, by definition, includes the potential variations – constitute the first order criterion for the differentiation, as well as for grouping the types (in figure 1, above the patterns, the groups are marked with capital letters + digits; underneath, the typical architectonic pattern is marked with capital letters).

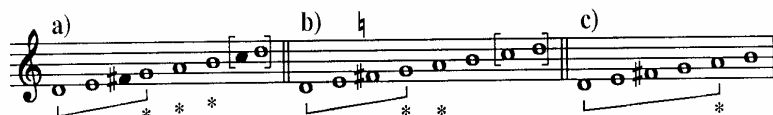
Figure 1



1.2. The *strophes* are composed of two or three melodic lines. From the content connections it can be deduced that the two-line strophe would be the basic norm (patterns A1, A2), from which the three-line strophes have developed (patterns B1, B2 and C1, C2); the arrows point to the directions of transformation). Some types have also got amplified forms (which will be presented below, under markings A31, A32 and B31, B32).

1.3. The *sound structures* in which the songs occur are pentatonic (pentatonic substrate respectively) or diatonic (hypoionian, hypomixolydian, hexa-, hepta-chord of major stance). The most common ambitus is of sixth, which can expand, at the upper level, into a seventh or an octave. Taking into account the mobility of the final cadences (in example 1, marked with \*), the scales are relatively transposed, because in this way the common layers of the structures emerge (hereafter, the melodic examples are transposed in a similar way).

Ex. 1



The melodic movements of the song reveal the main steps of the modes, as well as their relation to a *modal centre* and to the final-tone (in example 1, the braces). In a pentatonic scale (scale *a*), the relation  $d^1-g^1$  is dominant,  $g^1$  being the modal centre (the  $g^1$  centre is also obvious in the situations where step  $d^1$  is either missing or attained for mere ornamental reasons); the final cadence can be any of the steps belonging to the pentatonic picnon ( $g^1-a^1-b^1$ ). The relation  $d^1-g^1$  is obvious in both hypoionian and hypomixolydian (scale *b*), though here – the most frequent final-tone being  $a^1$  – a *bivalence* is sometimes created, through the forming of the relation  $d^1-a^1$  (see examples 3a, 6, 8b). Regarding these two modes, we also mention that there are melodies in which the third is variable ( $f^1/f^1\#$ ), or, in terms of melodic variants, one is in hypoionian and another in hypomixolydian (see comparatively examples 3b and 10a). In the major stance hexachord (scale *c*), the relation of the steps is undeniable, the  $d^1$ -step being fundamental and the  $a^1$ -step final-tone.

In some of the examples presented, a leap on the last unstressed syllable of the verse appears, with an opposite direction to that of the melodic line (see the final descending leap in example 5a and at the median line in example 9b, in comparison to the final-tone in example 2a, as well as the ascending final leap in example 8b, in comparison to the end of the second line). In these cases, the real cadence (either interior or final) is the step situated on the stressed syllable. From the typological comparisons, it follows that such leaps (in a descending or ascending direction) are *movements of cadence* which can be found in many types and do not have a constant nature - they are nothing more than structural artifices.<sup>8</sup>

1.4. As with the vast majority of types of carols, the verses attached to the melodic lines can be either tripod (5-6 syllables) or tetra-pod (7-8 syllables). In the strophes appear refrains, which can have the same metre as the verses, but they can also be shorter or longer. In the typological group under discussion, the refrain usually occupies the ascending/ concave line; in patterns A and B, this is the final line, while in patterns C, it is in the middle of the strophe. The exceptions to this regularity – the lack of refrain or placement on another line – are rare. There are also tripod melodies in which appear anterior attached refrain-like text elements (see example 9b); their presence is not a characteristic belonging exclusively to this group, because it is found in many other types.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Szenik, Idem 15. See also Bartók, *Melodien der Rumänischen Colinde (Weihnachtslieder)*, Universal Edition, Wien, 1935, no. 81a-d in comparison to variants 81e-g; in the presence of descending leaps of cadence, in the transposition onto the unique final-tone  $g^1$ , the melody variants are not at the same pitch.

<sup>9</sup> Szenik, Idem 24. See also, in the Addendum, the songs marked with\*.

## 2. Melodic types

The general profile patterns, in correlation to the architectonic pattern, constitute the framework in grouping the songs (according to point 1.1). In each group, the melodic types will be differentiated according to the pitch of the cadence from the determining melodic line, which – as it follows from all of the above – are final in the two-line strophes from the A groups and in the three-line ones; in the C groups, they are in the middle of the strophe. Based on the pitch of these cadences, in correlation with the relation to the modal centre, four *subgroups* have been constituted: (1)= $g^1$ , (2)= $b^1$  (both in modal structures with the centre  $g^1$ , mostly in the pentatonic substrate), (3)= $a^1$  (in structures with the centre  $g^1$  or bivalent), (4)= $g^1$  (in major hexachord with the fundamental  $d^1$ ).<sup>10</sup>

The following examples illustrate the most representative structural aspects of the typological group under discussion; they have been selected from vast documentary materials.<sup>11</sup>

### A1 and A2 Patterns

In melodies with two-line strophes, with an AB architectonic scheme, the characteristic linear contrast can be followed the most obviously. In pattern A1, the first line occurs in the medium/acute segment of the ambitus, the gravest point being attained only in the second line, from where the melodic line increases to the final cadence. In pattern A2, the linear balance is symmetrical, due to the decrease of the first line to the gravest point.

In pattern **A1** are represented all the four subgroups which have been differentiated according to the pitch of the final cadences, as well as the abovementioned modal structures. In the A melodic lines, the cadences are variable: they are set either on the same, or on another step than the final tone; the melodic scheme is contoured in several shades: the first motif can be gradually ascendant or – after the ascendant step – it can stagnate around or on the step of the final cadence. All of these particularities can be found in three-line profile patterns too. Moreover, the link between the types belonging to the different pattern categories occurs even in the use of the same melodic components, whether they are motifs or whole lines (these cases will be mentioned later).

The songs from examples 2a and 2b are part of subgroup (1); they are close variants, though the former is tripod and the latter is tetra-pod. Example 2c belongs to subgroup (2); although the final cadence is on  $b^1$  and the initial motif is descendent, starting from the acute segment of the


<sup>10</sup> Certainly, when it comes to regrouping vast materials, other subordinated criteria apply as well, such as: variable cadences, initial formulas etc. In the material analyzed, not all of the four subgroups have been found in all the general profile patterns.

<sup>11</sup> In the carol catalogue, the respective group is represented by means of 395 songs, of which 281 have been published and 114 are catalogued in the archives of AIC and AMC.


ambitus, it has contact surfaces with the anterior example (the second motif from line A and the first motif from line B).

**Ex. 2**


A.1.  $\text{♩} = 116-112$  CR 171; Stăuini, Vinu de Jos, AB

a) 

$\text{♩} = 82$  AFC 0140; Mănăstirea, CJ

b) 

$\text{♩} = 126$  HRC 266-2; Jugur, AG

c) 

In the example 3, one can notice songs with different modal structures, the final-tone being on step  $a^1$ . In the first two, line A cadences on  $g^1$  and, through the melodic movements, this step affirms itself as a modal centre (in example 3a in hypomixolydian, the cadential motif; less noticeable in example 3b, in hypoionian, the initial motif); in lines B, the step  $d^1$  affirms itself as a modal centre, in relation to the final  $a^1$ ; hence, the relations between steps are bivalent in both scales. The two types fit into subgroup (3).

In the melody from example 3c, the relation  $d^1-a^1$  is emphasized, thus it will belong to subgroup (4). (If we regarded it mechanically, without taking into account the relations resulting from the melodic movements, the scales in examples 3b and 3c would fit into the same category, as they vary only in the acute step.)

**Ex. 3.**

A1  $\text{♩} = 126$  AIC 1025; Hodac, Mureș

a) 

$\text{♩} = 172$  CR 175; Visca, Vorța, Hunedoara

b) 

$\text{♩} = 132$  AIC 6707; Micănești, Hunedoara

c) 

Pattern **A2** is illustrated by means of two songs with the final-tone  $a^1$ : example 4a belongs to subgroup (3), in the pentatonic scale the modal centre is on  $g^1$ ; example 4b belongs to subgroup (4), occurring in major hexachord.

## Ex. 4

A2.  $\text{♩} = 114$  CR 241; Covragiu, Hunedoare

a) 

$\text{♩} = 138$  DSC 79; Lejnic, Hunedoara

b) 

**Amplified forms: A31 and A32**

From the extra-Carpathian areas, several amplified melodies have been published, under the forms AABB or ABAB. They have been formed through repetition – sometimes varied – from the two-line strophes (patterns A1 and A2; these cases will be enumerated in the addendum). Such amplifications appear in other typological categories as well, although they are rare.

**Pattern B1**

In the three-line strophes with an ABB architectonic scheme – based on the melodic similarities with the types from pattern A1 – it can be noticed that there is a tendency of enlargement, which characterizes other categories as well.<sup>12</sup> One of the cases illustrating the existence of the same melody in two forms can be seen in example 5a, compared to example 2a (by comparing the two melodies, the already mentioned displacement of the final cadence in the leap  $g^1$ - $d^1$  can be followed above as well). Under the form ABB, the refrain moves onto the final line. The cadence of the first B is different from the final one, thus creating unity by the contrast between the two lines with identical content. The melodies from examples 5a and 5b belong to subgroup (1); they have a different metre, though they are similar through lines B, which in example 5b are enlarged to the measure of the tetra-pod verse.

## Ex. 5

B1.  $\text{♩} = 164$  CR 253; Lăpuşnic, Hunedoara

a) 

$\text{♩} = 116$  HRC 271-3; Gura Teghii, Buzău

b) 

The subgroup (3) is illustrated with a melody which occurs in a bivalent hypoionian; in example 6a, in lines B, the arpeggios  $d^1$ - $f^1\#$ - $a^1$  shades the role of center of the  $g^1$  step. In several cases, the two concave/ascending lines are not identical; the architectonic scheme is ABC, as in example 6b. The

<sup>12</sup> According to Szenik, Idem 18.

hexachord modal structure and the final cadence on  $b^1$  place this type into subgroup (4).

**Ex. 6**

B1.  $\text{♩} = 200-208$  CR 274: Valea Mare, Alba

a)



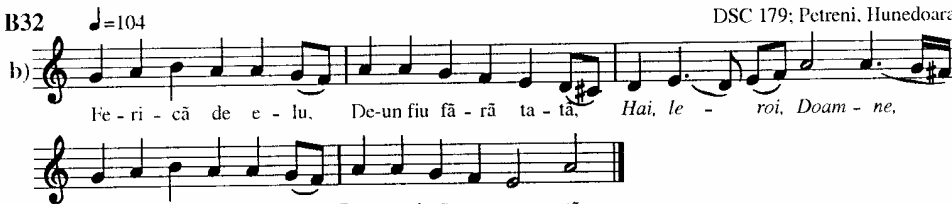
on  $d^1$ . But in the final line B, the cadence is displaced with an ascendant step on  $d^1$ , thus repeating the cadence of line C.

**Ex. 8**

B31  $\text{♩} = 214$  BBC 10b; Râu de Mori, Hunedoara

a) 

B32  $\text{♩} = 104$  DSC 179; Petreni, Hunedoara

b) 

**Patterns C1, C2**

The typical architectonic pattern in this model is ABA; the determining line of the group, with a concave/ascendant drawing – along with the refrain – areas in line B. These signs prove that it has formed from the AB strophe, through the return of the initial line. The cadences of lines A are variable: the two can be either on the same step or on different steps, which is why in the classification into subgroups, we shall consider the cadence of line B. More seldom, the final line is different from the initial one, the architectonic scheme changing into ABC. The contour of line C is formed in the same portion of the ambitus, thus it brings no change to the general profile pattern.

The first three examples (9a, b, and c) illustrate melodies belonging to subgroup (1), having the cadence of line B on  $g^1$ . All three occur in hypomixolydian, with the centre on  $g^1$ . The cadences of lines A are on the same step only in example 9a. Compared to the typical architectonic scheme ABA from example 9a, the structural scheme in the remaining two is ABC. In example 9b, the metre of the verses is tripod and, in the lateral lines, an anterior refrain-like three syllabic element is attached; the melodic motif of the refrains enlarges the melodic line, fitting organically into its contour. In this melody appears another uncommon phenomenon: the displacement of the cadence of B line, through a descending leap to  $d^1$  (on these elements, see the findings at points 1.3 and 1.4.)

The melody in example 9d is similar to example 9a, although through the cadence of line B on  $b^1$ , it is part of subgroup (2).

Ex. 9

C1.  $\text{♩} = 166$  AIC S1533; Livada, Cluj

a)  $\text{♩} = 76$  AIC 3613; Fofeldea, Sibiu

b)  $\text{♩} = 168$  HRC 225-1; Jitia, VN

c)  $\text{♩} = 128$  AMC 8904; Băraii, Cluj

Se pre-um - blă Mai-ca Sfânt - tă, Vi-ța ver - de-a ie - de-ra, Se pre-um - blă Mai-ca Sfânt'.

Le - nu lui, Co - lo-n jos măi jo - su-i, Jos la pîn-du mă-rii, Le - nu lui, S-o năs - cu-i, cres-cu

Dar și Că-lin, făt fru-mo-su, Mă-ru-lui măr, hai lerdom-lor, Est-on cel ceri hă-ră - nest'.

Pă mar-gi - nea dru-mu-lui, Doam-ne-a le-rui s-a-nost Domn, Pă mar-gi - nea dru-mu-lui.

In the melodies from example 10, the cadences of line B are on  $g^1$ ; according to their modal structure, they fit into subgroups (3) and (4).

The content connection with pattern A1 is proved by example 10a, in comparison to example 3a; the comparison of these two melodies also sheds light onto the connections amongst modal structures, through the mobility of step  $f^1/f^1\#$  (example 3a is in hypoionian, example 10a in hypomixolydian).

In all three melodies, it can be noticed that in the final line the cadential step of line B is repeated. Furthermore, in examples 10b and 10c, the entire cadential formula is repeated, the architectonic scheme changing into  $ABa+b$ . By comparing these two melodies from a modal point of view, it becomes obvious – much more accurately than in other cases – the difference in the relations between steps. This is due to the melodic movements. From the melody in example 10b, the skeleton  $d^2-g^1-d^1$  can be extracted, where  $g^1$  is the fundamental, the final-tone is the second step, while in example 10c, the skeleton is  $d^1-f^1\#-a^1$ ,  $d^1$  representing the first step and the final-tone being the fifth.

Ex. 10

C1.  $\text{♩} = 144$  AIC 5125; Godinești, Huedin

a)  $\text{♩} = 168$  AIC 5315; Almaș-Săliste, Hunedoara

b) NFS 50; Tilișca, Sibiu

c)

Sus la ră - să - ri - tu, Iai, Dom-nu - lui, Doam-ne, Sus la ră - să - ri - tu.

Si-mi-ni-că, Du-mi-ni-că, Li-li - a - nă, fa-tă dal - bă, Si-mi-ni-că, Du-mi-ni - că.

Ce tu, O - nea, te-ai gă - ta - tu, Ho, ler, da - ler, O - no - lea, Ce tu, O - nea, te-ai gă - tat.

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In the melody which exemplifies pattern **C2** (example 11), one can find the same relations between steps as in example 10b; even the melody of lines 3-4 is varied.

**Ex. 11**

CR 341 Pogănești, Zam, Hunedoara

C2.  $\text{♩} = 168$

Mă-ne-ca-t-o, mă-ne-ca-t-o, Lin, lin, da, lin mi-ș, dra-gă, Mă-ne-ca-t-o, mă-ne-ca-t-o

### Conclusions

Our investigation proves that in the repertoire of Romanian carols, the final cadences situated in the acute or medium segment of the ambitus are found in different relations: the distance between the gravest step of the ambitus and the final step can be a fourth, a fifth or even a sixth; hence, the cadence on the fifth step is just one of the possibilities. The variety of instances can be followed in the sound structures as well, as well as in the patterns of the musical strophes. Despite this variety, it has been found that –taken as a whole – these melodies are linked to one another through the use of certain elements of common musical language.

From the data of the documentary materials, it follows that the typological group presented is more intensely found in the counties of Hunedoara and Alba, without lacking from the repertoire of other parts of Transylvania and the extra-Carpathian areas.

(Translated from the Romanian by Adrian Corpădean)

### ADDENDUM

The table informs on the melodies belonging to the groups under discussion, distributed on typological groups, published in the most important collections of carols. (The collections are signed with the abbreviation from the bibliography and the number of order or page; the sign \* shows the presence of anterior attached refrain-like syllables.)

Groups	Collections
A1	BBC 4, 9, 10b, 23b, 81j, 82b, 86h; BCI 165, 173; BGC 7, 28, 237; CR 171-239; DSC 64, 133, 146, 150, 222; HRC 156/4, 158/3, 202/3, 225/4, 244/3, 245/1, 248/2, 266/2, 271/1, 288/3
A2	BGC 286; CR 240-248; DSC 79, 93, 181
A31	BCI 194; HRC 250/3
A32	BCI 175, BGC 255
B1	BBC 4, BCI 197, BGC 55; CR 249-285; DSC 1, 39, 72, 95, 288; HRC 129/2, 147/1, 241/1, 241/2, 271/2
B2	BBC 23b; CR 286-288; DSC 283; HRC 271/3, 272/1
B31	BBC 9, 10b; CR 289-293; DSC 196
B32	CR 294-296; DSC 179
C1	BBC 63, 65, 81a-g, 82a, 94a,b; BCI 152, 156*, 210*, 244, 266; BGC 38, 76, 83, 102, 115; CR 297-339; DSC 20,24, 43, 48, 49, 50, 199, 210, 252; HRC 150/3*, 152/1*, 153/1*, 186/3, 224/1, 226/3, 230/2, 244/4, 259/2, 265/1; NFS 50
C2	BBC 102j; CR 340-343; DSC 29, 40

## REFERENCES AND ABBREVIATIONS

- AIC+no. *Archive of the Institute of Folklore*, Cluj-Napoca
- AMC+no. *Archive of the Music Academy "Gh. Dima" Cluj-Napoca*
- BBC Bartók, Béla, *Melodien der Rumänischen Colinde (Weihnachtslieder)*, Universal Edition, Wien, 1935
- BCI Brăiloiu, Constantin – Ispas, Sabina, *Sub aripa cerului (Under the Sky's Wing)*, Encyclopedic Edition, Bucharest, 1998
- BGC Breazul, George, *Colinde (Carols)*, Romanian Writing, Craiova, 1938
- CR \* *Colinde Românești*, Coordinator Ioan Bocșa, Media Musica Edition, Cluj-Napoca, 2003
- Ciobanu, Gheorghe, *Elemente muzicale vechi în creațiile populare românești și bulgărești (Old Musical Elements in the Romanian and Bulgarian Popular Creations)*, in: *Studii de muzicologie (Musicological Studies)*, Vol. I, Musical Edition, Bucharest, 1965, p. 385-399. Republished in Ciobanu Gh.: *Studii de etnomuzicologie și bizantinologie*, The Musical Edition of the Union of Composers, Bucharest, 1974, p. 40-55
- DSC Drăgoi, Sabin, *303 colinde cu text și melodie (303 Carols with Text and Melody)*, Romanian Writing, Craiova, 1925
- HRC Herța, Iosif, *Romanian Carols*, The Romanian Cultural Foundation Publishing House, Bucharest, 1999
- NFS Nicola, R. Ioan, *Folclor muzical din Mărginimea Sibiului (Musical Folk from Mărginimea Sibiului)*, Musical Edition, Bucharest. 1987
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