

# THE STRUCTURE OF THE CHOREOGRAPHIC REPERTORY FROM DAMBOVITA COUNTY

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**Abstract.** *This paper presents the choreographic repertory from Dambovita County. In the Carpathian area of Dambovita County had been reported over a hundred choreographic variations. The selection of the followed was made by two criterions: the specific representation and artistic value.*

**Keywords:** *choreographic repertory, Hora, folklore.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Styles belong to several types of dance with undeniable artistic value from different areas: *Hora (Romanian round dance) in two parts, Brau Mocanesc (Shepherd's Belt), Common Sarba (name of a lively Romanian folk dance).*

Generally every dance has its own song and there are cases when various choreographic styles are being grouped, then followed by some songs; the latter are usually fewer because, in general, styles are repeated in the area [1].

The way in which folk dance lives and develops in this rural community of the sub-Carpathian area subject needs more extensive inquiries.

The best opportunity to examine how it survives, the best moment to get an overview of the folk dance in this area is certainly Village Hora. Not long ago, dance was held in meadows, in homes and dance halls and then in clubs. Girls were most often accompanied by parents: "It is illegal for a teenage girl to appear without parents after claims requirements<sup>1</sup>.

The boys, who generally paid a fee slightly higher than the girls, reserved themselves the right to take the shape, to hold, to lead "the head of Sarba" or "Belt" and, in general, to "command" to the music band the dances which followed in a certain order. They could invite to the dance any girl, and she would never go dancing uninvited. Girl's refusal to dance with a boy was punished by excluding her from that event: "If a girl refuses, they kick her out- Pietroșița ..." (John Nicholas). "She cannot refuse ... they'll kick her out. More than that, the musicians will sing her the march." She can come next Sundays but the boys will no longer take her to dance. Nowadays this happens rarely, but still happens"<sup>2</sup>

In mountainous areas and hills, choreographic repertory, presented in this kind of moments, it was - numerically speaking - relatively high, the average number of dances was around 35-40. The approximately 100 names of dances seen in the area confirm this richness, especially because most of the styles of dance differ from village to village. This rich repertory is still conditioned by the existence of some "good musicians".

Referring to the origin of dances, the first feature refers to a large number of dances of a wide notoriety throughout the sub-Carpathian area: *Hore, Sarbe, Brauri, Breaza* the

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<sup>1</sup> Viorica State, Voinesti.

<sup>2</sup> Vasile Gheorghe, Runcu.

category of "couple dances" and also the "two-hore", all of them derived from group styles of dance. All these options are considered as belonging to traditional local repertory.

In terms of origin, the places from where the dances came in this area are the mountains (Sarba, Brau, Breaza) and the plains (hora with rhythmical beating, limping hora, hora with triple time structure, geamparalele- lively Romanian folk tune). These types are common to Carpathian area and have a higher frequency than those belonging to the Danubian area. The energy transmitted through dance is expressed by the number and consistency of performant dances in the repertory, which are practiced more frequently in the mountains than the lowlands. The vitality of the dancers is visible when we admire dances presented with various occasions (especially at the village dances) and when the entire community focuses on virtuosity dances.

There is a particular repertory, "latent" which includes performant dances, held by those who have extensive knowledge of choreography. Their number gradually decreases, many of the pieces belonging to the repertory are manifested now as solo dances, and this causes significant changes in the compositional structures, reported to the original group forms. (An example is the "right Brau"). In this area it is noticed that the dances belonging to this "latent" repertory are relatively few, fact which indicates a loss of quality of the traditional aspect of the dances in the area. On one hand, this repertory includes dances which in the past were very common; on the other hand, dances that had never been well known and remained practiced only by some generations or by very good local dancers.

It is also noticed that the process of consolidation of a certain repertory is based on the category of couple dances, as well as two common types of dance known all over the Carpathian area: *Sarba* and *Breaza*.

The actual structure of dance repertory and their existence are conditioned by the way in which dances are transmitted from generation to generation. This process is carried out spontaneously, the dances are learned through imitation, then improved by practice.

From early childhood children were taken to *the village hora* [2] and weddings, just to observing ("hidden behind women") the evolution of steps, which contributed to the development of a kinesthetic and rhythmic-melodic representations that helped forming the initial essence of apperception. Children firstly learned to distinguish, to recognize specific dances and songs, which is the most important step to assimilate the entire dance repertory.

A second important step is the replication of the most common dances (hora, sarba, breaza). The learning process can be organized by gender, "on the meadow with cattle, on free time at home. The girls, as well as boys, tried to replicate seen dances, singing songs for themselves or being accompanied by an instrument. Sometimes girls, two by two danced outside Hora or behind guests at weddings. This spontaneous process was often carried on within the family with a proper learning test (watched by brothers, older sisters or parents).

The moment in which these dances were well-learned was by practicing them with different occasions so that young people could learn the rules of behavior, and had as a social context the statute labour (Romanian "claca"), some family parties and the evening sittings of village women.

"Entrance to the Hora," marks the beginning of the dance group training, intermediate stages being in some degree facilitated by the other two, three Hora organized by age groups. Achieving a higher level of knowledge of this repertory and practicing it, gave especially to boys, the right to dance in top or tail of the string, or before the fiddlers.

The process of learning the dances is currently sporadic and individual, with lacks of traditional context. Today the village Hora takes place especially at night, offering the children a smaller opportunity to watch entirely the unfolding of the event. It is no less true that the dance repertory is much shorter, and the best opportunities to see a complex choreography are wedding events. Leaving the village at the age (or before) "entering the

hora”, a large number of young people cannot become dancers and they do not know all the dances that were done in the area.

In the Subcarpathian region of Dambovita a traditional terminology can be found (perhaps more accurate and more consistent than in other provinces), which, at a higher level of generalization, classifies dances together in larger categories, the criteria being those of grouping and organizing movements.

## 2. DISCUSSIONS

The dances of Hora are grouped into two distinct categories: "hora in row" and "hora of two", which correspond to group dances and couple dances. Hora in row, based on geometric configuration criteria, is divided into: hora string itself (or semi-open circle) and "hora circle (closed circle). In turn, hora of two is divided into: "pairs hora", which represents a style clearly influenced by modern dance, and "two-hora", category that shows a real interest for evolutionary study of dance forms and for the general, typological classification.

“Hora of two”: this traditional dance does not include only pairs, its main feature is the structure of the group dance, like concomitance or sequence of the group (open or closed circle), lines of 3-4 dancers, couples in lateral position. “Hora of two” belongs - in terms of rhythm -to Hora, Sarba and even Brau category, but still, they represent a new stage in the evolution of dance. Undoubtedly, these forms in which “hora of two” occur are related to the specific areas where they appear. As a fact, in the lowlands of the county they are mainly carried out in line formation (small group), in the hilly areas the group of dance is formed by many dancers and in mountain areas, pairs are more frequently met.

Cinetico-rhythmic features of these dances as their classification by the area where these are practiced gives sufficient information to justify their organization in native types, as part of a certain style- which represents a secondary "style" of dance. Typologically speaking, the approximately 100 dances (with approximately 260 variants) existing in the area are grouped into six major categories and two side respectively in 13 primary and eight secondary types, which - in comparison with other areas of the country - represents a typological noticeable diversity.

### ***Main types of dances:***

#### *-Hora categories:*

Main types:

- Great Hora (Hora Mare, Nuneasca)
- Hora in two parts - Father Mark (Romanian: Tata Marcu), Little Garden (Romanian: Gradinita), Little Flower (Romanian: Floricica), kasatchok (Romanian: Cazaceasca)
- Limping Hora (Rugulețul, Rugulețul Des, Murgulețu, Mocăncuța)
- Rhythmical beating Hora (Dura, Floricica, gypsy dance-Romanian: Hora Tiganeasca, Tiganca la trei, Boldaneasca)
- Hora of two (Jianu, Ciobanasul, Maritica, Dinosu, Neaga).

Secondary Types:

- Ternary structure Hora (Hora Nutii, Birul, Hora Ceasului, Jianu)
- Hora with figurative gestures (Perinița, Scaonu, Cateaua)
- Circle dances (Resteul, Maiorasul, Romanul, Olteanca )

Subtypes:

- Asymmetrical rhythm hora-paced hora (Sarbeasca)

#### *-Sarba types*

Main types:

- Common Sarba (Sarba, Maierasul)
- Sarba in two (Sultanica, Bulgareasca)
- Sarba strofica (Sarba dogarului, Ofitareasca, Simianca, Chindia, Drumul dracului, Sabianca, Spoitoreasa).

Secondary Type:

- Sarba with spinning (Fedelesul).

*-Brau types*

Main types:

- Sherherd's Belt (Romanian -Brau Mocanesc with subtypes: Brăuleț (Brau of six);
- Right Sherherd's Belt (Romanian Brâu drept) -Brau drept, Brau drept bătrânesc, Brau of eight;

*-Breaza types*

Main Type:

- Breaza (Breaza, Unguria, Transylvanian).

*-Couple-dances types (in circle)*

Main types:

- Young couple walking and spinning (Clopotelul, Ghirdoveanca, Prahoveanca, Iederica)
- Walking couples ( Hoina, Ciufu, Atica, Fata Mamii, Maritica, Buriul, Danga)

Secondary Types:

- Couples changing position on command (Manioasa);

*-Derived category of dances:*

- Hora and sarba in pairs.

Secondary Types:

- Polka (Polka dreapta, Polka pe furate, Racii).

Secondary categories:

*- Geampara category*

Type:

- Geampara (Geamparale, Lelita Ioana).

Types:

- Virtuosity dance -solo (Alone)
- Figurative dance (As in the tent's entrance- Romanian "ca la usa cortului")
- Soloist dance with the mask (Capra).

The evolution of these types of dances related to the frequency and their importance leads to the following observation: Sarba category (Sarba of two and Common Sarba) is the best represented in the area. The following category of dances most practiced is Hora (Great Hora and Hora of two). Breaza category occupies the first place as frequency and Brau category is particularly represented by the subtype Braulet while Brau Drept has lost its vitality as being practiced more in particular.

Pairs dancing category, had, after a period of development that could be located in the first decades of the twentieth century, a clear decrease in importance and frequency, and concerning the couple dances derived category, it is represented mainly by Hora and Sarba danced in pairs. The secondary categories and types of dances are few as number or restricted to some areas or even to a single locality.

## *2.1. PARTICULARITIES OF THE CHOREOGRAPHIC FOLKLORE FROM THE SUB-CARPATHIAN AREA OF DAMBOVITA COUNTY*

Obtaining the specific features of an area involves synthesizing all components relevant to the phenomenon of choreography: the semantic content (expressed by the functionality), phenomenological aspect (the way of life), artistic expression (type, structure and style); gathering all the partial results after studying each locality and comparing the information with similar details obtained from the folklore surrounding areas or even further areas.

In terms of functionality, in this area folk dance justifies its existence firstly through the social functions assigned to dance. Both in ceremonial ritual and individual events, dancing can be seen as a symbol of social and family structures that exist in a community and also as a mediator in personal relationships, and also between age groups, sex, marital status. As a fact, the act of dancing has the function of separation, integration and accompaniment for one's life, it also contributes strengthening the unity of the group as to the forming and development of human personality.

Compared to the past, we can see the growing importance of recreational and amusement functions of folk dance resulting from the way humans consider dance (which is a complex cultural event) as a spectacle. In terms of aesthetics, dances from hilly and mountainous areas, although they represent undeniable artistic values, in comparison with plain areas, have a lack of virtuosity which makes them less spectacular. Even Sarba, whose spectacular representation cannot be denied, appears to have social influences.

Regarding these features, the folk dance from the Carpathian area of Dâmbovița obviously differs from the one practiced in the lowlands. As to the traditional wedding dances as well as to the mentions of the existence of "Paparuda" [3] and "jumping over fire", we can deduce that in an earlier cultural stage this area had multiple connections with the southern region and with the Danube Plain.

As a way of existence in this area, folk dance gives to all its forms of manifestation an important cultural activity. Firstly, these characteristics derive from the frequency and consistency of events involving dance. By comparing the types of dances practiced in the area, a certain typology is being confirmed. The way these types are ranked in importance reveals the characteristic of the discussed area.

Thus, in comparison with other areas, the styles "Hora in two parts", "Rhythmical beating Hora", "limping Hora" especially the asymmetric rhythm subtype, and type of "Geampara", are much less represented.

However, it is required to take into consideration the fact that, in the past, these types have had a greater importance, which makes us believe that the Danubian dialect included a much wider area in its northern limits than nowadays. The order of importance of types indicates the attraction of this area for the mountain dances, with the main types: Common Sarba, Great Hora and Breaza.

A great importance for the sub-Carpathian and hilly areas are "Sarba of two" and "Hora".

## 2.2. THE STRUCTURE OF DANCES FROM DAMBOVITA COUNTY

Determining the structural characteristics that contribute defining the specificity of the sub-Carpathian area choreographic dance followed the following criteria:

- a. relevance of the distinctive features of the parameters of dance, which means that all elements included in dances have been ranked according to their role and importance, and also according to dance type;
- b. frequency with which these elements appear throughout the dance;
- c. the importance and frequency of types of dances in the local events.

Analysis of the distinctive features of dance constitutive parameters leads to emphasizing dance movements' particularities in time and space.

Taking part to the dances is exclusively "mixed" and there is no limit regarding the number of dancers. Although there are solo and gypsy dances, like "Cateaua", where only men participate. If we refer to dances structure throughout the country we discover a mixed composition of dancers and a lack of basic repertory with dancers exclusively male or female (even "Brau" has mixed composition), which justifies the area we refer to as "the south" of the country.

Geometric configuration, grouping the dancers and orientation in space [4]. Mostly, the group dances and the couple ones are balanced in frequency and importance; however, we find the evolutionary trend from group dances to couple dances.

Taking into consideration the existing dance traditions, the "closed circle" appears as a predominant configuration. "Open circle" (thread) has been noticed in our area not for the number of dances practiced but for the fact that the most common and important type (Common Sarba and some styles of Brau), is being practiced in "open circle. The geometric configuration of "Sarba" is very mobile, dragging the thread.

Geometric configurations of group dances are: couple in a circle, line and freely distributed in space. The most predominant is the lateral arrangement of the dancers in the group band in circle and line.

*The outlet.* The multiplicity of geometric pattern involves a wider variety of outlets. For group dances most predominant is the hand outlet, with arms folded and also shoulder outlet. It is also noticed (especially for Sarba) the existence of outlets in the same band (holding shoulders, hands, girls crossed back and boys holding each other shoulders) This style is used for dances in "open circle" encountered along the Carpathian area (*Braul padurenesc, Sarba gorjeneasca, Sarba musceleana*)

*Kinetics.* Elements of kinetic movement of the area are characterized by average diversity. They are the general types of movements. The most known kinetic elements are: jumping (from one foot to another), cross steps (especially in front), beatings, beaten steps, spins and linear steps. We also note the high percentage of arm movements, which is specific to plain areas. The most common movements are: small vertical swing and wide swing (forward and backwards).

*Amplitude.* This movement does not present a special feature; it is made both horizontally and vertically.

*Trajectory.* In general, the dances are performed with a large displacement in space, paths are well marked. The most common types of trajectory: bilateral and unidirectional to the right. A special statement for Sarba.

This dance follows a circular path to the right, which develops in time, describing a meandering walking or dragging to a spiral to unwind again in open circle. At the same time with this development group couples on the edge or the center of the band, describe roundabouts trajectories (right- left) or trajectories in more directions, linear trajectories.

*Intensity.* Represents the force running motion, generally does not exceed the average limits.

*Tempo.* Execution speed is in following degrees: vivid and fast.

*Meter.* Obviously, in this area, like in the whole country, binary meter has the highest frequency and importance. An important feature for this area is the high weight of binary meter in ternary group (2 +2 +2), and also quite common in cases of alternation (or combination) of some binary rhythmic-kinetic motifs with binary or ternary type motifs (2 +2) + (2 +2 +2) + (2 +3).

*Rhythmic motifs.* In rhythmic construction, the basic cells are: “spondee”, “dipiric” and “anapest” and a combination between them. One high rhythmic motif is a mixture of “spondeu” and “amfibrah” ‘this formula represents the basic rhythm of Breaza. In various combinations, the “Amfibrah” appears as a specific rhythmic cell in gypsy dances.

Syncopated rhythmic formulas occur mainly built in motifs built on three measures (Brau in six, Right Brau) and in terms of asymmetrical rhythmic reasons, these are represented only in “Geampara” style (2 +2 +3).

A feature related to rhythmic syncopated formulas, the accents that appear frequently in dance variants belonging to types of Hora (Rugulețul, Murguleț) which may be an argument for the derivation of these types of formulas in asymmetric rhythm of this type that are specific to the Danube Plain.

*Morphism.* Following the dance in its harmonic development in this area, a general feature is noticed, that of the existing balance between polymorphic forms (simultaneous superposition of different or various choreographic lines) and monomorphic (uniform simultaneous executions). Observing dance evolution, polymorphism becomes important. In this regard, the types that currently have a maximum frequency (Hora Mare, Sarba Comuna, and derived types, Hora and Sarba of two, Breaza) are both polymorphic through their richness variation within the same band. In general the process of breaking the group into couple emphasizes the polymorphic nature of dance.

*Compositional form.* In our folk area the most common are the formulas based on the principle of movement chaining units (motives or phrases). In this group, in order of frequency and importance, were: varied homogeneous chain formulas, diversified rondo and heterogeneous chain. Chaining heterogeneous motives appears in executions of “Brau” where every artist, from an inventory, more or less rich in traditional kinds of reasons, combines them according to his own creative capacity.

If formulas are based on chaining units belonging to its own particular old list of dances, the types of recent origin (Sarba and Hora, couple dances in circle) fixed compositional forms are mainly based on the principle of grouping of two or more different units. The most used type is the group of phrases or sections of binary, ternary group having a lower frequency.

*The structural report: dance – music.* The analysis dance-music relationship reveals a predominant feature of dimensional correspondence between musical phrases and dance. Relevant to this area is the time overlap (while music is built on two measures, the choreography is on three measures).

*Relationship dance – text.* In this area, the syncretism dance - text [5] is well represented, generally shouting orders being sometimes satirical or jocular character (e.g. Maniosul, Birul, Cateaua). Most common are mandatory and shout commands that either scored high intensity moments of the dance, or makes points at the end of choreographic phrases or sharp movements of a certain frequency). Certainly, a long-termed contact with the analyzed folk tradition will end with the discovery of a series of particular elements, which gathered in the synthesis of music and dance event, will form the overall picture of the Subcarpathian area of Dambovita.

### 3. CONCLUSION

From this perspective, which includes the correlation of historical evolution, as well as the specific area, Carpathian folk tradition appears to us as an individual with a particular personality well defined in the context of others, but not outside the Sub-Carpathian area of Wallachia.

In essence, it cannot be considered a folk autonomous area, but an area belonging to the Carpathian region of Wallachia.

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