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Musical Manuscript No. 2575 from the Romanian Academy Library in Bucharest*

Keywords: 19th-Century dance music, salon music of Wallachian elites, piano music

Approximate year of writing: 1830

Author of the notebook: an unknown musician¹

Note: The writings in the notebook contain many spelling mistakes in French, Romanian and German. They are due to the author, henceforth the Musician. In this paper, however, I preserved his original spelling.

The content:

Outer cover: *Des chansons Valaques sur le Piano=Forte (sic)*

Inner cover: *Chansons et Danses Greques*

Des Postreffes et Chanson Turqwe (sic)

Air de danses Wallaques (sic)

Composées pour (?) Le Piano=Forte

The author is probably an independent pianist who provides on demand musical services at parties enlivened by dance and music. His manuscript notebook consists of two sections. The first one, which I call the *main body* here, is written mostly by the Musiciawn himself in black ink and consists of piano pieces. The second, which I call the *secondary body* (starting with folio 25), contains fragmentary notations and sketches of musical notations not necessarily related to the piano, and is written in ink or pencil by different people.

* This paper has been previously published in Romanian and English in a slightly different form, as introductory study of the edited musical manuscript no. 2575 (see Rădulescu 2019: VII-XXII).

¹ George Breazul calls this codex Anonymus Valahus. See Breazul 1956: 22.

The main body of the notebook is an *aide-mémoire* of the Musician-pianist: it may be assumed that, when invited to animate a party, he could use it to respond as quickly as possible to the requests and wishes of the employer-beneficiary or of his guests. It contains a total of 72 carefully noted pieces. Of these, five are Greek, one hypothetical Albanian² and another, very large, Turkish: *Postrefte Turqwe* (*sic*) (folios 3v-6), although the subsequent *Allegretto* (folio 6v) may be a part of it.³ Of the following pieces, another 48 are presumably popular Romanian. The others are various salon pieces of East European circulation: *Crakoviana*, *Ecossaise*, *Valz* (*sic*), *Polish*, *Anglousse* (*sic*) / *Anglaise* (e.g. folio 19; see Ex. 1). The author of the pieces is not mentioned. In the case of some salon pieces, it could be the Musician himself.

56. „Anglousse”



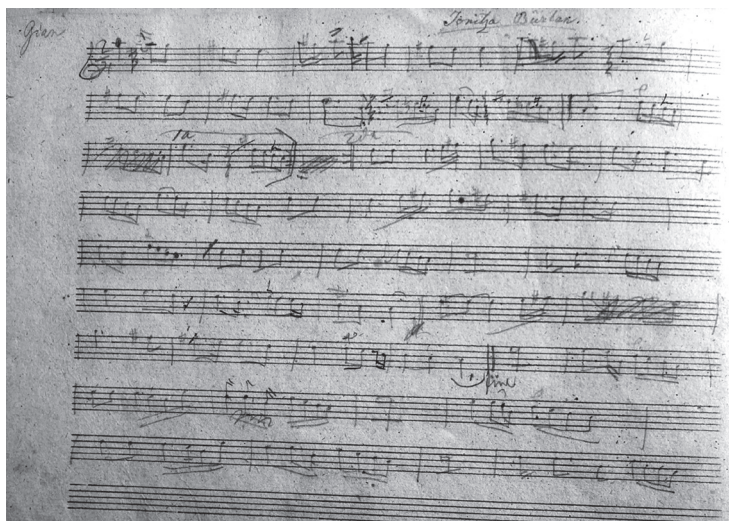
Ex. 1. Musical manuscript no. 2575 from the Romanian Academy Library in Bucharest, folio 19 (Gheorghită 2019: 48).

The pieces in the secondary body, that is, the sketches at the end of the notebook written by different people, either in black ink and fine pen nib or in pencil, are as follows: romances with alternate lyrics in French and Romanian (folios 25-29), but also attempts at quick notation by ear of popular pieces

² This piece (*Kintika arnautcek*, folio 3) could be also a Greek dance ‘arnaute’ of the Kassab-oglan, “corps des bouchers que les Grecs employaient aux boucheries (*sic*). Ils sont Macédoniens, bien faits et hardis...” (See Kokkonis 2020: 4). See also note 4.

³ In a first phase of the research, I considered that *Allegretto* (folio 6v) is an autonomous piece with an intermezzo function, which could have been composed by the Musician himself: I had noticed the change of tempo, bars and melodic profile, but also the awkward construction of the melodic phrases, which are strangely asymmetrical. This opinion could be retained and reconsidered.

probably performed by a *lăutar* (popular musician), whose name may be Ioniță Burlan/Bârlan (folio 29v; see Ex. 2); two vocal pieces for two voices in parallel thirds and sixths (folios 30-31); other musical fragments whose writing in pencil is so effaced that they are almost impossible to read (folios 31v-32v).



Ex. 2. Musical manuscript no. 2575 from the Romanian Academy Library in Bucharest, folio 29v (Gheorghită 2019: 73).

In the main body of the collection (up to folio 6) are grouped Greek, Turkish and *Arnăute*/Albanian pieces.⁴ The Romanian popular ones occupy the next, much larger section. Among them, however, the Musician inserted some court dances (*Crakoviana*, *Ecossaise* etc.). In the secondary body are inserted, as I mentioned above, sketches of pieces that I will refer to in the end.

Like any ethnologist, I asked myself the following questions: Who was the author of the collection? For what beneficiary did he elaborate his notebook with musical notations? How is to be explained the concentration of the Balkan pieces at the beginning and of the Romanian ones at the end of the main body? I will answer by formulating hypotheses, included in a possible scenario of the events related to the production of the notebook, and comments regarding its content.

An independent musician from Austria or Germany (more likely from Austria, I will explain below why), with a mediocre general and music educa-

⁴ *Arnăute*/*Arnăuți* could be also Albanian mercenaries of the Princes.

tion and specialized in salon or party music, learns that in Wallachia (i.e. the Romanian Country), a principality on the northern border of the Balkan area, musicians are being sought capable of producing music for the balls and parties of the *beau monde* by playing the piano. He decides to try his luck. It is possible that, before starting on his journey, he obtained, through his prominent Austrian clients, some useful contacts in the Romanian aristocratic world.

In preparing his trip, the Musician gathers cultural information to help him understand what music might be in demand/sought by the aristocrats in the Principality. He learns that the country, under a rather formal Ottoman suzerainty and recently rid of the Greek Phanariot rulers, is quickly westernizing, especially in the present marked by the protectorate of the Russian Empire (1828-1834).⁵ All the *beau monde* is noticeably getting “civilized”, adopting not only the French language, but also the fashionable dance music from central and Western Europe. The Musician assumes, or has found out from others, that the older boyars nevertheless still continue to like the Greek and Turkish music that they had been accustomed to since their youth. He may also knew that among the ordinary people there are still many Turks and Greeks who – one never knows – may someday become secondary beneficiaries of his services. He may have been mistaken about Turkish and Albanian musics, which did not seem to be in demand anymore, in any case not among the *beau monde*, but I do not think he was wrong about the Greek Phanariot music.

The musician does not seem to have known any language other than his mother tongue: German. All his writings in French have mistakes, e.g. *Made mojselle Szafftiki de Bibesku* instead of *Mademoiselle*... I wonder in what language he communicated with his Romanian employers! He did well in Wallachia, however, where, as a provider of musical services, he seems to have had professional relationships with two of the country’s major boyar families: Bibescu and Filipescu. Their names, and the name of Ipsilante/“Ipsil”, are explicitly recorded on the notations of some pieces.

Before embarking on his adventure, the Musician prepared a notebook with scores that included the set of Greek song notations (folios 1v-3), the Turkish piece (a *Postrefe*, i.e. *pestref*, a long piece in two sections, probably entirely copied from a pre-existing collection, folios 3v-6), and the so-called *Albanian* piece (folio 3). The pieces at issue may have been provided by fellow musicians from the Balkan countries. One of them – longer, more complete

⁵ It was the only Russian protectorate in the history of Romanians that did not end in a catastrophe.

and more meticulously noted than the others – was probably copied from another, possibly published, notebook: the Turkish *Postreffe*. Vienna had the reputation, which it still holds today, of temporarily or permanently hosting people of this origin. This is also why I have assigned to our Musician an Austrian, specifically Viennese, nationality. However, I do not rule out the possibility that he himself may have discovered and noted some pieces while on a previous Balkan trip.

We do not know how long the Musician stayed in the Romanian Principality – probably a lot, because the second part of his notebook, which starts with the piece *Air Walacqwe* (folio 7; see Ex. 3) – contains almost exclusively Romanian pieces. One may assume that some of them were heard and transcribed during his stay in the Romanian Country, from boyar court musicians, at that time still slaves (the liberation of Gypsies from bondage took place in stages, beginning with 1855), or (more likely) from free musicians in town.⁶

8. „Air Walacqwe”



„Seqw?: Frunsa”

Ex. 3. Musical manuscript no. 2575 from the Romanian Academy Library in Bucharest, folio 7 (Gheorghiuță 2019: 16).

⁶ In the Addendum to this text I cite the titles of all the Romanian pieces as they appear in the notebook.

In my opinion, two were the reasons why the Musician considered it necessary to complete his collection. One was that his aristocratic clientele reacted positively to the “Wallachian arias”, a sign that the progressive boyardom was beginning to move closer to the people. The proof is in the mentions *Wallaqwe all Fillipesku* (folio 10v), and *Made mojselle Szaftiki de Bibesku* (folio 16; see Ex. 4), placed at the beginning of some notations. The other reason is that, in all likelihood, the Austrian musician was also looking for customers among the well-to-do Romanian intellectuals – lawyers, doctors, engineers, namely members of the middle-class that was beginning to emerge in the Principalities – who presumably valued the music of ordinary people.

43. „Hora – Made mojselle Szaftiki de Bibesku”



Ex. 4. Musical manuscript no. 2575 from the Romanian Academy Library in Bucharest, folio 16 (Gheorghită 2019: 41).

In the notebook, all the Romanian pieces are/seem to be dance melodies. Many have as a title a Romanian verse line, which means that they also had vocal versions. A few titles: *Entre Olt schientres Oltetz* [approx. *Between the Olt and the Olteț rivers*] and *Lunge, Lunge mult iescht Lunge* [approx. *So long is the riverside*] (folios 7v-8); *Omoareme puikulitze / Daca nuem dedesch gurize* [approx. *Kill me my beloved chick / If you don't give me your lips*] (folio 9; see Ex. 5); *Kite stele szint pe Tsar* [*All the stars in the sky*] (folio 9v); *All Wledean* [*Vlădean's*] (probably a musician) (folio 10v). However, at that time most of the popular songs were in free rhythm, very difficult to put on western staves. So the Musician must have changed them in order to adjust their inner

rhythms and to set the songs in the European four-beat pattern. Did any popular musician help him by playing the piece in a divisional rhythm, in equal and symmetrical phrases of four bars?... It is possible: Romanian vocal musics have the property of being able to be transformed into dance tunes by such means, by then already familiar to any popular musician.

15. „Omoareme puikulitze/Daca neum dedesch gurize”
(Omoară-mă puiculiță, dacă nu-mi dăduși guriță)



Ex. 5. Musical manuscript no. 2575 from the Romanian Academy Library in Bucharest, folio 9 (Gheorghică 2019: 21).

The vast majority of the pieces are *Hora*, with no other indication. Were these the dominant dances in popular practice?... or was *hora* the generic name given at the time to popular dance tunes?... Along with the many *hora* there are also three so-called *Szirbechte*⁷ (folio 18v). With only one exception, the dance tunes are bipartite, each section being made of 2-4 phrases of 4 bars. The diatonic ones can be mono-tonal (folios 7, 8), or with a modulation in the second section on the minor parallel (folio 13a, c). However, the tonalities in which the melodies can be inscribed are often modally colored, through alterations that, during a tune, can affect any step, except I and V. There are

⁷ The first of three pieces with the misleading generic title of *Szirbechte* (hypothetically *sârbă*) certainly belongs to another type of dance, called *Brăul pe șase*. However, the next two pieces may be *sârbe*.

also tunes in a minor mode with an augmented second between the degrees II-III (folio 11v, a), a major mode with an augmented fourth (folio 9), a minor mode with an augmented second between the third and the fourth degrees (folio 11v, b), all in the category of those I have called here Phanariot. It is possible that some Romanian pieces were noted by ear and superficially harmonized by the Musician himself. Moreover, some pieces could be simply his own invention, as a matter of fact even involving some skill, e.g. *Wallacqwe* (folio 12a, b; see Ex. 6).

25. „Wallacqwe”

The musical score for "Wallacqwe" is presented in five systems. Each system consists of a treble staff and a bass staff. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 2/4. The melody in the treble staff is characterized by eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together. The bass staff provides a steady accompaniment with eighth notes. The score includes measure numbers 8, 17, 25, and 29 at the beginning of their respective systems. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots at the end of the fifth system.

„Seqw? Wallacqwe”

Ex. 6. Musical manuscript no. 2575 from the Romanian Academy Library in Bucharest, folio 12b (Gheorghiță 2019: 30).

The accompaniments of the Romanian pieces are imagined by the Musician. He harmonized them with the chords on the main degree of their tonalities (T and D), also borrowing from various popular or academic European sources

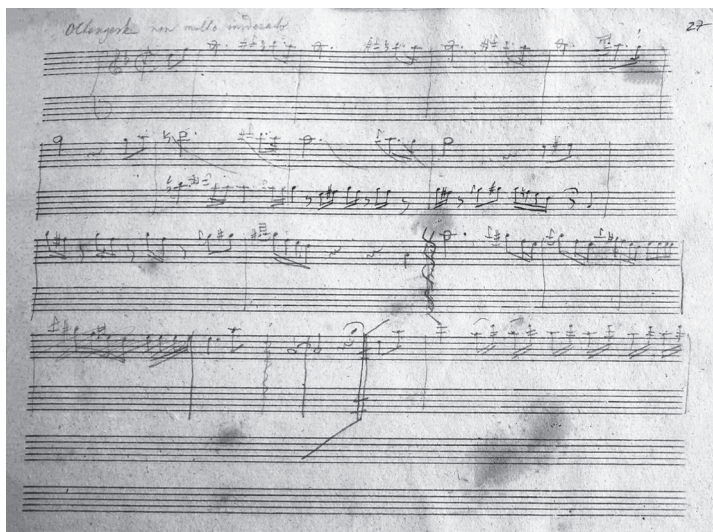
the modalities of playing the chords through harmonic figurations.⁸ I do not think that the Musician found harmonization models in the practice of the Romanians' folk music; anyway we have no evidence from that time that the musicians practiced tonal harmonizations. The only harmonic rudiments that would have been possible at the time were, perhaps, immovable pedals on an empty fifth on the kobsa... though the kobsa may have been then primarily a melodic instrument! In any case, in terms of harmonization, everything was still in the testing phase. So the Musician did what he was good at, with his beginner skills in *Harmonielehre*. One of his problems was the choice of the tonal-harmonic functions to use for the melodies in two sections with augmented seconds separated by a minor third (folio 11v, a; see Ex. 7). The Musician sometimes used tonal displacements to the lower major second, with the respective parallel octaves (folio 9v). Subsequently, i.e. probably after the pieces had been performed in public, the Musician was dissatisfied with some harmonizations and modified them in the notebook, in pencil over the black ink (folio 11v, b).



Ex. 7. Musical manuscript no. 2575 from the Romanian Academy Library in Bucharest, folio 11v, a (for edited version, see Gheorghită 2019: 28).

The most interesting part of the notebook is the final one: the secondary body. The section starts with *Air valaque nouvelle* at folios 25-26v (see Ex. 8), noted by someone else, most likely a young woman with a boarding school education, who writes negligently in black ink with a fine pen nib, but has a

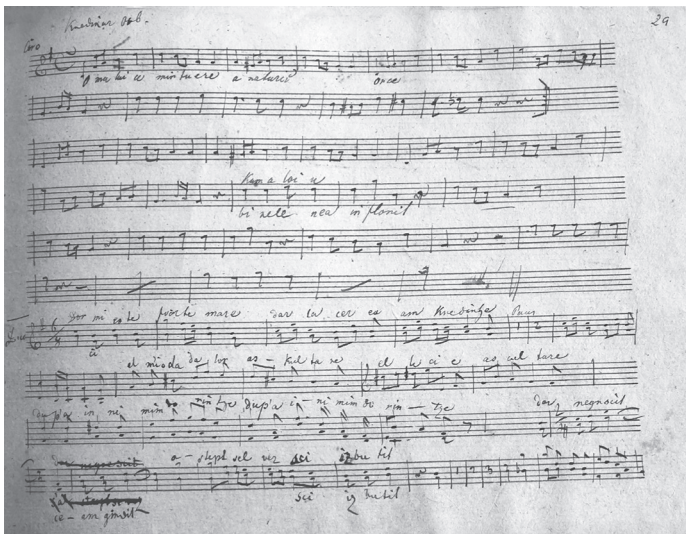
⁸ Examples of different harmonic figurations: folios 16 (see Ex. 4) and 22v.



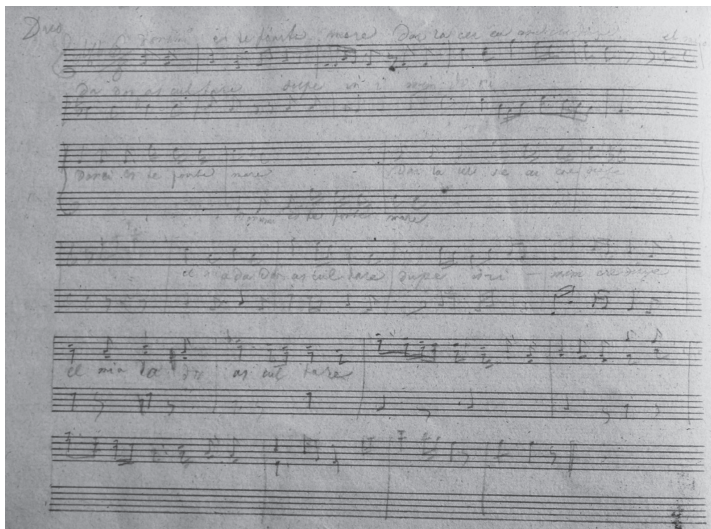
Ex. 9. Musical manuscript no. 2575 from the Romanian Academy Library in Bucharest, folio 27 (Gheorghiță 2019: 68).

A photograph of a handwritten musical manuscript on folio 28v. The page contains five staves of music. Below the staves, there are several lines of lyrics written in Romanian. The notation is in a historical style, featuring various note values, rests, and dynamic markings. The handwriting is in dark ink on aged, slightly stained paper. The top of the page has some handwritten text in a cursive script, possibly indicating the title or tempo.

Ex. 10. Musical manuscript no. 2575 from the Romanian Academy Library in Bucharest, folio 28v (Gheorghiță 2019: 71).



Ex. 11. Musical manuscript no. 2575 from the Romanian Academy Library in Bucharest, folio 29 (Gheorghită 2019: 72).



Ex. 12. Musical manuscript no. 2575 from the Romanian Academy Library in Bucharest, folio 30v (Gheorghită 2019: 75).

On folios 29v-32v, someone else (?) attempts to write down a song by Ioniță Burlan (probably a popular musician, mentioned above; see Ex. 2), then other popular vocal songs with Romanian words. The pencil writing, very pale, is worn off and quasi-indecipherable. The notation runs into the problems that arise, then as now, from the transcription of rubato songs. I single out folio 30v (see Ex. 12), featuring yet another duo vocal song.

Assumptions regarding the secondary body of the notebook: one of the ladies who hired the Musician to animate a *soirée* had a professional discussion with the Musician, borrowed his notebook, and wrote down in it the songs she hoped he would perform on the pianoforte. Later, perhaps on other occasions, other people may have intervened in the notebook too. Interestingly, the last person made efforts to score Ioniță Burlan's violin piece in free rhythm (folio 29v; see Ex. 2): it could be the first attempt, be it failed, to score a popular piece in rubato rhythm!

The secondary body of the notebook is interesting because it suggests a few changes about to occur in the celebration music of the Romanian upper class. The first is the rise of the romance, possibly nonexistent until then. The second is the potential guests' interest for vocal pieces that can be performed in groups, on two voices, in the cleanest Western-European tonality. Finally, the concern of the same partygoers for peasant songs in free rhythm: the *doina* and the lyrical song, which they do not find an easy way to approach.

The Musician, compliantly, allowed all his noble patrons to intervene in his own notebook. Upon his departure (probably when leaving the country), he was forced to give his main employer the entire notebook. It was certainly a sacrifice to do so!... but this sacrifice made it possible to discover it 200 years later.

ADDENDUM

Contents

Outer cover	<i>Des chansons Valaques sur le Piano=Forte (sic)</i>
Inner cover:	<i>Chansons et Danses Greques</i>
	<i>Des Postreffes et Chanson Turqwe (sic)</i>
	<i>Air de danses Wallaques (sic)</i>
	<i>Composées pour (?) Le Piano=Forte</i>
F. 1v	<i>Air. Andante. Sanson Grece</i>
F. 2	a) <i>Air. Andante. Sanson Grece</i> (final part of folio 1v) b) <i>Otalepe ros neotis</i> (<i>Ω ταλαίπωρος νεότης</i> / <i>O miserable youth</i>). <i>Sanson Grece</i>
F. 2v	a) <i>Andante Chanson Grecqwe</i> b) <i>Air (qwe?) Greki</i>
F. 3	a) <i>Danse Grecqwe</i> b) <i>Kintika Arnautcek / Song of the Arnaut</i>
Pf. 3v-6	<i>Postrefte Turqwe</i>
F. 6v	<i>Allegretto</i> (possible the last part of the <i>Postrefte Turqwe</i> , folios 3v-6)
F. 7	<i>Air Walacqwe</i>
F. 7v	a) <i>Frunsa werde Merisor / Frunză verde merişor</i> (Romanian song turned into <i>hora</i> ⁹) b) <i>Entre Olt schientre Oltetz / Între Olt şi-ntre Olteţ</i>
F. 8	a) <i>Entre Olt schientre Oltetz</i> (final part of folio 7v b) b) <i>Lunge, Lunge mult iescht Lunge / Luncă, luncă, mult eşti lungă</i> (Romanian lyric song, instrumental version)
F. 8v	a) <i>Ah Stepene te slevesk / Ah, stăpâne, te slăvesc</i> (song turned into <i>horă</i>) b) <i>Zaba Sietzt tai mencat / Geaba şezi tot (ne)mâncat (?)</i> (song turned into a dance melody, probably <i>sâră</i>)
F. 9	a) <i>Walaqwe Mu (sic)</i> (dance melody, probably <i>horă</i>) b) <i>Omoareme puikulitze / Daca nuem dedesch gurize / Omoară-mă puiculiță / Dacă nu-mi dăduși guriță</i> (song turned into <i>horă</i>)
F. 9v	a) <i>Frunzu Verde</i> (song with a dance rhythm, possible <i>horă</i>) b) <i>Otchilor, raspundes (?) / Kite stele szint pe Tsar / Ochilor, răspundeți (?) / Câte stele sunt pe cer</i> (song notated in divisional, western rhythm)
F. 10	a) <i>Funzu verde de kormus</i> (dance melody) b) <i>Mulzemim luj Dumnyezou</i> (dance melody) c) <i>Bojati Drakulj / Bogații dracului</i> (song turned into a dance melody)

⁹ This piece, like all those whose title is a complete or fragmentary Romanian verse, is a dance originating in a vocal lyrical song, originally in free rhythm. The notation does not contain indications that would allow the unequivocal identification of the type of dance in question.

- F. 10v a) *Walaqwe*. *All Wledean* (song turned into a dance melody)
 b) *Wallaqwe all Fillipesku* (partial) (larger piece, which begins
 with a song and continues with a few serial dance tunes)
- F. 11 a) *Wallaqwe all Fillipesku* (final part of folio 10v, b)
- F. 11v a) *Wallaqwe* (dance melody, possible *horă*)
 b) *Chanson Wallaqwe* (dance melody made up of three
 sections)
- F. 12 a) *Chanson Wallaqwe* (final part of folio 11v, b)
 b) *Wallacqwe* (dance melody, probably invented by the
 Musician)
- F. 12v a) *Wallacqwe* (piece partially invented by the Musician starting
 from a pre-existing song)
 b) *Wallacqwe* (dance melody)
- F. 13 a) *Hora*¹⁰
 b) *Hora*
 c) *Hora*
- F. 13v a) *Wallaq*
 b) *Hora*
 c) *Hora* (partial)
- F. 14 a) *Hora* (final part of folio 13v, c)
 b) *Hora*
 c) *Hora*
- F. 14v a) *Hora* (or three disparate *hora* sequences?... or suite created
 by the Musician?)
 b) *Hora*
- F. 15 a) *Hora*
 b) *Hora*
- F. 15v a) *Hora*
 b) *Hora* (partial)
- F. 16 a) *Hora* (final part of folio 15v, b)
 b) *Hora nebunitor / Hora of the crazy people*
 c) *Hora Made mojselle Szafftiki de Bibesku*
- F. 16v a) *Hora*
 b) *Hora*
 c) *Hora* (partial)
- F. 17 a) *Hora* (final part of folio 16v, c)
 b) *Hora*
- F. 17v a) *Hora*
 b) *Hora*
 c) *Hora* (partial)
- F. 18 a) *Hora* (final part of folio 17v, c)
 b) *Hora*
 c) *Hora*

¹⁰ This *hora*, as well as those in the following pages, are slightly arranged dance tunes of a somewhat “suspicious” simplicity. They could be partly the result of the intervention of the person who wrote them down.

- F. 18v a) *Hora Moldave* (with pencil corrections on harmonization and other unintelligible notes; the name of *Ipsil* appears at the beginning)
b) *Szirbechte / Sârbă* (wrong indications: the melody is another dance, *brâul pe șase*)
c) Indecipherable (*sârbă* ?)
d) Indecipherable (*sârbă* ?)
- F. 19 a) *Ecosaisse (sic)*
b) *Anglousse (sic)*
- F. 19v a) *Eccosois (?)*
b) *Eccos... (?)*
c) *Eccos... (?)* (partial)
- F. 20 a) *Eccosz... (?)* (final part of folio 19v, c)
b) *Eccos... (?)* (partial)
c) *Kallamayka (?)* (possible a ukrainian/*huțul* dance melody)
- F. 20v a) *Crakovianka*
- F. 21 a) *Crakovianca* (final part of folio 20v), *Valtzer*
b) *Crakovianka*
- F. 21v a) Piece without title (the page top is missing from the image)
b) *Valzer*
c) *Eccosse (sic)*¹¹
- F. 22 a) *Quadrille*
- F. 22v a) *Valz ka Trâmbitza de Poste*
b) *Valzer* (partial)
- F. 23 a) *Valzer* (final part of folio 22v, b)
b) *Marsche Jutche, Trio / Marș iute, Trio*
- F. 23v a) *Marsche Jutche* (different of folio 23, b)
b) *Pollon... (?)* (partial)
- F. 24 a) *Pollon... (final part of folio 23v, b), Trio (Pollon... da capo)*¹²
- F. 24v a, b) Two untitled songs in Western style, which seem to be performed in close succession
- F. 25 a) Final part of the folio 24v
- F. 25v a) *Air valaque nouvelle*. Romance with Romanian lyrics, followed by...
- F. 26-32 ... Various sketches, difficult to decipher, written by unknown persons in black ink, then in pencil: a romance without words, a hypothetical violin *doina*, a dance tune, two romances in Romanian, a sentimental vocal duo...

English version by Adrian Solomon

¹¹ It is possible that the three pieces on folios 21v were a small suite conceived by the Musician.

¹² It is possible that the pieces on folios 23v and 24 were turned by the Musician into a small suite.

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