

**KLEZMER TUNES FOR THE CHRISTIAN BRIDE:  
THE INTERFACE OF JEWISH AND ROMANIAN  
EXPRESSIVE CULTURES IN THE WEDDING TABLE  
REPERTOIRE FROM NORTHERN BESSARABIA**

WALTER ZEV FELDMAN

ABSTRACT

By the early eighteenth century Ottoman-ruled Moldova became a unique social interface of local and immigrant Orthodox Christians, Muslim Turks and Tatars, and Ashkenazic and Sephardic Jews. During the nineteenth century this process resulted in a mixed Ashkenazic *klezmer* and Gypsy *lăutar* instrumental repertoire with two distinct branches – Judaized Moldavian dance genres for the Jews, and Moldavianized Jewish genres for the Moldavian Christians. One notable result of this mixture was the custom of both Christian and Jewish musicians performing the “Songs of the Cup” (*Cântec de pahar*) at the Christian wedding table, a large part of which were taken from the klezmer dance melodies termed *Khosid*, in Romanian known as “Husid.” This Moldavian repertoire of Jewish origin was first documented by Romanian sociologists in the 1930s, then in post-Soviet Moldova, and later through the current author’s fieldwork in the Republic of Moldova, Germany and Israel between 2011 and 2015.

*Keywords:* klezmer, lăutar, Moldova, khosid, transitional repertoire, intonatsia.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC OF MOLDOVA/BESSARABIA

The topic of the current research is a repertoire consisting of several overlapping musical genres within one multi-ethnic territory of Eastern Europe. Within Ottoman-ruled Moldova in the second half of the eighteenth century – and more especially in the post-Ottoman nineteenth century – the basis was laid for the creation of a professional urban instrumental music that took root both in Moldavian villages and among Ashkenazic Jews in small towns and cities. The joint participation of Gypsy *lăutari*, Jewish *klezmer*, and to some degree also Greek musicians was a basic condition for the creation of this repertoire. Documentation for this repertoire is richest within the regions of Bessarabia and Bucovina that had

been under Russian and Austrian rule during the nineteenth century. These documents – mainly of a scientific nature – were created both in the inter-war period and then after the 1980s. Earlier social documentation – and some early twentieth century commercial recordings from the nearby Russian and Austrian imperial territories – would suggest that similar repertoires had been created in a broad zone within and surrounding Historical Moldova, including in those regions that found themselves within the Kingdom of Romania after 1878. But following the 1970s, both the social and political dimensions of Romanian society, plus the emigration abroad of the remaining Jewish communities, explain the absence of similar repertoires there by the later twentieth century. And at roughly the same time within the Soviet Republic of Moldova this older local repertoire and style was largely displaced by newer and more “national” Romanian Gypsy instrumental styles originating in Bucharest and other parts of the Kingdom.

With this ethnographic and political background it is possible to approach the somewhat eclectic repertoire formerly played at the wedding feast in Moldavian villages, in recent generations most typically in Bessarabia and Northern Bucovina. This repertoire, known as the “Song of the Cup” (*Cântec de pahar*) contains several stylistic elements. Here we will focus on two of the most prevalent – the first derived from the klezmer dance form known as “Khosid” (= Rom. Husid) and the other connected with the traditional dance of the butchers’ guild of Istanbul, known in Turkish as *kasap*, Greek *hassapiko* (or *hassapiko serba* or *serviko*), Moldavian *bulgăreasca*, Yiddish *bulgarish*.

This latter combination proved influential among Roma (Gypsy) and Jewish communities all through Eastern Europe, and among the Greeks, Turks and Roma of Istanbul. By the 1880s this same musical process had crossed the ocean to America, where Greek and Jewish professional musicians continued to learn from and influence one another up until the late 1950s. But almost coincidentally as it were, historical and social events – mainly from ca. 1920-1950, led to the rapid demise of this musical trend, sundering the musical and dance connections that had long connected Moldavians, Jews, Greeks, and to some extent the musician Roma of Istanbul.<sup>1</sup>

Much of the appeal of this transnational musical genre was its ability to be “translatable” into several musical cultures, and to furnish material for more central genres within a “national” musical culture. While the somewhat later Greek *rembetika* and Romanian Gypsy *lăutar* musics, as well as several trends in Jewish klezmer music, are better known today, this earlier transnational music survived long enough to be documented on early commercial recordings, and some later scientific recordings and notations – but not long enough for the social forces that had produced it to be widely remembered. I had treated this transnational genre at length first in my 1994 article on the *bulgar* dance and then in my 2016 monograph on European klezmer music.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> See Feldman 2016: 349-352.

<sup>2</sup> Feldman 1994, and Chapter 15: “The Bulgar, a Transnational Klezmer Dance Genre” in Feldman 2016: 347-366.

But when this monograph was in its final stages I was still engaged in field work researching another major component of the *Cântec de pahar* repertoire, namely the Husid/Khosid. This latter topic brings up a somewhat different aspect of the interrelationship of Jewish and Moldavian folk culture, which was more focused on the Moldavian territory and rather less on Istanbul. It also brings to the fore the creation of two ethnic repertoires which were in a sense mirror images of one another. I had termed these the “transitional repertoires.” While my earlier research (since 1994) had focused on the Moldavian phenomenon within Jewish instrumental music, my more recent work – now to some degree also building on the research of the Moldovan ethnomusicologist Vasile Chiseliță – also addresses the issue of the corresponding Moldavian adaptation of Jewish instrumental dance music. Thus these instrumental repertoires may be viewed as markers of the social relations linking and separating Ashkenazic Jews and Romanian-speaking Christians in Historical Moldova, as well as evidence for the professional relations of their respective musicians classes – the *klezmorim* and the *lăutari*.

#### KLEZMORIM IN OTTOMAN, ROMANIAN AND RUSSIAN MOLDOVA

Historical Moldova today is divided among the Republic of Moldova, Romania and Ukraine. Most of the modern Republic of Moldova had been known in the nineteenth century as Bessarabia. Incorporated into the Ottoman Empire since 1511, Moldova became the frontier between that Empire, the Crimean Khanate, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and Muscovy. It was the scene of several historic battles as well as overland trade to Istanbul and seaborne trade to the Black Sea. Moldova’s ties to the Ottoman capital were strengthened during the Phanariot Period of the rule of the Greek Princes from Constantinople, following the Prut Campaign with Russia in 1711. This period ended officially in 1828, but continued as a societal factor almost until the independence of Romania in 1878. In the Phanariot Period Ashkenazic Jews were welcomed in the regions of Ottoman-dominated Moldova in and around the Hotin Fortress, where they became an influential part of the urban population throughout Northern and Central Bessarabia. Following the Russian annexation of 1812 these local Jews were augmented by newer immigrants from Russian Ukraine and also Austrian Galicia. During the nineteenth century these Ashkenazic Jews also came to absorb the older Sephardic Jewish communities. As contact between Russian Bessarabia and Ottoman Istanbul became increasingly difficult – the Sephardic Jews of Bessarabia gradually came to intermarry with the Ashkenazim and to redefine themselves accordingly. By the end of that century Yiddish-speaking Jews usually constituted well over 50% of the town populations. In the North and Center of the country this percentage was often closer to 80%.

While most other Jewish groups in the world had a professional synagogue cantor (*hazzan/khazn*), and in the Muslim world, usually also professional male

musicians and sometimes female dancer/singers, only the Ashkenazim throughout Eastern Europe also had a professional musicians' guild (the klezmer/klezmorim). Uniquely, the klezmorim composed in their own system of genres, divided into wedding ritual melodies for listening, and a variety of dance genres for both group and solo dancing. While it was fully documented only in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this division of genres seems to have reached a more mature form as the klezmer profession was accepted throughout the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the course of the seventeenth century, following the creation of the klezmer guild in mid-sixteenth century Prague. According to the terminology I had developed between 1994 and 2016, this system of both wedding and dance genres, created by and performed exclusively for Jews, can be termed the "core" repertoire. By the early nineteenth century there was a broad distinction between a "Northern" core klezmer repertoire in Northern Poland, Belarus and Lithuania, as opposed to a "Southern" klezmer repertoire in Ukraine, Southern Poland, Galicia and Moldova. However the broad principles of Jewish wedding melodies, dance and dance music were uniform in both North and South, while differences lay more in compositional and performance style and a somewhat divergent terminology. These differences were almost always an internal Jewish affair, that did not reflect the dances or performance styles of the co-territorial non-Jewish populations. In both North and South the creation of the klezmer melodies reflected the same mixture or "fusion" of earlier (sixteenth–eighteenth century) West and Central European dance music, Ashkenazic liturgical "nusah," and components coming from Greco-Turkish music.<sup>3</sup>

By the early eighteenth century at the latest the klezmorim were also active in Ottoman-ruled Moldova. In contrast to nearly all regions of Christian Europe, the Ottoman guilds were multidenominational, they had no exclusive patron saints, and were open to members of all local religions. Prior to the eighteenth century, the musicians guild in Moldova was dominated by members of the Roma/Gypsy community, known as *lăutari*. But in that century the guild accepted numerous Ashkenazic klezmorim. Some musical patterns of the country can only be understood with reference to a former significant Greek presence, and its center in the Ottoman capital, Istanbul/Constantinople. For several generations Jewish musicians of Ashkenazic origin co-existed with Greeks in Moldova. Jewish and Christian musicians often became bi or trilingual, speaking Romanian, Greek and Yiddish. From the middle of the eighteenth century, and especially in the nineteenth century, Ashkenazic Jews had a large influence on the musical life of the country, especially on the wedding repertoire, due to the wide presence of the klezmorim, and to their collaboration with the earlier local musicians, the *lăutari*, who were usually of Rom (Gypsy) origin.<sup>4</sup> The best known early example is the

---

<sup>3</sup> See Feldman 2016: 11-26.

<sup>4</sup> Chiseliță 2006.

famous *cimbalist* Solomon Țimbelarul (i.e. “Shloyme der Tsimbler”) who flourished in Iași, documented in 1741 as a court musician for the Phanariot Greek Voyvod in the capital.<sup>5</sup>

After 1812 Bessarabia responded both to factors particular to its status within the Russian Empire, and to political developments in the remaining Moldova under Ottoman dominance, which became part of the new Romanian Kingdom in 1878. After this date the Jewish and the Greek communities had an inverse demographic relationship. As Ashkenazic Jewish immigration into Russian Bessarabia from the Russian Ukraine and Austrian Galicia increased, Greek immigration declined and the resident Greek community either emigrated out or redefined themselves as “Moldavians” by intermarriage and adoption of the Romanian language. West of the Prut river, klezmer and *lăutar* musicians from Iași and elsewhere were able to continue their yearly journeys to the Ottoman capital, which have been described by Ițic Svart (1974) through letters written in Istanbul, and preserved in the archive of the klezmer synagogue in Iași.

By pure serendipity a description by an eyewitness to klezmer/*lăutar* performance – although not of the *kasap* dance – in early nineteenth century Istanbul survives. Speaking of the Sweet Waters of Asia (Küçük Su Kasrı), near Anadolu Hisari, on the Asian side of Istanbul, the English traveler Julie Pardoe writes:

“All ranks alike frequent this sweet and balmy spot. Wallachian and Jewish musicians are common, and the extraordinary length of time during which they dwell upon a single note, with their heads thrown back, their mouths open, and their eyes fixed, and then following it up with a whole sentence, rapidly and energetically uttered, is most singular. But these oriental troubadours are not without their rivals in the admiration of the veiled beauties who surround them; conjurors, improvisatori, story-tellers, and Bulgarian dancers are there also, to seduce away a portion of their audience, while interruptions caused by fruit, sherbet and water-vendors are incessant. They are, however, the most popular of all, and a musician whose talent is known and acknowledged seldom fails to spend a very profitable day at the Asian sweet waters.”<sup>6</sup>

An important musical link between Moldova and the Ottoman capital had been provided by the cattle tribute, instituted in Moldova and Wallachia early in the sixteenth century. Thus, in the 1630s the Turkish travel-writer Evliya Çelebi described the triumphal entry of the cowboys from the Danubian Principalities Moldova and Wallachia into the Greek neighborhood Galata in Istanbul:

“The guild of *pastırma*-making herders: they are 600 people. Among them are also rich merchants. But most of them are infidels from Wallachia and Moldova... During November they bring 300,000 head of cattle and sacrifice

<sup>5</sup> See Spielmann (ed.) 1988: LXX.

<sup>6</sup> From Pardoe 1839. The Küçüksu Kasrı (“The 3 Sweet Waters of Asia”), near Anadolu Hisari in Asia was one of the many scenic spots of Istanbul.

them to make beef *pastırma* for the people of Istanbul to eat... These cattle herders are armed from head to toe; they have no shops or factories but pass by on their horses – they are simply great soldiers”...<sup>7</sup>

One can only imagine the celebrations of these Moldavian and Wallachian cowboys after they had braved the roads and the bandits to reach the Ottoman capital! They probably could not bring their own musicians with them on the perilous roads, but it became a custom for the Gypsy and Greek musicians of the capital to play a specific style of dance for the Ottoman butchers’ guild – Turkish *kasap* – that was based on the music of faraway Moldova. This new musical style developed over a period of more than three centuries. The Danubian cowboys had been “great soldiers,” and in Istanbul they dealt with both Turkish and Greek butchers. The Turkish butchers had been connected with the elite Janissary army corps; hence they were militarized. This is the simplest explanation for the evident military quality of the butchers’ dance in all its ethnic variants.<sup>8</sup>

This link between the klezmerim of Moldova and the Ottoman capital seems to have continued long after the separation of Moldova and Wallachia from the Empire. As late as 1910 a modern klezmer brass band, under the leadership of a cornet-player named Goldberg, was recorded playing a Moldavian klezmer repertoire by the Orfeon Company. It is not known from which town the band originated; one would suspect Iași, except that we have no record of a klezmer ensemble led by anyone named Goldberg. In any case, Goldberg was a superb musician, offering a highly unusual performance of what is evidently a *doina*. On the obverse, his ensemble plays a well-known Jewish *sârba/bulgar*, which was still in the repertoire of the famous Iași klezmer fiddler Avrom Bughici in the 1960s. Very significantly, the labels of both recordings are written in Greek characters and language, with the *doina* described as “Klephtiko Vlachiko” (Romanian Bandit Ballad). Thus, this single disc documents the four-way musical connection of the Jews, the Moldavian Gypsies, the Greeks and the Turks (in whose city it was recorded).<sup>9</sup>

Despite their political separation, musical contacts between Ottoman/Romanian Moldova and Russian Bessarabia also continued throughout the nineteenth century. An outstanding example of this phenomenon is the career of the klezmer violinist Milu Lemisch (1847-1918), documented most recently by Vasile Chiselîță (2012). Coming from a prominent klezmer family in Iași, Lemisch later was extremely active in the musical life of Chișinău and Bălți, performing for

<sup>7</sup> Feldman 2016: 356.

<sup>8</sup> See Chiselîță 2005 and Feldman 2016: 348.

<sup>9</sup> Similar ethnic title “translation” had been employed by the Orfeon record company in Istanbul as early as 1910 to sell Moldavian klezmer performances to a local Greek clientele: Goldberg’s *doina* and *sirba* were marketed there as “klephtiko vlachiko” and “sârba” (in Greek letters). See the notes to *Klezmer Music, Early Yiddish Instrumental Music. The First Recordings: 1908-1927, From the Collection of Dr. Martin Schwartz*. Arhoole Folklyric CD 7034, 1997.

the local Moldavian aristocracy and in the theater. In 1887 he emigrated to America, where he founded a klezmer lineage in Philadelphia, with many current descendants. He left his *lăutar* work to his student Costache Parnau (1856-1912) in Bălți.

In the course of the nineteenth century – if not earlier – this cultural process resulted in a mixed Ashkenazic klezmer and Gypsy *lăutar* instrumental repertoire with two distinct branches – Judaized Moldavian dance genres for the Jews, and Moldavianized Jewish genres for the Moldavian Christians. My earlier research on this topic transpired in Brooklyn (NYC), with the great klezmer clarinetist Dave Tarras (1897-1989), during the late 1970s. The Podolian-born Tarras (Tarrasiuk) had studied with the klezmer kapelye of Edineț (North Bessarabia) prior to emigrating to America in 1921. He became the leading immigrant composer in the Bessarabian klezmer/*lăutar* style, recording his own compositions as well as some older items in New York from 1925 until 1979. I published my first article on this topic and on his role in recreating this repertoire in America in 1994 in the journal *Ethnomusicology*.<sup>10</sup>

Since the American immigration from Russian and later Romanian Bessarabia was almost entirely Jewish, there was no way one could then research the corresponding Moldavian adaptation of Jewish dance music. However, unbeknownst to me, at that very time the noted researcher in both Moldavian dance and pastoral music at the Academy of Sciences in Chișinău – Vasile Chiseliță – had been collecting wide material on this very topic. Earlier, Chiseliță had been a student of Zemtsovsky's in Petersburg. But he was only able to publish about this interethnic topic in the post-Communist era.<sup>11</sup>

My own fieldwork on this topic – in Moldova, Romania, Greece, Germany, Canada and Israel – took place between 2011 and 2015, supported through New York University in the United Arab Emirates, where I was then teaching. It began in Mainz, where an elderly Gypsy *lăutar*, Teodor Coman (b. 1930), had emigrated, together with his wife, who was the daughter of the klezmer band-leader of the Marantz family in their North Bessarabian *shtetl* Rașcani. I had first made his acquaintance through the extraordinary Bessarabian folkloric composer and accordionist Emil Croitor – now resident in Tel Aviv. In 2008 I participated in the Other Music Project (based in Weimar), entitled the *Other Europeans*, directed by Alan Bern. Later, in 2011– through my NYU Abu Dhabi faculty research grant – I was able to revisit the Comans in Mainz. My assistant Christina Crowder and I discovered that Teodor's elder brother – trumpeter Dumitru Vasile Coman – had been a principal musical informant for the major notated collection of Moldavian instrumental music, published in Chișinău in 1972.<sup>12</sup> Teodor Coman insisted that, while in the Communist period no musical item could be described as Jewish, in fact more than one quarter of that Moldovan published collection was purely

---

<sup>10</sup> Feldman 1994.

<sup>11</sup> Chiseliță 2006, 2008.

<sup>12</sup> Stoianov 1972.

Jewish (*natural evreiască*) or else Jewish klezmer material somewhat modified to suite the Moldavian taste. According to the terminology I had created first in 1994 and then developed in 2016, these would furnish examples of “transitional” repertoires, being adapted from one folkloric culture into another. And it is to these that we will now turn.

#### TRANSITIONAL REPERTOIRES IN THE MOLDAVIAN *CÂNTEC DE PAHAR*/SONG OF THE CUP

The Transitional Repertoire reflects the reality of the klezmer repertoire as it was documented from the later nineteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries in the Jewish “South” – Galicia, Ukraine and Moldova. It was more distantly reflected in the “Northern” klezmer repertoire of Lithuania, Belarus, and Northern and Central Poland. The melodies in the transitional repertoire displayed clear interaction with the core Jewish repertoire, which resulted in the creation of new hybrid genres. The foreign provenance of the transitional genres was still remembered among klezmerim in the early twentieth century. The genre names included in the Transitional Repertoire are the dances *volekh*, *hora*, *zhok*, *sârba*, *ange*, *londre*, and *bulgarish*, derived from the Romanian words *horă*, *joc*, *sârbă*, *hangu*, *oleandre*, and *bulgărească*. In the non-dance category the most important genre is the *doyne* (*doina*), with the related forms *de zhalea* (*jale*) and *taxim*, all based upon “flowing rhythm.” Evidently these genres were incorporated recently enough for those names to be remembered, at times even outside of the geographical zone where the Romanian language was known. Thus while the klezmerim of Bessarabia also possessed a core Jewish repertoire of a “southern” nature akin to that of Ukraine and Galicia, its place within the total musical system was not identical to the situation elsewhere, due to the larger presence of the “transitional” repertoire.

To understand this process more fully it is essential to recognize the fact that in Moldova there was also a parallel Gentile “transitional” instrumental repertoire, created for Moldavians by the klezmerim and *lăutari*, featuring Yiddish genre names such as *husid* (*husin*), *șaiar* and *freilihs*. This Non-Jewish Transitional Repertoire was based largely on the core klezmer dance repertoire – transformed according to Moldavian musical performance practice (“intonatsia”).<sup>13</sup> One notable result of this mixture was the custom of both Christian and Jewish musicians performing the “Songs of the Cup” (*Cântece de pahar*) or “Songs of the Table” (*Cântece de masă*) at the Christian wedding table, which usually were taken from the klezmer dance melodies termed *Khosid*, in Romanian known as “Husid.” Vasile Chiseliță, at the Academy of Sciences in Chișinău, describes it:

“Connected with the ceremony of the ritual table at the traditional wedding there evolved a distinct musical creation in the rhythm of dance, termed among

<sup>13</sup> See Feldman 2016: 211-213; Zemtsovsky 2012; 2018.

the people Vivat, Dance with the Cup, Song of the Cup, the Sweet Cup, etc. The genre attributes symbolic function to the music, destined specially for celebration, to show honor and homage to the married young couple...<sup>14</sup>

By the 1990s this Wedding Table repertoire was apparently no longer functional, and so it is familiar today only to the oldest generation of musicians. According to ethnomusicologist Speranța Rădulescu, her research in the Botoșani region of Romanian Moldova over the past decade did not reveal a similar wedding repertoire.<sup>15</sup> It would appear that in the twentieth century this repertoire was widespread rather in Bessarabia and (Northern) Bucovina. Our rather limited corpus contains more than one style; some apparently originate in an older layer of Moldavian peasant music, generally of a dance-like character. As described by Chiseliță:

“According to its dance-like character, the melodies of the Cup represent a type of dancing in place or pseudo-dance, which are widespread particularly in Bessarabia... In the process of intercultural communication, that was very intense in the Moldavian (Bessarabian) zone and in Bucovina, gradually there took shape an enrichment of this genre. In the course of the last two centuries a series of new types appeared, centered on certain dances that represented cultural borrowing. In the sphere of the dances of the Cup or the Vivat, three specific dances were integrated, taken over from Jewish folklore: 1) *freilih*; 2) *șaiier* and 3) *husin* or *hussar*. In Bucovina there was also a type of *huțulca* for the table, taken over from the Carpatho-Ruthenian community.”<sup>16</sup>

“Freilih” is derived from the common Jewish circle dance, known in the South as *freylekhs*. “Șaiier” is a form of contra-dance derived from Yiddish “sher.” This had developed in Jewish folklore in the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in all of Jewish Eastern Europe. Its ultimate derivation is from the eighteenth century German contra-dance known then as “scher.” After acquiring Jewish choreographic expression and Jewish instrumental accompaniment it diffused throughout the areas of Eastern Yiddish speech.<sup>17</sup> It was borrowed both in Moldavian and in Ukrainian folklore from the Yiddish – not the German – usage. Known Jewish *sher* melodies have been documented in the performance of entirely Ukrainian brass bands in the Vinnitsa region of Podolia from the later 1980s until the early twenty-first century.<sup>18</sup> Apart from any possible place in the *Cântec de pahar* wedding table repertoire, these dances also had been performed as folk dances during the wedding as well. Many of the other tunes are usually connected with Jewish related examples of the *hangu* and *hora* genres – and with the Istanbul

<sup>14</sup> Chiseliță 2009: 355-56.

<sup>15</sup> Interviewed in Athens in October 2010; see Rădulescu 2007.

<sup>16</sup> Chiseliță op. cit.

<sup>17</sup> Feldman 2016: 261-274.

<sup>18</sup> Loberan 2005.

urban dance *kasap/hassapiko* (“the butchers’ dance”).<sup>19</sup> While the Greek element is no longer distinguished by terminology, many of the tunes had been known to the Moldavians as “husid”, from Yiddish “khusid” or “khosidl.”<sup>20</sup>

Within the klezmer repertoire of the South the *khosid* or *khosidl* represented a distinct musical form, appropriate to accompany an improvised solo dance in a slow tempo, based largely on gestures of the upper body, arms and hands. It was practiced primarily by non-Hasidic Jews, who were by far the majority in Bessarabia. The identical melodies were employed also as a wedding ritual dance for the parents of the bride, known as *makhetonim tants*.<sup>21</sup> This improvised solo dance form was central to the entire choreographic system of East European Jews both in the North and in the South. It was able to be transferred from a wedding ritual context for the older generation, to a hierarchical and mystical Hasidic context, to a non-Hasidic Jewish wedding dance context. None of these choreographic forms had any close relationship to dance concepts current in Moldavian culture. Thus, unlike the *freilihs* and the *șaier*, the *husid* entered the customs of the Moldavian wedding largely divorced from its original choreographic usage. As we will see while examining several specific melodies, the appeal of this genre seems to have been related to its seriousness and dignity, which was evidently deemed appropriate to specific moments of the wedding celebration.<sup>22</sup>

With the dearth of Jewish weddings in the small Bessarabian towns after the 1970s, the remaining local *lăutari* no longer had a need to be familiar with the Jewish versions of the dance. This fact was demonstrated to me rather dramatically in 2008, at the home of *lăutar* Teodor Coman in Mainz. As the German film crew from the Other Europeans Project in Weimar were filming, he and his son – the noted violinist Valeri Coman – attempted to play a formerly well-known Jewish *khosid* melody. This very tune had been recorded by Dave Tarras in New York in 1925. They had evidently not performed it for a long time, so they had to agree on the tempo and rhythmic phrasing. When I rose to perform a few basic dance gestures, Teodor stared, and stopped playing his violin. He looked pleased and announced in Russian: “Tak tantsivali ran’she!” (That’s how they used to dance!).

Thus, the existence of the two corresponding “transitional” instrumental repertoires within Moldova brings to the fore the subtle musicological issues of “intonatsia” and “ethno-hearing.”

<sup>19</sup> Feldman 2020; “The Bulgar: a Transnational Klezmer Dance Genre,” in Feldman 2016: 347-366.

<sup>20</sup> Forty years after the Holocaust they begin to be called “Hussin” or “Hussar,” showing a confusion of categories, now that the *lăutar* musicians were no longer playing at Jewish weddings, or having occasion to speak Yiddish. According to my fieldwork in Chișinău and Edineț (2011-15) both Jewish and non-Jewish Moldavian musicians of the post-WWII generation often refer to a binary Moldavian *hora* performed at a slower tempo and in Jewish style as a “hussar.”

<sup>21</sup> Feldman 2016: 324.

<sup>22</sup> See Feldman 2016: 315-46 (“The Khosidl at the Interface of Mystical and Secular Expression”).

## INTONATSIA AND ETHNO-HEARING

Divergent attitudes of different ethnies toward accepting or rejecting musical material coming from “outside” was already documented among native peoples in the South West of the US in the 1930s.<sup>23</sup> But the most consistent and elegant definitions of the “microlevel” of ethnic performance practices was the discovery of Russian ethnomusicology. This had its beginnings in the later Tsarist era, but was refined and codified in the earlier Soviet period, especially by Boris Asafiev and later by Izaly Zemtsovsky (Petersburg and California). Using terms such as “intonatsiia”<sup>24</sup> in Russian, and “ethno-hearing”<sup>25</sup> in English, this broad theoretical approach posits the existence of a cultural consensus within each ethnos about the expression of many musical features, such as 1) rhythm and tempo on every musical level; 2) about the attacks and approaches to a pitch; 3) to the timbral coloration of the human voice or especially legato musical instruments, etc. While individual musicians may create certain styles or techniques, within a “traditional” and largely oral musical culture, performance practices must meet the approval of the larger society, which set limits on the individual musician:

“A human being perceives the musically meaningful formation (in Russian, *intonatsiia*) and our perception transforms listening into hearing, acoustical sounding into musical intoning. Sound (as such) only indicates the meaning whereas intonatsia creates it in the process of active music performance and perception...Intonatsia is always at the center, between music-making and articulation, and all the three are governed by ethno-hearing.”<sup>26</sup>

Where two or more cultures and languages meet geographically or socially, musical items or whole genres are often borrowed, but only once they have been adapted to the dominant “ethno-hearing” and “intonatsia” of each culture. Within Eastern Europe examples abound; e.g. shared musical genres of Turks and Greeks in the Aegean/Bosphorus area; multi-ethnic “Macedonia”; and shared instrumental repertoires of Moldavians and Jews in Bessarabia. The insider to any of these cultures (or even the musically informed outsider) can immediately perceive whether he or she is listening to a Turkish “zeybek” dance melody or song or to a Greek “zeimbekiko”; to a Moldavian “bulgărească” or to a Jewish “bulgarish”.

The stylistic difference between the Ashkenazic North and the Ashkenazic South was included within the broader distinctive musical “intonatsia” developed by the Eastern Ashkenazim. This distinctive intonatsia for Ashkenazic vocal music

<sup>23</sup> Herzog 1936.

<sup>24</sup> Asafiev 1947, 1987.

<sup>25</sup> Zemtsovsky 2012, 2018.

<sup>26</sup> Zemtsovsky, communication 03/2019.

was already referred to by Beregovski in 1928.<sup>27</sup> Indeed the earliest commentator on the klezmer performance – the Russian musicologist/musician Ivan Lipaev – already sensed something of the workings of this system when he penned these lines in 1904:

“If you listen to and sort out in detail the music of the Jewish musicians you will catch its rhythmic and melodic development, and of necessity at last you will reach the conclusion that all the foreign melodic lines were gradually blended into a single harmonious whole, and reworked within the crucible of the Jewish national feeling and soul. The only thing that was touched rather little was the song ‘Volokh,’ that is, ‘Wallachian,’ but even it, in the end has become unrecognizable.”<sup>28</sup>

Even decades before the term “intonatsia” had acquired its distinctive meaning within Russian musicology, our author anticipates its usage in describing the Jewish klezmer performance and compositional structures. It is striking that even in 1904, and even as far north as Petersburg and Vitebsk – where Lipaev had heard klezmer performances – the Moldavian (“Wallachian”) element in the repertoire was noticeable and distinctive.

The related issues of intonatsia and ethno-hearing impinge on compositional style in many subtle ways that have not been fully explored in almost any musical system in the world. While some aspects of “intonatsia” may be represented through Western staff notation, others demand different kinds of indication or description. The issue of musical intonatsia involves both musical description synchronically, and the creation of hypotheses about diffusion, stability and change diachronically.

One of the most obvious areas amenable to analysis is musical tempo. Within villages and sometimes nearby towns, it is possible to map typical understandings of tempo in dance. Within the same country whole regions may present distinctive usages of tempo for folk dance, whether for the same dance type or for different dances. These differences in tempo imply different conceptions of posture and body movement. Within the borders of modern Greece, for example, differences in dance tempo frequently distinguish folk dances of the mainland from those of the islands. Deeper into Eastern Europe, Ashkenazic Jews consistently had danced at a much slower tempo than neighboring peoples. This had been true even in Moldova, and even in the cases where dance repertoires had been borrowed in both directions. A cultural consensus on tempo will lead to differing treatments of similar

---

<sup>27</sup> Beregovski/Slobin 2001: xii.

<sup>28</sup> Lipaev 1904: 171.

melodic material within neighboring musical cultures wishing to adapt aspects of the neighboring music.

Apart from their cultural specificity within the historical and social relations, the repertoires under discussion here furnish intriguing examples of cultural decisions about performance practice and compositional style. Within the East European Jewish and Moldavian musical cultures the dual “transitional” repertoires present very rich materials to analyze the functioning of *intonatsia*. Of course recorded sound is capable of far-reaching comparative analysis. But even in the cases where only notations survive (which is true for most of our present material), the aspects of identity and divergence point to general rules of ethnic *intonatsia*. Several such cases are evident in the Moldavian Songs of the Cup, to which we will now turn our attention.

#### MUSIC OF KHOSID/HUSID IN THE SONG OF THE CUP

Our earliest documents of this repertoire were notated in 1938 in Romanian-speaking villages in the region of Cernăuți (Czernowitz) by the musicologist Pavel Delion (1913-1997), from a leading local fiddler, Father Ion Chiriac (1893-1986), who was also an Orthodox priest. Delion was then a local music teacher, and his fieldwork was as part of an expedition organized by the noted Romanian sociologist Professor Dimitrie Gusti. In this pre-Holocaust collection, the largest part of the *cântec de pahar* melodies are described as “Husid.”<sup>29</sup> Most of the *cântece de pahar* have a dance-like character, but usually not closely related to any twentieth-century Moldavian dance repertoire. Connections with various East European Jewish repertoires occur, coupled with the fact that the *cântec de pahar* repertoire is open to new Jewish additions, these appear significant to the genesis of the genre. A substantial group of such “Songs of the Cup” were recorded in the 1950s and 1960s in the villages of Bessarabia, and published by Professor Petr Stoianov in 1972.<sup>30</sup>

Although instrumental wedding melodies appear in both inter-War and more recent Moldavian collections, for our purposes we will focus on the pre-Holocaust repertoire of Chiriac, collected by Delion, and the somewhat larger corpus edited by Stoianov. The other wedding tunes in Stoianov (e.g. no. 413 or 416) are in an

<sup>29</sup> These were published by Pavel Delion (Delion 1994). I owe my acquaintance with this rare publication to Christina Crowder. The klezmer connections of this extremely interesting collection – including also *horas*, *sârbas* and *bulgăreascas* – will have to await a separate study.

<sup>30</sup> Inexplicably, the recent comprehensive *Antologie de folclor muzical...* (Blajinu 2002) contains no examples of the important wedding table genre, although he does reproduce other pieces from the Stoianov collection. Blajinu includes a short section of “Melodii lăutărești,” which are mainly lăutar *horas*.

instrumental *lăutar* style of the later nineteenth century, which are written “ad libitum” and are meant for violin, or in the style of the *horă lăutărească* in 6/8, with long held notes, frequent ornaments and runs (e.g. the *cântecul miresei*, “song of the bride” no. 366). A number of weddings tunes of Chiriac use these structures as well (no. 9, no. 10). The table songs in Stoianov however are always metrical and rather symmetrical in structure; in general they occupy the interface between dance music and song. One piece that is metrically more full (i.e. running 16<sup>th</sup> notes) and is arpeggiated is described by Stoianov as *joc cu paharul* (“dance with the cup”); although some of the “songs of the cup” have the same character (e.g. no. 330). Stoianov’s no. 337 seems to be one such tune (also in the repertoire of the late German Goldenshtayn, 1934-2006, a Jewish clarinetist from Ataci, northern Bessarabia, who was documented in early 21st century Brooklyn). All of these sources demonstrate that a dance-related instrumental repertoire of Jewish origin was played for listening at peasant weddings in Moldova, probably more in Bessarabia and Northern Bucovina than in the Regat. However, during a field trip to Iași in the 1990s, the Romanian ethnomusicologist Florin Bucescu had told Christina Crowder that many *husid* (*husin*) tunes were known for the christening (*botez*) ceremony.<sup>31</sup>

Three of Chiriac’s *cântece de pahar* are entitled “husid.” These three are part of a large group of 14 tunes in the collection described there as “husid.” While the modern editor of the collection does not understand the meaning of the term, it is of course the Yiddish term for a slower, usually solo men’s dance (*khosidl*), mentioned above. By the post-War generation in Moldova *husid* was sometimes corrupted to “husin” or “hussar,” and then confused with *freyliks*. According the Moldavian fiddler Teodor Coman (b. 1930 and interviewed in 2011 in Mainz), in his time the term *freyliks* was more common in Edineț and Lipcani, and *hussar* in Soroca and Bălți. Coman had learned a substantial *husid* repertoire from his Jewish violin teacher, who had studied in the Moscow Conservatory. Delion claims that Chiriac had studied the published violin method of Leopold Auer (St. Petersburg Conservatory) as an autodidact; but it seems unlikely that he could have achieved his notable success only by studying these books. Most probably he had also learned from a local klezmer or *lăutar* fiddler who had studied there. In general some towns of Northern Moldova had a rather sophisticated musical life, with a number of technically proficient musicians. The *khosidl* was a dominant folk genre, and so it must have been for Chiriac, growing up in the same region a generation earlier, where Jewish professional musicians held a very significant role in musical life. Two of his *husids* had the function of table drinking songs. A fourth *husid* (no. 13) was used for yet another part of the wedding, involving the crowning of the bride.

---

<sup>31</sup> Crowder: oral communication 2011.

Ex. 1a: Husid (Ion Chiriac, 1938)<sup>32</sup>

This “Husid” no. 13, the most elaborate in Chiriac’s collection, was immediately familiar, first through its ca. 1912 recording by the klezmer Belf Orchestra from Podolia as “Na Rasvete” (At Dawn) a wedding ritual tune, then its 1927 recording by the Abe Schwartz Orchestra in New York as “Baym Rebbes Tish” (At the Rebbe’s Table). In the same year it was also recorded by the clarinetist Kosta Gadinis, born in Siatista in Greek Macedonia in 1885, who lived in New York since 1915 and died there in 1987<sup>33</sup>. Issued for a Greek audience in America, Gadinis entitled his tune “Chasapiko Roumaniko.” This is of course a reference to the other major genre shared by Moldavians, Jews and Greeks – the *kasap/hassapiko/sârba* – rather than to the *khosid/husid* per se, which probably

<sup>32</sup> All the following musical examples were expertly digitized by Ms. Christina Crowder, to whom I remain grateful.

<sup>33</sup> Kokkonis 2016.

would not have borne any meaning in Greek society. Nevertheless, Gadinis's version of this melody – while played considerably faster than any Jewish version, and conforming thoroughly to a Greek “intonatsia” – agrees in each of its three sections with these two recorded klezmer versions from Ukraine and from New York. This would suggest that Gadinis had actually learned the tune from klezmerim after his emigration there.<sup>34</sup>

The musical score for "Na Rasvete" is presented in a single system with six staves of music. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 2/4. The score includes several trills (marked with a '3') and repeat signs with first and second endings. The measures are numbered at the beginning of each staff: 10, 18, 28, 35, and 42. The piece concludes with a final note and a fermata.

Ex. 1b: “Na Rasvete” (Belf Orchestra, ca. 1912)

Of course in New York this musical/ethnic ambiguity was not a subject for scholarly papers, but rather for commercial speculation by record producers with specific ethnic clientele. And in this early period American academia took no interest in the documentation of the music of the recent immigrants – especially from Eastern Europe, who would be barred from entering the country after 1924. So, unlike the situation that would develop in the inter-war and post-World War II in nations like Greece, Romania or the Soviet Socialist Republic of Moldova, there was no official institution dedicated to safe-guarding the ethnic purity of the musical expression of these various immigrant groups in America.

<sup>34</sup> See a notated comparison in Ottens and Rubin 1999.

The opening four-measures of both tunes are basically identical – there can be little doubt that Chiriac was using something very like the known klezmer version as his reference. However, the two melodies diverge considerably thereafter. The fact that Chiriac uses the second section as a ritornello – a feature absent from Jewish versions of the tune – is also a major difference. What we may call the “common” Jewish version constitutes a very distinctive composition. While in general it may be subsumed in my category of “three section khosidl in Freygish”,<sup>35</sup> its construction is somewhat more elaborate than any of them. Its melodic periods are particularly long – basically two units of 8 quarters, totaling 16 quarter notes. This feature alone tends to separate it from the khosidl as a dance genre. It is also not entirely unlikely that the Ottoman military (mehter) *peşrev* may have furnished a distant model for pieces with this relationship of melody and rhythmic cycle.<sup>36</sup> Thus it is probably not accidental that neither of its two commercial titles refer to dance explicitly. The Belf orchestra’s Russian title “Na Rasvete” (*At Dawn*) would seem to refer to it as a Gas Nign – a “Street Melody” played to accompany the guests through the streets of the shtetl, as the wedding was breaking up, usually toward dawn. Abe Schwartz’s title refers rather to an explicitly Hasidic environment at the table (“tish”) of a Hasidic *rebbe*. This ceremonial table was the scene of a great deal of singing and at times of instrumental klezmer melodies “for listening,” but not for dancing.

Beyond the opening four measures, however, the Moldavian melody shares very little with the Jewish original. It is entirely more symmetrical, without the elaborate musical “rhetoric” which distinguishes each of the three sections of the klezmer melody. Likewise it dispenses with the four measure cadence which is repeated at the end of each section. Nevertheless, its material seems to be drawn from other, somewhat more dance-like Jewish examples of the khosid genre. A good example of its possible sources is the tune recorded in New York in 1916 by the noted Romanian klezmer cimbalom-virtuoso Joseph Moscovitz, as “Sadegurer Khosid.”

Utilizing very similar melodic material to “Baym Rebbes Sude,” Moscovitz’s tune is entirely more dance-like, featuring shorter melodic periods and more striking rhythmic figures. Its descending cadential formula in section III is almost identical the descending phrase in Chiriac’s section III. The origin of this melody among klezmerim of the Sadegura Rebbe – precisely within the Bucovian geographic zone in which Ion Chiriac lived – would strongly suggest that he had combined such phrases with the original klezmer melody found in the Jewish sources. It is even not impossible that such a combination had already been accomplished by klezmerim in the region, as Sadegura/Vizhnitz had a particularly

<sup>35</sup> Feldman 2016: 338-342.

<sup>36</sup> This thesis was part of my recent (2020) research as a fellow in the Oxford Seminar in Advanced Jewish Studies, under the title: “Ottoman Musical Sources as Antecedents for the Ottoman Stock within the Klezmer Musical Fusion”.

rich Hasidic klezmer tradition. The most well-known representative of this tradition was the tune later made famous in early twentieth century Palestine as the secular Hebrew song “Hava Nagila.”<sup>37</sup>

Ex. 2: Sadegurer Khosid (Moscowitz, 1916)

The extended Romanian footnote after Husid no. 13 contained rather surprising information, describing a peasant custom after the Orthodox Christian wedding and the wedding feast:

“Monday morning, after the conclusion of the ‘first walk,’ an older sister or another older female, removes the bridal headpiece. The bride then takes a headscarf and also a round decorated cap made of covered cardboard called a *cârpă*, and also known as a ‘fes’. A long embroidered gauze scarf reaching down to the waist is draped around the headpiece (*cârpă*) of the young married woman. After the wedding, the special embroidered scarf is replaced by an everyday shawl or headscarf. The *cârpă*, covered by the headscarf, is a symbol of marriage and is worn into old age.”

So, in this case we can see the ritualized, rather ceremonial musical character, not related to the older generation, but rather to the newly acquired status of the bride as a married woman. Evidently, in this Orthodox Christian peasant community, this enhanced status was expressed in the serious musical terms used by the Jewish khosidl. One can only surmise about the many generations of deep intercultural interactions that brought about such a musical and social result.

<sup>37</sup> I discuss this in my book chapter “Have a Hora: Coming to Terms with Hava Nagila”, in my book in progress *The Elusive Klezmer*.

Ex. 3a: “La Nuntă”, Stoianov no. 169, Mokra, Dubăsari

This piece is one of the earliest transcriptions in the Stoianov Collection. It had been notated by the well-known musician Vladimir Kurbet in the village Mokra, in the Transnistrian region of Dubossari/Dubăsari in 1949. Although the editor did not include it within the “Cântec de Pahar” category, its title “La Nuntă” (At the Wedding) suggests it must have had a related function. The klezmer imprint on the repertoire of another well-known inter-War Transnistrian folkloric collection<sup>38</sup> helps to explain the evidently close link of the this Moldavian melody with a Jewish source. The prominent klezmerim of Dubăsari in this period are also mentioned by Moshe Bik in his Hebrew article on klezmerim of Central Bessarabia.<sup>39</sup>

This was evidently a well-known tune, as it was recorded by Belf in Europe and was among Dave Tarras’s first American recording, in 1925, under the title “Sha di Shviger Kumt.” (“Quiet, the Mother-in Law Comes”). Tarras stemmed from a Hasidic klezmer lineage (the Tarrasiuks) from the same Podolian region of Ukraine where the Belf Orchestra seems to have been based. Belf’s title, meaning “The Rabbi’s [or the Rebbe’s] Havdole,” refers to the custom of Hasidim in Ukraine to dance with the rebbe after the close of the Sabbath, during the Havdalah ceremony (Yid. Havdole, written in Russian as “Gavdule”). Tarras’s title, on the other hand, refers to the ritual dance of the mother in law at the wedding. As I have shown elsewhere, the identical corpus of tune were used by misnagdim as wedding

<sup>38</sup> Korchinski 1937.

<sup>39</sup> Bik 1964.

ritual tunes and by Hasidim as sacred dance tunes, or by misnagdim as *khosidl* tunes, imitating Hasidim.<sup>40</sup>

Ex. 3b: “Sha di Shviger Kumt” (Dave Tarras, NYC, 1925, “Dem Rebns Gavdule”, Belf Orchestra, ca. 1912)

I discuss the Tarras version<sup>41</sup> as part of the “rhythmically dense *khosidl* repertoire in minor.” Unusually, each of the three sections of this melody is created in a large rhythmic unit of 12/4, i.e. in 6 units of 2/4. This rhythmic break-up is also suggestive of the Ottoman *usul* (rhythmic cycle) *çember*, in 12/4, which was common in the *peşrev* genre. Each one of these sections contains a kind of 2 measure “motif.” This motif appears as measures 3 and 4 of section I; in the same position within section II; and as part of the long cadence in section III. Of course such a prominent motif would be reflected in the gestural dance movements of the solo dancer.

Kurbet’s transcription reveals “La Nuntă” to be essentially the same melody, but with several significant differences. Perhaps most strikingly, the 2 measure motif is totally absent. What we do see is a variant of the motif in section II, measure 3 and 4. Tarras also performs it in this way, but as a variant of the basic motif. But La Nuntă lacks any reference to this motif in its opening section I or closing section III. The twelve-beat construction of the *khosidl* is retained in La Nuntă’s sections II and III. But it is strangely absent from section I, which has a

<sup>40</sup> Feldman 2016: 323-325.

<sup>41</sup> Idem: 344.

simply symmetrical repetition of 4 measures, totaling 8. This absence also does not permit the “rising” melody to fully express itself. Thus the two remaining sections – which are very close to the Jewish version – seem to lack their fundamental reference point in the original section I of the *khosidl* melody.

Another Moldavian treatment of a *khosid* melody can be seen in the Stoianov Collection *Hora* no. 155, played by Dumitru Vasile Coman, recorded in Chişinău in 1969. But a comparison with the known klezmer *khosid* repertoire reveals it to be a version of the tune recorded ca. 1912 as a “Khosidl” by the Podolian klezmer ensemble going under the name “Belf.” These pre-WWI Belf recordings are major sources for the *Khosid* repertoire, and I include this on my comparative chart,<sup>42</sup> along with the parallel version in the Beregovski klezmer collection.<sup>43</sup> We will analyze the *khosidl* first.

Ex. 4a: *Hora* no. 155, from the playing of Dumitru Vasile Coman, Chişinău 1969, in the Stoianov Collection, 1972

Ex. 4b: *Khosidl*, as recorded by the Belf Orchestra, ca. 1912

<sup>42</sup> Idem: 334.

<sup>43</sup> I summarize here a much longer analysis from my book, chapter 14, pp. 333-336.

A transcription alone could never convey the actual musical communication of this *khosidl*. The clarinet (perhaps Belf himself?) leads the melody throughout. The tempo is remarkably slow at 72, although it will gradually pick up somewhat. By the second measure the clarinet takes advantage of the intonational capacity of the instrument by micro-tonally varying the pitch of the G note. The measure 5 is announced by a strong emphasis on E while the sixteenth notes of the descending sequence beginning in the next measure are notably uneven, and generally somewhat rushed. In the second measure of section (II) the opening D note is varied much like the note B had been in the previous section, and the descending sixteenth notes are noticeably slurred rhythmically. Beregovski documented the same tune (this time called *freylekhs*) from the clarinetist Barkagan (no. 146). The notes are identical, and the tempo mark at *allegro moderato* is the same as the faster tempo Belf reaches toward the end of the recording.<sup>44</sup>

The Belf *Khosidl*, like most of the Shabbos *zmiros*<sup>45</sup> has two sections of eight measures each. The first section uses a minor pentachord, of which the significant melodic movement is from the first to the fourth degree. The fifth degree appears only fleetingly in the middle of the third measure as a kind of variant of the melody stated in the opening two measures. In the later measures the fifth appears as two sixteenth notes as part of a descending sequence. As in the vocal examples Frigyesi analyzes, the second section begins on the third degree of the initial minor pentachord (G), and leaps to the fifth (d). When the major third degree (B) appears in the second measure we are aware that a major triad is being played, and this major third will continue throughout the eight measures of this section. Nevertheless, the melody displays no characteristic of a true major, reaching no higher than the fifth degree with no larger movement in thirds either upward or downward. The melody will return to the first section and will eventually close there, reinforcing the impression that it is basically a minor tetrachord. The melody of section (2) thus appears to base itself upon the third degree of a minor pentachord, a kind of modal variation within the minor.

The distinctiveness of the structure of this *khosidl* is brought out by contrasting it with essentially the same melody as it entered a neighboring non-Jewish repertoire, in this case the Moldavian. As Dumitru Vasile's brother Teodor pointed out, in 1969 no instrumental piece could be described officially as "Jewish" or titled with a klezmer-derived genre name, so this husid tune was included in the Stoianov collection as a "horă".

While we do not have access to any recording of Coman's version, the form the notation takes is in itself revealing. First of all, the chapter heading of the hora section gives a generic tempo mark for *hora* from 120-138 = <quarter note>.

<sup>44</sup> This can be heard on the reissue of "Klezmer Music: Early Yiddish Instrumental Music: 1908-1927. From the Collection of Dr. Martin Schwartz," Arhoolie Folklyric CD, 1997, track 20.

<sup>45</sup> Frigyesi 1998.

Thus, even at its slowest possible tempo this piece was played at almost twice the tempo of the Belf recording (!). This fact alone would demand a very different performance practice. There are other striking differences. We can locate section I of the Belf *Khosidl* as section II of *Hora* no. 155, where it is virtually identical. However section (Ib) of the hora (which is section II in the *khosidl*) begins with four measures that are somewhat different both rhythmically and modally from the *Khosidl*. Since these measures are no longer a “middle” section, modulating from an initial section in a minor pentachord, the “re-composer” (whether Coman or another Moldavian musician) felt free to alter the rhythmic structure so that it is no longer parallel to the other section of the tune. He will return to the Ashkenazic matrix when he reaches his second section, whose difference from the Jewish original is minimal. But the entire feeling of modal progression that links the two sections of the Jewish piece no longer functions in the Moldavian tune. Evidently this difference was intentional and was indicative of both what the Moldavian audience wanted to take and what they did not want to adopt from the Jewish *khosidl*.

Both the popular music in Istanbul and klezmer music in Galicia and Bucovina furnish intriguing parallels for another tune in the *cântec de pahar* repertoire. Stoianov includes as *cântec de pahar* piece, notated in 1966 (no. 338), which had also been recorded around 1910 by the Galician klezmer violinist Iosif Solinski as “Rumeinische Fantazi no. 3.” Although his biography is obscure, it appears that Solinski – who recorded several sides in Lvov – originated in the region of Kolomey, in the extreme southeast of Galicia, bordering on Bucovina. The popularity of this mixed form in Istanbul gave rise to the new genre with the obscure name “longa,” which the Turks regard as originating in “Eflak-Bogdan” (“Moldo-Wallachia”). These were often used as the final item of a *fasil* suite in the nightclubs (*gazino*) of the capital, rather than as real dance music. The well-known dance tune published in Istanbul in 1912 (by Şamli Selim) as “Nihavent Sirto” by the violinist Kevser Hanim. Kevser Hanım’s original title utilized the term “sirto”, taken from Greek folklore (*syрто*), because by the early twentieth century the Romanian-origin *longa* and the Greek-origin term *sirto* (which had appeared somewhat earlier in Turkish urban music, by the mid-nineteenth century), were becoming confused. This can be seen as well in Tanburi Cemil Bey’s recording of his “Nihavent Sirto” from the same period, which is structurally a *longa*. A modern Turkish editor of Kevser Hanım piece refers to it as “longa,” since by the late twentieth century the term “sirto” was no longer in use for this genre. In fact a recent CD from Istanbul refers to this change in terminology in its title: “Sirto’dan Longa’ya” (*From Sirto to Longa*).

Although linguistically identical to the Greek dance form “*syрто*,” in fact the Turkish “sirto” is derived from the Romanian term “*sârbă*.” In Istanbul this had been an alternative term for *hassapiko sirba* (= Turk. *Kasap Havası*), the dance of the butchers’ guild (Stelyo Berberis, oral communication, 2012). Early Turkish

sources also refer to this dance as “sirba.” This very confusion of the Romanian and Greek musical elements (together with Jewish components) also indicates how these musical cultures had been blended throughout the Phanariot era and into the nineteenth century, and were regarded as virtually one by the Turks of Istanbul. Thus in the “mentalité” of the Turks in the turn of the century Ottoman capital, at a period when almost all of the former European provinces had been lost (following wars and treaties in 1878, 1909 and 1912), these Danubian tunes must have provided a bitter-sweet nostalgia. Thus in this case, we come full circle with Turkish, klezmer and Moldavian versions of the same item.

Ex. 5a: *Cântec de pahar* no. 338 (recorded in 1966, Florești)

No. 338 was also in the repertoire of German Goldenshtayn (1934-2006), as a Jewish tune, and his version was virtually identical to the one in Stoianov. Both of these in turn agree in most details with the recording made ca. 1910 by the Galician klezmer fiddler Solinski. The Turkish version – first published in 1912 by a well-known female violinist who taught in the Istanbul Conservatory, and still rather popular today in almost identical form – differs in several respects from the Galician and Moldavian versions. Nevertheless, the overall melodic direction, rhythmic formulas, and division into sections of the Turkish piece are essentially identical with its northern cousins. It is not at all impossible that the Moldavian versions documented after World War II were influenced earlier by the diffusion of Solinski’s recording, which was on a European label and may have been sold in inter-war Romania. On the other hand, Solinski put his piece into a series of four

sides that he named “Rumeinishe Fantasi,” indicating either that he was reworking previously known Moldavian *lăutar* or Moldavian klezmer material, or else composing new pieces in that style; quite possibly a mixture of both processes.

The musical score is written in a single system with five staves. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 2/4. The first staff begins with a circled '1' above the first measure. The second staff starts at measure 6. The third staff starts at measure 12 and contains a circled '2' above the first measure of its section. The fourth staff starts at measure 18 and contains a circled '3' above the first measure of its section. The fifth staff starts at measure 23 and ends with a double bar line and repeat dots. The music consists of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some rests and dynamic markings.

Ex. 5b: “Nihavent Sirto/Longa” (Kevser Hanım, Istanbul 1912)

But if the klezmer fiddle and cimbal recording may possibly have been also known in Istanbul, we would expect Kevser Hanım’s version to be much closer to the purported “original.” On the other hand it is doubtful that she could have claimed to be the “composer” of a piece that was widely known as a foreign composition. According to the Bucovinian fiddler Leon Schwartz (interviewed in New York in 1980) klezmer fiddlers from his region still occasionally visited Istanbul early in the twentieth century, and he had in his repertoire a “Turkish Prayer” (Terkisher Gebet) that such a klezmer fiddler created in Istanbul and brought back with him to Bucovina. Today only a few Turkish musical experts still connect Kevser Hanım with her “Nihavent Sirto”, which is widely played in Istanbul as the “Nihavent Longa.” This melody is too distinctive to be a reworking of a folkloric “archetype,” there must have been a composer at work. Quite possibly the Turkish, the Moldavian and the Galician klezmer versions all go back to a lost “original.” Perhaps this had been created by a klezmer or *lăutar* musician of the previous one or two generations, but his identity has evidently been lost to posterity. Nevertheless the piece or pieces that we have, in versions dating from 1910 to 1966 and later, exemplify this strikingly transnational process, leaving its

mark on the old gazino music of Istanbul, on the former klezmer music from Galicia to Moldova, and on the *cântec de pahar* of Moldova.

The *cântec de pahar* and the klezmer “fantazi” are nearly identical – it is the Turkish “sırto/longa” that stands somewhat apart, although nonetheless sharing the basic musical material. While Solinski’s violin performance is truly masterful, his version is slightly more symmetrical than the Moldovan version. This is seen especially in section III which begins with an identical ‘a’ measure in major, repeated four measures later. In the Moldovan version, in place of an a-b-c-d structure the identical major-like modulation does not repeat after four measures but rather leaps up over an octave – from A to high c, and recapitulates the higher ambitus of the second half of section I.

Section I of the Turkish *sırto* echoes something of the rising ambitus of the Moldavian and Galician versions. But its section II major modulation is created within a highly symmetrical a-a-a-b structure that the other versions avoid. The minor returns in its section III, but with a more symmetrical rising and descending structure than in the others. On the basis of the publication/recording dates alone it would be difficult to prove the priority of the Turkish or the klezmer/lăutar versions. On the whole the striking originality of the latter versions suggest that the Turkish melody – which specifically echoes “Wallachian” prototypes – is somehow a reworking of a more complex melody originating somewhere in the Danubian territories.

#### BETWEEN MEMORY AND IDEOLOGY

Interviews today can no longer supply a cogent rationale for the full nature of this cultural combination seen in the Song of the Cup, which was already at the edge of living folk memory even when the earliest scientific documentation was undertaken in the late 1930s. We are left with analysis of the music itself, in its Moldovan, Jewish, Greek and even Turkish manifestations. It has been possible for researchers to compile some data on the past musical collaboration of klezmer and lăutar musicians, in a large zone stretching from Bucovina and Bessarabia all the way to Istanbul, since the second half of the eighteenth century. In the case of the Jewish klezmerim and the Moldovan lăutari there are documents, biographies and some interviews dating from the 1980s until the present that can shed light on this musical and social symbiosis.

In this case we are not dealing only with the Jewish klezmer musicians as skilled interpreters of an existing local musical style. Rather, from an early period the klezmerim took an active role in interpreting and shaping how this music developed. At the same time they were interpreting more typically Moldavian musical forms for a Jewish public. The creations of the Moldovan klezmerim and their lăutar partners became known among Jewish communities first of all in neighboring Galicia and Podolia, but also further north, into Belarus. They also seem to have inspired imitations among these local klezmerim. In their American

immigration two such klezmerim – Naftule Bradwein (d. 1963) from Galicia, and Dave Tarras (d. 1989) from Podolia – became active creators in this Bessarabian instrumental style. The *lăutari* fulfilled a similar function, interpreting and reshaping the creations of the Jewish musical culture for their Moldavian Christian clientele. In the case of the fiddler Ion Chiriac, he could fulfill this cultural function even while having the social role of an Orthodox priest.

Far beyond Moldova itself, we can observe the reflexes of this musical creativity in parts of Greece and in Istanbul, and then among the Jewish and Greek immigrant musicians in America, roughly between 1880 and 1950. Thanks to the existence of a commercial market for the 78 rpm recordings made in Istanbul, Athens and New York there exists sound documentation of at least certain movements within this broad musical phenomenon. Due to the demographic exigencies of emigration, however, these documents focused more on Jewish klezmerim from Ukraine and Moldova/Romania and Christian musicians from Northern Greece and Istanbul than on Moldovan *lăutari*, who did not usually form part of this emigration.

A secondary issue is how this material has reached us, and how its preservation and dissemination was viewed in the recent past by successive national governments within the Republic of Moldova and Romania, and by their scholarly and musical institutions. To a lesser extent both Greece and Turkey occasionally contribute some ideological or historical perspective. These official attitudes also affected musical scholarship, and hence the generally available interpretation of the nature of the musical relations of the past. In 1938 P. Delion could document an Orthodox priest/fiddler who described a substantial peasant wedding repertoire under the Yiddish name “*husid*.” But by 1972 – when Petr Stoianov published his musical anthology – nothing Jewish could exist as a musical category. Stoianov, although he was able to label the music of his own ethnic community as “Bulgarian,” could not use the term “Jewish” (*evreiească*) for a musical item. Nevertheless, his valuable collection abounds in Jewish klezmer tunes in the *horă*, *joc*, *hangu* and *bulgărească* genres, in addition to those in the *cântec de pahar*. With the emigration of most remaining Jews from smaller towns in Moldova in this same period (post-1970), and the decline of knowledge of the Yiddish language among the local *lăutari*, even the Yiddish name of the *khosid* genre – formerly simply adopted into Romanian as “*husid*,” became distorted into forms like “*husn*” and even “*hussar*.” Knowledge of the origin of the genre seems to have been largely forgotten or to have been suppressed in official publications.

As far back as 1972, while a Ph.D. candidate at Columbia University in New York – working on Soviet Moldova for a graduate seminar – I became aware of this issue. I was informed by a recently arrived Jewish immigrant – a former programmer for Radio Moscow – that presenting Moldavian folk music was a problem. Why? I queried. This was because so much of it was obviously Jewish, she explained. Over the past several years I have observed something of these

cultural and political dynamics in my conversations with Emil Croitor in Tel Aviv, who is perhaps the last major Jewish composer in Moldavian *lăutar* style. While he is himself a South Moldovan (from Cahul), he is acutely aware of the Jewish element in the older Northern style and repertoire. Some of his compositions attempt to blend both styles, and are still popular in Moldova long after he had immigrated to Israel in the mid-1990s. From my conversations with Croitor it became clear that by the 1970s cultural authorities in Chişinău had decided to encourage musical integration with Bucharest and with other regions of Romania. For the South of Moldova this was a fairly natural pattern, but for the North and some parts of Central Moldova it represented a drastic change from the local musical styles.

Within the Republic of Moldova this has become virtually an “invisible” issue. It has left no “paper-trail,” and even the recordings of the radio in Chişinău from that era (1950s and 1960s) do not seem to have been preserved. Within both the radio and the Conservatory system the entire issue of the local history of the small-town musical traditions has been virtually erased. The same had been true of the repertoire presented during the Soviet period by the official Moldovan folk-dance troupe *Joc* (“Zhok”). When I observed their performance in Istanbul during the 1980s I was struck by the almost total absence of Bessarabian dances – let alone the Moldavianized Jewish dances – and the presence of many “borrowings” from various provinces of Romania quite distant from the Moldavian regions of that country.

In the decades following World War II only one small-scale study with notated musical examples (about the Central Bessarabian town Orhei) was published at all – but in Israel and in the Hebrew language.<sup>46</sup> Within Moldova the noted ethnomusicologist Vasile Chiseliţă, at the Academy of Sciences, has been collecting material since the 1980s and has been publishing on this topic after the fall of the Soviet system. Only in our most recent research in the Northern town Edineţ (2011-2015) has it been possible to make contact with the older generation of local *lăutari* (especially Tolea Ciobanu, Vanea Popov, and the late Aurel Ghada) who still recalled something of this earlier cultural dynamic. The current Edineţ band-leader Popov also integrates aspects of the local style into his more recent compositions.

#### CONCLUSION

Moldova/Bessarabia has evolved patterns of dealing with its ethnic diversity that cannot be reduced to a simple competition of two or even three large ethnicities. The continued multiplicity of ethnicities (Romanians, Ukrainians, Russians, Jews, Gypsies, Bulgarians, Gagauz and Tatars; in the past also Greeks, Turks, Armenians and Germans), and some degree of assimilation and exchange of

---

<sup>46</sup> Bik 1964.

identities, resembles other multiethnic regions, such as Greek or Yugoslav Macedonia, rather than more homogeneous and politically hegemonic states such as the Regat core of the Kingdom of Romania. It also differs from a binarily divided and contested territory, such as Kosovo (Kosova), with its competing Serb and Albanian identities.

Musically the “Songs of the Cup” or “Songs of the Table” of the Moldovan peasant wedding of the recent past display a lively dialogue among the ethnicities that had formerly played dominant roles in the musical life, and to some degree also in the society of Moldova/Bessarabia. Most prominently we can see the Romanian-speaking Moldovans, their partly Roma *lăutar* sub-group, and the Ashkenazic Jews, with their musicians class, the *klezmorim*. Second to these are the Greeks with their links to the Ottoman capital Istanbul, all of which had become historical memories by the post-World War I era. Within this complex it is striking that the Moldovan peasant culture encouraged a musical expression for what might be seen as the most religious and the most secular extremes within this entire complex. These were the Hasidically tinged Jewish wedding dance known as “*khosid*,” on the one hand, together with the memories of the *kasap* dance of the butchers’ guild of Istanbul (related to the Moldovan *sârbă* and *bulgărească*) on the other. Together these were part of the dual “transitional repertoires” of instrumental folk music in Moldova – one consisting of Moldovan dance genres altered for the Jewish taste, and the other based on Jewish dance genres composed or performed according to the Moldovan taste. In addition both communities developed melodies based on earlier Greco-Turkish tunes reflecting both Moldovan and Jewish musical practices.

Thus it is of extreme interest to observe both how the musicians themselves, and how the cultural consensus of their respective communities acted to shape the “transitional” repertoires. These repertoires of Moldovans and of Jews evidence both an interest and a respect for the cultural productions of their neighbors speaking a different language and practicing a different religion. In a sense this Moldovan and international research – modest though it is in scope – can furnish a heuristically sound model in approaching several zones where cultures have experienced many generations of musical contact. And of course South Eastern Europe is extremely rich in such territories. Thus it is only by examining and comparing various musical, historical and ethnographic documents – along with some modern interviews – that something of these complex ethnic and musical interactions of the recent past can be reconstructed and defined.

#### REFERENCES

- Asafiev, Boris, *Muzykal'naia form kak protses* (Musical Form as Process), Moscow, 1947.  
 ———, *O narodnoi muzyke* (About Folk Music), edited by Izalij Zemtsovskij and Alma Kunanbaeva, Leningrad, Muzyka, 1987.  
 Beregovski, Moyshe, *Evreiskaia narodnaia instrumental'naia muzyka* (Jewish Instrumental Folk Music), ed. by M. Goldin, Moscow, 1987.

- \_\_\_\_\_, *Jewish Instrumental Folk Music: The Collections and Writings of Moshe Beregovski*, ed. and transl. by Mark Slobin, Syracuse, 2001; second edition of 2014, revised by Kurt Bjorling.
- Bik, Moshe, *Klezmorim be-Orgeev* (Klezmorim in Orhei), Haifa, Publications of the Haifa Music Museum and Library, 1964.
- Blajinu, Dumitru (ed) *Antologie de folclor muzical: 1107 melodii și cântece din Moldova istorică* (Anthology of Musical Folklore: 1107 Tunes and Songs from Historic Moldavia), Constanța, 2002.
- Chiseliță, Vasile, “Probleme de clasificare a muzicii de dans din Bucovina și Basarabia” (Classifying Issues for the Dance Music in Bukovina and Bessarabia), *Arta*, Chișinău, Institutul pentru Studiul Artelor, 2005: 68-81.
- \_\_\_\_\_, “Rezonanțe culturale evreiești în muzica instrumentală de dans din Moldova și Bucovina” (Jewish Cultural Resonances in the Instrumental Dance Music in Moldova and Bukovina), *Republica Moldova – casa noastră comună. Materialele Conferinței. Culegere de lucrări științifice*, Chișinău. Ed. Business-elita, 2006: 97-115.
- \_\_\_\_\_, “Interferențe culturale evreiești în muzica tradițională de dans din Basarabia și Bucovina” (Jewish Cultural Interferences in the Traditional Dance Music in Bessarabia and Bukovina), *Anuarul Institutului de Etnografie și Folclor “Constantin Brăiloiu”*, București, Editura Academiei Române, 19/2008: 201-222.
- \_\_\_\_\_, “Muzica tradițională de dans” (Traditional Dance Music), in *Arta muzicală a Republicii Moldova* (Musical Art of the Republic of Moldova), Chișinău, 2009: 355-56.
- \_\_\_\_\_, “Rezonanțe ieșene și basarabene în biografia muzicienilor Lemisch: surse, dileme, controverse” (Resonances from Iași and Bessarabia in the Biography of the Lemisch musicians), *Anuarul Muzeului Literaturii Române*, Iași 5/2012: 47-64.
- Delion, Pavel, *Folclorul muzical din Vancicăuți, Balcăuți, Cernăuți* (Musical folklore in Vancicăuți, Balcăuți, Cernăuți), Iași, 1994.
- Feldman, Walter Zev, “Bulgăreasca, Bulgarish, Bulgar: the Transformation of a Klezmer Dance Genre,” *Ethnomusicology* 38/5/1 (Winter) 1994: 1-36. Revised version in Mark Slobin (ed.), *American Klezmer: Its Roots and Offshoots*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2002: 84-124.
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Music of the Ottoman Court: Makam, Composition and the Early Ottoman Instrumental Repertoire*, Berlin, VWB, 1996.
- \_\_\_\_\_, *Klezmer: Music, History and Memory*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2016.
- \_\_\_\_\_, “The Music of the Transnational Kasap Dance, from Moldova to Istanbul, Athens and New York (ca. 1750-1950),” *Annual of Istanbul Studies*, 2020 (in press).
- Frigyesi, Judit, “Hungarian Revolutionary and Jewish Religious Songs: an Unusual Musical Encounter Leading to a New Hypothesis for the History of East-European Jewish Song,” (unpublished) paper delivered at: Hungarian Jews and 1848 – International Conference, Jerusalem, 1998.
- Herzog, George, “A Comparison of Pueblo and Pima Musical Styles,” *Journal of American Folklore* 49/194/1936: 282-417.
- Kokkonis, George, “Hora, Sirba and Doina in Greek Discography” (unpublished paper), 2016.
- Korchinski, V, *Moldavskie naigryshi i pesni* (Moldavian Instrumental Tunes and Songs), Moscow, Muzgiz, 1937.

- 
- Lipaev, Ivan, "Evreiskie orkestry" (The Jewish Orchestras), *Russkaia Muzykal'naia Gazeta* 4/1904: 101-103; 5: 133-36; 6: 169-72; 8: 205-207.
- Loberan, Isaac, *Klezmermusik aus Moldawien und der Ukraine von XIX bis XXI Jahrhundert*, vol. I, Vienna, Varwe musica, 2005.
- Ottens, Rita, Rubin, Joel, *Klesmer-Musik*, Dtv, 1999.
- Pardoe, Julie, *The Beauties of the Bosphorus*, London, 1839.
- Rădulescu, Speranța, *Festive Music of the Jews of the Botoșani Region* (CD notes), Bucharest, 2007.
- Spielmann (ed.), *Izvoare și mărturii referitoare la evreii din Romania* (Sources and Evidences Referring to Jews in Romania), vol. 2, Bucharest, 1988.
- Stoianov, Petr, *500 Melodii de joc din Moldova* (500 Dance Tunes from Moldova), Chișinău, Cartea Moldovenească, 1972.
- Svart (Kara), Itic, "Lăutarii evrei din Moldova," *Revista culturii mozaic* April 15/1974: 3.
- Şamlı Selim, *Nota Mecmuası – Chant Turc*, Istanbul, 1912.
- Zemtsovsky, Izaly, "Ethnic Hearing in the Sociocultural Margins: Identifying *Homo Musicans Polyethnoaudiens*," *Garment and Core: Jews and their Musical Experiences*, Ramat Gan, 2012: 13-30.
- \_\_\_\_\_, "Do We Need a Concept of *Musical Substance*?" *Revista de Etnografie și Folclor / Journal of Ethnography and Folklore* (Bucharest) 1-2/2018: 163-189.