HUNGARIAN FOLK MUSIC RESEARCH
IN THE 19TH CENTURY - SOME
UP-TO-DATE ASPECTS

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Studying the work of our predecessors is useful for scholars of the
present. The most significant Hungarian collections deriving from
the 19th century are indicated on the table enclosed. This paper
discusses some problems on the basis of analysis of the
collections mentioned and some other sources: 1) The concept of
the folk song; 2) Handling of scientific theories; 3) Traps set by
aesthetic and ideological expectations; and, 4) Information
implied in the collections.

Along the Danube, in Central and Eastern Europe, interest in folk music began in
the 19th century. Since then, this interest has grown into scholarship in every
country, though at different times and in different ways. An eminent representative
of this discipline was Vinko Zganec, in honour of whom the international
conference of Čakovec was held. Hungarian ethnomusicology was founded by Bela
Bartók and Zoltán Kodály at the beginning of the 20th century. Both of them used
the 19th century folksong collections, but handled them with cautious criticism.1
Though this criticism is still justified, the immense folk musical material - over
100,000 musically classified tunes - accumulated since then, together with the
relevant theoretical analyses, suggest more up-to-date conclusions to be drawn from
the work of our 19th century forerunners.

The prominent 19th century collectors and collections are summarized in the
attached table. I think even a compact list like this suffices to indicate the

dimensions of the works at issue. However, the recorded material is most heterogeneous: the old and more recent Hungarian and foreign art songs in rococo, *verbunkos* and, later, popular styles, out-number the genuine folksongs. Some collections, e.g. nos. 2, 4, and 6 of the attached table differentiated the folksongs, but their qualification was not always correct. The rate of folksongs is highest in collections 5 and 6. With the acceleration of the process of modernization, an increasing number of collections appeared in print in the second half of the last century. Their titles declared them to be collections of folksongs, e.g. nos. 7-11, but they mostly contained popular art songs which were composed around that time, gaining unprecedented popularity among the strata midway between peasant culture and the culture of the upper middle layers. Finally, the most authentic collection is no. 12 whose editors really published tunes of genuine folk games, omitting the songs composed for nursery school children.

Conclusion 1 concerning the concept of folksong

As a matter of course, the concept of folksong has long been clarified. The folksong is created and maintained by the popular community (the peasantry in these regions of Europe). It is passed on and modified orally. It is also, known, however, that there are tunes received from outside the community: from neighbouring peoples, art music sources, church music, urban entertainment music, etc. Though the musical style of these tunes often differs from peasant music, they are used, moulded, and passed on by the community. Also, popular tunes, chansons, and urban dance tunes are sung in the villages for some years as part of temporary fashion, but they are then forgotten, leaving no mark on tradition. I wonder whether contemporary researchers treat these phenomena duly differentiated, or whether they casually wash away the differences with reference to recently fashionable sociological or anthropological arguments. There are namely certain songs whose folksong character and type can only be exposed by careful examination.

Conclusion 2 concerning scientific theories

The editors of several last century collections, especially those of nos. 9 and 11, also conducted theoretical research and wrote studies on the folksong. In the studied period the choriamb

\[ \uparrow \uparrow \uparrow \uparrow \]

was believed to be the typical Hungarian poetic metre, so they packed the scores with them, in support of the theory, for example in a song from collection 7 which

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comprises only choriambs, except for the line-ending rhythm (see attached Ex. 1 A). As more authentic transcriptions reveal, this tune must have been sung differently, in more pliant and diverse rhythm, which the collector subsequently transformed. For the sake of comparison, let us see the same tune recorded by Béla Bartók on the phonograph in 1907 from a peasant performer. (Ex. 1 B).

The scientific efforts of the last-century scholars, yielding erroneous results however well-intentioned they might have been, warn us that we have to keep confronting the seemingly safe theories with reality.

**Conclusion 3 concerning esthetic-ideological questions**

In Hungary in the 19th century the folksong was more than its mere self: it was a symbol expressing the glorious past, the awakening national consciousness, the enthusiasm of the mid-century fight for dependence, and later, after the fall, the inner opposition to despotism. This means that the collectors recorded those songs which they thought to comply with these sublime national meanings. Now, the popular art songs satisfied these criteria better than the folksong did, while among the folksongs, those carried such meanings which were of art music origin or borrowed from the surface layers of neighbouring - Bohemian, Moravian, Slovakian, and German - music. With its strange tonalities and rhythm not always fitting the regular measures, the autochthonous Hungarian folksong appeared too rustic and uncultured for the musical taste of the times. This explains why the most genuinely Hungarian tunes of Oriental origin are least represented in the collections. When, on rare occasions, a tune like that happened to be recorded, it was always refined, as in collection no. 11 (Ex. 2 A). Quite unwarrantedly, its editor inserted a new line with an ending alien to the tonality between the 3rd and 4th lines of a pentatonic tune with quintal shift structure. What's more, he composed an ill-matching *verbunkos* accompaniment and an addition in a major key to the song, to make the piece rounder. Both ideas are completely alien to the style of the old Hungarian song, as can be seen in comparison to a genuine peasant performance collected by Bélint Sárosi in 1958 (Ex. 2 B).

Though no one in his right mind would commit such falsification today, taste and ideology are still presented in our relationship to folksongs. As for taste, the selection of folk ensembles and adaptations often means counter-selection today, too, while the manner of arrangements is often stereotypic, or contradicts the inner laws of folk music. Far greater damage is caused by using the folksong as an ideological tool. In Hungary, for example, the Stalinist culture policy wished to use folk music in support of its goals, wielding it like a weapon against Western artistic trends. In reaction to that, a wide group of educated people became averse to all forms of folk music. Later, in the 1960s and 70s when Western culture could flow into the country unhindered, the contrary took place: folk music research became regarded - though covertly - as outdated, nostalgic, even nationalistic.
especially when it came to the music of Hungarian outside the border. This
disguised qualification became overt in such measures as the incorporation of the
formerly independent Folk Music Research Group of the Hungarian Academy of
Sciences into a larger institution, which does not hint at folk music, even in its
official name. This is the Institute for Musicology where I work. Such mistakes
will occur as long as folk music is not considered an organic, fully acknowledged
part of the national culture.

Conclusion 4 concerning folk music processes

It is of paramount importance that the 19th century Hungarian collections put to
paper folksongs existing solely in oral tradition for centuries before. At the
beginning of my researches, I could hardly believed that nearly 40% of the old
 Hungarian folksong types known today would be found and identified in them. It's
 even more intriguing that by juxtaposing or chronologically arranging certain data
 from these collections, we may be able to retrace the changes in traditional musical
 life, the process of folklorization.

As regards popular folksongs frequently featuring in the publications, there
 might have been a trend of revival underlying them, which contributed to the
 relatively wide spread of certain old folksongs from above, and to the stabilization
 of a single variant of tune and words. This phenomenon can be illustrated with a
 song with quintal shift structure from collection no. 9 (Ex. 3), which also features
 in nos. 5 and 11, in several other collections not mentioned here and in popular
 plays from the middle of the last century onward. 350 variants of this Hungarian
 song were later collected from areas bordering on Austria to Romanian regions
 beyond the Carpathian Mountains, and there is hardly any difference between the
 songs. It is highly likely that the manner and extent of the dissemination of this
 song was facilitated by its inclusion in the collections, and more importantly, by
 its urban popularity from stage performances. It even had an impact on
 neighbouring folk music, as we know of 12 Slovakian, 2 Moravian, 1 Polish and 1
 Croatian variants.

For us now, it is even more significant that we can track down and date the
 genesis of the new style Hungarian folksong. Bartók called it a musical revolution
 by the strengthening peasantry liberated from bondage, which stopped the flood of
 creating a typically Hungarian but more modern and European set of tunes than that
 of the old-style songs. In the early 19th century this style was missing from the
 collections. Instead, we can find a variety of art songs which constituted one of the
 sources of the new style. Later we begin to come across few-syllable, narrow-ambit

3 P. Jácintyi: Magyar népdalipusok (Hungarian Folk Songs Types) vol. 1. 1961. Budapest
4 All the songs will be published or mentioned in Corpus Musicae Populæris Hungaricae
    (Collection of Hungarian Folk Music) vol. 8. Ed. by L. Vargyas (in print), type 54.
5 The latter also included in Žganeo's collection of 1924 as no. 351.
6 The Hungarian Folk Song, p.51.
songs as the first specimens of the new style still resembling the old style, with their number greatly increasing in collection no. 11, for instance the well-known soldiers' song (Ex. 4).

MUSICAL EXAMPLES

(Ex. 1 A)
M. Fürady: 100 magyar népdal (100 Hungarian Folk Songs), no. 10.
(Ex. 1 B)
B. Bartók: The Hungarian Folk Song no. 280.
(Ex. 2 A)
I. Bartalus: Magyar Népdalok, Egyetemes Gyűjtemény (Universal Collection of Hungarian Folk Songs), vol. 6 no. 145.
(Ex. 2 B)
2) I. Bartalus: Magyar Népdalok, Egyetemes Gyűjtemény (Universal Collection of Hungarian Folk Songs), vol. 6. no. 145 - singing part in g minor.
(Ex. 3)
G. Márty: Magyar Népdalok Egyetemes Gyűjteménye (Universal Collection of Hungarian folk Songs), vol. 1. no. 17.
(Ex. 4)
I. Bartalus: Magyar Népdalok, Egyetemes Gyűjtemény (Universal Collection of Hungarian Folk Songs), vol. 5. no. 9.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Title of the Collections of the Hungarian Folk Music Research Institute</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>The Hungarian Country Music Collections of the Hungarian Folk Music Research Institute</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>Hungarian Collections of the Hungarian Folk Music Research Institute</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
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<td>4.</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>Hungarian Collections of the Hungarian Folk Music Research Institute</td>
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</tbody>
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**Notes:**
- The table lists the authors and titles of the collections. Each entry is associated with a specific call number, which is likely a reference to a physical or digital collection. The call numbers range from C700 to C799, indicating a systematic categorization of the collections within the library or archive's system.
- The entries are separated by horizontal lines, with each line representing a different collection.
- The table is structured to facilitate easy reference and access to the collections, with clear indications of the authors' contributions and the titles of the collections they have compiled or contributed to.
Ex. 4A

Adante

Büs az i-dő, büs vagyok én ma-gam is,

Va-la-men-nyi szép asszon van, mind hemis.

Sze-re-to-tük nem ál-lan-dó,

Mint az i-dő, vál-to-zan-dó a lány is.

Ex. 4B

Parlando $\text{f} = \text{cc}=\text{AS}$

Poj pa-ri-pám réz-pat-kó-ja de fé-nyés,

- Ma-da-ra-si csárdás ló-nya de ké-nyés!
Kőnyés ci-pő - je, kap-cá - ja.

De sok pénzök - met kész-tál-ja, hiá - ba.

Ex. 2 A

Jól kimórrő.

Zongora.

(piano)

Ex. 2 A

állj,
En végnek császár ma-
dár,

Ad - a császár nekém gu-
nyát

komjat gy-
nyát

Kőkö-th Kor-
csu pu-
rí

pát.

pát.

Károlyi, G. (1969)
Ex. 2 B

1) Fe-ren e csá-szár
    sz mondota,

2) Én elöt-tem
    ne som-por-dálj,

3) El kell men-ni
    há-bo-ra-ba.

4) Én va-gyok a
csá-csár ma-dár.

5) Nem fogad-ta
    ké-rő-szün-köt,

6) Ad a
csá-szár
    ne-köm gu-nyát,

7) Ko-miss in-göt,
    ko-miss ga-tyát,

8) Ab-ból ki-ad-
    ni ré-szün-köt.

9) Fe-ke-te kar-
    csu pu-ri-pát.
Két meggy le-győr veszítet-ki kö - rül, de semmi kés - ség re.

Ex. 4.

Mérsékeltve [Moderato]

Fűty-tyentett már-e-gyet a má - sín - na,

Visznak enget .vi - zi - táci - ó - ra.

Míg a fercesz en-gem meg-vízi-tál,

Kis-an-gya-lom o - da - kün sirdo - gál.