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# ACTA ETHNOGRAPHICA

ACADEMIAE SCIENTIARUM  
HUNGARICAE

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MAGYAR TUDOMÁNYOS AKADÉMIA  
BUDAPEST, 1953.

# ACTA ETHNOGRAPHICA

A MAGYAR TUDOMÁNYOS AKADÉMIA  
NÉPRAJZI KÖZLEMÉNYEI

SZERKESZTŐSÉG ÉS KIADÓHIVATAL: BUDAPEST, V., ALKOTMÁNY-U. 21.

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*Acta Ethnographica, Budapest 62, Postafiók 440.*

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A MAGYAR NÉPZENE TÁRA. — Corpus Musicae Popularis Hungaricae. Edited by *Béla Bartók* and *Zoltán Kodály* on behalf of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Vol. I. Children games. Technical editor: *György Kerényi*, Budapest, 1951. XXXVIII. 934 pp. 16 tables, 1161 tunes. (Collection of Hungarian folk music).

Ever since *Béla Bartók's* summary<sup>1</sup> of 320 folk songs was printed in German and in English, and the 150 Transylvanian tunes edited by *Béla Bartók* and *Zoltán Kodály*<sup>2</sup> were published with English, German and French introduction respectively, scientific circles have had the possibility to form an idea concerning the collection of Hungarian folk songs.

The present volume is the first in a series to include a complete collection of Hungarian folk songs. Twenty thousand tunes are going to be published in this series. They have either been taken down in notes on the spot or recorded on phonograph cylinders or gramophone plates. The scientific systemizing of this vast material, its treatment from historical, comparative and other points of view, its commenting and editing, require great many years work which will serve as sufficient excuse that this first volume, the Children games could be published only recently.

Editing was started in 1934 by *Bartók* and *Kodály*. Since *Bartók's* departure from Hungary in 1940 and his subsequent death, *Kodály* remained in sole charge of editing. During these years, not only the full material of recent scientific collection has been included into this work but also variants taken from earlier manuscripts or from publications. Special consideration was given to the spreading of certain groups of tunes and to the evolution of their variants. Similarly, drawing on historical and musical sources the editors have brought within the scope of their comparative study the entire material of Hungarian folk songs. The same applies to international comparative studies. In the present volume, however, international comparison

<sup>1</sup> Das ungarische Volkslied. Ungarische Bibliothek 1. Reihe 11. Berlin, 1925. — Hungarian Folk Music. London 1931.

<sup>2</sup> Les hongrois de Transylvanie. Chansons populaires. Budapest, 1923. — Hungarians of Transylvania. Melodies. Budapest, 1923. — Die Ungaren in Siebenbürgen. Volkslieder. Budapest, 1923.

could be carried only to a certain point because of difficulties in obtaining foreign literature, and because of the fact that nursery rhyme publications are rather rare abroad, too.

The publication of the full collection is planned to comprise 20 volumes and to include all tune categories of Hungarian folk music in the following order: 1. Children Games — the volume recently published, 2. Tunes of Calendar Customs — actually in print, 3. Nuptial Tunes — under preparation and 4. Dirges. Another twelve or fourteen volumes are to follow. They will include folk songs proper (lyrical tunes, ballads, dance tunes, etc. not attached to some special occasion unlike those figuring in the previous volumes) classified according to musical principles. Instrumental tunes will be published last.

Each type requires different principles of classification according to their particularities. Different principles are to be applied to Children games and to dirges; to these latter as well as to many instrumental tunes the principles concerning the four-line strophic tunes cannot be applied. The melodies of our calendar customs are rather heterogeneous though many of them are of the same amorphous character as children's songs. The tunes of the calendar customs have to be classified according to the individual occasions they are meant for and to the part they play within a given occasion.

Systematic classification caused greatest difficulties in the first volume. Due to the fact that this material is void of any closed form, that different motifs, even different melodies wholly integrate within one game, and due to the irregular repetition of the bars which thus cannot be systemized it was practically impossible to include into common groups those which on the strength of their characteristic features belong together without leaving out of consideration their manifold relations to other tunes. This is why in the above volume the editors have adopted the principle: to take the most important, most characteristic melody feature, called the nucleus of the tune, as a start and to range the nuclei of common character in groups according to their specific sound-connections, that is musical intervals belonging to a definite key. Such are, e. g. *re-do*, *mi-re-do*, i. e. the trichord forming the nucleus of the scale, or *sol-la-sol-mi*. If also other motifs figure in the whole of the game their possible affinity to one another is to be found in a special index. Thus, for instance, a tune consisting of two notes and another of six can be found side by side in the volume as both are featured by the *re-do* nucleus. In the former we have nothing more than the *re-do* nucleus while in the latter this very nucleus figures as the principal motif completed by additional motifs going as far as *sol-la*. This is the only method permitting the systematic classification of nursery rhymes exceptionally prone to variability, and where the manifold connections are due to the interference of melodies and the disintegration of motifs.

The system is, at the same time, most suitable to reflect musical development as the musical nuclei gradually lead us from two neighbouring sounds to the extent of a full hexachord resp. octave range. So they expose the development from the most primitive forms to the more developed ones where the effect of adult-songs asserts itself to an ever increasing degree: fragments of folk songs, sunk among nursery rhymes, molten into children's games, figure among the original features of children's song and can be recognised in a disintegrated, or more or less accomplished stage as separable features, among the repeating-varying elements of nursery rhymes. The last stage of development consists of the group of independent folk songs and finally of school songs. This course of development answers the question why this series begins with children's songs. This material presents the antecedents of the development of folk-music proper and can be regarded as an introduction to more developed forms.

This statement may, prima facie, sound peculiar to anybody familiar with the principal types of Hungarian folk music, and aware of the great part the pentatonic system plays in it, whereas in the above volume he will find tunes almost without exception in the major-hexachord or its fractions, or, again, in its form reaching the octave. Indeed, the whole material of Hungarian nursery rhymes as it is seems to be a world different from the Hungarian folk song proper. The major-scale type sound connections the hexachord melodic system has much



in common with the children's songs and folk songs of European peoples, mainly with those belonging to the German-speaking area. This type of tune seems to throw light upon the identical development of musical elements with the European nations.

Certain elements and features of this material, however, are not really far from, or unfamiliar to the pentatonic system. E. g. the nuclei included in groups 1 to 3 — the *do-re-mi* trichord — as well as the *sol-la-sol-mi* connection are elementary germs of songs in representing not only individual sections of the major-hexachord but also those of the pentatonic scale: duly complemented either scale system can be built on them. And, indeed, among the Finno-Ugrian and the Turkish peoples — our linguistic and anthropologic relatives — many tunes of a limited melody range can be found that can be regarded as various stages of the road to pentatonism. Such melodies or sections thereof figure also in Hungarian nursery rhymes, such as Nos. 329–330 or 357 to 360 of the above volume. In these the nucleus of the melody consists of three neighbouring major-seconds which might really be *do-re-mi* but here it was interpreted as *fa-sol-la*, due to its completion in certain variants. On the other hand the different completions reveal what is really behind it. These nuclei are basic connections of sounds which, receiving different complementary members, continuations, insert themselves in various ways into one scale system or into the different scale systems. There are, however, still many variants showing how uncertain the sense is which later qualifies these germs as forming certain degrees in the scale system. In the two groups different continuations offer different interpretations to the same connection of sounds: *sol-la-sol-fa* or *la-si-la-sol*, with a minor-continuation, similarly *mi-re-mi-la* connection can be *re-do-re-sol*. It is, of course, most suitable for classification to similarly interpret variants belonging together; the most frequent continuation determines the interpretation of the nucleus and where it takes place within the system. But it is the very method of classification that exposes the scientific problems, too: within the same rhyme or even melody sometimes a threesound trichord stands alone, sometimes it is combined with *sol-mi-do*, sometimes with *mi-re-do-si-la*. These nuclei of melody have preserved remnants of the stages in the development prior to the formation of scale-systems. It is corroborated by the often discernible freedom in the choice of the cadence: tunes interpreted and recorded in *do*-major-hexachord may have, also within one type of tune, a cadence different from *do*. Such are, e. g. Nos. 163, 165, 169, 211, 234, 261, 267, 280, 283, 284, 294, 366, 372, 383, 857, 861–862 and 798 to 800. Such tunes with a free cadence, not ending with *do*, might be superficially regarded as unfinished, as fragments, which would not be altogether unjustified, especially in nursery rhymes. Particularly tunes ending with *re* offer such fragmentary effect (Nos. 234, 340, to 343, 346, 347, 383, 857, 861 and 862). Variants Nos. 346–347 might be regarded as subsequently mutilated as the second variant stops at *fa*, on the other hand variants No. 857, 861–862, fairly removed from each other, with a rounded off, uniform ending, cannot be a mere coincidence and, at least, point at the fact that *re* as a cadence is not strange for Hungarian children, and to finish off with *do* is, by no means, an imperative necessity for them. It follows that the obstinately repeated *sol-re* distances of the basic motif figuring in the examples 340–343 with a *re*-cadence may also belong here, though a motif later complements it to *do*, and, what is more, this ending is a separate new nursery rhyme in No. 862. Identical nuclei with different continuations in the variants are to be found in Nos. 75–77, 79, 357, 358, 359–360.

On the other hand, No. 165 presents an example that, whatever liberty there is in the cadence in certain cases, it cannot obliterate the original key character of the nucleus. The trichord figuring in it, continued with a second-minor, downwards ought to be interpreted as *si-do, re, mi* but in this motif we feel it only *sol-la-sol* with a *fa* cadence. The variants (160–164) of the same show the lack of a closed form with their different cadences (*mi, fa, and sol*). On the other hand No. 249 which uses the same sounds differently, calls for a *do* cadence in which we feel, after the antecedents, a deviation from the key.

Considering the great number of such »irregularities«, not in line with the normal major hexachord melodies, they cannot be regarded as mere coincidences, or as signs of deterioration, but as remnants of a previous or an other kind of musical conception which has been kept alive to fairly great degree even amidst the major-hexachord conception which has become overwhelming. It seems to be fairly justified therefore to regard the nuclei ranged in special groups — groups No. 1–3 — as products of the pre-hexachord state (*do-re-mi* and *sol-la-sol-mi*) of which continued with *fa* arises the major-hexachord. From these nuclei roads lead to both systems and the Hungarians under different influences seem to have taken both possible paths of development.

As a completion to musical classification and to the problems arising therefrom the editors ranged also the games belonging to them. As the game and the song form an unbreakable unit every tune in the volume figures together with the description of the relating game in the order of musical classification. But the games had to be ranged also into a system of their own on merits of their own peculiarities; this system is to be found at the end of the volume with reference to the musical material. It meant a task without any model and, accordingly the system might possibly be modified or complemented. Nevertheless we hope that this initiative which can be termed as pioneer work in its field will be favourably welcomed.

We are confident that our volume with its double system, its huge material, its appendices rich in photographs and sketches, its numerous indices, will be useful in promoting research in folk-music and will offer an ample source for international, comparative musical science. It is meant to offer an idea of the significance of Hungarian research work in the field of folk music the results of which will fully assert themselves in the following volumes.

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