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SURVEYS

LAJOS VARGYAS

THE HUNGARIAN FOLKLORE HERITAGE AND EASTERN EUROPE

Bartók's comparative study¹, in which he briefly summarized the results of his East-European research appeared more than thirty-five years ago. It stands to this day as the greatest achievement in the comparative study of Hungarian and other folk music. It was precisely its outstanding quality which prevented it from becoming an active force in further research; scholars did not dare to use it, to develop it further, or to incorporate it in their experience in other branches of ethnology. Thus the time has come to compare Bartók's deductions with other ethnographical studies, so that complementing, and to a certain extent, modifying one another they might serve as a basis for drawing more generalized conclusions.

For a start, one should recall Bartók's most important conclusions. The summary of his research work was that both the old and the new style of Hungarian peasant music were entirely Hungarian, as regards the old there are even Cheremissian parallels. This old style, however, remained, so to speak, entirely within Hungarian limits. We can only speak of adoption on a large scale in two small areas where Hungarians live intermingled with their neighbours: Croats in the valley of the River Mura and Rumanians in the Transylvanian Plateau. In the Transylvanian Plateau the Rumanians adopted even old Hungarian dance music

of the *verbunkos* type which spread to other Rumanian areas where they are known as *ardeleana*.

A Slovak layer superimposed itself on this old style even before the emergence of the new style. Bartók estimated the proportion of tunes of Slovak origin in Hungarian folk music at forty per cent. He must have been thinking of the 18th century when he spoke of the "so-called non-national epoch". But according to him their influx was not due to direct popular reception. "There is every indication" he writes, "that Hungarian gentlemen had a major role in dragging in alien musical elements", Bartók refers to so many of the tunes having a party game character, and to the fact that "what little gentlemen know and like of the village folk tunes is chiefly of such an alien nature". He added that "direct adoption of Slovak material—without gentlemen acting as intermediaries—is only in evidence in any significant quantity in Hungarian villages bordering on the Slovak speaking area".

As against this Bartók pictured the effect of the Ukrainian *kolomejka* as a mutual influence of folk origin, which—as he said—"I feel rather than know"—had produced the following sequence of development: the *kolomejka* turned into Hungarian swineherd's

¹ Béla Bartók: *Népzene és a szomszéd népek népzeneje*, Bp., 1934 (Our Folk Music and the Folk Music of the Neighbouring Peoples).

song, this developed into *verbunkos* music, and the songs of the new style emerged from the latter. The last stage of this mutuality was the spread of the Hungarian new style songs in Slovak, Ruthenian and Moravian villages, and even later in Bohemia, Galicia and Bosnia.

Bartók's research was supplemented, and partly modified, by Kodály who pointed out parallels from the Volga region and correspondences in various epochs of European art music and the folk-songs of Western peoples². The Cheremissian, Chuvash and other melodic correspondences from the Volga region have put the Eastern origins of the Hungarian old style beyond question—something that Bartók had only intimated—the Eastern origin of the swineherd's song and its independence of the *kolomejka* became obvious. While the links of the *verbunkos* dance music with the swineherd's songs have become even clearer, a greater role in the emergence of the new style has lately come to be attributed to the influence of the popular art song and, through it, West European music.

Szabolcsi must be given the credit for tracing one of the types of dirge and the tunes connected with it to the times preceding Turkic influence in the formation of the Hungarian people³; this was confirmed by more recently discovered archaic European

parallels⁴ which would suggest the existence of a type of *Un-European* tune over a large area.

Comparative research into the ballad, popular beliefs, folk tales and dances also has its contribution to make.

Ballads have been collected for a long time and with a great deal of zeal throughout Europe. A survey covering the whole of Europe is therefore possible. It became obvious that a large number of Hungarian ballads were of French origin, and that they were transmitted in a direct way without any other people acting as intermediaries. They must therefore have been transmitted by French and Walloon settlers during the 14th and 15th centuries.⁵ It appears that with the exception of one here and there, ballads of other origin were not adopted by Hungarians. The genre and certain of its pieces assimilated from the French spread over extensive areas, in East Europe, mostly showing the effect of the Hungarian adaptations. Some Hungarian ballads include sections of fragments of heroic songs originating in times preceding the Hungarians' settlement, but transformed in the spirit of the new genre.⁶ What has this added to the results of folk music research?

² Zoltán Kodály: *A magyar népzene*, (Folk Music of Hungary) Bp. (1952.) (Chapters 2, 7.) Also published in English by Barrie and Rockliff, London, 1960.

³ Bence Szabolcsi: *Osztják hősdalok — magyar siratók melódiai* (Ostiac Heroic Songs—Melodies of Hungarian Dirges), *Ethnographia* 1933; by the same author: *Osztják és vogul dallamok* (Újabb adatok a magyar népi siratódallam problémájához), Ostiac and Vogul Melodies, Additional facts à propos the Problem of Hungarian Dirges), *Ethnographia* 1937; Lajos Vargyas: *Ugor réteg a magyar népzeneben* (Ugrian Stratum in Hungarian Folk Music) *Zenatudományi Tanulmányok* I. (Musicological Studies, Vol. I.) Bp. 1953.

⁴ Lajos Vargyas: *Tapasztalataim a román népdalgyűjtésről* (My Experiences of Rumanian Folk Song Collecting) *Új Zene Szemle*, V. (New Musical

Review Vol. V.) 1954; Benjamin Rajeczky: *Siratódallamaink rokonsága* (The Relationships of our Dirges) *Magyar Népzene Tára*, V, 1190 (Corpus Musicae Popularis Hungaricae Vol. V, 1109) Bp. 1966; Lajos Vargyas: *Totenklage und Vorgesichte der Ungarn*, *Festschrift für Walter Wiora*. Kassel 1967.

⁵ Lajos Vargyas: *Kutatások a népballada középkori történetében. I. Francia eredetű réteg balladáinkban.* (Researches into the Medieval History of the Folk Ballad. I. A Stratum of French Origin in our Ballads), *Ethnographia* 1960.

⁶ Lajos Vargyas: *Kutatások a népballada középkori történetében. II. A bonfoglalás kori bősépek továbbélése balladáinkban.* (Researches into the Medieval History of the Folk Ballad, II. The Survival of Heroic Songs from the Time of the Hungarian Settlement in our Ballads) *Ethnographia* 1960.

Above all the knowledge that in addition to the Eastern ancient stratum of the folk song pre-dating the settlement of the Hungarians a similar effect could be pointed out in other areas of folklore. Moreover, apart from Siberian Turkic parallels one has also cropped up—precisely in the apparently youngest, the Izsák Kerekes ballad—which has preserved a memory of Turkic-Ob-Ugrian contact. Secondly, the fact that considerable Western European cultural influence flowed into East Europe through Hungary. Here one must take note of an important lesson in methodology which must also be applied in comparative studies of folk music: that the problems of Eastern Europe can not always be solved purely in Eastern Europe, and only comparisons taking cognizance of broader vistas—both European and Asian—are able to throw light on complex interrelationships. I even came upon an example where only a single, fragmentary and corrupted Hungarian variant exists, but numerous complete and extensive Balkan epic songs,⁷ and judging by the material of the two neighbouring peoples one would have presumed that the neighbouring tradition was older; but more distant links revealed that the direction was the reverse, but the more ancient traditions of the neighbouring peoples has preserved the adopted elements better. A further lesson in methodology is that one must never decide on the question of adoption-transmission purely on a quantitative basis, but must also consider the differences between individual peoples, that is whether traditions are flourishing, or declining.

This stratum of ballads of French origin also suggests how the elements of Western culture made their way to Eastern Europe. At any rate other roads exist besides the German-Bohemian-Moravian-Slovak route established in certain indisputable instances by Bartók, chiefly with regard to more recent examples. This lesson is valid particularly for more ancient times. But pieces of seemingly more recent origin are not

always new either, nor did they always come to Hungary from the North, not even little tunes of a party game character. Parallel with Hungarian ballads the French and Rhineland German correspondences of a whole series of other Hungarian folk songs have emerged, among them the song with the text "Hogy veti el a paraszt" (How does the peasant sow it) Bartók 257⁸. Among the French this was a group dance of medieval origin, where certain elements of the text were mimed; traces of it are preserved by the wedding game-tunes of peasants in Békés County.

But if the seemingly new pieces of "German-Bohemian character" conceal earlier, Western connections, how much more one might conjecture this to be the case in the numerous ancient, modal melodies that have accumulated in the music of the Hungarian villages side by side with the ancient stratum of the new style. Even if certain types, for example, some Phrygian melodies such as those on the opposite page turned up only in that narrow strip along the Hungarian-Slovak language frontier, possibly on both sides of it. It would be an error, considering their Slovak variants, or because of characteristics that differed from Hungarian pentatonic melodies, to exclude them in advance from the style of the old melodies, from the Mixolydian "valaska" melodies, as well as from the most expressly Slovak music, the Lydian melodies. As regards their area, that certain narrow Northern strip was in actual fact the centre of Hungarian life at the time of the 150 year long Turkish rule (what is more, even later, in the period of the Kuruc wars). Only there was there a possibility for the survival of European fashions, and for passing them on to the serfs of the castles. (At that time

⁷ "Vitéz és kegyes", (Valiant and gracious), Vargyas: *Francia eredetű réteg* (Stratum of French Origin), *Ethnographia* 1960, p. 169.)

⁸ Lajos Vargyas: *Magyar népdalok francia párhuzamai*. (French Parallels of Hungarian Folk Songs.) *Néprajzi Közlemények* (Ethnographical Communications) V/3-4. 1960.

AP 5146/g

Tempo giusto ♩ 108-120

1) Va - sár - nap bort in - ni, Hét - fõn nem dol - goz - ni,
Sej ke - den le - fe - küd - ni, Szé - re - dán fel - kel - ni.

Drinking wine on Sunday
Not working on Monday
Lying down on Tuesday
Getting up on Wednesday

Writing on Thursday
Counting on Friday
Asking on Saturday:
What work we do.*

AP 5150/a-b

Poco rubato ♩ = 116

É - des - a - nyám hall - ja - e kend,
Nyis - sa ki a ka - pu - ját :kend!
Itt hoz - zuk a be - cses me - nyét,
Ko - vács András ne - ve - lé - sét.

Dear mother do you hear me
Open up the gate
We are bringing your daughter in law
Who was brought up by András Kovács.**

* Mrs. István Herceg, aged 56 Csucsom Gyömör County Czechoslovakia. Collected by Lajos Vargyas, 1963.

** Mrs. Lajos Cs. Bodnár aged 62 Szilice, Gyömör County Czechoslovakia, Collected by Lajos Vargyas

Transylvania was already living a life of its own, and that corner of the Northwestern part of Transdanubia where this same life survived, lost its earlier traditions during the later vigorous spread of an urban middle-class way of life.) Let us reflect that most of the songs deriving from the Kuruc period were discovered in that narrow strip in Nyitra, Bars, Hont, Nógrád and Gömör Counties. At any rate, the Hungarian ballads also remind us that decisions on connections with the neighbouring peoples can only be made after an exploration of the complete European interrelationships.

*

Research into popular belief supplements the picture. Two studies are at our disposal, Géza Róheim's⁹ and Vilmos Diószegi's work on the Shaman belief of the Hungarians¹⁰, which appeared in 1958. The conclusion of the former is that the Hungarians' popular beliefs were of Slav origin: their husbandry was of Slav origin, and so were the many kinds of beliefs connected with the life of the household, the magic rhythm, their conception of various supernatural beings, witches, goblins, and all the major festive customs that were connected with the different phases of the annual cycle in all the agricultural peoples of Europe. He was only able to point to Eastern tradition in the person of the priest-magician. But surprisingly rich traditions of this sort were pointed out by Diószegi, whose work made it evident that this sphere of beliefs was an element of decisive importance in Hungarian folk traditions which has survived with great persistence. But this Eastern heritage has remained within Hungarian limits in the same way as the ancient stratum of music. Here, too, the presence of the Siberian Turkic character is overwhelming, but in very faint traces he was also able to point out Ugrian features.

The world of folk tales is closely connected with popular beliefs. Numerous ancient belief elements have been kept alive

to this day precisely by popular tales, among them the beliefs about the practices of the shamans. This is the sphere of beliefs that is charted to an even greater extent than the ballads. The accumulation of data in the sphere of tales is not only extensive, but national and international catalogues also facilitate orientation. This renders it possible—although no newer comparative evaluations have been made concerning the tale—for us to establish: the Hungarian peasantry preserves, in this most international of genres, numerous elements predating their settlement ranging from initial formulae to whole types¹¹. The "Heavenly body liberator" type of tale¹² is akin to Siberian tales, but it actually preserves a type of ancient myth which speaks of mankind's very first great accomplishments, such as the legend of Prometheus stealing fire. And the Kriza legend which tells of the "mördölöcskék"—that is, of the little lambs—in the garb of the Christian legend contains astoundingly precise parallels of journey into the underworld in Turkic epic songs¹³. If the Hungarian legends of the creation are included as well, which show outlines of the Ugrian and Turkic correspondances¹⁴, then

⁹ Géza Róheim: *Magyar néphit és népszokások* (Hungarian Popular Beliefs and Folk Customs), Bp. 1926.

¹⁰ Vilmos Diószegi: *A sámánhit emlékei a magyar népi műveltségben* (Vestiges of Shamanism in Hungarian popular culture), Bp. 1958.

¹¹ Lajos Vargyas: *Szibériai hősték-elemek a magyar népmesében* (Elements of Siberian Heroic Songs in the Hungarian Folk Tale). *Néprajzi Közlemények* (Ethnographical Communications) 1961.

¹² Sándor Solymossy: *Népmeséink sárkányalakja* (The Dragon Figure of our Folk Tales), *Ethnographia* 1931.

¹³ Lajos Vargyas: *Keleti párbuzamok Tar Lőrinc pokoljárásához* (Eastern Parallels of Lőrinc Tar's Journey to Hell). *Műveltség és Hagyomány* (Culture and Tradition) V. Bp. 1963.

¹⁴ Lajos Vargyas: *Keleti elemek a magyar néphitben* (Eastern Elements in Hungarian Popular Beliefs) *Antiquitas Hungarica* I/1. 1947; by the same author: *Honfoglalás előtti műveltségünk maradványai a néphagyományban* (Vestiges of our pre-Settlement Culture in Folk Traditions). *Magvető Almanach*, Bp. 1967/2.

we might say that folk music, ballads, tales and popular beliefs combined have preserved quite considerable vestiges of Hungarian culture from the time before the settlement. Yet, only the first steps have been taken in comparative research. It seems that contrary to notions held up to now the Hungarian people have retained far more of their pre-Christian traditions than the other nations of Europe. The explanation is self-evident: the Hungarians entered a territory with an already developed culture with their own divergent culture. The Hungarians—possibly even at the price of modernization—had to cling to more aspects of their old self, than those who in their old territory, amidst their old neighbours and relatives, had steadily formed this culture for themselves.

*

The dance, the direct relative of folk music, whose exploration and comparative study was the last to be started but with such vigour that it can already be studied as reliably as other folk arts, remains to be discussed¹⁵. Although here no "ancient", that is pre-conquest traditions can be pointed out, a strongly national, separate dance culture is all the more in evidence. We know of two of its components that also link the Hungarians with their neighbours: the *csárdás* and the man's solo dance. The *csárdás*, just like the new folk songs, is of recent origin¹⁶ becoming popular in the 19th century, and like the new folk songs it spread amongst the neighbours of the Hungarians with great

¹⁵ Ernő Pesovár: *Der heutige Stand der ungarischen Volkstanzforschung*, Journal of the International Folk Music Council 1963; György Martin: *Bevezető a Népművészeti Intézetben végzett tánckutató munka eredményéről* (Report on the Results of the Dance Research Work Conducted in the Institute of Folk Art and Popular Culture), *Ethnographia*, 1965.

¹⁶ Ernő Pesovár: *A csalogató csárdás* (The Enticing *Csárdás*), *Táncudományi Tanulmányok* (Studies in Dance) 1965/66.

¹⁷ György Martin: *Magyar tánc típusok kelet-európai kapcsolatai* (East European Connections of Types of Hungarian Dances) *A Magyar Tudományos Akadémia I. Oszt. Közleményei*. Publications of the

vigour. The solo dance influenced a narrower region earlier, just like the ancient folk songs, although in a somewhat wider sphere than they generally within the Carpathians, it spread to many Rumanian villages in Transylvania and also among the Slovaks, chiefly the Goráls. The Moravians were the only people outside the Carpathian Basin to show this influence¹⁷.

*

What kind of conclusions can we draw about what is common to or conflicting with each other in the enumerated relationships? Above all the fact that Eastern elements so vigorous in Hungarian folk culture generally did not get past the national limits. This is as true of music, as of legends and popular beliefs. Why? To obtain an answer the elements that did get further must be considered; primarily the ballad which penetrated the furthest.

It is clear in the case of the ballad that we are concerned with something that was new for the medieval peasantry, which was an expression of peasant prosperity in the last centuries of the Middle Ages. It was the new social content, the new manifestations of development within it that captivated the peoples: the new fashion¹⁸. This made its enormous radiation understandable: in the North—for example, the Ruthless Mother-in-law—all the way to Archangelsk, and in the South—for example, Klement the Mason—all the way to Crete and Trebizond¹⁹. This social modernity, of course,

1st Dept. of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences) XXIII 1966; by the same author: *Performing Styles in the Dances of the Carpathian Basin*, Journal of the International Folk Music Council, 1968.

¹⁸ Lajos Vargyas: *Kutatások a népballada középkori történetében IV. Műfaji és történeti tanulmányok*, (Researches in the Medieval History of the Folk Ballad. IV. Generic and Historical Lessons) *Ethnographia*, 1962.

¹⁹ Lajos Vargyas: *Kutatások a népballada középkori történetében, III. A Kőműves Kelemen eredete*, (Researches in the Medieval History of the Folk Ballad, III. The Origin of Klement the Mason), *Néprajzi Értesítő* (Ethnographic Bulletin) 1959.

stemmed from the French peasants, and the reason the Hungarians were able to transmit it to such a large area was that because of their settlements in Hungary it made its appearance and was received earlier here than elsewhere; and of course the Hungarian reformulations were also modern, and therefore fashionable.

This "modernity" was absent in the old folk song style. However great its aesthetic value may have been, nevertheless it did not represent anything radically new—let us say—in comparison to a *valaska* melody of Zólyom, or a Rumanian melody with the range of an octave from the region of Bihar—but only something different. For the most part a difference in degree, but within an identical level of development. This also was sufficient for nationalities living in close contiguity with each other to adopt it, particularly if the way of life of one of the peoples also offered other elements as an example to their neighbour. But it was not likely to be the subject of major diffusion.

The aesthetically less weighty new style was better suited for diffusion; for that, too, expressed a radically new social attitude, just as the decorative art that flourished before it. Bartók also applied the adjective "modern" to it a number of times when he searched for the answer to the problem: why did these songs exercise such a powerful influence on the neighbours of the Hungarians²⁰? This decided perceptible "modernity", the gay, confident, new spirit, and its emergence at a late date clearly indicates that we are confronted with an artistic expression of a peasant life liberating itself from the centuries of restriction and with developing urban middle class attitudes²¹.

These clear examples with a social content can orient us when it comes to the other of the mutual influences or their absence. In the case of the 40 per cent with alien influences kept in evidence by Bartók the social attraction is self-evident. The influence reached the Hungarian people through the class of gentlemen (in other

words: secular and sacred art music to be heard in Hungary) that is, from a higher stage of social development. On the other hand, it is quite natural that the shaman faith of the Hungarians at the time of their settlement could not have meant anything new to the peoples living here; the reverse was true. For the Hungarians the realm of beliefs and customs connected with agricultural life, particularly the many dramatic and simulating traditions, minstrelsy, alms collecting, carnival games, the straw dummy, Midsummer bonfires which thrived in a rich and varied chain already at the time of their settlement all the way from Byzantium to England was something new. It is also clear that the "Heavenly body liberator" ancient myth and the like already represented a superseded stage of development when the Hungarians arrived here, and turning into the "Möndölöcskék" Christian legends they only caught up with the times and did not lead them. The ancient elements—sections of epic song—only became suitable for further diffusion with penetrating force when they were assimilated in a framework of a currently fashionable manifestation, such as the ballad, at the time it flowered. This occurred on two occasions: the mythical heroic song section assimilated in the legend of Molnár Anna (Annie Miller)—the scene under the tree—made its way far to the West, to the Germans, the Danes and the Dutch, and the building sacrifice—its Caucasian germ, turning into Kőműves Kelemen

²⁰ "What facilitated the spread of the new Hungarian tunes in other language territories? First of all: the sparkling rhythm of the tunes themselves, and the freshness of their melodic line—that is to say: their modernity. . . ." (Bartók: *Népzeneink és a szomszéd népek zenéje*, 21), (Our Folk Music and the Music of the Neighbouring Peoples.) "This is how this phenomenon might be explained: for these peoples the structure of the new Hungarian songs was apparently too long, too complex, one might almost say: too modern!" (*ibid.* 30).

²¹ Lajos Vargyas: *Hagyomány és kultúra*. (Tradition and Culture.) *Társadalomtudomány* (Social Science), 1943.

(Klement the Mason)—to the remote South.

The lessons drawn from the dance also concur with these experiences. Here, as in the case of music, the more exacting man's dance spread to a lesser degree than the *csárdás*, although to a greater extent than the ancient stratum of the music, which can be explained by the greater social penetrating force of the dance and the prevalent custom of recruiting for military service. But even this was something more attractive within an identical degree of development—*primus inter pares*. The *csárdás* was something different, roughly the same thing as the new style folk song: the artistic expression of an explicitly new social attitude; the Hungarian formulation of the European dance fashion of the times, a dance for couples. And as the representative of the new European development it was adopted and turned into a fashion in lands far away, much more readily than the man's solo dance which demanded a higher standard of artistry.

What ensures the spread of folklore is evident: not the national character, which intensifies the significance of things for the given people, nor aesthetic values; both

ensure attention in sophisticated culture, but only to a slight extent in the life of the peoples. There the token of success is solely the expression of development in a new form, the new social content. This does not always represent the highest aesthetic accomplishment, and not every value of a high standard turns into a fashion. (In the latter instance there is really no fundamental difference between folklore and sophisticated art.)

Work in various branches of ethnography corroborates that of others, casting more light on the complex fabric of mutual influences of East European folk culture. We see the facts, the trends and the magnitude of adoptions with increasing clarity, and this offers us a chance to look for the motivating cause behind the facts, and the conditions for adoption. The ultimate aim is to see the mechanism of cultural development in the flow of culture. Folk music research, together with other aspects of ethnography, has arrived at results that will soon be able to supply reliable answers to such questions.

GYÖRGY RÁNKI-IVÁN T. BEREND

PREJUDICE AND REALITY

Economic development in the Dual Monarchy

There are few subjects concerning the history of the past century on which historians have expressed as varied and as conflicting opinions as the Austro-Hungarian Empire. In this case conflicting attitudes are due not merely to each historian's particular approach or method but also to the fact that the population of Austria-Hungary consisted of a most singular

mixture of nationalities. The historians of the eleven nations living within its boundaries had acquired the habit of analysing the problems in the light of contemporary political antagonisms, for the most part only from the point of view of their own respective nationalities. Hence it is not surprising that Heinrich Benedikt, the noted Austrian author of a work on economic development