

## RECENSIONES

VARGYAS, Lajos: *The Hungarian Ballad and Europe*. Vols I—II. Edition Music. Budapest 1976. 269, 823 pp.

These two volumes are summing up the researches on ballad of Lajos VARGYAS of several decades. As he did in his earlier works (first of all in the "Researches into the Mediaeval History of Ballad", Budapest, 1967.), he wants to describe the place of the Hungarian material in the European ballad-poetry, and to modify in this way the research results up to now, by his profound knowledge of Hungarian popular ballad. (He firmly refutes especially the theory set forth in the introductory study of the selection entitled "European Folk Ballads" by Eric SEEMANN, Copenhagen, 1967.)

The monumental work (concerning both structure and characteristic) is divided into two large units. The first volume contains writings of theoretical character, in the second the Hungarian types of ballads and their extensive comparative material are revealed. The definition of the ballad is differentially, approached from several points and dealt with in many chapters, too, through he is dealing with it in the chapter "The place of the ballad among folk and literary genres" above all. Referring to international research, he is accepting the theories rather than arguing them, he states that this literary form, new in form and contents, took shape historically after the heroic epic. The novelty of the content of ballad is derived from the fact that conflicts issuing from human situations are in the centre, and that "the psychological attitude of man and his description in social situations" (p. 15-16.) are dominating. The changes, as compared with the genres of earlier times are indicated by not lengthiness but strophic formation (concerning form), and by the abundance of poetical means. The writer states: "New contentual elements must be coupled with new formal elements. A new epic style was developed by social problems, man described in his moods, and by the complications of sentiments and emotions . . . the stylized narrating of the theme is the plot, taking its course in dialogue form, in typical situations and by intermissions . . . etc. (p. 19.) are characteristics of the ballad", according to the author.

In his summing up he defines the "real ballad" approaching it from more aspects (p. 30.) and consequently he also defines the "nonreal ballad" but excludes it from his further research.

Examining the circumstances of the evolution of ballad and its social and historical background (p. 93-105.) he reveals that "it began to rise at the end of the 13th century . . . the first characteristic ones were formed at the beginning of the 14th century, and from this time on it became fashionable and came quickly into general use" (p. 96.). He finds the basis of all these in the social-historical development of the peasantry, and this is backed up in a separate chapter.

Expounding "The System of Comparing", VARGYAS puts the complicated question of transmission-reception in the centre and reveals his work-hypothesis concerning the affinity of ballad texts to be found with different peoples. The given examples in the question of the degree of parallels and of the homology of texts illustrate the working method of the author.

The third important part is "The chronological groups of Hungarian Ballads" (p. 57-68.). By his opinion the first group involves the thematical and poetical elements before the Hungarian conquest. The most comprehensive group (27 types), of French origin is separated from the first group. The French origin of Hungarian folk ballads is reinforced in a farther chapter by historical evolutionary factors, by the data of the appearance of French colonists in Hungary, thereof the spreading of this group was determined by social-historical facts. According to the investigations of Lajos VARGYAS, the route of spreading of the European folk ballad is essentially

ally determined by the French-Hungarian relations. After these he gives the main features of all the special territories regarding European ballad poetry, their development, interrelations and the migration of types. His statements are confirmed with concrete examples that are basically opposed to all previous theories concerning the spreading of ballads.

In the chronological groups of Hungarian ballads he separates the original medieval Hungarian types, and he is dealing with German, Romanic, etc. cognate texts as with sporadic cases. The question of ballads of most recent times does not come up, because, according to his opinion, they may be disregarded in comparative research.

Observing the results of European ballad research up to now, VARGYAS studied carefully the Danish ballads. He gives full particulars of the 543 texts of the representative collection, the "Danmarks gamle Folkeviser", but only 201 can be accepted as ballads. The other 342 types are, however, by no means to be regarded as ballads, because they are compositions of the aristocracy and as such they never became part of traditional poetry. The ballad is a "peasant-communal production" (p. 117—149.), emphasizes the author even in the title of the next chapter. In connection with this he raises, however, those questions so much talked-of, referring to the origin, bequest and life of ballads, concerning the minstrels. It is unambiguously stated that the ballad is no individual production, no "gesunkenes Kulturgut", not composed by minstrels neither spread, but the production of peasants. This is proved by the striking likeness of the mechanical structures of the various ballads, in consequence. "to be sure, that one ballad came into being on the model of another, so, as a matter of fact, a well-proved pattern was varied. Apart from this, only one construction is known in the European and Hungarian ballad: the structure repeating strophes." (p. 123.) Proving this theory, an appended table with the structural scheme of 83 Hungarian ballads is to be found in the book. The homogeneity of the text-organizing is helped by common formulas, motives and text units. He proves the truth of his theory by the connected structure of the texts of highwayman and murder ballads of the most modern times, the 19th century.

The chapter "Areas and Types of Ballads" beginning with a concrete survey of the Hungarian material, may practically be regarded as the previous summarizing of the second volume. It describes the European ballad-areas and their relation to one another. Analyzing the ballads of French, Danish, English-Scottish, German — and in less extent other peoples, he determines the "real ballads" among them and their main themes. He established, all of so-called "real ballad" originated from France and spread in Europe.

The chapter entitled "Melody and Dance" is to be read at the end of the first volume (p. 209—246.), in which — first in the Hungarian special literature — is presented a survey of the nature of ballad-melody as an inevitable characteristic of the genre. But, in this aspect the most important question is the origin of the melody. The author describes first the melodies of French, then of German, Slavic and of other origin. He also examined the appearance of melodies of spiritual origin as ballad-melodies, and together with this the complicated bequest problem.

The detailed presentation of Hungarian ballads is given in the second volume. Without it even the theoretical analysis of the first volume would be rootless, because there is only referred to the serial number of the ballads, without indicating their type. The whole volume presents altogether 134 works — from these several with their variations —, and thus almost the whole scale of Hungarian ballad poetry is given. VARGYAS segregates 134 types according to the following large units:

Old (medieval) ballads	1—83
Ballad-like ancient songs	84—92
18th—20th century broadside ballads	93—100
Outlaws ballads	101—120
New ballads	121—134

The system of presenting the ballads: type number and title; introducing one or more variants, possibly with tune; indicating the main deviation among the variants; first record; spreading in Hungary in the order ballad-territories given in the first volume (but without marking the places of sources; context with other ballads; tunes; foreign comparisons; bibliographical references. After these he shows the main problems of the ballad, especial the ones concerning the question of reception and spreading, then he quote the special literature referring to the Hungarian ballad.

The first large group is the "Classical ballads" that forms the best part and pith of Hungarian ballad poetry. This volume does not deal with further inner systematic division within this large unit, as his opinion, according to the survey mentioned above is given in the first volume. Neither does he separate thematic units concerning the 83 types. Some such verses got to the "Ballad-like old songs", that are known only in one variant, respectively they are "not

real ballads" as for example the rival verses or certamens. The historical songs are included neither in ballads nor ballad-like verses, they are entirely excluded from the research. The "18-20th century broadside ballads" is a separated group according to the op.cit., and from these most popular ones became folklorized and that is why they got into the collection. The number of broadside ballads is considerably larger than those mentioned here, and their historic-cultural connexions are pointing further. The "Outlaw ballads" form a thematical unit, and in this case VARGYAS aimed at a most useful classification. He segregated the 20 types on the bases of characteristic motives and text units. This means that neither representative highwayman protagonists, nor well known, typical texts give basis, and yet it throws a stronger light on the building on formulas of highwayman poetry. The "New Ballads" chronologically conforms to the previous two groups, here first of all the novelty and a kind of melody are dominating. The inquiry in the extensive material is helped by three indexes:

1. Conflict-situations according the themes (love, marriage, family problems, social differences and contrasts, rebellion against social position, etc.);
2. scenes, characters according to stylistic particulars;
3. alphabetical index according to type number;
4. alphabetical index of individual ballad-texts.

By all these Lajos VARGYAS has accomplished a gigantic task and enabled us to get an overall picture of the Hungarian ballad poetry, so as to become an integral part of international research.

ILDIKÓ KRIZA

UJVÁRY Zoltán: *Gömöri népdalok és népballadák* (Folk songs and folk ballads of the County Gömör). Herman Ottó Múzeum. Miskolc 1976. 623 pp.

Collecting of folklore material a revival is to be seen nowadays. New collections representing the folklore of a particular region or the folk poetry of a certain village are being published one after the other year by year.

Zoltán UJVÁRY (Professor, head of the Ethnological Department of the Lajos Kossuth University, Debrecen) has undertaken the task of presenting regional material. This rich volume on folk poetry has become the result of a work inspired by love and affection towards his homeland and by giving information about a territory where folklore research has not been satisfactory so far, makes other publications more complete.

Almost all of the county Gömör now belongs to Czechoslovakia, so, as a result of the more strongly tradition-bound character of the Hungarians living the life of a national minority, they still managed to preserve a very rich folklore tradition despite the social development and the achievement of bourgeois-status.

In the first part of the book in his introductory study of some 126 pages the author gives a picture of the preceding studies as well as of the main characteristic features of the material presented by him. From among the 150 villages of the county Gömör the author undertook to explore the tradition in 49 villages of 150 and collected nearly 600 texts, some 300 supplied with tune, as well.

The book begins with presenting children's songs, alone, without the description of the game. As a consequence, it is not quite clearly understandable, in what sense should erotic songs be parts of children's folklore or why is a text of a wedding song placed here while another one appears among ballads. It is a fact that has since been well known that children's folklore comprises works of widely different origin. For instance, in the material collected by UJVÁRY we can find e.g. even two variants of the ancient game. The song illustration of the tale "Old Hildebrand" (AaTh 1360 C) together with a number of love songs and mocking songs are placed among the children's games. It is regrettable that the correlation between the text and the function has not been examined.

*Love songs and wedding songs* make up a chapter and in number give the greatest unit of the volume. According to UJVÁRY's theoretical point of view, these two groups belong together since, in a number of cases they cannot be separated. He proves his statement by an outlined description of the wedding ceremony. Each phase of the wedding ceremonies lasting several days has a preference for singing and playing music. Local customs can even strengthen this statement that holds true for the whole country.

Love songs comprise a great number of treasure of folk poetry. This field of folklore is characterized by a multitude of symbols and images, by the symbolic expression of love. But