

## **Individual memory and collective history: the forgotten manuscript of István Bartalus**

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**Abstract:** *The printed folk song collection of István Bartalus is the largest one from the 19<sup>th</sup> century Hungary. Its manuscript provides much more data, but systematic study describing it has not been done. The field-works of Bartalus was not authentic in modern sense. However, on the basis of his manuscript relatively much is known about how Bartalus managed his field-work, as unusually in his age Bartalus marked the location of it and also the name and often the social status of his informant. That's why his manuscript is peculiarly interesting from the point of view of connections between the personality of the collector and the collective memory which this study focuses on.*

Key-words: *folk song collection, István Bartalus, manuscript, Hungarian, nineteenth-century.*

### **1. The folk song collection of Bartalus**

Laying the groundwork for the new modern Hungarian ethnomusicology at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Zoltán Kodály and Béla Bartók Béla often referred to 19<sup>th</sup> century Hungarian folk song collections (Bartók 2002, VI, Kodály 1971, 17-19). Among them several times was mentioned the largest one, namely that of István Bartalus, which contains 840 tunes and more lyrics and was published in seven volumes between 1873 and 1896. It was particularly significant not only due to its monumentality, but because as a printed publication it could be better known than contemporary manuscript collections. Kodály and Bartók denoted some deficiencies of former folk song collections, compared to which their methods were novelties. In this context they identified their own work against them, and perhaps this was one of the reasons why the folk song collection of István Bartalus were poorly studied in details yet. Nevertheless, being treated critically it is an important historical source of 19<sup>th</sup> century folk music. For example, researching the new style of Hungarian folk song emerging in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century János Bereczky involved the collection in his historical study as a dated contemporary source which he cited several times (Berecký 2005 and 2013). The most important criticism of modern

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research to it is the insufficiency of scientific method, therefore the own concept and knowledge of the collector became too dominant. On the other hand, that's why connections between individual collectors and collective knowledge is an evident point of view by studying it. The collection reflects significantly not only of the personality of Bartalus, but in generally of how a musician and a scientist approached peasant music before the era of modern Hungarian ethnomusicology.

István Bartalus (1821–1899) was a musical polyhistor, the member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, and a prominent figure of the first era of Hungarian musicology. He was a pianist, music teacher, writer, and musicologist, thus approached folk songs not from the ethnographical, but from the musical side (Bónis 1999 and 2001, Sz. Farkas 1976). His intention to collect Hungarian folk songs originated in his aim to facilitate the creation of national art music. A collection titled *101 magyar népdal* ('101 Hungarian Folk Songs') published in 1861 by him is a relatively miscellaneous one including first of all popular art songs which were fashionable among townspeople. Much more significant is his large work, namely the seven-volume print *Magyar népdalok. Egyetemes gyűjtemény* (Hungarian Folk Songs. A Universal Collection) in its content, too, which is partly based on his own field-work beginning at 1871 and was published between 1873 and 1896. Aiming the wider public, the 840 tunes included in it were complemented with piano parts. The collection is peculiarly interesting because of its two-type sources: besides the printed edition the manuscript collection of folk songs noted without accompaniment is also known. It can be found at the Institute for Musicology in Budapest, part of the Research Centre for the Humanities of Hungarian Academy of Sciences. In the context of the song collection of the poet János Arany, which some tunes also Bartalus published from, Ágost Gyulai shortly described the manuscript (Gyulai 1952). It contains some more songs, in all 929 tunes – Ágost Gyulai, and based on him later studies mentioned 919 tunes – which are arranged more systematically in it for as much as individual field-works form a group. In Zoltán Kodály's folk song collection foundable at the same institution there are noted sources in which Kodály recorded the difference between the publication and the manuscript of Bartalus, furthermore he discussed some tunes of the manuscript in his introduction to the publication of the folk song collection of János Arany mentioned above. From this we know that Bartalus's manuscript was studied by him. Later, László Dobszay and Janka Szendrei cited tunes among others from the manuscript of Bartalus (e. g. 1992, 74), but systematic study describing it and comparing it with the printed edition has not been done; studies about the collection of Bartalus are based on the printed version.

The work of Bartalus is peculiarly interesting, as in contrary to some of his contemporaries he documented not only the repertoire of his own milieu. The manuscript and the publication are partly based on Bartalus's own fieldwork. His

own words in the introduction to the seventh volume of the printed edition (Bartalus 1896) and the names of settlements by the tunes lighten that he travelled to his fatherland, Transilvania, narrowly to the Szeklers and to five counties (Heves, Borsod, Gömör, Nógrád and Zemplén) of the Northern territory of the Hungarian language area, and visited both towns as well as villages. In order to achieve the 'universality' which was also marked at the title of his publication he aspired to get acquainted with traditions of diverse regions and social strata. As well as his contemporaries Bartalus noted popular tunes from urban peoples as folk songs, too, but peasant songs in the narrow sense of his collection are of course the most interesting for us. On the basis of his manuscript relatively much is known about how he managed his field-work. Unusually in his age Bartalus marked the location and often the name or the social status of his informant, even if he did it not consistent the modern sense. The name of members of lower social strata were usually not recorded, as only phrases like 'after the folk', 'a servant', 'after a gipsy women' can be found. Rare exceptions are for example 'Sándor Osváth Székely peasant' from Bözöd, 'Mihály Beller Matyó peasant' from Mezőkövesd, or 'György Ágoston Székely farmer' from Kadicsfalva. But it is more informative for us when it were referred to the age of them, for instance 'after a 75-years old peasant women', 'after a peasant girl', 'an old soldier'. A lot of teachers, priests, cantors, judges were mentioned with location, name and profession. Only the location and the name are usually not enough to identify the informants, but for example Róza Keglevich from Pétervásár may had belonged to the Counts Keglevich owning a mansion in that settlement, Mentovich Jr. from Marosvásárhely could have been the son of the poet and scientist Ferenc Mentovich (1819-1879) who lived there, and Mindszenti probably was the catholic priest and poet Gedeon Mindszenty (1829-1877) served in [Bükk-]Szenterzsébet where that songs are from. Bartalus mostly signed the location of the tunes in his printed publication, and sometimes he informed about the social status of the informant, too, but the previously unknown data of the manuscript are much more interesting sources for the research. Thanks to this information it can be studied deeper than by other contemporaries, what part of folk music and popular music Bartalus came to know, what Bartalus found worthy enough to note and publish; and in general, the relation between the personality of a collector and musical memories of a society. He also took melodies from other collections and published them at his own expense, to achieve the 'universality'. Some of his own compositions signed with his name are published in the same work, too. An interesting topic could be, what kind of tunes selected Bartalus to his collection from that of others. However, in this paper it would be studied his encounter with folk music, his knowledge about folk music; that is generally, meeting-points of a collector and collective memory on the base of his own field-work.

## 2. The folk song concept of Bartalus

The foregoing shows that as usually in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Hungary (Tari 1994, 1997, and 2014, 385-401), the concept of folk song was not cleared by István Bartalus, either. According to him main criteria of folk song are simplicity and immediateness (Bartalus 1896). However, these characteristics may also feature urban popular songs, though they are not specific to them. Studying his folk song concept it presents itself to compare his work with that of Béla Bartók, as both of them collected also in the peculiarly traditional Transilvanian area. It is typical that after getting acquainted with archaic types of Hungarian peasant music which cannot be known from other sources Bartók was intended to make field-work in outlying villages and by old peasants to collect the oldest strata, while Bartalus typically noted tunes there in significant towns and as it was mentioned, often from nobles, teachers, priests, cantors or other intellectuals. It is true that Bartalus usually mentioned the social status of his informant in his printed collection, if they belonged to the lower strata – 'after the folk', 'after a beggar', 'after a gipsy women', that is, he apprehended the importance of these informants. However, there is no sign by Bartalus of seeking informants only from the lower strata. Let us add, village field work was a huge difficulty than and there, due to bad road conditions and undeveloped infrastructure, but also because of the mistrust of rural peoples towards urbans, as it was described by later collectors. On the other hand, urban intellectuals of that time, might have known more of archaic traditional music than their successors a few decades later, as it is demonstrated by some old folk song sung by Transylvanian intellectuals to Bartalus.

Regarding both the manuscript and printed publication of Bartalus, his value judgement related to folk music can be observed on the basis of what he selected to publish. Most of the tunes of the manuscript are present in the publication, and Bartalus seemed to achieve the universe character by usually representing each field-work in equal measure in his collection, too. Therefore, the only exception is striking. In the manuscript Bartalus noted thirteen tunes sung by a man, Domokos Varga in a small town in Transylvania, namely in Székelykeresztúr, since 1920 Cristuru Secuiesc, Rumania (Bartalus n. d., Vol. 2. 112-117 and 119-125). To some tunes he marked the name of Fiátfalva, a small village near to the town, which may have been the home place or the place of birth of the informant, or the village where the man had learned the tunes. Unfortunately we do not know who this man, Domokos Varga was, and which social group he belonged to. His tunes are among the most valuable and most interesting songs of the collection. They are mostly old, often pentatonic tunes, and almost all of them are richly ornamented. This phenomenon is insomuch exceptional by the songs of the collection, particularly of the printed version, that Katalin Paksa raised the question of whether Bartalus heard any archaic ornamented tune or he did not choose them (1988, 52). The dilemma might be partly answered on the base of the manuscript in which ornamented tunes

are transcribed elaborately, that's why it is suspected Bartalus not only heard ornamented tunes but he was interested in them (see Figure 1). Nonetheless, only one of the thirteen tunes was published in the printed edition, which is furthermore not an old tune, but the one which belongs to the fashionable song style of the era influencing the new style folk song, too. What was the reason of his abandoning old, ornamented tunes, which are the most interesting examples from the point of view of today's research? It is likely to be sought in his folk songs' concept and in his ideas of folk music. His definition of folk songs contained two criteria: simplicity and immediateness. Ornamentation was probably considered to be contrary to the simplicity, and perhaps he saw the impact of art songs in it. This is supposed by the fact that some songs of the printed collection composed by Bartalus himself are similarly ornamented.

116 Jaj'be szipen harangotall.

Varga Bruns. 163.

Jaj' de hi-pen ha-ran-gor-tall

A-ei ked-vel ga-lan bom-nal jaj.

Ki-vit-tell a se-me-kö-be

El sem bi-ur-hat-tan kö-le.

Fig. 1. Bartalus István's manuscript, vol. 2, 116

The fact, that Bartalus equally collected and published popular songs and art songs was regarded as a methodological error by later research, and different categories of

songs are really not separated by him. The tunes of folk song collections of the 19th century were drawn by Zoltán Kodály into his folk song collection, to compare them easier with peasant songs, but neither Kodály nor his friend and colleague, Béla Bartók recorded or noted them from peasants, as they regarded them not as folk songs. It is true, that quantitative limit of sound recording facilities and of field work in general could also be a part in the aspect of Kodály and Bartók. Meeting with archaic folk songs which were unknown both by science and public they understandably sought peasant songs in the narrow sense. For this purpose, they selected the repertoire of their peasant informants, too. However, this point of view is also an individual one, even if it is scholarly reasonable. Being reinterpreted the data of popular songs in the collection of Bartalus could have a value as sources.

Fig. 2. Bartalus István's manuscript, vol. 1, 80

It is peculiarly interesting when Bartalus cited popular art songs, which he had heard from peasants who equally sang old types of folk song. A fashionable melody of that time is published without any data of the location or the informants in his printed collection. The tune appeared in 1863 as a song of Kálmán Simonffy, a well-known composer of popular songs, but it had published in a more ornamented instrumental version titled 'Bőnyi csárdás' around 1860 as a posthumous work basing on a manuscript of the particularly popular 'csárdás' composer Márk Rózsavölgyi. It was present in several folk song collections of the nineteenth century (Kerényi 1961, 216 and 1964, 215) and it was played on popular records from the very early 20th

century.<sup>2</sup> Therefore its appear in the printed edition is not a novelty. However, the manuscript reveals that the tune was sung to Bartalus by a peasant girl from Dédes, a village of Northern territory (see Figure 2). The tune is the 80. one of the first volume of the manuscript, that is, it was transcribed at one of Bartalus' first field-works, thus it testifies the fast spread of popular tunes. Popular songs which were sung by peasants and appeared by Bartalus with data of field-work are considerable as sources for the research of connections of urban and peasant music, and they lighten the miscellaneous repertoire of peasants. The songs noted from the cited village, Dédes are examples of that phenomenon. Some tunes of the villages are noted from a 75 years old peasant woman who sang four old-style, descending tunes and a popular song (Bartalus n. d., Vol. 1. 74-77 and 83). But there are besides three descending melodies, three well-known popular dance tunes and three new style folk songs from the village in the manuscript with the mark 'after a peasant girl' (Bartalus n. d., Vol. 1. 78-82, 86-88 and 90). These data of partly different repertoire of generations are peculiarly interesting for historical ethnomusicology, for example from the point of view of the study of the new style Hungarian peasant song mentioned above, which was inspired by urban music of the second half of 19<sup>th</sup> century.



Fig. 3. Bartalus István's printed collection, vol. 2, 146

Songs of non-peasant informants can also be historical documents of contemporary popular music, which also might have influenced peasant music of the same area. Examples of this are some songs which relate to Western-European musical fashion: they are in major tonality, use sequences, and the typical harmonical turns of art music are hid in them (see Figure 3). At the case of the tune presented here only the location, a Transilvanian town, Kézdivásárhely (since 1920 Târgu Secuiesc,

<sup>2</sup> „Régi nóták, csárdás I.” Concert Record „Gramophone”, G. C.-70445, Matr. 41 ak.; „Csárdás.” Dacapo Record, U-8108, Matr. 8108.; „Jaj de magas ez a vendégfogadó. Csárdás.” Jumbola-Record, A. 110095., Matr. Ho.198-G.; „Jaj de magas ez a vendég fogadó.” Favorite Record, 1-25812., Matr. 3628-0-; „Jaj de magas.” Favorite Record, 1-25647., Matr. 2274-f. The recordings are available on <http://gramofononline.hu/>

Rumania) is marked in the printed version. However, on the base of the manuscript it is known that this tune and three other similar songs which are dispersed in the printed volumes were sung by the wife of an apothecary, that is, a small but stylistically homogeneous group of tunes of an urban person was recorded.

### 3. 'Improvements' of the tunes by Bartalus

Although Bartalus was really interested in the music of other social strata, the role of his individuality manifested just by transcribing peasant songs. On one hand, it is known by the own words of Bartalus published as a report on his field-work, that his transcriptions were not free from some musical prejudices (Sz. Farkas 1976, 95). Zoltán Kodály pointed out that on melodies adapted by Bartalus from other collections it can be well observed that Bartalus often modified the tunes, applying typically the so-called choriamb rhythm on them (Kodály 1952). The choriamb rhythm, a dotted rhythm variant of the  $- \cup \cup -$  metrical foot is a typical rhythm of Hungarian popular dance music and Hungarian popular songs of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as it was meant as a Hungarian characteristic at that time. A common feature of the contemporary collections is that folk songs are often transcribed with choriambes in them (Paksa 1988 and 1991). So did Bartalus, too. This rhythm was probably present also in folk songs, especially in the new strata of them, which were connected to popular songs historically. But it appears in large numbers and in an unusual way also in the tunes of the own field-work of him. It can be only supposed that sometimes special rhythms of peasant songs, first of all of the old style types were not clear to Bartalus. In the context of this already known problem it will be presented only a peculiar example here.

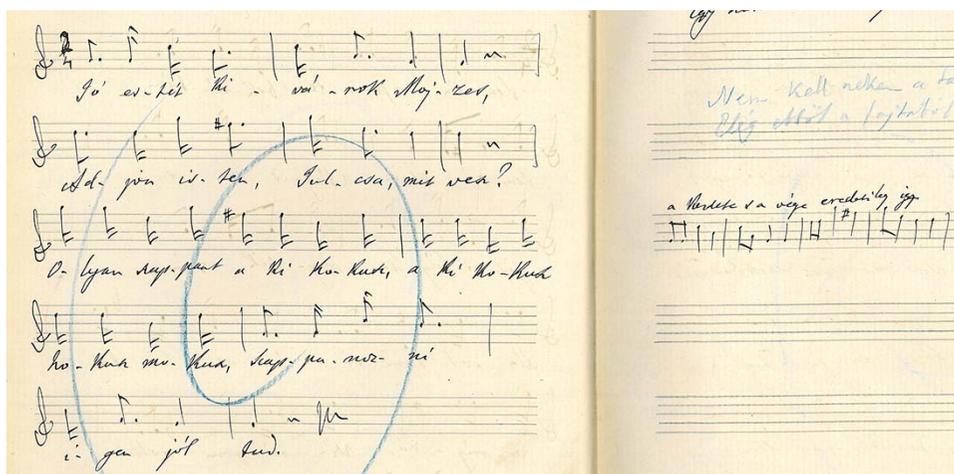


Fig. 4. Bartalus István's manuscript, vol. 2, 185

Some changes of the collectors folk musical concept can be observed in the case of a new-style folk song. In the manuscript it was noted using fashionable choriamb rhythm which are not characteristics of this type of tunes. On the other hand, Bartalus marked that the rhythm of the tune had been different (see Figure 4). The original rhythm is typical of the tune existing even in the 20th century (see the types of tunes in Bereczky 2013, Vol. I. 521-543). So this phenomenon is a sign that Bartalus really modified tunes, but this time he drew attention to the change, too.

Even more surprising is the printed version of the song, which Bartalus used the original rhythm in (see Figure 5). What may have caused this change? We should remember that the seventh volume of *Magyar Népdalok. Egyetemes Gyűjtemény* were published after 23 years the first volume and 25 years the first field-work of Bartalus. During the long period of time he might have become increasingly acquainted with real folk music and perhaps due to his changing concept and knowledge he revised the modification what he himself had done.

### Jó estét kívánok Mojzes.

The musical score for "Jó estét kívánok Mojzes." is presented in two systems. The first system includes the vocal line (Énekszó) and piano accompaniment (Zongora). The tempo is marked "Lassacskán." (slowly) in 3/4 time, followed by a "cresc." (crescendo) section, and then "Frissen." (freshly) in 2/4 time. The lyrics for the first system are: "Jó estét ki - vánok, Mojzes, Adjon is-ten, Julesa, mit vesz? O-lyan szappant,". The second system continues the piano accompaniment and includes the lyrics: "a ki kó-kusz, a ki kó-kusz, hókusz mókusz Szap-pa-noz - ni i-gen jól tud." The tempo for the second system is marked "Lassacskán." (slowly) in 3/4 time.

Fig. 5. Bartalus István's printed collection, vol. 3, 18

Besides the dominance of choriamb rhythm, compared to the entire Hungarian folk music the small number of parlando-rubato tunes is conspicuous in the collection. The possibility raises that Bartalus really heard relatively few parlando-rubato tunes, as they belong to the old style which was becoming less fashionable. It is also

shown that the *parlando-rubato* character had been not really apprehendable for Bartalus. There was present a type of non-rhythmed or slightly-rhythmed diction in contemporary urban popular music, in which slow tunes were declamated by almost equal length notes prolonging the final notes of each line. But the much more free, real folk musical *parlando-rubato* character was unknown in urban music. Only about thirty of the 929 melodies of Bartalus' collection imply *parlando* character. The freedom of *parlando* and *rubato* is rarely reflected in the notation. In some cases because of the rhythmical simpleness of transcription it can not be identified if the diction of the tune was *parlando* or *tempo giusto*, only on the base of the type of melody known in the 20<sup>th</sup> centurian folk music as *parlando-rubato* type is surmized that Bartalus might have heard a similar variant.

In the context of the significance of the collectors personality it is relevant that *parlando* character and generally an old type of folk songs are probably most authentically presented by a Transylvanian melody type in the collection. Perhaps it is related to the Transylvanian roots of Bartalus and to the fact that this stratum, namely the so-called psalmodic style may have been more familiar with urban people (see Figure 6). Despite the term it originated not in Gregorian psalm; its roots dates back to earlier than the Hungarian Conquest in Europe around 895, but it is similar to that thanks to the recitation. Psalmodic tunes are recitative, narrow-range pentatonic and rarely tetratonic tunes typically with *parlando-rubato* character. Six psalmodic tunes are in the manuscript of Bartalus, and it is characteristic that he marked by some examples of it, that it was noted after a blind beggar, after a gypsy women, or after peasant girls; that is, they were sung by representatives of lower social classes. It is known that similar recitative tunes were typical part of the traditional musical repertoire of beggars (Dobszay, Szendrei 1992, 59-60). As such, and as simply recitation reminding to Gregorian psalm ipsalmodic tunes may have been apprehendable of urban intellectuals than other strata of specially peasant music.

It is indisputable, that Bartalus collected and published urban popular songs at the expense of studying more archaic strata of folk music. Approximately hundred-seventeen of the 929 tunes of the manuscript belong to the elder styles of authentic folk songs. Pentatonic tunes which play a fundamental role in Hungarian folk music and which influenced other types of Hungarian folk music are represented in a relatively small number: there are only circa fifteen pentatonic songs in the manuscript. Regarding at the data it comes to light that Bartalus met the old style in small villages, mostly by peasant or gypsy or beggar informants. He collected several old style folk songs, including pentatonic and *parlando* tunes in villages of the Northern territory, where this style of folk songs was living even to the seventies of the 20th century. He also collected some examples of them in Transylvania, which was more archaic territory, but Bartalus did field-work here less in villages and less from peasants. Because of this fact the proportion of old style tunes are smaller in his Transylvanian collect.

160. *I. Kerechur. Varga Domokos.*

113. *Sírat a madár es sírat erdő*  
(*Füstpálvi*)

*Andante.*

*Sí-rat a ma-dár es sí-rat er-dő*  
*ös-veny, Még ar et art mond-ja,*  
*Ver-jen meg ar is-ten.*  
*Sí-rat a ma-dár es*  
*sí-rat er-dő ös-veny, Még ar*  
*et art mond-ja, Ver-jen meg ar is-ten.*

Fig. 6. Bartalus István's manuscript, vol. 2, 113, sung by Domokos Varga

Katalin Paksa pointed out that besides the rhythm even folk musical tone scales and strophe forms were not completely understandable by Bartalus, who often modified them while composing art musical piano accompaniment to the tunes. In the case of a descending melodic old style folk song of the printed edition Bartalus presumably reduplicated the last line, and to make it fluent he finished the fourth line with the second grade of the scale which is but strange at this type (Paksa 1988, 51-52). On the one hand the manuscript confirm this description of possible changes (see Figure 7). Bartalus really had noted the tune otherwise than he published it. Originally, the final note of the fourth line was the first grade. Above them a 'h', that is in

Hungarian, a 'B' note was written, which form also the printed version was based on. However, the repeat of the fourth line seems to be problematic as Bartalus transcribed the tune as a five-liner strophe, but with double line at the end of fourth line. It is a question if the strophe had extended by the informant, futhermore, if the subsequent strophes which includes four lines of text had four or five lines of melody. As it is submitted by Paksa, even knowing the type it is not always possible to know what was modified by Bartalus and what is a sign of the declension of oral transmission.

Mei'li' Voj'as'hely. 129.

92. En' elöttem ne sompor daly':

En' e- löt- tem ne som- por-  
daly, En' va- gyok a vá- rár ma-  
dár, Ad a vá- rár ne kím- gy-  
nyát, Ké- mid in- gyát, Ké- mid gy- tyás.  
Fe- te- ké- kor- da pá- ri- gyát.

Fig. 7. Bartalus István's manuscript, vol. 2, 92

#### 4. Conclusions

Summarising, the monumental folk song collection of István Bartalus, especially his hardly known manuscript anticipates the works of modern ethnomusicology. Because of its typical 19th-century features, namely insufficient data and unclear concept of 'folk song' of Bartalus the collection is not authentic as a primary source, although due to its more data the manuscript is peculiarly worth studying from the viewpoint of repertoire. However, it is a valuable historical document. It testifies how an urban musician met old musical styles which were already unknown for his social strata that time; how the folk song types which he had known as an urban intellectual born in Transylvania helped him; and how the fact, which parts and what type of settlements of the Hungarian language area he reached influenced him. His musical knowledge and his idea of folk song left its mark on his transcription of tunes, for instance as modifications of the rhythm. Thanks to these phenomena the folk song collection of Bartalus lightened what an eminent scholar thought about folk music, national music and popular music of his time.

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