

# Kyrie ungaricum – Data on Research History and the History of Melody

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**Abstract:** In an article, published in 1964 Benjamin Rajeczky tried to interpret the definition ‘ungaricum’ found in a medieval manuscript from Cracow (Kr-1267). We find the following rubrics to a Kyrie and its Sanctus version respectively: ‘Sequitur ungaricum kyrieleison’ and ‘Ungaricum sanctus de beata virgine pulchrum sequitur’. Rajeczky did not regard the designation an isolated instance. Comparative analysis shows that there are ordinary melodies that are preserved only in Hungarian and Polish manuscripts. Indirect examples serve as further examples of Hungarian–Polish cultural interchange.

**Keywords:** Kyrie ungaricum, Gregorian chant, Benjamin Rajeczky

Benjamin Rajeczky neither wrote large-scale studies nor extensive musicological analyses. Neither did he leave a series of monographs behind. Beside a few general works, his scholarly oeuvre consists of pedagogical and journalistic writings and numerous relatively short articles that raise rather than solve problems. Although his ethnomusicological and medieval studies address a wide range of different topics, they all reveal a common attitude and a special kind of approach – a coherent system of considerations, which is characteristic of Rajeczky’s thinking. Consequently, the many-sided and apparently diffuse life-work gives the impression of consistency.

The effort to find and identify the characteristic features of Hungarian music history unifies Rajeczky’s studies about folk music and Hungarian plainchant tradition. However, this natural effort, a kind of emotional preconception, was always controlled by his rigorous scholarly method. His articles show that he tried to interpret the facts of music history in their cultural context, examining them in regional or, if necessary, even broader context. He would certainly have regarded as completely improper to examine musical phenomena detached from its surrounding culture and to study it only within the confines of a given country. Moreover, in his thinking another postulate of ideological nature might have been some sort of universality of the musical

products showing itself either in the use of general topoi or as the result of concrete cultural connections. We could say he was mostly interested in showing, defining and interpreting the dialectics apparent in the interrelationships of cultural phenomena.

In order to clarify the relationship between local and regional features of music, to differentiate the pieces of native from those of foreign origin Rajeczky carried on studies in which he corrected earlier misunderstandings, identified melodies, provided a more accurate description of sources, and raised new questions. Despite their shortness, occasional mistakes and sometimes even the lack of thoroughness, expected today, Rajeczky's articles became not disregarable and had a great influence on several fields of Hungarian musicology.

His writings represent a kind of transition between journalism and scholarly papers. Based on the available information and source material, Rajeczky pointed at problems and made scholarly observations without trying to achieve completeness. While his method became scholarly, his style remained journalistic even in musicological articles. Like in journalism, the titles can be either very general, or describe the subject very specifically, or in some case use interrogative sentences. By the frequent use of the expressions 'data on' or 'contribution to', many of these titles indicate that Rajeczky was not aiming for completeness. All this may be due either to Rajeczky's personal constitution or to the circumstances. He did not have a rich enough collection of research material at his disposal for answering questions more exhaustively. Yet in spite of their 'incompleteness', his writings have remained influential in their special fields. In them Rajeczky presented new viewpoints and directed future research into new directions, and if we have to correct his statements sometimes, it rarely affects the essence of his ideas.

Generally this applies to his comparative analyses in the field of the history of plainchant. As an example I can site an article (published in 1964)<sup>1</sup> in which he tried to interpret the definition 'ungaricum' (Hungarian) found in a medieval manuscript from Cracow (Kr-1267). In the manuscript of the Biblioteka Jagiellonska we find the following rubrics to a Kyrie and its Sanctus version respectively (see the melody in Ex. 1): 'Sequitur ungaricum kyrieleison' and 'Ungaricum sanctus de beata virgine pulchrum sequitur'.<sup>2</sup>

These rubrics had for a long time intrigued Hungarian scholars. The first one to mention it was a 19th-century scholar József Dankó who cited it in his

<sup>1</sup> Sur le Kyrie Ungaricum du manuscrit N° 1267 de la Biblioteka Jagiellońska. *Studia Hieronymo Feicht septuagenario Dedicata*. Warszawa 1964, pp. 137–142.

<sup>2</sup> f. 3 and f. 24v.

1893 *Vetus Hymnarium*.<sup>3</sup> In a review of this work from the same year Áron Szilády attributed special importance to the ‘notable relic’ of Hungarian relevance.<sup>4</sup> In 1941 Polykárp Radó drew attention to the ‘Ungaricum Kyrieleison,’ still in a similar sense.<sup>5</sup> Based on his experiences concerning Gregorian dialects and medieval transmission of plainchant in general, Rajeczky rejected this naive and one-sided approach already in 1941.<sup>6</sup> Two decades later he tried to evaluate the meaning of the rubric by using extensive comparative source material. By this time the cardinal question for him was not the possible Hungarian origin of the melody but the way of transmission; how late medieval melodies were borrowed and how cultural connections (in this case the Hungarian–Polish) that makes the exchange of cultural products possible work.

Rajeczky knew that the possibility of borrowing in case of this ordinary melody cannot be rejected a priori neither from the point of view of cultural history nor of the history of the genre itself. We know several melodies – among them ordinary ones – from the age of the Cracovian manuscript that can hypothetically be regarded as compositions of Hungarian origin. The political, cultural and even musical connections of the two countries may have provided plenty of opportunities for the transmission of melodies. Rajeczky documented the cultural exchange referring to the flourishing of the University of Cracow in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, when thousands of Hungarian students studied there and may have become potential transmitters of melodies.<sup>7</sup> (*Example 1*)

*Wr-7566, f 5*

Yet Rajeczky was fully aware and explained it several times that the denomination of melodies are sometimes only locally meaningful; they served rather as an identifier of melodies and may not be regarded as reference to their origin or to their author.<sup>8</sup> Among the rubrics of ordinary melodies we often encounter personal names (Baksa), place-names (Rosomberg) or topographic definitions (Capolna), and even categorizations of aesthetic nature (pulchrum, decorum etc.). Rajeczky regarded these designations analogous to those found in folk music (dance of Apor Lázár, song of Lupuj Vajdáné etc.).

To decide whether the ungaricum-rubrics refer to the place of origin or simply to Hungary's role as a mediator, Rajeczky examined the occurrences of the melodies in Melnicki's Kyrie and Thannabaur's Sanctus catalogues.<sup>9</sup> First, on the basis of the dissemination of the melodies and the age of their sources he came to the conclusion that the melody may have been composed originally as a Sanctus. He supported this hypothesis with the plausible observation that the Kyrie melodies differ more from each other in the sources than those of the Sanctus. Moreover, the differences appear to be a consequence of the different adaptation of a source melody rather than spontaneous variations.

Since the catalogues point to South-Germany as the source, the Hungarian origin of the melody proved to be unjustifiable. Yet the question still remained unanswered: what may have been the direction and the line of transmission of the melody? To answer this question was difficult because the Cracovian manuscript containing the Kyrie ungaricum designation is older than the graduale from Kassa, the only Hungarian source that includes the Kyrie version of the melody. Rajeczky, however, did not exclude the possibility that the definition of the Cracovian source is authentic. Although no document supported his hypothesis, he thought that the adaptation of the Kyrie text to the melody may have taken place in Hungarian territory the documents of which have been lost. Yet Rajeczky left out another possibility. Because the Sanctus version can also be found in a fifteenth century Hungarian source (Graduale Futaki = Fu) that survives from the same period as the manuscript from Cracow, it is theoretically possible that the melody itself may have been included in the Polish manuscript through Hungarian intermediary sources.

The Polish Jerzy Pikulik had more information at his disposal when fifteen years later (in 1980) he tried to answer the questions raised first by Rajeczky.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Benjamin Rajeczky: op. cit.; *Magyarország zenetörténete I.* [The music history of Hungary I] Budapest, 1988, p. 372.

<sup>9</sup> Margaretha Landwehr-Melnicki: *Das einstimmige Kyrie des lateinischen Mittelalters.* (Regensburg, 1955); P. J. Thannabaur: *Das einstimmige Sanctus der römischen Messe in der handschriftlichen Überlieferung des 11. bis 16. Jahrhunderts* (München, 1962).

<sup>10</sup> Jerzy Pikulik: Śpiewy ordinarium "Ungaricum" w polskich rękopisach przetrzydenckich. *Muzyka* 25/3 (1980), pp. 37–53.

His examination did not change our knowledge concerning the possible origin of the melody, but it modified the picture concerning its dissemination. It turned out that in addition to the Cracovian manuscript the Sanctus is included in thirteen other Polish manuscripts, seven of which originates also from the fifteenth century. Pikulik could also document the Kyrie version from four additional manuscripts. Rajeczky's conclusions were based on the assumption that the earliest representative of the Kyrie was the Cracovian manuscript, and its rubric must have referred to an unknown Hungarian intermediate source. Since three of the sources registered by Pikulik are coeval with that of the Bibliotheka Jagiellonska and they do not contain the ungaricum label, Rajeczky's hypothesis that in the dissemination of the melody in Poland Hungarian sources may have played a role, proves to be untenable. Yet it is not impossible that at least the Cracovian manuscripts may have copied the melody from a Hungarian source, especially since every other fifteenth century source containing this particular Kyrie are from Wrocław (Wr-7566, Wr-1194, Wr-181). Detailed comparison of the variants supports this hypothesis. Because the form of the cadences in the Cracovian manuscript does not have parallels among the other Polish sources, Pikulik suspected some kind of foreign, although not 'ungaricum' model behind it (*Example 2a*). At the same time Pikulik did not attribute great importance to other differences between the melodic shapes. One of the formulas of the Kyrie or Sanctus, for example, can be found in two (one simple and one more elaborated) alternative forms (*Example 2b*). Remarkably, while the manuscripts from Wrocław use the simple version unanimously, the Cracow sources, together with the Graduale from Kassa, employ the ornamented one.

The image contains two musical examples, labeled 'a)' and 'b)', each showing two staves of music in G-clef and 4/4 time.

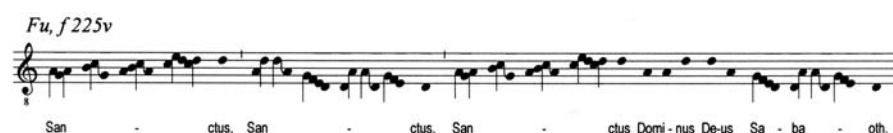
**Example a)** shows two versions of a melodic formula. The top staff is labeled 'General form (with E):' and the bottom staff is labeled 'Kr-1267 (without E):'. Both staves show a sequence of notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. The top staff has an 'E' (E-flat) on the first G, and the bottom staff has an 'E' (E-flat) on the first G. The lyrics 'ley - son.' are written below the notes.

**Example b)** shows two versions of a melodic formula. The top staff is labeled 'Wroclaw version' and the bottom staff is labeled 'Kr-1267, Ga'. Both staves show a sequence of notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. The top staff has an 'E' (E-flat) on the first G, and the bottom staff has an 'E' (E-flat) on the first G. The lyrics 'Ky - ri - e' are written below the first three notes, and 'ley - son.' are written below the last three notes.

*Example 2*

Rajeczky did not regard the ungaricum designation an isolated instance. Examining its cultural background he brought up analogies that seemed to be far-fetched at first sight. He even referred to such statements as that of Hieronymus Feicht's about the 'hejnal-blowing'. In the Krakau article of the

MGG the Polish musicologist mentioned that this practice came to Cracow from Hungary in the 14th century. Rajeczky cited it as another indication that musical practices of Poland and Hungary could have influenced each other.<sup>11</sup> Rajeczky may have seen the justification for his own view in the examples he found in Miazga's Credo catalogue about ten years later.<sup>12</sup> Miazga registered several instances where Credo melodies of Polish manuscripts, though considerably later than the Cracovian source, are supplied with 'ungaricum' or 'węgierskie' designations. However, he does not seem to be aware of the fact that there is a further Sanctus melody in Polish manuscripts with the same rubric. This was reported first also by Pikulik in his above-mentioned article (*Example 3*).



*Example 3*

According to the information given in Thannabaur's Sanctus catalogue, this piece is in all probability of Central European origin. The catalogue documents it from eight Bohemian manuscripts, the Graduale Cassoviense, mentioned above, and from a Graduale Premonstratense from Schlängel. The five earliest documents come from the fifteenth century. In Pikulik's view, the number and age of the Polish occurrences suggest not only the popularity of the melody in Poland, but also its possible Polish provenance. However, the source material used by Pikulik was far from complete, for the Graduale Cassoviense is not the only Hungarian representative of the melody, as Thannabaur indicated. Four other manuscripts also contain it (Fu, Ju, Tra, Zag-2), one of which (Graduale Futaki) is contemporary with the earliest Polish source cited by Pikulik (1463).<sup>13</sup> Consequently, although the information about the dissemination of the melody in Poland is meaningful, we can define the provenance neither on the basis of chronology nor of documents. Neither can we come closer to answering the question of the meaning and origin of the ungaricum definitions found also with this melody in two sixteenth century Polish manuscripts (Graduale of Johann Olbracht ms. 42, Graduale from Wawel ms. 46.).

<sup>11</sup> Rajeczky Benjamin: op.cit. 137.

<sup>12</sup> Tadeusz Miazga: *Die Melodien des einstimmigen Credo der römisch-katholischen lateinischen Kirche*. Graz, 1976.

<sup>13</sup> The manuscript from Sandomierz (Sa-1677) is dated by Pikulik to around 1460.

In sum, although we cannot convincingly interpret the rubrics, the Polish–Hungarian cultural connections revealed in the attempt to interpret them help us learn more about the origin, dissemination and transmission of the pieces. Collecting such information makes the picture of cultural interchange of musical products more subtle and differentiated. The result of such research is as important as answering questions of provenance or historical priority.

Due to recent investigations, we are able to supplement Rajeczky's and Pikulik's knowledge by further probable evidence of Hungarian–Polish cultural contacts. Because of the lack of sufficient comparative source material, Rajeczky could not presume that beside the *Kyrie ungaricum* that explicitly connects Hungarian and Polish sources there are other cases that, although indirectly, indicate similar connections. Comparative analysis shows that there are ordinary melodies that are preserved only in Hungarian and Polish manuscripts. These melodies were recently discovered as a result of the work done on a new catalogue of Central European ordinary melodies.<sup>14</sup>

Coinciding with the findings of research on cultural history, the majority of the musical evidence demonstrating the connection of the Polish and Hungarian traditions has pointed to Cracow. Also the two melodies on *Example 4* support this.

Although in a different context, it was Rajeczky who already called attention to the first melody (Ex. 4a). In an article in which he described the Hungarian practice of modelling new ordinary pieces on preexisting melodies, he discussed a Sanctus–Agnus pair that was based on a Responsory of the Office for St. Thomas Becket, which was very popular in Hungary from the twelve through the seventeenth century. Rajeczky could document the melody only from Hungarian sources, but recent studies show that the melody was transferred to Cracow during the fifteenth century (from Hungary) and gained there popularity (its 7 sources are all from Cracow, Kr-45, Kr-42, Kr-46, Kr-1651).

The dissemination of the second melody of the Ex. 4b also demonstrates the fifteenth-century connection between Hungary and Cracow. While Thannabaur's catalogue lists only Hungarian sources, Schildbach's Agnus edition shows that the melody appears also in two German and one French manuscripts.<sup>15</sup> Since these sporadic occurrences of the melody are relatively late, special importance has to be given to four Polish sources that, as my own research demonstrates, contain the melody too.

<sup>14</sup> Gábor Kiss: *A középkori magyarországi ordinarium-dallamok történeti, liturgiai és zenei vizsgálata a közép-európai repertoár kontextusában* [A Stylistic, Historical and Liturgical Analysis of the Medieval Hungarian Ordinary Melodies in the Context of the Central European Repertory]. Diss. Budapest, 1997.

<sup>15</sup> Graduale 1532, Arrau Kantonsbibliothek, M4; Graduale ex Tegernsee, saec. 15, München Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm. 19267; Graduale ex Lausanne, saec. 16, Freiburg Kantons- und Universitätsbibliothek, L 517.



a) *MN, f 327v*

San - ctus, San - ctus, San - ctus Do - mi - nus De - us Sa - ba - oth..... et ter - ra glo - ri - a tu - a.

*Kr-45, f 16*

San - ctus, San - ctus, San - ctus Do - mi - nus De - us Sa - ba - oth..... et ter - ra glo - ri - a tu - a.

b) *Fu, f 221*

San - ctus, San - ctus, San - ctus Do - mi - nus De - us Sa - ba - oth.

*Example 4a–b*

The next melody on the *Example 5* indicates that the system of cultural contacts must have been two-directional. The melody in question was used equally as Kyrie, Sanctus and Agnus Dei.

*Ca, f 17*

Ky - ri - e ley - son. Chri - ste ley - son. Ky - ri - e ley - son.

*Kr-45, f 50v*

San - ctus, San - ctus, San - ctus Do - mi - nus De - us Sa - ba - oth.

*Ca, f 38*

A - gnus De - i, qui tol - lis pec - ca - ta mun - di, mi - se - re - re no - bis

*Example 5*

Apparently popular in the Polish region, the melody was sung from Cracow to Gniesno and Wloclawek. It can be equally found in secular and monastic manuscripts. All three settings show remarkable variability, which may be due to the unusual simplicity and small ambitus of the melody as well as to the almost complete absence of widely curved motifs that would have crystallized the melodic shape. The strange melody is undoubtedly of Polish origin, for its only Hungarian representative (Graduale from Kassa) later than the majority of its Polish documents.



Although by no means of Central European origin two other melodies refer indirectly to Hungarian–Polish connections (*Examples 6a* and *6b*). One has French or South-Italian, the other South-German provenance. The information on their dissemination is very confusing: since they occur in very few manuscripts surviving from areas remote from each other, it is impossible to draw up a map of their transmission. They are not known from Bohemian or Moravian sources, and thus their presence in Hungarian and Polish manuscripts demonstrates again the intercultural exchange between Hungary and Poland the existence of which, although difficult to describe, can be denied less and less.

*MN, f 327*

a) 

*Fu, f 223v*

b) 

*Example 6a–b*

These indirect examples would not necessarily arouse interest in themselves. In the context of the the ungaricum definitions discussed in the first part of this paper, however, they might serve as further examples of Hungarian–Polish cultural interchange. And vice versa, in this light, the cases analysed by Rajeczky and Pikulik seem no longer to be codicological curiosity, individual or accidental occurrences but not accidental only accidentally survived manifestations of cultural and historical reality. The explicit references in the rubrics, the indirect information gathered from comparative analysis and from historical facts all contribute to the creation of a complex approach that help fill the gaps of knowledge. This approach is not far from the complex, many-sided musicological position of Rajeczky, who was able to unite imaginative power with realistic and expert research.

### The sources used in the article

MN	<b>Missale Notatum Strigoniense</b> saec. XIV/in, Bratislava Archív Mesta, EL 18 (olim EC Lad.3).
Fu	<b>Graduale Francisci de Futhak</b> 1463, Istanbul Topkapi Seray, 2429.
Ca	<b>Graduale ecclesiae Cassoviensis</b> (2 tomi) saec. XVI/in, Budapest Országos Széchényi Könyvtár, Clmae 172a–b.
Ju	<b>Graduale ecclesiae Alba Juliensis</b> saec. XVI/in, Alba Iulia Bibliotheca Batthyanyana, Ms.IX.57.
Tra	<b>Graduale ex Transsylvania</b> (Alba Julia) 1534, Budapest Országos Széchényi Könyvtár, Fol Lat 3815.
Zag-2	<b>Rituale dioecesis Zagrebiensis</b> 1647–1650, Kalocsa, Főszékesegyházi Könyvtár, Ms. 302.
Wr-7566	<b>Graduale ex Wrocław</b> 1416, Wrocław Biblioteka Uniwersytecka, Ms. 7566.
La	<b>Graduale ex Łask</b> (collegium), c.1520, Łódź Archiwum Wojewódzkie, sine sign.
Kr-1267	<b>Graduale Cracoviense</b> saec. XV, Kraków Biblioteka Jagiellonska, Ms. 1267.
Kr-45	<b>Graduale Cracoviense</b> saec. XV, Wawel Biblioteka Kapitulna, Ms. 45 (olim77).
Kr-42	<b>Graduale Cracoviense Ioanni Olbracht</b> Tom. III. (de BMV) 1507, Wawel Biblioteka Kapitulna, Ms. 42.
Kr-46	<b>Graduale Cracoviense</b> (Waweli rorantisták), 1543, Wawel Biblioteka Kapitulna, Ms 46.
Kr-1651	<b>Graduale Cracoviense (?)</b> 1651, Częstochowa Biblioteka Seminarium Duchownego, sine sign.
Wr-7566	<b>Graduale ex Wrocław</b> 1416, Wrocław Biblioteka Uniwersytecka, Ms. 7566.
Wr-1194	<b>Graduale ex Wrocław</b> 1429, Wrocław Biblioteka Uniwersytecka, Ms. M 1194.
Wr-181	<b>Graduale ex Wrocław</b> saec XV, Biblioteka Kapitulna, Ms. 181.