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Paradigm Shifts in the History of Folkloristic Fieldwork at the Turn of the 19th and 20th Centuries and in the First Half of the 20th Century

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Abstract: The author of the article wishes to compare Hungarian textual and musical folkloristics at the turn of the 20th century with regard to changes in fieldwork methodologies. Hungarian folklore studies in the 19th century preferred text-oriented recording of performances, while by the first half of the 20th century the need for a performance-centered study of folklore with the help of audio recording emerged. Owing to a fundamental change in the method of folklorecollection, Hungarian folklorists studying folk music and folk dance by the middle of the 20th century applied the method of participant observation. In the meantime extensive collection gave way to intensive collection focusing on the repertoire of a given local community or of an outstanding performer. In this process Béla Vikár had a distinguished role as he was the first one to use phonograph in collecting folk poetry and folk music in Hungary, besides which, with the help of stenography, he has a remarkable manuscript legacy of folktales and folk customs as well. The approach and objectives of Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály differed from those of Vikár's, since for them quantitative considerations were still important, while Vikár's approach borrowed elements from social sciences as well. The break-through in this respect was marked with the oeuvre of László Lajtha, a disciple of Bartók, who dealt with vocal and instrumental folk music alike. During five decades Lajtha as a collector shifted paradigms a number of times and on the peak of his folklorist oeuvre he published monographs on the vocal and instrumental musical repertoire of bands and villages. His studies inspired György Martin, dance folklorist as well as the revival folk dance movement in the 1970s. The performer-centred study of narration that Gyula Ortutay elaborated on at the beginning of the 1940s proved to be successful primarily in the study of prose epic genres and it unreflexively followed the method of folk musicologists.
Keywords: folk music recordings, instrumental folk music, folklore collection, phonograph, Béla Bartók, Zoltán Kodály, László Lajtha, Gyula Ortutay, the Budapest School of folk narrative collection focusing on storyteller personalities

From time to time, it is important for academic disciplines to review their own history.[1] The present study took shape during work on the large-scale *Encyclopaedia of Hungarian Folk Poetry*, which is the current project of the Folklore Department of the Institute of

[1] For the latest review, see Gulyás et al. 2011.

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Ethnology, RCH, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, when critical discussions during the preparation of the individual entries raised a number of general and theoretical questions of history of scholarship. Although the present volume, like the conference at our institute that took place prior to its compilation, is devoted primarily to the exchange of current fieldwork experience, an investigation of history of scholarship is perhaps not entirely without interest.

Fieldwork – or *collection*, as it has long been referred to in Hungarian folklore studies – is a necessary, but not in itself sufficient, condition for the work of the folklorist, and the question of what the collector, or the academic discipline, does with the collected data is at least as important as the method of collection. Since most of the folklorist's time is devoted to the collecting, recording, and philologically appropriate publication of folklore presentations, less time remains to organize, evaluate, and interpret the collected knowledge. Vast quantities of folklore texts and melodies have been gathered to date by means of collaboration between professional ethnographers and volunteers, representing different approaches to collection in different historical periods. In an overview of history of the discipline, the latter perspective – *the method of collection* – cannot be neglected, as it fundamentally determines the nature of the emerging collection, while the coordination of the products created by collectors using different approaches is not necessarily justified.

The history of a discipline can be written from various perspectives, and it is not necessarily important to embed it within a linear narrative of a developmental novel. The history of scholarship does not follow a schema of progressive evolution: it is far more reminiscent of a sinus curve, with peaks and troughs. Such a wave formation is not foreign to folkloristics, and if one individual has progressed to some extent in terms of academic thinking, it is still possible that they have offered nothing new in other areas, or have even taken a step backwards. One typical "childhood illness" affecting history of a discipline is that great personalities sometimes unwittingly overshadow the lesser professionals working around them, resulting in the further strengthening of the hierarchy that has been established during their lifetime. The claim that 20th-century research into Hungarian folk music not only yielded important results for folk music research, or for musicology in general, but was essentially the flagship for Hungarian and universal folkloristics as a whole, is not merely an empty words. However, to read into this statement no more than the fact that the Hungarian nation bestowed on the history of 20th-century music two geniuses, who also augmented universal folkloristics with important innovations, would be somewhat simplistic. There is no doubt that Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály made a huge contribution to both art and humanities. This study aims to position the two masters within the surrounding network of music and textual folklorists, highlighting both the advantages and the drawbacks of their method. At the same time, the results and methods of professionals working in other fields of folkloristics, such as textual folklorists, are reflected differently in the light of the work of the great music folklorists.

Below, I present the main stages in folkloristic fieldwork methodology from the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries to the middle of the 20th century, outlining the historical, social, economic, political, and, if necessary, personal aspects of the major junctures.[2]

[2] The primary aspects of the evaluation are professional, historical, and social. Other aspects, such as political, economic, and private, will be included in the footnotes.

From the end of the 19th century to the mid-20th century, Hungarian folklore research moved in a peculiar way from data collection methods typical of the 19th century to participant observation, without actually having any contact with Western European and North American representatives of the latter. This is especially true for folk music and folk dance research.

The present study attempts to link 20th-century music and textual folklore research to the evolution of the fieldwork methodology, setting aside all previous rankings. The determination of emphases, which is extremely important in musical composition, is also essential in the representation of historical processes. The work also traces the impact of changes in fieldwork methodology on the nature of the product created during collection, as well as the difficulties in comparing different types and qualities of folklore data. In addition, it emphasizes the extent to which textual and music folklore researchers at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries and the first half of the 20th century ignored each other, and how often they were engaged in a dialogue of the deaf. Looking at the scholarly findings from this period, we may be forgiven for thinking that these two major areas of folkloristics were not – or were only very superficially – interested in each other's results. In fact, it was often the case that the two areas discovered roughly the same things independently of each other – without reflecting on each other's discoveries. In many respects, music folklorists were ahead of their day, developing methods and asking questions that would only decades later become determinative in textual folkloristics.

The turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, the last three decades of "happy peacetime", the last quarter of Hobsbawm's "long 19th century"[3], was an outstanding period in the history of Hungarian culture. The turbulent changes in the economy and technology also created an opportunity for the creation of Hungarian modernity, which led to the emergence of an entirely new worldview and new tastes, as described in all high-school textbooks. The evolution of technology led to radical changes in two fundamental areas of folklore research. Folkloristics is based on two pillars: firstly, on the approach to the individual viewed as "the informant" – that is, on who, where, and under what conditions a connection is established with the subject of the discipline, a member of an entity referred to as "the people," as well as on how what they say is recorded on paper – that is, the phases via which, and in what quality, the snapshot of folklore performance reaches the potential reader. The most important question is how to bridge the gap – if it can be bridged at all – between orality and written records. Very different answers have been given to this question at different times, each highly characteristic of their day.

It is worth looking at some examples in greater detail from the days before the emergence of audio recordings. Folklore collection in the 19th century can be described using the concept of indirectness: the collector and the publisher of folk creations was typically not the same person: János Erdélyi, János Kriza and Arnold

[3] A term coined for the period between the French Revolution and the First World War by the British historian Eric Hobsbawm.

Ipolyi[4] generally did not collect the texts they published. Their work was aided by a network of collectors, comprising students and local intellectuals, and the history of their organization is currently being explored by researchers at the beginning of the 21st century.[5] From performance to the pen, or to publication in print, the folklore text passed through several hands, being changed and polished in the process. A very similar picture emerges when we examine the collection of contemporary folk music scores, which also took place by means of networks of collectors whose main concern in the course of recording and publishing were the expectations of potential readers, musically educated citizens, as was the case in the collection of folk tales and folk song lyrics (cf. Paksa 1988).

The age of the division of professional folklorists into collectors, recorders, and publishers was brought to an immediate end with the appearance of the phonograph and its use by Béla Vikár.[6] The three-way division of roles was condensed into one common denominator by the fact that singing into the phonograph's funnel became a means of capturing the moment. At the same time, the phonograph theoretically made it possible to listen an unlimited number of times, implying almost complete accuracy when creating scores. Although he did not transcribe his songs on paper himself, nor was he a pioneer of musical transcription, Vikár can be regarded as a paradigm shifter in several respects, despite the fact that his immediate successors did not recognize the importance of all his innovations (Landgraf 2010:514–515).[7] On the one hand, as mentioned above, he can be remembered as someone who recognized and exploited the potential of voice recording, whose primary motivation was the dialectological interest of the linguist Béla Vikár (see Tari 2003:8–9). On the other hand, and few people are aware of this, the explicitly textual folklorist Vikár was one of the first to use shorthand. Although the method existed earlier, and although those interested in folklore were aware of it, folklore texts

[4] János Erdélyi (1814–1868) poet, philosopher, editor of the Hungarian folklore anthology *Népdalok és mondák*, 1846–1848 [Folk Songs and Tales], János Kriza (1811–1875) Unitarian priest, bishop, folklore collector, editor of the *„Vadrózsák" Székely népköltési gyűjtemény,* 1863 [Brier-Roses: a Szekler Folk Poetry Collection]. Arnold Ipolyi (1823–1886) catholic priest, bishop, historian, art historian, folklore collector, author of *Hungarian Mythology* (1854).

[5] On Kriza's collection network, see Szakál 2012. For the most detailed information about contemporary collectors and collections and individual members of collecting networks and informants, see Domokos 2015. Erdélyi's working method differed somewhat from that of Ipolyi or Kriza, in that he used the data submitted in letters for the Kisfaludy Association's tender in his outstanding collections. He thus did not know his data providers, nor the collectors and senders, in person thus the quality of the data is even more uncertain than in the case of the other two collections.

[6] Béla Vikár set down on paper his idea for phonograph collection at the beginning of the 1890s, but was unable to begin due to lack of financial resources. Vikár obtained the funds needed for his first phonograph, with difficulty, from the minister of religion and public education, Gyula Wlassics, and the first collections were made in December 1896. See Sebő 2006:24–29; Landgraf 2010:514–515; Fewkes 1890.

[7] On the difficulties of achieving acceptance of the new technology, and on the numbers who were concerned that the new recording medium would eliminate the need for taking down scores, in Great Britain, see Bearman 2003; Freeman 2011.

in shorthand are not found in large numbers in the archives.[8] Furthermore, and perhaps this was his greatest merit, although he did not live in a rural environment – unlike his contemporary, Lajos Kálmány, who served as a rural pastor – he still collected his data in person, not merely travelling to villages by horse-drawn cart, but also taking the effort to visit people in their own homes to obtain data. Vikár considered it important to be familiar with the milieu, the environment of his singers and storytellers, and to establish as close ties as possible with the villagers (Landgraf 2010:516). Although we cannot claim that Vikár led the way in terms of participant observation, we can certainly say that he entirely reinterpreted the notion of the informant.

As an individual, Vikár is also of outstanding importance for his recognition of the importance of simultaneously collecting textual and musical genres, which he did not regard as separable. Despite not moving in the two fields with equal confidence, his work, if only briefly, brought together at one point in time textual and musical folkloristics – only for their paths subsequently to separate once again.

In this respect, the collection work carried out by Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály can be regarded as a step backwards. They also visited their collection sites in person. Both Bartók and Kodály emphasized, and stated repeatedly, that collecting was the greatest experience in their lives, that the happiest moments in their careers were their meetings with villagers, and that the hours and days spent in remote settlements transformed them into completely different people. However, they were not able to spend much time in each settlement, since, being researchers of vision and striving for totality, they wanted to gather data from the entire language region. Bartók even wanted to discover in its entirety the music of those nationalities living with the Hungarians, while Kodály regarded the exploration of historical sources as the second most important of his scholarly missions. It was through no fault of their own that the large-scale plan was unsuccessful. Bartók, being a man of principle, refused to continue collecting after Trianon, while Kodály was able to devote only a relatively small amount of his time to it. Besides the question of

[8] Written in shorthand, and later transcribed, Vikár's still unpublished collection of folk poetry and folk customs can be found in the manuscript collection of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences: Landgraf 2010:517–519. During his fieldwork in Siberia, József Pápay also used shorthand to take notes, as well as to record folklore data. Some of these data have been transcribed, while the rest are still available in shorthand format. I am grateful to Gábor Vargyas for this information.

principle, both men were forced to abandon their collection work for financial reasons, as well as reasons related to their private lives and artistic careers.[9]

One characteristic of their method is the fact that they typically did not visit the homes of peasants who were able to sing or play music. We learn from their correspondence that they were always informed about local conditions before they arrived in a village: they would contact the local intelligentsia, who prepared the collection for them – for example by selecting appropriate singers, whom they ordered to appear at a given time in front of the school, the parish hall, etc. (Bartók 1955). Of course, both the previous statements are only partially true, as there are examples of an opposite approach as well. It is worth quoting one interesting case:

> "Oh, Libánfalva and Hodák! What pleasant memories! The position of the ex-notary has temporarily been taken by a Hungarian 'gentleman' (Madaras), who received us with the greatest affability (just like the one in Répa; it must have been the sub-prefect's doing). But he imagined the collection in Hungarian style: people were summoned by officials and ordered to sing by force! Besides, he spoke only Hungarian, so he ordered the Wallachians (Romanians) about in Hungarian, and in Hungarian style – with the utmost seriousness; of course they didn't understand a single word he was saying. (…) When it became clear that we weren't going to get anything useful from the notary's office, because those who'd been summoned (and poorly selected) knew nothing, he told us we should go to the peasants' houses."[10]

From Bartók's extant and published correspondence, it is possible to reconstruct his relationship to collection work, but only to some extent (Bartók 1955, 1976, 1981). In

[9] Bartók explained the reasons for his categorical decision in many of statements and declarations throughout his life. He gives different justifications for giving up his collection activities. He mainly argues that, due to the changes in the borders, his favorite regions – Transylvania and Upper Hungary – become inaccessible (e.g. in an interview with Dezső Kosztolányi, published on May 31, 1925, in *Pesti Hírlap*. See Bartók 2000:57–61, esp. 59). Another frequent argument was that, due to the difficult economic situation in the country, it was almost impossible to obtain support for folkloristic collections between the two world wars, while his own financial resources had diminished (see "Önéletrajz" [Autobiography], in Bartók 1966:8–11, 11; Autobiography, in: Bartók 1992[2]:408–412, 11–12; see also Dille 1949:5–6.) To this we can add the fact that, after the collapse of the Monarchy, his teacher's salary at the Academy no longer covered his costs of living or those of his family. (From 1907, the year after his graduation, until 1934, Béla Bartók taught piano at the Hungarian Royal Academy of Music, the predecessor of the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music. He did not particularly enjoy this job, which he often considered thankless, although he did it meticulously and conscientiously, which meant that it took plenty of his time away from other activities. On this, see Székely 1978:44–46; 1995:41–43; Demény 1981. This formed the basis of his livelihood until the Hungarian Academy of Sciences created a research post for him to prepare a collected edition of his folk songs in 1934, see, for example, Dille 1949:6). Financial reasons also played a part on the fact that he embarked on an international career as a performer, thus alongside frequent foreign tours, teaching, composing, and working on folklore material collected earlier, he had no time left for further collection. Also contributing to the dwindling of field research by Bartók, and to the increasing scarcity of Kodály's own collections, may well have been the emergence of a new generation, as the Department of Composition, directed by Kodály, produced some outstanding experts in folk music, who took over the task from the 1920s.

[10] Letter to Mrs. Béla Bartók (Márta Ziegler), in Marosvásárhely [Târgu-Mureş], sent from Köszvényesremete on April 12, 1914 (Bartók 1981:227–228).

general, we can say that he and Kodály reflected very little on the hows and whys of collection. In letters written to members of his family, Bartók mostly reports on the amount of material collected, or on rare occasions talks anecdotally about the difficulties getting in touch with singers, or the problems persuading old women or young girls to take part, vividly describing the sometimes fascinating or comic aspects of collection work.[11]

It is worth quoting from a typically laconic letter from Kodály, which contains pragmatic advice to his friend Attila Péczely, a folk song collector and teacher:

> "I can't give you any special instructions, practice is the main thing, it will make up for whatever might be missing. Rather record more songs than fewer, even if they seem common, well known, don't waste much time on bad, out-of-tune singers with no rhythm, look for someone better, maybe that's the most important thing."[12]

Kodály and Bartók were driven by their ambition to explore the entire folk music tradition of the whole language area. The collection work done in the 19th century did not have sufficient credibility due to the indirectness of the collectors, the lack of rules for transcription, its over-accommodation to the requirements of the recipients, and its failure to adequately reflect orality, thus it proved to be unsuitable for the complex scientific analysis elaborated by Kodály and Bartók (for more on this, see Paksa 1988). In later scientific folk music research, 19th-century score-based musical collections were not considered as a source of equal value to 20th-century phonograph-based transcription; none of the former were included in systematic collections (such as the volumes of the *Treasury of Hungarian Folk Music*),[13] unlike the collections of folk poetry or folk tales that were written down in the 19th century, and that were considered as equivalent to 20th-century tale texts. The above situation explains why Kodály and Bartók collected extensively, breaking with the process of moving towards intensive collection, as initiated by Vikár and Kálmány.[14]

Kodály, however, made one very innovative observation in terms of his approach to fieldwork. Few people will be aware of the fact that, while he did not regularly explain his position, he adopted an entirely innovative approach to the relationship between individuality and community. Olga Szalay, while preparing a monograph on Kodály as folk music researcher, discovered among the writings and notes left behind by the author, who published little and rarely, around ten separate references to this (Szalay 2004:88). Before the appearance of Bartók and Kodály, community creativity had been generally accepted

[11] An example of the latter is his much-quoted letter to violinist Stefi Geyer, sent on August 16, 1907, from Gyergyókilyénfalva [Chileni], which reconstructs his lengthy dialogue with an old peasant woman (Bartók 1976:120–123). Another example is a beautiful and vivid description in a letter to Márta Ziegler, later his wife, sent from Nyitra [Nitra] on February 4, 1909 (Bartók 1981:187–189).

[12] Dated Budapest, July 30, 1925 (Kodály 1982:62).

[13] This does not mean that they did not know of them and make use of them; in fact, these publications were the starting point, for example, in the choice of collection sites, and later, in the outlining of historical processes, all the significant 19th-century collections were regular points of reference.

[14] It is hard to find hints as to the circumstances of collection or to the concepts of collection in the works of Kodály and Bartók. They scarcely reflected on this part of their activity, given that their ultimate goal in collection was the final product, the recorded, clarified folk song. This will be discussed in greater detail below.

as an explanatory principle for the phenomenon of folklore. Although several collectors living at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries recognized that some storytellers or singers knew more than the average and deserved to have their entire repertoire collected, this recognition was not followed by any theoretical elucidation.[15] In many places, Kodály draws attention to the importance of performer personalities and to the examination of individuality in the context of the community. He considered it important to distinguish from the average certain singers with above-average knowledge – in terms of quantity or quality – and also to examine what knowledge exists in a smaller or larger community and how it is shared among individuals. Kodály thus recognized that extensive collection would not be sufficient in the long term, and he encouraged his followers, first and foremost the tragically fated Pál Járdányi, as well as Lajos Vargyas, to produce settlement monographs. Járdányi's collections in Kide/Chidea (Romania) and Vargyas's in Áj/Háj (Slovakia) represented the fulfillment of Kodály's plans, and perhaps even went beyond them by broadening the horizon of folkloristics towards the social sciences.[16]

The innovative character of Bartók's fieldwork can perhaps best be understood in the dichotomy between individuality and community. He considered it natural and self-evident that in the Hungarian villages of Transylvania and Upper Hungary [present-day Slovakia], not only the music of the Hungarians should be collected, but also that of the Romanians, Slovaks, and Gypsies living with them,[17] since the nationalities that had lived together for centuries had together created the musical world that the collector encountered in that region. The other side of this truth is that if he and Kodály had not carried out random fieldwork, visiting the Hungarian-language area, and in particular Transylvania and Upper Hungary for over a decade, they would not have been able to determine the dialectical breakdown and chronology of folk music and its place in interactions between nationalities, nor would they have been able to lay the foundations of folk music studies, which were then refined in turn by subsequent generations.

One of the most important benefits of the folkloristic use of voice recordings was the comprehensive change in attitude that separates the folkloristics of the 19th and 20th centuries, and not merely the collection of folklore. By making it possible to listen an unlimited number of times, the phonograph meant that written transcripts were more accurate than ever before, and it became a fundamental requirement in the work of Bartók and his followers.[18] Bartók also referred to the importance of individuality. In one of his writings on the purpose and method of collecting, he dealt in detail with the role of performance, comparing the performance of peasant singers – obviously in the light of his own performing experience – with that of outstanding musicians who play

[15] Ortutay 1940/1978, Ortutay 1978.

[16] Járdányi 1943; Vargyas 2000. For details on the Áj monograph by Vargyas in this context, see Mikos 2015.

[17] This was discussed first and foremost in his extensive book *Our Folk Music and the Folk Music of Neighboring Nations*, which was published in the form of an one-off, independent study. See Bartók 1966:403–461.

[18] On this, see his interview with András Futó, published in the January 1936 issue of *Magyar Dal* [Hungarian Song] (Bartók 2000:156–159).

the same piece a little differently on each occasion.[19] Bartók struggled throughout his life to bridge the gap between what he heard and the possibilities of traditional score writing. On several occasions, he decided to introduce new musical notations, and he listened to his recordings many times throughout his lifetime, refining his previous scores (cf. Kerényi – Rajeczky 1963).[20] His scores – as opposed to those of Kodály (see Szalay 2004:84–95) – focus on what is atypical in each performance, and attempt to capture the moment and the individual elements. Bartók's research shifted the focus from the definitively typical to the variant, resulting in a fundamental change in attitude, while also contributing, to some extent, to the fact that Hungarian folklore collection turned away from quantity toward quality.

At the same time, there was no significant polemic surrounding the recording of textual folklore genres in the first half of the 20th century. The fierce debates on the writing down of folkloric texts had taken place in the last decades of the 19th century, and typically concerned the authenticity of folklore recording, and specifically the method of transcription. At the beginning of the 20th century, the debate came to a standstill, which the appearance of the phonograph did nothing to disturb.[21] The economic-financial and institutional conditions in the first half of the 20th century were not favorable for the collection of extensive textual folklore genres, since, in a country weakened by war, there was no central desire or demand to sponsor folklore collection. Rather than this period, it was during the preceding half-century, and especially in the 1840s and 1850s, that significant folk poetry collections had been created in Hungary, as well as in the period following the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867 and in the three decades following the Second World War.[22] Folklorists working in institutional contexts between the two world wars mainly undertook cultural-historical and historical-comparative studies (the most significant being Sándor Solymossy and János Honti),[23] while research of present-

[19] Bartók: Miért és hogyan gyűjtsünk népzenét? Bartók 1966:581–596, 582–583. (Why and How Do We Collect Folk Music, in ibid: 1992[2]:9–25, 10): "By the way, this interpretation of folk music is very similar to the interpretation of great artists: there is no set uniformity, there is a same diversity in perpetual transformation."

[20] It is also apparent from recollections by members of the Bartók family that listening to phonographic cylinders and refining the recordings were among Bartók's everyday activities. (On Bartók's strict schedule, and the role of folk song recording within it, see Büky ed. 2009).

[21] See the detailed guidelines published following the establishment of the Folklore Fellows Hungarian Department, which also establishes the rules for folk music collection, while taking into account the aspects of the expected transcription: Sebestyén and Bán 1912.

[22] Economic conditions and financial resources fundamentally affect the amount and quality of folklore collection in a particular era. It would be interesting to explore more thoroughly in what periods, by whom, and to what extent folkloristic fieldwork was supported financially. It would be a worthwhile task to collect and evaluate the extant documents in order to understand which political trends supported the subject, and with what intensity, as well as the periods in which private donations played a significant role in financing folk poetry and folk music collections.

[23] Sándor Solymossy (1864–1945), the first university professor of folklore, taught at the University of Szeged from 1929 and also played a key role in launching Gyula Ortutay's career as a folklorist. János Honti (1910–1945) worked at the Museum of Ethnography, then at the National Széchényi Library, thus he can basically be regarded as a professional folklorist. During his short lifetime of thirty-five years, he created a significant body of theoretical and cultural-historical work.

day or recent folklore data was not among the priorities of the discipline.[24] The difference between the two areas in terms of their relationship towards transcription may also be due to the fact that musical literacy is not as self-evident as the writing of texts: indeed, the ability to write down tunes from hearing is a particularly difficult skill to acquire, demanding much practice, an ear for music, and a wide-ranging musical literacy, which the average person does not necessarily have. At the same time, it would perhaps have been interesting, and would still be interesting today, to compare the differences between the principles of musical and textual transcription, and the parallels and contradictions in the history of each. Incidentally, Bartók also considered the accuracy of textual transcription to be highly important. To this end, although by his own admission he lacked a great sense for languages, he learned Romanian and Slovakian, while also employing native speakers for translations; he also considered it essential to record the peculiarities of dialect in folklore compositions performed in any language.[25]

The research carried out by László Lajtha (1892–1963) was an important step forward in terms of fieldwork and musical transcription. Lajtha was the first methodological collector and interpreter of polyphonic instrumental folk music in Hungary, and he spent around five decades visiting Hungarian villages.[26] This is a considerably longer period than the collecting career of Bartók and Kodály. Technological advances also helped, as half a century after the appearance of the phonograph, at the turn of the 1930s and 1940s, the improved sound quality and longer recording time provided by the gramophone made it possible to record an orchestral repertoire more accurately, and subsequently to transcribe the scores, too.[27] The phonograph was unable to reproduce several voices in parallel in an acceptable quality. In addition, it was able to record for only a few minutes before the cylinder needed replacing, which was ideal for recording performances of a few stanzas of a folk song with four-line verses characteristic for Hungarian folk music, but unsuitable for recording long sequences of instrumental music, mainly dance music – such as the long chains comprising the principal melodies and the interludes

[24] Despite the situation outlined above, and the difficult financial circumstances, some significant collections were created, most importantly János Berze Nagy's folk tale collection from Baranya County, while many mixed collections contain significant folklore material from this period.

[25] Cf. Bartók: „Miért és hogyan gyűjtsünk népzenét?" (Why and how we collect folk music?) Bartók 1966:581–596, 582–583. In 1992[2]:9–25, 10–11; Cf. Kodály: The article entitled: "Bartók, the Folklorist", describes the relationship Bartók had with his Romanian translator, linguist and textbook writer, Alexics György. The article also comments on the relationship Bartók had with the son of his translator, Alexits György, Jr. who bore the same name as his father and worked within the field of mathematics. Please see: (Kodály 1974a/2:450–455; most especially: 452–453. Please see: "Bartók, the Folklorist". In Kodály 1974b:102–108; most especially: 104–106). One of the greatest aspirations of his life was to study Serbian folk music, and that of Serbian folk poetry. He was only able to access said materials in the last years of his life in New York. Please see: *Serbo-Croatian Folk Songs*.

[26] He began collecting as an academy student in 1911, under Bartók's guidance, and continued until his death in 1963, interrupted for longer periods only by the last phases of the two world wars (Berlász 1984; Tari 1992).

[27] Lajtha: A gramofonlemezre való népdalgyűjtés muzeológiai jelentősége [The museological significance of collecting on gramophone records] (Lajtha 1992:95–99); In vivo – in vitro. A magyar népzenetudomány technikai előfeltételei [The technical prerequisites of Hungarian folk music research] (Lajtha 1992:136–142).

that separated them.[28] This may have contributed to the fact that Bartók, and especially Kodály, rarely collected instrumental music.[29]

Lajtha's field of interest was also broader in a geographical sense than that of his two great predecessors: Bartók's collection work in the Hungarian Great Plains represented only a short episode in his life,[30] as his research took place almost exclusively in Upper Hungary and Transylvania, while Kodály's visits to Transdanubia and the Great Plains were also relatively brief.[31] By contrast, Lajtha undertook significant research in both the Great Plains and Transdanubia. In the 1940s, Lajtha again had an opportunity to carry out collection work in Transylvania, as he had at the beginning of his career in the early 1910s.[32] This time, however, rather than visiting the Szekler Land, which was already familiar to him and very popular among folklorists, he focused on the diaspora in Central Transylvania, which had scarcely been investigated from a folkloristic point of view, with the result that the "discovery" of the Mezőség is associated with his name. He, like Kodály's disciples, created settlement monographs (Szék/Sic, Szépkenyerűszentmárton/Sânmărtin, Kőrispatak/Crişeni), which would not be published until over a decade later (Lajtha 1954a, 1954b, 1955).

By the end of the 1950s, with the closing of the borders, the possibility of collecting in Transylvania ended definitively for him. It was then that he began to take an interest in Western Transdanubia, an area that, due to its strongly civic character, was largely

[28] For more detail, see Halmos 2013:56–57.

[29] Nevertheless, Kodály's instrumental folk music collection is not insignificant. See Tari 1984:2001, 2007. For them, instrumental folk music was primarily monophonic peasant instrumental music, and they enjoyed collecting signal instruments, as well as tunes played on shepherd's flutes.

[30] A brief but significant episode. Bartók regularly visited his sister, who lived in the plains of Békés County and was married to the steward of a manorial estate. It was here that Bartók obtained his first folk music experience and collected his first folk songs, and his first folklore-inspired works originate from here. See the recollections of his relatives, including his niece, Mrs Albert Kós (Magdolna Oláh Tóth), Mrs. Pál Voit (Éva Oláh Tóth), and the latter's husband, Pál Voit (Bónis ed. 1995:64–75).

[31] A comprehensive exploration of Kodály's collections, including their scholarly, political, and personal aspects, can be found in Szalay 2004:31–81.

[32] Experts distinguish four periods in Lajtha's collecting career. The first was in the 1910s, mainly in the Szekler Land, the second in the 1920s and 1930s in various locations, including Palócföld and the Great Plain. The gramophone became significant in the third period, between 1940 and 1944 (Berlász 1984:107–142).

ignored by collectors in search of archaicisms.[33] Nonetheless, Lajtha discovered there at least as many old-style melodies as new, and in the meantime made many changes to his collection method. According to the recollections of Zsuzsanna Erdélyi,[34] who worked as Lajtha's assistant from the beginning of the 1950s to the early 1960s, in their free time, when they were tired of traipsing through the muddy villages, they "did gypsy stuff" – that is, they observed the town gypsy orchestras in their original environment, in pubs, taverns and restaurants. The extensive repertoire of the musicians, and the multitude of old and new melodies, were in themselves valuable to collectors (see Erdélyi 2010). Lajtha attempted to establish a deeper relationship with the musicians, the members of the gypsy orchestra, and the lead violinists, and he became a regular guest in the homes of some of the orchestras and musicians. His posthumously published monograph on orchestra leader Pál Tendl, a cimbalom player from Western Transdanubia, was a result of these relationships, an undertaking that remains unique to this day (Lajtha 1988).[35] The only parallel is a similarly posthumously published monograph by György Martin on Mátyás István Mundruc, the most significant dancer in Kalotaszeg (Martin 2005).

In the scores that he transcribed with the help of Béla Avasi and Benjamin Rajeczky, Lajtha took into account not only the melody, but also the original orchestration and harmonization, while keeping in mind the recording of the original sound (Avasi 1993). In terms of his score-writing methodology, he followed in the footsteps of Bartók, who had a very powerful influence on him in other respects, too (cf. Solymosi Tari 2007).

Lajtha was the first to approach the exploration and organization of Hungarian folk dance traditions with scholarly discernment. Although he was not an accomplished dancer, he was keen to learn the moves because he realized that this was the only way in which he could analyze them precisely.[36] The concept of participant observation

[33] The beginning of Lajtha's collection career in western Hungary was not so much motivated by the personal interest of the aging academic, as by politics. Between 1949 and 1952, the Communist authorities had almost entirely marginalized the scholarly artist, who was unwilling to identify with the system in any form, and continuously voiced his opinions. They removed him from his teaching post when they restructured the National Music School, where he had been teaching for three decades, and established in its place the Bartók Conservatory, later the Béla Bartók School of Music, where he was no longer given employment. His works were not performed in Hungary, thus he did not receive any royalties, nor was he allowed to travel abroad. For many years, he supported himself by selling his valuables. In 1952, the system softened its attitude to him and a research group was created for him with two assistants, the musician and former nun Margit Tóth, and the politically persecuted Zsuzsanna Erdélyi. For ten years, until his death in 1963, Lajtha basically made a living from his collection work. Cf. Berlász 1984:60–73; Erdélyi 2010. The fact that in 1951, László Lajtha was awarded the prestigious Kossuth Prize by the state for his folk music research work, during the very period in which he was marginalized, gives an insight into the psychology of the era (Berlász 1984:70).

[34] Zsuzsanna Erdélyi (1921–2015) ethnographer, folklorist; granddaughter of János Erdélyi, diplomat (1944–1948), assistant of Lajtha (1952–1963).

[35] Lajtha was involved in several similar projects, although these did not receive the same recognition, thus his material on István Csejtei, another orchestra leader from Szombathely (Berlász 1984:174–175, 232) and on the Salgótarján orchestra (Tari 1992:142) remain unpublished today.

[36] Bartók had already stressed the importance of jointly researching dance and music, as well as dance and customs: Miért és hogyan gyűjtsünk népzenét? Bartók 1966:592–593; Bartók: Why and How Do We Collect Folk Music? In Bartók 1992[2]:21–22; and in practice he proceeded in the spirit of this approach.

was thus seen here in an entirely new light. László Lajtha also realized that it was impossible to gain an understanding of the structure of instrumental folk music that functioned principally as an accompaniment to dance without some knowledge of dance (Volly 1970; Dóka 2007). There is a continuous dialogue between the dancer and the orchestra, and especially with the leader of the orchestra, since the musician is a kind of a service provider, paid by the person in quest of entertainment, who expects their complete acquiescence. Lajtha is also associated with a further technological innovation, as he pushed for sound-film recordings of the dancers (Berlász 1984:94–95). György Martin (1932–1983), the famous ethnochoreologist, who is considered by many as the immediate successor to Bartók, has also been linked with Lajtha in many respects, including his direct contact with dancers, his frequent return visits, and his learning of dance sequences. Martin's task was made easier by that fact that he began his career as a professional dancer, and he was a talented stage performer. Lajtha, on the other hand, began dancing only in the interests of science, and he established his findings, which are still significant today, as a layman.

He himself reflected on the changes in his approach and the refinement of his method in the course of his career as a collector, which spanned five decades. Towards the end of his career, he no longer described himself as an *ethno-musicologist*, but as an *anthropo-musicologist* in his academic lectures abroad (Berlász 1984:239–240; Tari 1992:158). It is not primarily a question here of the duality that exists in the social sciences, since by redefining his specialist area, Lajtha, who was not a trained ethnographer, did not represent a shift between German-style ethnography and French social anthropology or Anglo-Saxon cultural anthropology. All that had happened was that he no longer defined folk music as some kind of ethnic idiosyncrasy or as the characteristic of certain social strata or groups, or as an expression of belonging to a particular group or strata. Instead, he wished to examine music – and not just the segment of it referred to as folk music – as a human trait in all its complexity and its social embeddedness. Although his identification with different social sciences was not conscious, it can be seen from the above that his entire career in musicology opened up the closed world of musicology and folk music research towards the social sciences.

The dance house movement, which began in Budapest in 1971, took its intellectual inspiration and practical knowledge directly from Lajtha,[37] who was no longer alive by then. Paradoxically, he had had a somewhat hostile attitude toward folklorism during his lifetime, as represented by the so-called Pearl Bouquet movement between the two world wars (Berlász 1984:101–102, 116–118), although this was no longer able to influence his impact on the dance house movement. The movement also looked to the figure of Lajtha for ideological support, since the folk music and folk dance revival was initially unable to identify with the folklorist and musicologist Bartók, and especially not with Kodály, or with their complex social and artistic program, while there is still a great deal of confusion in the dance house ideology in terms of its evaluation of these two

[37] On the social- and cultural-historical background of the movement in English, see: Frigyesi 1996; Balogh – Fülemile 2008.

folklorists.[38] Lajtha's published collections from Szék/Sic and the Mezőség/Câmpia Transilvaniei region formed the basis for the dance house repertoire, and these regions were principally visited by dancers keen to learn folk music and dance in practice (Martin 1982, 2001; Halmos 2013:15–18). Although we do not know whether Lajtha took into his own hands the instruments played by the peasant musicians and the urban gypsy musicians, or whether he allowed them to teach him, it was a mere step from his dance lessons and monographs on the orchestra leaders to the leaders of the dance house movement also wanting to learn to play the tunes and the accompaniments, and to the dancers wanting to learn dances directly from the informants.

Some enthusiastic representatives of contemporary folk musicology, especially Lajos Vargyas (1914–2007) and György Martin, attempted to take the founders of the dance house movement under their wing and to put the new method into the service of science. These efforts came to fruition in the outstanding research carried out by Béla Halmos (1946–2013) and Ferenc Sebő (1947–) (cf. Halmos 2004).

Researchers from the early 20th century gave different responses to the problem of the individual and the community, as one of the fundamental questions of folkloristics, resulting in a shift in method in several directions. All those who considered empirical research to be important began to understand that folklore was not a collective creation – or that it was not collective in the way that had been supposed in the 18th century. Kodály, Járdányi, and Vargyas all explored the problems of individuality and difference, and undertook their fieldwork along these lines. Both the above-mentioned monographs and Lajtha's similar aspirations followed a specific methodological path – that is, none of the monographs can be considered as a variation of an ideal type, but each can be evaluated as a methodological innovation.[39] In summary, rather than personality monographs, they can be said to have opted for the more complex and labor-intensive community monograph – as both the village monographs and the orchestra monographs represent some kind of community. It is difficult to say with hindsight why none of these later became an actual method, and with the exception of Lajtha, they have not been followed by similar efforts in the work of individual collectors. Besides the idiosyncrasies of the

[38] This finding is based largely on personal experience, that is, on dance house fieldwork. Opinions about Bartók and Kodály remain mixed among those who frequent dance houses, because the movement was precisely opposed to what the two composers represented in their oeuvre – that is, they did not perform folk music according to the way it sound originally, as the villagers played it, but with stylistic features, singing techniques, arrangements, and harmonization, altering and adapting it to the requirements and artistic concepts of bourgeois concert halls. The purist dance house ideology could not accommodate this in its world, even though the phenomenon had its own specific social- and cultural-historical causes in its own period. Kodály's social program, and the spread of his pedagogical method in Hungary, contributed greatly to the fact that Hungarian culture progressed to the dance house movement a few years after his death.

[39] A comparison of the method and approach of the three authors deserves a separate study.

individual lives, the reasons for this include both historical and social aspects.[40] At first glance, it is striking that a significant proportion of the above monographs were created in Upper Hungary or Transylvania, regions to which it was almost impossible to gain access from the late 1940s to the early 1970s. Published in 1959, the only late divergence from the process outlined above is István Halmos'[41] village monograph on the Upper Tisza area, *A zene Kérsemjénben* [Music in Kérsemjén] (Halmos 1959). In the correspondence between Lajos Vargyas and Zoltán Kallós,[42] the idea of a similar plan emerges, regarding which Vargyas attempted to give instructions to his younger colleague and to guide him in the village monograph vs. personality monograph dichotomy.[43] This fact indicates that the subject was still on the table even in the 1950s.

Gyula Ortutay's[44] monograph on Fedics (1940) was thus in conformity with the spirit of the age, and in its own way attempted to find answers to the above questions (Ortutay 1940/1978).[45] What was innovative about Ortutay's work was its unique approach in developing social interest in text folkloristics and a methodology for folkloristics focusing on individuality. The approach also covered a broader social agenda, focusing on the poor in Hungary between the two world wars and demonstrating the value-creating and mediating capacity of this stratum. Ortutay's collections in the 1930s and 1940s, as well as his new collection method, shifted folk tale research away from its former deadlock, driving it beyond its rigid, bookish, 19th-century historical focus of interest and highlighting the variability and instantaneous nature of storytelling, the importance of audience responses, and the importance of the immediate context and all the possible correlations of the performance. His discovery became widespread practice throughout the world and had many followers in Hungary as well (cf. Dégh 1995).

[40] The most important of these was being "overloaded," as mentioned earlier in connection with Kodály and Bartók. One example is the case of Pál Járdányi (1920–1966), who graduated as a violinist and composer, and also studied ethnography. He continued to compose until the end of his life, besides regularly writing as a music critic, and from the beginning of his career he also collected and systematized folk music and was later one of main driving forces behind the publication of the *Treasury of Hungarian Folk Music*. He taught at the Academy of Music until he was dismissed, for political reasons, in 1959. He edited textbooks (for violin and clarinet) for state music education, which began in the 1950s, composed many pieces for children, etc. For his literary oeuvre, see Járdányi 2000.

[41] István Halmos (1929–2016) ethnomusicologist, he has made wide-ranging fieldwork in Szatmár county, and among the Piaroa Indians in Venezuela.

[42] Zoltán Kallós (1926–2018) folk music collector whose exceptionally extensive activity stretches over more than a half century and embraces several Transylvanian regions and Hungarian villages in Moldavia.

[43] In a letter dated November 18, 1957, he offers guidance on questions of musical sociology (Vargyas 2004:46–47). Then, on December 22, 1957, he argued in favour of the village monograph rather than the individual monograph (Vargyas 2004:49).

[44] Gyula Ortutay (1910–1978) ethnographer, folklorist, politician. Minister of religion and education (1847–1850), professor at the Department of Folklore and rector (1957–1963) of the Eötvös Lóránd University, Budapest, director of the Institute of Ethnography of the HAS (1967–1978).

[45] In a lengthy introductory study to his collection, Ortutay provides a detailed account of the methodological antecedents of his method in Hungary and abroad: he mentions Russian, Finnish, and Danish parallels, as well as Johann Reinhard Bünker's storyteller, the Sopron street sweeper Tóbiás Kern, Lajos Kálmány's storyteller, Mihály Borbély, and János Berze Nagy's storyteller, and the sowiet folklore researcher, Asadowkij. However, there is no musicological collection among these antecedents. See Ortutay 1940/1978^{2}:5–16. Ortutay 1972:225–230. Asadowskij 1926.

On the other hand, with respect to the accuracy of recording, Ortutay did not perpetuate the traditions of his predecessors: rather than using phonographs or tape recorders for his collection work, he recorded the stories of Mihály Fedics on the basis of dictation.[46] As he lost the first version of the manuscript on the train on his way home, he had to re-record the entire repertoire (Ortutay 1940/1978:385–386). Seen from the digital world of the 21st century, and even, perhaps, from the perspective of Bartók or Lajtha, this method appears far from modern, since it does not lead to the level of accuracy and authenticity that has become the standard in textual and folk musical recording.[47] Although Ortutay later made radio recordings of "Uncle Fedics's stories" for the Patria record series,[48] the earlier print version was not based on sound recordings.[49]

At this point, it is important to explain that, although new, previously unknown methods, appear from time to time in science, their application does not necessarily become automatic, or something that goes without saying. In other words, the history of these disciplines does not conform to the evolutionary model. Again, we can rely only on assumptions in our quest for reasons. The phonograph, later the gramophone, and even the first tape recorders, were huge, cumbersome devices, and were difficult to transport bearing in mind the contemporary road and traffic conditions. The phonograph was better used for recording a folk song of a few minutes than a tale lasting several hours. The cylinders, like the device itself, were very expensive, and most contemporary collectors did not have sufficient financial resources at their disposal.[50]

Ortutay's collection of ballads in the 1930s, and its publication, similarly belonged to an earlier, 19th-century paradigm. The publication of the Nyírség ballads included only the texts, not the music (Ortutay 1933). Bartók and Kodály had by that time already been collecting regularly for decades, and the latter in particular had a great fondness

[46] Gyula Ortutay was secretary to Miklós Kozma (1884–1941), president of the Hungarian News Agency, and later worked for Hungarian Radio (1935–1944), likewise under Kozma. In parallel with the latter post, he also taught Kozma's children and had a good personal relationship with his employer. Nor was his connection with the field of communications interrupted after the Second World War, as he then became head of the Hungarian Central News Agency for a few years, and continued to be closely associated with the institution later. This was how he came to launch the radio series "A Little Hungarian Ethnography on the Radio" (see Jávor et al., ed. 1978), and many other ethnographic educational radio programs. In light of this, it is not entirely clear why it was not possible for him to acquire a voice-recording device for his important collections at the turn of the 1930s and 1940s. It is possible that, from his salary as an official, he would not have been able to financially insure the devices in the event of damage, and that this explains why he did borrow one from the Radio or the Museum of Ethnography. It is also unclear why he did not make use of shorthand, which was widely known at this time.

[47] He mentions at one point that Mihály Fedics refused to sing into the phonograph because of his poor health and breathing difficulties, as bending towards the funnel left him without breath: Ortutay 1940/19782:53; 1972:251).

[48] The Patria gramophone discs contained all sorts of folklore recordings, mainly folk music. They were published between 1937–1963.

[49] Only a few pieces from the repertoire were subsequently recorded: the tales "Beautiful Ilonka," "Noah and the Evil One," and "The Two Golden-Haired Siblings" were recorded on Patria disc. See Sebő ed. 2010:123–125.

[50] As late as the 1970s, the shortage of recording material caused problems for the folklore collector. According to Ilona Nagy, who was already collecting using reel tape, the official line was that nothing should be recorded on tape that was not a folklore text in the strictest sense.

for all forms of sung verse. As an admirer of the poet János Arany, he regarded the genre of the ballad as extremely important, and wrote them down and published them along with scores. Ortutay, however, took the primacy of the text as granted, and even the later editions of his ballad anthologies and collections were published without musical scores (e.g. Ortutay 1941).

The unparalleled innovation in the method of individuality research, by means of which he advanced folkloristics and surpassed all who had gone before him, lay in the need for contextualization. Although the aim of recording the immediate context had continually arisen earlier, and although, for example, the recording of the personal data of folklore performers was a fundamental requirement even at the beginning of the 20th century (cf. Sebestyén and Bán 1912:202), in his collection of tales Ortutay managed to bring to life the personality of the storyteller from the dry, factual data, while the circumstances of the performance, and the biology of storytelling, became the subjects of the research. Of course, it is quite another question why, since his death, many more folklore collections have appeared that confine storytelling to mere "data".

From the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, the history of research into folk music and textual folklore developed in close symbiosis, even though individual representatives of the two fields did not take an interest in each other's work. Some findings may have emerged in parallel, and the changes in various fields were not uniform. Exploring the ways in which the problems encountered during the writing down of texts and the transcription of music are connected, and how they differ, would provide subject matter for another lecture or study.

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