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HUNGARIAN DATABASES WITH VISUAL ITEMS OF THE BALKAN FOLKLORE

Abstract: The article describes the Hungarian databases that contain visual items from the area of Balkan folklore. These materials can be found in the archives of scientific research institutes, and contain Bulgarian, Greek, Croatian and Serbian folklore items, as well as items from other nations of the former Yugoslavia.

Keywords: dance and music folklore, folklore databases, Balkan, Macedonia, Hungary.

Databases in Hungary

In 1896, Béla Vikár recorded folk song for the first time with a phonograph. (Landgraf: 2). Later Béla Bartók, Zoltán Kodály and László Lajtha extended the research with material from the nations of the Carpathian Basin; it was on this that they based their ethnomusicology and folklore research. Beyond processing the authentic material, they tried to implement the folk music into the contemporary culture, and make it accessible for educational purposes. Among their followers was György Martin, who laid the basis for research into folk dance. He dealt with the folk heritage of the nations of the Carpathian Basin. His creative research came into close connection with folklore revival in Hungary. Revival came to the fore in the *táncház* movement that started in 1972.

At the end of the twentieth and beginning of the twenty-first centuries projects were started that aimed at the digitalization of the recorded music and dance folklore heritage in Hungary.

The most significant folk dance film collection with traditional dances was created at the Institute for Musicology, where György Martin was the director of the department from 1974 until 1983.¹ The database of the department consists of documents with Labanotation, manuscripts, gramophone records, film-rolls, CD discs, DVD discs, tape-records, VHS cassettes and photos.² A part of the collection of the Institute is digitalized, and these databases are available on the website of the Institute. This collection has nine databases:

1. "Collection of the Hungarian Folk Music" – a digital database of the Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály collections, but also contains some older collections from 1898.

¹ Martin <http://mek.oszk.hu/00300/00355/html/ABC09732/10111.htm> (08. 10.2013).

² Institute for Musicology, Department of Folk Dance Research: http://www.zti.hu/zti_uj/index_hu.htm?08 (06.06.2013).

2. "Database of Folk Dances" is a film collection of the Institute. Records here can be searched by registration number, name of the dance, type and sub-type of dance, informant, town or village, county or dance dialect.
3. "Motif Collection," in which can be found motifs with Labanotation, from the previous databases.
4. "Zoltán Kallós's Collection" – music and songs from Transylvania and from the Csangó community.³
5. "Béla Bartók: Hungarian folksongs – universal collection" the Bartók-rend (Bartók's whole analysing system) online, with thesaurus, and databases with multimedia tools.
6. "Published folk music records" – database with 6000 record catalogued by different aspects.
7. "Publications with original folk music records" – catalogue.
8. "Photo Archive of Folk Music and Folk Dance" -- This collection contains ethnographic photos of music and dance.⁴
9. "Database of Folk Dance Films", "TáncFA" is in the first phase, with 25 films. The collection contains records from different regions of the Hungarian folk territory, from private and other film collections.⁵

These databases are in different phases of elaboration and are constantly being refreshed.⁶ It can be seen in the mentioned details that the folk dances take significant place among the collections.

Another important research centre is the Hungarian Heritage House, where the digital database of dance films is housed. Here the library and the archive is responsible for the documentation of the folklore heritage. This collection was formed by György Martin, and consists of a library, a collection of manuscripts, an audio-visual collection and a film collection.⁷ The process of digitalization is on going. Nowadays several films are available from here. On this website the material can be searched by collector, theme, field and period, and researchers can find them with choreographic signs and music notes. The system works by email, the requested details arriving within five minutes to the given address.⁸

³ About the Csangos: http://www.magyarfalu.hu/rolunk4_en.html

⁴ Online databases of the Institute for Musicology: <http://db.zti.hu> (01.08.2013).

⁵ <http://www.zti.hu/tanc/tancfa.htm> (05.07.2013).

⁶ Annual report of the Dance Science Committee, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, 2012: http://mta.hu/data/cikk/11/74/71/cikk_117471/Tanctudományi_Munkabiz_beszamolo__2012.pdf

⁷ <http://www.heritagehouse.hu/fdk/databases> (10.10.2013).

⁸ Folklore databases: <http://www.folkloredb.hu/fdb/index.php> (02.02.2013).

Materials from the Balkans

Béla Bartók also collected songs from the minorities living in Hungary, and systematically researched the folk music of the Balkan ethnic groups.

Nowadays one of the main tasks of the Department for Folk Music and Folk Dance Research (Institute for Musicology) is the sustaining and working up the rich folklore heritage of the minorities in Hungary and its neighbouring countries.⁹ The first dance films appeared in 1948, in the catalogue of the Institute for Musicology. Among the film records can also be found materials from the Balkans. Here can be found materials from different regions of Macedonia, authentic folk music records, and stylized choreographies from festivals. Also included are Bulgarian materials from the period from 1979 to 1998, recorded at Bulgarian and Hungarian festivals. There are some Greek materials from festivals between 1949 and 1979. The Serbian records are from the period of 1948 to 1984, and contain authentic material from different regions of Hungary and Serbia, as well as recordings made at festivals. The Croatian records are mainly from Hungarian territories, and from different festivals. Beyond them, can also be found Bosnian, Bunjevac and Shokac materials from Hungary, how authentic as stylized from festivals. Beyond them can be found also Albanian and Slovenian folklore material.¹⁰

In discussing the collecting of Balkan music forms in Hungary, we have to mention Tihamér Vujicsics and Antal Kricskovics. Vujicsics was a famous composer with Serbian roots who researched Balkan folk music in Hungary. The results of his research were published in the book “Music heritage of the South Slovenians in Hungary” (Vujicsics, 1978). Antal Kricskovics is a famous choreographer with Bunjevac roots. He founded “Fáklya,” the central ensemble of the minorities in Hungary; it is nowadays only a Croatian ensemble. (Bólya 2012: 45-46). Vujicsics and Kricskovics collected a great deal of Southern Slavic material in Hungary. (Lukács 2009: 51-53).

In the online “Database of Folk Dance” at the Institute for Musicology mainly Hungarian materials can be found. The paper-based film databases contain Romanian¹¹ dances from Transylvania and Hungary. Here we have to mention the folklore heritage of the Csangos, which is Hungarian folklore but with strong Balkan influence.

In the Hungarian House of Heritage there are materials from almost every Balkan people. These are common data with the Institute of Musicology, and the number is not large, and not available on the online database.

New initiation: databases with Macedonian folklore

In 2013, among other projects of the Macedonian Lectoracy in Budapest, the creation of a Hungarian database of Macedonian folklore was started. In this collection can be found books, CD discs, DVD discs, photos, and films in digital form. The Library of

⁹ Department and Archive for Ethnomusicology and Ethnochoreology: http://www.zti.hu/zti_uj/index_hu.htm?08 (06.06.2013).

¹⁰ Paper-based catalogue of films at the Institute of Musicology.

¹¹ As result of the common cohabitation in Transylvania, the Romanian material takes significant place in the Hungarian databases.

the Lectoracy contains about 2000 books, wherein 300 are in close connection with folklore and ethnology. These books constitute the main book base of this new folklore database.

Among the films nowadays can be found materials from the fieldwork from 2013 and 2014, which were realized with the financial support from the Hungarian state, the Institute for Ethnology and Anthropology, and the Skopje and Folklore Institute “Marko Cepenkov”, Skopje. The themes of the photos, audio and video recordings are in connection with the customs of the feasts and the oral-heritage. On the CDs and DVDs can be found records with authentic music, singing, and dance from festivals, as well as materials from the national state ensemble “Tanec”.

The first phase of the work is finding materials of Macedonian folklore in Hungary, and in parallel, creating sub-databases with the materials from Macedonia.

We plan to make the catalogue accessible for public interest from 2014. Among our plans is also getting a closer professional connection with the Library of the Hungarian Dance Academy, the Institute of Musicology, and the Department for Ethnomusicology at the Franz Liszt Music Academy.

We will add to the database the Macedonian items from the catalogues of the Institute for Musicology and the Hungarian Heritage House. We also will collect materials from the Aegean Macedonians in Hungary.

The aim is to create a systematized database of Macedonian folklore, and to make materials and sources available for the public interest and for researchers. With the support of the Institute for Ethnology and Anthropology, Skopje, we created a folklore film section about the calendar feasts and connected customs. The newly formed database is continuously refreshed and developed with fresh materials of fieldworks.

The role and uses of the databases

We must mention briefly the *táncház* movement in Hungary, which developed as a folklore revival movement. The word “*táncház*” means “dance house”. The tradition under this name has roots in Transylvania, and refers to a house where people gather only to dance. In the period of the Soviet dictatorship, beginning in 1972, *táncház* became fashionable, and then a real movement, in Hungary, and was very popular among the young people. (Bólya 2012: 45-46). At *táncház* events different dances are taught, always accompanied with live music. From November of 2011 the *táncház*-method was accepted by UNESCO as a Hungarian model for the transmission of intangible cultural heritage.¹² The Balkan *táncház* movement began in 1974, only two years later than the Hungarian, and from its beginnings it was very successful. The founder was Antal Kricskovic. Today there exist more kinds of *táncház* with Balkan materials in Hungary. Their programs contain different dances, but in general those performed are Bulgarian, Macedonian, Serbian and Croatian *oro*-s or dances. In some *táncház* can be found Romanian or Greek dances also. The Balkan *táncház* are organized generally by music ensembles.

¹² *Táncház* method on the website of the UNESCO: <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?lg=en&pg=00011&Art18=00515>

In Hungary, Bulgarians, Greeks, Romanians, Serbians and Croatians have official status of minority. Sadly the Macedonians have not succeeded in getting this status. The official minorities in Hungary get financial support and have their own self-government, so they have possibility to take care of their folklore heritage and to found folklore ensembles. In Hungary there exist more ensembles for Bulgarian, Greek, Serbian, Croatian folklore, and for Romanian as well. We can find Macedonian people in Hungary among the members of the Bulgarian or Serbian communities, but most of them are connected to the Greek minority, which consists of refugees from Aegean Macedonia. Significant numbers of those refugees were ethnic Macedonians. (Боља 2013: 6).

The first ensemble with Macedonian folklore was founded in 2012, under the name “Ohrid”. This group can work with good folklore materials as the leader is an ethnographer who researches Macedonian folklore heritage. The existence of this group is a success from the aspect of propagation of Macedonian culture in Hungary. The repertoire contains authentic songs and dances and a stylized choreography from the ensemble “Tanec”.¹³

If we see the Balkan táncház programs in Budapest today, we can observe the transformation of the folklore material. More and more often the step forms are the most important elements of these programs but they have no real connection with the live folklore. Sometimes we cannot find even one participant who is the member of the given ethnicity. This – sorrowfully – is also true for the Balkan folklore ensembles, who perform stylized choreographies. For example, there is a Bulgarian ensemble without a single Bulgarian member. There can be found exceptions of course. For example, the Bulgarian folklore ensemble Zornica¹⁴, whose leader was educated in Bulgaria, and all members of which have Bulgarian roots who like their own folklore (Bólya 2013: 4). It is an interesting fact that this leader has Macedonian roots also.

The Balkan folklore ensembles have to improve all possibilities, to stay in contact with the folklore of the homeland; this will help to propagate the culture of this country.

The qualification programs of the lectoracies and departments of language have themes connected to culture also. The Macedonian Lectoracy, with a founding of folklore database could give new ideas for the propagating of their folklore and give base for the folklore groups.

If we speak about public education, we must mention the elementary schools and secondary schools as well as the Croatian and Serbian secondary schools. The Croatian secondary school and the ensemble “Fáklya” (“Torch”) is situated in one building complex, where the students get acquainted with folklore under the leadership of Antal Krocskovics. This means that there are given good conditions for folklore-studies. The Serbian ensemble also works in the building of the Serbian secondary school. They have good performances, with authentic and stylized folklore.

Zoltán Kodály says that children have to learn singing on the basic of the musical mother language -- the folksongs. We can say together with him, that children also have to learn dancing on the base of the dance mother language, as these are important elements of the ethnic culture. For that it is important to keep contact with the folklore sources and strengthen their own culture.

¹³ Website of the ensemble: <http://macedon.hu/en/index.html> (01.01. 2013).

¹⁴ Website of the ensemble: <http://zornica.hu/index.php?lang=bg> (10.10. 2013).

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