

Antecedents of the Research

Even his contemporaries felt discrepancy between the national symbol status of Erkel's operas and the inaccessibility of their musical text. To tell the truth, apart from the French musical culture, in the nineteenth century it was a unique event if an opera score was printed: the genre of opera proved to be resistant to the modern, textlike existence of the music, and against the conception of autonomous composition. Also the condition that the publishing of complete opera editions started relatively belatedly, even within the second generation of the single-composer complete editions, originates in this phenomenon and in the related difficulties. In the light of these facts, the project of the Erkel complete edition in 1962 initiated by the Institute for Musicology (of Budapest) was in synchrony with the West European trend, moreover, in case of its realization [GB: realisation] it would have antedated both the Verdi and the Rossini complete editions. Somfai László's essay about the extraneous orchestrations found in the Erkel-scores published in 1961 and the special phenomenon that in the Hungarian theaters [GB: theatres] each one of Erkel's operas was put on the boards in twentieth-century revisions, were obviously catalysts to the plan of the Erkel complete edition. Finally the plan of the complete edition remained unfulfilled, and the four opera scores together with the six overture scores (*Bánk bán* is not among them) made by Jenő Vécsey remained unpublished. (A few decades before, the complete Erkel-recording planned by the Hungarian State Opera, in whose written documents the necessity of the printed complete edition was mentioned for the first time, ended up in the same way.) Beyond Vécsey's death, however, there were some other intrinsic, methodological causes that could set back a complete edition based on up-to-date, academic-critical foundation: the unreflected opposition of the modern revision and the author's manuscript, and an even then one-sided autograph-cult, which is mistakenly interpreted also on other occasions, creates the spurious illusion of the authenticity by equating the author's manuscript and the author's last intention. Each one of Erkel's so-far-published opera scores proves that his opera autographs cannot be considered as the vehicle of the author's last intention even in the case when the scores stayed in the use of the author supervising the performances. (Neither the fact that Vécsey did not regard his publications public in their surviving form can change the one that his philological method was questionable.) Consequently, this respectable antecedent could not be meritably used in a modern critical complete edition of Erkel's operas.

Findings of the Research

The critical analysis of the as yet unknown or library-registered, but previously non-examined document outcropped during the source research prior to the present first edition of *Bánk bán*, resulted in three essential achievements to be detailed below: (1) it was undoubtedly proven that five years after the premiere Erkel revised *Bánk bán*, first and foremost the orchestration of his sons within the opera. (2) Two numbers of the opera came into existence by the adaptation of Erkel Sándor's and Erkel Gyula's former pieces. (3) The so far non-examined autograph manuscript of the libretto informs us of an early variant of the lyrics and the musical concept, and throws new light upon the birth of the libretto. I evolve my arguments for the three statements below.

(1) The six score-copies turned up from the area of the (Austro-Hungarian) Monarchy during the source research contain musical texts consistent with each other, but different from the autograph. This text was the revision which was made by Erkel apropos to the premiere in Kolozsvár (today Cluj-Napoca), and in which he corrected the orchestration of his sons on the one hand, and sanctified the cuts crystallized during the former performances on the other. I accepted the following four arguments as evidence: (a) On the already revised score copies which carry the 'Cl' sign and Erkel's entries, there can be read in Erkel's handwriting word-for-word the same alternative orchestrational proposals as the ones he had suggested in his letter written on January 18, 1866 to János Follinus, director of the theater of Kolozsvár. Thus it was the score mentioned in the letter and in the same time sent to Kolozsvár. Since it does not contain new numbers, the „supplements” (Erkel) executed in it can refer only to the revision. (b) Each of the contractions of the revised score can be found in the author's manuscript as cuts. (c) In every case, the revisions of the orchestration concern sections which originally, according to the examinations of Somfai, were not orchestrated by Erkel himself; on the other hand, it leaves intact the whole third act which was originally orchestrated mainly by the author. Thus we are talking about the correction of the Erkel-sons' orchestration, and not about an ad hoc version made for the premiere in Kolozsvár. (d) The Transylvanian press unambiguously confirms the fact of the revision: after the premiere in Arad, on November 27, 1866 the *Alföld* („Lowland”) writes about a *Bánk bán* „revised with huge attention by Erkel”.

Also the fact can be considered as an indirect evidence that in the region of the Monarchy solely the revised version spread freely, while the early variant conducted by Erkel remained within the National Theater right until the 1940 premiere of the modern revision. Anyway, the musical text of *Bánk bán* was transmitted in two parallel threads, and during this process the early version did not become invalid. However I do not regard the long lasting validity of the early

version as an argument for the invalidity, local validity, or the questionable authenticity of the revision. Erkel had several reasons for retaining the „original” version also after 1866 for home use. Generally: the demand for a definitive text was not too intense in the scope of 19th-century opera, considering that it was the very genre in which the musical text kept its instantaneous nature, and one-off character most of all. Furthermore, the listener does not realize the changes of the orchestration and distribution, hence the self-identity of the piece does not become questionable, either. However, there are some more practical arguments, too: the revision of *Bánk bán* in the middle of the 1860-s coincided with the attacks that were launched on Erkel as a theater [GB: theatre] manager mainly because of the repertory shaping, within that, the preference of his own operas. In this situation, and in the midst of the general displeasure caused by the theater's [GB: theatre's] artistic and financial state, it would have been obviously an unfortunate step from Erkel to come up with the plan of recopying his entire opera, an investment whose considerable charges would not have been justified by a profit manifesting in newly written numbers or other easily recognizable innovations in the music.

Five years after the premiere in Pest, the idea of the one in Kolozsvár was not either too early or too late for providing an occasion for Erkel to fix the changes crystallized during his theatrical practice till then and his dissatisfaction with the orchestration in the shape of a revised version. Hereby in the revision a certain criticism of the familial orchestrating workshop is formulated, too: in a creation psychological sense the orchestrational work of the Erkel-sons was a „negative model” (A. Walker) in developing the definite form of *Bánk bán*, in the same way as the work of the helpers around the Weimar Liszt, namely providing a basis for the author's orchestrational intention to be realized [GB: realised]. Anyhow, the Erkel-workshop is not a unique phenomenon at all: in the Classicist branch of the 19th century represented by Erkel, in which not the orchestrated definite form, but the abstract musical idea was considered pre-eminently as the intellectual property, the fact of the extraneous orchestration did not conflict with the requirement of originality. The existence of the Erkel-workshop provides us information about the historical status of the Erkel-operas, not their aesthetic quality.

(2) The other main increment of the source research started with a clean slate was the clarification of the authorship of certain numbers of the opera. After the investigation of the orchestral parts' material in the one-time National Theater [GB: Theatre], the dance-number's whole, complicated story became clear for us, and we can learn that Erkel made steps for arranging the situation of the ballet-number, assaulted by the press from the beginning, for good. He had already rejected the major part of the ballet music composed presumably by his son, Sándor before the revision; in turn the Hungarian dance functioning as its closing dance was converted into a bipartite *csárdás*, which by that time not only had become the supreme musical manifestation of the Hungarian national identity, but had also gained currency on the foreign ballet stages as a par

excellence Hungarian dance. After all, only the slow introduction part of the *Csárdás* is composed by Ferenc Erkel. In addition, he was the one, who inserted a choir-part in the score of the ballet, which is extremely strange. Gyula Erkel's *Széchenyi-March* composed for piano was found in the Erkel-legacy of Marosvásárhely (Târgu Mureș, Neumarkt am Mieresch), in which the music of Andrew II's entry march from *Bánk bán* can be recognized. Here Erkel handled his son's work gentler, yet, because of the precipitance, with the same intention as in the case of the dance number. (Beyond the march, another, additional movement of the dance number was unveiled as the composition of Gyula Erkel.)

Not only the above mentioned case of the ballet number, but also the issue of the 2nd act's closing certifies that Erkel took seriously the reviews written in the press. The investigation of the orchestral parts' material in the one-time National Theater [GB: Theatre], in line with certain press releases of the 1870-s, makes it obvious that Erkel accepted Mosonyi's and others' recommendations about the necessity of cutting down the act, and he decided to make a radical cut which closes the act shortly after the murder. The prayer sacrificed for the cut was put into the 3rd act. The present edition did not regard this cut as the part of the author's definite intention for two reasons: on the one hand it does not form a part of the author's revision; on the other one, in my opinion this cut made under external pressure instantiates an effect dramaturgy which is originally unfamiliar to the dramatic logic considered as to be followed by Erkel and Egressy. Anyway, the practice of this drastic cut became embedded into the modern revision of Nádasdy and Rékai, and thus was quasi canonized.

(3) For the very first time the libretto fragment originating in Egressy's hands and containing also Erkel's entries (L1) started to be examined, too. This very important source shows us an early version of the lyrics. Beyond this, it preserves also notes referring to the musical realization [GB: realisation], which foreshadows the composer's original concept which is significantly different from the definitive version. On the basis of this source and text-analytical examinations, the sections cut from the libretto probably by Ede Szigligeti could be named circumspectly: viz., according to a press release so far neglected, the old fellow-author curtailed the already deceased Egressy's original lettering. The joint investigation of the libretto and the musical drafts on the whole does not affirm the hope having emerged over and over again in the Erkel-research, according to which Egressy and Erkel had started to carry on their successful undertaking right after the premiere of *Hunyadi László*. By every indication, the completion of the libretto can be dated to 1850 in its form approved by Egressy, in turn the initiation of the coherent composition to the very end of the 1850-s. However, it is conceivable that certain musical drafts were put down on paper as early as the 1840-s. Nevertheless, since according to the press' testimony in that decade Erkel has not come to a decision about the libretto to be set to music yet, the sketched musical materials, if there were any, probably were not related to a real, existing libretto; the poetry of the

Italian-French opera genre cultivated by Erkel made this kind of method possible without further ado. (The N^o 3 Ensemble is one of the numbers that are related to early, textless music, and in this very number there can be found a lyrics-fragment missing from the draft, and which can be interpreted only within the softening political situation around 1860.)

Finally, the peculiar instrumentarium of the *Bánk bán* drove me to the revelation that the international motivation of the couleur locale showing up in the opera repertory of the middle of the century contributed significantly to the expression of the national voice, in which the meaning of „national” is to be understood within „exotic”. The examples of Meyerbeer and others show that in the opera comique of the middle of the century the folk milieu becomes as exotic as the wide nature or the historical past. The exotic instruments like viola d’amore or dulcimer in the case of Erkel, fill the dramatic parts of archaism and vernacularity in the same time. It is remarkable that according to the press releases, Erkel wanted to expand the circle of the exotic instruments by applying a *tárogató* (a Hungarian historical instrument of the clarinet family), and although this did not happen, the English horn, which is incidentally the attribute of the mad scenes also in the international repertory, in a musical sense virtually functions as a *tárogató*; the English horn substitutes the *tárogató* in the same way as the two piccolos substitute the shepherd’s pipes in Melinda’s mad scene. At the same time, Erkel goes as far as possible within the reconcilability of the national musical raw material and the international musical forms right in the score of *Bánk bán*, which is exemplified by the recognition of the common denominator between a mad scene’s stereotypes evolved in the Italian opera repertory and the tripartite csárdás-form. Otherwise Egressy and Erkel knew well that the obligate element of a mad scene is the use of musical quotations; not only the related notes of the source L1 bear testimony to this, but the quotations effectively realized in the score as well.

The first edition of the *Bánk bán* publishes the material of the premiere in Kolozsvár, i.e. the musical text of the author’s revision. In the course of the edition, my decision in favour of the philological method of the «best text» was partly a matter of principle, partly relates to the existence of the two text-versions. The early and the definite version do not mingle intrinsically in the edition, which is rooted partly on the very intention of the clear demarcation of the two versions, partly on the respect of the textual autonomy of the sources. However, making the early version available was an equally important aim of the publishing, as was putting the author’s definite intention in print.

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