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A Monographic Description of the Folk Music of Bátya

Summary

The village of Bátya is situated in Bács-Kiskun County, in the Sárköz area, in the vicinity of the town Kalocsa. The first mention of its name we know of was made in 1061. There have been data of its existence ever since. The local culture is of double roots, as besides Hungarians, there are (Southern) Slav immigrants living there, too. The latter speak a variant of Croatian that they call „Rác”. It is just the youngest of them that do not speak the Rác language any more, nevertheless they do understand the tongue of their grandmothers.

All the inhabitants of the village are of the Roman Catholic religion. They are extremely ardent believers, which might be a consequence of either the proximity of the Kalocsa arch-bishopry or of the fact that the settlement was a clerical property for several centuries. The local priests were sometimes Hungarians sometimes Slavs, though in most cases Hungarians. The mass has even lately been celebrated in the language of the Rác as well, though just occasionally.

Even the locals were of the opinion that Bátya had no tradition at all, just like all the areas that had been occupied by the Ottoman Empire in the 16th-17th centuries. No one had ever ventured to look for any traditions of either local history or of folklore. Zoltán Fehér Ph.D., my father was a young teacher when in 1952 he was designated to this village. Being interested in ethnography, he started doing research work though he had been discouraged by many. As a result, he has got 10 thick volumes of material collected in the "traditionless" village.

Nowadays you cannot collect any new material but asking people about the items that have been found earlier. Unfortunately all the members of the community this culture used to belong to are dead. But one can find different ways of reproducing the well-known pieces or variants of items described earlier. There are altogether 472 data of songs.

This material is of an ancient character. Besides the fact that the traditional layer of archetypes is still alive, there are frequent examples of Transdanubian pentatonicity (elevated 3rd and 7th stages). Even the new style is featured by a sort of old-style character, and local specialities; what you hear in Bátya is not only variants of songs known all over the country. And even the latter are performed in with an ancient attitude.

In classifying and organizing the material, I followed the principles laid down by Pál Járdányi.

My thesis demonstrates the result of research work of -- as László Lajtha put it -- *the biology of music*: a good example of the mutual tradition and a characteristic mixture of the cultures of two ethnic groups both from the point of view of artistic features and contents.