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Where are the roots of Hungarian folk music located? One answer to this multi-faceted question is given in János Sipos's co-authored study together with Ufuk Tavkul (who wrote the book's third chapter), *Karachay-Balkar Folksongs*, in which Sipos traces and explains the ties between the musical traditions of the Hungarian and Turkic peoples. Language uses and musical traditions often exemplify similarities or influences, and these can be traced in studies combining linguistic and ethnomusicological methods. In Sipos' book the ties between language and music are related to the linguistic connections between the two cultures in question in a situation in which Turkic languages, presently numbering around thirty-five, are spoken by roughly two-hundred million people, ranging from Southeastern Europe to Siberia and Western China, and some of these people have or in the past had links with Hungarians and Hungary.

For thirty years, Sipos, a Hungarian senior researcher at the Institute for Musicology (belonging to the Hungarian Academy of Sciences) and author of fourteen books, engaged in a large comparative research project focusing on the music of Turkic peoples. Between 1987 and 1993 Sipos carried out fieldwork in Turkey, Thrace (a region divided among Turkey, Greece and Bulgaria), Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Kirgizstan, Turkmenistan and Karachay (in the Caucasus). During these excursions he recorded some ten thousand tunes, which since then have been archived at the Hungarian Academy of Science and integrated into Béla Bartók's Anatolian collection and László Vikár and Gábor Berecski's Volga Kama collection, which was published in their 1989 study titled *Votyak folksongs* (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó).

The main topic of the present study is the origin of Hungarian folk music. According to Sipos, the roots of Hungarian folk music are to be searched for in the past migration paths of the ancient Magyars. These Magyars migrated from East to West, meaning from Asia to Europe; moreover, it is generally assumed that the ancestors of the current Hungarian people once lived together with other peoples in the North and South Caucasus. The book is therefore all about one

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Caucasian presumed ancestor group of Hungarian folk music, the Karachay-Balkar community. Around 125,000 in number in 1996, the Karachay-Balkar, who are presently mostly Sunni Muslims, inhabit the North Caucasus, west of the Black Sea, and are included in the Russian Federation; but unfortunately the book does not provide even a general map to locate this community. Their language belongs to the Northwestern group of Turkic languages, within the Caucasian group of the Kipchak branch of Turkic languages. This language is called *tavlu*, meaning literally "mountaineer." During two fieldwork trips to the Caucasus and three further trips among the Karachay of Turkey, Sipos recorded, transcribed, and analyzed some 1,200 tunes from his informants.

Unfortunately, there is a discrepancy between the book's Table of Contents and its actual contents because the Table of Content does not assign numbers to the chapters, whereas in the body of the book the chapters *are* numbered; moreover, unfortunately, this numbering does not match the author's delineation of the book's chapters in his Introduction (8-9), in which only five chapters are introduced instead of the seven actually appearing in the book. Following the Introduction that is also the first chapter, the second chapter describes the various fieldwork projects conducted by Hungarians in the Caucasus, while the third chapter deals with the history of the Karachay-Balkar people. The fourth chapter details the musicological features of Karachay-Balkar tunes, linking their music to that of other Turkic groups. This chapter includes a huge folksong anthology consisting of 150 pages. The fifth chapter is all about the lyrics of the songs, and the sixth chapter is devoted to their musical analysis, whereas the seventh chapter gives the rhythmic formulae of certain melodic lines (but, strangely, nothing is said in this chapter or anywhere else in the book about the iambic rhythm that is so common in the Hungarian language and music).

This book raises the following questions: How can ethnomusicology show links among various ethnic groups? Do similarities in the music of some groups derive from their known or supposed shared background or even genetic origin? Can cultural traits be transmitted between neighboring populations (horizontal transmission), just as they are passed from ancestral to descendant populations (vertical transmission)? All these questions and their detailed answers, employing various methodologies, together make a key issue in ethnobiology as well. János Sipos tackles this issue by assuming a possible transmission from the Karachay-Balkar to the Hungarian people, meaning through vertical transmission. It turns out that this issue is just as important for Hungarian researchers searching for the original homeland of Hungarians, a project that started already in the thirteenth century, during the reign of King Béla, when around the year of 1232 a Dominican monk named Otto left his companions and headed eastward to look for the Caucasian Magyars that he had read about in earlier chronicles. By now there is a consensus that the Magyars settling in the Carpathian Basin were descendants of Finno-Ugrian and Turkic ethnic groups; and as for their folk music, Sipos claims that "there was no unified Finno-Ugrian or Turkic folk music, yet the most typical [musical] forms of Finno-Ugrian and Turkic-Tatar groups could be differentiated" (Sipos 2015: 13).

According to Sipos, Béla Bartók, who did fieldwork in Turkey in 1936, was one of the first to explore the relations between Hungarian and Anatolian folk music, thus pointing to the two groups' similar pentatonic structure and prosody and concluding that they may have had a common Central-Western Asian origin (15). Other Hungarian musicologists, too, have been

looking for the roots of Hungarian music in and around the Middle Volga region. Some of these musicologists have suggested that pentatonic tunes, a major feature of Hungarian music, most probably have a North Turkic-Mongolian origin. These musicologists searched for the roots of Hungarian laments, noting that they had Ugrian or Anatolian and Azeri elements and therefore could have such origins. To find some of the roots of Hungarian music, Sipos concentrated on vocal folk music, claiming that it was the chief reservoir of archaic strata. Following in Bartók's footsteps, he recorded a huge number of melodies in order to systematically examine the connections between Hungarian music and that of Eastern groups, and mainly Anatolian folk music. For example, based on his findings, he affirms that the psalmodic and lament styles are related to, and could probably originate from, Byzantium. Following his explorations in Turkey, Sipos was able to study many other different ethnic groups, such as the Kazakh, Azeri, Kyrgyz, the Thrace Bektashis and the Karachay-Balkar communities.

The chapter on the history and social life of the Karachay-Balkar people (ch. 3, 41-86) was written by historian Ufuk Tavkul. However, Tavkul does not deal with the cultural issues connected to this group and their folk and musical heritage, so this chapter basically surveys the situation of the Karachay-Balkar as a highlander people whose area of living was for centuries, and to this day is, of strategic importance for both the Russians and the Ottomans/Turks surrounding them. By way of an introduction to their music, within the same third chapter, under a paragraph titled "Old custom, songs, gods" (75-85), the Karachay-Balkar folksongs are classified according to their function and theme, and thus divided into sub-groups such as: heroic songs, ballads, songs of the Soviet era, love songs, plaintive and cursing songs, laments and Muslim religious songs. But unfortunately it is difficult to realize from the catalogue provided there if these songs are still alive today. The book has no CD accompaniment but it mentions that the songs can be listened to on its e-book edition (95); yet, at present no such edition or any bibliographical reference to it can be found anywhere on the Internet.

In his musical analysis in Chapter Four Sipos divides the corpus of 1,200 tunes into thirteen musical categories according to their number of lines and their degrees, cadences and progression of melody and mode. Next, in the fifth chapter, Sipos chooses a representative selection from the 1200 tunes, which in fact make a folksong anthology, based on the same division into thirteen musical categories (163-300). Unfortunately, though, the very names or naming of these categories sometimes lacks clarity. For example, one category is called *jir* tunes, but the very word or term *jir* is never explained or translated into English, so the meaning of these melodies remains unclear and all that is stated about this category is that the Karachay-Balkar themselves claim that it is indigenous.

After presenting the features of Karachay-Balkar folk music (143-157), still in the fourth chapter, the author compares it to Hungarian folk music with regard to five musical criteria: scale, form, meter, compass and melody outlines. Here many examples of Karachay-Balkar and Hungarian tunes are presented in parallel columns on the same page (e.g., example no. 14, 145). However, the corpus of Hungarian tunes featured in this comparison lacks explanations concerning, for example, how and where they were picked. Of the five musical criteria, considering scale, the author shows that the minor third scale is the most common (with the Aeolian mode predominant) in both corpora. As for form, most of the Karachay-Balkar and Hungarian tunes are shown to be built from four independent melodic lines with predominantly

descending cadential sequences. Regarding meter, both ethno-linguistic groups tend to perform their more archaic tunes in the *parlando-rubato* manner, and 2/4, 4/4, 6/8 are their most characteristic meters. The Karachay-Balkar have almost no asymmetrical meters, a feature that does not seem very relevant for the comparison, whereas some Hungarian folksongs are asymmetrical (such as the first slow dance in the dance suite of Transylvania), but the author does not elaborate on this feature.

Chapter Five introduces, as said, a folksong anthology made up of a selection from the 1,200 tunes recorded in Sipos's various research projects and organized according to the aforementioned thirteen categories of form and sound pattern. Chapter Six then details the lyrics of the melodies with first a preliminary discussion of their language, which later serves the author's comparison between the performances of the songs in Karachay-Balkar and in Hungarian. The Karachay-Balkar language derives from Cuman, a language that by the end of the seventeenth century had already merged with the Hungarian language; this fact makes the Karachay-Balkar word stock particularly important for Hungarian and explains why Sipos compares its vocabulary with Hungarian as well as with common Turkic (303). Of the 1,200 tunes, the lyrics of 287 are transcribed in Karachay-Balkar and translated into English, but unfortunately no comments are made on the topics of these songs.

In general, often the extremely musicological approach and technical vocabulary of this book make it difficult to read and be understood by non-musicologist educated every-readers. Although the content organization of this book is, as shown, at times confusing and large parts of it are not sufficiently reader-friendly, still, it is meritorious as a voluminous and well-documented exploration of Karachay-Balkar folksongs exhibiting a thorough musical analysis and stimulating insights into the roots of Hungarian folksongs. This incredible attempt to understand the similarities between Hungarian and Caucasian music is an interesting approach that could be further validated through a more distinctly phylogenetic or cladistic methodology (partly following evolutionary biology) that would trace the vertical transmission of the music in question by coding the metrics, scales, modes and lines of the large corpus to which it belongs.