The Myth of Village Source as Label of Recreational *Folk Dances*

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Preface

When I started folk dancing in my early teens, it was due to the infectious and exotic music and movements of the dances from so many (mainly eastern European) countries in the program of the local recreational folk dance group, that I was immediately hooked. Of course, the social benefits of being a participant in a group of likeminded people, were important too. It wasn't long before I began to wonder where all these beautiful folk dances came from, from which foreign lands, from which peoples, from which cultures. Luckily, in most cases the dances came with a name and a country of origin, as told by the teachers. After some time I felt I wanted to engage with these cultures and peoples and the way they did the dances themselves. Soon it became clear that the way we perform the dances in our recreational groups in the western countries, was not exactly the same way as how the people used to perform them in the places of origin. The differences intrigued me, and I began to look into them, trying to unravel the processes of transmission and transformation that seemed to shape the folk dances on their travel from the places of origin to our recreational groups.

At the same time, I began to realize that most participants in the international recreational folk dance community (of which my own groups were part) are not aware of these differences. Often, the existence of such differences was simply not relevant for the western groups, although sometimes questions were asked about how the dances were actually performed in the places of origin. In the latter cases, the information provided in the answers usually didn't include much detail on the transmission and transformation processes that took place in reality. Gradually, I started to understand that the repertoire of the international recreational folk dance community deviates to a large extent from the actual folk dances in the places of origin, but that the participants in our groups seem to believe they are, more or less, the same.

I find this understanding not only revealing, but also enriching: knowing more about the transmission and transformations processes actually puts these folk dances in a broader cultural and folkloristic perspective, leads to a better understanding of the original cultures and peoples, and complements *and* completes the experience of performing the dances yourself. This is the reason I decided to put my ideas and considerations on the origins of the folk dances in the repertoire of the international recreational folk dance community on paper.
The result is the small booklet in front of you.

I have been involved in the international recreational folk dance community for nearly five decades. During this period, I took folk dance classes, and taught classes myself, mainly in The Netherlands, but also a lot in several other countries. I have built a folk dance archive consisting of dance music and notations that covers a large part of the repertoire of the international recreational folk dance community. The archive also contains a large amount of literature (books, articles) on folk dancing, both on the international recreational folk dance community as well as on folk dancing in specific countries and/or from specific peoples. Furthermore, the archive contains literature on folklore, history, ethnography, ethnomusicology, and ethno-choreology of many of the countries addressed in this paper. During my research, I got in touch with many folk dance teachers (professional and amateur, specialized and generic), from different countries, active within the international recreational folk dance community, whom I consulted, interviewed, and often became friends with. Furthermore, I visited several of the countries addressed in this paper, often with the opportunity of doing (non-academic) research on the local folk dance situation. The considerations and arguments presented in this paper are the result of an analysis of all the information I collected and analyzed as mentioned above. For a related study subject, see Green (2017) and for a recent, from a relatively American-centered perspective, discussion on similar issues see Folkdance Footnotes (2022).

1. Introduction

It is common belief that in most societies dancing is or has been a part of normal life[1]. When performed in rural regions and villages by the local population during traditional, symbolical and/or ritual settings and occasions, such dances are often referred to as folk dances. After the industrial revolution traditional folk dancing in, especially, western countries became nearly extinct and only in some remote places remnants have been collected and revived. From about a century ago, in these same western countries, folk dancing as a leisure time activity emerged, where people enjoyed doing folk dances not only originating in their own country, but from other countries as well. This recreational international folk dancing has evolved into a large community, in which, due to global communication and travel having become a lot easier, a repertoire of folk dances came into being that is nowadays known and available worldwide.

The word "folk dance" as used in this global community keeps the idea of traditional[2] origins of the dances alive, which can be heard often expressed by participants in this community by means of the question "from which village" a particular dance is. An important part of the attractiveness of these folk dances to participants in this international recreational folk dance community is exactly the fact that there is this idea or image of "tradition", as well as concepts of folklore, culture, authenticity[3], folk arts, and more.

When investigating the processes involved in the transmission of the "original" folk dances to the repertoire of the recreational folk dance community, one discovers that this image of "traditional" dances is not really accurate, rather it becomes clear that the path from the "village" to the recreational dance group constitutes many stages and layers, in which "agents" and their personal choices and influences play a large role, leading to less or more *transformation* of the dance material. At the same time, many participants in the mainly western, recreational folk dance community, still believe they are doing "traditional" folk

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1   A nice way of putting it is Taylor (2021: 5): "Whether described as art, ritual, text, symbol, or propaganda, dance has been a socializing practice as far back as we can trace."
2   The word "traditional" is rather subjective, also in relation to folk dance, see for example Nahachewsky (2012, 39). Nevertheless, it is extensively used in the IRFDC and I will use it here in the same way, without implying any value to the dance or connecting definite attributes to it.
3   When talking about the "origins" of folk dances in the IRFDC often the issue of authenticity is brought up. Authenticity is a rather difficult concept in folklore in general, see Bendix (1997). This paper, however, is not about issues of authenticity, so I will not discuss this further

dances. While the attitude of "no harm is being done" often prevails, we, in recent years, are witnessing the emergence of "new", "invented" folk dances in the repertoire of the western recreational folk dance groups, that no longer in any way relate to the sources that are being implied in the "labels" of such dances. These are, basically, examples of misinformation which might lead to misunderstandings about each-other's cultures, the opposite of why many people started to practice folk dancing in the first place.

This paper will focus on the *transmission* and *transformation* of folk dances from the "village" into the recreational folk dance group repertoire, and investigate the stages and agents involved in this process. It will be advocated that the idea of the "traditional" "village" folk dance as source of the recreational folk dance is largely a myth.

2. The International Recreational Folk Dance Community (IRFDC)

International recreational folk dancing has a long history and is nowadays practiced in many countries all over the globe. The way international recreational folk dancing has developed differs between countries, but there are also many similarities. A full description and analysis of the origins and developments of international recreational folk dancing could be of great interest but might constitute a huge endeavor and is certainly far beyond the scope of this paper. For some information on the developments in the US see for example Wakefield (1966), Shay (2006, 2008), Laušević (2007), Nielsen (2011), Nahachewsky (2012), Cohen (2014), or for the UK see Mellish (2017). Our focus here is on the sources and the transmission of *the dances that are currently being danced as part of the repertoire of the international recreational folk dance community* (IRFDC), which is of a much narrower scope. Although contacts between recreational folk dancers and groups from different countries date already from more than a century ago (noticeably between countries in North America and Western Europe), since approximately the final quarter of the twentieth century a strong increase in such contacts and exchanges took place, such that today we may indeed speak of a global or worldwide international recreational folk dance community in which developments that were of a more local character before have become globally shared. This certainly applies to the dance repertoire. In this study I focus on recreational folk dance groups in North America (US, Canada), Western Europe, Israel, Asia (mainly Japan, Taiwan), Australia and Brazil. Similar groups exist in some other countries as well, but these are less well globally connected, have emerged more recently and/or are less well organized (and in addition it may be my lack of awareness on the existence of such groups).

A few words about the terminology might be helpful. With the word "international" I refer to the fact that the dance repertoire of such recreational folk dance groups consists of dances related to folk dance traditions from many different countries, peoples or cultures[4]. Of course, there are also recreational folk dance groups whose repertoire is based on only one country, either their home country or another country. Such groups are not the subject of this paper, although contacts and exchange (of both people and dances) between such "mono"-national groups and international groups clearly occur. To be clear, with "international" I do not refer to the fact that such groups exist in many countries (for this I will use the term global).

With the word "recreational" I refer to groups who practice international folk dancing just for fun, as a hobby, in leisure time, not professionally, typically in the context of affinity groups. The organization and character of such recreational groups may differ between countries, even between local groups within a country. The level of organization may range from highly structured, regularly practicing groups of a fixed membership, to more loosely organized and irregular get-togethers with highly variable participant groups. Some groups have permanent, trained teachers leading weekly classes, while others do without regular teachers and thrive on irregular invitations of external teachers to lead specialized workshops. In some countries regional or national folk dance organizations exist (or have existed), even for amateur recreational folk dancing, while in other countries only limited, local and group-specific organizational structures exist. Notice that I use the term "recreational" adjectively to the groups constituting the IRFDC, which specifically refers to the way the groups practice the activity of dancing, irrespective of the type of dances they do. "Recreational" is not an attribute of the dances that are practiced (in our case folk dances). Although the difference could be perceived as small (or non-existent) it is important to realize that the IRFDC participants generally perform dances that do not "belong" to their own tradition, so it is not "recreational dance" in the sense of performing one's "own" dances on specific occasions just for fun (as for the purpose of dancing), cf., Nahachewsky (2012: 16-17).

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4   Here I use the word "tradition" to indicate that the folk dances are considered by the people themselves as belonging to their own – folkloric – heritage and as 'emerging in a less easily traceable manner within a brief and dateable period' (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983), stemming, one way or another, from the past. For the purpose of this paper I leave aside whether such tradition is a "real" or "invented" tradition (ibid.). More general considerations about folklore and tradition may be found in e.g., Bendix & Hasan-Rokem (2014).

3. The IRFDC repertoire

As mentioned above, the folk dance[5] repertoire that circulates within the IRFDC relates to dance cultures from multiple countries and peoples. Examining the repertoire among the groups of the above delimited IRFDC, it appears that most of the dances are from[6] Central European, Eastern European, and Southeastern European ("Balkan") regions, Israel[7] and (to a lesser extent) some Middle Eastern regions and Western, Northern and Southwestern European regions, e.g., Nielsen (2011). The focus of this paper therefore will be on the dances relating to these regions, with strong emphasis on Eastern European and Balkan regions, cf., Laušević (2007), Shay (2008). Notwithstanding the importance or popularity of dances from other regions and countries that are part of the IRFDC repertoire, the topic of this study is most clearly illustrated by dances originating from these regions, cf., Casey (1981). In addition, from my own personal experiences my view on these regions is more elaborate than for other regions.

Apart from the geographical distribution of the folk dances in the IRFDC repertoire, there is another important aspect that must be mentioned. Almost all dances in the repertoire are regarded as single, individual dance pieces in the sense of a set, clearly outlined, prescribed, and "unchangeable" step/movement pattern to be performed to an equally set and prescribed piece of music[8].

5   I will use the term "folk dance" throughout this text because it is this term that is generally used in the IRFDC when referring to their dancing activities and repertoire. Other terms like ethnic dance, world dance, national dance, or others, could occasionally be encountered but are far from common practice in the IRFDC. See Nahachewsky (2012) for a detailed discussion on dance naming and terminology, especially from the perspective of the purpose of dancing. As Nahachewsky (ibid.: 31) says: "The truth of the matter however, is that the term "folk dance" is used very widely in popular speech, as well as by many dancers who claim to perform it."

6   The words "…are from…" suggest an absolute source or at least the existence of some proof that the dances really originate from these places. In reality, this is difficult to establish, which is exactly one of the purposes of this paper. In addition, dances as performed in the IRFDC are by definition re-created or revived but could still be identified as dances with a "concern for the past" (Nahachewsky, 2012: 26), or, as has been called, "dancing in a second existence".

7   It should be remarked that Israelian dances constitute a rather distinct category in the IRFDC repertoire. While some "traditional" Israelian dances exist (in the sense of being handed down to us through oral, living evolution), the vast majority of Israelian dances being danced today in the IRFDC are choreographed in relatively recent times by individual choreographers and therefore do not have or relate to a specific geographical place or people of origin as a source. Since the latter is the main topic of this paper, our analysis does not typically apply to Israelian dances, although they constitute a rather big part of the IRFDC repertoire. On Jewish dances see for instance Berk (1972).

8   The combination of a prescribed step/movement pattern with a prescribed piece of (existing, prerecorded) music appears to be a deeply rooted practice/custom within the IRFDC. The insep-

In addition, such "dance piece" carries with it a "label" consisting of a name, a country, region, and "village" of origin (see also below) and possibly some clarifying "folkloristic" information on the type, background, origin, performance occasion and meaning of the dance. Sometimes a personal name of a teacher, choreographer or researcher is part of the label as indicative of a "personal" source of the dance (the program or repertoire of a specific person). Of many of the dances written notations are available that include the labelling information and a step-by-step or count-by-count description of the step/movement pattern, e.g., Herman (1947), Harris-Pittman-Waller (1977), Casey (1981), Mouzaki (1981), Schiel (1995), Donkov (1997), and many more, or a videotaped recording[9] of the dance performed by a group or the teacher exists. A "folk dance" from the IRFDC repertoire may therefore, for all practical purposes, be defined as a "package" consisting of a label, a prescribed step/movement pattern, a prescribed musical piece and, optionally, a notation/description and/or video.

With this definition a folk dance (in the IRFDC repertoire) may be regarded as an "object", uniquely identifiable through the "label" and the other attributes from the "package". From this view of folk dances as objects[10] it also follows that these objects (dances) can be clearly marked, identified, referenced, collected, stored, sold, or purchased. In this way, such "objectified" folk dances become tradeable goods, consumer products, merchandise, or "commodities". At the same time, most IRFDC participants are fully aware that these "folk dance commodities" are not simply regular economic goods, but they carry a cultural/folkloristic value and meaning. This cultural meaning is epitomized by reference to the label and the "village of origin" of the dance. Many folk dancers, when folk dancing, have a certain amount of awareness of (and are sometimes very interested in) this reference to the source culture of the dance, and it often is one of the main reasons why people do such dances in the first place[11].

arability of a step pattern and the accompanying music is extremely important for many IRFDC participants. Confusion and debate may arise as soon as another step pattern is introduced to a music to which a well-known step pattern is being danced already for a long time, or another music is used for a well-known step pattern.

9   Nowadays uncountable examples of such videotaped dances are available on YouTube.

10   Objectification of folk dances is also discussed in e.g., Nahachewsky (2012: 101, 139). Here I extend the notion of objectification to the economic domain by referring to the dances as commodities.

11   This is typical of dancers in the IRFDC and is not necessarily the same in other dance communities. However, there might be different ways people from different dance communities view folk dancing as cultural activity. As Nahachewsky (2012: 27) discusses, a "concern with the past is not necessarily foremost in the mind of every participant at every moment of a reflective dance

However, as it will appear further on, this "cultural reference" to the "village" source of the folk dances is, in many cases, a myth. While the "labelling" of the folk dances by the teachers, who transmit these dances to the IRFDC repertoire, seems to confirm a direct link to the original "village" folklore, this link appears to be a long and complex path along which many changes, transformations, adaptations, distortions, inventions, or creations replace or are added to the original "village" dances. In the minds of many participants of the IRFDC their repertoire of folk dances coincides and/or overlaps with the original "village" repertoire, e.g., Shay (2008). Although in many cases a certain relationship between these two repertoires cannot be denied, it will be shown that an actual overlap to any extent is mostly non-existent.

Both the "labelling" and "commodification" of the folk dances in the IRFDC repertoire contribute to this gap between "village" dances and the IRFDC repertoire. The experiences of many of the IRFDC participants who, out of strong affinity with the root cultures of the folk dances they do, had, or took the opportunity to visit the countries and "villages" as named in the "labels" of the dances, confirmed the existence of this gap. For some of these people such experiences were enriching, inspiring, or revealing, while some others afterwards commented to have been disappointed. Hereafter, I will analyze the origins of this gap, the role(s) of actors and agents in the creation of the gap, and earlier and current processes taking place within the IRFDC that maintain or seem to widen the gap.

4. Sources and transmission of IRFDC folk dances

There are many different sources of the folk dances in the IRFDC repertoire. In the minds of many (most?) recreational folk dancers, the dances they perform come from a specific "village", of a specific "people", and from a specific "country" [12]. When asked *why* they believe so, they usually refer to the teacher having

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event". Although he is not talking specifically about the participants of the IRFDC, this might apply to them as well. Indeed, as Nahachewsky (2012: 27) continues, "[r]ather the interest in the past is clearest when observing the overall character of the community's tradition from a bit of a distance." Furthermore, as he (ibid, 137) continues in reference to recreational dance "[i]nterest in cultural context varies in recreational dance activity, perhaps at least as much as concern with authenticity."

12   It is known to be rather difficult to talk about the origin or source of "folk" items. Bartók (Essays 1976: 173, cited in Malvinni 2004: 148) already commented on this issue:
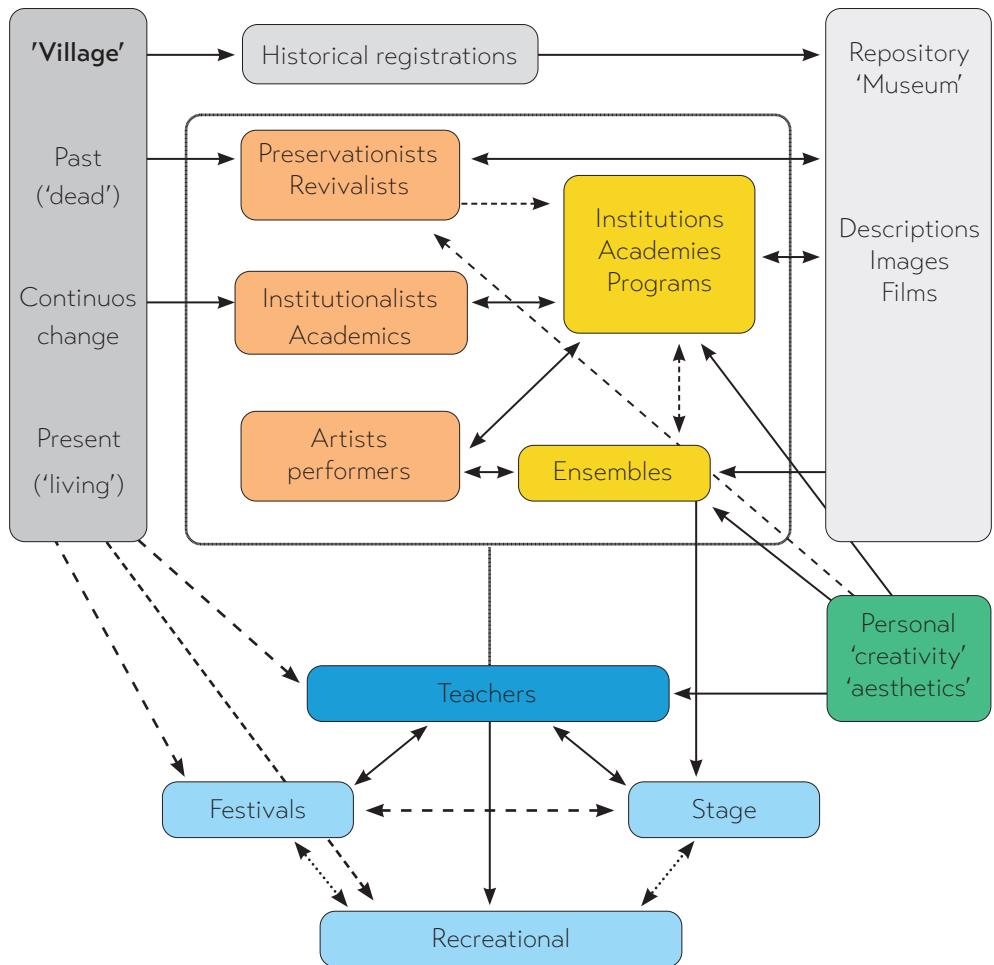
Figure 1

Figure 1: *A model of sources and transmission of folk dances from the village to the repertoire of the International Recreational Folk Dance Community (IRFDC). The main components are the "village", the "repository", the personal "creativity" and the group of "teachers". In between are several – categories of – "agents" (actors and institutions) who play a certain role in the transmission of the dances. Arrows indicate impact, influence, contribution, interaction, or a certain amount of exchange within the modus of a relationship. Solid arrows indicate a strong (in terms of amount or content), clear, deliberate, or durable relationship. Dotted arrows indicate a weak, unclear, unintentional, or accidental relationship. Although the model seems rather complex, it is still a "model" meaning a simplified representation of reality. In the real world, more and/or other connections, actors, sources, and nuances can be observed. Detailed explanation of this model and its components in the text.*

"labeled" the dance in that manner: when teaching the dance, the teacher provided its name (sometimes with translation or explanation), and its "origin" in terms of a country, a region, and/or a village. However, as we will see, hardly any dance in the IRFDC repertoire can convincingly be linked *directly* to such "traditional" or "original" "village" folk dance. In an overwhelming majority of cases, a long, complex but interesting path of transmission of knowledge, creation and information can be discerned between a "village" (folk) dance and a folk dance as done in the IRFDC.

A few words are appropriate on the use of the term "country" in the label of folk dances in the IRFDC repertoire. Basically, all IRFDC folk dance literature (syllabi, dance notation books, dance program overviews) write down the dances as "name + country", where "country" indicates the current (politically demarcated) national territory (or polity) in which the place (village) of origin of the dance is currently situated[13]. While this might seem easy and appropriate, it may lead to unclear referencing, specifically in cases where folk dances originate from peoples or nations who are ethnically or culturally different (minorities) from the ethnicity/culture of the country's national majority (or from diaspora communities for that matter). Especially in Central and Eastern European countries, where a large part of the IRFDC repertoire originates, this often occurs. As an example consider the dance Kezes from the Hungarian minority living in Moldavia in present-day Romania. Labelling such a dance as Kezes – Romania (since that is the current national-political territory where the dance is from) might be geographically-politically correct but obviously gives a wrong impression to some. On the other hand, Kezes – Hungary also doesn't work. "Hungarian" might do, but this too often leads to misunderstandings. Despite such inaccuracies, people in the IRFDC continue to label and list all dances in the "name + country" form up to this day.

As for the origins of such music [pure folk music], this factor would be as difficult to determine as it is difficult to determine the origin of vegetable or animal species or life. Another comparison is the following: folk language and folk music have very much similarity in their appearance, life, and function. We cannot trace the origin of the single words and grammatical forms to their absolute source, to the very invention of these words and forms. And, in a similar way, we cannot indicate the very source of the single tunes of pure folk music.

I surmise this could equally apply to folk dances (and dance steps, movements) as well.

13   The concepts of "country" and "nation", especially in the context of nationalism, are extensively debated in the literature. An interesting study on music and nationalism is Bohlman (2011), which I believe contains much that is applicable to folk dance as well. In the IRFDC the word "nation" is hardly used, instead the word "country" is used exclusively. Here I will also use the word "country" throughout, without implying the accurateness of this term and without suggesting the history of nation building, and nationalism is not applicable to folk dance research – on the contrary.

5. The "village"

First, let us briefly consider the "village" folk dances[14]. I use the term "village" between quotation marks as a "label" to refer to a certain geographically bounded location inhabited by the people to whose cultural expressions the dance that is being referred to belongs[15]. Typically, such locations where "original" folk dances[16] have been observed, notated, or researched, are hamlets, villages, or small towns situated in the countryside. In cities and other, larger, and more urban, settlements folk dances were much less noticeable, had died out, were considered uninteresting or were a mixture of the many ethnicities and cultures inhabiting such locations, and as such were considered less representative of the "ethnic" culture of the location[17]. Indeed, most of the folk dances in the IRFDC repertoire refer to rural or village dances[18]. For our purpose, the most important characteristic of such village dances is that, as time goes by, they are, consciously or unconsciously, but continuously being changed, transformed, adapted, re-modelled, re-configured, re-shaped, sometimes even re-invented, because of slow or rapid changes and developments ("evolution") in customs, social practices, habits within the community, or due to influences from external sources and contacts. In general, independent of the duration of the period of change, one might say that the performance of a dance in the original village at a certain moment in time is a unique occasion. I would posit that a dance, any dance, exists only at that specific time, place, and occasion. Even if the "same" dance will be done in the "same" community a certain amount of time later, it will typically not exactly be the same dance (although the community members might perceive it as the same dance). Furthermore, all village dance participants

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14   A full analysis and description of village folk dance practices and developments is beyond the scope of this paper. Only a few topics that are relevant for this study are mentioned here. A large amount of literature exists on this topic, only a few examples being: Armstrong (1985), Wingrave & Harrold (1984), Allenby Jaffé (1990).

15   From here on I will drop the quotation marks around the word village, keeping in mind it is used as a label and not in a literal sense.

16   Generally, it is not always appropriate to talk about single, individual "folk dances" in the traditional village setting, as if such dances exist as clearly defined and circumscribed patterns, structures, or "entities". It is often more appropriate to talk about "dancing" as part of village life. Often during traditional events in the village, people "dance", instead of "perform dances". Much more, dancing is embedded in the activities of the event taking place, although there also exist occasions where certain people might "perform" specific dances. For the purpose of this paper, I will continue talking about village folk dances, assuming the distinction between "dancing" as a social activity and "performing dances" is clear or not relevant for our arguments.

17   In the romantic, Herderian sense of folk research.

18   The category "village dance" as described here bears resemblance to the "peasant dance" category as mentioned in Nahachewsky (2012: 30), especially when considering that a large part of the population in the villages that I am referring to, used to be peasants.

perform it in their own, personal manner, which is determined by many factors, like physical and mental abilities, mood, opportunity, status in the community, and other socially induced factors. Although in many traditional communities specific attitudes, roles and "identities" are "expected" from dance participants, that doesn't mean that all people dance alike. On the contrary.

Hence, we cannot speak of *the* dance from *that* village in absolute, indefinite terms. There is an obvious parallel here with traditional folk music, as for instance expressed by Malvinni (2004) as:

> Gypsy music implies, for the temporality and historicity of music, that there can be no permanence in music. And does this not define the case with all so-called ethnic or folk musics, even with what (once was) "art" music? Can there ever be such a "thing" as musical permanence? [2004: 126]

> Every moment constitutes a "final hour", in that at every moment some event is lost forever. [2004: 142]

"Traditional" village folk dances are, by their nature, volatile, casual and momentary. When talking about a dance one has seen (or joined) in a village one must acknowledge that the "version" of the dance one saw existed only at that time as executed by that specific person. In the village dances are continuously changing[19]. Returning to the village at a later moment in time one will be confronted with new versions/renditions of the dance.

This might sound as a rather rigid interpretation of village dance, and often the differences between different renditions of a dance at different moments in time might not be that big. But, spanning periods of multiple years or even decades, we should no longer assume that dances remain static. In fact, we may safely surmise they do not, which is well-known and extensively described in the literature, see for example Slobin (1996), Nahachewsky (2012). By analogy, compare the continuous change of "living" folk music as described in many studies. Even disregarding the fact that dances (and villages) literally "die out", the remaining dance practices we see today in many of the villages where the dances in the IRFDC repertoire are allegedly from, are completely different from how they were at the time when the researcher visited the village in the first place. If we call this

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19   Of course, some village traditions can be very stable, persistent and will remain – nearly – the same for a long period of time. That may also hold true of dances. But in principle all traditions are continuously changing, evolving, see the section on the village.

current situation the "living" present, all other renditions of the dances are from the "dead" past[20]. Many studies exist that try to collect, describe, and preserve the folk dancing of the past, see for example Schröder (2000), Buckland (2006), and are trying to establish at the same time the value of the "past" dances for our modern community.

6. Collection, registration, and transmission

Researchers, travelers, visitors, or other outside observers who go to the village to observe, describe, record, write down, tape, or film a dance, will typically collect one rendition of the dance at that specific place, time, and occasion. Compare it to taking a photo that "freezes" the dance at that specific moment, while the evolution of dancing in the village continues like a film. Also, researchers usually record the manner the dance is executed by only one or a few persons, while there are likely many differences between how different community members perform the dance[21]. Even when the whole group is being videotaped, the researchers afterwards usually "select" one version of the dance as done by one (often the best) dancer, as the "iconic" version of the dance, possibly with variations as seen from other persons[22]. See for a critical analysis of observation of local dance Green (2016).

As a result, a dance as captured by an observer or researcher in a village should always be understood as a particular rendition of that dance by a specific person, at a specific place, for a specific occasion, and at a specific time. Another visitor who captures the dance in the same place but at another time and occasion, will record, in principle, another dance. It is important to note that in all

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20   Here, I use the pair "living" and "dead" as more or less absolute concepts in the sense of existence in time. "Living" is always in the present, "dead" in the past. When referring to dances another way of engagement with time could be to consider the dance experiences of the participants, whether they "involve some active reflection on the past" or "are fully engaged with the present flow of experience while dancing" (Nahachewsky, 2012: 24). In (ibid) the pair "vival" and "reflective" dance are used to describe the latter categories.

21   Sometimes such interpersonal differences are referred to as personal "style". However, such differences can be much more than style, they can also be on the level of basic movements and figures.

22   Or as seen from other, nearby, villages, where a dance is done under the same or a similar name or to a similar tune. This combination of dances from different villages into one dance for the IRFDC neglects one of the most important characteristics of traditional village dances as "community markers", in the sense that people from the village often strongly identify with "their own" dances.

cases of village folk dance registration, the result is not free from subjective interpretations by the collector or researcher[23], not only with respect to the selection of the dances included in the repository, but also with respect to the exact description of movements, style, and other dance qualities (even in the case of interpretation of filmed/videotaped dances[24]). What the observer observes or registers is influenced by personal, aesthetic, and cultural values and beliefs of the observer. As Reason (2003: 300) provocatively states: "Even after having seen a [dance] performance only yesterday, having been *there* in person, the performance itself is no longer available to us in and of itself, but rather through our own doubtful memory as supported, and inevitably transformed, by the various more or less fallible documentations available." [italics in original] In folk music research analogous arguments can be found, e.g., Malvinni (2004) who writes:

But first a reservation: there seems a certain amount of presumptuousness to the notion that the music of peasants can be preserved by researchers, whether they be amateur musicians or professionally employed ethnomusicologists. What grants Bartók, or any other researcher, the right to "speak for," as it were, the peasant? What are the hidden politics and class interests behind such schemes of representation? [142]

[on Bartók's published transcriptions of his phonograph recordings] However, in their privileging of pitch and to a certain extent rhythm, they essentially ignore timbre, background sound, overtones, imprecisions (what for Bartók might have been mistakes) in the performance. Yet no notation is ever exact. [149]

Empirically, musical material, as Bartók himself observes, is like a living creature, breathing and changing from moment to moment. [151]

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23   Here it is interesting to quote Bartók on the issue of folk music collecting in the field (Bartók, 1976: 10, cited in Malvinni 2004: 150):

Even if the first collectors had intended to, they could not have produced satisfactory results from scientific viewpoint, for they lacked the essential of instruments – the phonograph. Present-day researchers work with a variety of measuring and fixing instruments: they are thus able to give the most faithful reproduction possible in the form of a "snapshot" of each melody. But having the best material equipment is not enough: the equivalent intellectual equipment is just as important.

24   I claim that even looking at filmed or videotaped dances, not everybody will see the same. One person will observe and extract something which will not exactly be the same as somebody else will. That is because visual observation is not objective: the image of what one sees is formed and informed in the brain and is not independent from how the brain generally works and the person's existing subjective knowledge, memories, and capabilities. An interesting analysis of dance photographs and how they suggest movement is Reason (2003), who states (194): "... the viewer must also have the imagination to look further into the picture and see what might be possible." This is one of the few clear acknowledgements of the subjectivity on the part of the viewer when looking to and interpreting dance images, in contrast to the part of the maker of the image. Nevertheless, see Adamo (2016) for more on video analysis of music and dance.

Or, again on music, compare Bohlman (2011):

> A folk song in oral tradition is a different musical object from the same folk song in written tradition. It is not simply a matter of standardizing notation, tuning, or rhythmic inconsistencies from verse to verse, but rather of creating a version that represents something essential – about a performance or performer, or in the canonic repertories about an expansive tradition. [129]

Basically always, dances observed in the village are described and registered at some instance, either directly in the field, or afterwards in the "office" from film/video or from memory. Where early registrations were only available in writing, pictures, or photographs, with the advent of filming "in the field", moving images of village dances became available too. Apart from the "live" registrations, sometimes researchers also were able to extract information from the memory of older inhabitants about how dances were performed in earlier times. Still, all such registrations of village dances (be it live or from memory) represent a dance execution at a specific time, place, and occasion and by specific person(s). At any later moment in time these registrations can only be seen as representing the past, and in that sense, they constitute a "museum" of dances[25].

For this paper, I designate the collective of all registrations of village dances, made at any point in time or place, symbolically as the "repository", a "virtual" repository which should be seen as a very distributed facility in many locations [26] and of many different qualities, consisting of books and other written documents, and films and other image registrations. Since all registrations in principle refer to dances of the past (as explained above), this repository constitutes a kind of "museum". Over time, the repository is filled with items collected by different groups of people. The main categories of these people (and related institutions) will be briefly considered here. I regard these – groups of – people as "agents" in the process of transmission of dances from the village to the repository.

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25   This is not to disregard the fact that knowledge of folk dancing and folk dance research and collection may (sometime strongly) differ between countries, even neighboring ones, due to differences in history, culture, economic development and political situations.

26   For instance, at institutes, academies, schools, museums, libraries, archives (e.g., radio, television), but also at the homes of individual folk dance teachers, choreographers, researchers as personal private archives. As a result, the accessibility of this distributed repository ranges from easy, open access to limited or classified (none) access.

Historical registrations.

Roughly up until the end of the nineteenth century, collection and registration of village dances were rather limited, sparse, or non-existing[27]. Although in the "Romantic" period, in the second half of the nineteenth century, folk researchers were abundant in collecting folk music and poetry, with some exceptions hardly anything was collected on the folk dances. Still, everything that is available, I will assume here as being part of the repository. In the first decades of the twentieth century, in several countries, village folk dance did enjoy some interest in cities (either from "romantic" ideas of the folk as the true bearers of the identity of the people, or for nationalistic purposes), and folk dances could be seen on festivals and stages. Descriptions and photographs thereof can also be found in the repository.

Preservationists and revivalists.

From roughly the turn of the twentieth century, and in some countries starting mainly after WWII, people with interest in folk dances as part of the intangible cultural heritage started to collect, research, and register village folk dances. The motivations for these people to do so varied from person to person and country to country. Revivalists and preservationists typically were motivated by retaining a gone or nearly gone past and were striving for preservation ("museum") of the old (almost lost) dances because of their humanistic, societal, educational, or artistic value, or re-create or continue the tradition by performing the dances in other settings[28] (usually in cities outside the region/place of origin). Although some may like to assume that a revived dance constitutes a – nearly – exact copy of the "original", I agree with Nahachewsky (2012: 83) in that:

> Any revival or recontextualization of a dance changes the tradition in important ways. In this regard, revivals can never be fully successful; they aren't exactly bringing the original back to life, but rather are *new creations* to a certain degree in each case. [italics in original]

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27   Maybe only a few paintings, travel stories and/or city or court registers are available, which are usually very hard to interpret in terms of concrete dance movements (although some have tried to do their best for certain dances/places, like English Morris dances and even ancient Greek dances). On problems and challenges in interpreting images (visual representations) of dancers and dancing see Sparti & Van Zile (2011).

28   The revival of folk music has been discussed in the literature relatively well, see e.g., Goertzen (1997), Brocken (2003), Olson (2004), Weissman (2005), Schneider (2006), Bithell & Hill (2014). The revival of folk dance is much less covered. English country and Morris dances, as collected and re-interpreted by Cecil Sharp, are a clear example of a dance revival starting approximately in the period around the turn of the century (e.g., Fox Strangways 1980), and the Hungarian Tanchaz movement with dances from Hungarians in Transylvania is a good example of a later revival in de seventies (Szilárd Jávorszky 2015, Taylor 2021).

Institutionalists and academics.

In many countries, sooner or later folk dance was considered a relevant subject for the state, for institutions, for science, for art, and/or for the development of a national identity[29]. Professionals from institutes and academies, sometimes in service of the government/state, started to collect village folk dances, together with related aspects of folk culture like music, customs, and material culture. The motivation for these professionals varies, but their research mainly concerns national, occupational and/or artistic interests (it is their job)[30]. Such interests, however, often lead to subjective interpretations, choices, and selections, see

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29   The latter was typically true for the (former) socialist countries in Central and Eastern Europe, where folk dance became an important marker as carrier of the ideology of the Party and for nationalistic and propagandistic purposes. At the same time, in many cases, the leading socialist Parties took an active stance in "transforming" the folk dances to suit their political purpose, see for instance Kürti (2004: 13-15), who writes:

The Soviet model was fairly simple, and followed throughout the entire Soviet bloc: refashion local and regional dances into an acceptable dance form that does not have the feeling and symbolism of the national. Thus, regional forms of dances with specific character, were either elevated into the expected national dance style or, alternately, deemed unfit for public consumption. [2004: 14]

That this was not restricted to socialist countries in the middle of the 20th century is shown by Manos (2003: 28) on a Greek case of dance folklore from the Greek-Macedonian region:

By the early 1990s in Greece, dance was seen as a malleable and easily manipulated cultural product. A restricted and typified group of dances attributed to the Dopioi [local] population category and classified according to specific step patterns, with names deriving from the local Slavic dialects but translated into Greek, was established as representing dances from the Florina region.
[...]
Dance was regarded as a recordable element and removed and isolated from the social setting in which it operated (and, probably, originated). It was then modified to fit the national ideology's standards. [...] Dance elements that were thought to resemble those of neighboring countries were excluded or changed, and local culture refined and purified to include only elements representative of the national culture.

In a similar vein, Bohlman (2011) discusses music and nations in Central Europe, and writes:

More specifically, I examine the ways in which certain types of music undergo transformations so that they can more effectively represent the musical and political power that the nations of Central Europe have claimed for themselves. These changes are not the products of something immanent in music itself, but rather result from aesthetic decisions and actions made by those with a certain degree of power at their disposal, especially the power invested in technologies for the retrieval, recording, and reproduction of music. [2011: 129]

30   It is interesting to note the difference in motivation (as described above) between institutionalists/academics on the one hand and preservationists/revivalists on the other, although they may have a lot of common ground as well. Between the two groups, issues of quality, accuracy, methodology, subjectivity, interest, and professionality have been (and are) highly debated over the years. But, notwithstanding these differences, the result, for the purpose of this paper, is basically the same: in both cases observed dances represent the past (the moment they were written down) and are not free from subjective interpretations once registered in the repository.

also Porter (1997), Shay (2008), resulting in "transformed" registrations in the repository. There is a parallel here with folk music research, cf., Malvinni (2004) who writes:

> We would argue that the discourse which determines the propriety of "national" music is problematically linked (whether consciously or not) to vested interest in the national apparatus. Namely, whoever and whatever possess the right and means to research will also be in control of the outcome. [2004: 92]

The registrations of these professionals also became part of the repository[31]. See for a few examples Ilieva (1978), Franken (1978), Raftis (1987), Van Winkle Keller & Shimer (1990), Giurchescu & Bloland (1992), Felföldi & Pesovár (1997), Ceribašić (1998), Rakočević (2013). At the same time, in many places folk dance was introduced in existing or new dance schools and academies, and training programs were set up under the guidance of amateur and/or professional folk dance ensembles. To a lesser extent and only in some places, preservationists and revivalists also contributed to the programs of these schools, trainings, and ensembles.

In particular within the category of institutionalists and academics the representational aspect of the collected folk dances often appeared important. Where such folk dances in essence represent the cultural characteristics of the people in a specific place, there was often an urge to raise the folk dances to a higher level of representation namely of the nation itself. Compare Bohlman (2011: 63) on folk music: "When folk music follows the national journey, it undergoes a transition from representing the immanent quintessence of the nation to representing the nation itself."

Artists, performers, and ensembles.
I include this category for completeness in view of the sources of dances in the IRFDC repertoire, although artists and performers (often as members of ensembles) typically are not engaged in collecting village folk dances themselves. Some of them do, however, intermingle with folk dance collectors in academies and other institutions. Sometimes they also consult the folk dance repository for their work, although they, in general, do not contribute to it. In many former

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31   A lot of examples exist of books in which dances are written down, including the exact date, time, place, and occasion when the dance was observed. Even the name of the person from whom the researcher learnt the dance is often available. On the other hand, also a lot of registrations exist without any clear reference to the date, place, and occasion of observation.

socialist countries in Eastern Europe, state folk dance companies have played (and are still playing) an important role in promoting (nationally and globally) national folklore, often based on ideological and political motives or with nationalistic or propagandistic purposes, cf., Shay (2002). While often labelling their dance shows as "traditional" it is clear that the link with traditional village dance is, in reality, mostly absent. Nevertheless, see Petkovski (2015) and Öcal Özbılgın (2010) for some examples of how traditional dances are incorporated in the program of a professional national folk ensemble.

It is important to understand that in this model the categorization does not say anything about the nationality of the people and institutions involved. Members of all the mentioned categories can be either from the same nation as the village or community they visit(ed), or from any other (foreign) nation, cf., Lawson (1953). When analyzing the IRFDC repertoire, we see that a lot of dances are based on examples collected in the villages and countries by people from other countries, particularly from some Western European and North American countries. Furthermore, it is also understood in this model that the people involved could either be doing this work as a paid professional (whose job it is to do this work) or as an amateur by hobby or affinity without getting paid to do this work. The reason I do not include these aspects here is that the topic of this paper is to investigate the sources of dances in the IRFDC repertoire and the processes of transmission of such dances from the village to that repertoire. For this, nationality nor employment of the agents are of relevance. On transmission and transformation of village dances see also Nahachewsky (2012).

Despite all the differences in motivation, approach, methodology, standards, quality, and level of elaboration between the registrations undertaken by these categories of people and institutions, there are several issues they all have in common, of which three will be discussed here. First, as stated above, all registrations of dances they observed in the village and, one way or the other, added to the repository, constitute the *past*, cf., Stratou (1966). In many cases, users of the repository will take notice of this and deal with the dances in this way, typically for research purposes. In other cases, however, users forget or neglect this issue (or simply ignore the is-was difference) and deal with the dances, mistakenly, as representative of the current "living" dance situation in the village. This often happens in the IRFDC. Dance images as taken from the repository are then equated with "real" dances "[s]ince both dance and images of dance are visual in nature, [so] it is tempting to rely on dance images as credible depictions of a past reality and as ways to validate the historical accuracy of new performances." (Van Zile 2011)

Secondly, all processes of observation (visual, aural), registration (writing, photographing, filming), documentation, categorization, interpretation, analysis, and consultation (both in relation to the village as to the repository) are affected with a weaker or stronger level of *subjectivity*. When it comes to the senses, this is a fact of life and as such cannot be circumvented. Many "agents" in this model strive for an as high as possible level of objectivity, but still – sometimes heated – debates take place on "true" or "false" observations and/or registrations and questions about the existence of the "absolute truth"[32]. Some level of "subjectivity" also results from unavoidable inaccuracies or unclarities in human observational and registrational actions. Another level of subjectivity occurs in the conscious or unconscious choices that people make in these processes, from selecting the dances which are to be registered, choosing the people to watch or talk to, to deciding on the level of detail of the registration and documentation. Sometimes, such choices are personal, but they may also be imposed by institutional, hierarchical, scientific, nationalistic, or political demands, see e.g., Shay (2002), ambitions, expectations and/or regulations[33]. Such impositions also often have led to deliberate changes and/or transformations of the originally registered village folk dances that entered the repository.

Thirdly, in nearly all cases there is a smaller or larger amount of personal "creativity" or "artistry" seeping into the dance registration. To some extent, this

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32   In the IRFDC this typically occurs when viewing recorded videos of folk dances. Some consider a video registration as constituting the "absolute" truth of a dance performance, especially in comparison to a written description and/or photographs (still images). Sparti & Van Zile (2011) discuss some difficulties with interpretation of dance from images, specifically related to the way movement is or can be represented in visual "still" images and the way in which such images can create an idea of realistic movement to the viewer. The focus remains, however, on what the maker of the image did or can do to create this impression of realistic movement, but the volume hardly discusses what happens in the brain of the viewer who looks at such images. The way in which a viewer sees (understands) the image is very subjective and depends on many personal characteristics. I believe this applies to video images too, although many regard videos as an almost completely realistic image of movement. Although this may be true for the image (as a registration) on the video itself, it is not for the image ("reflection") of the dance that is created in the mind of the viewer who watches the video, which is subjective and depends on personal knowledge and other characteristics. I've witnessed a lot of discussions in front of a screen between people who argue "…you can clearly see he/she is dancing like this…" while the other disagrees and with the same vehemence cries out "…you can clearly see he/she is not…". Movements in reality are also a product of the physics of movements and of the intention of the person who performs the movements, and these aspects (physics and intentions) are typically not visible in a videotaped dance registration.
33   Clear examples of such politically motivated "choices" can be found in almost all former socialist countries in Central and Eastern Europe and the Balkans, where the collection, preservation, systematization, and presentation of folk dances was often strongly guided or prescribed by the ideologies of the ruling Parties.

aspect could be accounted for under the second subject above (subjectivity), but I want to highlight it here by mentioning it as an important factor of its own, and as such I have indicated this aspect separately in the model in **Figure 1**. Where I understand the issue of subjectivity as described under the second factor as mostly a matter of "practical considerations", the "creative" or "artistic" influence here is connected more to aesthetics and "personal taste" if you like, and often a matter of deliberate intention[34]. Such influences appear to be clearly present, though not always known, or visible, in the IRFDC repertoire. Some of the agents described above, and certainly many of the teachers to be described hereafter, make (often strongly dependent on the mentality of the person) deliberate choices based on personal creative, aesthetic, or artistic ideas and beliefs, thereby often considering the experiences with tastes, demands, expectations, hypes, or vogues (and often economic incentives as well) among the dancers in the IRFDC (see also below). Here too, it is often but not always a conscious choice of the agent. Such creative personal influences may "creep in" without being noticed both by the agent or the dancers.

The general result of the collection and registration activities of the "agent" categories discussed here is that the folk dances in the repository are, *by definition*, transformed as compared to the "original" village dances[35]. That means the repository does not contain a mirror image of the village dances, but rather an "artificial" collection of dances that are, at most, derived/interpreted/modified from the village dances[36]. The transmission of the dances at the hands of the agents from the village to the "repository" is really a transformation, even if it is not intended or understood to be so. In the next step of our model, the transmission of the dances from the repository to the IRFDC repertoire will appear to be a second transformation see also **Figure 2**.

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34   In terms of dance categories, one might wonder whether such intentional dance "creations" should be grouped under the term "art dance" instead of folk dance, see e.g., Nahachewsky (2012: 17). Such categorization is not the purpose of this paper.

35   In ethnomusicology, the problems associated with field work and the collection of musical examples reflecting traditional settings (including the transformations taking place), are well-known and have been broadly discussed in the literature, see for example Rice (2014). On folk dance, to my knowledge hardly any literature exists that considers the subjective and transformative aspects of the collecting or capturing of "observed" traditional village dances.

36   A large part of the repository is organized according to national indices, consisting of what could be called "national collections". However, due to the way the dances are collected (see above) one could question the "national" character of such collections. As Bohlman (2011: 80) writes on folk music:

The volumes of music and music history, the essays and articles, and the sundry other papers produced by Francis O'Neill bear many of the earmarks of a national folk-music collection, but their idiosyncrasies and highly personal attributes also challenge the very premise of claiming that a collection can be typical of the nation, any nation. [...] In one way or another, every national collection I discuss in this chapter is shaped by a personal charisma.

7. Teachers and transmission

In our understanding (see the model in **Figure 1**), all folk dances in the IRFDC repertoire are, one way or the other, taken from the "repository". They are trans-mitted from this repository by specific intermediate "agents" whom I will denote with a generic term as "teachers"[37]. Festivals, staged performances and/or com-petitions (which I have included in **Figure 1**) could be, to some extent, a possible source of dances in the IRFDC repertoire (e.g., Shay 2006), but if they do, it is often accounted for by the teachers and their collection and transmission activities. In addition, some teachers or choreographers might use staged per-formances as a source of folk dances to be transmitted to the IRFDC, sometimes because they were dancers in ensembles themselves or learnt the dances from the choreographer or watched the show. Such sources are understood here to be part of the repository.

Therefore, I consider the teachers as the primary "agents" to introduce folk dances to the IRFDC repertoire. Who are these teachers? Teachers who are (or have been) active in the IRFDC greatly vary as to their background, nationality, occupation, experience, and level of activity, see e.g., Joukowsky (1965). Due to this great variety, it is rather difficult to provide a clear picture of this group. In reference to our model in **Figure 1**, we might divide the group of teachers roughly into two parts: (1st group) those who are basically the same people as the cate-gories of "agents" in the *transmission* process of dances from village to reposito-ry (preservationists or revivalists; institutionalists or academics; artists or per-formers; or people affiliated in other ways to institutions, academies, programs or ensembles), and (2nd group) those who do not belong to these categories and are "independent" individuals with or without professional training, but ac-cepted in the IRFDC as credible teachers. They might be of the same nationality as the dances they teach, or they might be of another nationality. Teachers who teach only dances from one country are sometimes referred to as "specialists" in that domain. This is typically (but not always) the case for teachers who are from the same nationality as the dances they teach. These teachers often travel abroad and teach workshops and classes in many countries within the IRFDC. Part of these people are professionals earning their living with this folk dance

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37   In principle, a dance in the IRFDC repertoire might also be taken by a (non-teacher) member of this community directly from the village, or from the observance of a festival or a staged perfor-mance (indicated by dotted arrows in the figure), but the number of dances from these sources is to my knowledge very small compared to the number of dances transmitted by teachers.

teaching. There are also non-specialist teachers who teach dances from multiple countries. These people typically are from the US or certain West-European countries, and they usually teach mainly locally to one or a few groups, and usually do not travel globally for teaching. These teachers are often amateurs and have, next to their teaching, other professions.

How do these teachers acquire their program of dances they teach to the IRFDC? Most of these people did not go to the villages themselves to learn the dances that were "living" at that time. In view of the model I present here, I state that most of their dances are acquired, almost by definition, from the repository. In most cases, this is not a direct extraction from books or films, but through different paths and teaching sessions in which one or more of the transmission "agents" are involved. To make it concrete: a lot of teachers acquire dances from other teachers (or "agents"), either in educational or training settings or by attending specialist workshops and classes. In a minority of cases, teachers might acquire dances by attending festivals/competitions in the countries of origin or by visiting villages[38] But, in such cases, they are regarded as one of the "agent" categories discussed before.

The acquisition of dances by teachers is prone to the same *transformation* process discussed before for the transmission of village dances to the repository. It means, teachers also make subjective choices, selections, and decisions as to the dances they want to transmit and the exact form and label of the dances. Typically, teachers will or need to take the expectations, needs, and wishes of their workshop/class participants into account to be successful in their under-

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38   Such festivals, a well-known example from Bulgaria being the Koprivshtitsa Folk Festival that has been running since 1965, often include performances of village groups presenting their own dance folklore. Many teachers and other participants of the IRFDC regard the stage-presented repertoire of these village groups at such festivals as original, authentic and/or traditional. However, it is well-known that even village groups transform the dance material they want to perform at the festival, in order to "look better", win a higher prize, or attract more funding opportunities. This was even the case during the socialist era in Eastern Europe, when there often was guidance (and sometimes pressure) from the cultural authorities to select, polish-up and transform the dance material to be better fitting the contemporary ideologies. That this was not only an issue of the communist influence may be seen from the pre-WWII Hungarian case of village groups (collectively known as the "Bouquet of Pearls" associations) staging performances in the capital during a period of folklore revival and interest in "national culture". Deliberate changes were made to the presented dance material for the purpose of the stage performance, as indicated by Taylor (2021: 42) who writes:

  …the truth was that dance material and costumes were often embellished by leaders of Bouquet groups while adapting them for the stage according to their tastes and worldviews.

takings. The dances they teach are re-contextualized versions of dances from the repository in the classroom. So, a twofold transformation process is taking place between the village dances and the IRFDC repertoire: the first transformation when village dances are collected and registered in the repository by the "agents", and the second transformation when the dances are taken by the teachers from the repository and taught to the IRFDC. The result is that most folk dances in the IRFDC repertoire are rather far off from "traditional" village dances, even though a lot of teachers believe they are transferring traditional "folk" dances while they, actually, are presenting "transformations in transmission" see **Figure 2**. As an example of this consider the widely known dance with the name Troika. This dance is known all over the world in the IRFDC as a "Russian" folk dance but is unknown as a folk dance in Russia! An early notation of this dance appears already in Herman (1947) as "The Russian Troika". The dance most probably originated in the US, because there are no known sources of a dance of this kind in Russia. Nevertheless, in the accompanying information to the dance notation, Herman (1947) writes:

> The glamour of Russian dances has made them universally popular; and, contrary to general opinion, they are not all difficult to do. The Troika, using only a simple running step set to lively music, retains all the Russian flavor. [6]

It should be added that the transformation process does not always end once a dance has been included in the IRFDC repertoire. Typically, a dance introduced for the first time by a teacher to a group at a specific place and time could be re-taught to other groups, not by the "source"-teacher him/her-self, but by participants (sometimes other teachers, or regular students/participants) who were present at the "original" teaching occasion. Re-teaching a dance to other groups is in the same way prone to the transformation process discussed before, i.e., new choices, selections, adaptations (or errors) are made. This leads to a situation where a dance introduced by the "original" teacher might continue to exist in the IRFDC repertoire in several "versions" that might slightly or strongly differ from one another. A lot of examples exist of debates where participants from different groups argue about which version is "right" or "wrong". Participants in such discussions who are not aware of the role and impact of the "agents" and the transformation process sometimes ascribe these different versions to "originating from nearby though different villages", still showing the mythical belief in village sources of the folk dances they do.

8. Transformation of dances in the transmission process

The *transformation* of the dances involved in the transmission from village to repository (including the registration and the reading of the registration), and from repository to the IRFDC repertoire **(Figure 2)**, are both to be seen as re-contextualizations, that may take many different shapes, cf., Nahachewsky (2012). I will discuss three types of transformation related to respectively the movements, the accompanying music, and the label of folk dances.

Movements.
A primary function of folk dancing during traditional events in a village is to establish and confirm social cohesion among the community members. For this reason, usually there are some *overall* conditions or rules pertaining to specific dances, to make sure social disturbances or unwanted, risky behavior is avoided. While the shape and patterns of a dance must adhere to such overall "rules", individual people typically do not exactly dance alike. Individual motoric and movement abilities and detailed variations in step patterns always exist among individual members of the dancing group. Often, such personal differences are important to maintain individuality within the group setting. Furthermore, in a lot of cases, folk dancing in traditional settings shows much room for improvisation, where the specific movements are personal, instantaneous, and "casual", even though the community will usually recognize the movements as part of their (local) culture and style. In any case, a relatively large variation exists in specific/detailed dance movements in a folk dance in the traditional setting. When such dances are transmitted (from the village to the repository, or from the repository to the IRFDC), movements are typically fixed in a certain way, steps and step patterns are prescribed exactly, and larger structural units (motives, figures) are determined as "building blocks" of the dance. In addition, when the collector uses a notation system, another transformation occurs, first because the collector must choose what to write down and what not, and second: no notation system can capture the dance movements perfectly[39]. This is not to say that the observer/collector deliberately transforms the dances. Most is being done unconsciously by the observer. But inevitably, (personal) choices are made in this process by the agent or teacher, leading to a *transformation* of the "original"

[39]   With respect to music, the problems with using a musical notation system are well-known, especially when trying to write down non-western folk musics. See for example Brăiloiu (1984) for one of the first discussions on the problems with using western, classical notation for traditional folk music of non-western countries/peoples.

village dance into the repository or IRFDC repertoire. If the goal is to preserve the dances or to teach the dances to the IRFDC, this kind of transformation is indeed inevitable, and even necessary, since it is impossible to re-create the exact dance event in other places at other times. This kind of movement transformation often occurs somewhat unconsciously but with proper intentions. Transformation of movements may also occur when agents or teachers try to analyze and/or structure a dance and, in the process, "correct", "polish", or re-organize observed movements to create a clearer and easier comprehensible pattern or structure. Especially teachers often tend to simplify or clarify certain dance steps/movements/patterns to be doable by students in the IRFDC. Such transformations are usually deliberate, but not always explained. In addition, transformations of movements occur when elements from different dances or from similar dances from different villages are combined into one new dance (as distinct variations or figures), to become more attractive or more representative of a broader region. Such transformation constitutes a bigger departure from the traditional dance occurrence. Finally, in some cases, agents or teachers "invent" new dance movements, motives, figures or structures with the aim to beautify, complete, elaborate or intensify a dance to the interests of the IRFDC (or the audience in case of a folk dance stage presentation)[40] . As a result, many dances in the IRFDC repertoire are partly or wholly structured, re-structured, arranged, choreographed, or invented, either based on a traditional village dance or not, and making use of (or no use of) steps/movements from village dances. The first example of such an "invented" folk dance that comes to mind, of course, is the "Greek" dance Sirtaki (or Zorba's dance). As Scott (2013: 159) writes:

> [...] *Zorba's Dance* is the *sirtáki*, which, unlike the *sirtós*, is not a folk dance; in fact, it was composed specially for the film [Zorba the Greek, 1964]. It mixes two forms of the *hasápiko* dance: the *varí hasápiko* (4/4 slow) and the *hasaposérviko* (2/4 fast). In brief, it is born of popular culture (the movies), not of folk culture. [italics in original]

Music.

In the IRFDC it has become common practice to use pre-recorded music for dancing, while in the traditional village setting almost exclusively live music was used. In the transmission of dances from the village to the repository, sometimes (but not always) the live music was written down or recorded as well. Written

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40   Cf. Loutzaki (2003: 209) on the Greek Syrtos-dance: "The syrtos has been appropriated by folk dance teachers and their additions to the movement patterns have resulted in an essentially different dance from the local and traditional one."

music is, however, prone to similar transformative changes as dance movements, and live recorded music is only occasionally usable for the re-creation of dances in the IRFDC. Much more often, pre-recorded (studio) music from records or CDs is used, which leads inevitably to (personal) choices as regards the specific melody and instrumentation (if available at all). Dances in the IRFDC therefore usually do not adhere to the "original" music that the dance is "supposed" to be danced to as in the village. Of course, there are basically two types of traditional dances in regard of the music, namely dances that are to be done to a specific, pre-scribed music/melody, and dances that can be done to different kind of music/melodies. In the latter case, the choice of music offers a larger freedom, if the music/melody has a recognizable connection to the dance, with little risk for transformation. In the former case, using a different music definitively leads to a transformation.

Label.

As stated above, the "label" of a dance consists of a name, a country/people, region, and village of origin (or the name of the composer/choreographer of the dance) and possibly some clarifying "folkloristic" information on the type, background, origin, performance occasion and meaning of the dance. Of these label elements, the name and country are the most used and most important ones. Giving a name to the dance and mentioning the country of origin is a very useful method for research and analysis and for capturing/registering a dance. However, in a particular village, not all dances might have clear, agreed upon and unique names. Sometimes the local people might refer to a dance as simply "our dance" or the title of the song to which it is danced. Similar dances in nearby villages might have different names, and completely different dances might have the same name. Also, often the people in the village do not know the name, do not know why it has a/that name, or do not know the meaning of the name themselves (they would say: "it is just called that way, our parents and grandparents did it that way"). Therefore, researchers and observers often are obliged to decide on a dance name themselves. The name under which a dance is recorded in the repository and the name under which it is taught in the IRFDC might therefore constitute a transformation from the name it had in the village. The label element "country" is prone to transformation as well, because naming a country of origin requires to decide on boundaries: political boundaries, ethnographical, geographical, cultural, etc. Most often, current political boundaries are chosen to determine the "country" as part of the label information. But in view of folkloristic or ethnographical characteristics of the people in the village

this can lead to incorrect references, constituting a transformation. All other elements of the label are to a greater or lesser extent prone to transformation regarding the information content.

The "transformations" as discussed here are illustrated with several examples in the **Appendix**. These examples are dances that are relatively well-known in the IRFDC. In the examples, the background of the dances is given, as well as the available information on the source and aspects of the transmission and transformation processes. Despite the labels accompanying these dances suggest otherwise, none of them can convincingly be regarded as coming from a "village source".

Strikingly, a very commonly observed understanding in the IRFDC is that the folk dances in their repertoire *are* "traditional" or "original" folk dances *from* the village. In view of the above, it becomes clear that this understanding is basically false. To some extent, the misunderstanding relates to the meaning of the words "are ... from". Folk dancers in the IRFDC typically tend to understand these words in the sense that they believe that the dances they have been taught are being danced (today) exactly in the same fashion (same steps, figures, movements) in the villages from which the teacher has told them they originate (as confirmed by the label information). This is clearly not the case, which most participants will easily accept if one explains the current dance (and living) practices in these villages. However, a new misunderstanding subsequently arises when dancers assume that, acknowledging the changing situation in the villages today, the dances must have been danced in the same fashion in these villages in the past, either the near or the remote past. Of course, this too is most often clearly not the case, which might also be easily explained to the dancers by referring to the "transformation" that has taken place. What remains to be explained is the fact that the dances as they are being taught to the participants of the IRFDC by their teachers, have been prescribed, controlled, and fixed by individuals ("agents", sometimes the teachers themselves, sometimes other individuals) and taken from the repository, without much real connection to the "living" village dance tradition, having undergone the transformation process mentioned above. In that sense, it would be more appropriate to say that these folk dances are "related to", "referring to", "based on", "derived from", or "inspired by" traditional village dances (except for those dances that are completely "made up" by a teacher or other "dance maker"). The actual situation in the IRFDC is, however, that all such explanations are usually not given to the participants, and that the labels provided by the teachers for these dances often suggest the – mythical – village source.

9. Labels

Over the course of time, these folk dance "labels" have become rather deter-mining in the IRFDC repertoire. Most activities in the IRFDC consist of learn-ing, repeating, and copying individual dances that are uniquely indicated and identified by their "label". Dancing in the IRFDC is not so much the "activity of *dancing*" as it is the "copying/repetition of *dances*". Each dance is identified by its label, of which the name of the dance and the country/place of origin are the most important or visible, see for instance Casey (1981), Harris-Pittman-Waller (1977). As said, referring to the dance by its name and country leads to the interpretation and understanding that the dance under this name and in this form originates in – a certain place/village in – this country. Although many ex-amples exist where this understanding bears a certain credibility, many more examples exist where this understanding is incorrect, as illustrated above. As the corpus of teachers contributing to the IRFDC repertoire increased and the size of the repertoire also expanded significantly over the past several decades, dances are more and more identified, next to the label, by the name of the per-son who "created" the dance, who first introduced the dance to the community,
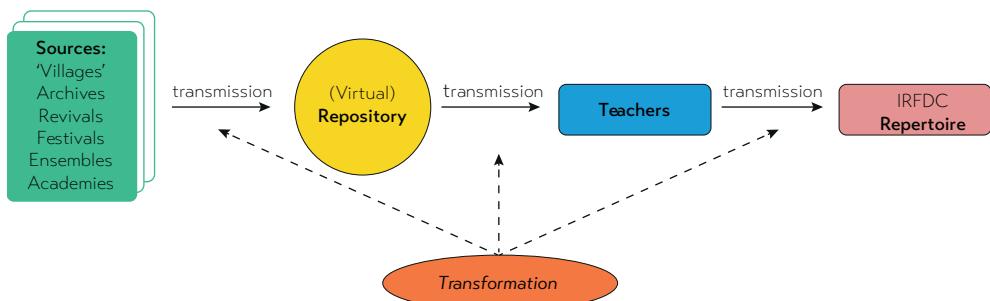

Figure 2

or who exhibits some other "authority" over the dance. This is often stated as that the dance is "from the repertoire/program of" this person. In many cases, this personal name has become part of the label as well, often indicated and/or claimed by statements and/or copyright signs © in the dance notations. Now-adays, the source of a lot of folk dances in the IRFDC repertoire is, in the first place, the name of a person and, in the second place, the country/place/village of origin. Many groups, organizations, and people in the IRFDC keep data bases of folk dances (as indication of their known repertoire) simply by listing these labels (dance name, country or origin, person from whose program it is), see e.g., Folk Dance Federation California or Folk Dance Musings. Folk dances in the IRFDC therefore seem to have become items, "objects", goods, or commodities, which are uniquely determined by their labels.

10. Recreational folk dances as commodity

This image of "folk dances as commodities" is not only a matter of organization or "bookkeeping" for folk dance groups and organizations in the IRFDC. Folk dances as commodities become desirable, distinguishable, purchasable, and tradeable objects with which needs, and interests of participants can be fulfilled. Knowing many "dances" allows dancers to participate in many folk dance activities (camps, parties, festivals, classes) in many different places and among different groups of people. By learning many dances, dancers acquire more knowledge about dance folklore, from which they derive pleasure and intellectual fulfilment out of cultural and/or historical interest. Since for most IRFDC participants it is impossible or very difficult to join in folk dance activities in "traditional" settings in the places of origins in the "source" countries, the collection of "folk dances as commodities" that they master is the best substitute they can obtain. In addition, since it is nearly impossible to perform folk dancing in the traditional manner in places outside the source locations, the mastering and repetition of individual folk dances (as commodities) is the only way left for lovers and afficionados of international recreational folk dancing.

In contrast, for teachers and dance "makers", folk dances as commodities become a means of trade and work organization. Above, a folk dance in the IRFDC repertoire has already been described as a "package" consisting of a label, a prescribed step/movement pattern, a prescribed musical piece and, optionally, a notation/description and/or video, e.g., Joukowsky (1965), Casey (1981). Such a package is a tradeable good, a commodity. It can be sold, and a lot of people are eager to purchase these packages. Folk dances as commodities have become a source of income and a way of making a living for folk dance teachers. Maybe calling it "big business" is a bit too much, but "business" it certainly is. Whether there is a real connection to original village folk dances or not has become less important. Including such connection in the dance label might increase the "value" of the folk dance as commodity, but without it the dance package will probably still find many consumers. At the same time, making money with the cultural expressions of other peoples might appear to be at odds with ownership of such items, which is a tricky issue still under debate, cf., Brown (2003).

In recent years, building on the success of "folk dances as commodity", several teachers active in the IRFDC took the opportunity to add newly created "folk" dances to the IRFDC repertoire, which are no longer based on or adapted from

"traditional" village folk dances from the source countries, but which are the results from their personal creative and artistic expressions. This is somewhat (but not wholly) comparable to the creation of Israelian dances that constitute a large part of the IRFDC repertoire[41]. Such teachers usually build on a long-time dancing and teaching experience and knowledge of traditional folk dances and/or of the IRFDC repertoire. Typically, for such dance creations, they use an existing musical recording from a specific source country but choreograph a dance to that music that makes use of all kinds of generic "folk" dance steps and movements that need not to be from the same country, adding sometimes newly invented movements and forms. Such dances are than "packaged" in the same way as most of the other folk dances in the IRFDC repertoire and offered to the community in classes and workshops. As label they choose the name of the music or create another name, and as country they mention the source country of the music. Although some of these teachers mention that the dance is their own creation[42], the impression that the participants are left with (resulting from the label of the "package"), is that it is a folk dance from that country. Obviously, this is not the case, and a conflict arises between the label and the real source of the dance. In recent years, some of these newly invented "folk" dances have been hotly debated (e.g., EEFC 2019) between their makers and others who oppose the use of such "wrong" labels or even of creating such "fantasy" dances in the first place. Apart from issues like tradition, appropriation, or exploitation, some of the arguments brought forward in such debates relate to the difference between "art" and "folk" dance, similar to such categorization in music (Gelbart 2007), but for dance the matter has certainly not been settled yet[43].

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41   A difference between newly created Israelian dances and the recently created "international" "folk" dances by other teachers is that Israelian dances are not labelled as "traditional" or originating from a village source but are referenced only by the name of their creator/choreographer instead.

42   Sometimes such teachers argue their dance products are more to be regarded as "art dances" than as "folk dances", although for many participants this difference remains unnoticed or irrelevant.

43   Note that the world-famous Russian choreographer and leader of the dance company bearing his name Igor Moiseev once said (quoted in Ilupina & Lutskaya, 1966):

How can one describe the work of a ballet master who strives to invent new folk dances? And anyway, can *folk* dances be invented? Isn't there something paradoxical in the very combination of the words? If they are *folk* dances, it means that they have already been invented by the people. If they are invented by choreographers, can they be called *folk* dances? Strangely enough, they can. Take *Bulb*a (Potato Dance) for example. The dance, originally inspired by a Byelorussian song, was actually born in our company, and yet it has now returned to Byelorussia as a folk dance. People dance it at all the village festivals. (1966: 6, italics in original)

11. Some recent developments

Over the past, let's say, two decades, the increase in focus on folk dances as individual "packages" is leading to a situation where the IRFDC is becoming ever more detached from the folk dance situation in the countries/places/villages of origin. This is not only due to the transformations described above, but also to the "commodification" of folk dances. The value of individual folk dances has become more intrinsic to the rules of "supply and demand" in the IRFDC itself, than to their real or alleged connection to "traditional" folk dances in the source places. In earlier decades one could encounter disputes about the real source of a folk dance and its correct or wrong performance or execution style. Such discussions are becoming replaced by discussions on the intentions or decisions of the teacher or choreographer as to what the dance is and how it is to be performed. Adding to this the fact that most of the folk dances in the IRFDC repertoire are in their particular shape/composition not known in the places stated as their sources, the situation evolves that the IRFDC repertoire has become a folk dance "body" of its own, more and more disconnected from the folk dance sources. Nowadays we might even witness the formation of recreational folk dance groups in the source countries who practice dances taken from the IRFDC repertoire, sometimes unaware of the connection – however loose – with their "own" traditional dances.

At the same time, in some or many of the countries of origin we encounter other developments in the field of folk dancing. After some years following the end of the socialist period in many of the source countries, folk dancing is becoming a leisure time activity for more and more people and interest in folk dancing (and folk music and other folkloristic crafts as well) is growing strongly see for instance Ivanova-Nyberg (2011), Grancharova (2013), Mellish (2016). Partly, this seems to be due to a need for feeling and expressing a national identity different from other European countries (typically also as a countermovement to integration in the EU). In some places, such nationalistic motives are becoming very strong supporters of own, national folk dancing, unfortunately sometimes embedded in (extreme) right-wing parties or movements. The repertoire of folk dances as being performed in these places consist of some "traditional" dances, but many more which are either derived from the – during the socialist period developed – folk dance practices and stage choreographies, or newly created by choreographers in a clearly recognizable national style for the purpose of being used in recreational folk dance groups. From this perspective, we witness the

emergence of a folk dance repertoire in the "source countries" which is hardly or no longer related to the IRFDC repertoire. However, these ongoing developments need further study.

12. Conclusion and discussion

Over the past decades the IRFDC repertoire has grown into a vast collection of folk dances, being introduced into this community by numerous teachers from different countries and with different backgrounds. Investigating the composition of this repertoire, the connections or references these folk dances have – or do not have – to the origins that are being mentioned in the labels of the dances, the activities of teachers and other "agents" who are involved in the transmission of the dances into the IRFDC repertoire, and taking into account the commonly held beliefs in the IRFDC about the origins of these dances, I have come to the following three main conclusions:

1. most folk dances in the IRFDC repertoire are not directly originating from a "village source" but have gone through multiple stages of a "transformation" process, in which personal choices of many different "agents" have impacted the ultimate form of the dances as they are present in the IRFDC repertoire.
2. most folk dances in the IRFDC repertoire are currently identified using "labels", while the information contained in the label is often not aligned with the origin stated therein (especially in case of the recent newly created "fantasy" folk dances).
3. most folk dances in the IRFDC repertoire have evolved into "commodities" that are collected and traded as – economic – consumer goods.

With respect to the first conclusion, I have tried to show in this paper that, contrary to the commonly held belief among IRFDC participants, the source of most of the dances in their repertoire is not (directly) the "traditional" village folk dance. Instead, the dances in their repertoire are arranged, adapted, modified, created, or choreographed (in short: transformed) based on dance material taken from the repository, that may or may not include elements from traditional sources. On the other hand, since it is quite impossible to exactly "copy" "traditional village" dancing to the setting of recreational folk dance groups in the West[44], the fact that traditional village dances undergo some or more transformation while being transmitted from the village to the IRFDC repertoire, makes sense and is unavoidable. Positively, these transformations enable the actual

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44   In much the same way as any revived tradition can never exactly bring the original back to life. Particularly concerning the dance context which almost by definition differs between the original and the revived situation, see Nahachewsky (2012: 83, and footnote 2 therein).

dancing of IRFDC participants, at the same time learning and being informed about other cultures and fulfilling their physical, emotional, and intellectual needs through active participation in folk dance, cf., Nahachewsky (2012, ch.12). Even when accepting the existence of this "village source" myth, the question remains why this myth exists. To some extent, the source of the myth lies in the work of the actors involved in the transmission process, who do not always properly reflect this transformation process in the information that they provide as part of the label that identifies the dance (see below). Such behavior results in the participants being unaware of the transformation process, and not being able to acquire such information without access to the involved actors or the repository. We could also surmise other reasons for this myth to exist. IRFDC participants are not always (very often not) interested in knowledge of this transformation process but "only" in dancing the result of the process for fun and physical activity. In addition, many participants are rather happy with the information provided in the label of the dance, particularly that it is a folk dance from a far away, exotic place brought to them to acquire and expand their cultural knowledge. This bears some resemblance with an "orientalist" attitude to exotic cultures as presented by Said (1978), in the sense that believing in the "village source" myth is more rewarding than gaining knowledge about the transformation process.

With respect to the second conclusion, I have also tried to show that from the viewpoint of the IRFDC participants, folk dances have become objectified and are merely taken as "labels", the information content of which is taken for granted by the dancers, leading to the myth of village sources. When looking to the labels of the folk dances in the IRFDC repertoire, often there is none, no clear or not enough mention of the transformation processes having taken place in the transmission, leading to misunderstandings and misconceptions about traditional village dancing and about other cultures. Where the attractiveness of the dances often contributes to a positive attitude towards other cultures, this misinformation might lead to false images and wrong attitudes.

With respect to the third conclusion, I am arguing that the folk dances contained in the IRFDC repertoire have evolved into commodities that attain their value from consumption and trade in the IRFDC itself, and that this value does not translate to the original sources or villages where the dances are assumed to be based on. This reminds us of certain effects that appropriation of other people's cultural expressions may have. Much has already been said in the literature on cultural appropriation, also in the context of international recreational

folk dancing, e.g., Laušević (2007). Such appropriation based on correct information does not have to be valued negatively; after all, international recreational folk dancing has shown to enable positive attitudes among and between peoples from different cultures. But if appropriation leads to exploitation, cultural exploitation as well as economic (like with the invented dances), the question should be asked whether we have gone too far, and whether we are entering the dangerous terrain of "cultural (neo-)colonialism", Konings (2010). This concern, in my opinion, is valid, especially considering folk dances in the IRFDC having become commodities with which earnings are generated and which have become subjects of trade relationships that have become important drivers in the community. At the same time, labelling such "invented" dances with names implying a specific cultural source raises the question of "ownership" of native cultures, see e.g., Brown (2003), although this topic might require much further research.

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14. Appendix: Examples

Korobushka (Russia)

Korobushka is widely known within the global IRFDC (Western Europe, North America, South-East Asia). It is known as a "Russian folk dance", or a "folk dance from Russia". Some of the earliest IRFDC written records of this dance date from the late 40s, early 50s (see references below). More recent descriptions of the typical IRFDC version of this dance can be found on the internet or in many syllabi, e.g. https://folkdancemusings.blogspot.com/2014/06/korobushka-russia.html (accessed 2 January 2022). The overall dance pattern in all these descriptions is basically the same, but details of styling and movement execution may differ, as may be seen in the many, easy to find, YouTube videos of IRFDC groups/instructors doing/teaching this version of the dance. An alternative name of the dance is Korobochka, although this name is not used in the IRFDC.

Tracing the source

Korobushka or Korobochka is the name of a traditional folk dance that can be found in many regions of Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus. Although the melody used for Korobushka is basically the same in all these regions, the dance pattern differs widely, except that it is a couple dance everywhere (incidentally a formation in threes may be seen). Examples of Korobushka/Korobochka are easy to find on YouTube. The dance pattern and movements of the IRFDC version of Korobushka, supposedly being a dance from Russia, do not resemble any of the known Russian Korobushka variants, although there is some resemblance with Ukrainian variants, see e.g., a revival form of Korobochka https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JFwRqIGaCAg (at 36:37) and a traditional variant https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ctUVbxxe7PA (at 1:05:58).

The IRFDC version of Korobushka originated not in Russia, but in the United States. The source of this version, i.e., the person who introduced it into the IRFDC, is, most likely, Michael Herman. According to most references (see below) it is based on a dance that originated among Russian immigrants in the US shortly after WWI. Exactly when and how the dance came about, and whether it went through an additional transformation when Michael Herman introduced it into the IRFDC, remains unknown to me. The earliest written reference I was able to find is Harris et al. (1950), which leaves an approx. 30-year gap unaccounted for. According to the Russian folk dance specialist Hennie Konings (pers. comm. 2010) Michael Herman was of Ukrainian descent and IRFDC leader Dick Crum told Hennie that Herman learnt the dance from his Ukrainian teacher and folk dance choreographer Vasyl Avramenko. That could explain the clearer resemblance of IRFDC Korobushka to a traditional variant from Ukraine. Since, at the time of origin of the dance, Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus were part of the Soviet Union, and since in western speech the Soviet Union (or any of the individual republics of it) was conflated with simply "Russia", the fact that "Russia" was given as source country of the dance could have been a simple case of mixing up country names. Apart from Russia or America as a source of Korobushka, the references quoted below nicely reveal how other information related to the dance (about e.g., music, song, meaning, style) creeps into the "label" of the dance.

The origin of this information, whether reliable sources or personal imagination, remains unclear. Concluding, the most well-known IRFDC version of Korobushka, said to be a dance from Russia, is known all over the world *except in Russia*. Russia as a source is clearly a myth. Yet, despite many correct references in the literature (see below) that this dance originated in the United States and not in Russia, the mythical "Russia" source still prevails among IRFDC participants.

Transformations

The version of Korobushka as described in Harris et al. (1950) is taken as a reference. Three out of four parts of the 16 measures dance pattern in Harris (ibid.) (the "Schottische Step with hop (measures 1-6), the "Hungarian break step" (measures 7-8), and the three-step turn (measures 9-12)), are steps and movements unknown in Russian folk dance. Only the fourth part (balance together and back and change places, measures 13-16) resembles a Russian dance movement. What is called the "Hungarian break step" (cross-apart-together) might be seen to resemble a movement from the Ukrainian variant (tap R toe forward, tap R toe sidewards, close R to L). The "three-step turn" could be related to the side-steps in the Russian forms of Korobushka (step-close sidewards, two times). Most often, the IRFDC Korobushka is danced with running steps, jumps, hops and leg swings. This style is not in line with the typical Russian dance style, which is rather smooth with walking steps.

Many styling variants exist in the IRFDC Korobushka. Sometimes the turn in measures 9-12 is not performed, but a simple sidewards step is done instead. In fact, the turn seems to be a later addition (cf. Harris et al., 5th ed. 1978) because all older descriptions do not have the turn. Wakefield (1966) and Casey (1981) describe the turn, as well as a hand clap at the end of the turn (rather un-Russian). The "Hungarian break step" with jumping on both feet is sometimes replaced by toe-pointing (or step backwards, point forward, close, which seems to be the Herman version), much like the Ukrainian form. In some versions the man starts with R, in others with L. In some variants, during the "Schottische step" in measures 1-6, dancers make vertical circular movements with the hands, again very un-Russian.

The Korobushka as introduced in 1994 by Hennie Konings at Stockton Folk Dance Camp is a traditional Russian one (see reference below). It is a completely different dance pattern although it has the same music. This version, although rightfully referred to as a Russian folk dance, did not find wide acknowledgement in the IRFDC. The "Michael Herman" version is still perceived by many as the "real" Korobushka from Russia.

References

Harris, Jane A., Anne M. Pittman, and Marlys S. Waller (1950, 5th ed 1978), Dance a While – Handbook of Folk, Square, and Social Dance, Burgess Publ. Comp.
    Korobushka (Russian). Korobushka, also spelled Korobotchka, means "little basket" or "peddlar's pack." According to Michael Herman (1941), this dance was originated on American soil by a group of Russian immigrants, following the close of World War I, to the Russian folk song, "Korobushka."

Eisenberg, Larry (prod.) (1951), The World of Fun Series of Records for Folk Games, The Methodist Radio and Film Commission.
    Korobushka (Russian)[1].

Herman, Michael (ed.) (1953), Folk Dance Syllabus number one, Folk Dance House.
    Korobushka (An American-Russian Dance). Taught by the Hermans [2] as done from childhood.

Hipps, R.Harold and Wallace Chappell (1959), A World of Fun – Instruction Book for Use with the World of Fun Folk Game and Dance Records, Board of Education of the Methodist Church.
    Korobushka (Russian). "Korobushka" means the "Peddler's Pack," and it may be an occupational dance commemorating this universal human trade. Some authorities believe the dance originated among Russian immigrants in this country, but it nevertheless has an authentic Russian flavor.

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1   Note they add a correct pronunciation remark: "Accent on 2nd syllable."
2   Mary Ann and Michael Herman.

Kulbitsky, Olga and Frank L. Kaltman (1959), Teachers' Dance Handbook number one – Kindergarten to Sixth Year, Bluebird Publ. Comp.
    Korobushka (Russian-American Couple Dance). The dance is a product of Russian immigrants who wanted to dance to one of their favorite tunes. It spread from the Russian colony in New York City and is, today, a standard folk dance all over the country.

Venable, Lucy and Fred Berk (1959), 10 Folk Dances in Labanotation, M.Witmark & Sons.
    Korobushka (Russian Couple Dance). The dance was created by Russian immigrants in this country.

Kraus, Dick (before 1961, exact date unknown), Syllabus with international folk dance descriptions, unknown publisher.
    Karobushka[3] (Russia). Based on old Russian ballroom dance-patterns and fitted to an old folk song, "The Peddler," this dance was supposedly made up by Russian immigrants to the United States.

Kraus, Richard G. (1962), Folk Dancing – A Guide for Schools, Colleges and Recreation Groups, The Macmillan Comp.
    Korobushka (Russian). This dance, performed to a favorite old Russian folk song about a "pedlar's pack," was supposedly originated in the United States by a group of Russian immigrants shortly after World War I.

Stockton Folk Dance Camp (1964, 1968), Syllabus. Dance presented by Vyts Beliajus.
    1964: Korobushka (Russian-American).
    1968: Korobushka (Russia).

Wakefield, Eleanor Ely (1966), Folk Dancing in America, J.Lowell Pratt & Comp.
    Korobushka (Russia). There seems to be general agreement that the dance was choreographed by White Russian emigrants to the United States, sometimes after World War I.

Casey, Betty (1981), International Folk Dancing U.S.A., Doubleday & Comp.
    Korobushka (in the chapter Russia and the Ukraine). According to Michael Herman, Korobushka [...] was first presented in the United States by a group of Russian immigrants soon after the close of World War I.

Stockton Folk Dance Camp (1994), Syllabus. Dance presented by Hennie Konings, description by Carol and Bill Wenzel, Ruth Ruling.
    Korobushka (Russia). This traditional dance is known in many parts of Russia. This variant comes from Rostov. With his students, Alexei Shilton[4], teacher of traditional dances at the "Russian academy of music" (formerly Gnesin-Institution), collected this dance and introduced it during Russian Dance Camp in Suzdal (Russia) in 1992. The melody is the one familiar to Federation dancers.

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3   Note the more correct phonetic spelling of Karo- instead of Koro-.
4   Spelling error. Name should be Shilin.

Ya da kalinushku lomala (Russia)

The title Ya da kalinushku lomala ("I was breaking the snowball-tree") is not the name of a traditional folk dance, but of a ceremonial song of the Nekrasov Cossacks. In the early 18th century, a large group of Cossacks from the Don region in southern Russia (Don Cossacks) fled the tsarist repression, led by Ignat Nekrasov (hence their name), many of them eventually settling in the Ottoman Empire. In addition, Nekrasov Cossacks were so-called "Old Believers" and therefore also persecuted by the Russian Orthodox Church authorities. In the 1960s small groups of Nekrasov Cossacks moved back from Turkey to the USSR settling in the Stavropol region in southern Russia. The traditional folklore of these Nekrasov Cossacks preserves old Don Cossack elements, but also shows clear Ottoman-Turkish influences.

A traditional recording of this song can be found under the title Ya puchochki vyazala ("As I was binding bunches") on a 1982 Soviet released Melodiya vinyl LP. Another recording of this song, the one that is used in the IRFDC for the dance with the same name, was released in 2004 on a Syncoop CD. This rendering of the song has a rather different style than the Melodiya one, more "romantic" in the 20th century Soviet influenced Don Cossack tradition. The song is not traceable to a specific geographical place nor village but belonged to the repertoire of a displaced group of people.

Tracing the source
The dance that is performed to this song in the IRFDC was choreographed by the Dutch Russian folk dance specialist Hennie Konings, who first presented it in 2006 at a folk dance seminar in Switzerland. In 2008 Radboud Koop introduced the dance to a wider community at the Stockton Folk Dance Camp, from where it spread further within the IRFDC, re-taught by several other teachers. Examples of dance notes may be found in the Stockton 2008 syllabus, and on several internet sites, as well as YouTube video's, e.g., https://folkdancemusings.blogspot.com/2014/05/ya-da-kalinushku-lomala-russia.html (accessed 6 January 2022), or https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gVn8A7nAyvc (accessed 6 January 2022).

The dance steps, movements and pattern were designed by Hennie Konings on the basis of traditional Russian folk dance elements, in the style of a girls' lyrical khorovod ("round dance"). In the dance folklore of Russia or the Don or Nekrasov Cossacks, a specific dance to this song does not exist, certainly not the fixed pattern as designed by Hennie. In this sense, there is no traditional "village" source for this dance. It should be remarked that a completely different dance was created in 2008 to the same music in the context of a Dutch folk dance program for elderly people (Syncoop 2008, Zilverdraad 5), but this dance is not considered here because it has no proliferation in the IRFDC.

Transformations
Hennie Konings created this dance with the intention to exemplify a typical Russian girls' lyrical round dance, using steps and movements from the (academic) canon of the Russian folk dance tradition. It is, therefore, not a "transformed" dance resulting from a transmission process from "village" dances to the IRFDC repertoire. Individual movements, steps, and patterns, however, may be considered as such "transformed" transmission results. Hennie learnt these basic folk dance elements, while studying at various places in Russia, from the "repository" of Russian folk dance as it was collected and/or choreographed by Russian folk dance specialists, choreographers, teachers, and ethnomusicologists, mainly during the 20th century. The dance, therefore, does represent the Russian folk dance in general, but not a particular regional or local folk dance style.

References

Melodiya (1982), Nekrasov Cossacks Folklore Ensemble of the Stavropol Territory at the Moscow Conservatoire, LP C20 20435 009. See also https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cdC_Eng5fB0 29:26 (accessed 6 January 2022)

Stockton Folk Dance Camp (2008), Syllabus. Dance presented by Radboud Koop.
    Ya da kalinushku lomala (Russia). This girls' round dance (khorovod) was choreographed by Hennie Konings based on traditional dance material. It was first presented in Switzerland in 2006.

Syncoop (2004), What a Wide Steppe – Russian, Ukrainian and Cossack folk songs performed by Folk Song Ensemble "Volushka", CD 5766 CD 293. See also https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b-69NcNquIFY (accessed 6 January 2022).

Syncoop (2008), Zilverdraad 5 – Dances for Elderly People, CD and book (in Dutch)

Dana (Romania)

The title Dana is not the name of a traditional folk dance, but is taken from the 2002 released song "Hei Dana" performed by the Romanian Turkish-Roma artist with the stage name "Brandy", see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lYdl1LD_mh8 (accessed 6 January 2022). It is a cover, in the Romanian language, of the song "De Bana" from the, in Germany residing, Turkish pop-folk band Yurtseven Kardeşler, see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k1nTLmkgILY (accessed 6 January 2022). De Bana is an authored song (music and lyrics by Mustafa Şimşek, arrangement Yurtseven Kardeşler) and cannot be classified as traditionally, orally transmitted folk-lore. Within the context of the Romanian (folk) music landscape, the Romanian version of the music categorizes as manele (cf., Beissinger et al. 2016) with strong Roma (Gypsy) and Turkish-Oriental features, especially typical for the southern parts of Romania (Muntenia and Oltenia, the "old" Wallachia, the region that was part of the Ottoman Empire for long periods of time). Except for pinpointing this particular style of manele to the southern part of Romania, this song is not traceable to a specific geographical place nor village, but it belongs to the artistic property of the authors and the band.

Tracing the source

The dance that is performed to this song in the IRFDC was choreographed by the Romanian folk dance specialists Cristian Florescu and Sonia Dion, presented for the first time in the IRFDC in 2004 at the Stockton Folk Dance Camp. Examples of dance notes may be found in the Stockton 2004 syllabus, and on several internet sites, as well as YouTube video's, e.g., https://folkdancemusings.blogspot.com/2014/08/dana-romanian-gypsy.html (accessed 6 January 2022). The dance steps, movements and pattern were designed by Cristian & Sonia based on traditional Roma-Romanian folk dance elements. In the dance folklore of Romania or the Romanian Roma, a specific dance to this song does not exist, certainly not the fixed pattern as designed by Cristian & Sonia. In this sense, there is no traditional "village" source of this dance.

Transformations

Cristian & Sonia created this dance with the intention to exemplify the way the Roma population of southern Romania would typically dance, using steps and movements from the Romanian and general Balkan (and Oriental) Roma folk dance traditions. It is, therefore, not a "transformed" dance resulting from a transmission process from "village" dances to the IRFDC repertoire. Individual movements, steps, and patterns, however, may be considered as such "transformed" transmission results. Cristian & Sonia learnt these basic folk dance elements, while visiting and studying at various places in Romania, from the "repository" of Roma-Romanian folk dance as it was collected and/or choreographed by Romanian and Balkan folk dance specialists, choreographers, teachers, and ethnomusicologists, mainly during the 20th century. Specifically, as far as the dance tradition of Roma from southern Romania is concerned, one of its most remarkable features is its improvisational character: dancers, men and women alike, hardly ever dance in unison in prescribed formations or patterns. In the IRFDC, however, dancing in an improvisational manner is not or hardly possible; dancers need fixed structures and patterns to be able to perform the dances from their repertoire. For this reason, the dance Dana was prescribed by Cristian & Sonia and choreographed to consist of fixed figures and step/movement patterns. The idea of improvisational dancing is included by allowing the dancers to dance at an arbitrary place in the dance hall (instead of in a circle or line with hands held), and by encouraging the dancers to adopt (and "improvise") a Roma-like dance style, taking the personal freedom of adding and choosing arm, hand, finger, body and shoulder shaking movements in "oriental" style, as well as using – meaningless – words and outcries to support the exuberant feeling of the dance. These were all deliberate choices made by Cristian & Sonia themselves, as "creators" of the dance. The dance, therefore, does represent the

Roma-Romanian folk dance in general, but not a particular regional or local folk dance style. It is more like an authored dance, stemming from the creative and artistic choices of the dance makers. Dana, therefore, does not have a "village" source, yet many IRFDC participants believe the dance to be a traditional Roma (Gypsy) dance from Romania.

References

Beissinger, Margaret, Speranţa Rădulescu, and Anca Giurchescu (eds.) (2016), Manele in Romania – Cultural Expression and Social Meaning in Balkan Popular Music, Rowman & Littlefield

Stockton Folk Dance Camp (2004), Syllabus. Dance presented by Sonia Dion and Cristian Florescu.
> Dana (Romanian, Muntenia). In the Romanian folk repertoire, we find many modern dances with Eastern inspiration and influence. These dances are called Manele. Among them Dana, one of the most popular, is performed by gypsies who live near the capital city of Bucharest or in other major cities in southern Romania. Those gypsies came from Turkey, as is clear from the music and steps to this dance.

Karamfil (Bulgaria)

Karamfil is not the name of a traditional folk dance but is the title of a song released in the 70s on vinyl LP by the Bulgarian state record company Balkanton. It is sung by Dimitâr Kolarov, one of the most famous late 20th century singers from the Pirin region (the Bulgarian part of Macedonia in the southwest of the country). It is an authored song (music and lyrics written by the Bulgarian composer Dimitâr Yanev) and cannot be classified as traditionally, orally transmitted folk-lore. The song is dedicated to the Bulgarian partisan commander Kosta Mitov who died during the 2nd WW in the fight against fascism (see Yanev 1981). Karamfil (a Turkish loan word) means carnation, the flower which was the partisan symbol, and the song has strong nationalistic overtones. The music is in 7/8b measure (3-2-2, slow-quick-quick), which is typical for the Macedonian region for both songs and dances. The character and style of the music are also recognizably Macedonian. Although Karamfil was not written as a dance song, the recording is perfectly suitable to dance to.

Tracing the source

The dance that is performed to this song in the IRFDC was introduced into the IRFDC by the Dutch Bulgarian folk dance specialist Jaap Leegwater. Examples of dance notes may be found in the Stockton 1984 syllabus, and on several internet sites, as well as YouTube video's, e.g., https://folkdancemusings.blogspot.com/2014/04/karamfil-bulgaria.html (accessed 7 January 2022).

The first figure is a traditional Širto dance, in the version that Jaap learnt in 1979 from the people of the village of Debren, close to the town of Bansko in Pirin, Bulgaria. Under the name Širto one may find many different local dance variants in all parts of Macedonia (Bulgarian, Greek and former Yugoslavian), which all have the 7/8b measure in common, but dance patterns (steps, directions, movements) often differ slightly. The second figure is created by Jaap himself, inspired by these many Širto variants. Although Jaap had a field recording of the Širto from his field work, he decided to use the music of Karamfil because of its attractiveness, beautiful melody and "easy listening". Jaap first introduced the dance to the IRFDC in the early 80s in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, and somewhat later in Brugge, Belgium. In 1984 he introduced the dance at the Stockton Folk Dance Camp. Nowadays, the dance is widely known all over the world except in Bulgaria, where this two-figure Širto-derivative is unknown and even the song Karamfil is hardly remembered.

Transformations

Jaap Leegwater designed the dance Karamfil to consist of two different dance figures to be danced synchronously to the 16 bar + 16 bar verse + chorus structure of the Karamfil music and song. The first figure is the traditional Širto dance that Jaap learnt in 1979 from the people of the village of Debren. The second figure is created by Jaap himself, fitting to the Širto style, but also contrasting to the first figure by its directions (to the center and back instead of along the line of dance). Putting these two figures together in a synchronous manner to the Karamfil song was a deliberate choice of Jaap. As such, the dance cannot be classified as traditionally, orally transmitted folk-lore, because in the traditional dance folklore of the Pirin region such "constructed" dances do not occur.

The Širto that Jaap learnt "in the field" was accompanied by a traditional Macedonian music band consisting of two zurna's (oboe-like double-reed wind instrument) and one tapan (big drum). The field recording was technically not really fit for use in the IRFDC, and in addition, the sound of zurna's with tapan was not easily appreciated by IRFDC dancers at the time. Furthermore, the field recorded music did not have a regular melodic structure, which was difficult for IRFDC dancers who preferred regular structured musical recordings consisting of multiples of 8 bars. The choice for Karamfil and the structuring of the dance pattern are thus personal, somewhat artistic, and practical, choices of Jaap Leegwater. Yet, Karamfil is believed by many in the IRFDC to be a traditional folk dance from Pirin, Bulgaria.

References

Balkanton (1970s), [Glasove ot Pirin – Pesni ot Dimitâr Yanev; Voices of Pirin – Songs by Dimitâr Yanev], Balkanton BTA 10329

Yanev, Dimitâr (1981), [Pirinski Pesni; Songs from Pirin], State Publ. Comp. Muzika, Sofiya

Stockton Folk Dance Camp (1984), Syllabus. Dance presented by Jaap Leegwater.
   Karamfil (Bulgaria). Karamfil comes from the area of Pirin, Bulgaria, and is the name of a Haiduk (rebel) who is mentioned in the accompanying song.

Fidula (2003), Tänze im Kreis 5, Tanzbeschreibungen von Michael Hepp.
   Karamfil (aus Westbulgarien). Karamfil (Nelke) war das Losungswort der "Heiduck", der Partisanen unter der türkischen Besatzung auf dem Balkan. [Karamfil (from western Bulgaria). Karamfil (carnation) was the watchword of the "Haiduk", the partisans under the Turkish occupation in the Balkans.]

Siriul (Romania)

Siriul is not the name of a traditional folk dance but is taken from the title of a Romanian folk song (Cât e Siriul de mare, "As big as the Siriu is") from Buzău in Muntenia, Romania. Buzău is the name of a town, river, and administrative region to the southeast of the Carpathian Mountain arc. Siriul Mare is the name of a tributary river to the Buzău river, while Siriu is also the name of a village, a mountain (range), and a small lake in the same region. A well-known recording of this love song, released by the Romanian state music company Electrecord, was by Benone Sinulescu, one of the most famous Romanian singers from the second half of the 20th century. Clear evidence of the origin of this song is unknown to me, but the singer Benone Sinulescu claims ownership of the song[5]. No definite clue can therefore be given whether this song classifies as traditionally, orally transmitted folk-lore. In the song lyrics the Siriul and Buzău rivers figure prominently, so this song is traceable to the specific region of the Siriu Mountain and river in Buzău, Muntenia, Romania. It is not a dance song per se, although it has a regular rhythm that is danceable, though the three-part measure is rather un-common in traditional music and dances from the Romanian south. The music that is used in the IRFDC for the dance Siriul, however, is not the Sinulescu vocal recording, but an instrumental rendering, released on a Syncoop CD in 1994. It is performed by the Dutch folk music band Csárdás, solo pan-flute by Jeroen Duyfjes.

Tracing the source

The dance that is known in the IRFDC with the name Siriul was choreographed by the renowned Romanian folk dance specialist Theodor Vasilescu. Dance notes by Theodor Vasilescu can be found in the syllabus to his Dance Program no.8 from 2004. Other examples of dance notes of this dance may be found on several internet sites, as well as YouTube video's, e.g., https://folkdancemusings. blogspot.com/2014/05/siriul-romania.html (accessed 7 January 2022). Theodor Vasilescu introduced this dance to the IRFDC in 2003 and later in some European countries and thereafter in the wider IRFDC, where it has been re-taught by many teachers.

Transformations

Although the information provided by Theodor in the label of this dance (see reference below) suggests otherwise, in fact not much information is available in the "folk dance repository" that this Siriul is a traditional, orally transmitted dance from the Buzău/Siriu region. Moreover, the dance pattern is created by Theodor to, on the one hand, fit the music nicely, and, on the other, give the impression of a traditional, lyrical, women's folk dance in generic "Muntenian" style. Based on possible traces of such a traditional dance that would have survived, one could at best say this version of Siriul is a reconstruction. The dance, therefore, does not have a "village" source, yet IRFDC participants widely believe this dance to be a traditional dance from the Buzău region in Romania.

References

Electrecord (1999), Benone Sinulescu "Radu mamii, Radule", CD EDC 249 (the recording is probably of a much earlier date)

Syncoop (1994), Csárdás – Volksmuziek uit Slowakije, Roemenië, Hongarije en Moravië [Folk music from Slovakia, Romania, Hungary and Moravia], CD 5754 CD 168; re-issued from vinyl LP: Hakketoon (1982), Csárdás, LP 1982.20

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5   When the singer passed away recently (November 2021) a dispute about the copyrights of the song came to light between the singer and the municipality of Buzău, the latter who used the chorus tune of the song as clock tower signal in public, see https://adevarul.ro/locale/buzau/scandalul-jurul-melodiei-cat-e-siriul-mare-printre-marile-dezamagiri-benone-sinulescu-video-1_6196822c5163ec4271b0e03a/index.html [accessed January 28, 2022]

Vasilescu, Theodor (2004), 25 Romanian Folk Dances – video tape 8, presented by Lia & Theodor Vasilescu (unofficial publishing)

Siriul (Buzău – Muntenia, Romania). Siriu is the name of a small river crossing the wonderful region of Siriu Mountain. In the local folklore of Buzău region where this river and mountain are to be found, there is also a well-known song and a dance wearing the same name. The dance accompanying the Siriu song has a very simple structure with a strong lyrical feature displayed on a pattern of 6 measures only. Originally it was a women dance which later on turned into a mixed dance.

Çobankat (Albania) ◇◇◇◇◇◇◇◇◇◇◇◇◇◇◇◇◇◇◇◇◇◇◇◇◇◇◇◇◇

Çobankat is not the name of a traditional folk dance, but the title of a folk song from the region of Korça in present day southeastern Albania. Many versions of this song may be found on the internet and YouTube, including renditions by non-Albanian performers, with sometimes very different lyrics (ranging from a love song to a freedom fighter song) and musical interpretations, e.g., https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fwcTs6MPohg (accessed 8 January 2022). It is not a dance song per se, although most renditions have a regular rhythm that is danceable. The music that is used in the IRFDC for the dance Çobankat was released on CD in 2001 by the Turkish company Kalan, see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=axXuqxuS_cw (accessed 8 January 2022). It is performed by a non-Albanian band with vocals by the Canadian-born Brenna MacCrimmon and Turkish Sumru Ağıryürüyen accompanied by the Turkish musicians Muammer Ketencoğlu, Arben Guza and Cevdet Erek.

Tracing the source

The dance that is known in the IRFDC with the name Çobankat was choreographed in 2004, specifically to the Kalan recording of the song, by the Norwegian-born American folk dance teacher Lee Otterholt. He introduced the dance into the IRFDC, e.g., at the Stockton Folk Dance Camp in 2004. Examples of dance notes may be found in the Stockton 2004 syllabus, and on several internet sites, as well as YouTube video's, e.g., https://folkdancemusings.blogspot.com/search?q=cobankat (accessed 7 January 2022). Since then, it has been re-taught by many other teachers to IRFDC groups all over the world, becoming a very popular dance, especially because of the music of the Kalan recording being strongly appreciated by many folk dancers. In the dance folklore of Albania, a specific dance to this song does not exist, certainly not the fixed pattern as designed by Lee Otterholt. In this sense, there is no traditional "village" source of this dance. Instead, the choice for the structuring of the dance pattern to this music is a personal, creative, and somewhat artistic, choice of Lee Otterholt.

Transformations

According to Lee he created the dance using "typical Albanian steps" (Stockton 2004). The steps, though, are rather generic to the whole south-central and south-western Balkans, including regions of (former-Yugoslavian, Greek, Bulgarian) Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro, and Greek Epirus. Some resemblance of the steps exists with steps from dances like Pogonishtë, Lesnoto, or Syrtós, but there seems no basis to consider Lee's Çobankat as a structural variant of such traditional dances. The dance pattern is strongly fixed to the particular Kalan-rendering of the song, with complete synchronicity between musical phrases and dance figures. Such a synchronicity is not very common in this type of traditional folk dances of the region. After the introduction of the dance to the IRFDC by Lee, other teachers have made small changes to the dance choreography (specifically regarding the position of the arms, V- or W-hold), so that now multiple variants of the dance exist. As for the music, since it is played by non-Albanian musicians it misses the stylistic peculiarities of tonality, ornamentations, and pronunciation of the lyrics that are specific to the Korça region. Nevertheless, Lee's Çobankat is highly valued by many IRFDC participants worldwide, believing it to be a real Albanian folk dance.

References

Kalan (2001), Ayde Mori, CD 226

Stockton Folk Dance Camp (2004), Syllabus. Dance presented by Lee Otterholt.
Çobankat (Albania). Čobankat means "The Shepherdesses." It is a traditional song of the "Tosk" people of Albania. The words extol the freedom to be found in the Albanian mountains. I have put typical Albanian steps to the melody. [note the incorrect spelling with Č instead of Ç]

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Ne klepeći (Bosnia)

Ne klepeći is not the name of a traditional folk dance but is taken from the title of a Bosnian song Ne klepeći nanulama, also known under the name Ne silazi sa čardaka (first words of the lyrics). Although there are references to the song as being "traditional", it seems likely that it is an authored song (lyrics Ibrahim Dedić, music Husein Kurtagić, arrangement Svetomir Šešić, see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R5ATsIw5-lA , accessed 8 January 2022). One of the most famous renderings of the song is the one by singer Nedžad Salković, released in 1982 by the, then Yugoslavian, record company RTB (now PGP-RTS). Many other performances of this song can be easily found on the internet and YouTube. The song lyrics reveal it is a mourning song, in remembrance of a deceased mother.

Tracing the source

The dance that is known in the IRFDC with the name Ne klepeći was choreographed specifically to this song by the American folk dance teacher Jim Gold. It was introduced by him, and by other teachers who learnt it from him, to the IRFDC from about 2015 onwards, first in the United States, and from there on worldwide. Examples of dance notes may be found on Jim Gold's own website (see references), and on several other internet sites, as well as YouTube video's, e.g., https://folkdancemusings.blogspot.com/2016/02/na-klepeci-nanulama-bosnia.html (accessed 8 January 2022). Jim, and other teachers, teach the dance to IRFDC groups using the label of a "Bosnian folk dance", as can be attested for by inspecting the many websites that include or refer to this dance. In the dance folklore of Bosnia, however, a specific dance to this song does not exist, certainly not the fixed pattern as designed by Jim Gold. In this sense, there is no traditional "village" source of this dance. Instead, the choice for the structuring of the dance pattern to this music is a personal, creative, and somewhat artistic, choice of Jim Gold.

Transformations

The dance pattern (steps, movements, directions) of Jim's dance Ne klepeći are a personal artistic creation of himself. According to Jim his dance is "in Bosnian folk style". The steps of his dance are, however, rather general "Balkan-like" folk dance steps and there seems no basis in relating them specifically to Bosnian folk dances. Furthermore, the song being a mourning song for a deceased relative, it is highly unlikely that Bosnians would dance to such music. Nevertheless, Jim Gold, being aware of this, remains with his presentation of this dance as being a Bosnian folk dance. According to Jim, his dance (as all other folk dances he created) should be understood as the result of the "imagination" and "dreams" of a choreographer. It is worthwhile to provide this long quote from his website:

Choreographies are created in the imagination and dreams of choreographers. If steps do not exist, or have yet to be created, the choreographer begins to move. Soon a dance appears.

A folk dance choreographer is steeped in the lore, folk dance music, culture, history, art, steps, and national style. The steps he or she creates are faithful to the dancing style of the native country.

But no matter what the choreographer creates, choreographies are really suggested steps. All dances are open to interpretation, and subject to future improvisations depending on the imagination, ingenuity, and creativity of the teacher or leader presenting them. And this, whether created in a village, native country, or in the new world.

The relatively new art form of International Folk Dancing is developing and growing in the United States and throughout the world. Along with more traditional approaches, new bands have also formed. The new music they create is often based on a fusion of folk traditions and modern styles. With so many beautiful songs, striking harmonies, and awesome vibrations presently nourishing your mind, what else can you do but dance?

Join the creative stream! Become part of this flow! [Gold, website, nd]

After Jim Gold introduced Ne klepeći to the IRFDC, criticism arose about this way of creating "folk" dances ("fantasy" dances as I call them) to which a label is attached that mentions the country from which the music originates as the source country of the dance (i.e., Ne klepeći as a Bosnian folk dance because the music is a Bosnian song). A heated debate erupted on the email listserv of the EEFC in 2019 in response to Ne klepeći, among IRFDC participants from the US, including some with roots in Bosnia or Yugoslavia. Discussion topics included themes like authenticity, artistry and creativity, cultural values and respect for native culture and identities. The matter is not settled, and more and more "fantasy" dances are being created as we speak.

References

Gold, Jim (website accessed 8 January 2022), https://www.jimgold.com/ne-klepeci-nanulama/
Ne Klepeci (Bosnia/Herzegovina). Dance Meaning: 'Ne klepeci nanulama': "Don't rattle with your wooden slippers." Nanula is a wooden slipper worn outside. (Translation: Gabrijela Golub). Pronunciation: Ne Klepetshi Nanulama. Choreography: by Jim Gold in Bosnian folk style. Music: Starogradski Biseri (Old Town Pearls) Najljepse Starogradski Pjesme CD purchased in gas station in Gabriela's home city of Banja Luka.

Gold, Jim (website accessed 8 January 2022), On The Nature of Folk Dance Choreography, in: Articles from 50 folk dances choreographed by Jim Gold: A Step by Step Guide, https://www.jimgold.com/articles/

EEFC listserv of the East European Folklife Center https://sympa.services.net/eefc/info/eefc

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