



## Odzemok: Cultural and Historical Development

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### ABSTRACT

This article characterizes the male dance odzemok as one of the most representative dances in the broad spectrum of Slovak folk dances. A more detailed analysis and subsequent analysis of the literature confirms the absence of a comprehensive integrated material concerning odzemok in a wider context. This text further highlights the historical development of said male dance in the central geographic area, and analyzes the factors that led to the development of its present form.

**KEY WORDS:** folk dance, folk music, male dance, odzemok, hajduch, valachian colonization

### Introduction

Odzemok has an important place in the history of dance culture in Slovakia. It belongs along with young men's or lad's dances and verbunk to a group of men's dances. The consequences of its origin, its development and forms are not clearly defined even now.

If we want to study dance and be more familiar with it, we cannot focus only on its form and content but we must take into concern a wider context. Dance, as well as other folk forms, exists only at the moment of its concrete active realisation. Preserving the dance is correlative with the active expression of a different kind of dance, which helps us to spread it from generation to generation. Therefore it is not possible to record it directly, originally and historically. Slovak folk dance has been naturally changing and modifying over the years but also has been disappearing. Therefore any attempts to reconstruct older forms of the dance can be done on the base of analogy with similar actions which was preserved in the other archaic milieu or can be supported by our research in historical records. Documentary and audio-visual records of the dance which have been made since the 50s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century bring more information about the dance. A study of historical and cultural penetration of odzemok in our region brings a lot of questions that can be answered after studying the archeological, musicological, historical and social aspects of its existence. The focus of the study is on the synthesization of information which is elaborated in historical references in Slovak literature. Another instrumental factor in problem-solving was several years of studying the folk dance using film captures in which the dance expression of the folk culture bearers were presented and all demonstration of folklore as well as contemporary dance culture were studied.

To clarify any historical, social or cultural activity of a certain group of the population is almost always connected with the problem of objectivity of references from the certain period which was influenced by different levels of national and ideological glamorization of reality.

Odzemok as a dance expression of a certain period represented by a group of people has been formed through the centuries and has been adapted to the region. Odzemok as we know it nowadays has moved from shepherd's areas to rural where was accepted and transformed, during this process it has lost its original intimate, magic and ritual form and has become a symbol of a men's country dances. There is another fact which makes difficult to interpret written records i.e. a lack of written records from the soldiers, nobility and especially from shepherd's area. Many historical and contemporary records mention odzemok in a connection with the period of a Turks' expansion in Europe in soldiers' dances and also with nobles' dances. The larger source of information is from a later period when odzemok was brought to rural areas and was gradually and naturally turned into a Slovak national dance.

### General characteristic

We define „the folk dance“ as a moving, dancing and musical art especially for village people but also for town people. More concrete definition sees the folk dance as the dance made by a nation, an ethnic group as connected with the life of folk people, area, region, and national character, with specific characteristic of movement, form and structure which is connected with a vocalic- instrumental expression of the nation, the ethnic group and it is passed from generation to generation. It is one of the oldest forms of the folk art. It was formed by geographical, historical and social conditions in people's life.

The folk dance we can find in different cultural and social conditions and forms with unidentical intensity. It has disappeared from the original rural area with consequences of losing a functional meaning of the dance in the people's life. The folk dance has undergone the natural way of development to survive, and the most important role plays a phenomenon called folklorism. The bottom line is a usage of a folk culture in the strange, not natural environment, for example the usage of the patterns and sewing patterns of a folk dress in a fashion, a form of folk architecture and ornaments in the town culture, folk verbal arts in literature and so on. The bearers of folklorism in the past were not the folk – the creator of folklore, but other cultural stratum (for example: the intelligentsia) (ZÁLEŠÁK 1982:7). The main creators and representatives of the folk dance were leaders of socially poor groups in the past, peasants, shepherds, craftsmen and workers. Slovak folk dance has a long development tradition so there is also an influence of other cultural and ethnical groups and dance expression that adapted to regional conditions, naturalized, became popular and came down further. In the present time the term dancing folklore is understood as the dance expression of the certain historically defined time period of a shepherd – peasant and craftsmen culture i.e. approximately hundred years of dance expressions of socially poor groups. The focus of the thesis is not on a hardly identified folk art of the past historical period and the folk art of nowadays; the reason for such a selection is in a relative isolation and therefore a great variation of the local and regional culture of this period.

Variability in the folk dance culture in different parts of Europe is a result of various activities, changes and events of a historical and cultural development and in a certain way it reflects a special geographical condition of the region. Content and a form are two very important parts of an artistic performance that are dependent one from another and they cannot be separated. Each folk dance, game, tradition or song expresses certain needs, longing, thinking or mood of the folk. It has thoughts, an idea and content (ZÁLEŠÁK 1953:46). The folk dance has a syncretic character which means that a song and music are

perceived as a non-separable part of the dance and it is connected with other expressions of the traditional folk culture and influences each other. The folk dance is a part of family rites but especially calendar rites (rites and traditions of a life and an anniversary cycle) which are deeply connected with the certain life style, farming and making a livelihood. The folk dance was a part of folk rites and festivals with its magical, ritual and later also traditional custom and even more an amusing function. The aesthetic feeling of folk people is represented by the folk dance. If we use exaggeration we can say that the dance is the mirror of the etiquette of a social life. The final form of the dance is greatly influenced by the clothes. The traditional folk dance should be understood as an alive and changing mechanism. The dancing repertoire of separated historical times was created as a result of stratifying, overleaping, influencing and fading away of the dance expression. It was influenced by local, national and multinational traditions. The folk dance is a phenomenon that is dynamic, objectively existing only in a performance of its bearers and in the past it was changing in various forms in the time, with transferring from an interpreter to an interpreter with a different disposition and different feelings. As well as other folk arts originated on the collective principle but at its beginning strong and capable individuals have created the folk dance. Their ideas had to be approved and accepted by a collective. While the dance was going from an interpreter to another, from generation to generation, from one place to another and formed and in many cases achieved a high artistic level.

*The main characteristic of the Slovak folk dance:*

1. It is built on a rhythmic dance of lower limbs which have a dominant function in the dance. The other movements of a body comparing with legs have only an incidental function.
2. Principles of improvisation and richness of dance motifs mainly in older rustic turning dances. Collective and younger turning dances contain less recourse of motifs and they are connected into given constant consequences. There is a lack of any improvisation in the young dances with the firm musical and dancing form (strophic) and for their performance is necessary to constantly repeated dancing motives.

### **Historical development of the dance – Central European context**

A Slovak dancing folklore is a part of bigger regional areas of the Central and Eastern European dancing folklore in spite of its definite character. It was formed on the area of the Austria – Hungarian through the years of overleaping and influencing with ethnic groups living in this area in different times. The Slovak folk dance had been developing in the

region of the Carpathian valley through the centuries. Since 5<sup>th</sup> century when Slavic came to this area, the folk song – a music- dancing culture begun to develop and had been transformed through the centuries by a lot of forming elements and it is preserved until now. The culture of our ancestors did not develop in isolation or in a close knit group but on the contrary because of a geographical location of the inhabited areas of our ancestors it was like an epicentre of mixing of different culture flows which further marked and influenced also our culture and next development.

Firstly, in already mentioned geographical location and borders with other nations forms the base for cultural contacts and interactions. The contacts built through the centuries among neighbouring countries – we cannot forget Southern Slavic, who we have inheritance relationship with – gave a space to more common elements and parts in our folk culture but also in Slavic's national culture. Forming Slovak culture was in contact with other cultures that were not Slavic and had an impact on its formation and character. In the new area, it came to a contact with the rest of the Celtic culture, the German tribes' culture and most of all there was the direct contact with ethnical groups which permanently resided or in that time lived in the Hungarian Plain. Here can be seen the beginnings of formation of lasting neighbourhood with Hungarians, the beginning of an inhabitation of the German ethnic group and also the influence of Romanian, Tatars and Turks should be taken in consideration. There are preserved collective chain and round dances in the dance-folkloric, relatively monolithic Southeastern Europe, in the Balkan nations considered as a typical. They were characteristic of a medieval European dance culture and their persistence in this area is the result of the centuries of isolation caused by lasting Turkish occupation of those territories (DÚŽEK-GARAJ 2001:324). A dancing expression in a national culture, whether our or other, is not always homogeneous, or the same. That is why not all dance expressions that can be watched in Slovakia also have Slovak origins. This is the result of a century's process of creating own national identity to which the dance belongs as one of its manifestation. It is quite known that dance and folk dances as a favorite, often fashionable mean of cultural and social contacts are often quite naturally, without barriers, quietly fall within the limits, the boundaries of social groups, layers, ethnicity, country, etc., And expand into new environments become established there and continue in them. It can be seen in the dancing patterns as examples of our dance-music past, which demonstrate the wide correlation with generally applicable fashionable European currents and dances of each epoch (DÚŽEK-GARAJ 2001:323).

### **Wallachian colonisation as the most important factor for an establishment and a formation of odzemok**

Differences in the folk dance culture of the different part of Europe are results of various activities, changes and events of the historical and cultural development, in some ways they reflect specific geographical conditions in the region. On the contrary the similarities in folk dance traditions are the main aspect for forming typical dancing territories (zones, regions) and dance-folklore dialects (DÚŽEK-GARAJ 2001:323). Very significant impulses for the formation of the major part of the dance- folk tradition lies in a peasant culture, there were significant migrations, ethno-cultural processes and the associated population movements. Gradually, from 13<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> century to the 18<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> ongoing so-called century the Wallachian colonisation progressed ridges of Carpathians from the Balkans - Romania, through Ukraine, the Southern borders of Poland, Slovakia and Moravian Wallachia with ethnic cultural contributions from these areas (DÚŽEK-GARAJ 2001:327). During the late 15<sup>th</sup> and early 16<sup>th</sup> century in the Carpathian region in our country sheep are mostly grazed on mountain areas, but in the context of population increase, the flocks started moving to low-lying mountain pastures. Carpathian mountain areas remained largely unused and therefore the arrival of shepherds who focused precisely on the mountain shepherding and did not encounter any resistance, so that they became a welcome option for landlords, who used very rarely these populated mountain areas. Wallachia-Ruthenian population comes in groups on our territory between 14<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Wallachian colonisation was spreading mainly through the Carpathian arc of the Transylvanian Alps to Bratislava. In connection with this process unprecedented musical and dancing streams culminated in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and formed the important layer style especially in Northern Carpathian and Northern East European areas. Shepherds lived in distance from a village way of a life, they had a contact with the rebels-robbers, seekers for shelter; provided the right conditions and the environment for the flourishing particularly physically demanding, armament or men's dance (Ibid).

Shepherds were a support for robbers as they lived in remote places in the mountain. Overleaping contacts among shepherds and robbers were the cause for forming a song tradition. There are to follow the sequence when the shepherd-pastoral songs become the robbers' songs. The shepherds who lived in the hilly areas of Slovakia were separated most of the year from a village collective. They lived right on a pasture in huts and in sheds often built in very remote locations. The shepherds gained a culture distinct from the peasant (ZÁLEŠÁK 1964:182). The first mention of nomadic pastoralists, in the historical sources also referred to as Ruthenium, comes from 14<sup>th</sup> century in our area, namely in the area of Eastern Slovakia, they went through Ukraine, Romania and Transylvania. In the first half of

the 15<sup>th</sup> century they were mentioned in Central Slovakia. In this century, they also came to Spiš, Orava and Trenčín County. During the following centuries they were colonizing mountain areas of other counties (Turiec, Liptov) and their number was increasing (ELKS 1995:793). It was an ethnically mixed pastoral element, initially with the Romanian-Ruthenian, later with the Polish-Ruthenian characters. That was connected to their original designation Gelding/Romanian and Wallachian/Romanian which was replaced by the name Ruthen/Ruthenian. During the 14<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> century Wallachian founded nearly a hundred villages on the principles of law, particularly in Zemplín, Šariš, Spiš, Gemer (BEŇKO 1991:7-9). People were coming alone or were invited by separated dominions and so they began to settle permanently on very favourable terms, such as: sheep to graze in forests and a manor were exempted from work, payment of taxes and duties. Shepherds could elect from themselves their own Wallachian Duke who had to be confirmed by a landlord. To punish various offenses they were not subjected to the landlord, but the elected Duke who was representing them at the landlord and was a judge but also a collector of fees for the landlord. Shepherds passed to the landlord for example: cattle 20 to 50rd, horses, bees, marten skins, ship skins, cheese and so on. Moreover, they kept roads, forests, borders of the estate and carry out a military service and protect the Lord on the road. The original native population which thereby knowingly fled from suzerainty added to the Wallach-Ruthenian population subsequently. Within a few decades the landowners gradually stripped of their rights and privileges until they finally relegated to the level of serfs. However, their culture and a way of life maintained until the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### **Odzemok in the light of historical records**

The first mention of Slovak shepherds dances which, by their astonishing peculiarity, became the subject of an attention of foreigners, especially the Hungarians, are actually the first reports of Slovak dances at all (KOVALČÍKOVÁ-POLOCZEK 1955:14). The oldest reports of a hajduk/hajduch dance are from 1514. Ján Zápoľský suppressed a peasant uprising led by Juraj Dóža. The tormented Dóža's soldiers had to dance the hajduch dance during Juraj Dóža execution – burning. The preserved documents about historical layers of odzemok are from 16<sup>th</sup> century. According to Atlas its dynamism can be seen even in the first half of 20<sup>th</sup> century. It demonstrates not only the knowledge and the existence of the dance but also innovation of odzemok which since 1945 is related with activities of folklore dancing groups and the migration of population (DÚŽEK 1990:94).

Jozef Kresánek in the article „Historical roots of the hajduch dance” puts forward a logical genealogy of the hajduch dance, although the author himself considers it to be just as likely. He gives us another possible view of the development of the investigational

dances, for this reason, the genealogy of the hajduch dance according to Jozef Kresánek is specified below:

- a. Old soldiers' and shepherds' dances dating back to prehistory almost all European Nations that underline the importance.
- b. In 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> century the dance Moreska spread around the Europe; it is military, only men dance, an even – odd measure, danced with swords.
- c. These kind of dances influenced and put in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century a powerful impetus to the existence of contemporary hajduch dance on the territory of Central and South-eastern Europe, where was fought against the Turks and Kozáčka in Ukraine, where was fought against the Tartars.
- d. All combined together with shepherds' dominant elements – mostly from the choreographic point of view – was crystalized and lasted until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The reports from the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century give the evidence that the dance is specific for shepherds and they were danced mainly in Slovakia. For example in 1572 Valentín Belassa the noble from Liptovský Hrádok danced "shepherds' dance" in Bratislava castle. While dancing he was suddenly in a squat then in a jump, legs knocked together and a part. They were vigorous jumps and squats.

Men from Orava sent by Juraj Thurza in 1615 surprised people of Wittenberg by the hajduch dance with swords, hatchets and axes. The melody of the odzemok was written by Mönch from Salzburg sometime at the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century or perhaps already in 14<sup>th</sup> century. The hajduch respectively shepherds' dances by the style can be found in the collection of Anna Szirmay-Keczer. From the 18<sup>th</sup> century it is known several references to the pastoral dance in particular in connection with Christmas carols. Even the Christmas carols mentioned the dance of shepherds, playing the bagpipe and the other shepherds 'instruments. „Pásli ovce valasi...”, the church song is sung with the odzemok melody. The reference from the end of 18<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of 19<sup>th</sup> century says about dancing the odzemok in the area of Banská Bystrica. Hajduchovanie – hajduching the verb from hajduch is mentioned also by Pavol Jozef Šafárik. Božena Němcová recorded odzemok after the end of the Horehronsky bear hunt in 1858. The patriotic intelligentsia in the second half of the last century preferred odzemok and dance as a vibrant art and a physical heritage preserved in the memory of the nation until now. The tradition made the dance a symbol of heroism, resistance movement, expression of masculinity, evidence of skilfulness (ONDREJKA 1969: 27). This dance was for robbers the joy in which they showed their



strength, dexterity, and cleverhandle with weapons –shepherd's hatchet, encouraging themselves. One of the main conditions to be accepted to the robbers 'group according to a folk tradition was: to dance well odzemok. In these times odzemok was probably enriched by elements inspired by the martial ardour of robbers (e.g. different swings, swaying with the hatchet under someone's feet) (ZÁLEŠÁK 1964:182). Its Slovak folk form we can find in short descriptions of Slovak patriots in 19<sup>th</sup> century. Finally, in the middle of this century with the general increase in interest in the folk dance it appears its precise descriptions intended for the stage needs of the folk movement of artistic interest activities as well as for scientific monographic studies (DÚŽEK 1978:95).

### Terminology of odzemok

Odzemok dances are after peasant dances the most common Slovak dances. Unlike peasant dances that are danced throughout Slovakia, odzemok dances are prevalent in mountainous regions – with the centre in Central Slovakia. In addition to the name odzemok, there are many other terms for this dance. The most often used terms are Hajdúch or Hajduk (ZÁLEŠÁK 1978:61). It seems that the borders between odzemok and hajdukovkanie (the verb from hajduk) have been erased. Pavol Dobšínský in the work "Prostonárodné obyčaje, povery a hry slovenské" already in 1880 openly said and pointed out that the names are freely chosen according to a place or preference of individual dancers. He also pointed out that as weapons are known not only swords but as well as hatchets or "vatrále".

The Heyduck soldiers who were fighting against Turks are for the first time mentioned in the Decree of the Polish and Hungarian King Vladislav III. in the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The Heyducks are primary mentioned as fighters against Turks. The term hajduch was kept with them after escaping from the army when they became a holdup man. The Heyducks in 18<sup>th</sup> century got into the service of feudal lords and represented a powerful body for the enslavement of serfs (KRESÁNEK 1959:144-145).

The origin of the word hajduk is Turkish. In Bulgarian hajduk means robber, holdup man. In Bulgaria, this word begun to use during the Turkish rule when thus called Turks who persecuted, were stealing and destroying the native population. Analogously, the meaning of the word was taken by Slovaks who after the Turkish invasion called Hajduk people appointed by a feudal who were overseeing mercilessly on hard work. From mention above can be easily explained the origin of the dance of our mountain boys – robbers (KOVALČÍKOVÁ, POLOCZEK 1955:14). Less used are terms as Robbers' dance or Janosik dance, Zbujacky, Bačovsky dance, Valastina and so on. Odzemok is in some

place named after special figures. For example: Broom dance, Above the hatcher or Above the hat (ZÁLEŠÁK 1978:61).

Other accepted names of this dance reflecting the different historical context, ethnic characters and physical similarities. Bearing in mind the general and the most commonly used denominations; the dance terminology can be divided into four groups:

1. *Odzemok*: The most common name is odzemok which expresses the motion aspect of this dance such as jumps, “chime” from the ground.

2. *Hajduk, hajduch*: At the time of Turkish expansion into the Central European region in the Carpathian Arc hajduk dances were established and have survived until nowadays. The name hajduk, hajduch point the connection with robber’s dances former soldiers, magistrates and nobles. This name mostly occurs in Central Slovakia.

3. *Kozáček, kozák*: The term kozáček, kozak or a kozak dance occurred in a Slovak village environment during the Wallachian colonisation from Ukraine. The name of the dance refers to the pastoral dance and East Slavic context. Odzemok in Eastern Slovakia is named as kozáček, kozák or kozácky dance (Cossack’s dance).

4. *Local names*: There is existing a huge number of the names for this dance chosen by local dancers but they are not mentioned in neither of previous categories because of their diverse and inconsistent naming. This includes dances such as: shepherds’, hajduk’s, robbers’, Jánošík’s dance, čuškový, hatcher’s, stick’s, around bottles, around the glasses, around the hat or juhas dance. Less common names represent incipits of songs accompanying the dances and further they have connection with interpreters (Jánošík, robbers, pastorals) or with the props used while dancing (DÚŽEK 1990:94).

### **Characteristic of odzemok**

Odzemok belongs to male dances of an old style. In the most literature, the authors refer to it as a Slovak national dance. The earliest reference is dated from 1514, but odzemok dances are older and linked to the military, noble, outlaw and pastoral dance. They were danced occasionally in rural areas in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Odzemok dances have their characteristic squat- jumpy motiva and from this point of view they belong to physically demanding dances danced occasionally. Especially fit and physically fit dancers danced odzemok as a form of solo dance, dance in pairs or, less frequently as a group (round) odzemok with more dancers. Odzemok dances are demanding for movement. Basically they are man’s dances connected with the shepherd’s, soldiers’

androbbers' tradition. They are mostly solo dances, in the past less frequent also collective circle dances. When dancing in the group there is relaxing part with simple, unified steps followed by demanding part with typical squats and jumps. The form and music – dance are semi bond and with more virtuous solo dance the bond is leased (DÚŽEK 1990:94).

In a diverse ethnically heterogeneous environment of the Carpathian basin, it was originally danced by soldiers, nobles and after a relevant impact of the Wallachian colonisation, it was danced by shepherds and holdup men. A Slovak rural, peasant – shepherds' environment served as a preservation component which passed the dance from generation to generation and kept the solid knowledge for present times. The dance went through the centuries from the dance of shepherds to the exalting and symbolic dancing expressions of multi ethnical Hungarian army and nobles, back to the shepherds' and peasant's environment. It became a typical manifestation and symbol of a demanding, national dance of Slovaks and Slovakia; area where strong experiences of wars against the Turks multiplied with a constructed folk dance tradition (DÚŽEK-GARAJ 2001:329).

In Slovakia, odzemok dances are danced also by women alone or rarely together with men. The women's odzemok dances as a solo dance are preserved in the area of men's odzemok dances with the similar form and names. There is the very special dance called Cindruška or Cipovička in women's odzemok dances. It is a type of pastime game done when girls and women gather together for an evening of spinning. The dance is performed as a solo, in pairs, or in a group and has elements of squatting, jumping, and clapping (DÚŽEK 1990:94).

Socio-historical transformations of the dance demonstrate also the usage of dancing props. Dancers demonstrate their agility in odzemok by their own dance moves. In many areas they increase the activity by using props. The most commonly used props in the dance with an armament character are: sabres, axes, hatchets, sticks and "fokoš". The original props used in the dance have changed while odzemok dances entrenched the pastoral and rural environment. Props with the armament character were partly replaced by props used mostly in rural areas such as: scythes, brooms, bottles, hats and others. This phenomenon is not appropriate to call a replacing, rather than extending the props used in the dance odzemok. Based on historical, iconographic sources, as well as newer video archives, we can conclude that the most commonly used props at odzemok was a shepherds' hatchet, although we must not forget the local or broader understanding of regional differences in the possibility of using the props. Affinity of the shape, a method of handling the props and original, respectively possible functions of props mentioned tend to the armament based of

the dance. A bottle, less a hat is currently a quite universal prop of a non-armament (DÚŽEK 1990:94).

The dance with a relation to odzemok with the stick is also *zajáčkovec* (a rabbit's dance), it is said that it was danced by hunters after a successful hunt, currently it is danced by female dancers or in pairs over the crossed sticks, wickers, straws, straps or a drawn cross (rabbit dance, straw or strap dance, *Na zelenej lúke*). A carnival stick dance (carnival, *Pod šable, šable* – scythes, *kordovnícky*) is related to odzemok danced with sticks. An obligate song, a general for of the dance and its inclusion in the carnival customs, however, point to Western European - primarily a German context (ELKS 1995:1107). Odzemok dances have mostly a competitive function. Martial elements with weapons occurred more often in the past than nowadays. Music was played by bagpipes with odzemok melodies.

### **Spatial structure of odzemok**

*Circle (group)*

*Foursome*

*Couple*

*Solo*

*Circle odzemok dances:* They are danced in Central Slovakia. The origin of the circle form is probably in an old spatial form where is danced around the fire. Pastoral dances were also danced around bonfires and after adapting to a rural environment the circular form remained without the use of lighted bonfires. The circular form of the dance is organized by the leading dancers. The dance motifs sequence in not predetermined, the leader improvises. He uses progressive system from the easiest dance motifs to more difficult. The circle form has less dancing motifs and it is less demanding than a solo form. Dancers are subordinated to the dancing in a joint group. The typical feature of circle (group) odzemok dances is changing of odzemok motifs with relaxing motifs. Relaxing motifs are usually less demanding step motifs in a local style. Mostly dancer use different kind of steps from simple steps, variable steps respectively different kind of shepherds' steps. Odzemok motifs with squats and jumps demand the strength, swiftness, endurance and the dancers have to be physically fit. The hatcher was a very important prop in circle odzemok dances from Central Slovakia but the movement was very limited. Dancers had the hatcher mostly on

their shoulders respectively they were holding it vertically in front of them. The number of dancers in circle odzemok is optional.

*Foursome odzemok:* In some regions, there are popular odzemok dances in four; dancers are holding each other in the cross shape by hands or instead of hands they are held by hatchets. This kind of odzemok dances can be seen in Upper Liptov, northern Spiš (Goral) and northern Šariš (in higher-lying villages with a pastoral tradition).

*Couple odzemok dances:* Couple odzemok dances are typical for Čierny Balog.

*Solo odzemok dances:* Solo odzemok dances occur mainly in the periphery of an odzemok dances territory and in Western and Eastern Slovakia but also in Kysuce, Orava and Horehronie. A typical solo odzemok territory is the territory of Moravian Slovakia and Wallachia. The solo odzemok due to its individual character is different from the collective kinds of odzemok.

A solo dancer is not limited by anything, his odzemok is rich of motifs and as well is more demanding. Solo odzemok is usually a competitive dance and that intensifies its degree of a complexity and difficulty. The hatchet in circle dances is static, but with solo odzemok the hatchet is a very lively prop. The dancer uses it while swaying, jumping, changing it under the foot, turning above a head and so on. Relaxing motifs are disappearing, they are losing their sense.

### **Dancing motives of odzemok**

Cyril Zálešák in his book "Description of folk dances" divides elementary dancing motives of odzemok into two kinds: *Hajduch jump*, *Odzemok jump*. These two basic jumps and their different variations are most representative dance motives which makes them distinctive primary and it is a distinguishing feature of the odzemok.

#### *Hajduch jump*

There are two types of hajduch jumps. Hajduch jumps into standing on both legs and hajduch jumps into standing on one leg.

#### *Odzemok jump*

Odzemok jumps are jumps from a squat on one leg to a squat on other leg (legs are changing in jumping), while the leg which is not in squat is on a stand or in air (ZÁLEŠÁK 1956:126).

Štefan Tóth in „Movement of Slovak folk dance“ gives similar classification of dancing motives as Cyril Zálešák. The dancing motives he divides into: *hajduch and odzemok elements*. The categorisation of individual motifs is identical to Zálešák division which distinguishes stand and squat as starting positions.

#### *Hajduch elements*

All the elements with squat to half- squat or squat to jump in hajduch elements belong to this group. The dancer uses in a squat always closed, half- squat or jump a closed or open position of the feet.

#### *Odzemok elements*

This includes all the elements for which a squat exchanging feet from an open position to an open position. We recognize odzemok dances forward, sideways and twisted odzemok dances (TÓTH 1959:83-86).

### **Music**

The structure of odzemok and hajduk from the melodic and motoric point of view come from an intimacy of the shepherds' and robbers' life style in which a whistle, fujara - a folk shepherd's and hatchet played a very important role. The rhythm of odzemok comparing to other Slovak dances is slower because of difficult even acrobatic figures. An exclusive instrument to accompany this dance was a whistle and bagpipes, later string instruments, but which gave the dance movements ease and became a changing factor of the dance (KOVALČÍKOVÁ, POLOZCEK 1955:14). Although different forms of the dance of odzemok, especially from a historical point of view, are recorded in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, its origins are probably older and associated with an old armament and pastoral dance.

From the musical point of view it is important that from the 16<sup>th</sup> century odzemok began to appear not only in the way of dancing, but also in the first music notes (DÚŽEK-GARAJ 2001:87). The first two notes records of hajduch dance (an earlier name for odzemok) come from 1588 (KRESÁNEK 1997:32).

The musical basis is usually well known, more time repeated song “Po valasky od zeme...” and its numerous variants in two crotchets in instrumental version and the tempo range MM = 90 – 140. Odzemok exists in the rural environment with the name which refers to various dances – movement, historical, ethnical and geographical relations (DÚŽEK 1990:94). The earliest records are melodic variants of the song “Po za bučki, po za peň...”, which is the most popular odzemok melody.

Its incidence proves the earliest record of the song in Štark book from 17th century, respectively two variant note records in the collection of Anna Szirmay Keczer from the first half of 18<sup>th</sup> century. The elementary even a little bit modified form of this song can be found in odzemok dances from Zuberec, Hriňová and Krivany. Individual variants differ from one to another in a tonal structure of the Ionian, respectively Lydian character, in a melodic course especially at the beginning of the song - the initial tone of the octave, respectively of a quint, the structure of short motifs in other melodic course, as well as in an instrumental method of an interpretation. In addition to the prevailing double duvaj of accompanying instruments, the particular rhythmic effect is achieved by combining spontaneouscontras with easy play (crotchets times) of a double bass or a contrabass (DÚŽEK-GARAJ 2001:87).

### **Shepherds' musical styles**

They are a result of the younger development and their formation which goes back to 14<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> century, in some regions they culminated during 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, in other regions their development has lasted until now (ELSCHEKOVÁ-ELSCHEK 1982:8).

We assume that this style has retained its dominant position until at least the 14<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> century when a new music style appeared – a shepherds or Wallachian style which was stimulated during the Wallachian colonisation with the elements brought by various ethnical groups of Eastern Carpathian provenance, mainly Romanians and Ukrainians (ELSCHEK 1982:150).

In the mountainous areas of Northern and Central Slovakia, the existence of richer, more developed melodic formations, the crystallization of choir singing, the stabilization of the recitative manners and the creation of interesting temporary forms to the latest harmonic song layers can be seen over past two- three decades. Regional cultural traditions play an important role in these processes. This layer consists of 30% of songs in a Slovak national average, in mountainous areas of central and northern Slovakia make up 60% of the local repertoire. A presentation of songs is wide, rubato, substantially with free rhythms, in which are crystallized descendent rhythmic models. The origin of shepherds' songs is connected with a development of pastoralism in mountainous areas and with a cultural contribution of colonisation layers in Eastern Europe. A pastoral music style unified most of song genres in the area of Central Slovakia, mostly traditional songs, epic genres, lyric or pastoral: a quint tone melodic thinking is dominant in wedding, love, funny and dancing songs. The term a pastoral or shepherds' style includes an entire cultural layer with specific

music features, irrespective of whether they are functionally or by the contain of the text directly thematically linked with shepherds (ELSCHEKOVÁ-ELSCHEK 1982:8).

### **Robbers' songs**

They represent an extension of stylish variant of the later provenance, an organic continuation of pastoral styles with which they share all their musical basic features. Therefore, they are considered to be the second stage of the development of pastoral songs.

Robbers' songs broke tonal and tonality frame, a narrow – scoped quint melody and it was replaced by a heptatonic bitonality with more differentiated tonality and a melody structure. Following music features are characteristic: increasing the range of songs per octave, creating tonality structures quartet-sextet-cordialand joining quint frames. The typical tones of these songs are hypotonic and mixolydianand as a type we can find 5-6parts. The melody of a descent character has typical intervals jumps. A robbers' theme is not only the content and thematic areas, from which these songs are drawn, but often songs are extended by ballad, love and social themes (ELSCHEKOVÁ, ELSCEK 1982:9).

### **Conclusion**

The study of an accessible professional choreological and musicological literature in a connection with the study of the dance art both in its earlier form, or a scenic led to a conclusion that odzemok rightfully belongs to the dance culture of Slovaks, although it did not origin in our country but it created its own path through which odzemok can be included among the main representatives of the Slovak folk dance. The importance of odzemok presents the formation of Pastoral-Wallachian culture where odzemok is an integral part and concerns as well as the wider cultural and social life. The earliest reference of odzemok dates back to the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, but it is assumed that odzemok dances are even older and initially they are bind to the armament, noble, later outlaw, and pastoral dance. The rapid spread of odzemok was caused by Turkish expansions into Europe, but also by migration waves of the Wallachian population. Odzemok has relatively quickly assimilated in a foreign environment and become a part of the traditional Slovak repertoire. Due to its technical difficulty, it was danced mainly by men, while retaining the various women forms such as cipovička, cindruška.

The Wallachian colonisation brought musical changes which had a developing influence on the song form but also on the dance art. A pastoral music style which brought with itself new specific song-dance-music expressions was in the direct connection with the



Wallachian colonisation. It began to create a separate culture that has entailed, among other things a musical instrument of an endemic fujara but also odzemok as a typical dance expression associated with a life of shepherds and robbers. It is not claimed that before the Wallachian colonisation the partial pastoral tradition in the area of nowadays Slovakia did not exist, but it is pointed out that it was precisely during the Wallachian colonisation and by its direct impact, there was a great increase in the pastoral culture whose remains can be found even today. The odzemok dance itself has undergone over the centuries various stages of development, when the original dance of soldiers and nobles took over technically challenging themes and brought them to the pastoral environments and this environment acted as a conservation factor. Odzemok finally came to the rural-peasant environment while it was danced by men at village balls to show their dancing, but especially physical capability. The top assimilation of odzemok into the rural-peasant environment brings various attempts of women to dance this typically male dance. Odzemok spread mainly on the territory of Central Slovakia in mountain areas where it domesticated, but here we can see also the logical sequence of geographic conditions, which are necessary for farming and sheep grazing.

This thesis has the ambition to create a kind of comprehensive summary of available information about odzemok and unite the possibilities of a comprehensive material regarding to the development of odzemok in our country and its penetration among Slovak folk dances. In studying such materials, we came across to the different terminology or the divergent choreographic structure. It is caused by a relatively narrow list of authors who devoted their works to odzemok or its certain part. The thesis should help to understand where, when and how odzemok came to our territory. Odzemok is not taken out of the context as a separated dance, but it is understood in the context and as a part of the entire Wallachian culture which brought some novelty in a song and music repertoire. Odzemok has not only successfully established itself among the Slovak folk dancing art, but also it has created a significant position, making many people to consider odzemok to be the national dance of Slovaks.

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