

# METAMORPHOSES OF SLOVENIAN FOLK DANCE

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*Similar to other phenomena in folk culture, folk dance has been subject to different influences throughout its existence that changed its form, structure, style, and function in people's everyday and festive lives. This paper analyses the changes that have taken place and tries to categorize them and establish reasons for them. The paper is primarily based on dances recorded after World War II, in combination with materials collected in the program of the Committee for the Collection of Slovenian Folk Songs at the beginning of the 20th century.*

*Keywords: metamorphosis, dance, form, function, name.*

*Tako kot vsi pojavi ljudske kulture je bil tudi ples v teku svojega obstoja podvržen različnim vplivom, ki so spremenjali njegovo obliko, strukturo, slog ter vlogo v vsakdanjem in prazničnem življenju. Prispevek analizira te spremembe, jih skuša opredeliti in poiskati vzroke. Opira se večinoma na ples, zapisane po 2. svetovni vojni, v dopolnitev pa služi gradivo, nabrano v začetku 20. stoletja v okviru akcije Odbora za nabiranje slovenskih narodnih pesmi.*

*Ključne besede: metamorfoze, ples, oblika, vloga, ime.*

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Dance is a series of rhythmical body movements related to the expression of dancers' emotions, feelings, and ideas. Broadly speaking, simple movements at rituals that often imitate humans at work or during fights can also be regarded as dance [Vogelnik et al. 1990: 211]. Dance lives in time and space and it changes constantly; this is why all the instances of a dance are always only single moments of its realization. It was not until the use of the video camera that a dance could be captured as a whole. Due to its equally important physical and psychological components, as well as its elusive changeability, the essence of dance has always been hidden under a veil of mystery and has been a subject of guesswork and philosophical contemplation from the earliest cultures to the present day. Socrates, for instance, considered dance as a pure act of metamorphosis. *In its eternal changeability, dance destroys personality and recreates it in a new form. But the new form does not survive much longer than a moment either. It dies in order to give rise to yet another one* [Maletić 1986: 12].

This constant changeability is also characteristic of folk dance and is present in all its evolutionary stages. Although folk dance movements normally follow a certain formula and thus make a dance seem stable, especially in the last stage of its development, the formula is carried out somewhat differently each time the dance is performed; every dancer performs it according to his or her abilities, emotional state, character, and temperament. The uniqueness of individual performances gives rise to numerous variations on the same

formula and variants from which, under the influence of several different factors, other forms of dances can be developed.

This paper traces the metamorphoses of Slovenian folk dance found in material collected after World War II and presents reasons for their occurrence. It also analyses these metamorphoses and tries to establish to what extent the changeability of dance is visible in the material collected at the beginning of the 20th century by collectors for the Committee for the Collection of Slovenian Folk Songs (the OSNP).

Similar to the dances of other nations, Slovenian folk dances are either authentic or adopted from other cultures. The term *authentic* refers to dances that came into existence within the Slovenian geographic area and have roots in Slovenian culture, whereas *adopted* dances were taken from other national and cultural environments and then adapted to Slovenian dance movements.

The age of authentic dances cannot be determined precisely, but some dance forms that are similar to dances of other European nations may be of Indo-European origin. Each new nation took the common heritage and developed it in its own way, creating unique dance forms. There is no evidence or information about the process of change and development of this Indo-European heritage; because the original dance forms are not known, inferences about them can only be made on the basis of related dances of other nations of Indo-European origin or primitive peoples from different parts of the world [Sachs 1933: 7–122].

This method has revealed sources of old fertility and animal dances in the movements of carnival masqueraders. It is also believed that the group chain dance, in Slovenia usually called *kačo zvijat* (snake coiling), is a remnant of old spiral-like dances that originated from dances imitating animals or from dances with a labyrinth motif. On the other hand, the dance *romarski vrtec* (pilgrim swirl), with a similar form, is probably a remnant of mourning games due to its penitential character and the fact that it used to be danced at burial grounds, such as in Sladka Gora and Šmarje pri Jelšah [Ramovš 1977: 74]. It has also been determined that bridge games, in which the essential motif is the movement of a queue of dancers under the arms held up in the air by one or more couples of dancers, used to be danced at spring celebrations and weddings or mourning rituals [Orel 1936: 88–89]. The passage under the “bridge” of arms is believed to symbolize the act of rebirth, passage from one state to another (from singlehood to wedlock, from winter to spring) or passage from the world of the living to the world of the dead [Šuštar-Vodušek 1963: 485–486; Ramovš 1991: 141]. As far as authentic couple dances are concerned, there are three in Slovenian ethnic territory and the age of these could not be determined either: the *visoki rej* (high dance) from Gailtal/Zilja, found in reports from the late 18th and early 19th centuries [Ramovš 1988: 188–189], the *kranjski ples* (Carniolan dance) described by Anton Tomaž Linhart in 1791 [Linhart 1981: 282], and the *rezijanski ples* (the Resia/Rezija dance). All three originate from dances imitating animals that later developed into wooing dances, their main motif being the dancing of the male around the female. In the first two dances, the dancing around the female was followed by dancing in couples, whereas in the last one

only the dancing around a dancing partner has been preserved, and the couple never makes physical contact. Similar wooing dances were characteristic for the entire Alpine region and were not a specifically Slovenian feature. In Slovenia, all but the Resia/Rezija dance have died out. Abroad, such dances were further developed into other present dance forms [Wolfram 1951: 173–195].

As with authentic dances, the exact age of adopted dances cannot be determined either. Only the approximate timeframe in which these dances were introduced to Slovenia has been established, namely the period between the late 18th and early 20th centuries. In addition, the rough geographical locations where the individual dances were adopted from can also be sketched out because most of the dances originate from the German-speaking parts of Austria, predominantly from Tyrol and Styria, some of the dances were adopted from immigrants from the Dinaric regions in the Balkans, and a very few also spread to Slovenia from Hungary and Italy [Ramovš 1992: 16–41]. Sources can be determined on the basis of comparative analysis of Slovenian variants and variants from source areas recorded in several collections.

Reliable detection of the changes in both authentic and adopted dances can only be made on the basis of the material collected through field research. Unfortunately, this type of research did not become widely used in Slovenia until after World War II, when the dance tradition was already dying out and could therefore seldom be observed live on everyday and festive occasions celebrated by Slovenians. This is why numerous older descriptions and information from various authors, publications, travel journals, newspapers, magazines, questionnaires, and collectors' comments in transcriptions of folk songs often had to be included [Ramovš 1992: 9–15].

Changes occurred in the form and structure of dances, their manner of presentation or style, their role and contents, and in the melodies and names. Metamorphoses of dance melodies are part of musicological research, which is why this paper focuses exclusively on metamorphoses of form, style, function, contents, and name.

## METAMORPHOSES OF FORM

Metamorphoses of form include changes in the form and structure of individual dances. They usually cannot be determined in their evolution, but rather as a finished form of a developmental process. Let us consider some examples of group dances. The dance *kačo zvijat* (snake coiling), already mentioned above, used to be spread throughout Slovenian territory and is still danced in some places. Its key element is the snake-like coiling of a queue of dancers holding hands. This form is the most common and has no special formula; dancers run, jump, or walk according to their ability, regardless of the musical accompaniment. Its metamorphosis is the *metliško kolo* (Metlika kolo dance), which is performed (now by a folklore group) with the same snake-like and snail-like coils, only that the dancers sing

four songs as an accompaniment that function as a set whole and provide a rhythmical basis for the simple dance steps of walking or running. This dance took on a different form when an entertaining paraphrase “Abraham ma sedem sinov” (Abraham Has Seven Sons) started to be sung as accompaniment to it. Corresponding to the contents of the song, optional movements were added to walking in a queue and making snake-like coils (e.g., jumping and crouching), first presented by the leader of the dance and then repeated by everyone else. Characteristic of the bridge game called *kovtre šivat* (blanket stitching) is the repetitive passing of a queue of dancing couples under the bridge of arms held up by another queue of dancing couples. By changing the dancing direction, the image of the dance changed and many new variants sprang up – which, however, still share the same key element of passing under the bridge. The adult dance game from Bela krajina “Ali je kaj trden most” (How Strong is the Bridge) used to be performed in three variants. The one from Metlika seems to be the oldest, with dancers standing in two opposing lines and singing. This variant later served as the basis for variants danced by children that were spread all over Slovenia. Under Uskok influence, the variants from Predgrad and Črnomelj were formed. In the Predgrad variant, the dancers stand in two opposing lines, whereas in the Črnomelj variant the dancers stand in two opposing semi-circles. Kolo dances from Bela krajina were subject to different metamorphoses consisting of changes in dancing direction, posture, performance of the basic dance motif, and adding new movements to the existing ones. The initially improvised *povštertanc* (pillow dance) acquired a set structure wherever accompanied by a song – for example, “Igraj kolo” (Play the Kolo) and “Le okol, okol” (Go Round and Round). In dance games with a redundant dancer, the intertwining of the moving queue of male dancers and the still queue of female dancers finished with a solo dance by the redundant dancer among the dancing couples. After metamorphosis, almost everywhere in Slovenia the intertwining part was dropped and only the final part of the game survived, focusing on the fast changing of the redundant dancer. In most cases, the dancer that was too slow to find a dance partner had to dance with a broom.<sup>1</sup>

Even bigger changes were introduced in the structure of couple dances. As already mentioned above, the *visoki rej* (high dance) was a lively dance in the late 18th and early 19th centuries and later developed into the slow *prvi rej* (first dance). The process of metamorphosis of this dance could not be established in detail, but it is clear that its two-part structure with alternating singing and walking of couples in the first part and dancing in the second remained intact. Only the dancing part changed or was even formed anew. The

<sup>1</sup> This paper is based on the material stored in the archives of the Institute of Ethnomusicology SRC SASA, published in the collection by Mirko Ramovš: *Polka je ukazana. Plesno izročilo na Slovenskem* (The Polka is Ordered. Dance Heritage in Slovenia.) Založba Kres, Ljubljana: *Gorenjska, Dolenjska, Notranjska* (Upper Carniola, Lower Carniola, Inner Carniola), 1992; *Bela krajina* (Bela krajina), 1995; *Prekmurje in Porabje* (Prekmurje and the Rába River Valley), 1996; *Vzhodna Štajerska* (Eastern Styria), 1997; *Od Slovenske Istre do Trente* (From Slovenian Istria to Trenta), part 1, 1998; *Od Slovenske Istre do Trente* (From Slovenian Istria to Trenta), part 2, 1999; *Koroška in zahodna Štajerska* (Carinthia and Western Styria), 2000.

structure of the *kranjski ples* (Carniolan dance) as described by Linhart was still similar to the lively *visoki rej* (high dance), but later transcriptions of the dance made by Tončka Marolt in Nomenj bear only a faint resemblance, signifying its decline. The process of metamorphosis is more obvious in the dance usually called the *nonpajeriš* or *majpajers*, but also known as the *potrkan ples*, *ta potrkana*, and *ta potrkan tajč* (stamping dance). The dance originates from the German *Neubayrisch*, which spread to Slovenia from Tyrol and other German-speaking Austrian regions in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The original dance had a three-part structure, consisting of the figural part of clapping hands and stamping feet, the spinning of the female dancer under the dancers' right hands, and dancing in couples. All the Slovenian variants have preserved only two parts, the figural part of clapping hands and stamping feet, and dancing in couples. Later, the figural part underwent another change, after which the dance was danced on the spot or during walking, and the order of clapping and stamping was optional or comprised of either clapping or stamping only [Ramovš 1972: 145]. Metamorphoses of other younger figural dances were similar. The first part of these dances typically consisted of stamping, clapping, wagging one's finger, crossing the active foot with the passive, imitating a shoemaker's work, jumping in frontal straddles, or bowing and hugging. These figures were performed in numerous variants, many of which were performed only once and never repeated, but some of them became set. The second part also changed significantly because the original polka with three-step turns was gradually replaced by two-step turning, known as *vrtenica* (spinning dance) in ethnochoreology. The *štajeriš* (Styrian dance), one of the oldest couple dances in the Slovenian Alpine region, had the same two-part structure as the *visoki* or *prvi rej* (high or first dance) at the end of the 18th century, when the singing alternated with the dancing. The singing part was gradually abandoned and made way for the metamorphosis of the dancing part [Vodušek 1960: 60–61]. The original simple figure of the female dancer's turning under the couple's right arms was transformed into choreographically more sophisticated figures, often quite complex and technically demanding so that they had to start using a handkerchief. In this form, the dance also spread to areas that had not known the original variant. Similar changes were introduced to other dances with a simple basic structure as well, such as the *mazurka* (mazurka), the *zibenšrit* (seven-step dance), and the *sotiš* (schottische). The latter spread to Slovenia at the beginning of the 19th century and became extremely popular throughout the countryside due to its simple dance formula of two change steps and four ordinary steps. Moreover, it became so widely-danced that the younger polka nearly merged with it. Metamorphoses of the schottische varied greatly in different regions, changing the posture, steps, and number of turns, or abandoning them, which resulted in new dances in which traces of the schottische can only be recognized by an expert eye.

## METAMORPHOSES OF STYLE

Structural metamorphoses were accompanied by stylistic ones, changing the performance of dances. This gave the dances a new character, sometimes even causing the form to change as well.

Among group dances, the greatest changes affected the *kolo* dances and dance games from Bela krajina. First, transformations of the *kolo* dances took place. Songs sung by dancers were originally the only accompaniment to the *kolo* dances, and sometimes they were even danced without any accompaniment at all. When instrumental accompaniment with tambouras and accordion was introduced before World War I, the performance became looser, which resulted in a slight change of the dance motif. For example, in the wedding game the *rešetca* (sieve), two dancers (male and female) choose a bride or a groom. The mother finally agrees to hand over one of her children (a male or a female dancer). At this point, the game is accompanied by a special song: *Pojdi, pojdi ljubi sin (hči), / skoraj nazaj pridi, / suha hruška zacvete, / onda nazaj pridi.* (Go, go my son (daughter), / come back soon, / come back as the dry pear tree / blossoms again.) According to France Marolt's transcriptions from 1936, the song was two-beat, giving rhythm to the simple dance walk. After World War II, a folk dance group changed the song to three-beat and started using the waltz step that is still used with the dance today. The collected material shows that *kolo* dances used to be danced in a slow manner, but after World War II folklore groups speeded them up, which resulted in exaggerated hops or swings. In some cases, the hops had to be omitted because the dance tempo was too fast.

Stylistic metamorphoses brought about many variants and variations of certain couple dances. If the first part of the *nonpajeriš* (stamping dance) was first danced on the spot, the pauses during which the dancers were completely still were later filled with vertical and horizontal movements. The same dance formula of the *zibensrit* (seven-step dance) could be performed in a slow, awkward manner, with swinging hips, emphasized three-steps, and gallop-like hops, either from right-to-left or in a single direction. Many variants of the *štajeriš* (Styrian dance) sprang up as well, using ordinary, swinging, or running steps, according to the musical accompaniment. Even the simple two-step spinning or *vrtenica* (spinning dance) allowed plenty of different movement choices that changed the image of the dance. The step was usually ordinary, but was very often combined with bent knees, swings, shakes, or sideways movements of the body. All the different performances influenced the image of the dance. Although each couple danced slightly differently, new variants developed only when the changes introduced by dancers became established.

## METAMORPHOSES OF CONTENTS AND FUNCTION

Metamorphoses of contents and function are closely related because a change in the contents of a certain dance often called for a new function. The *štajeriš* (Styrian dance), for instance,

was originally a wooing dance in which the male dancer tried to win the affection of the female dancer. Later, the dance retained very little of the original function and contents or even became solely a game testing dancing skill. In some regions (Carinthia, western Styria), the dance became a ritual dance at weddings, connected to special songs appropriate for the occasion (an introductory dance, the taking off of the bride's garland). According to the records, the wooing dance the *visoki rej* (high dance) could also be the first dance after *štebvanje* (a boys' competitive game on horses) that was danced under a linden tree only by girls that were still single or at balls when the love component was emphasized [Ramovš 1988: 207]. The *zibenšrit* (seven-step dance) was one of the general social dances that also became a ritual solo dance of the groom and his mother in the Dobropolje Valley. The waltz became a ritual solo dance of the bride and the groom, danced either at the beginning of the wedding celebration or at midnight, when the bride's garland was taken off. The role of dances including bowing and hugging (*kapucinarska*, *meniška*, *angelska*) or dances with leaps (*točak*, *brčpolka*) was originally magical, stimulating growth and fertility. With belief in the power of magic diminishing, the dances became common social dances, some performed as a part of the standard repertoire and others only for entertainment during the carnival period. The same happened to the shoemakers' and weavers' guild dances. Because they imitated craftsmen at work, they were danced only on the guild's celebration day. Gradually, these too became social dances; the first one with mimicking and entertaining contents, and the second one as a skill test in which male dancers competed in catching a handkerchief under the knee of a lifted leg.

The group dance *kačo zvijat* (snake coiling) is a remnant of old animal dances with a magical component. After losing its magical connotation, it became an entertaining game at weddings, used to rouse the sleepy wedding guests and enable the hosts to clean and air the room. In many cases, which also might have become a habit, the queue of merry dancers had to pass under the arms of two dancers, usually right at the end of the queue. At this point, the dance became more than just a game because the passage under the arms symbolized rebirth and thus added a ritual component to the dance. Similar contents and roles were once held by bridge games, such as *kovtre šivat* (blanket stitching). However, they too were lost and the games started being used only for entertainment, as the name itself suggests. Nonetheless, the original contents must have been preserved in people's subconscious because they became compulsory at weddings, used to collect presents for the bride. The adult dance game from Bela krajina called *Ali je kaj trden most* (How Strong is the Bridge) has the same contents as the variants for children, where two sides negotiate to pass over the bridge. Their original meaning and contents in mourning rituals have long been forgotten. However, the lyrics of the variants from Metlika and Predgrad include an entertaining part in which both lines of dancers, one called the "farmers" and the other "the gentlefolk," insult each other. This is completely unrelated to the rest of the lyrics but has given the dance new contents and meaning. The background of this part of the game could not be established, but it has been suggested that it may be a reflection of the medieval "fools' day" [Kuret 1984:

33, 65]. It is impossible to find out how the role and contents of dance games from Bela krajina evolved. It is assumed, however, that they were part of spring celebrations that were moved to Easter under Christian influence. Until World War II, they were performed only on this occasion and later became part of the standard repertoire of folk dance groups. The *kolo* dances from Bela krajina share a similar destiny. Except in the Uskok communities, they never held a central position at balls and were only danced on special occasions by the second half of the 19th century (in Črnomelj, Metlika, and Predgrad). Nonetheless, they have always – even in the 19th century – enjoyed plenty of attention as a special feature of Slovenian dance tradition. The status of the *kolo* as a typical dance from Bela krajina was further reinforced by folklorism in the 20th century.

### METAMORPHOSES OF NAMES

The metamorphoses of structure, style, contents, and function of dances often caused the names of the dances to change. Metamorphoses of names took place in all stages of the life cycle of a dance. The original names of authentic dances are unknown, but the names of adopted dances were usually taken over together with the dances.

In Slovenia, the chain dance with snake- and snail-like coils is usually called *kačo zvi-jat* (snake coiling), but also *ketno zvi-jat* (chain coiling) or *jutranjska žlajdra* (the morning chain). All the names clearly indicate the posture and structure of the dance. These names were given after the original contents and function of the dance had been lost and the dance remained only a game. In eastern Slovenia, the dance was accompanied by the melody from a southern Slavic *kolo* dance called the *seljančica* (farmer's kolo), which is why it was given the name *kolo*. In some areas, the name was taken from the accompanying song – for example, “Abrahama gredo” (To Do the Abraham), “Abrahamova procesija” (Abraham's Procession), and “Kameradi” (Comrades) – and in Haloze the name was influenced by the posture and shouting of the dancers that imitated the sound of the locomotive (*cug pelajo* ‘the train is coming’, *lokomotiva* ‘locomotive’). The name *čindara* used in eastern Styria and Prekmurje is of unknown origin. When understanding of the meaning of dances with repetitive passing under the bridge of dancers' arms was lost, people associated them with sewing and called them *kovtre šivat* (blanket stitching), *žakle šivat* (sack stitching), or *ponjave šivat* (tarpaulin stitching). Only in Šentvid pri Planini has the original meaning of the dance been preserved in its name *zidan most* (stone bridge). When moving to Bela krajina, the Uskoki brought a *kolo* dance with them without any musical accompaniment. This type of dance is known throughout the Dinaric region but was something completely new to Slovenians in Bela krajina. This is why it was named the *mutasto kolo* (silent kolo) and *na trumf* in Predgrad, which imitates the jumping and stamping in the dance.

Form and structure were also the source of inspiration for many names of adopted couple dances. This is how the German *Siebenschritt* (seven-step) became *sedem korakov* (seven



steps) or *sedem besedi* (seven words) in Slovenia, the German *Kreuzpolka* (cross polka) was called the *križpolka* (cross polka), the German *Schottisch* (schottische) was named *ta potrkana*, *ta potovčena*, *ta lopčava* (stamping polka), the German *Spitzbaumpolka* received the name *ta požugana* (finger-wagging polka) and the German *Zepperlpolka* was called *ta potresena*, *potresavka*, *droblan*, or *drobljanc* (shaking polka). Slovenian names usually directly reflect the category of certain dances. Of course, most of the adopted dances have preserved their original names with distorted pronunciations and adapted to the local dialects; for example, the *štajriš*, *najpajriš*, *majpajerš*, *zimšrit*, *šimšrit*, *najkatoliš*, *tajč*, *cotič*, *povštertanc*, *štegutanc*, *vajnkištanc*, *traplan*, *ceprle*, *mašarjanka*, *šamarjanka*, *bolcar*, and many others.

Some dances were named after the first line of the accompanying song, especially when the original name of the dance was not known, such as with the *kolo* dances from Bela krajina of Croatian or Uskok origin, for example “Pobeledo pole” (White Field), “Lepa Anka” (Fair Anka), “Hruške, jabuke, slive” (Pears, Apples, and Plums), “Igraj kolo” (Play the Kolo), and “Lipa moja” (My Beautiful One). Dances usually had multiple names: the distorted original one, the local one, and sometimes also the one originating from the first few words or the first line of the accompanying song. The latter was used as a reminder of the appropriate accompanying melody, such as “Pes pa nima več repa” (The Dog Has no Tail Left) or “Ajns cvaj draj” (One Two Three) for the *zibenšrit* (seven-step dance), and “Cev teden” (The Entire Week) or “Martinček, Martinček” (Little Martin) for the *mrzulin*.

With time, dances also acquired names according to the area they were danced in; for example, the *metliško kolo* (Metlika kolo), the *črnomaljsko kolo* (Črnomelj kolo), the *prekmurska zvezda* (Prekmurje star), and the *štajerski valček* (Styrian waltz). Another option was to attach to a dance the name related to its customary function (e.g., the *svatovska polka* ‘wedding polka’, the *krancples* ‘garland dance’, and the *prvi rej* ‘first dance’) or to its contents (e.g., the *metlar* ‘broom dance’).

## REASONS FOR METAMORPHOSES OF FOLK DANCE

Although metamorphoses of Slovenian folk dance were mostly unpremeditated and spontaneous, they occurred for various reasons.

Changes were heavily influenced by the long lives of certain dances, especially the ones with undetermined age that are usually regarded as part of Indo-European heritage, such as *kačo zvijaz* (snake coiling) and *kovtre šivat* (blanket stitching). Their original form, contents, and function are unknown and can only be guessed by comparative analysis of related phenomena in other European cultures. Proof of change is their present image preserved in the simplest form and structure, and names that represent the nature of the dances. In some cases, the relation with the original contents has been preserved through the ritual component of the dance.

The process of adopting dances from other cultural environments is another reason for

changes. The adoption was never entirely precise because the first dancers that demonstrated the dance in the new environment for the first time had already presented their own version of the structure, name, and melody of the dance.

Another factor that influenced changes of dances was the life of dances in the different environments to which they had spread. Although the basic formula and melody were usually preserved so that the source can still be recognized, different performers spontaneously added new elements to them and also changed the style and name of the dances. During this process, the elements of one dance merged with elements from another (e.g., the turning of the female dancer under the couple's right hands), the structure of one dance influenced another (e.g., the structure of the seven-step dance transformed *mrzulin* into *malender*), the name of one dance was given to another (e.g., there are to different dances bearing the name *sotis*). This also happened to stylistic features (e.g., swinging in dances from Slovenian Istria and the Littoral). A similar phenomenon occurred in the shift of motifs and textual sets in folk song [Golež Kaučič 2003: 317–318].

The fourth reason for change is folklorism, which first appeared in Slovenia in Bela krajina when a Črnomelj *kolo* dance that had died out ten years earlier was revived in 1888. The folklorism movement became very active a decade before World War II and after it, especially with the establishment of many folk dance groups, folk festivals, and other events. Folklorism encouraged the restoration of dying dances, in some cases even the creation of new ones, but above all it stimulated the recreation of dance heritage, which is undergoing changes through structural and stylistic innovations even today.

#### REFLECTION OF METAMORPHOSES OF FOLK DANCE IN WRITTEN RECORDS OF THE COMMITTEE FOR THE COLLECTION OF SLOVENIAN FOLK SONGS

In the framework of the folk song collection campaign by the Committee for the Collection of Slovenian Folk Songs (the OSNP), the document *Popraševalna pola o narodnih pesmih, narodni godbi in narodnih plesih* (Questionnaire on Folk Songs, Folk Music, and Folk Dances) was sent out in 1906 in order to help the collectors with their work. The questionnaire was sent to priests, teachers, and other public officials that had extensive contact with people. Their response was poor; the archives of the Institute of Ethnomusicology store 90 questionnaires, 77 of which have been filled out. Despite the poor response, the collected data is extremely valuable because it at least partially presents folk dances at the beginning of the 20th century and is therefore important for the analysis of metamorphoses of folk dances [Ramovš 1995: 298].

The answers that claim there »are no folk dances« because people only dance »ordinary dances« are of special importance. This occurred because the term *folk* was not defined in the

instructions, although Štrekelj, the author of the Guidelines<sup>2</sup> and the Questionnaire, clearly had in mind the authentic and adopted dance tradition. Informants did not understand the question the same way and therefore answered that they only knew *ordinary dances*, whereas *folk dances* had long been forgotten. They understood the term *folk* as ‘ancient’ and ‘primeval’ – something the dances they knew were not because these were too ordinary from their point of view. The same position was also held by the carriers of the tradition whom the informants observed and questioned.

The completed questionnaires do not contain any descriptions of dances, only their names (e.g., *polka*, *valček*, *mazurka*, *potrkan tajč*, *špicpolka*, *mrzolin*, *šuštarpolka*, *krajcopolka*, *nojkatoliš*, etc.), which show that folk dances then were similar to the results of folk dance research conducted after World War II, indicating that the most important metamorphoses had been finished by then. The two-part structure of the *štajeriš* (Styrian dance) was known only in the Upper Sava Valley, the Upper Savinja Valley, and in Carinthia, whereas in all other regions it was danced without the songs. Almost all the couple dances mentioned above have preserved the unchanged adopted names, but names such as *potrkan tajč* (stamping dance), *mrzolin*, and *valček* clearly indicate that local names were used as well. The answers to the questionnaire show that the role of dances in everyday and festive lives was the same as found in research carried out after World War II.

Some dance songs and melodies can be found among the roughly 13,000 units collected during the OSNP campaign, but there are records of only three dances: the *potrkan ples* (stamping dance), “Moja dečva je djava, krv, krv” (My Sweetheart Said: Blood, Blood) and the *malendra* (or *malender*). The first two are variants of the German *Neubayrisch*; the first one was named by the recorder because the informant did not know its name, and the second one took the name after the first line of the paraphrase, a common procedure in cases when the original name of a dance was lost. The third record is a variant of *malender*, only that its name has a female form. The descriptions of the three dance songs, dance melodies, and dances do not add new information to the metamorphoses of dances but, combined with the questionnaires, complete and confirm existing information.

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## METAMORFOZE LJUDSKEGA PLESA

*Prispevek skuša na podlagi gradiva, zbranega po 2. svetovni vojni, slediti metamorfozam slovenskega ljudskega plesa in njihovim vzrokom, analizirati pojavnost metamorfoz in ugotoviti, koliko je spremenljivost plesov razvidna iz gradiva, zbranega v začetku 20. stoletja po sodelavcih Odbora za nabiranje slovenskih narodnih pesmi. Iz obravnave so izvzete metamorfoze plesnih melodij. Slovenski ljudski ples je po svojem izvoru samonikel in prevzet, kar pomeni, da se je rodil na območju, kjer je naseljen slovenski narod, in korenini v njegovi kulturi, ali pa je bil prinesen iz drugega narodnostnega in kulturnega okolja in potem prilagojen gibnosti Slovencev. Pri obeh so se dogajale spremembe v obliki in strukturi, načinu izvedbe ali slogu, njihovi vlogi in vsebini, imenih in melodijah.*

*Oblikovne metamorfoze zajemajo spremembe oblik in strukture posameznih plesov. Za primer so navedeni nekateri skupinski (kačo zvijati, kovtre šivat, kola iz Bele krajine, povštertanc) in parni plesi (visoki rej, potrkan ples, štajeriš), ki so doživljali različne preobrazbe v korakih, držih, prostorskih formacijah, smeri gibanja idr. Tako je imel štajeriš kot eden najstarejših parnih plesov na slovenskem alpskem območju še ob koncu 18. stoletja dvodelno zgradbo, kjer se je petje poskočnic izmenjevalo s plesom. Sčasoma se je petje poskočnic začelo opuščati, s tem pa je bila odprta pot preobrazbi plesa. Prvotna preprosta figura vrtenja pod dvignjenima sklenjenima desnicama para se je začela spreminjati v koreografsko bogatejše figure, pogosto zapletene in tehnično zahtevne. Hkrati z oblikovnimi metamorfozami so nastajale tudi slogovne, kar pomeni, da se je spreminjal način izvedbe, s čimer so dobivali drugačen značaj, včasih pa so slogovne spremembe vplivale*

tudi na obliko in nastanek novih variant. Po podatkih so npr. večino kol v Beli krajini v letih pred 2. svetovno vojno izvajali počasi, po vojni pa so izvedbe folklornih skupin, v katerih kolo živi naprej, hitreje, koraki so postali bolj poskočni in zibajoči.

Vsebinske in funkcionalne metamorfoze so se med seboj prepletale, saj je sprememba vsebine posameznega plesa pogosto narekovala njegovo novo vlogo. Štajerš npr. je bil prvotno snubitveni ples, pozneje je to vlogo in vsebino ohranil ali pa postal izključno spretnostna igra dobrih plesalcev, medtem ko se je v nekaterih območjih (Koroško, Zg. Savinjska dolina) prevrstil v obredni ples na svatbi. Plesi s priklanjanjem in objemanjem ali odskakovanjem so imeli prvotno magično vlogo za vzpodbujanje rasti in plodnosti. Ko je vera v njihovo moč opešala, so postali del splošnega razvedrilnega plesnega repertoarja.

Oblikovne, slogovne, vsebinske in funkcionalne preobrazbe so pogosto vplivale tudi na imena plesov, da so se spreminjala. Prvotna imena avtohtonih plesov so neznana, s prevzetimi plesi so se praviloma razširila tudi imena, ki so se ohranila v popačeni obliki ali pa so jim druga okolja dala nova.

Metamorfoze ljudskega plesa se praviloma niso dogajale zavestno, človek je plese spreminjal spontano, vendar so spremembam botrovali različni vzroki. Nanje je odločilno vplivalo dolgo življenje posameznih plesov, zlasti tistih, katerih starost je neopredeljiva. Pomemben vzrok sprememb je bilo prevzemanje plesov iz drugega kulturnega okolja, saj prevzemanje nikoli ni bil natančno. Na spremembe plesov je močno vplivalo njihovo življenje v različnih okoljih, kamor so se širili. Pri tem so prvine enega plesa prehajale v drugega, struktura enega plesa je vplivala na drugega, selila so se imena in slogovne posebnosti. Četrty vzrok sprememb je bil folklorizem, ki je vzpodbujal obnavljanje zamirajočih plesov, predvsem pa izzval poustvarjanje plesne dediščine, ki se zaradi oblikovnih in slogovnih inovacij spreminja tudi danes.

V okviru akcije Odbora za nabiranje slovenskih narodnih pesmi je bila l. 1906 za sondiranje terena in lažje delo zapisovalcev razposlana anketa z naslovom "Popraševalna pola o narodnih pesmih, narodni godbi in narodnih plesih". Izkupiček je bil skromen, vendar so dobljeni podatki o plesih dragoceni, ker vsaj deloma odkrivajo njihovo podobo v začetku 20. stoletja in so pomembni za analizo metamorfoz ljudskega plesa. V odgovorih ni opisov plesov, pač pa so navedena njihova imena, ki kažejo, da je bila podoba plesov taka, kot so jo odkrivala raziskave po 2. svetovni vojni. To pomeni, da so bile odločilne metamorfoze v tistem času že končane. Med okoli 13000 enotami, nabranimi v akciji Odbora, je bilo tudi nekaj plesnih pesmi in plesnih melodij, plesni zapisi pa so bili skoraj izjema, le trije. Prva dva sta varianti nemskega Neubayrischa, tretji pa varianta mazurke. Ti zapisi plesnih pesmi, plesnih melodij in plesov k zgodbi o metamorfozah ne dodajajo nič novega, skupaj z anketnim gradivom jo dopolnjujejo in potrjujejo.

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