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CONCEPTS OF THE NATIONAL IN RUSSIAN
ETHNOORGANOLOGY

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Subject: Different concepts of (cross) national features and historical continuity in the study of Russian traditional instrumental music.

Purpose of study: To analyze the “slavocentred” approach and other concepts of folk music in Russian ethnoorganology, and to show some possible perspectives for the comparative study of Russian instrumental traditions.

Methods: Historical, descriptive, ethnoorganological.

Keywords: Traditional instrumental music, ethnoorganology, Russia, ethnocentrism, gusli, domra, gudok.

Questions of ethnicity and national peculiarities are of great interest to cultural sciences as well as to the everyday-culture of contemporary Russia in general. The idea of a national exclusiveness deeply rooted in history also plays a big part in cultural and educational policy. In Russian musicology the search for a specific Russian / Slavic character in music gave a great impulse both for in-depth studies as well as for the creation of national myths. Especially this refers to ethnoorganology since traditional musical instruments appear not only in their diverse primary functions for a local community but – at least from the late 18th ct. – also as a visible expression of the musical life of an ethnic group and as symbols of national culture.

In the 19th century in Russia, a wide discussion existed about what Russian art music should be like. These practical aims of establishing a new national style of music caused a large interest in folk songs and “musical archaeology”. In 1866 Prince Vladimir Odoievsky (1804–1869), an adherent of Schelling’s idealism and most influential exponent of Russian literary romanticism, called for a documentation of authentic (*podlinnyje*) folk songs without “western admixture” in an arrangement. While Odoievsky’s passionate call to educated musicians for collecting folk songs

focuses on the contemporary folk music practice, his research program on musical instruments is directed more to historical sources (Odoievsky 1871 [cit. by Vul'fius 1971: 99]). In accordance to the national romantic trends of his time, his interest was restricted to instruments used by the Russians before the reforms of Peter the Great. This reserved attitude to the contemporary practice of traditional instrumental music is typical for folk music research as well as for folklorism in late 19th century Russia.

Two decades after Odoievsky's suggestions Aleksandr Famintsyn (1841–1896), a musical critic and composer, published his monographs on the *gusli* (different types of box zithers, Famintsyn 1890), as well as on the neck lutes (*domra* and *balalaika* and others). In these in-depth investigations Famintsyn compares the Russian instruments with related instruments of European and non-European peoples. His attempt at drawing autochthonous paths of evolution of different *gusli*-types within the Russian history was later disproved by Nikolay Privalov (1908; s. also Vertkov 1973c: 283f.).

The research of Famintsyn was carried on by Privalov, a mining engineer and amateur musician. His comparative research was directed to the choice and the adaptation of “national instruments” to the so-called *Greatrussian orchestra*.

The study of Russian folk music instruments before 1917 was basically motivated by the question of their national specifics. Instruments of clear western provenience, such as the most popular harmonica and (in some regions) the violin, were almost completely neglected. The former, in the contemporary folk music discourse, was even condemned as an instrument spoiling the national musical culture.

In the Soviet period the harmonica was adopted by an official decision of the *komsomol* as a proper means for agitation (Vertkov 1975: 216). In folk music research, the young Evgenij Gippius (1903–1985) paid attention to harmonica music with respect to the short song *chastushka*. An other eminent Soviet ethnomusicologist, Klyment Kvitka (1880–1953), started fruitful fieldwork on such local instrumental styles as the double flute (*svirel'* or *dvojčatka*)*, the violin in Smolensk region and the pan pipe *kugikly* in the south Russian region of Kursk. In his ethnographic research on musical instruments, Kvitka was more confined to historical interpretation. Along with Gippius, Kvitka did not care too much about the question of which instruments can be accepted as “pure nationals”.

In his short survey from 1949 “Russian folk music instruments”, A. Agazhanov summarized some results of the pre-war fieldwork. In the preface, Agazhanov, in accordance with the Russian nationalism of Stalin's period, stresses that “The Russian people <...> has created a huge number of different musical instruments; among them *balalaika*, *gudok*, *gusli*, *zhaleiki*” (Agazhanov 1949: 3). Furthermore, the author does not try to confirm this daring judgement. However, instead of supposing ethnic origin as a main criterion for an authentic (*podlinnyj*) folk instrument, Agazhanov emphasized the fact that it was locally produced (“made by the folk masters”, *ibid.*). So the *balalaika*, as an instrument of mass production, is

* For literature not cited directly see Morgenstern 1994; Banin 1997.

not represented in illustrations or transcriptions. In contrast, the home-made three string violin of Kursk region is accepted as an authentic folk instrument.

The collections of instrumental music from the late 1950ies / early 1960ies of Sokolov on the *balalaika* and the wing-zither *gusli* do not include essential historical or theoretical contributions. The same holds true for Smirnov's more substantial documentation on wood trumpet (*vladimirskij rozhok*), harmonica and violin. Smirnov's assumption of the deep roots of Russian fiddle playing is not convincing, unlike his remark on a certain relation between harmonica style and traditional wind instruments (Smirnov 1962: 3, 10, 14).

Konstantin Vertkov, the author of the first monograph on traditional Russian instruments in Soviet times, published posthumous in 1975, that the criterion for a *folk musical instrument* stresses not its "ethnic" roots or its local production but its acceptance by the "folk": „Yet, however interesting the very question might be, to whom the honour of creating an instrument belongs to, it's much more important to know which position it holds, what function it fulfils in life of the people in question. Even this criterion serves as the decisive one in the acceptance of an instrument by a people to be its own, the national“ (Vertkov 1973a: 284).

This concept already takes into consideration the emic perspective (although Vertkov was never engaged in any field research). In the preface of Vertkov's monograph however S. Ja. Levin surprisingly returns to the national romantic concept of ethnic originality. With respect to Vertkov's criticism against the theory by Mathieu Guthrie from 1788, who claimed an ancient Greek origin of Russian musical instruments, he wrote: "This theory of non-Russian origin of the Russian folk instruments depriving them of their peculiarity [*samobytnost*] and national roots was wide spread up to the 20th ct." Indeed Vertkov rejected Guthrie's speculations (1975: 25) – just as most scholars before him did – however he did so without appeal to an ethnic exclusivity of Russian folk instruments. On the contrary, it was Vertkov who emphasized the interethnic character of instrumental traditions when turning out the term *cross national musical instruments* (Vertkov 1973b). Regardless of the obvious ideological implications ("the brotherly family of today's Soviet peoples", 1973b: 112) this was a step away from popular "slavocentred" approaches.

Interethnic issues were examined in more detail by other scholars. Igor' Tonurist carefully turned out the area of dissemination of the Russian wing-zither (*krylovidnye gusli*) and the genetic relations to balto-finnish and baltic instruments. Igor' Matsievsky (1980b) dealt with further finno-ugric relicts in Russian instrumental traditions, while Rimma Galaiskaya (1980) did comparative studies on different types of Russian box zithers.

Igor' Matsievsky (1980a), turned out a concept of the "folk musical instrument" that is understood as a historically and socially changeable one. His paper does not thematize a special national culture and instead stresses the social dimension of the term "narodnyj" (folk) which is opposed to the *professional* sphere of music making.

In a rather polemical contribution “Russian Folk Instruments and the Orchestra of Russian Folk Instruments” Matsievsky’s student Iurii Boiko (1984) compared and contrasted oral tradition to orchestral formations for representative and educational purpose of the Soviet state. Thus Boiko emphasizes the social dimension of folk music concept. His analysis shows a parallel existence of completely different and independent ways of music making within one national culture. On the contrary, Mikhail Imkhanitsky claims a historical continuity in “Russian folk orchestra culture”. According to Imkhanitsky the “first Russian orchestra with national instrumentation <...> was conditioned by the whole history of instrumental art of Russia’s past centuries, especially of ensemble art” (1987: 5, 45). In this highly deterministic view, the medieval *skomorokhi* appear as agents of a “prehistory” of the “folk orchestra”, created at the end of the 19th ct. Some scattered sources, however, can hardly confirm a “predominantly collective character of folk music performance” (1987: 7) by the old Slavs. The ethnographic sources from the last 250 years speak more for a characteristic solo or duet performance. Ensemble playing is restricted to few local traditions and less typical for Russian folk music – in contrary to other eastern European styles.

The concept of national continuity clearly appears in the first monograph on Russian traditional instrumental music published in Russian. The Moscow folklorist Aleksandr Banin remarks that, “all three components of instrumental art [the contemporary oral tradition, the Russian art music, the ‘folk orchestra’] are, in our opinion, successors of the prepetrinic Rus’ having equal rights” (Banin 1997: 12). The argumentation of this bold statement in a sense of a “holistic system of Russian instrumental tradition” (1997: 174) is however a rather confounded undertaking.

Banin suggests an influence of the *skomorokhi* on westernised art music in the late 17th ct.: “The descendants of the *skomorokhi* of the 17th ct. partly dissolved in folklore environment, and partly flew into the developing art of written tradition. In fact, with whom one could put together the first actor’s troupes, with whom the first orchestras of written tradition (together with foreign musicians and actors) if not with *skomorokhi*?” (1997: 11). At least in the 18th ct., when most orchestras were founded, many of them consisted of bondmen. About *skomorokhi* – or their mysterious “descendants” – as orchestra musicians we have no evidence. Probably no Italian, German or Russian master of the chapel of this time would allow in his orchestra any features of performing style or even repertory connected with the *skomorokhi*, whose art was categorically forbidden after 1648.

Further, Banin claims that “forms of existence of this [the peasant’s] tradition documented from contemporary bearers at least within the last two hundred years were not affected by any substantial changes” (1997: 11). According to this point of view, neither the development of the balalaika from a two-string drone instrument to a three-string one with a predominant chordal style, nor the total extinction of all pure drone instruments (fiddle, bagpipe, further hurdy-gurdy), the triumphant advance of the harmonica, the adoption of common European aristocratic dances

in peasant repertoire and finally ensembles including guitars and mandolins mean a “substantial change”.

The idea of historical continuity and ethnic exclusiveness is the *Leitmotiv* in the publications on the Pskov region by Anatoly Mekhnetsov and other collaborators of the *Folklore-ethnographic Center* (formerly the folklore department of the St. Petersburg Conservatory). The unsuccessful reconstruction of “The Gusli Playing of Ancient Rus” by Galina Lobkova (1985) I have discussed in Morgenstern 1995: 24–26. Mekhnetsov’s recent contribution “The Russian Gusli” (2002) is basically dedicated to the Russian variant of the Baltic wing-zither from the Pskov and Novgorod regions. The author attributes an impact of this instrument to a seemingly “pan-Russian” instrumental tradition: “Even with the culture of *gusli* playing, there were established the most important means of musical development and the principles of formal organization in the sphere of Russian folk instrumental music as a whole” (Mekhnetsov 2002: 11). Mekhnetsov refers to a special *gusli*-type of polyphonics as well as to a constant, undivided musical movement based on short sections. However his brief remark on *gusli* playing, not connected with transcriptions, can hardly be related to “Russian folk instrumental music as a whole”, even more so since the characteristic features of the latter are not examined at all.

Obviously Mekhnetsov’s national approach to local music traditions is ideologically motivated. His declaration, “Traditional Folk Culture. A Program of Preservation, Protection and Rebirth” (1993), is a manifestation of radical traditionalism. In this understanding traditional culture is not only seen as a heritage worthy of preservation and a topic for scientific documentation and discourse, or an inspiration for contemporary arts, but as a program for a very special kind of political *perestroika*: “A restoration of spiritual health of man and of all our society is possible only on the path of rebirth of the fundamentals of our national culture” (Mekhnetsov 1993: 144). This as well as the claim for “the strengthening of the spiritual, the moral immunity of the society” somehow recalls the German concept of “*Volkskörper*” (“people’s body”) and “*geistige Hygiene*” (“spiritual hygiene”). Of course such an extreme position is an exceptional phenomenon in Russian folklore research.

As we can see, the chase for deep rooted Slavic or Russian originality (*samobytnost’*) is a strong motivation in Russian ethnoorganology. Let us now have a look how this concept works in the historical study on the *gusli krylovidnye*, the *domra* and the relation of *gudok* and violin.

Gusli

The very name *gusli* is of high symbolic value as it is associated with the Igor’s Tale (11th ct.) as well as with Russian epics. In organology the term designates both: a wing-zither (*krylovidnye* or *zvonchatye* (the sonorous) and a delta zither (*gusli shlemovidnye* – helmed shaped or *psaltirevidnye* – psaltery). Nevertheless, the two instruments are often carelessly treated as one: “In old times the most favourite

musical instruments in Russia were the *gusli*” (Agazhanov 1949: 22). Though Vertkov has clearly shown the different morphology and geographical spreading of the two instruments (1975: 72f.), the same author writes: “The *gusli* are one [sic] of the most ancient string instruments of the eastern Slavs” (1975: 71). Concerning the *zvonchatye gusli*, Flavij Sokolov speaks in his collection of *gusli*-tunes –mostly from the Gdov district of Pskov region – (1959) of a “most favourite instrument of the eastern slavs” (1959: 5): “It is hard to find a folk instrument comparable by its significance in the development of the national music culture, by its enormous popularity in most different strata of Russian society with this most ancient, originally [*iskonnnyj*] Russian musical instrument” (1959: 5).

Igor' Tõnurist (1977) finally showed the main area of dissemination of the wing-*gusli* which indicates a Baltofinnic or Baltic origin of the instrument. On the other hand, Tõnurist at first could point out the supporting board (*otkrylok*), facilitating the chordal playing technique, as the characteristic organographic and musical features of the Russian wing-zither. This way, the most convincing arguments for its ethnic peculiarity came from an author less affected by Slavophil pathos.

Rimma Galaiskaia, though without reference to Tõnurist's publications, examines the *gusli* of both types in connection with the Finno-Ugrian issue (Galaiskaia 1980). She also disproves the conception of the wing-*gusli* as a pan-Russian instrument. However Galaiskaia's harsh criticism of national myths leads her to extreme positions as well. Her rather tendentious underestimation of the Russian delta zither (*gusli shlemovidnye* or *psaltirevidnye*) is due to ignorance of well known sources and speculative constructions (Morgenstern 1995: 28–32).

Aleksandr Banin (1997) indefatigably continues the national mythology when calling the *gusli* “one of the most wide-spread and favourite musical instruments of the eastern slavs” (1997: 46). This is much more surprising as Banin, in the corresponding chapter, treats only the *gusli krylovidnye* from Pskov and Novgorod region. We can not be surprised by Mekhnetsov's proud statement on “the independent nature, the originality of species of traditional Russian *gusli* of archaic form” (Mekhnetsov 2002: 4). However, this explanation is not based on any comparative study. Both authors' positions to the well known contributions of Tõnurist and Galaiskaia are not really clear, since they do not mention them at all. Also there lacks any reference to the comparative studies of Romualdas Apanavičius (1992, 1994) on Baltic / Russian wing zither.

The musical style of the Russian wing-zither is described by the collector Flavy Sokolov and more detailed by Banin, researching an example of the famous *gusljar* Timofeev. This musician prefers a melodic style with a contrapuntal drone considered by Sokolov as “an echo of early stages of development of the Russian people's musical culture” (Sokolov 1959: 9). However, Timofeev's style and the Gdov district in general are not the best material for reconstructing old Russian *gusli* tradition. As Tõnurist (1985) has shown, the local *gusli*-style was most affected by soviet stage folklorism. Furthermore in this district the modernized Estonian *kannel* played a big part, as well as the settlement of Estonian peasants the late 19th ct.

Banin himself had some doubt about the reliability of the material prepared by Sokolov for the Russian tradition of *gusli* playing. Emphasising the stylistic differences to the chordal style of one single transcription quoted by Galina Lobkova in 1985, he expresses his hope for further publication from the rich collection of the St. Petersburg Conservatory: “This doubtless will enrich our concepts of *gusli* tradition and apparently it will bring in substantial correction” (Banin 1997: 52). Today when organographic documentation (Mekhnetsov 2002b; Koshelev 2002) as well as detailed and careful commented transcriptions (Mekhnetsov 2002a) are available, we can hope that they will be also used for further cross cultural studies on the Russian wing-zither.

Domra

The *domra* is frequently mentioned from the end of 15th to the middle of the 17th ct. as an instrument of the *skomorokhi*. Not a single instrument is preserved and we also do not have any descriptions. Before Imkhanitsky’s study one engraving in Adam Olearius’ work was considered the only iconographic representation. It shows the quite large resonance body of a plucked instrument mentioned by Olearius as a *Laute*.

Famintsyn supposed a closed relation between the Russian *domra* and middle Asian lutes (*dombra*, *dumbra*). Just like Privalov, he tried to draw a direct line from the *domra* to the later *balalaika*. Furthermore Imkhanitsky, later also Banin, suggests a genetic relation between the *tunbur*, mentioned by Ibn Fadlan in 1921 as an instrument used by the *ar-rus*. This is not convincing, even if we were to follow the most fragile construction of the Scandinavian *ar-rus* as a “Slavic tribe” (Imkhanitsky 1989: 26; unfortunately Morgenstern 1995: 34 as well). Also the eight-string lute common in Kiev of the 10th ct. that Ibn-Dasta called *ud* can hardly be related to an instrument appearing nearly 600 years later.

Most valuable is Imkhanitsky’s examination of Russian iconographic sources from 16th and 17th ct. The author has found a large number of representations of lutes with a turned-bag peg box, one of them definitely proved to be a *domra*. The other sources show instruments even more closely related to middle and west European lutes. However, Imkhanitsky’s interethnic approach is limited only to the peoples of the former Russian empire. The author claims genetic relations of the Russian *domra* to Asian neck lutes as the Kazakh and Uzbek *dombra*. On the other hand, he remarks that the *domra* and the Ukrainian *kobza*, a short-necked lute of clear western provenance, are “nearly identical” (1987: 26). This is a rather contradictory estimation, however, it indirectly indicates a connection between the *domra* and common European lute instruments – a notion that is totally new in Russian organology. I too could not accept at first that the iconographical representations of lutes with turned-back peg-box, found by Imkhanitsky, could show the mysterious *domra* of the *skomorokhi* (Morgenstern 1995: 35). It was only Iurii Iakovlev who pointed out the connection of the *domra* not only with the *kobza* of Poland and

Ukraine, but also with the lute music of the Italian renaissance. Still some remarks on an influence of the western lutes on some “similar [Slavic] instruments common to the folk” (1993: 108) cannot convince. The same is true for an “ancient instrument *kobza*”, supposed to have existed earlier (1993: 109).

Aleksandr Banin, though mentioning Iakovlev’s contribution, does not comment in his view on the history of the *domra*. Again he tries to construct a pan-Russian line of evolution supposing that “the Russian tradition of playing tanbur-like instruments* goes back, not to the 16th, but at least to the 10th ct.” The gap of nearly 600 years, when no Russian “tanbur-like” instrument is known, Banin bridges by quite an original idea: excavations from 11th to 14th ct. in Old-Novgorod testify to an instrument of rebec-type close to the Bulgarian gadulka or Crete lyra. Because no bow was found, Banin suggests “that on these instruments they could play with a bow as well as with plucking or strumming technique” (Banin 1997: 42). According to the author, “without a bow they, of course, transform into a precursor of the *domra*”. To prove this interpretation one should just try to produce any sound on a fingerboardless rebec (where the strings are touched with the nails) by plucking or strumming. Further Banin denies a division of the folklore tradition of lute playing “in a period of the *domra* and a period of the *balalaika*”, not for its schematic simplification, but because “In the most essential components this is one tradition” (1997: 40). The components of the *domra* tradition however, become unclear.

The theory of Famintsyn and Privalov of the *balalaika* as a “masked” *domra*, shared also by Banin and partly by Imkhanitski (1989: 30), was disproved by Gennady Makarov (1991). Even though Famintsyn already emphasized morphologic parallels between the old two-stringed *balalaika* with oval resonance body and the middle asian long-necked lutes, it was only Makarov who has shown the direct relation between the Tatar *dombra* and the Russian *balalaika*.

Gudok and Violin

The *gudok* is first mentioned in the 16th ct. Iconographical sources from the 17th to the middle of the 19th ct. show drop-shaped but also figure-eight shaped bowed lutes. The former type is clearly represented in ethnographic descriptions of the *gudok* since the middle of the 18th ct. The typical scroll indicates a closed relation to western European *fiedel*. Thus the link between the *rebec* from Old Novgorod and the later *gudok* (Vertkov 1975: 91; Povetkin 1982) seems to be a rather fragile construction (Ginzbug 1971, 1975; Nazina 1982: 70–72).

The three-stringed *gudok* was tuned in different combinations of the fifth with octave or in unison (Morgenstern 1995: 56 f.), but never in successive fifths, as some scholars claim without quoting any sources (Agazhanov 1949: 19; Ginzburg,

* The rather unspecific term *tanburoidnye instrumenty* is frequently used in Russian organology – once regarding to long-necked lutes with few strings and round or oval body, once to all type of plucked necked lutes.

Grigor'ev 1990: 247; Banin 1997: 44). This corresponds to the drone technique by bowing all strings simultaneously.

The violin (*skripka*) in Russian peasant tradition is testified by ethnographic sources “not before the first half of the 19th ct.” (Banin 1989). What type of bowed instrument the older term *skripel'* or *skripotchka* (Ginzburg, Grigor'ev 1990: 246) signifies at present time is hard to say. At least, presumptions of a “three-stringed folk violin [*skripka*]” in 16th and 17th ct. (Ginzburg, Grigor'ev 1990: 250, also 247) do not seem to be substantiated enough.

Generally in Russian peasant tradition of the 19th and 20th ct., the violin is common in such regions, in which a stronger tradition of bowed instruments of a neighbored ethnic group exists (Morgenstern 1995: 66f.). In the first place this is the Byelorussian tradition. Especially the ensemble practice (two, three violins; violin, dulcimer; violin, dulcimer, tambourine) is basically restricted to the former Polish territories. As a solo instrument the violin is a bit more wide spread.

In Russian scholarship the folk violin is frequently associated with the *gudok*. Privalov (1904: 29), and later Mekhnetsov have observed peasants playing the *violin a gamba*. Kvitka and Rudneva found in the Kursk region home-made violins with tree strings. Al'binski even has discovered a living tradition of a figure-eight shaped fiddle, called *skripka* in the Perm region. However all these local styles of violin playing (judging by the available transcriptions) are characterized by principles distancing them from the *gudok*-tradition of the 18th and 19th ct.: a) the instrument is tuned in fifths (dissonant relation of the open strings), b) the bridge is curved, consequently c) the player bows usually one or two strings simultaneously, not all of them, d) the melody jumps from one string to an other (no functional division of melody string and drone strings). These are common features of European traditions of the folk violin, apparently not very old ones. Nevertheless, especially in the Pskov region, we can suppose relicts of *gudok*-playing. In the Ostrov district some older informants remember fiddles with oval resonance body played “over all strings, as on the balalaika” (village Belovo). Much more analogous information has been collected by Mekhnetsov and could contribute a lot to the research on the history of Russian bowed instruments.

The violin ensembles of Smolensk region can be understood as the eastern outskirt not only of the Polish-Byelorussian ensemble tradition, but in a larger sense of a common central and eastern European type of ensemble, called *troista muzyka* in Ukraine, *Bauernbarock* in Austria and *klezmer music* all over the world. In this respect Tatiana Kazanskaia's remark on a “national style of the Russian folk fiddle” (1990: 201) is not convincing. However, especially the ensemble style evokes much associations with the medieval Russian minstrels. When a fiddler ensemble from Smolensk region took part in an ethnographic concert in 1974 in Moscow, the excited audience exclaimed things like *skomorokhi!* (Sadokov 1976: 26). This led Sadokov, an archeologist, to further interpretations on the historical roots of the doubtlessly very impressive performance. Tatiana Kazanskaia, a professional violonist, describes the part of the *vtora* (the accompanying “kontra”-violin): “the syncopation, the

weighting of the weak beats, gives a comical touch to the sound. In this one can feel an old *skomorokh* tradition” (Kazanskaia 1988: 97). On the other hand, Kazanskaia in the same contribution mentions the “melodic-virtuous style”, typical of ensemble playing, as a historically later phenomenon (1988: 87) – in contrast to the soloistic “polyphonic-drone style”. Here the intuition of the author seems to be more striking. As we know by the studies of Jan Stęszewski (1975: 35) and William Noll (1986: 245; cit. by Bielawski 1992: 53 f.), in Poland peasant violin ensembles consisting of *pryma* and *sekund* arose only in late 19th ct. Hardly had they existed earlier at the Russian-Byelorussian boundary. As this type of ensemble “can be said to mirror a seventeenth and eighteenth century development in the music of social elite in Central Europe” (Noll 1986: 250; cit. by Bielawski 1992: 54), it cannot be related to the art of the Russian *skomorokhi*, destroyed finally in 1648.

Paradoxically, those Russian researchers of the last five decades who feel most emphatically to national originality and historical continuity (Sokolov, Imkhanitsky, Banin, Mekhnetsov) did not make big use either of comparative studies or of the foreign ethnoorganological research, not even those of the socialist countries. The “slavocentred” concept and the strong tendency to connect recent musical practice with archaic traditions inevitably led to a distorted historical representation of Russian musical life.

This did not at all diminish the actuality of a methodically proper research on the historical roots of recent instrumental traditions in Russia. Without any doubt such research can bring to light evidence for continuity in Russian traditional music culture. It also can help us with the rather difficult question on the characteristic features of this culture. However special studies in this sense are still rare.

Most ancient traces can be supposed in shepherd signals as well as in the ensembles of pan-pipes (Šimonytė-Žarskienė 2003: 115–164). The chordal style of *gusli*-playing apparently was common already in the 11th ct., as show written (Morgenstern 1995: 26) and organographic sources (Morgenstern 1995: 24). The famous wooden trumpet orchestras (*vladimirskie rozhki*) are related to ensembles of the 18th ct. Their style is rooted in traditional vocal polyphony, however in the rhythmic part of dancing tunes, an adaptation to the style of military brass band is probable as well. Only in a few regions is the drone style of the *balalaika* preserved (Morgenstern 1998a), which was wide spread from the middle of the 18th up to late the 19th ct. Important is also the influence of shepherd musicians on the harmonica, evident from field observations by Boris Smirnov (1962). In early harmonica style we can find some relicts of the Russian bagpipe (Morgenstern 1998b). In the Pskov region, especially the double reed clarinet (*double zhaleika* or *trostianki*) caused much more influence on the harmonica than the *gusli* did (Morgenstern 2003: 246f.). Due to its lower symbolical power, it is largely neglected in fieldwork and even more in publications*.

Thus the issue of historical continuity in Russian traditional instrumental culture presents a field for future research. But what can be the contribution of contemporary

* The first published evidence on double clarinet in Pskov region is owing to Banin’s monograph (1997: 107f.).

ethnomusicology to the question of ethnic originality of this culture – except of deconstructing some national romantic myths? Are there any ethnic features in Russian traditional instrumental music? That is a most difficult question, since instrumental practice regardless of its enormous significance for traditional culture, is strongly underrepresented in Russian ethnomusicological studies. Organographical research hardly bring sufficient results, since at best just a few instruments can be considered “purely Russian” in terms of origin or spreading area. In this regard the analysis of instrumental style offers greater perspectives. In ensembles of wooden trumpets or overtone flutes, the wing-zither as a chordal instrument might be seen as regional or local phenomena known predominantly in Russia. Before the invention of the harmonica, in many regions soloistic wind instruments were used for dance music, while in other eastern European traditions the violin was the prime part in an ensemble. Of great significance for Russian instrumental tradition are very short tunes for improvised single dances (*pliaska*) with four- or six-bar pattern as the famous *Barynia* (*Russkogo*) and the *Kamarinskaia*.

Actually, such tunes find analogue in Bulgarian, Macedonian, Serbian and Croatian traditions. A profound comparative study of these relations might lead us to more reliable conclusions on the old Slavic heritage in instrumental music.

Conclusions

Questions of the national character of the traditional musical culture and its historical roots have an enormous weight in Russian ethnoorganology. Reliable responses to these questions one can attain only through comparative methods when considering interethnic processes. The “slavocentred” approach inevitably leads to tendentious and wrong conclusions.

Russian traditional instrumental culture opens substantial perspectives for the study of ethnic peculiarity (more in a local and regional than in a national sense). It also is of high interest for diachronic research. We may hope on fruitful ethnomusicological works in this direction.

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TAUTIŠKUMO SAMPRATOS RUSŲ ETNOINSTRUMENTOLOGIJOJE

ULRICH MORGENSTERN

Santrauka

Straipsnio objektas – skirtingos rusų / slavų originalumo ir istorinio tęstinumo sampratos analizuojant tradicinę rusų instrumentinę muziką. Ypač išsamiai nagrinėjamas vadinamasis slavocentrinis požiūris ir kai kurios klaidingos interpretacijos, nulemtos nepakankamo europinio konteksto reikšmės įvertinimo. Skirtingos koncepcijos trumpai aptartos pasitelkiant pavyzdžius: kankles *gusli*, liutnią *domra*, liaudišką smuiką *gudok* ir jo santykį su įprastiniu smuiku. Paskui autorius mėgina brėžti galimas tolesnes rusų instrumentinės muzikos tradicijos lyginamųjų ir istorinių tyrimų kryptis.

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