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THE CONCEPT OF GOPUZ IN TURKIC AND HUNGARIAN FOLKLORE

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Folklore exists due to the nations who create, preserve, and enrich it, embedding their unique national characteristics and identity. Each example of the folklore has a creator and it becomes popular by passing "from tongue to tongue" between the individuals of this separate nation. Furthermore, these samples spread among other nations transcending beyond the borders, making new versions possible to appear. This is the case with the nomadic Turkic and the neighbour peoples lived together with them. Gopuz is one of the famous folkloric element of nomadic Turkic people which was inherited by the other nations like Hungarians.

This article addresses the historical roots of the Gopuz, examining its role in traditional rituals, epic narratives, and cultural symbolism. Special attention is given to the historical interactions and exchanges between Turkic tribes and Hungarian peoples, which significantly influenced Hungarian folk music and cultural practices. A comparative analysis highlights similarities and differences between the Turkic Gopuz and its Hungarian counterpart, the Koboz, considering their roles in spiritual, ceremonial, and secular contexts. Additionally, contemporary initiatives aimed at preserving and promoting the Gopuz and Koboz in both Turkic and Hungarian cultures are discussed, underscoring their importance for cultural heritage and identity.

Keywords: Ahmad Jafaroglu, folklore, Hungarian, Turk, gopuz, koboz, Turkic culture, Turkic-Hungarian relations, nomadic traditions

INTRODUCTION

The folklore of each nation is closely related to its lifestyle, living conditions, mindset, aspirations, and cultural memory, reflecting their historical background comprehensively. Hence it directly signifies itself in the context of historical and social conditions. Therefore, folklore is an essential key to understanding the socio-cultural history and collective memory of nations. The uniqueness and cultural identity of each historical period are encapsulated within folklore samples. The fact that folklore has represented the socio-cultural space inhabited by people for centuries makes it necessary to work on it. The study of relations between nations could not be feasible without touching their folklore traces. Thus it is possible to see the similarity of elements and ideas in the comparative analysis of national folklore samples - folk tales, songs, myths, legends, proverbs and parables. From this point of view, it should be noted that the similarity of leitmotifs is easily cognised in the folklore cultures of the nomadic Turkic people and the Hungarian people who lived together with them for some time, then migrated to the west.

The Hungarians' involvement in regional conflicts further influenced their migratory movements. The westward migration of the Hungarian tribes under the leadership of Árpád in the late 9th century was a complex process influenced by various socio-political pressures and interactions with neighboring nomadic Turkic tribes, leading to significant cultural exchanges and mutual influences.

The Hungarians, whose main homeland was Eurasia, lived side by side with the Turks in the steppes between the Ural and Altai mountains and in the 4th century, as a result of Hun influxes, settled in the Middle Volga region. They called these areas "Magna Hungaria". In 894, under the leadership of Arpad, they moved west and set up their home in the Carpathian basins. Pechenegs,



Alans and Kumans, who came to Hungary as early as the 10th century, organized the formation of the Hungarian people in the 13th and 14th centuries by "becoming Hungarian" and changing their religion to Christianity. It was at this time that many Turkish words began to be used in the Hungarian language [7, p. 3-4]. The Khazars exerted considerable influence over the Hungarians, evident in the adoption of certain political and military structures. For instance, the Hungarian leader Levedi was offered a position of prince by the Khazar Khagan, which he declined, recommending instead Álmos or his son Árpád for the role. This episode underscores the intertwined leadership structures and the depth of their interactions.

MAIN PART

The influence of the Turkic peoples' culture could be found in a wide range of areas of the Hungarian folklore, from Hungarian folk music to ethnography even including the Hungarian language. This impact has been studied for more than a hundred years. The relationships between Hungarians and Turkic nations influenced Hungarians' political alliances, military strategies, cultural practices, and linguistic development. The legacy of these interactions is still evident in various aspects of Hungarian culture today, underscoring the enduring impact of these early connections.

Not only in the works, articles and speeches of local turkologists, but also Hungarian scholars and researchers like Ignác Kúnos, György Hazai, Sandor Takats, Gyula Németh, Lajos Ligeti, László Rásonyi, Edina Dallos, Eva Csaki, János Sipos and others, this efficacy was highlighted.

Prominent Azerbaijani scholar Bakir Chobanzada, while studying the Turkic oral folk literature specially emphasized the influence of Turkic folk literature to the other nations: "Turkic-Tatar folk literature has not stopped influencing the literature of other nations. Such is the influence of Turkic folklore on Hungarian, Greek, Russian, Armenian, Persian ... folk literature" [5, p. 193]. An important part of Bakir Chobanzada's research is the folklore of Turkic tribes and relations of Turkic and other nations. The author advised that most of the Turkish words used in the language and folk literature of these nations come from the contact with the Turks and this fact is irrefutable. Similarly, Hungarian linguist Zoltán Gombocz (1877-1935) contributed significantly to understanding Turkish loanwords in Hungarian, providing deeper linguistic context to these cultural exchanges.

While analyzing the relationship between Hungarians and Turkic people, it is possible to observe the influence of the Turkic peoples' culture from Hungarian folk music to their ethnography. In this picture, the importance of folk music should be particularly emphasized. An integral part of Turkic music has been the gopuz musical instrument, which is considered one of the first musical instruments used among Hungarians. According to Ahmad Jafaroglu's research, starting with Hun Turks, gopuz was widely used in Europe by Hungarians, Czechs, Poles, Lithuanians, Russians, Ukrainians, Finns, the local population of Africa and the Balkan nations. Music was perceived as a force that helps people to free themselves from the difficulties and sufferings of the world, promises a happy life and future, and creates a connection between people and the other world [2, p. 203].

Ahmad Jafaroglu, a distinguished Azerbaijani-Turkish linguist and scholar, made significant contributions to the study of Turkic languages and cultures. His research extensively covered the Gopuz, an ancient stringed musical instrument integral to Turkic folklore and musical traditions. In his seminal articles titled "Cihan Edebiyatında Türk Kobuzu" ("The Turkish Kobuz in World Literature"), published in *Ülkü* journal in 1936 and 1937, Caferoğlu delved into the historical and cultural significance of the Gopuz. He traced its origins in Central Asia and examined its evolution and dissemination across various regions, including its influence on neighboring cultures such as the Hungarians. Jafaroglu highlighted the instrument's role in the oral traditions of Turkic peoples, emphasizing its use by bards and minstrels in narrating epics and conveying communal values. Furthermore, Jafaroglu's research underscored the Gopuz's symbolic importance, portraying it as more than a musical instrument. He identified it as a vessel of cultural transmission, embodying the spiritual and social ethos of Turkic communities. His meticulous documentation and analysis have



been instrumental in preserving the legacy of the Gopuz, offering valuable insights into its construction, variations, and the contexts in which it was traditionally played.

It is possible to show a lot of resemblances between Hungarian and Turkic folklore where we could emphasize the similarity of folk music. Thus, the Turkic peoples who settled in Central Asia had distinct musical customs. In various ceremonial contexts such as hunting, battle, weddings, and mourning, minstrels performed songs accompanied by the gopuz, entertaining or comforting the community. In wedding, praise and post-hunting ceremonies, the song-poetry recitations were accompanied by dances.

As a result of these pre-Islamic customs, the oral music played a great role in the formation and spread of epics, folk songs and folktales among the people. The musical presentation of ideas and themes was easily engraved to the memories. Undoubtedly, ideas and traditions that have changed over the years have not lost their attachment to their roots and are reflected in legends, narratives and epics. Musical instruments have a special place in the spread of this kind of folk songs and tales that glorify the national spirit and values.

In his monograph “Ozan-aşıq sənəti” (The Art of Ozan-Ashiq), M. Gasimli also addresses the influence exerted by the gopuz on Armenian and Georgian cultural traditions: “Since Arabic served as the language of science, Persian as the language of written literature (particularly poetry), and Turkic as a lingua franca for folklore across the entire Eastern world and regions influenced by the East during ancient and medieval times, it is natural that the “kopuz player” gained prominence within the cultural and spiritual environments of Armenian, Georgian, Ukrainian, and other neighboring peoples under names such as “gusan”, “gosan (mgosan)”, and “kobzar”” [11, p. 58].

In studies carried out to determine the origin of gopuz, it has been observed that the historical presence of the instrument can be traced back approximately one thousand years. According to sources, the earliest known text where the word “gopuz” is explicitly used as the name of a musical instrument dates back to the Uyghur period. In Old Uyghur texts, particularly in the narrative of “Edgü Ögli Tigin and Ayıg Ögli Tigin” (The Prince with Good Thoughts and the Prince with Evil Thoughts), the term “gopuz” clearly appears as the name of a musical instrument [9]. The most comprehensive source providing information about the meaning, characteristics, and usage areas of the term gopuz in Turkish cultural life that has reached the present day is the *Dîvânü lugâti't-Türk*. In this work, Mahmud al-Kashgari specifies that the word kubuz refers to an instrument similar to the lute (ud).

In general, gopuz has been an important tool in the spread of Turkish spiritual history and folklore. The influence of the Turkish gopuz can be seen in the sympathy shown to folk poets and the importance given to music in the court of the western rulers. Gopuz, as “a Turkish relic that entered the life and literature of the eastern and western nations at the earliest”, was able to preserve its existence even if it underwent minor changes in the folk creativity of other nations [3, p. 411]. The Gopuz embodies both the cultural memory and heroic ethos of Turkic communities, functioning as a powerful symbol of unity, bravery, and spiritual guidance.

Dede Gorgud, the symbol of Turkishness of the Turkic peoples, used to walk around with his hands like a saint, decide the fate of peoples by singing songs, give names to the brave, and try to convey to the people the differences between good and bad, brave and cowardly. It was an indicator of the value given to gopuz among the peoples. In legends related to this subject, it is narrated that when Dede Gorgud began to play the kopuz, the wind ceased to blow, birds stopped flying and the waters ceased to flow. Hence, “Book of Dede Gorgud” can be considered the primary source that reflects the importance of gopuz in Turkic cultural life.

The role of Gopuz in Turkic culture can be significantly expanded by examining specific Turkic epics, notably the epic of “Alpamysh” and the other “Oghuz epic” traditions. In the epic of Alpamysh, the Gopuz is depicted as a spiritual instrument that grants the hero strength, wisdom, and guidance through difficult times, symbolizing a divine connection and moral authority. The Al-



pamysh epic (also known as Alpamiş or Alpamis) is a renowned heroic epic widely celebrated among Turkic-speaking peoples in Central Asia, including the Kazakhs, Uzbeks, Karakalpaks, and others. The epic revolves around the adventures of Alpamysh, a legendary hero known for his bravery, loyalty, and moral strength. Alpamysh faces numerous challenges, battles formidable foes, and demonstrates profound wisdom and courage throughout the narrative. The Gopuz holds special significance within the Alpamysh epic, symbolizing spiritual guidance, cultural heritage, and moral authority. It is frequently depicted as empowering the hero, providing both spiritual support and inspiration. According to Karl Reichl, the instrument also serves as a tool for preserving the oral tradition, ensuring the transmission of cultural values and moral teachings from one generation to another [13, p. 138].

The Turkish influence in Hungarian music was manifested in the court of Attila, whom the Hungarians call their father. The traditions of Attila's court were later organized in the court of the Hungarian kings. The organization of feasts similar to those held at Turkic courts, the recitation of heroic epics by bards (ozans), and songs recounting the bravery and deeds of Attila, kings, and knights, as well as praises performed during these occasions, highlight the significant impact of Turkic folk songs and epic poetic traditions on Hungarian folk epics and songs.

An interesting note about this is also shown in the book "Turkishness in History" by the prominent Hungarian Turkologist Laszlo Rásonyi (László Rásonyi (1899-1984)). The 5th century Greek historian and rhetorician Priscus of Panion (Priscus(5th century)) made a diplomatic visit to the palace of the Hun emperor Attila as part of the Byzantine embassy in 448/449. When he talks about the Huns in his notes, he states that they have Turkic songs and heroic epics. So, when Attila enters the palace, Hun girls meet him with Turks. While sitting at the table together with the representatives of the embassy, two Hun singers sang songs about his heroism, victories and bravery in battles with gopuz [12, p. 35].

It was accepted as a national custom and tradition to present musical instruments to the guests in the palaces of the Hun-Turks before Christmas [2, p. 204]. Music was given special value, and musical instruments were sent as valuable gifts to palace guests and kings of other countries. For example, we can show the information that Attila sent the Hun Orchestra as a gift to the king of Burgundy [8, p. 290].

According to the information of Sándor Takáts (1860-1932), folklore elements such as saz, türkü and fairy tales were developed in Turkish and Hungarian societies in the 16th century. Thus, saz poets, instrumentalists, singers and many soldiers who were captured in wars traveled from forts to forts, from palaces to palaces, and conveyed their stories of bravery through songs, tales, and epics, and the culture of both nations merged and mixed with each other. Hungarian saz poets and singers increased during the Turkish period (after the Battle of Mohács (1526, August 29, Hungarians were under the influence of the Turks for a while), and in general, like the Turks, they performed songs with oud, drums, and bow instruments [15, p. 215-217]. For example, the Hungarian singer Tinadi recited the battles between the Ottomans and the Hungarians, the events in the fortresses and the borders, and chanted through the oud with using hand gestures in rhythm with the song [6, p. 6].

According to Zoltán Gombocz (1877-1935), Hungarians got acquainted with gopuz through the Kipchaks in the 13th century [3, p. 411-412]. In the 14th century, there were musicologists among the Hungarians who played gopuz. In one of the editions printed in Hungary in 1604, "gopuz" is indicated as "kobos" or "kobz" ("pondura", "lyra"). In another dictionary from 1647, it is expressed as "koboz" ("lyra"). Ármin Vámbéry proposed the idea that the names of the musical instruments used in the Hungarian language are related to Turkish culture. For example, cseng in Hungarian has the same meaning as zeng = Turkish chengi, yatek (Mac.) = bed (Altay), koboz (Mac.) = Turkish-Tatar gopuzu [3, p. 412].

Dr. Fuad Köprülü referencing Gyula Mészáros notes that the term "koboz" appeared in Hungarian language usage at the beginning of 1327. The musicians who played this instrument were



called “kobzos” and the names like Yohan and Nikolavus were in historical records as early examples [10, p. 249]. In different sources, we could encounter a minstrel named Kobzos Miklos. Hence, sources generally agree that “koboz” entered Hungarian via the Cuman or Pecheneg languages.

In another note of Ahmet Jafaroglu, it is stated that in the first half of the 17th century, Schödel played the historical songs of the Hungarians with an instrument called “kobza” in their mother tongue [3, p. 413].

In Central Asian Turkic communities, the gopuz was used by bards known as “bahşı” both as an accompaniment while performing lyrical poems, laments, songs and as an instrument to ward off evil spirits, invoke benevolent spirits, heal illnesses, and perform semi-religious rituals. According to Ármín Vámbéry, these bards were proficient in treating diseases, often healing their patients by mesmerizing them with music played on the instrument called “kobuz”[16].

CONCLUSION

In general, the similarity in pronunciation, and rhyme is proof of the antiquity of Turkish-Hungarian relations. The comparison between the Gopuz and Koboz can be deepened further by detailing differences in their construction, playing techniques, tonal characteristics, and cultural roles. The Turkic Gopuz typically features a deep, resonant tone suited for spiritual and ritualistic contexts, often associated with shamanistic ceremonies and epic recitations. Conversely, the Hungarian Koboz, while structurally similar, generally produces a brighter tone more suitable for narrative storytelling and secular performances. Historically, Koboz has been employed in courtly entertainment and folk music contexts, whereas Gopuz is heavily embedded in Turkic shamanistic and spiritual traditions.

Recent initiatives and programs to preserve and promote Gopuz and Koboz have been significantly expanded. UNESCO has recognized elements related to Turkic and Hungarian folk music as intangible cultural heritage, emphasizing the instruments' cultural and historical importance. Additionally, various international music festivals, such as the World Nomad Games and the Hungarian Folk Music Festival, prominently feature performances of these instruments, promoting broader awareness and appreciation. Academic conferences and workshops focusing on ethnomusicology regularly discuss these traditions, contributing scholarly attention towards understanding, preserving, and revitalizing traditional folk music and instruments in both Turkic and Hungarian cultures.

In conclusion, the Gopuz is an ancient historical relic deeply embedded in the spiritual and cultural traditions of the Turkic peoples. Due to extensive historical interactions and shared cultural heritage between the Turkic and Hungarian communities, the Gopuz (and its Hungarian variant, Koboz) has become profoundly integrated into Hungarian folklore and artistic traditions. The instrument has prominently featured in epic narratives, ceremonial rituals, and communal performances, reinforcing cultural identity and historical memory. Historically, skilled gopuz and koboz players have often emerged from warrior ranks, emphasizing the instruments' symbolic association with bravery, leadership, and moral guidance. The enduring presence of Gopuz within these cultures highlights the significance of music as a powerful tool for cultural preservation and intercultural dialogue, bridging ancient traditions with contemporary expressions and reaffirming its vital role in sustaining the cultural heritage of both Turkic and Hungarian peoples. As ethnomusicologist János Sipos points out, the structural and stylistic similarities between the Turkic and the Hungarian music are indicative of deeper musical and cultural interactions between the two peoples, stemming from shared nomadic roots [14].

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TÜRK VƏ MACAR FOLKLORUNDA QOPUZ ANLAYIŞI

R.Q. Cahangirli

Folklor onu yaradan, qoruyub saxlayan və zənginləşdirən xalqlar sayəsində yaşayır və inkişaf edir. Bu zaman həmin xalqların milli xüsusiyyətləri və kimlikləri məhz folklor nümunələrinə sirayət edir. Hər bir folklor nümunəsinin ilkin yaradıcısı olur və bu nümunələr zamanla həmin nümunələrin yaradıcısı olan xalqın nümayəndələri arasında “dildən dilə” keçərək geniş məşhurlaşır. Bundan əlavə, bu nümunələr sərhədləri aşaraq başqa xalqlar arasında da yayılmağa başlayır ki, nəticədə onların da müxtəlif versiyaları meydana gəlir. Bu köçəri türk xalqları və onlarla yanaşı yaşayan qonşu xalqlar üçün də keçərli haldır. Qopuz köçəri türk xalqlarının zəngin folklor irsinə məxsus tanınmış musiqi alətlərindən biridir ki, zaman keçdikcə macarlar kimi başqa xalqların mədəniyyətinə də sirayət etmişdir. Məqalədə qopuzun tarixi kökləri araşdırılır, onun ənənəvi mərasimlərdə, dastanlarda və mədəni simvolizm sistemindəki yeri təhlil edilir. Araşdırmada türk tayfaları ilə macarlar arasında yaranmış macar xalq musiqisinin formalaşmasında və mədəni təcrübələrin inkişafında mühüm rol oynamış tarixi və mədəni əlaqələrə xüsusi diqqət verilir. Müqayisəli təhlil əsasında türk qopuzu ilə macar kobozu arasında bənzərliklər və fərqlər ortaya qoyulur və onların dini, mərasim və gündəlik həyatdakı funksiyalar da nəzərdən keçirilir. Bundan başqa, araşdırmada həm türk, həm də macar mədəniyyətində Qopuz və Kobozun qorunması və təbliği məqsədilə həyata keçirilən müasir təşəbbüslər təhlil olunur və bu musiqi alətlərinin mədəni irsin davamlılığı və milli kimliyin formalaşmasındakı əhəmiyyətinə xüsusi diqqət yetirilir.

Açar sözlər: Əhməd Cəfəroğlu, folklor, macar, türk, qopuz, koboz, türk mədəniyyəti, türk-macar əlaqələri, köçəri ənənələr.



ИНТЕРПРЕТАЦИЯ ГОПУЗА В ТЮРКСКОЙ И ВЕНГЕРСКОЙ ФОЛЬКЛОРНОЙ ТРАДИЦИИ

Р.Г. Джахангирли

Фольклор существует благодаря народам, которые его создают, хранят и обогащают, придавая ему свои уникальные национальные черты и самобытность. Каждое произведение фольклора имеет своего создателя и становится популярным, переходя «из уст в уста» среди представителей одного народа. Со временем такие образцы преодолевают границы и распространяются среди других народов, приобретая новые формы и вариации. Это характерно для кочевых тюркских народов и их соседей, живших рядом с ними. Одним из ярких элементов тюркского кочевого фольклора является гопуз музыкальный инструмент, который был воспринят другими народами, в частности, венграми. В статье рассматриваются исторические корни гопуза, его роль в ритуалах, эпических повествованиях и культурной символике.

Особое внимание уделяется историческим контактам между тюркскими племенами и венграми, оказавшим значительное влияние на венгерскую народную музыку и культурные традиции. Сравнительный анализ выявляет как сходства, так и различия между тюркским гопузом и венгерским кобозом, особенно в духовном, обрядовом и светском контексте. Также освещаются современные инициативы, направленные на сохранение и популяризацию гопуза и кобоза в тюркской и венгерской культурах, подчеркивая их значение как части культурного наследия и идентичности.

Ключевые слова: *Ахмед Джафароглу, фольклор, венгры, тюрки, гопуз, кобоз, тюркская культура, тюрко-венгерские связи, кочевые традиции.*