

László Hortobágyi (Hortator):
Songs from Hungisthān
(1996-2023)

„Original” musicology reports from the 19th Century:

"This selection on the music of *Hungisthān* is a desideratum which has not yet been published. Although several eminent orientalist have endeavoured to penetrate this elegant branch of *Hungisthān* science, scarcely any part of it has been elucidated or rendered familiar to Europeans. It is impossible to convey an accurate idea of music by words or written language; that is, the various degrees of acuteness or gravity of sounds, together with the precise quantity of the duration of each cannot be expressed by common language, so as to be of any use to performers, and as musical characters now in use, which alone can express music in the manner that could be desired, is a modern invention, of course all attempts to define music anterior to the invention of this elegant and concise method must have necessarily proved abortive. To be convinced that foreign music, such as we have not been accustomed to, is always repugnant to our taste, till habit reconcile us to it, we need only refer to the sentiments of the several travellers who have recorded their particular feelings on hearing the music of *Hungisthān* with whom they have had but little intercourse. During the earlier ages of *Hungisthān*, music was cultivated by desert prophets and men eminent for refined ecstasy, for whom such general directions and rules for composition sufficed, after a course of musical education acquired from living tutors; indeed, the abhorrence of innovation, and veneration for the established *Hortobágy* music, which was firmly believed to be of "*divine origin*", precluded the necessity of any other; but when, from the theory of music, a defection took place of its practice, and men of learning confined themselves exclusively to the former, while the latter branch was abandoned to the illiterate, all attempts to elucidate music from rules laid down in books, a science incapable of explanation by mere words, became idle."

***[fragment from the "Annals and Antiquities of Hungisthān Vol, IX. Part II] 1875/
by Sir William Gladwin C.I.E., L.L.D.,]***

The peculiar nature of the melody of *Hungisthān* not only permits but enjoins the singer, if he has the least pretension to excel in it, not to sing a song throughout more than once in its naked form; but on its repetition, which is a natural consequence, occasioned by the brevity of the pieces in general, to break off sometimes at the

conclusion, at other times at the commencement, middle, or any certain part of a measure, and fall into a rhapsodical embellishment like '*zamzama gamak* of *Gāyaki Ang*', and after going through a variety of ad libitum passages, rejoin the melody with us much grace a: if it had never been disunited, the musical accompaniment all the while keeping time. These passages are not reckoned essential to the melody, but are considered only as a grace notes, introduced according to the fancy of the singer, where the only limitations by which the performer is bound are the notes peculiar to that particular melody, and a strict regard to time "

*/fragment from " The Imperial Gazeteer of Hungisthān" Sept. 1834.
by Prof, N,A, Willard ESQ,,MD ,, /*
