
Ildikó Kríza

Shepherd and Lamb

(A ballad-type along Hungarian and Romain border)

Razprava primerja romunsko balado z naslovom Miorița - Jagnje z madžarsko različico o umorjenem gorskem pastirju. Avtorica v prvem delu predstavi teoretični okvir preučevanja te balade, v drugem pa madžarsko varianto romunske balade, ki je nedvomno prišla v madžarsko ljudsko izročilo iz Moldavije.

The paper compares the Romanian ballad "Miorița" (Lamb) with its Hungarian variant about a murdered mountain shepherd. While the first part of the paper deals with the theoretical aspect of the ballad research its second part focuses on the Hungarian variant of this Romanian ballad which had doubtlessly become incorporated into the Hungarian folk tradition by way of Moldavia.

Miorița (pron. meeoritsa, = little lamb) is one of the most beautiful and best known ballad of Romanian folk poetry. Because of its association with pastoral life and its many-layered mythical meaning, it is generally regarded as a typical Romanian ballad. Writers, philosophers and folklorists have devoted much attention to it and specialists are constantly enriching the literature with new insights.

I. Romain ballad and its myth

Among the many popular and specialist descriptions in the international literature, the best known is the admiration expressed by the writer Mihail Sadoveanu who said in 1923 in his academic inaugural address on *Poezia populară* "we can rightly ask whether this ballad is matched in other folk poetry or art poetry, whether they have a similarly harmonious and artistic poem with its endless variants?... This ballad is so uniquely artistic in its entire structure and so imbued with deep sentiment for eternal nature that I personally regard it as the most noble poetic manifestation of our nation" (Sadoveanu Buc. 1954. 15). Later, after studying the theme, he wrote his novel *The Axe* (rom. *Baltagul*), in which he retells and further develops the folk poetry (Sadoveanu

1930). In addition, the ballad, taken from the famous collection of Vasile Alecsandri, was included in the school curriculum and became widely known as an essential part of the national culture (Alecsandri 1866. 463).

The literature classifies *Miorița* as pastoral poetry and distinguishes the colinda from the ballad (Densușianu 37–103, 123–161). According to the conclusion “the *Miorița* was born out of an episode in the life of shepherds, in the time when transhumance was still practised and shepherds met as they moved from one place to another. Later, a number of famous monographs were written on this theme, analysing all the ballad motifs separately and tracing its origin back to the archaic Balkan culture and Greek connections” (Caracostea 1934).

In 1964 Adrian Fochi, familiar with all the earlier literature, wrote what is still the most important monograph, *Miorița*, analysing 825 texts and reporting on comparative morphological research. Fochi's study is an essential work for folkloristics (Fochi 1964). In the introduction to the book, Pavel Apostol challenges Lucian Blaga's myth creation (Apostol 1964. 12). Placing the emphasis on the mythical images in the ballad, Blaga assumes the existence of a mother-centric myth, and considers that this is why the marriage with a supernatural being (with the queen, the Earth goddess or the Sun's sister) figures in the ballad (Blaga 1944). The elements of cosmic marriage are rooted in pre-Christian culture. In Blaga's myth was used a special Romania term “*place of Miorița*” as a symbole of folk soul and surrounding (Miskolczy 1994). In contrast of theory of pre-Christian heritage Mircea Eliade shows the link between the folklore elements and Christian thinking (Eliade 1965). The common feature of all the varied approaches is that *Miorița* occupies a special place in Romanian folkloristics and philosophical thinking (Vrabie 1966. 275).

What is the ballad about?

A considerable part, around half, of the hundreds of variants are ritual songs or colindas, while the other half are ballads. This difference can be observed in a number of respects in the system of motifs (Fochi 1964. 413). Romanian ballad catalogue made by Amzulescu thought, this ballad belong the poetry of shepherds (Amzulescu 1964. II. 196), but Helga Stein found an other system and called “Unmotivierete menschlichen Grausamkeit” (Stein 1974. 163). The folklorists accepted Fochi's conclusion in most regards. Ion Taloș, for example, studied the Transylvanian variants of *Miorița* and on the basis of the colinda texts made a thorough examination of the elements referring to an archaic burial rite, that is, to pre-Christian times (Taloș 1984. 15).

The text of the ballad consists of four narrative units.

1. Three shepherds meet on a mountain pasture and two of them decide to kill the third because he is the wealthiest, his flock is larger and his pasture better.
2. The chosen victim has a miraculous lamb who finds out about this and tells its master about the planned murder.
3. Knowing the inescapable future, the shepherd asks to be buried in the pasture, near the flock, with his favourite objects (axe, flute) placed beside him. And he asks that they say of his death that a princess became his wife, the sun and the moon were the witnesses, and the guests at the wedding were the trees and birds of the forest, the whole of nature.
4. In the last part of the ballad the shepherd asks the lamb in this spirit to take news of the miraculous marriage to his mother/younger sister.

The mythical elements and the especially beautiful poetic images have drawn the attention of many researchers, and the international parallels and links have been traced. Only Adrian Fochi has discussed the Hungarian variants, on the basis of the publications and data of József Faragó (Faragó 1961. 257). In the light of the latest publications I am undertaking to supplement these results and communications with the aim of reviving one of the processes of folklore through a concrete example of the question of transmission and borrowing.

II. Hungarian ballad of the murdered mountain shepherd

The lamb, which plays such a prominent role in the Romanian poetry, does not figure in the Hungarian ballads. Consequently the title and type identification could not be based on the Romain folklore. The Hungarian ballads are about the last will of the murdered mountain shepherd which is why Faragó, for example, uses the type identification of "*Will-making shepherd*", while Vargyas used the title "*The mountain shepherd murdered by robbers*" in his book on European ballads (Vargyas 1986. II. 397). Hungarian ballads research has not devoted very much attention to this type and it seems to me that it has not been given the place it deserves (Kríza 1969. 79). It is found in a small part of the Hungarian-speaking territory, in a region characterized for centuries by continuous Hungarian-Romanian coexistence (e.g. Moldavia). Vargyas mentioned in 1986 only of 14 variants, although Faragó's study indicates the existence of 30 texts (Faragó 1961. 357). New texts published in the last decade regularly produce new variants, showing the popularity of the ballad (Kallós 1973, 120; 1996, 96; Pozsony 1994. 60).

The type is characterized by a uniform text structure and variation not affecting the subject. It consists of three elements, all of which are also found in Romanian folklore.

1. The shepherd is murdered by robbers in the mountain pasture.
2. He asks to be buried and to have his flute beside him so that the wind can play a lament.
3. He asks that his mother/younger sister be told of his death that "he married the Sun's sister, the Earth's fat".

It is a demonstrable fact that the Hungarian-language ballad of the murdered mountain shepherd, the news of whose death is told in mythological images, is found among the earliest authentic folklore records. The ballad was written down in 1841-42 and sent, together with many other ballads and songs, by the local parish priest of Klézse (Cleja) to the Hungarian Academy of Sciences of the time (Domokos-Rajeczky 1956. I. 115). Because of the vicissitudes of history, the record made in the early days of folklore collecting, at the time of the origin of official folklore studies, remained unknown for a long time. Extracts from it were first published in 1936, but the full source was not published until 1956. When it was found that the 1841/42 ballad followed the laws of Hungarian folklore in recounting a well formed, full series of events in a closed, uniform structure. There is no sign indicating that it could have been translated from Romanian. Here, as in Hungarian ballads in general, the point of departure is a conflict among people and violent death which, together with the outline of the tragedy and communication of the catharsis, form a short dramatic structure. Then, as later, the description of nature and lyric experience are lacking from all variants.

Adrian Fochi, who knew the data, saw that the Hungarian ballads differed in structure from the Romanian, and examined the question with a critical eye, declared that the Hungarian ballad could not be a translation (Fochi 1964. 472). In his opinion, the Hungarian variant probably came into being as a result of a popular borrowing hundreds of years previously (Fochi 1964. 514). The earlier history of the ballad is unknown, but he assumes that the Moldavian Hungarians borrowed the text from the Transylvanian Hungarians in the 18th century at the latest, or earlier. Elements that did not survive later (or only in fragments) in Transylvania, were preserved by the traditional communities in Moldavia. (Fochi did not make a separate evaluation of the few Transylvanian variants.) In contrast, in Transylvania the Romanians preserved ballads/colindas which are the oldest version of the *Miorița* and not close to the Hungarian variants (Farágó 1977. 427).

As already mentioned, the very first version of *The murdered mountain shepherd* was recorded as a result of intentional collecting of folk poetry. It was found in Klézse (Cleja) by János Petrás in 1841/42. Three hand-written notebooks of the folklore material he collected have come down to us. Petrás was born in Moldavia in Forrófalva (Faraoani) in 1813. He became a Catholic priest, was parish priest in a number of villages, then from 1843 until his death in 1886, the victim of a murder and robbery, he lived in Klézse (Cleja). I mentioned all this to show that he was a person familiar with the culture of the region from inside. His comments on the texts show that he regarded the use of dialect words as natural. But he did not know the meaning of the shepherd's marriage with the sister of the Sun. Among the folklore material he collected, what he wrote down in 1843 was numbered one, while the data 1841/42 figures on the second and third notebooks. Most of the ballads are found in the first notebook, probably as a result of subsequent systematization.

It is an interesting fact of cultural history that the manuscript remained unknown. This situation made it possible to identify further traits of the genre because it was not until 90 years later, in 1931, that the next information on the ballad was written down by Sándor Veres (who later became a famous composer in Switzerland). In the material he collected he found a new type and a search for parallels began. The ballad was known in most of the villages of Moldavia and despite the use of a characteristically individual performance style, the text was very uniform. This observation led to the conclusion that the ballad was of Romain origin. ("This story is an adaptation of the most wide-spread Romanian ballad *Miorița*" Vargyas 1986. 399). Research brought to light more and more unknown ballads from Moldavia, and the scholars thought Moldavia was found to be the source of the most archaic Hungarian ballads and ballads which have been forgotten in other parts of the country can be found here. The Hungarian villages in the eastern part of the country can be found here. The Hungarian villages in the eastern part of the Carpathians became separated from the mother country after the political and cultural borders were formed. Because of its situation as an isolated language area, archaic text variants survived.

Two decades later the outstanding Hungarian collector of ballads, Zoltán Kallós also found again Hungarian ballads in Moldavia which were unknown in Hungary (Kallós 1973). Moreover, the stock of the folklore there reflected a state prior to the modernization in the 19th century (renewal of the language), and its poetic world was linked to the symbols of the Middle Ages. Together with the existence of special ballads, numerous ethnographic phenomena showed that the continued existence of an earlier social state can be traced in the Hungarian villages of Moldavia (Pozsony

1994. 18). A comparison of data on social development, ethnography and folklore led to the opinion that the ballad found in Hungarian folk poetry is not a translation of the Romanian *Miorița* but the further development of a popular borrowing that took place in the early modern age.

The Hungarian ballad begins with the demand made by foreign shepherds who arrive: (*Literal translation*)

The handsome, fine, white shepherd
 Guards his thousand lambs, countless sheep
 On the snowy hillside, in the snowy mountains
 He looks out over the snowy mountain
 There come three wicked swineherds:

He recognises they are murders and says:

I know, I know, that *you take off my head*
 When you have taken my head, bury me,
 Bury me by the gate of my sheep-pen,
 Put my longer pipe beside my head,
 When wind comes, blows it softly,
 People listening to it and will say
 The handsome white shepherd *is lamenting* himself.

He asks also to give the message to the relatives:

When you first reach a small smoky house
 You will find my old mother in it,
 She is washing a large woolen cloth *mourning* for me,
 I know it well, she will ask about me.
 You should say, I had married
 I married the offspring of Earth, the sister of Sun
 I married the fat of Earth and sister of Sun

Discussion of ballad's heros is short and brief: *Jól látom, hogy fejem veszitek, ha megtehetitek*" (I know, that you take off my head...). Then he asks the murderers to bury him with his flutes and then take the news to his mother such as: *megházasodott a napnak hűgával, földnek zsirjával* (he married the Sun's sister, the Earth's fat). Other expressions (e.g. "föld unokája" = grandchild of the Earth) still figure among the variants. Parallels of the unequivocal astral symbols can be found in the culture of Antiquity. In the Hungarian language they are found in 16th century Protestant hymns and they have survived right up to the present in folk tales.

The Hungarian ballads consists of three motifs only, which are also exist in Romanian folklore. The similarity can be found not only at the level of motifs but also in the shaping of the text. In both the Romanian and the Hungarian ballad the shepherd is killed. He enters into a mythical marriage and in his will gives instructions for his burial and for news of his death. The closest link can be observed in the section concerning the mythical marriage (Kríza 1978. 178).

The poetic image of supernatural marriage or death marriage can also be found in Greek, Armenian, Spanish and Ukrainian variants (Miskolczy 1994. 142). Mythical marriage is a common element of the folk tales. The supernatural bride as the hero also appears in tales and ballads. So we can say this folklore element appears in 20th century folklore tradition in a variety of ways. In the case of the Ukrainian lad who is pushed

into the sea/river, the messenger says that his beloved should not wait for him any longer because he has married another, the mermaid has become his wife. Other example is known from the Furmanov film entitled *Chapayew*, the brave partizan. In this song the soldier is dying, a black raven croaking above him, he asks the bird fly to his mother and wife saying to them he has not died, but has a new marriage under the brush. The Greek *kleftis* who is murdered in the mountains, was said at home to have married the Sun's sister. All these poetical images have a mythological background, being related to the cult of the sun and astral symbolism (Caracostea 1935.). The personification of the Sun, and the marriage of its sister with an earthly being (shepherd) still lives in 20th century Hungarian folklore as a tale motif, like in the tale AT 465 A (Nagy 1993. 153).

The symbolism of death is highly varied in Hungarian folklore too. The union with the Earth's fat could be linked both with pre-Christian fertility magic and with the Christian form of burial (Kríza 1969. 89). Burial in the ground and the funeral rites stand opposed to the sacrifice left unburied. Right up to the 20th century the funeral songs for the dead preserved, in the context of the Christian world-view, the notion that the souls of the dead went/flew to heaven and the body to the earth (Kríza 1993. 194). Only girls or men who died young were entitled to the death-wedding feast. They were buried with the pomp of a wedding and the wake consisted of wedding feast rites (Kligman 1988.). According to the Christian funeral songs, Jesus came as the bridegroom for the girl, while a virgin called the young man into the choir of angels. Only unmarried, "pure" young people were entitled to marriage with the heavenly beings. In the ballad too, it is this "purity" that makes it possible to sing of the heavenly wedding and death marriage. Mythological symbols appear in the funeral songs only indirectly, through parallel nature images.

In the Hungarian ballad, mythological images assist the portrayal of tragedy. The death awaiting the hero is itself the tragedy, but the murderers bear the burden of the will because they must take the news of their secret deed, and the mother suffers tragedy on hearing the news of the death communicated with symbols. The unique character of the Hungarian ballads arises from the portrayal of tragedy expressed with archaic elements. Despite the relationship between the motifs, it has a special message for those familiar with the given folklore.

References

- ALECSANDRI, Vasile: *Poezii populare ale românilor din Moldova*. Buc. 1866.
 AMZULESCU, Al. I. *Balada populare românești*. Buc. 1964.
 APOSTOL, Pavel: *Motivul mioritic în cultura română*. In: FOCHI, Adrian: *Miorița*. Buc. 1964. 7–20.
 BAKOS Ferenc: *Mioara*. In: *Emlékkönyv Benkő Loránd 70. születésnapjára* Bp. 1991. 31–37.
 BLAGA, Lucian: *Trilogia culturii* Buc. 1944.
 BLAGA, Lucian: *Miorița în ungurește*. *Patria* 1923. X.27.234.
 BRĂILOIU, Constantin: *Sur une ballade romanie*. La Mioritza. Geneve 1946.
 BRĂILOIU, Constantin: *Problemes d'ethnomusicologie*. Geneve 1972.
 CARACOSTEA, Dumitriu: *Miorița în Muntenia și Oltenia* Buc. 1934.
 DENSUȘIANU, Ovid: *Vieața păstorească în poesia poporului*. II. Buc. 1822–23.

- DOMOKOS Pál Péter – RAJECZKY, Benjamin: Csángó népzene. I. (Tsango Volksmusik) Bp. 1956. 63–66, 115–120.
- DOMOKOS Sámuel: A kétegyházi Miorița-kolinda (Miorița-colinda from Kétegyháza, Hungary) In: A gyulai Erkel Ferenc Múzeum Évkönyve. Gyula 1960. 99–104.
- ELIADE, Mircea: La sacre et le profane Paris 1965. Szent és profán Bp. 1996.
- FOCHI, Adrian: Miorița. Tipologie, circulație, geneză, texte. Buc. Ed. Acad, 1964.
- FOCHI, Adrian: Variantele maghiare ale Mioriței In: Miorița Buc. 1964. 458–477.
- FARAGÓ József: Háromszéki magyar Miorița (Hungarian Miorița from Háromszék/Transylvania) In: Balladák földjén Buc. 1977. 427–441.
- FARAGÓ József: Variantele maghiare ale Mioriței. Limbă și literatură V. Buc. 1961. 357–369.
- FARAGÓ József – JAGAMAS János: Moldvai csángó népdalok és népballadák. (Tsango Volkslieder und Volksballaden aus Moldavia) Bp-Buc. (1956.)
- KALLÓS Zoltán: Balladák könyve (Book of Ballads) Bp. 1973. 129–134.
- KALLÓS Zoltán: Ez az utazólevelem. Balladák új könyve (Here is my Pass. New Book of Ballads) Bp. 1996. 96–97.
- KISS Jenő - FARAGÓ, József: Bárányka (Little Lamb) Buc. 1973. 43–48.
- KLIGMAN, Gail: The Wedding of the Dead Berkeley/Los Angeles 1988.
- KRÍZA Ildikó: Balladakutatás – balladaköltészet. Ballada a román népköltészetben. (Balladenforschung – Balladendichtung. Balladen in rumänischen Volksdichtung) Ethnographia 1969. 73–90.
- KRÍZA Ildikó: Mitológémák a népballadában (Mythologemas in Folk Ballads) In: Előmunkálatok a Magyarország Néprajzához 3. Bp. 1978. 178–186.
- KRÍZA Ildikó: Mythologemas in Folk Ballads In: Myth and History Bp. 1979.
- KRÍZA Ildikó: Felsőnyéki halotti búcsúztatók (Funeral Songs in Felsőnyék) Bp. 1993.
- MISKOLCZY Ambrus: Lélek és titok. "A mioritikus tér" mítosza avagy Lucian Blaga eszmevilága, (Soul and Secret. Blaga's myth about the "place of mioritic") Bp. 1994.
- MISKOLCZY Ambrus: Miorița. Amikor a mitosz születik. (Egy román népballada. A Miorița útja Sovejától Párizsig és vissza, avagy fejezetek 150 esztendő román eszmetörténetéből a romantikus nacionalizmustól napjainkig) Bp. 1994. Diss. MTA. D 18102. (Miorița. When the myth is bornig. /A Romanian Folk Ballad. The Way of Miorița from Soveja to Paris and back. Chapters about the 150 old years romantic nationalism/)
- MOLDOVÁN Gergely: Román népdalok és népballadák (Romanian Folk Songs and Folk Ballads) Kolozsvár, 1872, 10.
- MUSLEA, Ion: Cercetări etnografice și de folclor I. Buc 1972. 18–21.
- NAGY Olga: Villási, the Táltos Boy. Gypsy Folk Tales from Méra, Szucság, Mezőbánd. Bp. 1996. 153–161. (Hungarian Gypsy Studies 9.)
- ORTUTAY Gyula - KRÍZA Ildikó: Magyar népballadák (Hungarian Folk Ballads) Bp. 1976. 96–101.
- POZSONY Ferenc: Szeret vize martján (Along the River Szeret) Kolozsvár 1994. 60–62.
- SADOVEANU, Mihail: Baltagul Buc. 1923 (A balta Bp. 1936).
- SADOVEANU, Mihail: Evocari Buc. 1954.
- STEIN, Helga: Rumänische Volksballaden Freiburg 1974.
- TALOȘ, Ion: Miorița și vechile rituri funerare la români I. (Miorița und die alten Bestattungen bei den Rumänen I.) In: Anuarul de folclor III-IV. Cluj-Napoca 1983. 15–35.

VARGYAS Lajos: Hungarian Ballads and the European Ballad Tradition II. Bp. 1986.

VRABIE, Gheorge: Balada populară română Buc. 1966. 275–293.

VULCANU József: A kis bárány (The Little Lamb) In: Fővárosi Lapok 1871. 6. 7.

Povzetek

Pastir in jagnje

(Baladni tip s področja ob madžarsko-romunski meji)

Razprava primerja romunsko balado z naslovom Miorița – Jagnje, za katero menijo poznavalci, da je ena najlepših romunskih balad, z madžarsko različico o umorjenem gorskem pastirju. Zaradi povezave s pastirskim življenjem in njenih različnih mitoloških pomenov je ta pesem uvrščena kot tipična romunska balada (čeprav je po vlogi vsaj 50 njenih variant od stotih kolednic). Avtorica v prvem delu predstavi teoretični okvir preučevanja te balade, ki so jo raziskovali tako romunski kot madžarski folkloristi (npr. Vargyas). Predstavi njeno vsebino, ki je v romunskem izročilu zgrajena iz štirih pripovednih enot, v madžarskem pa iz treh. Balada govori o umorjenem pastirju in njegovem čudežnem jagnjetu. V njej se med seboj povezujejo pastoralni in mitološki elementi. V drugem delu razprave predstavi madžarsko varianto romunske z naslovom Razbojniki umorijo gorskega pastirja, ki je nedvomno prišla v madžarsko nacionalno ljudsko izročilo iz Moldavije, kjer so stoletja živeli drug ob drugem madžarska in romunska skupnost. Glavni motiv v tej baladi je motiv mistične poroke umorjenega s »Sončevo sestro«, kar avtorica razlaga s predkrščansko-poganskimi elementi, ki so pogosti v madžarski in romunski folklori. S primerjavo obeh balad skuša avtorica predstaviti baladni tip, njegov razvoj in razširjenost v dveh različnih nacionalnih pesemskih izročilih.