

COMMON CHRISTMAS SONGS OF HUNGARIANS AND ROMANIANS IN THE TRANSYLVANIAN PLAIN

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SUMMARY. Until the middle of the 20th century carolling was one of the most popular folk traditions in Hungarian speaking areas. In several Transylvanian and Moldavian communities this continued until the end of the 20th century. On the Transylvanian Plain this tradition still lives on today. Due to the interethnic relationship between the two communities, we can discover many Romanian melodies and texts in the repertoire of the Hungarians on the Transylvanian Plain. The purpose of the study is the presentation and analysis of these.

Keywords: Transylvanian Plain, interethnic relationship, carolling, Hungarian, Romanian.

Until the middle of the 20th century, carolling was one of the favourite Christmas traditions in the Hungarian language area. Until the end of the century, the tradition of carolling was alive in many communities in Transylvania and Moldavia, and in the Transylvanian Plain it is still kept alive today. The Romanians and Gypsies living in these areas have a great variety of Christmas traditions, like the tradition of carolling, one of the most popular ones in the rural communities. Because of the long history of the many centuries of old cohabitation, the region can pride itself with rich interethnic and confessional traditions and customs.²

During my PhD studies and fieldwork, especially in ethnically varied villages, I experienced that the people living here to find it completely natural to carol with their friends, neighbours of different religion, ethnicity, culture or language. In some cases though, ethnical grouping could occur in some villages. This resulted in the Hungarian community's music repertoire borrowing some Romanian Christmas songs, lyrics and melodies. In my study I will present five folk carols from the Transylvanian Plain region and with them, the differences

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² Pozsony 2009: 226–227

and similarities between the lyrical and melodically material of the two ethnic groups carols. In researching, identifying and classifying the presented variations in the proper categories, I have used the literature and archive materials and data at hand.³ The Romanian folk songs or the ones with a joint historical background were mainly identified with the help of the carol volume of Béla Bartók⁴, and also the recently published, very detailed two volume musical synthesis written by Ilona Szenik and Ioan Bocşa. In this synthesis, the authors not only organized and typified the Romanian carol melodies in Transylvania, but they provided a masterful, up-to-date analysis of these as well⁵.

When typifying the said texts, I took the opinions of different researchers into consideration, such as Monica Brătulescu⁶ and Ferenc Pozsony⁷. Their utility system proved to be of utmost importance to my work. I defined the themes, key motifs, motifs and motif series in the texts of my analysis based on the texts and lyrics of the carols. During the analysis of the common motifs in the Hungarian repertoire and the Romanian carols, I have consulted the works of Tekla Dömötör, Zsuzsanna Faragó and Ildikó Kríza.⁸

1. Example

The small ambitus – the 1 example's Romanian variations, categorized as part of the old melody's group was compared by Béla Bartók with the first two lines of a three lined song with western origins⁹. He published the Advent song *Ó fényességes szép hajnal* (O, bright beautiful dawn) from Catholic psalm book in his carol volume as an appendix.¹⁰ The issue of the true origin of this type is still unclear, some researchers leaning towards ecclesiastical origins. According to the Régi Magyar Dallamok Tára I. (Old Hungarian Melodies Manuscript I.) the oldest known written source of the melody can be identified in the *Cantus Catholici*, published in 1651, then later in 1744 in the Calvinist Hymnbook from Kolozsvár (Cluj). According to the notes in the above mentioned source, the ancestor of the melody is an internationally known Gregorian Advent antiphon, which was used not only during ecclesiastical practices, but also as a dawn greeting song.¹¹

³ The Hungarian Academy of Sciences Research Centre for the Humanities, Folk Music Archive of Institute for Music, Budapest, Folk Institute Archive in Cluj-Napoca, „Gheorghe Dima” Music Academy Archives.

⁴ Bartók 1935

⁵ Szenik – Bocşa 2011

⁶ Brătulescu 1981

⁷ Pozsony 2000

⁸ Dömötör 1974, Erdélyi 1976, Faragó 1947, Kríza 1982.

⁹ Bartók 1935: XXIV., 29–31, nr. 45 a–p.

¹⁰ Bartók 1935: XXIV., 106, Appendix I. The variations collected on the Transylvanian Plain of the 1c. example (MNT II.: 648–649, 1113, nr. 508–510).

¹¹ RMDT I.: 311–312, 507–508, 118. sz., Péter 2008: 110–111, 48. sz.

In the first volume of the much later published *Magyar Népdaltípusok Katalógusa I.* (Hungarian Catalogue Folksong Types vol. I.) there is no mention of ecclesiastical origin and/or sources for the III type (A)/13.¹² The melody is a close, changed tonality variation of the III (A)/9 types (see example 2.); the two melodies appear under the same categorization in Béla Bartók's carol volume.¹³

Beside the text *Paradicsom mezejében, Nem sajnálom fárodságom* (In the field of Heaven, I do not regret my weariness) there have been other lyrical texts attributed to this melody, such as New Year's greetings and Christmas greetings.¹⁴

The variations that survived are well known in popular use in the Transylvanian Plain, by Romanians and Hungarians alike.¹⁵

The text of the examples analysed are identical content wise. This is the baby Jesus in the Garden of Eden, in a cradle on a golden rug, holding a golden apple in his right hand, and a golden rod in his left. The last two verses end with the fruit tree/ crucifix semiology.

According to Tekla Dömötör, the Jesus image depicted in the texts of the songs is identical with that of Mithras in Persian mythology. In the iconography depicting Jesus, the ruling symbols¹⁶ can be found in the stone-born Sungod cult as a rod (dagger), and a globe symbolizing the world. The lyrical motifs reminding us of the Mithras cult can be found also in the Romanian carolling poetry.¹⁷

Zsuzsanna Erdélyi draws attention to the similarities and parallels between the prayer genre and carol songs in her book about archaic prayer. In the prayer shown as an example, not only the first line is identical, but also the motifs are the same as the carol from the Transylvanian Plain (Erdélyi 1976: 692); two archaic prayers from Gyimes, published by Vilmos Tánczos, are almost word for word the same as the text of *Paradicsom* (Eden).¹⁸

The text based analysis show that the motifs of the songs prove to originate from different cultural and historical eras, their antecedents and parallels can be found in ancient and recent Christian culture, as well as in modern student folklore.¹⁹

¹² MNTK I.: 353–354.

¹³ See example 1. = 45 a–p, 2. ex. = 45 r–u. Bartók 1935: XXIV, 29–31, nr. 45 a–p, 38, nr. 45 r–u.

¹⁴ See: Hungarian Academy of Sciences Research Centre for the Humanities (HASRCH) Folk Music Typology System, the variations under nr.: 18.397.0/0

¹⁵ see: 1d. In: Szenik – Bocşa II. 2011: 12, nr. 128d.

¹⁶ scepter = golden rod; bull = golden apple

¹⁷ Dömötör 1974: 139–145, Kríza 1982: 111, 168, Pozsony 2000: 63–68.

¹⁸ Tánczos 1995: 106–108, nr. 58–59., 242–243, nr. 188.

¹⁹ Erdélyi 1976: 681–757, Dömötör 1974: 139–145.

E.g. 1a

Jézus Krisztus szép fényes hajnal (Jesus Christ beautiful bright dawn)

Kv 1744/250 = RMDT I./118.II.

Jé - zus Krisz- tus szép fé- nyes haj- nal

Detailed description: A single line of musical notation in treble clef, 2/4 time signature, with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody consists of a sequence of quarter and eighth notes. The lyrics are written below the notes.

RMDT I.: 311–312, nr 118.

E.g. 1b

Paradicsom kúkertjibe (In the stonegarden of Eden)

Poco rubato ♩ = cca. 110

1) Pa - ra - di - csom kú - kert - ji - be,
A - rany sző - nyeg le - te - rít - ve.

1)
2., 3., 5. vsz.

Detailed description: Two staves of musical notation in treble clef, 6/8 time signature, with a key signature of one flat. The first staff includes a tempo marking 'Poco rubato' and a note value of 'cca. 110'. The melody features a mix of quarter and eighth notes. The lyrics are written below the notes. A first ending bracket is shown above the second measure of the first staff. A second staff continues the melody. A third staff shows a first ending with a repeat sign and a first ending bracket, with the instruction '1)' above it and '2., 3., 5. vsz.' below it.

Mezőkeszű (Chesău), Cluj county, Horváth (Kicsi) Erzsébet 74,
collected by Zoltán Gergely, 2012.

E.g. 1c

Nem sajnálom fáradtságom (I do not regret my weariness)

♩ = 137

1. Nem saj - ná - lom fá - radt - sá - gom.
Csak Úr Jé - zust meg - lát - hat - nám.

Detailed description: Two staves of musical notation in treble clef, 6/8 time signature, with a key signature of one flat. The tempo marking is '♩ = 137'. The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes. The lyrics are written below the notes.

Ördögösfüzes (Fizeşul Gherlii), Cluj county, Lapohos Margit 69,
collected by Zoltán Gergely, 2012.

Zori, zori, zori (Dawn, dawn, dawn)

$\text{♩} = \text{cca. } 120$

Zori, zori, zori, dal - be su - rori,

Zori, zori, zori, dal - be su - rori.

CD. 0524. Szásznyíres (Nireș), Cluj county, Hora Silvia 38,
collected by Medan V., 1960, transcription by Iștoc L.

2. Example

According to the literature, the melody type in the second example is not only known throughout Europe and has ties with well-known two lined epical melody types, but can also be tied to the first part of a Gregorian Mary hymn written and published in the 17th century.²⁰ Beside the reciting aspect of the second example, the two lined, major pentatonic scaled folk variations widely known amongst the Calvinist population of the Transylvanian Plain are much more melodic. The way they perform the carols may vary in every village. The variations from Magyarborzás (Bozieș) and Ördöngösfüzes (Fizeșul Gherlii) (see: examples **2b.** and **2c.**) have a tendency to be performed with a parlando, quasi giusto marking, with a slower tempo, melismatic twists and turns, while the other two (see: examples **2d.** and **2e.**) can be characterized by a tighter, a more giusto performance.

On the Transylvanian Plain, more texts have been attributed to the same melody. The text starting off with *Hála legyen az Istennek* (Thanks be to God) (see: examples **2b.** and **2c.**) has no known author. According to the oral testimony of the interviewed subject, the song was taught – after WW2 – by Miklós Krizbai, a Calvinist priest from Magyarborzás. The song belonging to the repertoire of the adult groups, can still be heard today with its teachings of the birth of Jesus, and its biblical-dogmatic content. The song is also known in Ördöngösfüzes (Fizeșul Gherlii).

The lyrical variation *Szűz Mária, sárgo hajú* (Virgin Mary, fair haired) (see example **2d.**) belonging to the *Fiát kereső Szűz Mária* (Virgin Mary, seeking her son) typology, with few exceptions, thematically is similar to the variation from

²⁰ RMDT II.: 239, 479–481, nr. 75., MNTK I.: 349–350, MNT II: 651, 1135, nr. 513., Péter 2008: 113. See also HASRCH Folk Music Typology System nr.: 18.393.0/0.

Szépkenyerűszentmárton gathered by László Lajtha.²¹ Lajos Vargyas believes the ballad-like song to be of German origin; the meeting scene between Mary and the Jew girl – similarly to Lajtha – Vargyas finds that it is taken from a Hungarian cursing text.²² According to the oral testimony of Ilona Szenik, it is an independent text inserted in the above mentioned texts. This statement was supported by many Romanian carol variations. In the example from Magyarorszávat (Suatu) (see example 2e.) the weary Virgin Mary is kept awake by the “whistling” of the poplar trees, and the noises of the horses, so she “curses” them. She finally gets some peace and quiet at the oxen’s manger, so she can give light to the baby Jesus. She rewards them with a blessing for their goodwill (*the oxen calmed down*). *The Virgin Mary, the trees and the animal’s goodwill and cruelty*²³ text type and few of its motifs are very common in the Romanian carol poetry as well. An interview subject of Gipsy ethnicity from Bără (Barău) sings the melody with the following text *Nuşte, nuşte, da romale* (Rise, gypsies) (see example 2f.).²⁴

E.g. 2a

O gloriosa Virginum

CC 1651=RMDT II/75.

O glo-ri - o - sa Vir-gi - num

RMDT II.: nr. 75., 239.

E.g. 2b

Hála legyen az Istennek (Thanks be to God)

Quasi giusto ♩ = 70

Há la le gyen az Is ten nek

És meg - vál - tó Szent - lel - ké - nek.

**Magyarborzás (Bozieş), Bistrița-Năsăud county, Tóth Attila 67,
collected by Zoltán Gergely. 2007.**

²¹ Lajtha 1954: 11, nr. 1.= MNT II.: 19, 1083, nr. 25. The song starting off with *Elindult a Szűz Mária* (Virgin Mary set on her way) is incorrectly classified in the II. new year repertoire of the MNT. In the Transylvanian plain, on the first morning of the new year, the boys and men grace the houses with poemed greetings, not songs or carols. The travellers, beggars though, they travel from village to village between Christmas and Epiphany to gather food or money. They sing and wish merry holidays to their hosts. In return they receive money, baked goods, alcohol (pálínka- typical for the region). From László Lajtha’s notes, we can clearly see that the woman beggar left the village the morning after.

²² Lajtha 1947: 98–101, Vargyas 1976: 221, 580, 90. type., Erdélyi 1976: nr. 248.

²³ Kríza 1982: 80, Brătulescu 1981: 283–285, 168. type., Pozsony 2000: 69–71, Faragó 1947: 56–57.

²⁴ See Bartók 1935. nr. 45r and 45u. (Maros county, Gurghiu Mountains): texts in the gipsy language, they coincide with the text of example 2f.; Ilona Szenik accounted for two more sources in the Folk Music Archives in Cluj-Napoca, one of which is sung in two voices.

E.g. 2c

Hála legyen az Istennek (Thanks be to God)

Quasi giusto $\text{♩} = 97$

1. Há-la le-gyen az Is-ten-nek.

És meg-ál-dótt— szent lel-ké-nek.

**Ördögösfüzes (Fizeşul Gherlii), Cluj county, Páll Erzsébet 75,
collected by Zoltán Gergely, 2010.**

E.g. 2d

Szűz Mária sárgo hajú (Virgin Mary, fair haired)

Quasi giusto $\text{♩} = 73$

1. Szűz Má-ri-a sar-go ha-ju.

Szűz Má-ri-a— sar-go ha-ju.

**Ördögözfüzes (Fizeşul Gherlii), Cluj county, Bara János 79,
Kaszián (Szatmári) Róza 76, collected by Zoltán Gergely, 2010.**

E.g. 2e

Mikor Szűzmárjo földön járt (When the Virgin Mary walked the Earth)

Giusto $\text{♩} = 132-136$

1. Mi-kor Szűz-már-jo föl-dön járt.

Mi-kor Szűz-már-jo föl-dön járt.

1)

2. vsz.-től

**Magyarszovát (Suatu), Cluj county, Maneszes (Tóth) Maria 87,
Kiss (Dezső) Anna 76, collected by Zoltán Gergely, 2011.**

E.g. 2f

Nuşte, nuşte, da romale (Rise, gypsies)

Musical notation for 'Nuşte, nuşte, da romale' in G major, 2/4 time. The first line shows the melody with lyrics: Nuş - te, nuş - te, da ro - ma - le. The second line shows the melody with lyrics: Nuş - te, nuş - te, da ro - ma - le.

KZA. Mg. 3537/6, Bărâ (Barău), Cluj county, Măschitan Eva, 30., collected by Szenik I. and a group of students, 1979, transcription by Szenik I.

3. Example

The carol (3a.) with ABC structure and 4 (2) 1 cadence, Doric major hexachord tone sequence, is without a doubt of Romanian origin. Not only is it similar to the 3b. Example, but it also contains a rhythm pattern specific for Romanian carols, also known in the literature as „szaffikus diszpondeusz”. The lyrics of the variation from Mezőköbölökút (Fântânița) are also identical with the text of the above mentioned 1b. and 1c. Examples. In the Romanian variation, they always sing the third melodic line as a refrain.²⁵

E.g. 3a

Paradicsom szegeletbe (In a corner of Eden)

Giusto ♩ = 96

Musical notation for 'Paradicsom szegeletbe' in G major, 2/4 time. The first line shows the melody with lyrics: Pa-ra-di-csom sze - ge - let - be. Pa-ra-di-csom sze - ge - let - be. The second line shows the melody with lyrics: Van egy sző-nyeg le - te - rit - ve.

KZA. Mg 2941 / 117. Mezőköbölökút (Fântânița), Bistrița-Năsăud county, collected by Szenik I. – Mann G., 1975. transcription by Szenik I.

²⁵ Szenik – Bocşa 2011 II.: 49, V.C3 type, nr. 150b.

Co-lo-n gio-su, mai in gio-su (Down there, way down there)

$\text{♩} = 80$

Co-lo n gio - su, mai in gio - su, Co-lo n gio - su, mai in gio-su.

Di-mi-nea - ța lui Cră - cium.

7158. Cege (Țaga), Cluj county, Mureșan Pavel, 51, Mureșan Raveca, 53, collected by Traian Mîrza and students, 1960, transcription by Szenik I.

4. Example

Based on its structure and style, this melodic pattern is also borrowed from a Romanian carol. The general form of this structure is ABA (see **4a.**)²⁶ Béla Bartók published only one ABA and one BAA inverted variation structure under nr. 62 in his carol collection: Romanians often sing it as a fragmented structure, such as AB or BA form.²⁷

An interviewed subject from Mezőkeszű (Chesău) started the song (**4b.**) with the B line (BA), but from the second verse changes the structure back to ABA.²⁸ The Romanian variation (**4c.**) from Szamosújvár (Gherla), published by Béla Bartók is melodically and structurally identical with the ones from Szépkényerűszentmárton (Sânmartin) and Keszű (Chesău). The ABA structure forms a large group type within the Romanian carols.²⁹ This confirms the origin of the song.

In the carol catalogue published by Monica Brătulescu, we can find the text type – under the specification of the *betrayal of Judas* – in which Judas betrays Jesus for thirty silver coins.³⁰ Without a doubt, the carol sung with a

²⁶ ABA structure variations: Lajtha 1954: 53, 143–144, nr. 40. = MNT. II.: nr. 645, 505, Faragó 1947: 60–63, MNT II.: 646, nr. 1133, 504. HASRCH Folk Music Typoogy Sytem nr.: 18.398.0/0.

²⁷ Bartók 1935: 40–48, nr. 62.

²⁸ In the I. volume of the Catalogue of Hungarian Folk Song Types, the published example is also sung in an inverted BAA variation. The ABA structured melodies are often sung in an AB or Ba form as well; the reason for this might be that in practice they neglect the repeated lines, and with this the melody as well (MNTK I.: 354, III (A)/14 type.

²⁹ Szenik – Bocșa 2011 I.: 108–114, III.B1/64 type.

³⁰ Brătulescu 1981: 304, 184. type., Pozsony 2000: 78–80.

Hungarian text is of Romanian origin, because the sufferings of Christ theme are not present in the Hungarian Christmas songs. The Romanian refrain (*Florile dalbe* –White flowers) is also a translation from Romanian. József Faragó, in his collection from Pusztakamarás (Cărnăușu), publishes alongside the Hungarian variation the Romanian one as well. He concludes that textually “the Hungarian one does not coincide with the Romanian one, but in its nature, spirit and the mood it conveys, it entirely conforms to it” (the Romanian one).³¹

Now the carol is only present in the passive repertoire, the older generation recollecting only fragments of its lyrics. The carol is sung exclusively in Transylvania, especially in the Transylvanian Plain region.

E.g. 4a

Jézus az asztalnál eszik (Jesus eating at the table)

Jé - zus az asz - tal - nál e - szik, Fe - hér vi - rá - gok,
Zsí - dók a ház me - gett le - sik.

**Szépkenyerűszentmárton (Sânmartin), Cluj county, Varga György 43,
collected by Lajtha László, 1941.**

E.g. 4b

Jézus az asztalnál eszik (Jesus eating at the table)

Poco rubato ♩ = 185

2. Zsí-dók az ab-lak - nál le - sik. Fe-hér vi-rág - ja.
Zsí-dók az ab-lak - nál le - sik.

**Mezőkeszű (Chesău), Cluj county, Földvári (Horvát) Ibolya 77,
collected by Zoltán Gergely, 2012.**

³¹ Faragó 1947: 60–63.

Când cina Hristos la masă (Bartók 1935) (When Jesus ate at the table)

2, 5, 8, 17 [63] M. F. 1362 b, Gherla (Solnoc Dobăcea), un om, XI. 1910.
 T. giusto, ♩ = 88

112 j. Când ei-na Hri-stos la ma-să, Flo-ri-le-s dal-be, Când ei-na Hri-stos la mas,

5. Example

The ABCD structured, major hexachord tone sequenced Christmas carol starting off with *Betelehem kis falucskába* (In the small town of Bethlehem) – with the exception of an example from Szabolcs county – was a carol gathered in the entire Transylvanian area (Transylvanian Plain, Kalotaszeg, Udvarhely, Csík, Moldavia), and in the more archaic villages it is still part of the Christmas repertoire.³²

Example 5 has strong ties with the Christmas canzone from the Middle Ages, known all across Europe, *In natali Domini*³³, and also with a song from the 16th century. This song was published for the first time in 1744, and since then it is present in all Calvinist hymn book editions, starting off with the following lyrics: *Mondjatok dicséretet* (Give praise).³⁴

The melodic variations spread out in popular practice do not have any written sources; their survival can be attributed to word of mouth traditions.

The text of the song has been present in the Catholic devotional books since the beginning of the 20th century, and the melodies were learnt by ear. According to István Volly, Adolf Mohl was most probably the author of the text. Mohl was a priest from Győr, poet and historiographer, who wrote many Bethlehem games as well.³⁵ The melody is known in Transylvania with the same lyrics, it presents the important events in the life of Jesus, such as the birth tale, the homage of the wise men, Jesus as a teacher, the passions of Christ, the resurrection, ascension, and the outpouring of the Holy Ghost.³⁶ The close variations in

³² MNT II.: 653–654, 1135, nr. 519., MNTK I.: 598, IV(B)/75. type. See HASRCH Folk Music Typology System nr.: 18.497.0/1.

³³ RMDT II.: 320, 598, nr. 209., SZ–D–R I.: 240, nr. F/9, SZ–D–R II: 109–110, nr. F/9, MNTK I.: 379, III(B)/39. type., Dobszay 2006: 119–120, nr. 349.

³⁴ RMDT I.: 282, 643, nr. 93., SZ–D–R I.: 52, nr. I/93, SZ–D–R II.: 24, nr. I/93, Péter 2008: 72, nr. 15., 115–117, nr. 5.

³⁵ Volly 1982: 87–88, 279, nr. 70–71., Móser 1997: 102.

³⁶ Ildikó Kríza classified the carol starting off with *Betelehem kis falucskában* (In the small town of Bethlehem) in the *Jézus énekek* (Jesus songs) group (Kríza 1982: 120–123).

Romanian are also known across Transylvania. The variation in Romanian (5b.) was sung by a Hungarian subject, but content wise it is not Christmas related.³⁷

E.g. 5a

Betlehem kis falujába (In the small town of Bethlehem)

Poco rubato ♩ = cca 94



1. Bet-le - hem kis fà - lu - já - ba. Ká - rãcsõny - kor ej - fël - tãj - ba,
Fi - ú Is - ten em - ber: lett, Mind kis gyer - mek szü - le - tett.

**Búza (Buza), Cluj county, Eke (Simon) Mária 78,
collected by Zoltán Gergely, 2012.**

E.g. 5b

Pui, pușorii miei (Babies, my babies)

Poco rubato ♩ = cca. 142



1. Pu-i, pu - i - șo - rii mi - ei, Când e - rați ___ voi mi - ti - tei, ___
Io ___ me - ream pe a - ră - tu - ră, Șã strãn - geam ___ sã - mã - nã - tu - ră. ___

1)
2. vsz.



* - ** 2.vsz.-ban ismételve

**Búza (Buza), Cluj county, Eke (Simon) Mária 78,
collected by Zoltán Gergely, 2012.**

³⁷ See Bartók 1935: 96-99, nr. 96-99, 121a-m, and from these the 121 e data is gathered from the Transylvanian Plain. Szenik – Bocşa 2011 I.: 132–134, V.G group, nr. 181–184 subtype, Medan 1979: nr. 170-170, 49. According to the oral testimony of Ilona Szenik, in the popular Romanian practice, they attribute other lyrical and ballad like text to the said melodies: The wife built into the wall, The killed alpine shepherd (*Miorița*), The bride found dead. The 5c. example given by the subject from Búza, learnt the Romanian text from a Romanian neighbour.

Conclusions

In this area (Transylvania, Transylvanian Plain), it was customary until recently for the carolling groups to visit the neighbours, friends, colleagues, relatives living in mixed marriages, and of other ethnicities, religions. Until 1989 they went carolling together on Christmas Eve. These interactions resulted in the borrowing of few Romanian melodies and lyrics in the Hungarian repertoire in the Transylvanian Plain. Some of the lyrics were translated into Hungarian (such as *Jézus az asztalnál eszik* – Jesus eating at the table, for example), others were sung in Romanian.

As a conclusion we can state that the specificity (besides the preserved traditions) of the carol poetry of the Hungarians in the Transylvanian Plain is given by the elements borrowed from the Romanian community.

Translated by Halmágyi Enikő

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