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"Exile on narrow paths"

The Poetics of Early Hungarian Exile Songs

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Abstract. The Hungarian word *bujdosás* originally referred to both exile and travel in general; thus, peregrination was understood as "*bujdosás* or travel in foreign lands". This was not without a reason, as public safety, harsh travel conditions and unfamiliar foreign customs made exile and travel similar to each other. The genre of the exile song, which deals with wandering and leaving one's homeland, already in the Middle Ages was connected to the image of hopelessness caused by leaving and saying farewell, as well as with the encounter with the unfathomable nature of one's fate. The real model for later Hungarian farewell and exile songs is two poems by Bálint Balassi (cca. 1589). Seventeenth–eighteenth century complaint songs were increasingly concerned with the private sphere, turning more and more towards the lyric self. This is the experience that connects political and religious refugees, people in exile for private reasons, travellers and peregrines. Therefore, the genres of the complaint song and the exile song are markedly present in early modern popular poetry. The genre of exile song occurs with an increasing frequency already in the first half of the seventeenth century. In the early eighteenth century, the emigration waves following the end of the Rákóczi Insurgence turned exile into an everyday experience for both the exiled and those staying behind. Biblical reminiscences and the exodus motif known from the Old Testament were increasingly frequent, at times even at the expense of description of personal life. The exile song is an important and complex genre in Hungarian migration literature. These songs discuss central questions of several centuries, from fleeing personal problems to religious and political persecution, from the peregrine student's desire for freedom to the risks taken for one's worldview. They present all this in an empathetic, personal and rewritable way, constantly modifying the model at the same time.

Keywords: exile, lament songs, prayer, Hungarian popular poetry, manuscripts, popular prints, seventeenth century, eighteenth century

The genre of the exile song,[1] which deals with wandering and leaving one's homeland, already in the Middle Ages was connected to the image of hopelessness caused by leaving and saying farewell as well as with the encounter with the unfathomable nature of one's fate. The best-known Gogliard song, which served as an antecedent for later vernacular representatives of the genre, can be found in the codex entitled *Carmina Burana* and has the incipit *Dulce solum natalis patrie*.[2]

Dulce solum natalis patrie,
Domus ioci, thalamus gracie,
Vos relinquam aut cras aut hodie,
Periturus amoris rabie
Exul.

Sweet soil of my native land, / My happy home, hall of grace, / I must leave you today or tomorrow / To perish in love's madness. / [Exile.]

The student setting out on peregrination first says good-bye to his homeland, then to his company of friends. Although he has to leave because of love pain caused perhaps by a breakup, reflection on his personal life is missing. This type of exile song, where the motif of exile is a mere introduction to the expression of love complaints, appears in seventeenth century manuscripts of Hungarian lyric poetry, and later in popular poetry.

In the song repertoire of Western European Renaissance literature, these elegiac poems have a prominent role; depicting a familiar situation, they are easy to understand for everyone. The presence of the genre is made prominent by two German farewell songs, which, due to their melody, were internationally known. Here is the song written by Heinrich Isaac, which begins as *Innsbruck, ich muß dich lassen:*

Insbruck, ich muß dich lassen	[Innsbruck, I must leave you;
ich far dohin mein straßen,	I will go my way
in fremde land dohin,	to foreign land[s].
mein freud ist mir genomen,	My joy has been taken away from me,
die ich nit weiß bekummen,	that I cannot achieve
wo ich im elend bin.[3]	where I am in misery.]

1 The longer, Hungarian version of this paper: Csörsz, "Bujdosom szoros utakon." Special thanks to the research project OTKA 104758 and to the János Bolyai Scholarship of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences; to Zsombor Tóth, Ferenc Csirkés and Dávid Szabó.

2 We know of two variants: one preserved in Chartres, the other in Linz. *Carmina Burana*, 196.

3 Böhme, *Altdeutsches Liederbuch*, Nr. 254 (Förster Songbook, 1539, I, Nr. 36.) For other German representatives of this genres, see Böhme, *Altdeutsches Liederbuch*.

Funeral paraphrase (1555):

O Welt, ich muß dich lassen,
ich fahr dahin mein Straßen
ins ewig Vaterland,
mein Geist muß ich aufgeben,
darzu mein Leib und Leben
setzen in Gottes gnädig Hand.[4]

The Hungarian word *bujdosás* originally referred to both exile and travel in general; thus peregrination was understood as "*bujdosás* or travel in foreign lands".[5] This was not without a reason, as public safety, harsh travel conditions and unfamiliar foreign customs made exile and travel similar to each other. The semantic field of *bujdosás* overlaps with uncertainty, the feeling of threat, which characterised the life of the peregrine student who took a risk in order to see the wider world.

The prototype of Hungarian farewell songs is Péter Bornemisza's *Cantio optima,* cca. 1556.

Siralmas énnéköm tetűled megváltom,
Áldott Magyarország, tőled eltávoznom,
Vajon s mikor leszön jó Budában lakásom![6]

[How woeful 'tis for me from thee to be parted / Blessed land of Hungary, I leave broken-hearted. / When shall in fair Buda again be my dwelling?][7]

Bornemisza was a Lutheran preacher, who claims to be leaving Hungary due to wars and ideological strife; thus, the song belongs to the literature of religio-political persecution in Early Modern Hungary. The conditions and state of mind in exile can only be found in the refrain (When can I live in Buda again?), and the prayer of the one leaving is also missing, although later that became an indispensable feature of the genre.

The real model for later farewell and exile songs is two poems by Bálint Balassi (1554–1594) composed in 1589. The genre is indicated by the very title of one of these pieces: *Szarándoknak vagy bujdosónak való ének (Pusztában zsidókot vezérlő jó Isten)* [Song of a pilgrim or one in exile: Our God of good will who guides the Jews in the desert]. In this sense, the pilgrim, the penitent sinner has the same status as the one in exile. This poem by Balassi as well as his *Valedicit patriae (Ó, én édes hazám, te jó Magyarország)* [He bids farewell to his homeland, his friends, and all his beloved ones: Oh my sweet homeland, thou noble Hungary] were well known from

4 Böhme, *Altdeutsches Liederbuch*, notes of Nr. 254 (333).

5 From this word-family: *Erdélyi Magyar Szótörténeti Tár,* Vol. I, 1086–1090.

6 Szilády, ed., *XVI. századbeli,* 108, biographical notes: 402–403.

7 Translated by Paul Tabori.

the first edition of Balassi's *Religious Songs* in the seventeenth century, although the strophes about love and women were omitted from this edition.[8] The other stanzas, however, proved to be models for exile songs in the course of the next one and a half centuries. The poem *Oh my sweet homeland*, on the other hand, which follows this poem both in the so-called *Balassa Codex* and in some of the editions of his *Religious Songs*, does not talk about coming home at all. This is more like a farewell song, following the rhetoric of mourning poetry, mixed with the motif of love in the poet's imaginary life.[9] Since 1691, the poem *Our God of good will who guides the Jews in the desert* has simply appeared under the title *Song for people in exile;* this is an important milestone in the development of the genre, for this small booklet containing Balassi and János Rimay's poetry had countless editions in the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and the poems published in it were widely known, serving as models for the genre itself. For example, in 1773, István Gasparik applied the colophon of Balassi's poem to describe his own life:

> Bálint Balassi:
> Én édes hazámbul való kimentemben,
> Szent Mihály-nap előtt való harmad hétben,
> Az másfélezerben és nyolcvankilencben,
> Az ó szerént, szerzém ezt ilyen énekben.[10]

[When I came from my sweet homeland, / three weeks before St. Michael's Day, / in 1589 / by the Old Calendar, I wrote this song.]

> Gasparik songbook (1773):
> Én édes hazámbul való kimentemben,
> Mely történt atyámmal első octoberben,
> Ezerhétszáz után hatvankettődikben,
> Bús keserűségben szerzém ezt versekben.

[When I came from my sweet homeland / with my father on 1st October / in 1762 / I wrote this verse in great bitterness.]

The edition of Balassi's *Istenes énekek* [Religious Songs] had the form of a booklet, quite appropriate for the context of exile. It has a prose appendix with the title *Via Jacobaea, azaz Jákob pátriárkának oly uta, mely minden útonjáró s bujdosó igaz izraelitákat bátorságos és derék útra igazgat…* [Patriarch Jacob's journey, which

8 Szentmártoni Szabó, "Balassi búcsúverse," 173–211. For the overview of the genre, see Szentmártoni Szabó, "Balassi búcsúverse."

9 More about the biographical background of the poem, including Balassi's roleplay: Kőszeghy, *Balassi Bálint*, 287–89.

10 Kőszeghy and Szentmártoni Szabó, eds, *Balassi Bálint Versei,* 136.

guides every travelling or exiled Israelite towards safe and right paths],[11] which further expands on the theme. Though with a simpler title content, the later editions of the appendix provided right guidance for the true path and consolation during times of persecution against Protestants. Moreover, the piece entitled *Prayer of those setting out* is a prose version of Balassi's earlier cited poem *Our God of good will who guides the Jews in the desert.*[12]

In Balassi's other poems, love is given as the reason for exile. Some of these poems were also written in 1589. Love as a motive for exile can often be found in the works of Balassi's seventeenth-eighteenth century followers as well. In the seventeenth century, amorous farewell poems feature exile as a narrative framework; in some cases, exile merely refers to farewell to the beloved and provides an opportunity to express fidelity, while in other cases it verbalises emotional pain over the breakup. Such farewell songs contain both the male and the female viewpoint; in the eighteenth century they often assumed a dialogue format, e.g., in the case of Mihály Csokonai Vitéz's *Bútsú-vétel* [Farewell]. In this poem, the one leaving utters a prayer not for his own sake but for the beloved, regardless of his feelings for her. He seeks consolation in mutual oblivion. Take an early example from 1593:

> Már eljött én utam, el kell már indulnom,
> Óh, én víg szerelmem, tőled el kell válnom,
> Máshová bujdosnom,
> Gyötrelmet szívemben érted sokat látnom. […]
>
> Hová légyek immár én nagy bánatimban
> És idegen földen való bujdostomban?
> Mert szívem nagy búban
> Már megemísztetik rúlad való gondban.[13]

[My journey has come, now I must go, / O my cheerful lover I must leave you / and flee somewhere else / and see misery in my heart for you.
Where should I go now in my big sadness / and in exile on a strange land? / My heart in this big pain / is eaten by the troubled thought of you.]

The motif of envy and intrigue frequently occurs in early Hungarian lyrics, and later in eighteenth century popular literature as well. Love is treated more like a social interaction than the couple's private affair. The couple thus try to run away. Seventeenth-eighteenth century complaint songs were increasingly concerned with the private sphere, turning more and more towards the lyric self. This is the

11 Lőcse (today Levoča, Slovakia), 1670.

12 Balassi and Rimay, *Istenes énekek,* P–P2.

13 Stoll, ed., *Szerelmi és lakodalmi énekek,* Nr. 6, verses 1 and 4.

experience that connects political and religious refugees, people in exile for private reasons, as well as travellers and peregrines. Therefore, these genres were markedly present in early modern popular poetry. They retained their syncretic features already detectable in the case of Balassi, unconsciously uniting prayer, sadness over exile, and the catharsis deriving from pilgrimage and farewell to the beloved.

The genre occurs with an increasing frequency already in the first half of the seventeenth century. The most influential sample is Zsigmond Balogh's farewell song *Bánatimnak örvényében* [In the swirl of my sorrow] composed in 1664 in the court of Count Miklós Zrínyi, captain-general of Croatia. Copied several times by the eighteenth century, it is the earliest exile song which was popular and was combined with other exile songs. It dates back to György Szentsei's songbook from Transdanubia in 1704, while in the rest of the eighteenth century, it was included in anthologies in North Hungary (today Slovakia), but we do not know of printed editions. The song is none other than a description of life in a frontier fort, and the lyric I is a soldier himself, who unexpectedly has to go into exile. Thus, his exile is not caused by love pain, and he does not consider it part of his identity. The rest of the poem is made up of the words of farewell spoken by his fellow soldiers; the lyric I wishes them good luck in battle, hoping for a reunion of the community.

Jóakaróim, vitézek,
Kik hol vagytok, végbéliek,
Isten légyen már veletek,
Emlékezetben legyetek!

Mindenben Isten vezértek
Légyen, vitézek, tinektek,
Mikor pogánokkal víttok,
Nemzetünkért vagdalkoztok. […]

Gyakor szerencsés csatákat
Vitézül néktek kívánok!
Adja Isten, jövendőben
Tiveletek egyetemben!

Drága, laktam szép földemben,
Elhiszem azt jövendőben,
Kit lásson meg az én fejem,
Hogy lészek még víg örömben.[14]

[My friends, soldiers, / who live in the frontiers, / God be with you, / be in the memory of others!
I wish you the fighting / of fortunate battles! / May God let me take part / in these with you!
May God lead you, / soldiers, / when you fight with the pagans / and for our nation!
I believe I will live / on my beautiful dear land, / I hope I will live / to be happy here.]

It is this intimate milieu of camaraderie that is the subject of parody in the poem entitled *Egy bujdosó szegény legény* [Exile lament of a dismissed soldier][15]

14 *Szentsei-daloskönyv* [Songbook of György Szentsei] (before 1704), In Varga, ed., *Az 1660-as évek*, Nr. 57/I, verses 7–9 and 12.

15 Jankovics and Stoll, eds, *Énekek és versek*, Nr. 188.

from the end of the seventeenth century. Not a monologue, the poem is made up of descriptive strophes. It has a monologic variant, a humorous complaint song with the incipit *Mit búsulsz, kenyeres…* [Why are you sad, friend…],[16] which is known to have copies from the eighteenth century, even a popular print edition. Both songs are about poverty, ragged clothes, and worn-out weaponry, as well as about the danger of moral decay deriving from it. The *Egy bujdosó szegény legény* [Exile lament of a dismissed soldier] features an external observer and has a somewhat more optimistic tone: the soldier dismissed from service at one of the frontier fortresses is only waiting for an appropriate task, ready to sacrifice his life. This motif substitutes the prayer of the exiled ones as well as their expression of hope for a reunion with the community, even when there is no real hope. This song also entered folk tradition in Transylvania and Moldavia, but instead of the military topic it came to be connected to old-style complaint songs and exile songs. These less didactic genres of a more personal nature (love song, complaint and exile song) have a more open text in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, sometimes with only a single strophe remaining.

Aside from perpetuating these traditions and a few old texts, in the eighteenth century the exile song received new elements. In the early 1720s, the emigration waves following the end of the Rákóczi Insurgence made exile an everyday experience for both the exiled and those staying behind. The motif of insecure roads is complemented by that of the crisis caused by the alien character of other lands. Both in Kelemen Mikes's famous collection, *Törökországi levelek* [Letters from Turkey, 1717–1758], and in the exile songs the place where one is fated to go is not a real arrival but there is no way to go beyond it. In that place, one is surrounded by strangers; all one can cling to is a fading memory, even if it is of universal significance.

Biblical reminiscences and the exodus motif known from the Old Testament are increasingly frequent, at times even at the expense of the description of personal life. Such collective, sacred *topoi* have the effect of easing the pain of farewell and exile. It is due to their apparent impersonality that these motifs gained popularity: it was the audience's task to add the missing parts to the story. One of the important causes of exile was the persecution of Protestants in the 1670s and 1680s. The biblical vocabulary of the songs pertaining to it reflects the attitude of Protestant preachers taking refuge in Western Europe or Transylvania.

In what follows, I will present a few characteristic eighteenth century exile songs. In this period, the prototypes of the genre were two songs, one with the incipit *Ideje bujdosásimnak* [The times of my exile], the other with the incipit *Gondviselő*

16 Varga, ed., *Az 1660-as évek*, Nr. 90. Mihály Balázs wrote an excellent analytical essay (2011) about it disguised as an encyclopaedia entry.

édes Atyám [Holy Father, my guardian]. They were best known and most widespread in this century, even if they might date from an earlier period, and even if they might have only derivatively entered the *Kuruc* (rebel) traditions. True, the political atmosphere was gloomy after the Rákóczi Insurrection, but it is still a question whether all authors in exile were *Kuruc* and whether they were political refugees. In certain cases, the answer is yes, as is evidenced by the next song:

> Édes hazám, szánjad válásom,
> Messze földre van indulásom,
> Úgy fordulhat, világból is lesz kimúlásom.[17]

[My dear homeland, be sad because of my departure, / as I must leave for a faraway land, / and it might happen that I exit this world.]

while the song *Sírva írt levelem ('I wrote this letter crying')*[18] is about persecution and threats:

> […] Mert sok esztendeje,
> Hogy ellenség mérge
> Hazámból kivete
> Szernyű nagy ínségre. […]
>
> Istenem, Istenem,
> Most is én nemzetem
> Nem szána engemet –
> Te légy segítségem!
>
> Mindenütt ellenem
> Támad ellenségem,
> Szonnyúhozza vérem –
> Isten reménségem!
>
> Hegyeken, völgyeken,
> Falukon, utakon,
> Erdőkön, mezőkön
> Nékem ellenségem.[19]

[It has been many years / since the rage of the enemy / threw me from my homeland / to this horrible trouble.

O my Lord, my Lord, / my nation does not support me, / please help me!

17 *Bocskor Codex*, 1716; Csörsz and Küllős, eds, *Közköltészet*, Nr. 59.

18 The paraphrase of a song written in Tatar captivity in the 1650s.

19 Csörsz and Küllős, eds, *Közköltészet*, Nr. 61, verses 4 and 6–8.

Everywhere my enemies / are attacking me, / wanting my blood, / but the Lord is my hope!
In valleys and in hills, / in villages and in roads, / in forests and on fields / my enemies are there.]

The lonely refugee in the following song can no longer trust anyone but wild beasts:

> Sem apám, sem anyám, sem jó atyámfia,
> Hát csak magam vagyok az idegen földön!
>
> Jóakaróm is nincs, jó barátom sincsen,
> Nem csuda az oka, hogy jó kedvem sincsen.
>
> Ez idegen földön nyomorúságomnak,
> Egyik ez az oka az én bánatimnak. […]
>
> Ha jóakaróim engem elhattanak,
> Én laktam földemről engem kihíttanak,
>
> Csak legyetek nekem tü jóakaróim,
> Kegyetlenben lakó fene jó barátim.[20]

[I have neither father, nor mother, nor good relations, / I'm alone in a strange land!
I have neither an ally, nor friend, / No wonder, I'm not in a good mood.
In the strange land, this is one of the reasons / for my misery and sadness.
When my allies drive me away, / and chase me from my land,
You should be my friends, / you cruel beasts!]

These poems were copied by János Bocskor from the now lost papers of his father, Mihály Bocskor, who had spent several years in exile in Moldavia.

Similar to earlier times, in the eighteenth century, the word *bujdosás* ('exile') could refer to travel either in Hungary or abroad, and it could also mean travel on duty at home ("legation" or peregrination). In science, the word for a planet was *bujdosó csillag* ['a wandering or exiled star']. The best-known exile text is the *Árgirus históriája* [The History of Prince Árgirus] published in a popular edition in the sixteenth century, which refers to the journey of this fabled prince with the word *bujdosás*. This fiction greatly contributed to the constant presence of this subject in the Hungarian tradition, for example, *Csongor és Tünde* [a fairy play about Csongor and Tünde] by Mihály Vörösmarty (1830) and *János vitéz* [an epic poem about John the Valiant] by Sándor Petőfi (1844). The exile song thus served as a model for the poetic expression of other similar situations, putting into words common experiences and

20 Csörsz and Küllős, eds, *Közköltészet*, Nr. 60.

ideas that impacted the lives of both *Kuruc* soldiers in exile and students on peregrination abroad. Naturally, these are characteristic features of popular poetry: associations are constantly changing, and texts are continually shaped by the interaction between personal attachment and the impersonal, general rhetoric framework. Songs with an identical syllabic structure of 4×8 and with an identical metre (e.g., *Egy bujdosó szegény legény* [A Poor Lad in Exile]) were prone to combination; due to the shared features of the genre, it was the wandering strophes that became more dominant, while the more personal, more unique parts of songs were pushed into the background.

Let us now examine two important exile songs that were prominent representatives of the genre for centuries. Both of them treat exile with acquiescence and as a condition brought on by fate, and even when they specify the reasons for exile, they do so in only a sketchy fashion. One of the two poems has the incipit *Gondviselő édes Atyám* [Holy Father, my Guardian…].[21] We are not entirely certain about its author, but the acrostic in some of its textual variants yields the name István Geszti, who might have been identical with the István Geszti found in a list of students at the Calvinist College of Marosvásárhely (today: Târgu Mureş, Romania), dating from 1687. If this identification is correct, it is not surprising that the song can be found in other late seventeenth-century sources as well. During the eighteenth century, it spread everywhere in Hungary, and is especially popular in the folk tradition, as well as in Calvinist and Unitarian sources up to the 1820s. We do not know of any popular edition.

This poem is a characteristic Protestant prayer about lonely exile and the sense of abandonment and destitution. There are no farewell strophes, for there is no one to say good-bye to; however, there are several references to poverty and vulnerability. The title of the present paper, *Exile on narrow paths*, is taken from this poem and evokes Jesus's Sermon on the Mount: "Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:14) but it uses the wording of *The Story of Apollonius*, which was widely circulated in popular editions: *A Szentírás mondja, hogy szoros út vagyon* [The Holy Scripture Says that Narrow is the Way]. Aside from the popularity of the adventures of Árgirus, those of Apollonius known from antiquity also contributed to the spread of the topic of exile, since it is in relation to the essence of Árgirus' fate that the Biblical reference in this poem sums up the importance of the ability to hope and to tolerate suffering.

One of the best-known belletrists of the eighteenth century, Kelemen Mikes, on the other hand, received Protestant education in his early years; thus he presents exile as internal exile, penitence, and endurance that leads to salvation. Not only

21 Jankovics and Stoll, eds, *Énekek és versek*, Nr. 187.

does he refer to the Bible, which he repeatedly quotes in Hungarian translation, but he also uses its most common verses circulating in lay contexts. The last strophes of the poem *Gondviselő édes Atyám* also contribute to the biblical context: the Island of Patmos evokes the exile of John the Apostle and the Book of Revelations. Wherever fate takes man, God will protect him. Moreover, it is perhaps in such "narrow paths" or "narrow ways" that we can experience and understand God's omnipotence. The final part of the poem is similar to certain strophes in the next song: wherever we meet our death in exile (i.e., life in this world), the Lord will raise our soul.

The next poem with the incipit *Ideje bujdosásimnak* [The Times of my Exile…][22] was written by András Jánóczi, an otherwise unknown author. Although the text is usually dated to the end of the seventeenth century, it is probably much younger. It can be first attested in manuscripts in the 1760s, and its first printed edition that we know of dates from 1785, although it may well have appeared long before that. Even if we disregard instances when this poem was mixed with the text of *Holy Father, my Guardian…*, we can see that *The Times of my Exile…* replaced *Holy Father, my Guardian…* in the tradition, taking over its role and being circulated on a national level, particularly in Catholic contexts. Its folkloric variants also derive primarily from the Catholic regions of Eastern Transylvania, such as the Csík and Gyergyó regions. Therefore, we scarcely find it in the same sources as the poem *Holy Father, my Guardian…* These two poems are alternate texts, which are thematically related to and are rereadings of each other and can be found in different regions in a complementary distribution. These dynamics of alternate texts are seen in other popular poetic genres as well.

Ideje bujdosásimnak,
Eljött már távozásomnak,
Szomorú utazásomnak,
Sok okai vannak annak.

Angyalodat, én Istenem,
Küldjed, hogy kísérjen engem,
Utaimban vezéreljen,
Minden gonosztól megmentsen.

[The times of my exile / and departure have come, / my sad journey / has a lot of causes.
O God, send your angel, / to be my companion, / to guide me on my paths / to deliver me from evil.]

22 Jankovics and Stoll, eds, *Énekek és versek*, Nr. 189.

The song originally alludes neither to personal life events, nor to political and other persecutions. More importantly, it expects the audience to empathise with the condition of exile, and it presents a prayer to God, reassuring the lyric I wandering abroad that his soul will be saved wherever he goes. This is followed by the farewell to those staying at home whom the lyric I cannot hope to ever see again. The only company the exiled lyric I is left with is God, and similarly to Balassi, all he is asking of his family and friends is to keep his memory, intending his past to replace his present, for his friends and family will know nothing of the latter. The sadness of the song is absolved in the end by the lyric I blessing his loved ones and the Trinity, and we encounter the motif of the guardian angel again that we saw at the outset of the poem.

From 1832, *The Times of my Exile…* poem spread not only in manuscripts and popular lay editions, but also in the form of a religious printed edition, which is a rare phenomenon. Most of its variants date from around 1770, the 1820s, and the 1830s. The dates of its issue might be related to the wave of emigration following the *Siculicidium*, the Massacre at Madéfalva in 1764, which affected primarily the Catholic population of the Csík and Kászon regions. It is the popular culture and folklore of these emigrant Szeklers that made such a strong impact on Moldavia and Bucovina. It has many folkloric variants; for example, we know of its versions that are mourning songs and vigil songs.

From later variants the last strophe saying farewell and the prayer is either missing or is shorter. However, the argumentative part of the poem is unaffected and is sometimes expanded, with the reasons for exile becoming more emphatic. The questions in the following strophe have an intensive wording, which render this essentially apathetic poem agitated. Remarkably, however, they are taken from certain older variants of the song *Holy Father, my Guardian…*

> Szegény vagyok, hogy-hogy éljek?
> Idegen földre hogy menjek?
> Útravalót hogy keressek?
> Kenyeret is, haj, hogy vegyek?[23]

[I'm poor, how shall I live? / How shall I go to a foreign land? / How shall I get my provisions? / How shall I buy any bread?]

The following variant is a later one, and only a few of its strophes remind us of the *Urtext*. The onset of the poem is also different, although familiar to the modern reader:[24]

23 Jankovics and Stoll, eds, *Énekek és versek*, Nr. 189/X, verse 6.

24 Jankovics and Stoll, eds, *Énekek és versek*, Nr. 189/XI.

Elbúcsúzom országomtúl,
Kedves kis Magyarországtúl,
Visszanézek félutamból,
Szememből a könny kicsurdul.[25]

[I bid farewell to my country, / to my dear little Hungary, / looking back from halfway, / my tears are starting to flow.]

As attested by Pál M. Bodon's folk music collection from the Csík region (1907),[26] the melody, which has become widely known in Hungary and, thanks to Béla Bartók's collection of folk music (1906)[27] and Hungarian musical education in elementary schools, might have accompanied the first strophe of the *Urtext*, although its other folkloric versions might belong to different melody families.

The poem has a 23-strophe long Slovak paraphrase beginning as *I čas prišel k vandrovani* [The time has come that I bid farewell],[28] which was recorded by Miklós Jankovich at the end of the eighteenth century. The Slovak text follows the Hungarian Urtext quite faithfully. Interestingly, individual strophes in the poem are also related to other Hungarian exile songs. For example, strophe one corresponds to strophe five of *Holy Father, my Guardian;* strophes two and three are mere expansions of the preceding strophes; and originally strophes four and five might have belonged to a Hungarian religious song of consolation.

By the end of the eighteenth century, the exile and farewell songs that had been circulating for a long time were combined with each other with increasing frequency. The variants of the song *In the Swirl of my Sorrow* can be traced up to the nineteenth century, especially in North Hungary (today Slovakia). It is only the first four strophes that are preserved in the so-called *Lőcse Songbook* from 1768. The most interesting variant of the poem can be found in a manuscript entitled *Világi énekek és versek* B. P. [Mundane songs and poems]) and dated 1800.

25 *Kopácsi ék* [Songbook from Kopács] (1822–1825) 70–71, verse 1. Published in Jankovics and Stoll, eds, *Énekek és versek,* 918.

26 Today: Harghita county, Romania.

27 Original beginning of the text: *Elindultam a hazámból* [I have left my homeland], published by Kodály, *A magyar népzene*, Nr. 117.

28 Jankovich, Miklós: *Nemzeti Dalok Gyűjteménye* [Collection of National Songs] (beginning of the nineteenth century) VII, 15a–16b; this volume might be a copy of the *Jankovich–Erdélyi-kódex* (before 1740). Modern Slovak transcription and Hungarian translation: Varga, ed., *A kuruc küzdelmek költészete*, Nr. 93.

Bánatimnak örvényiben
Jaj, mint estem nagy véletlen,
Nincs, ki szánja szegény fejem
Te kivöled, én Istenem.[29]

Bánatimnak örvényében
[In the swirl of my sorrow]

Az tavaszi szép időknek
Látom, mindenek örülnek,
Erdők, mezők megződülnek,
Az madarak énekelnek.[30]

Lecsordulván szemem könyve,
Sírva néznek mindenekre,
Mert hazámnak szép címere
Keservesen jut eszemben.[31]

Homályban beborult napom,
Gyászban öltözött csillagom,
Mert virágzó állapotom
Gyászban fordult, az mint látom.[32]

Az ég alatt, az föld szényin
Vagyon-é ilyen jövevény?
Az egész föld kerekségin
Nem is találsz ilyen szegényt.[33]

Gondviselő édes Atyám,
[Holy Father, my guardian]

Nincsen nékem atyám s anyám,
Az kihez folyamodhatnám,
Isten nékem az én atyám,
Minden ország az én anyám.[34]

Mindenektűl elhagyattam,
Csak Istenemre maradtam,
Minden dolgom reá béztam,
Ő szent felségire hagytam.[35]

29 Varga, ed., *Az 1660-as évek*, Nr. 57/I, verse 1.
30 Varga, ed., *Az 1660-as évek*, Nr. 57/I, verse 2.
31 Varga, ed., *Az 1660-as évek*, Nr. 57/I, verse 3.
32 Varga, ed., *Az 1660-as évek*, Nr. 57/I, verse 6.
33 Jankovics and Stoll, eds, *Énekek és versek*, Nr. 187/I, verse 9.
34 Jankovics and Stoll, eds, *Énekek és versek,* Nr. 187/I, verse 10.
35 Jankovics and Stoll, eds, *Énekek és versek,* Nr. 187/I, verse 11.

Bujdosom szoros utakon,
Ösméretlen földhatáron,
Forgok sokféle próbákon
Az idegen országokon.[36]

Kell immár búcsúmat vennem, *Ideje bujdosásomnak*
Édesanyám, atyám s néném, *[The times of my exile]*
Szerelmes bátyám és öcsém,
Mert tovább nincsen itt létem.[37]

Isten hozzátok, pajtásim,
Vélem felnyőtt jó barátim,
Kikkel sokszor nyájasságim
Voltak és szép mulatságim.[38]

Nékem az mi jót tettetek,
Isten fizesse meg néktek!
Hosszabbétsa életetek.
Hogy őtet tisztelhessétek.[39]

Nem szólok már, csak hallgatok, *Bolondság volt nádhoz bízni*
Mert azzal se használhatok. *[It was foolish to trust in a reed]*[40]
Kérlek, rólam tanuljatok,
Másnak is példát adjatok.[41]

[In the swirl of my sorrow / Alas, I fell unexpectedly, / Nobody feels pity for me / except you, my God.
I see everybody is happy / because of the nice springtime weather, / the forests and the fields are turning green, / and the birds are singing.
My tears flowing, I look at everything crying, / because I remember the coat-of-arms of my homeland with sorrow.
My sun has been clouded / and my star has dressed in black, / because my blossoming life / has turned to grief as I can see.
Is there such a newcomer / under the sky or on the surface of the Earth? / You cannot find anybody this poor on the whole globe.

36 Jankovics and Stoll, eds, *Énekek és versek,* Nr. 187/I, verse 12.
37 Jankovics and Stoll, eds, *Énekek és versek,* Nr. 189/I, verse 14.
38 Jankovics and Stoll, eds, *Énekek és versek,* Nr. 189/I, verse 16.
39 Jankovics and Stoll, eds, *Énekek és versek,* Nr. 189/I, verse 17.
40 Stoll, ed., *Szerelmi és lakodalmi versek*, Nr. 226/VII, verse 9.
41 Stoll, ed., *Szerelmi és lakodalmi versek*, Nr. 94.

I have no father and no mother / to turn to, / God is my father, / every country is my mother.
I have been abandoned by everything, / I have been left with God, / I have trusted all my things to him, / and have given them to him.
I exile on the narrow path, / on unknown lands, / I go through various ordeals / in strange countries.
Now I have to bid my farewell / to my mother, my father, my sister, / my older and younger brother, / because I cannot live here anymore.
Goodbye fair companions…
All the good things you have done to me / may God return to you, / may he lengthen your lives, / so that you can honour him.
I no longer speak but listen, / because my words are useless. / Please learn from me, / and give an example to others.]

Although this is a mixed variant, it is a fine composition. The original beginning strophes (e.g. a patriotic complaint in 1–4) are followed by *Holy Father, my guardian* (I/9–12), the *The times of my exile…* (I/14+16, 17) and finally the last strophe of a song with the incipit *Bolondság volt nádhoz bízni* ['It was foolish to trust a reed'], which was a well-known seventeenth century love song also found in popular editions.

The first data about the complaint song *It is miserable to have been born to this land,* whose author István Dobai (or Posoni) is only known from an acrostic, dates from the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This is not an exile song but the mythological reference in one of the strophes recalls that genre.

> De csak a' keserves,
> Lelkemnek gyötrelmes,
> Hogy bújdosom mint Ulisses,
> Ki sokat járt, és lett híres.[42]

[The only thing / which makes me bitter, and my soul sad, / is that I am in exile as Ulysses, / who travelled a lot and became famous.]

Primarily known from Transylvanian Protestant manuscripts, this song of self-pity and critique of envy has popular editions as well as copies in Debrecen. Some of its passages are the source for the mid-eighteenth century exile song beginning as *Siratom magam magamat* [Only I mourn for myself]. The latter piece is reminiscent of the atmosphere of *Holy Father, my guardian…*, as the poet separated from everyone speaks of exile as well:

> Jó barátimról meg válni
> Idegen hellyen bujdosni

42 Jankovics and Stoll, eds, *Énekek és versek*, Nr. 186/I–X, verse 10.

Láttatom mélly sírba szállni
Mint tellyes gállyán merülni […][43]

[As I have to depart from my good friends / and to exile in strange places, / I look like one who descends to a deep grave, / as if a full ship sank.]

The most important prayer in the poem is also related to the textual family of the *Holy Father, my guardian…*, especially the subject of the poem with the incipit *Meguntam már a bujdosást* [I have grown tired of exile]:

Áldott Isten sok járasom
Szánd meg ennyi bujdosasom
Jelents meg hol lesz lakásom
Veggre tsendes nyugovásom.[44]

[O blessed God pity my many exiles / and my wandering, / Let me know where I can leave / and where I can finally quietly rest.]

The following strophe might be considered reminiscent of Mikes, that is, of certain biblical texts that inspired him:

Az Istennek akarattya
Hogy ezt velem kostoltattya
Lábam soka nem fáraszttya
Valaha végit szakaszttya.[45]

[It is God's will / to make me taste this / not to tire my feet any longer, / and to end it.]

It is not difficult to see the reason why the rich tradition of exile songs of the seventeenth-eighteenth centuries was alive for so long and why there were relatively few new additions to the genre. In the period under study, exile songs with an amatory subject continued to be circulating, especially two songs, Őszi harmat után [After the autumn dew][46] and *Bokros búk habjai rám tódultanak* [I am overwhelmed by the waves of sorrow],[47] though the latter had lost its original context. In addition, there are songs, some of them of a dialogic structure, about the separation of lovers due to conscription, such as the one with the incipit *Kardommal övedzem, látod, édes szívem* [I gird myself with a sword, my love] and others.

As has been shown, the exile song is an important and complex genre in Hungarian migrational literature. These songs discuss central questions of several

43 Csörsz and Küllős, eds, *Közköltészet*, Nr. 63/IV, verse 4.

44 Csörsz and Küllős, eds, *Közköltészet*, Nr. 63/I, verse 5.

45 Csörsz and Küllős, eds, *Közköltészet*, Nr. 63/I, verse 4.

46 Stoll, *Szerelmi és lakodalmi versek*, Nr. 276.

47 Jankovics and Stoll, eds, *Énekek és versek*, Nr. 184.

centuries, ranging from fleeing personal problems to religious and political persecution, from the peregrine student's desire for freedom to the risks taken for one's worldview. They present all this in an empathetic, personal and rewritable way, constantly modifying the model at the same time. The motifs of internal and external pressures for migration were transferred by this highly polished poetic tradition into folk poetry, especially the genre of the soldier's complaint, the folklore of the Hungarian diaspora after the failed Revolution and War of Independence of 1848-49, or the folklore of the Hungarian diaspora in North America.

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