
***Meogo 9 Versus Texts with the Motif of a Transparent Excuse of Water
Clouded by Stags or Horses:***

Outlining the Proto-Model. Revised and Expanded

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In his broad study about the motifs of lover's meetings and partings at dawn published in 1965¹ Arthur Thomas Hatto spotted a group of texts coming from French, Gascon, Breton, Lithuanian, Bulgarian and ex-Yugoslav traditions which share certain similarities with two *cantigas d'amigo* of a 13th-century Galician-Portuguese poet, Pero Meogo (Hatto, 1965: 39–40, 73–74, 84–86). Meogo 9 clearly belonged to this group of texts, while Meogo 5 shared with them the specific motif of an animal stirring the water, which is a deer in Meogo's case.

Common to these texts is a unique motif which Hatto named a *transparent excuse of water clouded by an animal*, which, apart from the traditions already named, has not been found in any other region of the world. The motif consists of the excuse that a girl, instructed by her beloved, offers to her mother after arriving home late: an animal had clouded the water at a spring, so she had to wait until the water was clear again in order to draw it and bring it home. From the daughter's story, the mother immediately understands that she met her lover at the spring. The recurrence of the motif relative to its geographic distribution (conservative areas on the borders of the continent) and similarities between the texts caused Hatto to believe that it might be very old, exclusively European and might have originated in the same, though uncertain, center of diffusion (Hatto 1965: 73, 84–86).

Although there are only five texts in Hatto's *Eos* which belong to this group (one Serbian, one Croatian, one Bulgarian and two Lithuanian), we know – from the chapter dedicated to this family of texts – that Hatto was also familiar with Meogo 9 and with some French, Gascon and Breton representatives of this family (Hatto 1965: 73, 84–85). In spite of the fact that Hatto's access to the traditions in which these texts were found was limited, the information he had was sufficient to discern the existence of this family of texts and define its distinctive features. The major one was definitely the motif of a *transparent excuse of water troubled by an animal*, but, as he noticed, apart from different animal species blamed for stirring the water, “the chief features of the song remain surprisingly uniform over the centuries despite its wide dissemination” (Hatto 1965: 84–85). Among the main

¹ *Eos: An Enquiry into the Theme of Lovers Meetings and Partings at Dawn in Poetry*. Ed. and General Survey by Arthur T. Hatto. The Hague: Mouton, 1965.

characteristics of the group he mentions the allusion that the animal which stirs the water may refer to a lover coming from another village or community – especially marked in the Bulgarian ballads – and the dawn as the probable time reference of the lovers' meeting by the spring (Hatto 1965: 85).

Among these European texts Hatto discerned two main branches: one in which the animal mentioned is a bird, and another in which the animal is a stag or a horse. According to Hatto's observations, the prototype of the first group should be a wild drake, while the stag should be the proto-model of the other. Both models must be very old, although the primacy of the *stag* or the *drake* type "cannot be decided for lack of evidence" (Hatto 1965: 85–86).²

On two occasions I have written about this family of texts and made a comparative analysis of those I was familiar with (Trubarac 2010; 2011: 78–110). I tried to shed more light on Meogo's *cantigas* and stags, beginning with the fact that, so far, there are only five texts in the complete corpus of the world's poetry in which the motif of deer which troubles the water has been found³: Meogo 5 and 9; the Serbian ballad *I wooed a maiden for three years*⁴ (*Manuscript of Erlangen*, 36), which is the Serbian representative from *Eos*; and two Serbian traditional songs unknown to Hatto, in which the motif of the stag stirring the water does not appear within the motif of *transparent excuse*. The first one *Early, arose the maidens* (Vuk I, 199), is a ritual song belonging to a spring custom called *ranilo* (see Appendix 1). The second one, *Oh, Danube, [oh] silent waters* (Vuk I, 669), which is probably related to some kind of prenuptial custom, is a song in which the motif of a deer troubling the water appears within the so-called Slavic-Antithesis (see Appendix 2). This lends additional importance to these Serbian texts and makes them essential for the study of Meogo's *cantigas* and the symbols present in them. The symbolic, formulaic and structural links between the ritual song *Early arose the maidens* and the ballad *I wooed a maiden for three years* (Trubarac 2010: 47–49; Trubarac 2011: 184–186) suggest that the ballad might share some mythological content with the song.

² Hatto launches several hypothesis about the possible directions of the migration of the song and the transformation of stag into drake and vice-versa, but as there was no evidence which could convincingly support any of them, he concludes that "the centre of diffusion is unknown" (Hatto 1965: 73).

³ There is one anonymous Castilian *zéjel*, *Cerbatina, que no me la buelbas* (M. Frenk Alatorre 2003, vol. 1, n° 322), which can be related to these four texts. It was written in the 17th century, and presents the only case in which a doe troubles the water. Bearing in mind the masculine erotic symbolism of Meogo's stags which cloud the water, the critics generally agree that the transformation of the deer into a doe shifted the pragmatic reading of the *zéjel* towards completely different contexts compared to those of Meogo's *cantigas* (Trubarac 2011: 59–61). For that reason, this text is excluded from the analysis.

⁴ This is the translation of the incipit, which appears in *Eos* and under which the ballad was presented for the first time in English. Its correct and literal translation would be: *For three years I was asking for the hand of a maiden*.

As the problems related to the diversity of animals troubling the water within the motif of *transparent excuse* is complex, here I will focus only on the *stag group* (which includes stags and horses). In addition to the group of texts known to Hatto (Meogo 9, the Serbian *I wooed a maiden for three years* and one Bulgarian ballad), I will include the French and the Breton representatives of the *horse type*, which were unknown both to Hatto and to me at the time I wrote about this topic before.⁵

Meogo 9 and European ballads and songs with the motif of a transparent excuse of water clouded by a stag or a horse

In this section, the comparative analysis will be applied to seven texts, grouped in five sections:

1. Meogo 9.
2. Serbian ballad *I wooed a maiden for three years* (*Просио девојку за три године*), *Manuscript of Erlangen*, 36.
3. Bulgarian ballad *Marushchitsa set off* (*Тръгнала е Марушчица*), Bukoreshtliev, 258.
4. Breton *gwerz* *The Fountain of Wasc'halek* (*Feunteun ar Wasc'halek*), Guillorel 2008: 215–216.
5. A fragment of a song recorded in Brittany, but sung in French, which is a variant of a French song *The Girl at the fountain before the sunrise* (*La fille à la fontaine avant soleil levé*), Poulain, NUM–10991 and two Breton variants of the same song.

a) Meogo 9 versus the Serbian ballad I wooed a maiden for three years

As a section of the Serbian ballad *I wooed a maiden for three years* is the closest known text to Meogo 9, these two will be examined separately from the rest of the group in order to comment on the parallels between them and mark them as points of comparison for the rest of the texts. Here is Meogo 9:⁶

⁵ I received the information about these French and Breton songs from Eva Guillorel, to whom I express my most sincere gratitude for her valuable contribution, her useful suggestions and all the additional information she has provided.

⁶ For the editions of the Meogo 9 see: *MedDB*: 134.2 and Cohen 2003: 425. In this paper, the *cantiga* is cited from Cohen 2014, from which the English translation is also taken.

– Digades, filha, mha filha velida, por que tardastes na fontana fria? – (Os amores ei.)		– Tell me, daughter, my pretty daughter, Why did you linger at the cold fountain? – (I am in love.)
– Digades, filha, mha filha louçana, por que tardastes na fria fontana? – (Os amores ei.)	5	– Tell me daughter, my lovely daughter, Why did you linger at the fountain so cold? – (I am in love.)
Tardei, mha madre, na fontana fria, cervos do monte a agua volv<i>an. (Os amores ei.)		I lingered, mother, at the cold fountain, Stags from the hills were stirring up the water. (I am in love.)
Tardei, mha madre, na fria fontana, cervos do monte volv<i>an a agua. (Os amores ei.)	10	I lingered, mother, at the fountain so cold, Stags from the hills were stirring the water up. (I am in love.)
– Mentir, mha filha, mentir por amigo! nunca vi cervo que volvesse o rio. – (Os amores ei.)	15	– You’re lying, my daughter, lying for your friend! I never saw a stag that stirred up the stream. – (I am in love.)
– Mentir, mha filha, mentir por amado! nunca vi cervo que volvesse’ o alto. – (Os amores ei.)		– You’re lying, my daughter, lying for your lover! I never saw a stag that stirred up the pool. – (I am in love.)

The *cantiga* consists of a dialogue in which the daughter explains to her mother why she is late. Her excuse is that a deer clouded the water, but the mother immediately understands that the girl’s beloved was in fact that “deer”. The same kind of dialogue can be found in the vv. 33–45 of the Serbian ballad *I wooed a maiden for three years* (*Просио девојку за три године*), *Manuscript of Erlangen*⁷ 36:

Просио девојку за три године, не дадоше ју ни за четири. Оседлах коња јоште с вечера, узе['] сокола на десну руку, а бојно копље у леву руку	5
а мор ферецу на десно раме, паке отидох кроз црну гору, кроз црну гору, на ладну воду, али на води душа девојка. Везах коња за виту јелу, прислоних копље уз виту јелу, пусти['] сокола на виту јелу, узе['] девојку за белу руку те одведох под виту јелу.	10

⁷ The *Manuscript of Erlangen* was written around 1720 (Gesemann 1925: XXI). It was discovered in 1913 in the Library of the University of Erlangen and edited for the first time by Gerhard Gesemann in 1925. The latest critical edition is that of Mirjana Detelić, Snežana Samardžija and Lidija Delić: *Песме Ерлангенског рукописа* (прир. Мирјана Детелић, Снежана Самарџија, Лидија Делић). web: <http://www.erl.monumentaserbica.com/>

Дори је љубих, дори је грлих, месец ми зађе, сунце изађе. Љуго тужила добра девојка: „Авај-ле мени, до мила бога! Како ћу, јадна, мајки лагати? Мене ће моја мајка карати.“	15 20
[Ја] момак рекох доброј девојки: „Мучи, не плачи, срце девојко а ја ћу јунак теби казати како ћеш твојој мајки лагати. Ти реци, душо, мајци твојој: тако ми бога, мила мајчице, јелен бијаше на ладној води рогом замути студену воду, рогом је мути, очима бистри. Ја сам чекала док је избистри.“	25 30
И отишла је добра девојка. Стала мајка девојку карати: „Хе кучко једна, не ћери моја! Што си чинила на ладној води од полуноћи близу до подне?“	35
Девојка мајки тихо говори: „Не карај мене, мајко рођена. Јелен бијаше на ладној води, рогом замути студену воду, рогом ју мути, очима бистри. Ја сам чекала док ју избистри.“	40
Мајка девојки тихо говори: „Не лажи кучко, не ћери моја. То не би, кучко, из горе јелен, већ би добар јунак иза града. Него ми кажи који је јунак који је рогом воду мутио и тебе, кучко једна, љубио. Нека те води, нека те љуби, зашто је јунак много просио а ја те нисам за њега дала. А сада си се сама удала која си њега сама љубила.“	45 50

English translation:

I wooed a maiden for three years:
They didn't give her to me in four.
One evening I saddled my steed,
Took my falcon on my right hand,
My war-lance in my left hand,
My blue cloak over my right shoulder.
Then I went away through the dark mountain forest,
Through the dark mountain forest to the cold water.

5

By the water stood the maiden of my soul.
 I tethered my steed to a slender fir-tree, 10
 Leant my lance against the slender fir-tree,
 Stood my falcon on the slender fir-tree,
 Took the maiden by her white hand
 And led her beneath the slender fir-tree.
 While I was kissing and caressing her 15
 The moon set and the sun rose.
 She, good maiden, bitterly lamented:
 “Ah, dear God, woe is me,
 How, poor wretch, shall I lie to my mother?
 Mother will be scolding me.” 20
 Said the youth to the good maiden:
 “Say no more, do not weep, maiden of my heart,
 I, hero, will tell you
 How to lie to your mother.
 Say to your mother, my soul, 25
 ‘So God help me, my dear mother,
 There was a stag by the cold water,
 With his horn he stirred up the freezing water,
 Stirring it up with his horn, clearing it up with his eyes.
 I waited until he made it clear”’. 30
 And so the good maiden went home.
 Her mother began to scold her:
 “You bitch, no daughter of mine,
 What were you doing by the cold water
 From midnight until noon?” 35
 In a low voice the maiden spoke to her mother:
 “Don’t scold me, my dear mother;
 There was a stag by the cold water;
 With his horn he stirred up the freezing water.
 Stirring it up with his horn, clearing it up with his eyes. 40
 I waited until he made it clear.”
 In a low voice the mother spoke to the maiden:
 “Don’t lie, bitch, no daughter of mine!
 That, you bitch, wasn’t the stag of the hills,
 But a stout hero from the fort. 45
 Tell me, which was the hero
 Who was stirring up the water with his horn
 And was kissing you, you bitch?
 Let him take you, let him kiss you,
 Because many times he asked for your hand 50
 And I didn’t give you to him.
 But now, on your own, you have married him,
 Because, on your own, you’ve been kissing him.”

The ballad describes a lovers’ meeting between a “stout hero” and a girl he wooed unsuccessfully for three years because her mother opposed their relationship, and the way they managed to make the girl’s mother accept their marriage, although unwillingly. It is presented as an erotic hunt and takes place in the “dark mountain forest” by the “cold water”

several hours before dawnbreak. The ballad can be divided into three parts: 1) the young man's preparations for the hunt, vv. 1–8; 2) the lovers' meeting, vv. 9–31; and 3) the conversation between the girl and her mother, vv. 32–55. In this third part, in vv. 33–45, the Serbian text matches the dialogue in Meogo 9, with two formal exceptions concerning the genres to which they belong: 1) in the Serbian text there are two “narrative verses” which introduce the daughter's and the mother's speech; they are formulaic and typical for Serbian decasyllabic traditional poetry (v. 36: *In a low voice the maiden spoke to her mother* and v. 42: *In a low voice the mother spoke to the maiden*); 2) the *cantiga's* refrain, which is almost an obligatory element in *cantigas d'amigo* but an impossible one in Serbian decasyllabic ballads. Now, let's see them contrasted.

<p>– Tell me, daughter, my pretty daughter, Why did you linger at the cold fountain? – (I am in love.)</p>	<p>“You bitch, no daughter of mine, What were you doing by the cold water From midnight until noon?”</p>	<p>35</p>
<p>– Tell me daughter, my lovely daughter, Why did you linger at the fountain so cold? – (I'm in love.)</p>	<p>5</p>	
<p>I lingered, mother, at the cold fountain, Stags from the hills were stirring up the water. (I'm in love.)</p>	<p>In a low voice the maiden spoke to her mother: “Don't scold me, my dear mother; There was a stag by the cold water; With his horn he stirred up the freezing water. Stirring it up with his horn, clearing it up with his [eyes. 40 I waited until he made it clear.”</p>	<p>40</p>
<p>– You're lying, my daughter, lying for your friend! I never saw a stag that stirred up the stream. – (I am in love.)</p>	<p>15</p>	
<p>– You're lying, my daughter, lying for your lover! I never saw a stag that stirred up the pool. – (I am in love.)</p>	<p>In a low voice the mother spoke to the maiden: “Don't lie, bitch, no daughter of mine! That, you bitch, wasn't the stag of the hills, But a stout hero from the fort.</p>	<p>45</p>

The cited verses show obvious thematic as well as many structural coincidences. The dialogues belong to the same symbolic, semantic and pragmatic script: a daughter is interrogated by her mother about tarrying in the hills at the cold fountain; she offers the excuse of a stag which clouded the water, but the mother immediately understands from the daughter's words that she actually had an erotic experience with the man she loves. Apart from the match in the spatial reference of the lovers' meeting (at the fountain in the hills), there is also a match in the temporal reference (dawn) – in the ballad, the dawn breaks *while* the young couple makes love (vv. 15–16). In Meogo 9 there are no temporal references, but it

seems clear (if we accept the supplement <Levou se aa alva> in vv. 1 and 4; see Cohen 2014: 44–45)⁸ from Meogo 5 that the girl who meets her sweetheart – who is compared to a stag in that text – rises up at dawn and goes to the spring to meet him.

There are other structural parallels: both dialogues begin with the mother addressing the daughter; in both cases, the verse in which the mother’s response to the daughter’s words begins (Meogo, vv. 13, 16; the ballad, v. 43) starts with the verb *to lie*, which is followed by a vocative referring to the daughter; in that response, the mother makes explicit the identification of the stag with her daughter’s lover (Meogo, v. 16) or suitor from the fort, who had already asked for her hand many times unsuccessfully (the ballad, vv. 44–45, 50–51). Still, the tone of the Serbian mother is cruel, even brutal: she insists on calling her daughter “bitch”, implying from the very beginning of the dialogue that she knows, or at least suspects, the reason for the girl’s tarrying, and, at the same time, she morally degrades the daughter for that. In one Galician *romance* with a false excuse of a pitcher broken “by washing it with sand”, the mother calls the daughter “traitorous bitch” for the same reason:

Miña naî mandoume â fonte, â fonte do salgueiriño; mandoume laval-a xerra coa folla do romeriño i-eu laveina con area e quebreille un bouqueliño...	My mother sent me to the fountain, the fountain by the willow tree; sent me to wash the pitcher with rosemary leaf. I washed it with sand and broke its spout ...
–Anda ti, perra traidora, dónde tiñas o sentido?	–Come on, you traitorous bitch, what were you thinking of?
–Eu non o tiña na roca nin tampouco no sarillo, que o tiña en aquel galán que anda de amores connigo. ⁹	–I thought not of a spinning wheel or a winder but of a beau I’m having an affair with.

The insult mentioned is common to both Serbian and Iberian traditional poetry and it is functionally justified in the context of mother’s reproach for the daughter’s preuptial defloration, so here it does not automatically point towards the same model. Still, we should bear in mind that an insult of this kind, spoken by mother to daughter, does not appear in *cantigas d’amigo* and we can assume it would be incompatible with the genre. On the other

⁸ This supplement has been accepted by both online editions of Galician-Portuguese lyric:
<http://www.cantigas.fcsh.unl.pt/cantiga.asp?cdcant=1217&pv=sim>
and also: <https://www.cirp.gal/pls/bdo2/f?p=129:30:5532448147334999943::NO::P30 IDC:1479>

⁹ Méndez Ferrín 1966: 94.

hand, as it exists in the later Galician tradition, it could have also existed in the traditional proto-model on which Meogo based his ninth *cantiga*.

Finally, there are some differences in the very motif of a stag clouding the water. In Meogo's case, the water is clouded by *stags* (we do not know how), while in the Serbian ballad there is only one stag which troubles the water, he does it with his horn and, at the same time, he clears it up with his eyes. Hatto calls attention to this detail and draws a parallel with the Zoroastrian and Christian tradition in which the unicorn dips his horn into an envenomed pool and so purifies it (Hatto 1965: 85).

b) *The Galician and the Serbian model versus the Bulgarian*

The Bulgarian ballad *Marushchitsa set off* (*Тръгнала е Марушчица*) was recorded on 15 July 1897 in the area of Central Rhodope Mountains in the village of Shiroka-Lăka. The singers were Bisera M. Karaironova and Stoika N. Gorgova.¹⁰ Cited in *Eos* (Pinto 1965: 655), it was the principle source of information for Hatto about the Bulgarian *horse type*.

Торнала е Марушчица на студена бистра вода, послед нея лудо младо. – Стой, пучекай, Марушчице, Имам дума да ти думам,	5	Marushchitsa set off for the cold and clear water; after her followed a young madcap. “Stay, wait awhile, Marushchitsa, I have a word to say,
Ситни дребни разговорки. Јуначкини, девойкѝни, Мало млочко пуседѝха, Пуседѝха, пугѝлчеха, Дори слѝнце зайдом зајде,	10	some small trifling chatter, a boy's and girl's chatter.” For a little and then longer they sat, sat and talked a little until the sun set
Месечинка зор зазори И бѝчинкѝ, и долчинкѝ, Марушчица ѝотрумунѝе: – Ј бре кљато, лудо младо, Кайно си ме ти измами.	15	and the moon and the dawn spread through the hilltops and valleys suffusing Marushchitsa's face: “And now, young madcap, you rogue, since you lured me on,
Ти измами и ѝотбави, Байрек си ме ти научи, Как да ложа стара майка. Речи си хи, Марусчице, Малѝе, малѝе, стара малѝе,	20	lured me and kept me, you are the one who must teach me how to deceive my old mother.” “Tell her, Marushchitsa, your mother, your old mother,
Фчерай, майчу, пуминало Пашовоно сиво стадо, Мостове бе возљулѝало, Врисове бе возмотило, Та хи чеках да се бистрат.	25	yesterday, mother, there passed by the pashá's grey flock, making the bridge's rocks loose and the fords muddied, so I waited for them to run clear.”
– Ложи, момне, кого ложеш, Стара майка немой лога, Стара майка млочко знае, Млочко знае и разбира, Снашка ти ѝ повѝехнала,	30	“You have lied, girl, whoever you deceive, you cannot deceive your old mother. Your old mother knows much, knows and understands much. Your waist looks worn, your dark hair upset,

¹⁰ For additional information see: Bukoreshtliev, 258, p. 120; and note 14 in Pinto 1965: 655.

Чьорни йочи помръняони, Бьало лице повъехнало, Тьонка снашка йотрошена. – Малъе ле, мила малъе ле, Снашкана ю йотпрахове, Морна коса йот вьатрове, Бьало лице йот слънцено, Чьорни йочи йот пекове. ¹¹	35	your black eyes clouded, your white face withered, your slender waist rumped.” “Mother dear, my dear mother, the waist is from dust, the dark hair from the winds, the white face from the sun, the black eyes from the heat.” ¹²
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The motif of a *transparent excuse* of water muddied by *pashá's grey flock* links this Bulgarian ballad with Meogo 9 and the Serbian *I wooed a maiden for three years*. There are some additional similarities too: 1) the “cold and clear water” as the place reference; 2) the dialogue between the mother and the daughter is present, though only in its elliptic form; 3) the initial use of the verb *to lie* in the mother’s response, followed by the vocative referring to the girl (matching both Galician and Serbian texts); 4) the plural of the animal (which correlates with Meogo’s *stags*); and 5) the conversation in which the man teaches the girl how to deceive her mother (which matches the Serbian ballad).

However, there are many differing elements: 1) the animal is a horse and not a deer; 2) the horses trouble the water only by an indirect action (by crossing the bridge); 3) they belong to pasha – a local socio-historic reference alluding to the Turks (in the Galician and Serbian texts there are no such references, although in the Serbian ballad the opposition a *rural girl : a man from the fort* is present); 4) the time reference is much broader (evening+night+dawn) and it seems that the dawn only appears as the moment when the girl starts asking what excuse to give to her mother; 5) except in vv. 26–27 (where the Bulgarian model matches the Galician and the Serbian), the mother’s response is developed in a different way, affording an opportunity for the further development of the girl’s *transparent excuse*, in which the dust, the wind, the sun and the heat are included.

In footnote 14, Vivian de Sola Pinto (Pinto 1965: 655) mentions another variant of the same ballad and gives some basic information about it, which Hatto had in mind. As this variant differs even more from the Galician-Serbian type (there is no dialogue between the mother and the daughter, and the young couple meets at night in a narrow and dark alley), I will not cite it, but only note some of the motifs which may be relevant. Firstly, this ballad (Stoin, 378) was written down as a song which peasants sang while returning home after working in the field¹³ - information which could point towards some agricultural connotation

¹¹ Bukoreshtliev, 258.

¹² The translation to English, done by Vivian de Sola Pinto, is copied from *Eos*, n°408, p. 655.

¹³ See the remark on n°378 in Stoin 1934: 171.

it might have had for the performers. In this variant the young lovers teach one another how to lie (the young man teaches the girl how to lie to her mother and she teaches him how to lie to his company), the element which appears in the Lithuanian tradition and in one Serbian representative of the *bird type* (Trubarac 2011: 89, 97–98). He tells her to say that the bey’s white horses muddied the wells, while she teaches him to say that he had lost his fleecy ram and had to find it. The mention of the bey’s horses mudding the water underlines the different socio-cultural and religious background of the lover, which is clearly marked in the Bulgarian texts. Although this might be relevant, the very motif of bey’s/pasha’s horses must be later than the Galician-Serbian stag. It is clearly the product of a rationalization of the stag which clouds the water with his horn and clears it up with his eyes.

Regarding the dialogue between the girl and her beloved, the fact that it exists both in the Serbian ballad and in the texts from the *bird group* (Trubarac 2010; Trubarac 2011: 81–110) points strongly to the possibility that this element existed in the proto-model of all these texts. The texts which are Breton and French representatives of the *horse type* also confirm this.

c) Breton gwerz *The Fountain of Wasc’halek* (*Feunteun ar Wasc’halek*)

The following ballad is a variant of a *gwerz Ar vroeg he daou bried/La femme aux deux maris*, which has a special importance as the first Breton song ever recorded – François Vallée recorded it in wax rolls in 1900 from Marc’harit Fulup.¹⁴ It was published for the first time by François-Marie Luzel in 1874.¹⁵ The text below is not the one from 1874, but a variant from his manuscript now in the holdings of Le Centre de Recherche Bretonne et Celtique, Fond Le Braz, ALB4 M 70, pp. 200–203. The French translation was made by Éva Guillorel, who, relying on Luzel’s translation, introduced some necessary corrections (Guillorel 2008: 214).

Me am euz ul lesvamm ‘r gwassa m’oufac’h da gavet,
 Ter heur a-rok ann de gant-hi me ve zavet
 ha kasset da vouit dour da feunteun ar Wasc’halek (bis)
 P’arrais ‘tal ar feunteun, ma fichet anter-garget,
 ha me ‘klewet ur vouez hag a oa deliberet (bis) 5
 Gant paotr un denjentil o abreuvi hi ronsed.-
 Hag hen o kregi em dorn, ma c’hass gant-han d’ar valanek,
 ‘Lakad ma daou-lagad da zellet euz ar stered (bis)

¹⁴ Archived in Dastum. Coll. Vallée, 1900.

¹⁵ François-Marie Luzel. *Gwerziou Breiz-Izel. Chants populaires de la Basse-Bretagne*. Vol. 2. Lorient: Imprimerie Corfmat Fils, Libraire-éditeur, 1874.

Hag hi re he-unan da zellet ar merc'hed.	
Pa deuis ac'hane, hag hen rei d'in kant skoed	10
Da vezur ma bugel, 'vel pa vije ganet (bis)	
–Me 'm euz ul lezvammik, 'r gwasan oufac'h da gavet,	
Pa arruin er ger, me 'vo gant-hi gourdrouzet (bis)	
–Pa arrufet er ger, mar veac'h gant-hi gourdrouzet,	
M'ho ped da laret d'ezi 'po kâd ar feunteun troublet,	15
Gant paotr un den-jentil o abreuvi he ronsed (bis)	
P'oa arruet er ger, ez oa gant-hi gourdrouzet (bis)	
Taolet emeas an ti, gant hi lezvamm milliget (bis)	
Ac'hane hi 'zo et na da di hi maerones,	
Da di Itron ar Genkiz, hi 'zo bet aliès...	20
Itron ar Genkiz a laras un derves d'hi mates: -	
–Terrupl eme-z-hi na ho kavann drouk-liwet,	
Pa arrujac'h em zi, n' dougac'h ket al liou-man,	
Kontrol a ret d'ar roz a zo er jardinou,	
Ar ieod bars ar prajou a deu da gomanz glazan –	25
–Perag, ma maerones, n'am c'havfac'h ket drouk-liwet,	
Pa'z on gant ann derrienn pewar miz zo tremenet (bis)	
ar pistik hag ar paaz, ann tri zra-se ma laz. –	
–Petra ta, Jaketa, na poa ket d'in laret,	
a vijenn et en kèr da glask medesined (bis)	30
Jaketa ar Penkoad, hag ho dije ho kwellaad? –	
–Tawet, maeronezik, ha n'am c'haketet ket,	
Kloaregik ann aotro 'zo kiriek d'am c'hlenved.-	
ann itron ar Genkiz, o klewet hi freposio,	
a deuz kasset lizer da gloarek ann aotro,	35
–Jaketa ar Benc'hoad a glewann a zo gwallet (bis)	
C'hui 'renk hi eureuji, pe beza forbanet,	
Pe dont da guitaad ho pro, elec'h na retornfet ket.-	
–Me 'zo ur c'hloarek iaouank, prest da veza bêlek,	
Itron, mar laret-se, setu me glac'haret (bis)	40
Paj-bihan ann aotro hag hi 'zo mignoned.	
ann dez-all oant er jardinn o torri kraou da zebri,	
hi fenn war hi varlenn, hag hen euz hi c'haressi (bis)	
Ann itron ar Genkiz, o klewet he breposiou,	
a deus skrivet lizer da bajik ann aotro.	45
Jaketa ar Benc'hoad a glewann 'zo gwallet,	
C'hui renk hi eureuji, pe veza forbanizet (ter)	
Pe dont da guitaad ho pro, elec'h na retornfet ket.-	
–Me 'zo ur paj-bihan, newez deut euz ann arme,	
Itron, mar laret-se, me zo prest da vont arre (bis)	50
Pa oa gret ann dimizi, hag iwe ann eured,	
Paj bihan ann aotro adarre 'zo partiet (bis)	
Setu seiz vloaz tremenet, ann eiz vloaz achuet,	
Jaketa ar Penc'hoad adarre 'zo dimezet,	
Paj bihan ann aotro er gèr n'arrue ket...	55
–Pa oann en Keridon war gein ma marc'h o tonet,	
Ha me klewet ur vouez a oa deliberet (bis)	
Gant meur a sonerrienn dimeuz taol ann eured. –	
–Digorret d'in ho tor, plac'hik diou-wes eureujet,	
Arru on d' digass d'ac'h ar pezh ho poa goulennet (bis)	60

ur gegel a gorz-Spagn, hag ur c'hleze alaouret (bis)
 –Ha me a zo aman euz koste ma fried,
 Ma rafenn re a vrud, marteze 'venn skandalet (bis)
 –Digorret d'in ho tor, plac'hik diou-wes eureujet etc...id-
 Digorret d'in ho tor, plac'hik diou-wes eureujet, 65
 Ma daoudorn 'zo klezret – o terc'hell brid ma marc'h
 ha ma c'hleze alaouret
 –'hann da digorrinn ann or, pa dlefenn beza lazet,
 Pa glewann laret è c'hui ez è ma c'henta pried.-
 Ann or pe deuz digorret, en hi gerc'henn è lampet, 70
 Etre hi ziouvrec'h è marwet! –
 ur mewith a oa gant-han, Pier lareur anez-han,
 –Pier, ma mewel, sent ouzinn, - Dâl ma c'hleze,
 ha gra ouzinn! – setu aze ma arc'hant, ha ma
 holl akoutramant, - Kerz d'ar gèr, ha lar d'am 75
 c'heront – e vinn marwet er rejimant!
 –N'am euz ket ar galon d'ho lazan,
 Abalamour m'ho servijan,
 'R galon d'ho lazan n'am bo ket,
 Balamour m'em eus ho servijet.- 80
 N'oa ket ar gèr peurlavaret,
 Ar paj bihan zo desedet, -
 Setu un intaon iaouank ann de kentan he eured!¹⁶

French translation:

J'ai une belle-mère, la pire que vous puissiez trouver:
 Trois heures avant le jour, elle me fait lever
 Et elle m'envoie chercher de l'eau à la fontaine de Gwashalec. (bis)
 Quand j'arrivai auprès de la fontaine, mon pichet à moitié plein,
 Voilà que j'entendis une voix qui était *délibérée*¹⁷, (bis) 5
 Celle du valet d'un gentilhomme qui abreuvait ses chevaux. –
 Et lui de me prendre par la main, pour me conduire avec lui à la genêtaie,
 De mettre mes yeux à regarder les étoiles (bis)
 Et les siens à regarder la jeune fille¹⁸.
 Quand je m'en revins, le voici qui me donne cent écus 10
 Pour nourrir mon enfant, comme s'il était né. (bis)
 « J'ai une petite belle-mère, la pire que vous puissiez trouver,
 Quand j'arriverai à la maison, je serai grondée par elle. (bis)
 - Quand vous arriverez à la maison, si vous êtes grondée par elle,
 Je vous prie de lui dire que vous aurez trouvé la fontaine troublée, 15
 Par le valet d'un gentilhomme qui abreuvait ses chevaux ». (bis)
 Quand elle fut arrivée à la maison, elle fut grondée, (bis)
 Jetée hors de la maison par sa belle-mère maudite. (bis)
 De là, elle est allée chez sa marraine,
 Chez Madame du Quenquis, où elle est souvent allée..... 20
 Madame du Quenquis dit un jour à sa servante :
 «Je vous trouve, dit-elle, terriblement pâle,

¹⁶ Guillorel 2008: 215–216.

¹⁷ The meaning of this “word” is obscure. (Guillorel’s comment, see Guillorel 2008: 215).

¹⁸ The text literally says: “à regarder les filles”. (Guillorel’s comment, see Guillorel 2008: 215).

Quand vous êtes arrivée chez moi, vous n'aviez pas ce teint-là.
 Vous faites le contraire de la rose qui est dans les jardins,
 Et de l'herbe qui commence à verdier dans les prés. 25
 - Comment, ma marraine, ne me trouveriez-vous pas pâle,
 Puisque j'ai la fièvre, depuis quatre mois? (bis)
 Les élancements et la toux, ces trois choses me tuent.
 - Pourquoi donc, Jacqueline, ne me l'avez-vous pas dit,
 Et je serais allée en ville vous chercher des médecins, (bis) 30
 Jacqueline du Penhoat, qui vous auraient guérie? –
 - Taisez-vous, petite marraine, taisez-vous et ne vous moquez pas de moi,
 C'est le petit clerc du seigneur qui est la cause de ma maladie.»
 Madame de Quenquis, en entendant ces propos,
 A envoyé une lettre au clerc du seigneur: 35
 «Jacquette du Penhoat est gâtée, me dit-on, (bis)
 Vous devez l'épouser ou être banni,
 Quitter votre pays, où vous ne retournerez pas.
 - Je suis un jeune clerc, sur le point d'être fait prêtre;
 Madame, si vous dites cela, je suis chagriné. (bis) 40
 Le petit page du seigneur et elle sont amis.
 L'autre jour, ils étaient dans le jardin à casser des noix pour les manger,
 Elle avait la tête sur ses genoux, et il la caressait.» (bis)
 Madame de Quenquis, en entendant ces propos,
 A écrit une lettre au petit page du seigneur: 45
 «Jacquette du Penhoat est gâtée, me dit-on,
 Vous devez l'épouser, ou être banni, (ter)
 Ou quitter votre pays, où vous ne retournerez pas. –
 - Je suis un petit page, nouvellement arrivé de l'armée,
 Madame, si vous dites cela, je suis prêt à y retourner.» (bis) 50
 Quand furent faites les fiançailles et aussi les noces,
 Le petit page du seigneur est reparti. (bis)
 Voilà sept ans passés, et huit ans révolus,
 Jacqueline de Penhoat s'est remariée.
 Le petit page du seigneur ne revenait pas à la maison..... 55
 Quand j'étais à Keridon, sur mon cheval, en revenant,
 J'ai entendu une voix qui était délibérée, (bis)
 Avec nombre de sonneurs, à la table des noces. –
 «Ouvrez-moi votre porte, jeune fille deux fois mariée,
 Je viens vous apporter ce que vous m'aviez demandé, (bis) 60
 Une quenouille de jonc d'Espagne et une épée dorée. (bis)
 - Et moi, je suis ici aux côtés de mon mari,
 Si je faisais trop de bruit, je serais peut-être réprimandée. (bis)
 - Ouvrez-moi votre porte, jeune fille deux fois mariée etc... id-
 Ouvrez-moi votre porte, jeune fille deux fois mariée, 65
 Mes mains sont engourdies – en tenant la bride de mon cheval
 Et mon épée dorée.
 - Je vais ouvrir la porte, dussè-je être tuée,
 Puisque j'entends que vous êtes mon premier mari.» –
 Dès qu'elle a ouvert la porte, elle a sauté à son cou, 70
 Entre ses bras elle est morte! –
 Il avait avec lui un valet qu'on appelait Pierre:
 «Pierre, mon valet, obéis-moi, – Prends mon épée,
 et tue-moi – voilà mon argent, et mon

accoutrement, – Retourne à la maison, et dis à mes parents – que je serai mort au régiment! - Je n'ai pas le cœur de vous tuer, Parce que je suis votre serviteur, Je n'aurai pas le cœur de vous tuer, Parce que je vous ai servi.»	75
Il n'avait pas fini de parler Que le petit page est mort, - Voilà un jeune veuf le premier jour de ses noces! ¹⁹	80

Guillourel notices that this *gwerz* is a compilation of four song types existing in Breton, three of which are also found in French (Guillourel 2008: 217). It is 80 verses long, with a heterogeneous metrical form.²⁰ It begins with the episode of a maiden sent to fetch water before daybreak who gets seduced by a valet of a gentleman who is watering horses. He instructs her what to say to her stepmother on coming back home: when she arrived the water was stirred by the horses of a gentleman's valet. After being scolded by her stepmother, the girl escapes from home and goes to her godmother's. The godmother helps the girl to marry the page, but soon he goes back to the army and stays there for seven years. He returns home the day of his wife's second wedding. She recognizes him and dies in his arms. He asks his servant to kill him.

In her analysis of this *gwerz* and the variety of Breton traditional songs related to it, Guillourel expresses the opinion that it is constructed by a process in which originally French songs were adopted and modified in accordance with Breton tradition and the canons of the *gwerz* genre which is characterized by a developed narrative with a marked Breton cultural setting, achieved by mentioning proper names, local toponyms and micro-toponyms (Guillourel 2008: 217–221). As to the first part of the *gwerz*, in which the erotic meeting at dawn takes place, she links it with the French song *La fille à la fontaine avant soleil levé* (Guillourel 2008: 206–207), which will be discussed below.

This *gwerz* is definitely the text with the most complex narrative structure, compared to all the texts with the motif of the *transparent excuse* of water clouded by an animal. There is no parallel in other texts either for the girl being thrown out of home after her stepmother's rebuke, or for the events that follow. This supports Guillourel's opinion about the hybrid nature of this *gwerz*. However, the motif of horses which cloud the water draws it into the Iberian and Balkan *stag/horse type* and at the same time separates it from the prevalent *bird models* of the Breton, French and Gascon traditions.

¹⁹ Guillourel 2008: 215–216.

²⁰ For more information, see: Guillourel 2008: 219–220.

Compared to the rest of the texts, the *gwerz* presents only two details common to the Galician-Serbian model: the motif of the transparent excuse of clouded water (although stirred up by horses, and not by stags) and the dawn as the time reference.

With the Balkan (Serbian and Bulgarian) texts, it shares the dialogue between the girl and the young man.

The animal blamed for stirring the water is in the plural, just as in the cases of Meogo 9 and the Bulgarian ballads.

In v. 7 of the *gwerz* appears the same motif as in vv. 13–14 of the Serbian ballad. In both cases the man *takes the girl by her hand(s)* to the place where they make love, which is defined by a specific species of tree (ballad: fir-tree) or shrub (*gwerz*: *genêt*, ‘broom’).

The rest of the features differ: 1) in place of the mother there appears an evil stepmother; 2) there is no dialogue between her and the girl; 3) there is no spatial reference to mountains; 4) there are no other specific structural parallels such as those discussed above.

d) The French song *J’avais-t-une méchante mère*

The song which I will discuss in this section is a variant of the French song *La fille à la fontaine avant soleil levé*, known in more than sixty variants recorded in France, Belgium and Quebec, with the oldest one published in 1586 (Laforte 1997: 547; Guillorel 2008: 206–207). *La fille à la fontaine avant soleil levé* is the French representative of Hatto’s *bird type*, because in variants in which the *transparent excuse* of troubled water appears, the bird which troubles the water is normally a nightingale or a drake. However, in this variant, recorded in Morbihan, Brittany,²¹ both birds and horses appear. According to the information provided by Guillorel, it is sung in a cheerful fashion with repetitions and ritornellos (Guillorel 2008: 206–207).

J’avais-t-une méchante mère
Ma dondaine
 Trop matin me fait lever
Ma don dé

Trop matin me fait lever
 Trop matin me fait lever

Pour aller à la fontaine
 Pour de l’eau aller chercher

²¹ The Breton language is not conserved today among all the Bretons, but almost exclusively among those living in Lower Brittany. In Upper Brittany the Bretons speak French.

Sur le bord de la fontaine
Mon bien-aimé j'ai rencontré

Sur la pierre de la fontaine
Nous sommes assis à parler

Nous en avons tant parlé
Que le soleil nous a levés

Que dira-t-elle ma mère
D'y avoir tant musé

Tu lui diras ma chère
Que l'eau elle était troublée

Que les petits oiseaux du ciel
Sont venus s'y baigner.

Et les chevaux du roi d'Espagne
Sont venus s'y abreuver,

Le noir le plus beau d' la bande
Dans la fontaine il s'est noyé.²²

In this song, both birds and horses appear as a part of a *transparent excuse* as animals responsible for clouding the water: “the little birds from the sky” by coming to the water to bathe, and “the horses of the King of Spain” by drinking it. The scene is developed with a motif of the beautiful black horse, which gets drowned in the spring. This is the only text I have come across so far in which horses and birds are simultaneously part of the *transparent excuse*, and in which the *stag/horse* and the *bird type* of the song meet. Although it might be tempting to search for the origin of both song types (*stag* and *bird type*) in a narrative model of this kind (in which both birds and horses stir the water), there is no convincing evidence to support that view. Firstly, this variant is one of the most recent to be collected (according to the information from the Dastum Sound Archive, it was recorded in 1990) and in the oldest representatives of this group of French songs only birds cloud the water. Secondly, in the rest of the European texts prior to the 19th century (Meogo 9 and Serbian *I wooed a maiden for three years*) there is also only one animal species at the spring. Guillorel observes (personal communication, 3 July 2011) that the motif of the “most beautiful black horse” which gets drowned is a stereotypical motif in the French tradition, which could explain its incorporation into this French-Breton variant of the song, especially if the *horse type* already existed in the

²² Dastum Sound Archives, NUM-10991, Collection Albert Poulain, *J'avais-t-une méchante mère*. Recorded in 1990. The transcription, made by Claude Le Coz, was provided by Éva Guillorel (personal communication, 25 August 2014).

Breton tradition and for that reason it is possible to link it with the French motif of a drowned horse. This is the only text in French I have come across in which the horses cloud the water. In 1955 Patrice Coirault made a contrastive analysis of the variants he knew (Coirault 1955: 328–337) and so did Conrad Laforte in 1997 (Laforte 1997: 546–549), but there were no horses clouding the water in any of them. However, the existence of this variant, which was collected in Brittany, enhances the probability that more variants may exist in French, although it remains to be seen if they were also linked, directly or indirectly, to the region of Brittany.

There are two Breton songs which belong to the same branch of songs as *La fille à la fontaine avant soleil levé*. Compared to the French variants of this song, the Breton ones differ in one detail relevant to this study: the animals which stir the water in them are horses. Let's see the first one, which was recorded in October 2007 by Éva Guillorel and Charles Quimbert in Guern, in Pays de Vannes, very close to the linguistic border with Upper Brittany (where the Gallo language is spoken). It was performed by André Drumel, a renowned singer who knew many songs in both languages. According to Drumel, he heard this song from an old lady who lived in his neighborhood and died in 1961. He also knew a Breton song about a soldier who returns home on the day of his wife's second wedding, but, to his knowledge, this story was not related to the one about the maiden who went to the fountain before dawn. The transcription and translation to French which are given below are provided by Éva Guillorel, as is the rest of the information mentioned (Guillorel 2008: 210, 759). The first line of each couplet is sung three times.²³

Me' moé ur vamig beur ag a zo lan a speret
Diù tér eur kent an dé geti e oan savet

Diù tér eur kent an dé geti e oan savet
É vonet de glah deur de fetan er ganarded

En noz e oé tioél hag en deur e oé troublet
Un artiller ieùank é teurat é ronsed.

French translation:

J'avais une pauvre petite mère plein d'esprit,
Deux ou trois heures avant le jour, elle me faisait lever.

Deux ou trois heures avant le jour, elle me faisait lever
Pour aller chercher de l'eau à la fontaine des canards.

La nuit était sombre et l'eau était troublée
Par un jeune artilleur qui abreuvait ses chevaux.

²³ The recording of the song can be heard in the *Annex sonore 4* in Guillorel 2008.

In this song, the maiden complains that her mother made her get up in a dark night, two or three hours before the sunrise, and sent her to fetch water at the drakes' spring. When she reached the spring, the water was stirred up by a young artilleryman watering his horses. According to the Drumel's testimony, this is only a fragment of the song – in the *Annex sonore 4* (Guillourel 2008) he says he forgot the verses that follow.

The longer, complete version was published for the first time in 1911 by Loeiz Herriou in *Guerzenneu ha soñnenneu Bro-Gued. Chansons populaires du pays de Vannes*, pp. 76–77. Herriou heard it from Marie-Josèphe Le Danvic, from Penquesten, as a song accompanying a *gavotte Pourlet*, a Breton national dance. There it appears under the title *Er voéz deu bried dehi/ La femme aux deux maris*, although it does not develop the story about the soldier who returns home on the day of his wife's second wedding, but only the one about the girl at the fountain before daybreak. According to Guillourel, these kinds of variants are typical for Vannes region and they all belong to the type of lyrical songs called *sonioù*, which are characterized by a complex musical structure (Guillourel 2008: 210). Each couplet is followed by the same refrain. Both the text of the song (Breton original and the French translation) and all the information about this song are taken from Guillourel (Guillourel 2008: 210, 758).²⁴

M'em boé me ur vam-gaer, ér hoahikan oé er bed,
 Hi e hré d'ain seùel, diù pé ter eur raok en dé.
Gé, gé, laritira,
Gé, laritirèno!
Ha gé, gé, lari lanla,
Gé, laritirèno!

Hi e hré d'ain seùel, diù pé ter eur raok en dé,
 De vonet de glah deur d'er fetan d'er ganarded.

De vonet de glah deur d'er fetan d'er ganarded,
 Get ur ribotig toul, ur goh seillig dizañnet.

Get ur ribotig toul, ur goh seillig dizañnet,
 Kaer vezé d'ain kargein 'vezent ket lan guéh erbet.

Kaer vezé d'ain kargein 'vezent ket lan guéh erbet.
 En noz e oé tioél, er fetan e oé troublet.

En noz e oé tioél, er fetan e oé troublet.
 Mabig er havalier oé teurat é ronsed.

Ean houlennas genein: «Plahig, hui zo dimet?»
 Me oé ieuankik ha sot, me laras ne oen ket;

²⁴ The transcript of the melody can also be found on the p. 758.

Me oé ieuankik ha sot, me laras ne oen ket;
Ean grogas ém deu zorn ha ras d'ein pemp kant skoued

Ean grogas ém deu zorn ha ras d'ein pemp kant skoued
«Kerhet bremen d'er gér hui laro 'veh dimet!

«Kerhet bremen d'er gér hui laro 'veh dimet!
De vab er havalier oé teurat é ronsed...

French translation:

J'avais une belle-mère, la pire qui fut au monde,
Elle me faisait lever deux ou trois heures avant le jour.
Gué, gué, laritira,
Gé, laritirèno!
Ha gé, gé, lari lanla,
Gé, laritirèno!

Elle me faisait lever deux ou trois heures avant le jour,
Pour aller chercher de l'eau à la fontaine pour les canards,

Pour aller chercher de l'eau à la fontaine pour les canards,
Avec une pauvre baratte percée, un mauvais seau sans fond.

Avec une pauvre baratte percée, un mauvais seau sans fond.
J'avais beau les remplir, ils n'étaient jamais pleins!

J'avais beau les remplir, ils n'étaient jamais pleins!
La nuit était sombre et la fontaine trouble.

La nuit était sombre et la fontaine trouble.
Le fils du cavalier abreuvait ses chevaux.

Il me demanda: « Jeune fille, êtes-vous mariée? »
J'étais jeunette et naïve, je répondis que je ne l'étais pas.

J'étais jeunette et naïve, je répondis que je ne l'étais pas;
Il me prit les deux mains et me donna 500 écus.

Il me prit les deux mains et me donna 500 écus:
«Allez, maintenant à la maison, vous direz que vous êtes mariée!

Allez maintenant à la maison, vous direz que vous êtes mariée,
Au fils du cavalier abreuvant ses chevaux...»

Speaking in the first person, the girl tells about how her evil step mother sent her to catch the water for the drakes with a broken churn and a bottomless bucket. She would try to fill them, but they were always empty. The night was dark and the fountain was stirred up by the son of the cavalier who was watering his horses. He asked her if she was married, and

she, “being naïve” said she was not. Then he took her by her two hands, gave her 500 crowns and told her to go home and say she got married to the son of a cavalier who was watering his horses.

In the two cited Breton songs the water is clouded by horses, but the echo of the *drake model* might be present in the motif of a *drakes' spring*, or perhaps in the chore of fetching water for the ducks. As there is no *transparent excuse* in these songs, they are much closer to Meogo 5 and to the Serbian ritual song *Early arose the maidens* (see Appendix 1) than to Meogo 9 and the family of songs with the motif of *transparent excuse*. However, just as it is the case with Meogo 5 (closely linked with Meogo 9) and the Serbian ritual (closely linked to *I wooed a maiden for three years*), these two variants of the same *son* are closely related to the Breton and French texts with the *transparent excuse* of water clouded by drakes, birds in general, horses, or both. The *drake model* links the Breton tradition with the Lithuanian one (where the *drake model* is also found) but at the same time the coexistence of the *bird* and the *horse type* in Breton tradition has its parallel in the Serbian tradition, where the *stag type* and the *falcon type* are found, though never combined in one text. The existence of two traditions in which both *bird* and *stag types* are conserved (Breton and Serbian) suggests that there is a high possibility that Hatto's dilemma about which model preceded the other one – if the stags were replaced by drakes, which were more traditional in one region, or vice versa – should be rejected, because both types might have coexisted from the beginning within the same tradition, as I tried to demonstrate in the case of Serbian tradition (Trubarac 2011: 289–292; 428–431, 453).

The second *son* deserves special attention for several more reasons:

1. There are metrical parallels between this *son* and Meogo 5. The *son* is made out of couplets followed by a refrain. On the other hand, the use of repetition is remarkable: the second verse of each couplet becomes the first verse of the next couplet (the only exception is the first verse of the seventh).
2. As Guillorel observes, the melody of the *son* leaves enough space both for the development of the text and for a long ritornello, inserted in between the couplets, which gives special importance to the musical aspect of the song (Guillorel 2008: 210). This is completely understandable for a song collected as the one accompanying a Breton national dance called *gavotte Pourlet*. The *ranilo* song has the same function: it was sung while dancing the *kolo*.

3. In this *son*, the dawn meeting of the young couple at a spring explicitly precedes the announcement of their marriage, which confirms the opinions of all those critics who have recognized this connotation in Meogo's motif of the girl who washes her hair at dawn²⁵ (which appears both in Meogo 5 and Meogo 6). In previous occasions, in a comparative study of the *Early arose the maidens* and several more *ranilo* songs, I tried to demonstrate that the nuptial connotation is present also in *Early arose the maidens* and that it might be related to the idea of marriage by capture with the girl's consent (Trubarac 2011: 264-283, 383-394). A reference to this has been also discerned in Meogo's *cantigas* (Morales Blouin 1981: 111-112; Trubarac 2009: 42-45).

4. The young man from this Breton song is a son of a cavalier, which implies a different social background compared to that of the peasant girl. The same motif exists in the Serbian *I wooed a maiden for three years* (where the man is a "stout hero from the town/fortress") and in the Bulgarian ballads (where the man is a Turk).

Contrastive analysis

Let's see all the elements I have discussed in the texts analyzed. Those which appear in Meogo 9 are shadowed in grey.

Compared element	Meogo 9	Serbian	Bulgarian	Gwerz	French
Dawn as a time reference	+	+	-	+	+
Spring as a space reference	+	+	+	+	+
Dialogue mother–daughter	+	+	+	-	-
Dialogue girl–young man	-	+	+	+	+
Narration	-	+	+	+	+
Refrain	+	-	-	-	+
Girl's transparent excuse	+	+	+	+	+
Animal clouding the water	stag	stag	horse	horse	horse & birds
Animal clearing the water	-	+	-	-	-
Animal mentioned in plural	+	-	+	+	+
Mother scolds the daughter	+	+	+	+	-
Mother accuses the daughter of lying	+	+	+	-	-

²⁵ About this, see Trubarac 2011: 62-64.

Out of twelve elements taken into consideration here, nine appear in Meogo 9. The numerical coincidence of these elements with those from the other texts is the following: Serbian ballad 7/9; Bulgarian ballad 6/9; the *gwerz* 5/9; and the song in French 5/9.

The only two elements which Meogo 9 does not share with the Serbian ballad are the refrain and the mention of the animal in the plural.

The animal mentioned in the plural exists in all the texts except the Serbian one. This suggests that there is a possibility that in the proto-model of all these texts the animal clouding the water was referred to in the plural – although these animals are always a metaphor for one male person. This is a curious detail *per se*, because it seems contradictory and has no apparent logical explanation. Rip Cohen thinks (personal communication, 8 November 2014) that a plural used in the girl's excuse might be euphemistic, since it appears in Meogo 9, and is absent from Meogo 5 – where there is only one stag mentioned. This might be a valid explanation.

On the other hand, the Serbian ballad is the only text in which the animal clouds the water and clears it up at the same time. The motif of a stag stirring the water with his horn and clearing it up with his eyes, found both in this ballad and in the Serbian ritual song *Early arose the maidens* (see Appendix 1), bears a halo of mystery and – due to its appearance in the ritual context – might be very old. Its meaning is not limited to a mere erotic symbol, but should sought in the ideological background of the ritual of *ranilo* (Trubarac 2011: 171–180, 383–394).

Apart from Meogo 9, the refrain appears only in the French song.

The dawn as the time reference is dominant and there is a certain importance given to it.

The motif of a spring is obligatory.

Meogo 9 is the only text which is composed purely of a dialogue between the mother and the daughter, while the rest of the texts combine dialogues with narrative parts. This suggests that the proto-model of this family of texts might have had a narrative poetic form, with at least two inserted dialogues (girl–lover and girl–mother). The prominent elements from all the texts analyzed allow us to outline a possible narrative structure for this proto-model: a young girl goes to the mountain spring to fetch the water and meets her beloved there at dawn; after making love to her, he instructs her how to excuse herself for tarrying, telling her to say that stag/stags clouded the water and that she had to wait until it got clear again; on the girl's return home, she and her mother engage in a dialogue—whose structure is

the one found in Meogo 9 and in the Serbian ballad. The closest example to this proto-model would be the ballad *I wood a maiden for three years*.

The Bulgarian ballad, the Breton *gwerz* and the French song show a tendency to shorten or to drop the dialogue between the mother and the daughter, probably because of the economy of the text – in order not to repeat the contents already expressed in the dialogue between the girl and the young man.

The Breton *gwerz* is certainly a hybrid text composed by combining several different songs. This kind of a textual genesis cannot be taken as the dominant model for the rest of the members of the family. While all the other texts share close structural parallels – in spite of the fact that they come from such distant parts of the continent – the *gwerz* presents the highest level of diversions from the structure of the rest of the group.

On the other hand, the case of Meogo 9 seems to be the most intriguing one, because, within this family of texts, it is the only one which cannot be shown to be traditional (for want of material) and with no narrative verses: it is a lyric-dramatic piece and has a strophic form with a refrain (these two features appear in the French song too). At the same time, it is: 1) the oldest representative of the family; 2) the most fragmentary one (relative to the “story” common to the rest of the texts); 3) the text with the highest level of parallels with a fragment of the second oldest text of the family (Serbian ballad), which, on the other hand, is the closest to the narrative structure of the proto-model discussed above and the fullest (least fragmentary) text of the family. There is certain “contradiction” in these facts about Meogo 9 (being the *oldest*, but the *most fragmentary* and the *closest match to the least fragmentary* text), which suggests that the explanation offered above concerning the genesis of the other texts should not be applied to Meogo 9.

The proto-model of Meogo 9

Regarding the traditional text which inspired Meogo to create poem 9, I see, hypothetically, two possibilities: 1) it was a traditional narrative-dramatic piece in verse (as in the case of other representatives of the family); 2) it was a traditional song made on the basis of a fragment (the dialogue between the mother and the daughter) detached from the narrative-dramatic proto-model of the rest of the texts. In either case, the use of this fragment as material for composing the *cantiga* can be explained by the fact that a mother–daughter dialogue is common in early Iberian lyric in general (both in *jarchas* and *cantigas d’amigo*), which means that it was a popular traditional form in the Iberian Peninsula and could have been used because it was suitable for composing a brief lyric-dramatic piece.

Among the analyzed texts, there are two types: those with refrain (Meogo 9 and the French song) and the other three without it (Breton, Bulgarian and Serbian ballad). If the traditional model used by Meogo was a narrative-dramatic piece without a refrain, a kind of *romance* similar to the Galician one with the excuse of a broken pitcher, Meogo had to put more effort to adapt the verse, introduce the refrain and apply other stylistic features of the genre of the *cantigas d'amigo* – which normally have a refrain. This is the reason why I consider this option improbable.

I am inclined to believe that the form of that text resembled the French song or the Breton *sonioù*. The French song has a refrain, the body of the strophes is made out of two verses and it can be composed of a repeated verse (strophe 2), or a second verse can present a slight modification of the first one (*Pour aller à la fontaine/Pour de l'eau aller chercher*); the parallelisms can appear between the verses of consecutive strophes (*Sur le bord de la fontaine/Mon bien-aimé j'ai rencontré//Sur la pierre de la fontaine/Nous sommes assis à parler*). The second Breton *son* is also composed of couplets followed by a refrain and there is a notable use of repetitions: the second verse of each couplet becomes the first verse of the next couplet. In all these features we can discern the rudiments of stylistically and formally more sophisticated characteristics of *cantigas d'amigo*.

Support for this opinion can be found in the strong match between Meogo 5 and the Serbian ritual song (see Appendix 1), which share some of the formal characteristics mentioned above. The proto-model of these two, both of which describe a scene of a girl by a spring with a stag clouding the water, probably is also based on a fragment with the exactly the same scene from the “story” observed in the family of texts with the *transparent excuse* of water stirred by animals. This implies that Meogo 5 and Meogo 9 are intertextually related on a narrative level.

The special importance of the match between Meogo 5 and *Early arose the maidens* lies in fact that the Serbian song is ritual, and – according to the observations of Mircea Eliade – every ritual is based on the repetition of a mythic archetype, by which people transcend profane time and space (Eliade 2000: 599). As this song is ritual, it must reflect certain mythic content. On the other hand, as the scene described belongs to the same “story” as Meogo 9 and the rest of our family of texts, this “story” should be based on a myth, or even be some kind of a myth. Myths, says Eliade, can degrade into epic legends and ballads and survive in minor forms without losing their structure (Eliade 2000: 601). This is what probably happened in the case of our family of texts and their proto-models.

Regarding the proto-model of Meogo 9, in its formal features it probably resembled the proto-model of Meogo 5 and the Serbian ritual song.²⁶ Detached from the rest of the mythic story, these fragments would have been shaped as lyric songs with refrain and abundant repetitions of different kinds, with the effect of highly marked rhythm – a characteristic of special importance if the song accompanies a dance, which is exactly the case of *Early arose the maidens* (and of one of the Breton *sonioù*). In one community, these lyrical pieces with refrain (used for ritual purposes) might have existed simultaneously with the narrative-dramatic proto-model (based on the mythic story) – as it is the Serbian case – or they might have existed independently from it, if the ritual persisted (due to its conservative nature and the practical needs of the community), even when the mythic story in verse was already long forgotten.

Early arose the maidens belongs to a custom related to the rebirth of nature, the idea of regaining fertility and the beginning of the agricultural new year. It is a spring custom, an annual ritual that marks the *beginning of a new cycle*. As Eliade states, through this kind of ritual a complete regeneration of time is to be achieved (Eliade 2000: 559). This implies that the pragmatic function of the proto-models of Meogo 9 and Meogo 5 within the ritual to which they once belonged was linked to the ideas of fertility and, possibly, initiation. If it was a ritual of passage, it should probably be (pre)nuptial.

Final conclusions

Although it could seem tempting to look for the origins of the family of European texts with the motif of *transparent excuse* of water clouded by an animal in Meogo 9 (because it is the oldest representative of the family), the results of the analysis show that to be highly unlikely. It is hard to imagine that the traditional texts, found in such distant parts of the continent, could have such a high level of coincidence of those elements which are absent from Meogo 9 if they had originated from Meogo 9 and later on developed separately in each one of the traditions. Even if we imagine a different scenario – somewhere within the European continent (Iberian Peninsula, France...) Meogo 9 inspired the creation of a structurally more developed text (now lost), which later on gave rise to the European

²⁶ Here I choose to use the term *proto-model* rather than *model* because if Meogo's *cantigas* are not traditional, but made by Meogo (who was inspired by some traditional songs), then we can consider that those traditional songs were the *model* that Meogo used in order to compose his *cantigas*. However, those traditional songs (models) were variants of the same European family of texts to which the other songs discussed here belong. All of them stem from some common model, which, in this case, I will call *proto-model*, as I refer to the diachronic level of the common model of all European traditional texts here discussed, and not necessarily the model of Meogo 9.

traditional songs and ballads we know –, the question of the specific geographic occurrence of these texts (the *bird type* included), noticed already by Hatto, would remain open and inexplicable.

The only viable explanation would be that Meogo 9 was created on the basis of a local traditional song (now lost), which belonged to the same family as the rest of the European texts with the motif of *transparent excuse* of water stirred by an animal. This traditional song was created on the basis of a fragment detached from a proto-model of our family of texts (a narrative-dramatic piece in verse, with two inserted dialogues: girl–lover and girl–mother), which reflected some old and forgotten myth that once existed across almost the whole of Europe. The texts with the *transparent excuse* of water stirred by an animal are its surviving traces found on the very margins of the continent.

Both the proto-model of Meogo 5 and the proto-model of Meogo 9 might be ritual songs belonging to the *same* ritual. They were probably sung and accompanied by dances, as it is the case with the Serbian song *Early arose the maidens*. The intertextual relation on a narrative level between Meogo 5 and 9 and their mutual relation to a broader mythic story suggest that their proto-models might have been small lyric songs which were pieces of some kind of a “ritual dramatic script”. That “script” stemmed from the mythic archetype which would be repeated every time the ritual was enacted.

In the Bulgarian, Breton and French texts, which are all of later date than Meogo 9 and the Serbian ballad, stags got transformed into horses, probably due to the process of rationalization. The Serbian song *Early arose the maidens* might be a key to understanding this process, since it can serve as a counterpoint to these texts. As the Serbian song is ritual, its text resisted modifications: all the transcriptions made by ethnographers who witnessed its performances within the rite called *ranilo* were identical. The formulae from traditional ritual texts and chants – once detached from their ritual or mythic context – inevitably undergo changes due to the process of desemantization. This kind of process can explain the transformation of original stags into the more rational horses from Bulgarian, Breton and French texts. At the same time, these texts can assimilate new elements coming from local social or historical realities which are external to the proto-model, as it is the case in the Bulgarian ballad, where the horses belong to the governing Turks.

Unlike the Bulgarian, Breton and French representatives of the family, the parallels between Meogo 9 and the fragment of the Serbian ballad are very strong, which implies that in 13th-century Galicia the traditional song that inspired Meogo was, at least, in a very early stage of separation from the ritual context it (once) belonged to.

Appendix 1: *Пораниле девојке (Early arose the maidens)*

This Serbian traditional song belongs to the corpus of *ranilo*, a spring custom performed several hours before the dawn. The main agents of the custom were nubile girls, who would gather late in the night, before the daybreak, and start singing and dancing *kolo*, ‘wheel’. In some areas of Serbia, they would go to the water source and sing and dance there, or they would fetch the water at dawn and take it home, so that the family members could wash their faces with it. A special formula would be pronounced on that occasion. In some other regions, where the girls would not go to any water source, they would sing the songs in which the “word” *vodole*, ‘water-le’, would always appear in the refrain. Various motifs from the *ranilo* songs and certain actions during the custom reveal its connection to the ideas of rebirth of nature and regaining the fertility of fields and within the community.²⁷ The song *Early arose the maidens* is the closest parallel for Meogo 5 yet found in any language (Trubarac 2010: 39–53; 2011: 181–263; 2012: 731–734). It was collected for the first time by Vuk Stefanović Karadžić and published in the first edition of his *Dictionary of Serbian* in 1818, under the entry of *ranilo*. Later on, it was collected by several ethnographers, who witnessed *ranilo* in different regions of Serbia and described it. In all these cases, the text of the song was the same (Trubarac 2011: 181). The only variant which differs is one collected in Montenegro by Vuk Vrčević and published in 1888 (Vrčević: 13). At the time Vrčević heard it, it did not belong to any specific custom.²⁸ Here is the text of the song collected by Vuk Stefanović Karadžić with my own English translation:

Пораниле девојке,
Јело, ле, Јело, добра девојко!
 пораниле на воду,
Јело ле, Јело, добра девојко!
 ал’ на води јеленче,
Јело ле, Јело, добра девојко!
 рогом воду мућаше,
Јело ле, Јело, добра девојко!
 а очима бистрише,
Јело ле, Јело, добра девојко!

Early arose the maidens
Jela le, Jela, good maiden!
 Early arose [to go] to the water,
Jela le, Jela, good maiden!
 By the water, there was a young stag,
Jela le, Jela, good maiden!
 Stirring the water with his horn,
Jela le, Jela, good maiden!
 Clearing it up with his eyes,
Jela le, Jela, good maiden!

²⁷ For more information about *ranilo*, see: Trubarac 2011: 171–180; 2012: 731.

²⁸ For more information about this variant and its parallels to Meogo 9, see Trubarac 2011: 181, 184.

Appendix 2: *Oj Дунавe, тија водо (Oh Danube, [oh] silent waters)*

This Serbian traditional song was collected by Vuk Stefanović Karadžić and published for the first time in 1814 in *Mala Prsotonarodna Slaveno-Serbska Pesnarica* (Vuk 1814, 45). Although there were no annotations about the occasion in which it was sung, there are some motifs from this song – such as going to the river at dawn and picking irises to whiten the faces – which point towards the possibility that it might have been related to some prenuptial custom, ritual, or magical activity. Certain parallels have been found between this song and motifs characteristic of Meogo's *cantigas* (Trubarac 2011: 269–273). Here is the song copied from the Vuk's 1841 edition (Vuk I, 669) with my own English translation:

<p>—Ој Дунавe, тија водо, што ти тако мутна течеш? Ил' те јелен рогом мути, ил' Мирчета војевода? —Нит' ме јелен рогом мути, нит' Мирчета војевода; већ девојке ђаволице, свако јутро долазећи, перунику тргајући, и белећи своје лице.</p>	<p>—Oh Danube, [oh] silent waters, why are you flowing so stirred up? Is it a stag stirring you with his horn, is it Mirčeta, the duke? —It's not a stag stirring me with his horn, it's not Mirčeta, the duke, but the naughty maidens, coming every morning, picking the irises and whitening their faces.</p>
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