

‘Nobody Appreciates the Soldiers’

The Afterlife of a Hungarian Soldier Lament (Eighteenth-Nineteenth Centuries)¹

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ABSTRACT

The variants of the song analyzed in this paper have persisted in Hungarian popular poetry (manuscript songbooks) and folklore from the 1710s to the present day. The song, composed after the fall of Ferenc Rákóczi II's War of Independence (1703–1711), expresses the grievances of soldiers regarding public order. Despite their heroism and victories, they were not appropriately honored by their noble officers, which facilitated the Habsburgs' ability to suppress the revolt. Nearly all variants of the song criticize the arrogant Hungarian nobility for their delusions. Later versions of the song transcend the Kuruc era, addressing soldiers' experiences more broadly across different historical periods. It was sung by Hungarian soldiers fighting against Napoleon and other adversaries, as well as in the context of conflicts with outlaws. Starting in the mid-19th century, the rise of “Kuruc romanticism” imbued this popular song type with renewed significance, leading new written versions to be perceived by the public as “original.” The *Tyukodi Song* (*Te vagy a legény, Tyukodi pajtás* – ‘You are the guy, our pal Tyukodi’) stands as one of the most renowned examples. It can be regarded both as an authentic relic and as a counterfeit, reflecting its dual role in Hungary's cultural memory.

Keywords: popular poetry, 18th and 19th century, history of Hungary and Transylvania, soldier songs, the cult of the Rákóczi era

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1. Soldiers, heroes, rebels

The history of Hungary exhibits a distinctive rhythm, alternating between struggles for freedom against oppressive empires and periods of lethargy following the suppression of rebellions. The battles against the Ottoman Empire during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries exemplify this pattern, as the Habsburg Empire frequently demanded repayment for its assistance against the Turks. The tragic defeat at the Battle of Mohács (1526) foreshadowed the inability of the Hungarian Kingdom to withstand the overwhelming power of the Ottoman Empire on its own. Following the occupation of Buda in 1541, the country was divided into three parts.

The western and northern regions, integrated into the Holy Roman Empire, retained the name “Kingdom of Hungary”. The central areas, including much of Transdanubia and the Great Plain, fell under Ottoman control, with the border zones becoming contested territories marked by battles for fortresses and trade routes. The *Partium* (‘Parts’), located east of the Tisza River at the edge of the Great Plain, along with the entire region of Transylvania, became part of the Principality of Transylvania. Although nominally independent, this principality was required to pay tribute to the Ottoman Empire.

This tripartite division persisted for nearly 150 years, severely hindering Hungary’s financial and social development while fostering the survival of many archaic cultural elements. It also encouraged vernacular publishing efforts by both the Reformation and Counter-Reformation movements. The status quo impeded the establishment of a formal standing army, leading to reliance on irregular forces such as the *hajdús* (originally cattle herders turned free soldiers), noblemen’s private troops, and fortress garrisons. This military organization is crucial to understanding the song type at the center of this study, as the collective memory of soldiers became closely tied to the identity of the early free-soldiers, even during the later period of the Habsburg regular army.

After the expulsion of the Turks from Hungary (1686–ca. 1730), the Habsburg Empire brought the entire territory of the Kingdom of Hungary and Transylvania under its control. This led to two significant wars of independence: one led by Prince Imre Thököly of Transylvania (1697, the “Hegyalja Rebellion”) and the other by Ferenc Rákóczi II (1703–1711, the “Rákóczi War of Independence”).² However, the broadly defined Kuruc period (1670s–1711) constitutes only a brief chapter in Hungarian history. What is known about this era was primarily documented in the eighteenth century by a posterity that remembered and debated it, rendering the period increasingly distant and rife with distortions.

The cult of the Kuruc era was multifaceted in Hungarian historical and literary tradition. On one hand, the nobility of the subsequent

2 Czigány 2004.

period (18th century) regarded it as a false promise of independence that had not been realized – an irresponsible and perilous era that pitted the country against its lawful monarch. From this perspective, Kuruc soldiers were viewed as rebellious and arrogant troublemakers, remembered in this tradition through mocking songs. On the other hand, the lower classes nostalgically revered the Kuruc era, lamenting their later burdens of heavy taxation and military obligations. Many among the poor clung to the hope of Prince Rákóczi’s return from exile (even after his death in 1735), occasionally plotting new rebellions, though these aspirations gradually dissolved into the realities of the 18th century. Slowly improving living standards and the enhanced career opportunities for Hungarian nobles – such as military roles during the War of the Austrian Succession and the Seven Years’ War – helped ease social tensions. These developments also left their mark on Hungarian and Central European popular poetry.

The majority of popular poetry concerning the Kuruc soldiers can be divided into two categories. Some poems are directly associated with the Kuruc period because they were sung during that time, either by supporters or detractors, or during the difficult decades before or after the rebellion. Others draw on motifs that evoke the Kuruc period and its heroes, though these texts are mostly of later origin.

The text type³ analyzed in this study belongs to the latter category, representing the deliberately preserved rebellious traditions of the 18th century. Until the mid-19th century, this type of poetry circulated exclusively in manuscript form, with only a paraphrased version appearing in a Hungarian chapbook around 1820. This paper examines the variations of the text, its evolving contexts, and its adaptations to different historical periods, tracing the history of its manuscript transmission and the limited printed versions over nearly a century.

2. Metrical and musical background

The history of the enduring soldier’s song “Nobody Appreciates a Soldier” parallels that of the famous Hungarian *Rákóczi Song*. This lament is addressed to the exiled Prince Ferenc Rákóczi II on behalf of the Hungarian nation.⁴ Both melodies are archaic, originating in the seventeenth century, and their emergence predates the earliest written records. Bence Szabolcsi (1899–1973), one of Hungary’s most prominent music historians, identified this melody as the “Rákóczi melody type”.

The metrical tradition associated with these songs was refined through other poems before shaping these cultic compositions.⁵ The tunes of the metrical forms within this tradition are closely related, forming a

3 In secondary Hungarian literature on popular poetry, the term ‘text family’ is used to refer to a network of closely or distantly related variants.

4 For its literary contexts see Csörsz 2024.

5 Domokos–Paksa 2016, 57–60.

distinct sub-type in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Hungarian poetry. The first couplet consists of 9, 10, or 11 syllables, while the third and fourth lines consistently contain 13 syllables, structured with a 4+4+5 caesura.

<i>syllables</i>	<i>caesura</i>
9 ~ 10 ~ 11	4 5 ~ 5 5 ~ 6 5
9 ~ 10 ~ 11	4 5 ~ 5 5 ~ 6 5
13	4 4 5
13	4 4 5

Nints betsülleti | a' Katonának
 Mint volt regenten | az Kurutzsagnak
 Vallyon vagyon | e' hirevel | az meltosagnak
 Hogy az Iffjak | Magyar fiak | rosz betsben vagynak⁶

Two love laments from the early seventeenth century, dating to around 1616 and the 1670s, can be identified as metrical precursors to the *Nobody...* text type:

Zöngnek az erdők, csöngnek az mezők	5 5
Minden jókkal majd bétölnek a szükölködők	4 4 5
És bévölködők,	5
De azok is nékem csak búszerzők. ⁷	4 6
Édes Juliám, gyenge violám,	5 5
----- aranyalmácskám,	[5] 5
Jó illatú és víg kedvű sólyom-madárkám!	4 4 5
Szállj bátran én kezemre.	4 3
Hozz örömet szívemre.	4 3
Ne félj semmit, édes sólymocska! ⁸	4 5

Later, in the mid-seventeenth century, a well-known prayer from the 1650s also appears:

- 6 'Nobody appreciates the soldiers, / as the Kuruc soldiers appreciated them a long time ago. / Does your majesty know, / That young people, Hungarian lads have been neglected?' In the entire study, the translations are our own.
- 7 'The forests are resounding and the fields are chiming, / who is needy, will be filled up all of goods / and those who abound in good too, / but these only give me sorrows.'
- 8 'My sweet Juliet, my tender violet, / ----- my gold apple, / my happy falcon bird who smells delicious! / Fly onto my hand, / bring happiness into my heart, / do not be afraid, my dear falcon!'

Régi hatalmú s gazdag irgalmú,	5 5
Mindenek fölött nagy igazságú	5 5
Szent Jehova, áldott Isten! Én por és hamu,	4 4 5
Te elődben, kebeledben futok, mint hív juh. ⁹	4 4 5

From the eighteenth century (1730s) we can cite the bitter lament beginning:¹⁰

A szerencse tündér kerekén	4 5
Öröm után következik kén,	4 5
Ha mi jót ad, akkor fémlik neked a napfény,	4 4 5
Míg meg nem csal, s búban nem hajt – példa vagyok én. ¹¹	4 4 5

Another poem with the same metrical structure is a farewell song to a bishop, Ferenc Barkóczy: *Eger diocese, you have a reason to cry* (Román Jakabfalvy, around 1761).¹²

Egri megye, vagyon miért sírj,	4 5
Nincs mód benne, hogy bánattal bírj.	4 5
Énekeket, bús verseket könyveiddel írj,	4 4 5
Ily herceget, ki tégedet kedvelt, így késíri. ¹³	4 4 5

One of Pál Ányos's (1756–1784) poems, the epitaph for Ferenc Nádasdy, a renowned general, conveys a rebellious message (1783):

Hová hanyatlasz, virágzó hazánk?
 Hát már nem tud más, csak bu, jönni ránk?
 Nem is reményli nemzetünk többé hajnalát,
 S éjjelében
 Kék egében
 Csillagot sem lát?¹⁴

The metrical structure is similar to Mihály Csokonai Vitéz's (1773–1805) patriotic anti-German poem (1790s):

9 'Holy Jehova, blessed God, who have your power from the beginning, / whose mercy is rich, and have truth above all! I am only powder and ash, so I run in front of You and Your bosom as a faithful sheep.'

10 Critical edition: RMKT XVIII/15, no. 143.

11 'On the unpredictable wheels of Fortune agony follows joy. When it gives you something good, the sun is shining – but later it misleads you and drives you into sorrow. I am an example for this.'

12 Dóbék 2019, 117.

13 'Eger diocese, you have a reason to cry, but you do not have any possibility to be sorrowful, neither to write sad songs with your tears, to accompany your prince, who loved you.'

14 'Where are you sinking, our prosperous country? / Oh, the sadness can go on ours only, no other? / Our nation does not hope for its dawn any more, / and cannot see / in its night or blue sky / any stars?'

Oh szegény Országunk! Óh szegény Hazánk!	6 5
El mult szabadságunk, Nyakunkon a' Hám.	6 5
Hová legyünk? Jaj! mit tégyünk? Csúf a' rabota.	4 4 5
Olly Országba mért nem mégyünk? Hol nincs Despota. ¹⁵	4 4 5

Earlier versions of this verse form were widespread during the 17th and 18th centuries, serving as a musical and rhetorical model for similar lament songs. Until the mid-19th century, *Nobody Appreciates the Soldier* was the most well-known example of this type.

3. Variants in the 18th and early 19th centuries

The original text, the lament of the Kuruc soldiers (and its variants), appears almost exclusively in Protestant sources. It was first recorded in a Unitarian manuscript collection in Torda, Transylvania¹⁶ (1754–1763), and later in the networks of major Calvinist colleges along the Tisza in Eastern Hungary, including Debrecen, Sárospatak, and, to some extent, Pápa in the Transdanubian region. These schools were renowned for their Hungarian patriotic education and played a key role in promoting the cult of the Kuruc period during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

In contrast, variants of the *Rákóczi Song* were recorded by Catholic scribes, and sometimes by parish priests. In Hungarian popular poetry, we occasionally observe significant differences between religious confessions in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries – these differences are evident not only in sacred topics but also in secular genres that might otherwise seem neutral.

The temporal distribution of the variants is also informative. The most prominent periods of circulation were between 1790 and 1810, and again in the 1820s and 1830s. It is also important to consider the re-folklorization process, exemplified by the *Tyukodi Song*, a late paraphrase that was published several times in the 1860s.

Let us now briefly review the main directions of variation and the subtypes of the song *Nobody Appreciates the Soldier*. The variants of this text type, or more specifically the periods during which this text type evolved, can be compared in a spreadsheet. The horizontal rows represent the beginning lines of the stanzas in chronological order (schematically), while the column headings correspond to the serial

15 'Oh, our poor country! Oh, our poor homeland! Our freedom was gone, so the harness is around our neck. Where should we go? What could we do? The drudgery is ugly. Why don't we go to such a country, where there are no despots?'

16 Today: Turda, Romania.

numbers of the sources. The numbers within the columns refer to the serial numbers of verses in each given variant.¹⁷

	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII	XIII	XIV
Nobody appreciates the soldiers (Nincs becsületi a katonának)	1	1						1				3		
The blood of the poor lad / the soldier is cheap (Szegény legénynek olcsó a vére)	2	3		2	1	[6]	3	2	1		1	2	1	
We liked the Kuruc era (Igen kedveltük a kurucságot)	3	2												
The poor lads were made officers (Szegény legényből tisztek tétettek)	4													
[heroic deeds of the Kuruc army, 1]	5													
	6	6												
	7													
	8													
	9													
How could we occupy Huszt castle? (Híres Huszt vára Máramarosban)	10						2	5		1	3			

17 Sources: I. *Diary of Mihály Szolga* (1745–1763), p. 287; II. *Dávidné Soltári* [Psalms of the Wife of David] (Sárospatak, North-Eastern Hungary, 1790–1791), no. 195; III. *Songbook of Imre Szeel* (Debrecen, 1790–1794), p. 144; IV. *Melodiary of István Elek* (Pápa, Transdanubia, 1805), 29a–b; V. *Songbook of Dávid Nihelszki* (Szatmár, 1806–1824), p. 153; VI. *Zöld Martzi, és a' szeretője nótáji; és egymástól való bútszázások* [Songs of Zöld Martzi, and His Lover; and Their Farewells], undated chapbook after 1816, Országos Széchényi Könyvtár [Hungarian National Library] 821.148, pp. 12–13; VIII. *Felvidítő V. Nóták I.* (Sárospatak, 1824), no. 185; IX. *Songbook of János Komáromi* (1829), 4b.; X. *István Tóth: Áriák és dalok* [Arias and Songs] (Kiskun region, Great Plain, 1832–1843), p. 16; XI. *Melodiary from Szatmár* (1820s), pp. 64–65; XII–XIII. *Collection of R. K.* (Debrecen, 1839–1843), no. 7, pp. 63–64 and no. 10, 16b; XIV. *Songbook from Selmechánya / Schemnitz* (1830s), p. 70. More details and variants: RMKT XVIII/14, no. 8, notes: pp. 349–354.

‘NOBODY APPRECIATES THE SOLDIERS’

	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII	XIII	XIV
If you have ever been to the treasured Transylvania (Ha mikor voltál kincses Erdélyben)	11	7					1	4			2	1		
[heroic deeds of the Kuruc army, 2]	12													
	13													
And who rode into Austria (De vajon ki volt mind Bécs aljáig)	14	5												
[heroic deeds of the Kuruc army, 3]	15													
	16													
	17													
	18													
All of the miracles (Ha valaholott voltak csudák)	19													
That would have happened (Mely dolog bizony meg is let volna)		4												
Woe us, the Hungarian nation / famous rogues (Jaj már minékünk, magyar nemzetnek)				1	3	[7]			2					1
If the poor man has a little bacon (Szegény legénynek ha szalonnája)			1	3	2	1		3			4		2	2
If the outlaw desires the hard-earned wealth (De a más véres verejtékére)						2								
[Marci Zöld and his adventures]						3								
						4								
						5								

The table also demonstrates that there was only a loose connection between the representatives of this text type, yet the same melody and verse form united more distant versions. In the next chapter, an attempt will be made to classify the periods of the variants.

4. Periods and layers in the life of the text type

The history of this text type can be divided into several periods. The disproportionate features of the spreadsheet are not unique; it is generally true of Hungarian popular poetry that the earliest variant is often longer than later versions. Most stanzas are omitted due to changes in context and gradual refinement over time. Thus, the original text represents an isolated variant in the history of the text type, while shorter, more flexible (and sometimes fragmented) later versions became more popular.

In textological analysis, networks and dynamic models are more useful than genealogical connections, as they better reflect the occasional, contemporary use of the texts. The first variant (1750s) presents a coherent Kuruc theme with many details. Its central message is that, during the Kuruc period, common soldiers were still held in esteem, as they were always ready to fight for their homeland, in contrast to the nobles. However, today, “nobody appreciates the soldiers.” The most important stanzas, in English translation, are:

1. Nobody appreciates the soldiers,
the way the Kuruc soldiers were appreciated long ago.
Does your majesty know,
That many soldiers, brave lads, have been neglected?
2. The blood of the poor lad is cheap,
His wage is only three worthless forints,
But he can't even spend it as he wishes,
Thus, poison, as a tormenting worm boils in his heart.
3. We admired the Kuruc era,
We received it as news,
And we believed we could earn such freedom,
That we could save and liberate our poor homeland.
4. The poor lads were made officers,
Who fought against the enemy,
Because the disputing lords were never defeated in battle,
While the soldiers fought as dragons or lions.
- 5–9. [heroic deeds of the Kuruc army, 1]

10. How could we occupy
The famous castle of Huszt in Maramureş?
We, poor lads, attacked from ambush,
And I saw German lords fleeing.
11. If you have ever been to the treasured Transylvania,
And seen heaps of German corpses,
They were cut by the hands of poor lads,
As demonstrated by the army of our lord and Fehérvár
[Alba Iulia].
- 12–13. [heroic deeds of the Kuruc army, 2]
14. And who rode into Austria,
Near Vienna?
It was the horse of the poor lads that ran, not of the lord,
Let's go, soldier, come on, hand on the sword, be faithful
unto your death!
- 15–18. [heroic deeds of the Kuruc army, 3]
19. All of the miracles
Outside and inside [Hungary] have been brave
adventures,
The poor lads fought valiantly in battles,
And only the poor men shed their blood, not the
nobles.¹⁸

The *Dávidné Soltári* (its humorous title meaning “Psalms of the Wife of David”) was recorded in Sárospatak around 1790, in a manuscript songbook belonging to a student. This songbook contains only an

18 In the Hungarian original: 1. Nincs becsületi a katonának, / Mint volt régentén a kurucoknak; / Vajon vagyón-é hírével a méltóságnak, / Hogy sok vitézek, próbált legények rut becsben vadnak? 2. Szegény legénynek olcsó a vére, / Három rossz forint szegénynek bére, / Azt sem költheti el soha szegény végtére, / Melyért méreg, kízó fereg forr a szívére. 3. Igen kedveltük a kurucságot, / Oly igen kaptuk, mint egy újságot, / Nyerünk, gondoltuk, oly szabadságot, / Oltalmazzuk s szabadítjuk szegény hazánkot. 4. Szegény legényből tiszték tétettek, / Az ellenséggel kik szemben mentek, / Mivel a sok pártos urak meg sem verettek, / Mint sárkányok, oroslányok, mégis küzködtek. [...] 10. Híres Huszt vára Máramarosban / Miképen esék birodalmunkban? / Mi pedig szegény legények voltunk csak alattomban, / Magam láttam, tokos uram futott pallosban. 11. Ha mikor voltál kincses Erdélyben, / Német testhalmot láttál sok helyen, / (Mind szegény legény kezei vágták azt egyben) / Urunk hada, Fejérvára bizonyság ebben. [...] 14. De vajon ki volt mind Bécs aljáig, / Ki nyargalódzott Ausztriáig? / Szegény legény, nem úr lova futott mindaddig; / Nosza, vitéz, no, kardra kéz, légy hú halálig! [...] 19. Ha valaholott voltanak csodák, / Mind kívül-belől estek szép próbák, / Szegény legények magokat frissen forgatták, / Csak szegények, s nem úrfiak véreket onták. *Diary of Mihály Szolga (1745–1763)* p. 287. The complete original text in Hungarian: RMKT XVIII/14, no. 8/I.

excerpt of the text, but the original message remains intact. In the 1790s and extending into the 1800s, the moral meaning of the cracked couplets could be applied not only to the soldier's fate but to that of any poor man. The couplet "If the poor man has a little bacon" appears in the opening position in one version.

Szeginy embernek ha szalonnája
 Vagyon kenyere s. testi ruhája
 Furtsa tsinos felesige meleg szobája
 Bár botskoros ha nem adós mi menkű baja.¹⁹

The most suggestive opening line is 'the blood of the poor lad is cheap'.

A katonának óltsó a vére,
 Három négy krajtzár egy napi bere
 Azt sem elheti meg szegény mindég kedvére
 Keserőség és nagy inség száll a fejére.²⁰

This period was one of the most challenging decades for the Habsburg army. Hundreds of Hungarian men were killed by cannonballs in the wars against the French, against Napoleon's army, or returned injured, crippled, and unable to work. These deeply ambivalent processes had a profound impact on Hungarian society, contrasting with the victorious battles and the strengthening of the military identity in Hungary during the eighteenth century. Consequently, in the popular poetry of the late century, marches aspiring for war, based on Western melodies and following the early Hungarian military tradition, are intertwined with laments that reflect the hardships of soldier life. Among these laments, the post-Kuruc text type can also be found.²¹

The growing nostalgia and irony accelerated the spread of the stanzas *The Noble Castle of Huszt in Máramaros* (Maramureş), *If You Have Ever Been to the Treasured Transylvania*, and *Woe Us, the Hungarian Nation*.

Jaj már mi nekünk Magyar Nemzetnek
 Kik fel támadtunk rebelliseknek
 Zákány István Szuhay Mátyas kopasz fejeknek
 Nagy pipájú, kevés dohányú szegény Legénynek²²

19 'If the poor man has a little bacon, / Bread and some clothes, / A pretty wife and a warm room: / Although he is a lower noble, / If he has no debts, he does not have any troubles.' Songbook of Imre Szeel (Debrecen, 1790–1794), p. 144.

20 'The blood of the soldier is cheap, / His wage is only three or four pennies, / But he can't even spend it as he wishes, / Therefore, bitterness and big poverty fall upon his head.' *Melodiary of István Elek* (Pápa, Transdanubia, around 1805), fol. 29r-v.

21 Critical edition: RMKT XVIII/14, no. 8.

22 'Woe us, the Hungarian nation, / Who have resurrected, rebels! / Woe to the bald heads of István Zákány and Mátyás Szuhay, / And to the poor lads, who have big pipes and a little tobacco.' This stanza appeared in the late 17th century.

These stanzas – reflecting the earliest text type of the Kuruc nostalgia, are a hint to the past with comic overtones, singing about the Hungarian people, who have ‘big pipes, but little tobacco’. It reflects the military noble rebellions against Napoleon (for the last time in 1809), which were large-scale, tragic events in this period.

The Hungarian army marched against France and lost the Battle of Győr (14 June 1809) in a heroic struggle. Napoleon occupied the Transdanubian region for several months. In this context, the uprising that supported the Austrian Emperor was judged in the same way as the ill-fated war of independence led by Rákóczi a hundred years earlier. Thus, the tradition of rebellion and patriotic (empire) fervor could merge in popular poetry.

A paraphrase of the Kuruc song tradition was written during this period, undoubtedly playing with these overtones, though the addressee has been changed. It became the lament of three well-known outlaws before their hanging. This song was published in a chapbook titled *Zöld Martzi, és a’ szeretője nótáji; és egymástól való bútsúzások* [*Songs of Marci Zöld and His Lover; and Their Farewells*]. It tells the story of the notorious outlaw Marci Zöld (‘Martin Green’), who was hanged in 1816. The presumed author of these poems was József Erdélyi (1795–1863), a Lutheran priest and teacher.

This broadside print can be divided into three main sections on the topic of executions. The first section features a multipart duet sung by Marci Zöld and his sweetheart. The second part contains the confessions of the outlaws (Marci Zöld, Palatintzki, Betskereki) during their interrogation in the county jail. At the end of this section, two original songs by Marci Zöld are printed, one beginning with *If the poor lad has some clothes...*, and the second, a lament, is printed alongside a woodcut depicting the three hanged outlaws.

The first song in the second section returns to the original epic structure of the text type; however, the stanzas are new (focused on the outlaws’ robberies). Yet, they align with the variants of the early moralizing stanzas from the 18th century.

Szegény Legénynek tefti ruhája,
Ha van kenyere és fzalonnája,
Felesége tsendes gondos meleg fzubája,
Bár botskoros Ha nem adós nints femmi baja.

De a’ más véres veréjtékére,
Ásító ’Sivány mikor kedvére
Nyargal a’ lován akkor jut Hóhér kezére,
Bár Gróf légyen örök fzégyen száll a’ fejére. [...]

Jaj már minékünk nagy 'Siványoknak,
Kik feltámadtunk úton rablóknak [...]'²³

The transformations of the text type, as observed, impacted both the historical context and the geographical regions. The Transylvanian-originated lament spread primarily in the Protestant colleges and towns of the Great Plain.

5. Afterlife, cult

We can trace the fate of this text type into the 1840s and beyond, due to the rediscovery of poetic or musical 'Kuruc' publications. The 'Tyukodi Song' ("You are the man, our pal Tyukodi") represents a unique blend of late additional stanzas and earlier verses. It was first recorded in the 1850s and later published by Kálmán Thaly and Gyula Káldy:

Te vagy a legény, Tyukodi pajtás!
Nem olyan, mint más, mint Kuczug Balázs.
Teremjen hát országunkban jó bor, áldomás,
nem egy fillér, de két tallér kell ide, pajtás.

Szegénylegénynek olcsó a vére,
Két-három fillér egy napra bére.
Azt sem tudja elkölteni, mégis végtére
Két pogány közt egy hazáért omlik ki vére!

Bort kupámba, bort, embert a gátra,
Tyukodi pajtás, induljunk rája,
Verjük által a labancot a másvilágra,
Úgy ad Isten békességet édes hazánkra.²⁴

23 'If the poor lad has some clothes, / Bread and bacon, / A quiet and tidy wife, and a warm room: / Although he is a lower noble, if he does not have any debts, / He does not have any troubles. // But if the outlaw, who covets the hard-earned wealth of others, / Rides on his horse, / And falls into the hands of the executioner, / Even if he is an earl, eternal shame falls upon his head. [...] // Woe us, famous rogues, / Who resurrected as outlaws on the roads!' Chapbook *Zöld Martzi, és a' szeretője nótáji; és egymástól való bútszázások* [Songs of Zöld Martzi, and His Lover; and Their Farewells], after 1816; Budapest, Országos Széchényi Könyvtár [Hungarian National Library] 821.148, pp. 12-13.

24 In English: 'You are the man, our lad Tyukodi, / Not like the others, like Balázs Kuczug, / Let good wine and blessings grow in our country, / We need not a penny, but two thalers, my friend. // The blood of the poor lad is cheap, / His wage is only two or three pennies a day, / But he can't even spend it, ultimately, / His blood will spill out between two pagans for the homeland! // Wine in my cups, wine, and bring some fellow to fight, / My lad Tyukodi, let's go against the enemies, / Let's beat the Labanc to the other world, / And God will give peace to our sweet homeland.'

The *Tyukodi Song* became a cultic text in Hungary and was considered an original Kuruc song throughout the twentieth century. It was published with piano accompaniment, arranged for choir, and even adapted into a novel. The fictional heroes of the song were incorporated into the novel, and ‘lad Tyukodi’ emerged as the allegorical figure representing the Kuruc soldiers (despite his nonexistence).

The *Tyukodi Song* is a descendant of the early Kuruc soldier’s lament, both in its musical and poetic elements. Some folk music variants serve as revival data, as the song was soon included in schoolbooks, popular anthologies, and novels. Thus, the song began as a post-Kuruc, eighteenth-century lament but evolved into a Romantic Kuruc song, preserving many of its original characteristics.

The *Tyukodi Song* was a cultic text in Hungary, and it was thought to be an original Kuruc song in the twentieth century as well. It was published with piano accompaniment and arranged for choir, even adapted as a plot of a novel. The fictive heroes became the heroes of a novel and ‘lad Tyukodi’ became the allegorical figure of the Kuruc soldiers (although he did not even exist).

6. Summary

This study outlined the transformations and thematic changes of a rich text type from the mid-18th to the mid-19th century. As a work of popular poetry, the variations can only be partially compared, as they were sung and written in different communities. Nevertheless, it is instructive to analyze the collected variants as a network. On one hand, the literary-historical connections are clearly discernible. Over the course of the genre’s evolution, the heroic deeds of the Kuruc period fade into the background and lose their relevance. The song gradually transforms from a heroic narrative into a lamentation and, by the 19th century, into a mournful, boisterous drinking song of Kuruc romanticism. Hungarian songs composed in this verse form are consistently bitter or rebellious, often carrying a patriotic message. On the other hand, the text also serves as a testimony to social history. In contrast to the cult surrounding Rákóczi’s war of independence, which celebrated the ‘heroic age’, the soldiers of the 18th and 19th centuries present themselves as impoverished men on low wages. At times, they seek solace in an increasingly distant, cultic past, in opposition to the evils of the present (as seen in the insurgents of the Napoleonic era). The song thus becomes a bitter self-characterization of the Hungarian nation, “with a big pipe and little dough”, which reflects the political changes of the 18th and 19th centuries.

Appendix: the melodies associated with this text type

Score 1

Dávidné Soltári [Psalms of the Wife of David], 1790–1791. RMKT XVIII/14, 353.

Nincs be - csű - le - ti a ka - to - ná - nak, Va - jon va - gyon - é - hí - ré - vel
Mint volt ré - gen - ten a ku - ruc - ság - nak.
a mél - tó - ság - nak, Hogy az if - jak, ma - gyar fi - ak rossz becs - ben vagy - nak?

Score 2

István Tóth: Áriák és dalok [Arias and Songs], 1832–1843. RMKT XVIII/14, 353.

Ne - mes Huszt vá - ra Má - ra - ma - ros - ba' Ak - kor volt ám a ma - gyar - nak
Mi - kor - ju - tott a mi bir - to - kunk - ba,
szőr - nyű ha - tal - ma, Ma - gam lát - - tam, [Szart] a pund - rá - ba.
Né - met u - - ram

Score 3

Sámuel Almási: Magyar Dalnok [Hungarian Singer], the 1850s. RMKT XVIII/14, 354.

Jaj már mi - né - künk, ma - gyar nem - zet - nek,
Kik föl - tá - mad - tunk, re - bel - li - sek - nek,
Zá - kány Ist - ván, Szu - ha - i Má - tyás ko - pasz fe - jek - nek,
Nagy pí - pá - jú, ke - vés do - há - nyú ma - gyar nem - zet - nek!

Score 4

The 'Tyukodi Song' (after Gyula Káldy: *Kurucz dalok: XVII. és XVIII. század* [Kuruc Songs, 17th and 18th century,] sine loci, 1892.

$\text{♩} = 60$
Té vagy a legény, Tyuko - di pajtás! Nem olyan, mint más, mint Kuczog Balázs.
Te - rēm - jén hát or - szá - gunk - ban jó bor, ál - do - más,
nem egy fil - lér, de két tal - lér kell i - de, paj - tás.

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