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*Bohemica litteraria*. 2023, vol. 26, iss. 1, pp. 89-108

ISSN 1213-2144 (print); ISSN 2336-4394 (online)

Stable URL (DOI): <https://doi.org/10.5817/BL2023-1-6>

Stable URL (handle): <https://hdl.handle.net/11222.digilib/digilib.78428>

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Access Date: 27. 11. 2024

Version: 20230719

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# Peter of Provence and Fair Maguelonne: from a French Mediaeval Romance to a Czech Broadside Ballad

Alena Kotšmídová

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## ABSTRACT

This paper deals with the Czech broadside ballad about fair Maguelonne and Peter of Provence and its origins in a late mediaeval French prose romance, subsequently translated into German and Czech. Some basic information about the romance and an outline of its most important features, and those of the two translations, help put the broadside ballad into its literary and historical context. The main focus is, of course, on the broadside ballad itself, i.e., on presenting the preserved copies, describing the formal aspects of the work, and comparing the plot of the ballad with the plot of the Czech translation of the romance. Keeping in mind the previous versions of the story permits us not only better to understand the specificity of the broadside ballad, but, at the same time, to identify some of the modifications made by the author of the ballad as expressions of wider ongoing processes.

## KEYWORDS

Broadside ballad; comparison; *Peter of Provence and fair Maguelonne*; reworking; romance; translation.

## CZECH ABSTRACT

Petr z Provence a krásná Magelona: od francouzského středověkého románu k české kramářské písni

Tato studie pojednává o české kramářské písni o krásné Mageloně a Petrovi z Provence a jejím původu v pozdně středověkém francouzském románu v próze, jenž byl následně přeložen do němčiny a češtiny. Několik základních informací o vzniku díla a náčrt nejdůležitějších rysů románu a jeho dvou překladů nám umožní zasadit píseň do literárního a historického kontextu. Středobodem studie je samozřejmě kramářská píseň samotná, tedy představení zachovaných výtisků,

popis formálních aspektů díla a srovnání děje kramářské písni s dějem českého překladu románu. Zohlednění předchozích verzí příběhu nám dovoluje nejen lépe ukázat specifčnost kramářské písni, ale současně identifikovat některé změny provedené jejím autorem jakožto projev širších literárně-kulturních procesů.

## KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

Kramářská píseň; srovnání; *Petr z Provence a krásná Magelona*; přepracování; romance; překlad.

*The story of Peter of Provence and fair Maguelonne* is known as a prose romance written probably in the 15<sup>th</sup> century in Middle French, possibly for Philip the Good, the duke of Burgundy, or for someone from his court (KOTŠMÍŘOVÁ 2021: 12–14; SÖDERHJELM 1924: 27, 36). However, the origin of the work could lie, at least partially, in legends of the Languedoc region transmitted from the 12<sup>th</sup> century. There could also have been a sort of primary version of the romance from the same period or a little later (COVILLE 1941: 474–481, RIHET-BOISMERY 1994: 5). If such a version or legend existed, it would probably have been declaimed or written in verse. In the 19<sup>th</sup> and at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this hypothetical first version was associated with the name of Bernard de Treviers, a canon of the cathedral in Maguelone. Though his authorship and even his existence were later denied (PARIS 1889: 511–512; BAUMEL 1953: 48–52), the possibility that the prose romance derives from an epic poem can never be totally excluded. In this article, we shall deal with the transformation of this French romance into a Czech broadside ballad. Firstly, we will give a brief overview of the German and Czech translations of the novel, and of the main differences between the translations and their respective sources. Then we shall turn to the broadside ballad. We will show some almost word-for-word correspondences between some formulations in the ballad and in the Czech translation, before continuing with a description of the formal aspects of the ballad and with an analysis of the differences between the known editions. Our study will be completed with a comparison of the content of the ballad with the French original and the two translations of the romance.<sup>1</sup>

1) Štěpánka Pištěláková compares the Czech translation of the romance with the Czech broadside ballad in her Master's degree thesis from 1954. Although she makes some good observations in her interpretation, the work is unfortunately strongly influenced by the ideology of the period.

## The story and the character of the romance

First of all, we would like to recall the story. Peter, a very promising young knight, the only son and heir of the Count of Provence, hears about the exceptional beauty of Maguelonne, the only child and heiress of the King of Naples. He decides to go to Naples and win her heart. Maguelonne falls in love with him and Peter with her, but since Peter is pretending to be a poor knight, they are afraid Maguelonne's father would be opposed to their love. They decide to flee to Provence but are separated before their journey has barely begun. Peter becomes a slave of the Sultan of Babylon, whereas Maguelonne goes to Provence alone, where she founds a church and a hospice. One day, Peter arrives there, sick and poor. At first, they do not recognise each other, but Maguelonne realises who he is from what he tells her about his life. After the joyful reunion of the lovers, and of the couple with Peter's parents, the two are married in a church ceremony, they live happily in Provence, and their only child, a son, becomes the King of Naples and Count of Provence.<sup>2</sup>

In fact, there is very little action in the story: there are only a few characters and no real conflicts between them, the only problems that arise are caused by the protagonists themselves, and there are no supernatural beings or events. Instead, the romance has a very sophisticated structure, where the actions, utterances or surroundings of one of the principal characters are mirrored in the actions, utterances or surroundings of the other. There are a lot of rather vague references to different historical events and personages, to other romances, and to biblical characters as well. One of the most important elements is the specific relationship Peter and Maguelonne each share with Saint Peter, which strengthens the ties between the protagonists, and, at the same time, reinforces the aesthetic value of the work (KOTŠMÍDOVÁ 2019).

## German and Czech translations of the romance

The romance was first translated into German by an anonymous author at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, but the only preserved manuscript dates from 1525

2) It has frequently been pointed out that a similar storyline is to be found already in the tale about Prince Kamaralzaman and Princess Boudour from the collection *One Thousand and One Nights* (see for example FRENZEL 1976: 452, ROUDAUT 2009: 8–9). Some authors believe that the story of Kamaralzaman and Boudour was a direct source of the romance (DEGERING 1922: 144) but we have no evidence for such an interpretation.

(edited by DEGERING 1922). Not long after this first and quite loose rendering, the story was translated again, in 1527, by Veit Warbeck (edited by BOLTE 1894). This translation is very faithful to the French model, the manuscript of Cobourg (edited by COLLIOT 1977), known as the shorter version of the romance. There are some very small but important changes which are linked to the Reformation, and the relationship between the heroes is slightly moralised (for more information about this translation see PUTZO 2019). In 1535, Warbeck's translation was published for the first time thanks to his friend Georg Spalatin. There are only minor changes between Warbeck's original translation and the text of the edition but, in the foreword, Spalatin recommends the story as suitable reading for both young girls and their parents and, at the same time, as a model for other authors who intend to write texts in German for young girls and women. Thus, it is clear that he read the text in a very didactic way.<sup>3</sup>

The Czech translation is also the work of an anonymous author (edition by KOLÁR 2000). It is based on one of the many editions of Warbeck's translation, as is already obvious in the title, where the name of the heroine is mentioned before the name of the hero. This modification was first made by Spalatin, perhaps better to reach the public he hoped for. The Czech translation was probably made shortly after the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century, possibly by someone from the circle around Jan Günther, a book printer in Nürnberg and later in Olomouc (VOIT 2006a). Again, the translation is very faithful to the German model, but, of course, it contains some changes. Above all, it is a little more moralised than the versions we have discussed above: the relationship between the main characters is described as even less physical, with virtuous behaviour being emphasised instead. The mother-daughter aspect of the relationship between Maguelonne and her governess is underlined, while also leaving no doubt that the governess is still very aware of her position as a servant. Finally, the presentation of the narrator is a little different. Rather than using the first-person plural of verbs which suggest the act of speaking, the narrator in the Czech translation more frequently employs the first-person singular of verbs which indicate the act of writing. As a result, the relationship between the act of narration and the

3) In his understanding, the main characters, because of their lack of respect for their parents, their behaviour, and their secret engagement/marriage, deserve to be punished by God. Nevertheless, since both hero and heroine endure this punishment and stay faithful to one another, they can be reunited at the end of the story. In other words, they can serve as both a bad and a good example for the reader. For more details, see PUTZO 2020.

narrated story (where everything depends on the spoken language), and that between the narrator and his public, are less close.<sup>4</sup>

The many editions from the 18<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, and even one reworking written by Stanislav Kostka Neumann and published in 1913,<sup>5</sup> show the immense and long-lasting popularity of the story in the Czech speaking area. The problem with the Czech translation is in the discontinuity between the first two editions. The first recorded is from 1565,<sup>6</sup> whereas the first preserved edition dates from 1741.<sup>7</sup> So, between these two editions there is a gap of nearly two centuries. It is probably somewhere in the second half of this period that the broadside ballad about Maguelonne and Peter emerges.

## The Czech broadside ballad about Maguelonne and Peter, its editions and description

Currently, we know of four editions of the ballad:

1. “Píseň Vtěšená a krátochwilná/ o krásné Mageloně a Petrowi z Prowincy/ kterak gsau se náramně spolu zamilowali/ potom gak se s nimi dalo” (“A charming and entertaining song about fair Maguelonne and Peter of Provence, how they fell deeply in love with each other and what happened to them afterwards”). A completely preserved copy, dated 1685, published in Prague (KNM 27 H 00258).

2. “[Píse]ň o krásné Magelo[ně a] Petrovi z Prowinci, kte[rak gs]au se náramně spolu zamilowali potom gak se s njmi dalo” (“A song about fair Maguelonne and Peter of Provence, how they fell deeply in love with each other and what happened to them afterwards”). A completely preserved copy, without indication of the year of the edition or name of the printer, allegedly published in Jindřichův Hradec (MZK VK-0000.736). If the information about the place of publication is true, it is almost certain that it was not published before the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century (VOIT 2006b). The song is bound into a *špalíček* (“block”), a sort of homemade omnibus volume, which contains another 74 songs.<sup>8</sup>

4) For more about the Czech translation, its oldest surviving editions and possible contacts with the older Polish version of the romance, see KOTŠMÍDOVÁ 2022.

5) For more information about this reworking and about the differences from the Czech translation of the romance, see HRABÁK 1956.

6) *Kopíář*, p. 84.

7) It was printed by František Antonín Hirnle in Olomouc (MVČ 1775 přív. neúpl.).

8) We would like to thank Jiří Dufka from the Moravian Library, who not only provided us with a scan of this copy of the ballad, but also identified the ballad mentioned in point 4 and in note 9 below.

3. “[Píseň utěšená a kratochvilná o krásné Mageloně a Petrovi z Provincií...]” (“A charming and entertaining song about fair Maguelonne and Peter of Provence...”). A copy printed probably in the last twenty years of the 17<sup>th</sup> century; the place of publication is unknown because the title page is missing, as well as some other leaves (KNM 27 H 3 neúpl.).

4. “[Píseň o Mageloně]” (“A song about Maguelonne”). A copy coming probably from the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century; the place of publication as well as the name of the printer are unknown because the title page and many others are missing (NK ČR Písničky IV. přív. 54 neúpl.). This fourth copy is bound together with another incomplete broadside ballad, “Písnička nová historická o jedné paní v slavném městě Římě, jak v mnišském přestrojení zachránila svého pána, jednoho hraběte, z pohanského zajetí” (“A new historical song about a lady in the famous city of Rome and how, disguised as a monk, she saved her lord, a count, from pagan captivity”).<sup>9</sup> Both songs contain some similar motives (true love, separation of the – this time married – couple, the enslavement of the hero, disguise of the female character) and have the same rhythmical structure.

As the title page of the first edition indicates the exact year of publication, the question of dating seems at first sight quite straightforward. Moreover, the third edition is dated to the same general period (it could be even a little older). However, we must bear in mind that the imprints of the first two editions are both incomplete, and the third edition can be dated to the last twenty years of the 17<sup>th</sup> century simply because it closely resembles the preserved copy from 1685. Also, we know that it was not unusual to backdate broadside ballads or popular prose romances to make them look older and thus more appealing to the public or to avoid censorship (VOIT 2006c), even though, in the case of the ballad of Maguelonne and Peter, a negative reaction from the censor would have been surprising. For now, since we can neither prove nor exclude the possibility of a false imprint, we will here retain the date indicated in the edition printed in Prague (number 1 above).

9) In the Knihopis database, this second ballad is not identified as a separate broadside ballad but is included under the title of the ballad about Peter and Maguelonne.

Another, equally incomplete, copy of this second ballad is preserved in the the Moravian Library (MZK VK-0000.543,1). It was originally printed on 8 leaves in 1666 in Litomyšl. The present name was attributed to the ballad by Jaroslav Vobr.

There is, also in the Moravian Library, a copy of another edition of the text with a slightly different name, “Píseň o hraběti, který se dostal do pohanského zajetí, a jeho manželka převlečená za mnicha ho vysvobodila” (“A song about a count who fell into pagan captivity and his wife, disguised as a monk, freed him”; MZK VK-0000.666, přív. 26). It was printed between 1666 and 1750.



As the Czech version of the romance is based on a German translation, we should consider the possibility that the Czech broadside ballad also finds its source in a German text. It is true that the German translation was versified shortly after the first edition in 1535. We know of a work by an anonymous student from 1539, followed by several adaptations written by Hans Sachs (BOLTE 1894: LII, FRENZEL 1976: 453–454). Nevertheless, we have so far found no German broadside ballad about Peter and Maguelonne.<sup>10</sup> In addition, some formulations in the Czech broadside ballad closely resemble formulations in existing Czech editions of the romance. Therefore, we think that the Czech broadside ballad is based on an edition of the Czech translation of the romance which we no longer possess.

	Broadside ballad	Czech translation, edition from 1780
Ex. 1	<i>V hospodě své se jal přemejšleti a k srdci čím dál / vždy připouštěti krásu / rozmlouvání: té panny milé, přeušlechtilé / milostné vzhledání.<sup>11</sup></i> ("In his inn, he began to meditate and more and more, he let the beauty, the words and the gracious looks of the gentle and very noble maiden enter into his heart.")	<i>Když pak Petr do své hospody od krále přijel, odešel soukromě na místo samotné a počal sám v sobě přemejšleti, k srdci připouštěti tu laskavou řeč a milostné vzhledání i také nevymluvnou krásu dcery královny, krásné Magelony, kterouž ona okrášlená byla</i> (KOLÁR 2000: 126). ("When Peter came back from the king to his inn, he went privately to a secluded place and began to meditate, and he let enter into his heart the kind words and the gracious looks, as well as the inexpressible beauty with which fair Maguelonne, the king's daughter, was adorned.")
Ex. 2	<i>Ach kdybych mohla / se ho doptati / jistě bych chtěla / za ním se bráti / ba byt' byl kraj světa.<sup>12</sup></i> ("Oh, if I could find out where he is, surely I would like to go to him, even if he were at the end of the earth.")	<i>Ach kdybych se mohla doptati, kde by byl, by byl kraj světa, chtěla bych za ním jíti beze vší pochybnosti</i> (KOLÁR 2000: 164). ("Oh, if I could find out where he is, even if he were at the end of the earth, without a doubt, I would like to go to him.")

10) We consulted two bibliographies of German broadside ballads (HOLUBOVÁ 2017, KOOLMAN, 1990), the Špalíček database of the Library of the National Museum (KNM), the Knihopis database of the Czech National Library (NK ČR), as well as the online catalogues and collections of the Moravian Library (MZK), the German National Library (DNB), the Bavarian State Library (BSB) and several other libraries in Germany.

11) *Piseň Vtěšená a krátochwilná/ o krásné Mageloně a Petrowi z Prowincy*, 1685, KNM 27 H 00258.

12) IBID.



According to the completely preserved editions, the ballad is to be sung to the tune of the song “Ach potěšení mé rozmilé” (“Oh my dearest darling”).<sup>13</sup> The text of the ballad is very regularly organised into stanzas divided into two slightly unequal parts by a colon and rhymed according to the following pattern: ABAB-C:DDC. There are generally no changes in the first four verses (lines). Just once or twice, the author could not find a suitable rhyme, in which case we have the structure ABCBD:EED. There are more variations in the last four verses, for example ABABC:AAC, ABABC:BBC, ABABA:CCA or ABABB:CCB. Relatively often, the last four verses have the same rhyme, which, moreover, can correspond to rhyme B of the first part of the pattern. The first four lines normally contain 5 syllables, the fifth and eighth lines contain 6 syllables, and again, the sixth and seventh lines most often contain 5 syllables. The following example shows the most regular form:

Czech		English
A	<i>Starosty potom</i>	“After, she called
B	<i>Své zavolala</i>	Her governess
A	<i>A s Petrem svým v tom</i>	And to her Peter
B	<i>Se rozžehnala</i>	She said goodbye
C	<i>On zas od ní vyšel:</i>	He departed from her:
D	<i>Do své hospody</i>	To his inn
D	<i>K hostem na hody</i>	Where, with pleasure, he joined the guests at the
C	<i>S potěšením přišel.</i> <sup>14</sup>	feast.”

It is clear that the only purpose of some of the verses is to maintain the rhyme:

Czech		English
B	<i>Smutně žádala</i>	“With a sad voice she asked
C	<i>Aby jeli spolu:</i>	To leave together:
D	<i>Však ve vši ctnosti</i>	But in all chastity
D	<i>A bezpečnosti</i>	And safety
C	<i>Stoč žhůru neb dolů.</i> <sup>15</sup>	<u>No matter whether upwards or downwards.”</u>

13) Unfortunately, we have not yet managed to identify the tune of this song. However, we would like to express our gratitude to Dr. Vera Frolcova, CSc. who kindly offered to help us learn more about the tune and who has also suggested that the ballad could be sung to the melody of the song *Ten chlumecký zámek* (“The castle of Chlum”), if every rhyme is repeated twice.

14) *Píseň Vtěšsená a krátochwilná/ o krásné Mageloně a Petrowi z Prowincy*, 1685, KNM 27 H 00258.

15) IBID.

In the first few pages of the ballad the particle “ej”, which is known from popular songs, is used at the beginning of some stanzas, but later it disappears completely.

## Formal differences between the individual editions of the broadside ballad

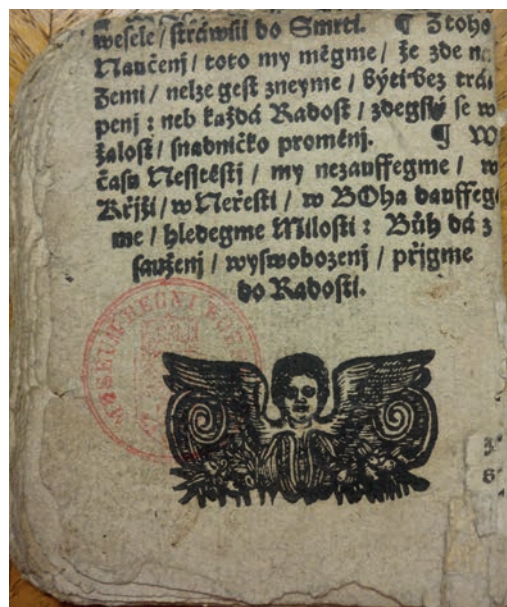
As we mentioned above, the 4 editions are dated between the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. There is very little difference between these editions. All the copies are in the sexto decimo format and originally were probably all made up of 16 leaves. The use of signatures is rather minimalist. In the edition from 1685, the only marked page is the first page of folio B. In the two incomplete editions, this page is missing, as well as the title page. Nevertheless, the Knihopis database supposes the presence of signatures A and B in the copy from 1680–1700. The edition from Jindřichův Hradec is an exception to this economical use of signatures because it marks the folios A2 to A5 and B to B5.

The usage of signatures is analogous to the usage of catchwords. There are no catchwords in the preserved pages of both incomplete copies. In the edition dated from 1685, there is only one, on the first page of the folio B. Only the edition from Jindřichův Hradec uses catchwords continuously throughout the whole document.

All the editions have practically the same composition, only the area of typeface in the edition from Jindřichův Hradec seems a little smaller. The editions differ in the use of rubrics employed to highlight the beginning of each stanza. The edition from Jindřichův Hradec and the anonymous incomplete copy from the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century use only one type of rubric. Another small detail which distinguishes the edition from Jindřichův Hradec from the three others is the use of the comma and virgule (/). The edition from Jindřichův Hradec uses only commas, whether at the end or in the middle of verses, whereas all the other editions use only virgules.<sup>16</sup>

One bigger difference between the 1685 Prague edition and the one from Jindřichův Hradec is in the woodcuts placed on the front and last pages of the copies. Both woodcuts on the front pages show a gallant couple. In the Prague

16) Both methods seem a little unusual, as the virgule is normally used at the end of the verses, whereas the comma is used in the middle. Cf. KOSEK 2010.



Figures 1 and 2. The first and the last page of the oldest known edition of the ballad. *Píseň Vtěšená a krátochwilná / o krásné Mageloně a Petrowi z Prowincy / kterak gsau se náramně spolu zamilowali / potom gak se s nimi dalo.* Praha, 1685 KNM, sign. 27 H 00258.

edition, the couple is in a garden planted with 3 trees. One tree stands in the middle, separating the couple. The woman, apparently a princess, is on the right, the man, probably a nobleman, is approaching her from the left, holding a ring in his hand. This is probably a generic illustration to tell the reader that the song is a love story; nonetheless, the presence of the ring makes it a very appropriate illustration of the story of Peter and Maguelonne. On the last page is a vignette with an angel.

The woodcut in the edition from Jindřichův Hradec also seems generic. It shows a couple seated side by side in a small boat rowed by two men. There are some trees and some mountains in the background with no obvious connection to the story. The vignette on the last page shows two roses whose stems are transformed into an abstract ornament.

Overall, the typographic quality of the edition from Jindřichův Hradec seems a little higher and the continuous presence of catchwords makes it more agreeable for the reader. Nevertheless, compared to the others, the Jindřichův Hradec edition contains a few more errors in the rhythm:



**Figures 3 and 4.** The first and the last page of the edition of the ballad from Jindřichův Hradec. [Píse]ň o krásné Magelo[ně a] Petrovi z Prowinci, kte[rak gs]au se náramně spolu zamilovali potom gak se s njmi dalo. Jindřichův Hradec, [1705–1800?], MZK, sign. VK-0000.736.

Prague, 1685		Jindřichův Hradec, [1705–1800?]
A	Do lesův hustých/	Do lesův hustých,
B	K moři zajeli/	K moři zajeli,
C	<u>Kdež zsed každý z koně:</u> (6 syllables)	<u>Kdež zased každý z koně:</u> (7 syllables)
D	A tu se spáti/	A tu se spáti,
D	Chtělo zdřímati/	Chtělo zdřímati,
C	Krásné Mageloně. <sup>17</sup>	Krásné Mageloně. <sup>18</sup>
	("They entered some thick forests	("They entered some thick forests
	By the sea	By the sea
	<u>Where both dismounted their horses:</u>	<u>Where both dismounted their horses:</u>
	And there fair	And there fair
	Maguelonne wanted to sleep	Maguelonne wanted to sleep
	And to rest.")	And to rest.")

17) *Píseň Vtěšená a krátochwilná/ o krásné Mageloně a Petrovi z Prowincy*, 1685, KNM 27 H 00258.

18) *[Píse]ň o krásné Magelo[ně a] Petrovi z Prowinci*, [first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century], MZK VK-0000.736.



Prague, 1685		Jindřichův Hradec, [1705–1800?]
C	<i>Odtut šťastně plouti</i> (sic):	<i>Odtud šťastně plouli:</i>
B	<i>Až jsou k jednomu</i> (5 syllables)	<i>Až k jednomu</i> (4 syllables)
B	<i>Ostrovu tomu</i>	<i>Ostrovu tomu</i>
C	<i>Sagona připlouli.</i> <sup>19</sup>	<i>Sagona připlouli.</i> <sup>20</sup>
	("They sailed safely from there: Till they reached An island Called Sagona.")	("They sailed safely from there: Till they reached An island Called Sagona.")

## Differences between the romance and the Czech broadside ballad

As already mentioned, the romance is not very rich in action. This means that very little needed to be edited out for the sung form. In fact, nearly all the original episodes are preserved in the ballad in their original order. There are, of course, some modifications. Firstly, there is a lot less direct speech in the ballad. Conversations are often just summarised indirectly, which is much shorter. Secondly, the historical (or pseudo-historical) frame of the story is strongly reduced. This bleaching of historical context is a cumulative process. As we have said above, the references to apparently historical events or persons, already not very clear in the French version of the romance, do not become any clearer in the translations. On the contrary. The prologue of both the Coburg manuscript and its German translation indicate that this particular form of the romance was composed (or translated into French) in 1453. The story is set in a period when some regions in the south of today's France were becoming Catholic (without any further precision). In the Czech translation, the year 1453 indicates both the date of the translation of the story (this time *from*, not *into*, French) and also the moment when some regions in the south of today's France (including Provence) became Catholic. From the way the Czech text is written, the reader can deduce either that the story of Peter and Maguelonne takes places in the 15<sup>th</sup> century or that the moment is not specified at all (there is no explicit link between the year 1453 and the reign of Peter's father). In addition, the question of the extent of the county of Provence becomes a little blurred in the German

19) *Píseň Vtěšená a krátkochvilná/ o krásné Mageloně a Petrowi z Prowincy*, 1685, KNM 27 H 00258.

20) *[Píse]ň o krásné Magelo[ně a] Petrovi z Prowinci*, [first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century], MZK VK-0000.736.

translation and disappears altogether in the Czech. In the broadside ballad, unlike in all the versions of the romance studied so far, there is no information about the moment when the story was written (translated) or when it takes place, and the names and lineage of nearly all secondary characters disappear (even the origin of Peter's mother remains unknown). Thus, Peter still comes from Provence and Maguelonne from Naples, but these places have almost no historical or geographical value. Thirdly, there are certain omissions in the plot: Maguelonne does not dream about Peter after having received the first ring. Later, in the hospice, she does not know that the rings Peter had given her have been found in the stomach of a fish. There is no visit from the count and the countess after the enlargement of Maguelonne's church and hospice and we do not know how Peter arrived from the hospice in Crapona to the hospice run by Maguelonne.

The most reduced episode is that of the second tournament in Naples. In the romance, Peter must combat a dangerous adversary, followed by his own uncle, which obviously risks exposing the secret of his identity. The king realises that something unusual is happening but does not know what. Maguelonne understands the situation perfectly but cannot say anything as she has promised Peter to keep his secret. All these perspectives create a web of tensions between the different characters. In the broadside ballad, however, the tournament is barely mentioned, which means that all these tensions disappear.

The easing of tension is noticeable in other scenes, too. When Maguelonne says to the governess that she would like to speak with Peter as soon as possible and to marry him, the governess does not reproach her for being too imprudent. When she and Peter meet secretly for the first time, she does not feel the urge to kiss him immediately, and so does not need Reason to calm her ardour. When Maguelonne wants to exchange her dress for that of a pilgrim, the pilgrim does not preach at her about the relative value of beautiful clothing, and when Peter wants the captain of a boat to take the barrels of salt with him to Provence, the captain does not try to convince Peter of the pointlessness of his plan.

As we can see, these simplifications not only lower the tensions between the characters, they also make the story less edifying, or moralising.

This is very important in the scene depicting the separation of the lovers and God's role in determining their fate. Whereas in the French and German versions of the story, the bird of prey which steals the rings wrapped in a red cloth is explicitly sent by God, in the Czech translation, the narrator tells the reader only that God wants to show Peter that there is no eternal joy in this world, whereupon we

learn about a bird which steals the rings. The reader can, of course, deduce that it was God who sent the bird but the link between the two events is not explicitly formulated by the narrator. In the Czech broadside ballad, the appearance of the bird and the theft of the jewellery are a pure coincidence in which God plays no role. Thus, we find it highly improbable that the separation of the protagonists could have been understood as God's punishment for their disobedience and/or sexual curiosity. It is merely an unfortunate event. In contrast, when some fishermen rescue Peter from Sagona, the ballad presents it as an act of divine intervention, even though such an interpretation is not necessary for the coherence of the story. At different moments in the story, both main characters pray, or express their gratitude to God and, on top of that, both in the introduction and in the conclusion to the ballad, it is clearly stated that there is no such thing as love or life without difficulty, but that God helps those who believe in Him. All of which add up to show that God's role in the ballad is exclusively positive.

Another element, very reduced in the broadside ballad and already weakened in the German translation of the romance, is the special relationship between Peter, Saint Peter, and Maguelonne. Warbeck eliminates all mention of prayers to the saints and replaces them with prayers to God the Father or to God the Son, which, in the case of Maguelonne, reduces the role of Saint Peter as a substitute for Peter the knight in the latter's absence (cf. KOTŠMÍŘOVÁ 2019). This reduction remains unchanged in the Czech translation. In the broadside ballad we find no explanation of why Peter attaches two silver keys to his helmet, nor is it specified that in Rome, Maguelonne prays in the church of St. Peter. The further reduction in the ballad of the special relationship between St. Peter and the lovers suggests that such an affiliation would no longer be very meaningful, or at least not very important, to the public that the Czech translation seeks to address.

Finally, the author of the broadside ballad does not devote much space to the legendary aspect of the story, whether it is the legend about the life of a saint or the legend of the foundation of a religious site. In the romance, it is repeatedly pointed out that Maguelonne observes a very strict lifestyle, and in three episodes she comforts the countess in her sorrow, even though she is, herself, sadder than the countess. There is a short description of how she treats her patients and, even if the ending of the romance is very brief, the narrator takes the time to explain that after their death, Peter and Maguelonne were buried in the church of Saint Peter and that there is still a church in that place. None of these details is mentioned in the ballad.



The slightly modified view of God's role on the one hand, and the reduction of the special significance of St. Peter and the legendary part of the narration on the other, leads us to question the importance of the role of God, faith, and religion in the romance and in the broadside ballad, and to consider the possible secularisation of the story.

In the broadside ballad, God and faith in Him occupy an important place, maybe greater, or at least more clearly expressed, than in the romance. At the same time, God is even less the explicit mover of the action than in the romance. How is this possible? The passages at the beginning and at the end of the ballad are secondarily attached to the story and do not constitute an integral part of it. Nevertheless, the introduction and the conclusion frame the story and show the audience how to understand it. In fact, they present the story as an exemplum of God's Power and Goodness and encourage faith in Him. This exemplary way of understanding the story of Peter and Maguelonne is quite close to the didactic interpretation of Georg Spalatin, except for the fact that in the broadside ballad, there is no notion of culpability or punishment of the protagonists.

After what we have just said, it may seem surprising to talk about secularisation. But the word "seem" is important here. We can already see some signs of this secularisation process in the French version of the romance when we compare it to earlier romances. The central figures never turn to God unless they are in serious trouble, and only if there is no other solution. Before their separation, the characters' prayers and acts of charity are very rare, and even after it, they can be very self-centred and sometimes even judgemental. There are no obvious miracles, and even those situations which could be understood as such are explained in a naturalistic way. The focus is already fixed on the heroes, their love and their actions. As for the Czech translation of *Peter and Maguelonne*, Petr Voit believes that it represents an example of a specific type of popular prose romance which helped to deepen and accelerate the process of the secularisation of the mind of the bourgeois reader (VOIT 1987: pp. 71–72). According to Voit, secularisation does not concern the text itself. Rather, it is seen as a (side) product of the reception of the work. Nevertheless, we do think that the term "secularisation" is also appropriate for the work itself. Thus, the secularisation of the broadside ballad would be part of a gradual, not necessarily intentional process, one revealed in the fact that the relationship and the adventures of the heroes become the only important themes, overshadowing everything else. In this way, we can say that secularisation has primarily affected

the principal part of the story, leaving the introduction and the conclusion to impart the spiritual dimension.

## Conclusion

The broadside ballad about fair Maguelonne and Peter of Provence is probably based on an edition of the Czech translation of the late mediaeval romance *Peter of Provence and fair Maguelonne* which we no longer possess, but which must have been very similar to the editions we know today. Thus, the existence of the ballad testifies that the story of Maguelonne and Peter was circulating in the Czech lands in the 17<sup>th</sup> or, at the very latest, at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Written in verse and probably sung before audiences both large and small, in the ballad's form and the way it was presented, we can see a connection with the possible origins of the French romance. Just as the German and Czech translations are faithful to their respective models, so the broadside ballad is a quite faithful transformation of the romance into a sung form. If the French romance is already clearly centred on the heroes, their relationship, and their desires, the Czech broadside ballad stresses these aspects of the story to the point where everything else almost disappears. This evolution is already indicated in the title of the ballad, which says nothing about Peter's or Maguelonne's parents. Instead, it announces that the song is about their love and what happens to them. One major change in the ballad is the virtual absence of any moralisation, which is most obvious in the scene of the theft of the rings, presented as a pure coincidence. All in all, the story of Maguelonne and Peter as recounted in the ballad – with the minimisation of tension between the characters and the reassuring mediation of God's goodwill – must have been very soothing for the popular public of that time.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

BSB – Bayerische Staatsbibliothek (Bavarian State Library)

DNB – Deutsche Nationalbibliothek (German National Library)

KNM – Knihovna národního muzea (Library of the Czech National Museum)

MVČ – Muzeum východních Čech v Hradci Králové (Museum of Eastern Bohemia in Hradec Králové)

MZK – Moravská zemská knihovna (Moravian Library)

NK ČR – Národní knihovna České republiky (National Library of the Czech Republic)

ZA Opava – Zemský archiv v Opavě (Regional Archives in Opava)

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