

**Source:**

*Amare gila - Unsere Lieder – Our Songs*. Ruža Nikolić-Lakatos u.a., eine Dokumentation der Lovaraliedkultur in Österreich. CD mit Begleitheft. In der Reihe: Tondokumente zur Volksmusik in Österreich Vol.4, März 1994, Neuauflage 1998.

Translated from German by E. Leick

**Ursula Hemetek****"Comparison of *Žo-tar mange žo-tar* and *Tu gelan tar a lumasa*, a slow song and a new song"****History of the Songs:**

*Žo-tar mange žo-tar* belongs to the slow songs. They were passed down orally from generation to generation. Ruža learned the song from her father. The reason for its creation was a true story, as is so often the case with the *loke gila*. It is difficult to determine when the song was written. The only certainty is that Ruža's father learned it from his parents. It is therefore at least three generations old. There have been individual changes in the oral tradition from generation to generation, strongly due to the improvisational character of this genre. Ruža also changed this song to suit her personal taste. For example, her two sons Johnny and Sascha appear in it and, according to her, she has changed some of the "words".

*Tu gelan-tar a lumasa* is a new song. Such creations often have echoes of pop songs or South American melodies, but they are rarely consciously used as a whole and translated into Romani. Individual melody parts or longer passages remained in Ruža's or Mišo's memory, they liked them, and a new song was created from them. I have witnessed the creation of several such songs myself. It is an extremely creative process and Ruža and her husband complement each other wonderfully. One of them hums a melody, Mišo starts playing it on the guitar and making up lyrics. It doesn't take long, and the first verse is finished. Mišo usually writes down the finished text, Ruža reads it through a few times and changes it according to her dialect. The two of them often discuss the lyrics for a long time. The melody doesn't have to be written down because Ruža has an extraordinary musical memory.

*Tu gelan-tar* was written about 20 years ago in a creative collaboration between Ruža and Mišo, with unmistakable echoes of a popular Hungarian melody. The song is also said to be based on a true story.

**Content:**

Both songs are about an abandoned partner. In the slow songs, as here in *Žo-tar mange žo-tar*, usually men are left by their wives. A woman's infidelity is often sung about. As Romani culture is patriarchal, it is usually the man's emotional world that is sung about. So much for tradition. In *Tu gelan-tar*, on the other hand, a woman is abandoned by her husband, which brings a new, individual component that certainly has to do with the fact that the singer is a woman.

In both songs, the loss is lamented, and the children left behind are emphasized. It is striking that the social environment is strongly included in both songs. It is a shame to have been abandoned and one must strive to regain one's honor. In both songs, loved ones are invited to drink and celebrate to

wash away the shame. This gesture shows the strong bond between the individual and the group, a characteristic of Romani culture.

In *Žo-tar mange žo-tar*, the woman who has left her husband does not come back. They drink together and prove that they are still honourable. In the new song, the man returns to his wife after she has asked the other Roma for permission.

### Vocabulary and structure:

Both songs are in the Lovari dialect. Some of the vocabulary is the same. The additions or interjections *jaj de, de, mamó, mo hej*, which do not carry any meaning but are found in almost all the old songs, are naturally adopted in the new song since they are associated with the singing style. The traditional six syllables are extended to eight syllables in the new song, while the four-line verse remains. The new song has fewer verses, and its text is more concise. It is a text that has been written down, so there is space for improvisation. The lyrics of *Žo-tar mange žo-tar* are based on formulas and wandering verses such as *Žutisar ma raja Devla* (4th verse), which are used in many songs depending on the mood. However, this requires a certain freedom in the textual and musical structure. In the new song, a very specific, fixed text belongs to a very specific melody. The written fixation of the text as part of the creative process is an essential feature of the new songs. The old songs were never recorded, at least not by the Roma themselves.

### Musical similarities and differences:

Key: both songs in A minor

Meter: expressed in free rhythm in both songs

Form: both songs are divided into four sections, in the new song with subdivision of the first three sections

Cadence notes: in both songs melodic 1 and 5, in the new song additionally melodic 3

Old Song:

New Song:

Form:	A	B	C	D	Form:	A	B	C	D
	a	b	c	d		a	b c	d e	f g
Cadence:	1	5	5	1	Cadence:	1	1 3	5 5	1 1
Syllables:	6	6	6	6	Syllables:	8	8	8	8
						(4+4)	(4+4)	(4+4)	

Word-sound relationship: In both songs, syllabic singing is the principle of musical declamation. A few melismas (on sequences of passing notes) enrich the progression of the respective phrase. The ornaments in the old song mostly arise from the improvisational power of the singer. The shaping of the final note with vibrato and great elongation is also used in the new song.

Melodic line: Whereas in the old song, the ascent is already completed in the first section and the descent to the finalis is carried out in the three following lines: in the new song the entire range of the melody (a duodecimal) is only gradually conquered and in the last line the tonal space is traversed in a falling motion.

Repeated recordings show that the new song is sung almost the same way every time. The lyrics are written down, the singer sticks to the original, and the deviations are minimal. This is not the case with the old song. Here, certain verses change depending on the occasion. Much more space is given to the mood of the moment, and the content is adapted to the listener.

There are certain basic patterns for the type of ornamentation: vibrato; slurring; glissandi, which are used spontaneously in both songs, albeit with greater frequency in the old song.

This juxtaposition reveals the differences between the two styles and makes it clear to what extent the new creation draws on old traditions. In their long tradition of migration and confrontation with host people and their culture, the Roma have always reacted creatively to the influences of their environment. They have integrated parts of the foreign culture into their own traditions. This can also be seen in the *neve gila*.