

# BALKAN TÜRKOLOJI ARAŞTIRMALARI MERKEZI BALTAM BALTAM

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BAL-TAM Emin Paşa – 17 Prizren – KOSOVA

40 Tel-Faks: +381 29 231 108 E-mail: trhafiz@yahoo.com Tel: +90 312 495 56 40

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YAZIN



# CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS OF THE CHARACTER OF THE FOX IN MACEDONIAN AND TURKISH STORIES ABOUT ANIMALS

# Jovanka DENKOVA<sup>1</sup> Natasa Dimitrova <sup>2</sup>

# **ABSTRACT**

The aim of this paper is to make a contrasting analysis of animal stories from our, domestic folklore and Turkish folklore. In this context, the character of the fox has its central place, so our analysis will concentrate on this character in Macedonian and Turkish animal stories with similar manifestations and

Namely, our people for a very long period co-existed with the Turkish in this region and this centuriesold period contributed to the interference of folklore elements in both directions, as well as the preservation of certain features in Macedonian literature. As in the past, today in everyday life the animals are all around us, and from there there is also an inspiration for their insertion into folk tales. So, in everyday communication with animals, there are positive and negative events that affect us, and because of that fact many writers who thought they were instructive, what they saw and heard, wrote and created books.

**Keywords:** stories about animals, folklore, Macedonia, Turkey.

# MAKEDON VE TÜRK MASALLARINDAKI TILKI KARAKTERININ KARŞILAŞTIRILMALI ANALIZI

# ÖZET

Bu yazının amacı, Makedon ve Türk folklorumuzdan gelen hayvanlarla ilgili hikayelerin karşılaştırmalı bir analizini yapmaktır. Bu bağlamda, tilki figürü merkezi bir yere sahiptir, bu nedenle analizimiz benzer nitelik ve özelliklere sahip Makedon ve Türk hayvan hikayelerinde bu karaktere yoğunlaşacaktır. Yani, halkımız çok uzun bir süredir bu bölgede Türklerle birlikte yaşıyordu ve yüzyıllarca süren bu dönem, folklor öğelerinin her iki yönde etkilenmesine ve Makedon edebiyatının bazı özelliklerinin korunmasına katkıda bulundu. Geçmişte olduğu gibi bugün de günlük hayatta hayvanlar çevremizdedir ve oradan da halk hikayelerine girmeleri için bir ilham kaynağı olmuştur. Bu nedenle, hayvanlarla günlük iletişimde bizi etkileyen olumlu ve olumsuz olaylar var ve buradan hareketle birçok yazar onların eğitici-öğretici unsur olduğunu düşünmekle gördükleri ve duyduklarını kaleme alarak kitap oluşturmuşlardır.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Jovanka Denkova, PH.D., Department for Macedonian language and literature, Faculty of Philology, Goce Delcev University, Shtip, Macedonia, jovanka.denkova@ugd.edu.mk

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Natasa Dimitrova, a postgraduate student on Macedonian literature, dimitrova1993@hotmail.com

# INTRODUCTION

There is no hesitation in the science of folk literature about the question of what kind of folk tales are the oldest. Undoubtedly, the stories of animals are mentioned here. It is thought that these folk tales have emerged as early narratives of people, somewhere between the savagery. That is, the animal stories appeared as syncretic reproductions of the earliest experiences and experiences of man with animals. The numerous traces in these folk stories from the animist, totemic, and magical performances and beliefs of the former man are significant indicative elements that indicate the great age of these folk artifacts. The animals were actually the first companions of man, and it is natural that he exactly devoted them to his first poetic works.<sup>3</sup> As for the question of the developmental trends of the creative process of animal stories, it should be pointed out that it is an extremely complex scientific problem, which has not been resolved to this day. However, it is assumed that the earliest variants of these folk tales preceded myths for some worshiped animals, who performed, played the role of some kind of prototypes of later characters in the animal stories. Folk tales about animals date back to the oldest type of stories in folk literature. The ancient man laments the environment surrounding him, and therefore believed that animals know how to speak and understand his speech. The animals were the first companions of man, and it is natural that he also devoted them to his first poetic works. Thus, the naive human relationship with wildlife became the basis of the human view of living nature. 5 It is assumed that the earliest variants of these folk tales were preceded by myths for some worshiped animals, who performed, played the role of some kind of prototypes of later characters in the animal stories. As the main heroes, animal stories have always had the characters of individual animals and birds, and for a long time there was no allegory in them, nor were the characters typed. The themes and motifs in animal stories are characterized by wide international prevalence. In our (Yugoslav and Macedonian) animal stories we talk about domestic animals, but also the most famous wildlife, and in this respect these stories are of European type. The characters of animals in these folk tales are often built on the basis of contrast: the fox is clever and the wolf is stupid, so one can speak of a kind of polarization of the characters in the animal stories and in the later fables. In fact, the characteristics of individual animals in these folk artifacts are based on real human observations, that is, observations and conclusions are given in a generalized form and in a hyperbolized form.<sup>6</sup> Macedonian folk tales about animals are characterized by all these features in their developmental flow, and in terms of their art form. The rich treasure of the Macedonian folk prose contains many wonderful examples of folk tales about animals.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Tome Sazdov, Usna narodna kniževnost, Detska radost, Skopie, p.143

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Tome Sazdov, Usna narodna kniževnost, Detska radost, Skopje, p.143

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Tome Sazdov, Usna narodna kniževnost, Detska radost, Skopje, p.143

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Tome Sazdov, Usna narodna kniževnost, Detska radost, Skopje, p.144

Especially in the numerous records of the most prominent collectors of Macedonian prose folk arts - Marco K. Cepenkov, Kuzman A. Shapkarev, they can find a variety of examples and variants of stories about animals and fables. There are not many episodes in the animal stories and they differ from other types of folk tales. Even, a very small number of animal stories have a common narrative form.

# ANALYSIS OF ANIMAL STORIES FROM TURKISH AND MACEDONIAN FOLKLORE

In the collection of animal stories from which we will draw material, we will only focus on the stories in which the character of the fox meets. There are five such stories in this collection: "The Bear and the Fox", "The Fox and the Wolf", "The Raven, the Stork and the Fox", "The Fox and the Bear," and "The Fox and the partridge". Of course, the fund of stories of animals with the fox as the main actor, in Turkish folklore, has a lot, but as mentioned earlier, only the indicated ones will be subject to our analysis.

As seen, the collection has two stories with almost the same title ("The Bear and the Fox" and "The Fox and the Bear"). While in the first story, the fox is the one that comes out shrewder and deceiving bear to wear her on her back, and burns her fur, after which pretends to be a completely different fox, in the second story, the fox loses primacy, and the bear is the one who is more inclined to outfit the fox to tie her tail to that of the horse and to run out of running. Similar motive of this story is the one written by Marco Cepenkov "The fox and the goat," where the fox deceives goat to get off the well in which it is trapped, to use it and it saved, and then leave him with the words: "Oh, my dear, if you were only smart as the numbers of hairs on your chin, you would not come down to the well before you think how to get out of it". The Turkish story "The Fox and the Wolf" has its own counterpart in the Macedonian folklore, through the eponymous story written by Marko Cepenkov. In the concrete case of the analysis of two animal stories, one of the Turkish and the other from the Macedonian folklore, with the same characters, the same titles ("The Fox and the Wolf"), but from various folk groups, we will try to make an analysis of segments with whose what assistance we will recognize the differences between Turkish folk tales and Macedonian folk tales. The theme in both stories is similar, i.e it is a struggle for survival, fighting for easy coming to source for food. It is known that the symbolism in the stories are short and easy to understand. The stories in both folk groups are not abundant with great stylistic achievements. Time is specified, localized as typed characters themselves. Thus, in both animal stories, the wolf is outspoken by the fox, she overwhelms him and takes all the food he has stored for the whole winter. That is, thematically these two animal stories coincide. The course of action goes in the same direction as the end. Perhaps this fact of such a great closeness between the story of the Turkish and the story of the Macedonian folklore shows us exactly how the Turks actually influenced the Macedonian people. That is, the centuries-old common living of the Macedonian people with the Turkish in this region has

contributed to presenting very significant knowledge about literature, folklore and everything that can be put into word, thought, and expression. There is almost no any visible differences between these two stories, although they are written and created on a different ground. The beginnings of the two stories are typified, that is, they begin with one time ... / one winter ..., that is, the author wanted to capture the moment of telling the story itself and to present the story itself as an inherent moment of experience. These folk achievements initiate injustice, that is, the extinction of the poor wolf by the crazy fox. When comparing these two stories on a similar level, only small segments would "pop out" out of exactly the same course of events, successively and consequently. Complete actions in the stories are followed by dialogue, that is, from the dialogical form of communication, we learn most about the eponymous story, that is, about the story of the fox and the wolf. As for the character of the fox, because of her overwhelming insolence, the folk narrator often slanders her by making her find herself "in a trap", as we find in the second story where the fox is outspoken by the partridge. Being in the fox's mouth, she did not have anything left but she had to deal with a "petty" lie, to escape from the fox and thus to outwit her and survive.

As a follow-up to these stories is the story of the Macedonian folklore, "The Fox with hundred minds and a Badger who had two minds" and the Turkish story "The Fox and the partridge". Amongst themselves, in their style and composition, although the themes are different, the stories of animals are similar. Their composition, as a rule, is based on a dialectical form. The composition of animal stories is built on descriptions and repetitions. The same element or the same episode in them is repeated several times. In the mentioned story, for example, the dialogue between the fox and the badger for stealing grapes, catching the trap and releasing it, and the conversations with the owner of the vineyard - are repeated several times. The reader will easily find that this principle is almost lawful. The fox is most often portrayed as a "ingenious fox," even though she sometimes is deceived, as it happens in our story, in which the fox trapes and loses his life because the badger has inflicted it.

Compared to previous stories about animals in which the fox is one of the main characters and almost always and everywhere she is outspoken, here she remains wise. It will be found in a similar situation in the Turkish story "The Fox and the partridge", where the cropped partridge, in order to save its life, overwhelms the vanity fox and runs away literally from the mouth: "When the fox opened her mouth to say 'bravo 'partridge flew, landed on a rock and said: "Fox, you fool, eveyone would say to you, and well done to me'." In the stories of the domestic, Macedonian folklore, the fox is shown to us as an enemy of the wolf. She also encounters various occasions and accidents with other beasts and domestic animals, in which her character gets even more precious features. The fox is on certain occasions posing as a wise teammate, but in the most remarkable situations, in the most unfavorable situations, she is taught and needs help from the teammate. In the middle of our nation, animal stories still enjoy great popularity and are told. They unequivocally testify that mastery in narration often belongs to illiterate or semi-literate people, as is the case with our storytellers. The story "Fox as a widow" is a glowing

pattern of this kind of story, in which dialogues imbue with its precision and cost-effectiveness. An insulted fox that animals call a "foxy-widow" has married a wild cat. Then, in the meetings with the wolf, the wild pig and the bear, the dialogue begins. And then the story continues in such a short form, to its end. The artistic value of animal stories should not be emphasized in particular.<sup>7</sup>

The character of the Fox is very suitable to illustrate the idea - thematic evolution of certain animal characters in the stories about them. Chronologically, in the former folk tales of animals in our country, the figure of the fox is an embodiment almost exclusively of selfishness and selfishness, in the later stories of animals and fables, the national narrator uses the foxes' inclinations to express more complex, more delicate social phenomena. <sup>8</sup> Judging other animals, the fox deceives them for her egoistic purposes. Perhaps, to a certain extent, the anonymous narrator has put the fox in the role of a human helper in order to process with her character in a satirical way motives for social inequality among people, especially mocking of the representatives of the higher social strata, such as kings, stewards and caddis. Such is the story "Fox, hedgehog and mole "(Macedonian folk), where the fox is in the role of judge between the hedgehog and mole and should divide their harvest, which they for strife and greed are unable to divide. Of course, in such a situation, most of the divided, ends in the hands of the 'judge': "Here is for you hedgehog so you can lye, every day, on the straw; and to you, a little mole, wheat one cup - enough for the whole winter; and for the fox will be nine kilos of wheat, in order to take them to the water mill. Here is a rule for you, like a rope in a bag, to be displayed, "said the fox, and robbed grievous goods from mole and hedgehog."

And in the story, "The Raven, the Stork and the Fox" (from Turkish folklore), the popular caracter of the fox is not missing, which is one of those stories where we meet more animals in number. Apart from most of the characters, these stories are full of dialogues. Mostly, conflict comes between other animals and eventually a judge, the fox is there to rule in her favor. The characters are more numerous, the actions flow linearly at an accelerated pace of interest at the ends, and the time in the stories is undetermined, that is, the events are arranged successively or simply say no backwardness in the past.

Here the fox surmounts the female raven every year, destroying one cub, threatening to eat everyone if she climbs to the tree, until the stork reveals the truth of the female raven that the fox can not even climb the tree at all. Immediately afterwards, the stork gets the fox's revenge, thanks to the recklessness and hustleness of the female raven: "When your mind does not reach for you, why give it to others?

# CONCLUSION

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Kiril Penushliski, prikazni za životni, Makedonska kniga, Skopje, 1973, p.10

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Tome Sazdov, Usna narodna kniževnost, Detska radost, Skopje, p.148

Original stories about animals themselves people generated by virtue of their knowledge of the constant observations of animals that come into contact, can logically conclude that the characteristics of the animal gradually transferred in the middle of human relationships with appropriate conceptual content, mainly of moral character.<sup>9</sup>

Something that distinguishes the stories of animals from other folk creations is that in these folk tales there are not many episodes. Situations across the stories are resolved in a short period of time and very few animal stories have a common narrative. The art form of animal stories is characterized by ultimate conciseness. In the composition of animal stories, there is almost nothing superfluous and superficially, even when there are occurrences of repetitions of some of the events. As the most common heroes, as in these two animal stories, are the fox, the bear, the wolf, the rabbit, the snake, the dog, the cat, and the rooster and other birds.

Throughout their centuries-old life and development, animal stories gradually differentiated and coshaped. The characters of the animals that appear in them as heroes are typified, each animal, depending on its physical characteristics and its behavior towards other animals and humans, has received an appropriate qualification, which does not always correspond to its true qualities, but reflects human understandings and sympathy. In fact, the method of building stories of animals is based on the principle of contrast, the opposition of the characters of the heroes through their actions, as the man interprets them. For example, the most important bearers of our animal stories - the fox and the wolf - are opposed. The fox is most often shown as cunning, but sometimes it is also tricky.

On the other hand, the wolf almost always in the stories is deceptive and wrinkled by the fox and other animals, and he is presented as stupid. Such a qualification of the wolf in the stories certainly comes from the fact that the greatest accidents man experienced precisely from the wolf. The wolf had to be found on the other side as a negative animal and because of polarization, and because it compared to the fox he did more evil. Finally, this paper aims to present stories of animals from the domestic / Macedonian folklore and Turkish folklore in which the character of the fox meets. Apart from the rest, a comparative analysis of the stories from the aspect of characters, action, time, place was made ... With the presented detailed analyzes, it was concluded that there are many similarities between the stories from the Turkish and the stories from the Macedonian folklore.

That is, the caracters of the fox in them are almost identical, as everything else. There are also such types of stories that overlap with both characters and subject matter. This may be reflected in the fact that the two nations, during their cultural, civilizational and life-course, had almost the same living conditions or the many cultural and historical influences between these peoples. However, even when

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Kiril Penushliski, Prikazni za životnite, Makedonska kniga, Skopje, p.8

it comes to so many similar themes, Macedonian folk tales for animals have their own identity, style and distinctions that separate them from the rest.

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