Traditional Turopolje songs from the memory of my grandma Marica

One chilly autumn evening my grandmother was telling me a story of the time when she had still been *dekla* (a maid) and young people had a different idea of fun. They used to sing and dance in the fields, at *prelo* (gatherings accompanied by women's thread spinning), or outside the church after *meša* (the Holy Mass).

Music was also the most common form of entertainment in long winter evenings. *Dekle* would sing to attract boys' attention, while the boys would express their feelings for them through humorous verses.

Her favorite time was the Christmas season, when *dulci*, traveling well-wishers, wished their hosts Merry Christmas and were rewarded for singing. She remembered one song:

"LUTA JE ZIMA, OGANJ KAD NIMA, MIKULA

POD PEĆ JE LEGEL, PAK JE OZEBEL, MIKULA

MIŠKO Z BRKAČI Z VINUM SE VRAČI, MIKULA,

MIKULA.

ČREPEC NALEVA, PAK SI POPEVA: GLORIA, GLORIA,

MIŠKO KAJ STOJIŠ, OVČICE BROJIŠ PO BREGU, PO BREGU,

ZEMI SI JARCA, NE BOJ SE STARCA, IDEMU, IDEMU…"

Grandma could see surprise and a smile on my face because she sang a Christmas song that made me laugh. She explained that young singers had used it to tease sleeping hosts who didn't understand the meaning of Christmas. *Dulci* visited people on Christmas Eve, then on St Stephen's Day, on New Year's Eve and New Year's Day.

My grandmother remembered Christmas Eve customs when everybody would gather at dinner and when straw, wheat and candles would be brought into the house. Then the father, the head of the family, would sing: "DAJ NAM BOG PICEKOV, RACEKOV, TELEKOV, PAJCEKOV, ŽIRA, MIRA, ŠENICE I DROBNE DEČICE, ZDUŠNOG VELIČENJA I DEKLAMA LIJEPIH DEČKOV! "

After *meša* people danced *kolo*, and in the vicinity of the church there would be a bonfire so that the youth would not be cold in a December night.

On Christmas day this song echoed in homes: "BOŽIĆ, BOŽIĆ BATA,

NOSI KITU ZLATA

DA POZLATI VRATA."

"Times have changed, as well as customs", said my grandma, finishing her story, stroking my hair and wiping a tear from her eye.

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