

Hungarian Shamanism

MATERIAL AND HISTORY OF RESEARCH

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1. Introduction

The material relating to Hungarian shamanism derives from a living folk-tradition and from folk customs.¹ In addition occasional information is found in printed and unprinted sources of historical,² literary, ecclesiastical³ and

¹ The material and early literature of folklore-research: Folktale-motifs: Honti 1928; Berze-Nagy 1935, 1958. Dramatic folk traditions: Viski 1935. Folk customs: Szendrey-Szendrey 1937; MNT 3a (1955), 3b (1956), 4 (1959). Child's songs, games: MNT 1 (1951). Proverbs: Tolnai. Festival-days: Szendrey 1937; MNT 2 (1955). Ideas of the soul: Szendrey 1946. Burial customs: Munkácsi 1900; Szendrey 1928; Viski 1934b; Szendrey-Szendrey 1937; Szűcs 1948. Lamentations at death: Kodály 1937, 1956, 1960. Magical practices: Komáromy 1910; Viski 1934a-b. Superstitions: Solymossy 1937a. Folk healing: Magyary-Kossa 1929-1931. Phraseology: Berze-Nagy 1929; Kertész 1922; Csefkó 1930; Tolnai 1935. Linguistic material: NySz; OkSz.-Recorded material and detailed research exists, in addition to the cited literature, in Ethn, NÉ, AE, NyK, etc.

² Contemporary historical sources on the ancient Hungarians can be divided into: (1) Byzantine sources (Leo VI the Philosopher, Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos, various chronicles) on which: Marczali-Vári 1900; Macartney 1930; Gyóni 1943. (2) Eastern sources (Ibn Rosteh, Gurdézi, El-Bekrí, Ibn Fadhlán, Istakhrí, Ibn Haukal, Mas'údi) on which: Kuun 1900; Macartney 1930; Czeglédy 1943. (3) Western sources (Annales Sithiensis Bertiniani, Conversio Bagvariorum et Carantanorum, Description of Europe by King Alfred the Great, Annales Fuldenses, Reginonis Abbatis Prumiensis Chronicon, Theotmar ad Papam Johannes IX, Rhabani Virtunensem ad Episcopum, Versus Waldramni ad Dadonem episcopum a Salomone episcopo missi, Ekkehardi casus Sancti Galli) on which: Marczali 1900; Macartney 1930; Deér 1943. (4) Slavic sources (Relationes Legendarum Constantini S. Cyrilli et Methodii de Hungaris, Narratiuncula e bello Ungaro-Bulgarico, Chronica Nestoris de Hungaris) on which: Jagić-Thallóczy-Hodinka 1900; Macartney 1930. (5) Hungarian sources (Frater Julianus 1236: De facto Ungarie Magne a fratre Ricardo invento tempore Domini Gregorii Pape noni, on which: Fejérpataky-Marczali 1900; Macartney 1930. Chronicles: Anonymus, circa 1200; Kézai, circa 1284; Chronicon Vindobonense, circa 1358; Chronicon Budense, 1473; and other publications issued together in SRH 1-2. A. Bonfini, Rerum hungaricarum decades, Basiliae (1543) 1568. On the authenticity of the chronicles: Hóman 1925; Györffy 1948.

³ Pintér 1921, 1; 2, pp. 413-458.

judicial types dating from the Middle Ages up to the 18th century, both in Latin and in Hungarian. Material folk culture¹ and archaeology² have also had something to provide. Aided by these sources scholars have attempted to recreate what in folkloristic literature is called the shamanistic element in Hungarian folk tradition.

This work of research has now been in progress for some 150 years. Since the turn of the century it has been intensified, and from the 1920's onwards has been devoted to the assembling and collating of folklore material. It is claimed that it is possible to recover an important segment of the religion of pre-Christian Hungary and its intellectual culture by attempting to isolate the shamanistic survival in Hungarian folk tradition. According to certain scholars this shamanistic element came from the East some thousand years ago to the region now dominated by Hungarian folk tradition along with the migrant Hungarians.³ It should consequently be compared foremost with shamanism in the Eastern lands where the Hungarians originated and where shamanistic beliefs and practices were living until quite recently, principally Siberia. At the same time, however, one must also take into account the contact between the invaders and other tribes in Central-Asia and South-East Europe. Furthermore, the Hungarians encountered and underwent the influence of beliefs that already existed in the land of their adoption before their arrival. Finally, all these traditions were again modified and overlaid by Christian ideas and customs.

Nevertheless we find in the Hungarian material the same motifs as in North-Eurasia. It concerns the ideas of the personality of the shaman and the shaman-candidate, battles between shamans hidden in clouds or disguised as animals, shamanistic ecstasy and the equipment of the shaman. Shamanistic practices are described mainly in folklore, less frequently in the form of real cultic or magic ceremonies. Traces of coherent cultic practices are also found in the dramatic folk tradition, in the descriptions from historical sources of sacrificial rites and animals sacrificed, and in the magic practices described in witch-trial records and which were prohibited by royal

¹ Ornaments, ethnographical objects: Solymosy 1937 a; Viski 1934a, 1934b.

² Archaeological finds, horse-burials: Munkácsi 1896 b; Hampel 1900; László 1944, 1946.

³ According to Marczali 1895, p. 59, about half a million people.

edict. The magicians of folklore, the seers, quack-doctors, faith-healers, witches, village wisemen, shepherds, wandering beggars and finally children with special birthmarks, the so-called stigmata, or other external characteristics, were regarded by the Hungarian scholars as shaman-figures with roots in the distant pagan past.

The material is grouped around these distinct individuals as central-figures. We therefore have different objects of research characterised by varying shamanistic features. The most important figures are:

1) *táltos* (cf. Finnish *taitaa*, 'to know'; Orsz. 'shaman, medicine-man, priest-magician, sorcerer, wizard').

2) *tudós* (from Hung. *tud-*, 'know', 'can'; has a somewhat wider meaning than *táltos*; Orsz (lit.): "scientist, scholar, scientific man"; MTsz: "fortune-teller, quack-doctor"; NySz: "scitus, doctus, peritus, eruditus, kundig").

3) *garabonc(i)ás* (probably from Ital. *gramanza*, 'magi', Greek *nekromanteia*; Orsz: "wizard, disguised as travelling student able to raise storm in popular superstition", NySz: "necromanticus, magus, praestigiator").¹

4) Shamans who appear in other less characteristic forms than the three mentioned above, i.e. magicians, wizards and seers.

5) Different types of witches, in the witch-trials of the 16th to 18th century usually called *boszorkány* (from Turk. *basyr*, 'press', *basyrqan*, 'evil spirit', 'suppressio nocturna', used in the sense of 'witch', 'sorcerer', 'sorceress'; NySz: "lemur, strix, incubus, lamia, venefica, trivenefica; Hexe, Nachtgespenst").

6) *regös* (Orsz: "minstrel, gleeman, bard"; Kel: "(mittelalt.) Spielmann; (volksbr.) Weihnachtssänger," in evidence from the 13th century; MTsz: "a group of boys who on Boxing-Day call on houses performing their *regös*-song."²

The Hungarians were converted to Christianity during the reign of the first Hungarian king, István the Holy (997-1038). But beneath the new official Church piety, the old belief lived on as a substratum. In contemporary historical and literary sources even as late as the 18th century there

¹ For this figure see: Szendrey 1914; Solymossy 1937b; Diószegi 1958.

² For the terminology see: Viski 1932, p. 15; MÉSz 5, 1961, p. 960; otherwise: Sebestyén 1902b; Róheim 1925; Berze-Nagy 1935; Solymossy 1937a, 1937b; László 1944; Szendrey 1914, 1938, 1940; Diószegi 1954, 1958; Balázs 1954.

are allusions to this. A chronicle from the 14th century in which a pagan rebellion of the 11th century is described, contains, for example, information on pre-Christian cult practice.¹

Both in Catholic and Protestant Church literature mention is made of the "pagan" or "devilish" belief. In the records of the witch-trials also this belief recurs as folk tradition; cult practices are there dubbed "magic".²

2. *The Religion of Ancient Hungary: Different Theories*

A more systematic study of the pagan belief and rites of the Hungarians began with Otrokocsi Fóris in 1693 and Cornides in 1791.³ The first flowering period of Hungarian religious studies occurred during the 19th century, when under the influence of the romantic school of history an attempt was made to reconstruct an ancient Hungarian mythology of which traces were to be found in historical sources. This line of research is known among Hungarian folklorists as the Romantic school of Mythology.⁴ In the work of several scholars this school was predominant throughout the 19th century.⁵ The most important of these was Ipolyi. Influenced by Catholicism, he accepted the theory of an original monotheism, and interpreted mythology

¹ "Prepositi vero miserunt ad regem et ad proceros nuncios dicentes: 'Concede nobis ritum patrum nostrorum, more paganismo vivere, episcopos lapidare, presbiteros exentherare, clericos strangulare, decimatores suspendere, ecclesias destruere, campanas confrangere' ... Interim vero prepositi plebis in eminenti suggestu residentes predicabant nephanda carmina contra fidem. Plebs autem tota congratulanter affirmabat: 'Fiat, fiat'" (SRH 1, pp. 359 f., 337 f.). On horse-sacrifices: "Omnes populi libaverunt demonibus et ceperunt comedere equinas pulpas et omnino pessimas facere culpas" (ibid., p. 338). Among royal prohibitions are István the Holy's (997-1038) decree against witches and magic, László the Holy's (1077-1095) decree against witches and prohibition against sacrificial rites at wells, holy trees, springs, holy stones, King Kálmán the Wise's (1095-1116) decree against magic. The use among peasants of *aldomás*, 'merciopus', still survives from old times (NySz: "sacrificium, oblatio, polluctum, epulae sacrificiales; collatio, epulae; benedictio; merciopus"). As a pagan sacrificial rite *aldamas* is mentioned by the chronicle-author Anonymus: "more paganismo occiso equo pinguissimo magnum aldamas fecerunt" (SRH 1, pp. 56, 64).

² During the years 1565-1756 554 witch-trials were instituted in Hungary. At these 169 death-sentences were passed involving burning at the stake (Komáromy 1910, pp I-XXIII, 1-783).

³ Katona 1897, pp. 61-68.

⁴ Katona 1897; Domanovszky 1903, pp. 234 f.; Solymossy 1937b, pp. 402 f.

⁵ Horváth 1817; Ipolyi 1854; Kállay 1862; Kandra 1897.

in the manner of Jakob Grimm. As early as 1854 Ipolyi was criticised by Csengery for his dependence on these two assumptions. A more basic criticism of the mythological viewpoint was put forward by Katona in 1897, who instead argued an ethnological and religio-historical approach.

In addition to the "ur"-monotheistic theory, another hypothesis played a big role in 19th century Hungarian religious studies, that is to say, the dependence of Hungarian pre-Christian religion on Iranian Zoroastrianism. This theory, championed mainly by Horváth, claimed to discover in the religion of Ancient Hungary a dualistic world-concept closely related to that of Ancient Iran. An important support for the theory of Iranian influence was found in the derivation (since proved erroneous) of the Hungarian adj. *ármányos* from the Iranian Evil Spirit, Angra Mainyu/Ahriman.¹

Ipolyi was the first to use authentic folklore material, an example that was followed by other scholars. The *táltos*-figure was dealt with in various works, and as early as the 1840's was interpreted by one scholar as an ancient Hungarian shaman-type. Apart from Ipolyi, this identification is found among other 19th century scholars, such as Kállay, Csengery, and Kandra. A thorough and up-to-date description of the contribution made by the mythological school as seen from the religio-historical viewpoint, is still lacking. There exists only the outline made by de Ferdinandy in 1963 (pp. 255 ff.). It is his opinion that the scholars of this school, despite their historical fallacy, came close to the truth when they maintained that the religion of Ancient Hungary was of a dualistic nature.

In spite of all the criticism that has been made and continues to be made of the mythological school, one must still point out its positive sides. Its adherents have assembled evidence from historical and folkloristic sources, and several of the most important subjects now being treated in the most recent research had already been handled by Cornides and above all by Ipolyi, as for example, sacrificial rites and places, idols, pagan cultic practices in connection with wells, sacred trees and stones, swearing by blood, wolf or dog. With Horváth the *táltos*-motif and a number of other animistic conceptions, sacrificial customs and burial traditions were for the first time compared with Finno-Ugric material. Horváth was inspired to take up this

¹ de Ferdinandy 1963, p. 253.

comparative method by Engel's investigations in 1791, and through Engel by the Finno-Ugric studies of the 19th century. As a result a new line of research in the religion of ancient Hungary was opened up, the so-called comparative Finno-Ugric Mythology which was further developed by Csengery in the middle of the 19th century by giving it an Ural-Altai perspective. Horváth compared the Hungarian shamanistic material with Finno-Ugric and Samoyedic elements, while Csengery and Kállay compared it with Turco-Mongolian elements.

But at the turn of the century this comparative method was exposed to the criticisms of Katona. He established as the primary goal the need to define the meaning of the religion of Ancient Hungary and describe the aims and principles of Hungarian ethnological research. He dealt also with the problem of monotheism, the relationship between religion and mythology, and the various ideas on these matters from those of the apologists of the Early Church and the Church-historian, Eusebius, through de Brosse, down to Tylor and Mannhardt.¹

The pure ethnological approach is met with more regularly at the turn of the century in Hungarian religious studies. It came into favour partly as a result of the recording of folk-belief in which various shamanistic elements were discovered, partly as a result of an intensified study of the *regös*-material. One collection of material made by Sebestyén with the help of the Kisfaludy Society revealed contemporary evidence of the shaman-drum, and established the *regös*-figure at the centre of their studies.

In 1900 Jankó dealt with the *regös*-, *garabonciás*-, *lidérc*-, *boszorkány*-, and *táltos*-motifs, and expressed the hope that it would be possible to reconstruct the religion of Ancient Hungary against the background of Ural-Altai shamanism. In the historical and historico-cultural work of this period shamanism was put forward as the most important ingredient in the religion of Ancient Hungary with *regös*, *táltos* or the sacred tribal chief as the principal figure.²

¹ Katona 1896a, 1896b, 1897.

² Cf. Marczali 1895, pp. 59-63 (*táltos*); Sebestyén 1902a, 1902b, 1906a, 1906b (*regös*); Bán 1908 (*regös*); Vikár 1907 (*regös*); Pintér 1921, I, pp. 19 f.; Róheim 1925 (*táltos*); Hóman 1928, pp. 111-117 (sacred chief); 1940, pp. 77-82 (various priest-figures along with the sacred chief); Solymossy 1932, 1937a (*táltos*).

A new approach was made by Solymossy (1932, 1937b), with a stricter formulation of aims in the ethnological investigation of the religion of Ancient Hungary. He argued that it developed out of shamanism and animism of the same primitive type as is found among other Finno-Ugric tribes. This religion was influenced and modified through the contact of the Hungarians with Turkish and Bulgarian tribes. In his opinion the principal figure in the religion of Ancient Hungary was *táltos*.

Hóman uses both folkloristic and historical material. The picture that he gave of the religion of Ancient Hungary in 1928 and 1940 presents it as more strongly differentiated than the usual tribal shamanism found among Northern and Central-Asiatic nomadic tribes. The Hungarians are said to have had a religion of the same type as other contemporary warrior and steppe peoples (Huns, Persians, Avars, Chazars, Turks, and Scythians). Animistic concepts from primitive epochs survived among the ancient Hungarians, but out of a cult of mythic ancestors there developed a tribal chieftainship of charismatic character, an early form of sacral kingship. According to Hóman there were priests for public ceremonies as well as magicians for everyday matters. These different officials performed the same functions as the Central-Asiatic shamans. They were subordinate to the different sacral chiefs or to the high-chief common to all the tribes. The religion was polytheistic with a supreme deity as the creator of heaven and earth, and a series of special gods for woods, mountains, water, etc. Such a sky-god with sons as this is found in Vogulic folk tradition in the person of Numi Tarem, creator of the world and its guardian. According to Hóman and Hungarian historians, however, the Hungarians came into contact with pure monotheism as early as the 7th century through the influence of Byzantine Christian, Jewish and Islamic missionaries.¹

The same historical approach was made by László in 1944 and 1946. In his treatment of ancient Hungarian intellectual culture he used a wide range of historical and archaeological material, supplemented by folkloristic evidence. The archaeological discoveries, especially the burial of stuffed horse-skins, indicates a religious system well-known from the *Völkerwanderung* Period. Hóman as well as László assume a totemistic ancestor-cult in the religion of

¹ MHK 1900; Zichy 1923, 1939; Hóman 1928, pp. 113 ff., 1940, pp. 79 ff.; MÖ 1943.

Ancient Hungary. This important element they found behind certain motifs preserved in chronicles.

In 1951 and 1954 Róheim used in a more systematic fashion than his predecessors Vogulic and Ostyakian parallels. He deals also with the question of the supreme deity of Ancient Hungary, totemism, shamanism and the sacral kingship. He argues somewhat daringly that Ugric mythology has features in common with the myths of the North-American Indians. Róheim frequently uses concepts and views deriving from psychoanalytical speculations, but he has a firm grip on the material he quotes.

3. *Ancient Hungarian Shamanism in General and Different Shaman-Types*

The question of the origin and signification of shamanism was dealt with as early as the period of Ipolyi, Kállay, Csengery and Kandra in connection with the discussion on the *táltos*-figure. Sebastyén provided in 1902 (b) a broad historical and ethnological background to another key-figure, *regös*, using quotations from Central-European kolinda material and certain ancient Roman cultic customs. The contributions made by Katona in 1896 and Jankó in 1900 were linked with the animistic theories of the 19th century and descriptions of Siberian shamanism in Western and Russian sources.

In 1908 Bán filled in a richly-detailed picture of shamanism itself and of the investigations into it, relying mainly on the theories of Lubbock, Tylor and Wundt. Following Lehmann, Bán assumes the following stages of development: primitive magic (pre-animism)—primitive animism—higher animism. Shamanism is regarded by Bán as the higher animistic stage. In contrast to the wizard (magus) the shaman has virtually a priestly function. The wizard has, certainly, a knowledge of magic powers, but unlike the shaman is not in their service. Bán also pays attention to the shaman's social role and his different duties: fortune-telling, healing and exorcism. These were eventually taken over by three separate practitioners, the seer, the healer and the exorcist. Even in today's research the problem of the splitting-up of the shaman's functions, his social downgrading or replacement by new officials as social changes occur still remains to be solved. According to Bán shamanism is only an aspect of animism, not a religious system in itself. It is

made up of certain religious elements which can appear in certain combinations, but without any stronger ethnic characteristic or relation.¹ In the matter of the ethnic differentiation, which, following Lubbock, Bán takes up, there is a complex of problems which also interest scholars dealing with legends and fairy tales: motif-diffusion, motif-contamination, ethnic homogeneity, regional characteristics, and isolated motif-variations.²

In 1910 Munkácsi gave a thorough description of Vogulic shamanism based on comprehensive folkloristic material. Among these people the shaman's main role is to establish contact with the gods in order to further the people's interests. But among the Voguls there are also black shamans who use their gifts to injure others.

Even in 1937 Solymossy based his interpretation of the nature of shamanism on Tylor's dream-theory and other doctrines dating from the 19th century and the turn of the century. This is also partly the case with Diószegi who in 1954 aligned himself with the sociological and evolutionist interpretations put forward by the Russian scholar, Tokarjev.³ Diószegi, in contrast to Zichy for example, in his works from 1923 and 1939 and to the traditional Finno-Ugric culture anthropologists, argues for the postulate that a general 'primitive communism' existed among the Finno-Ugric tribes as late as 500 A.D. This Marxistic theory of society and its application in shamanistic research derives from its use in the 19th century by Changalov in 1883.⁴

Research into the term *táltos* (*tátos*) was begun by Horváth in 1817, and this figure has also been dealt with, as is described above, more or less thoroughly by other adherents of the mythological school. On the basis of these early investigations, the conclusion was tentatively reached in 1874 that the *táltos* was an ancient Hungarian priest-figure.⁵ A more comprehensive collection of folklore material was published between 1910 and 1920 in the journal *Ethnographia*. The fight-motif was discussed by Kálmány in 1917 and by Kodolányi in 1945. In 1925 and 1927 Róheim made a thorough ethnological analysis of the figure in question. Solymossy placed him in the

¹ Cf. on these matters: Findeisen 1957, pp. 200 f.

² Honti 1935, 1940.

³ Bolš. Sovj. Enc. 61, 1934, pp. 802 f.; 47, 1957, pp. 505 f.

⁴ UG 10, 1952, p. 146.

⁵ CzF 6, 1874, coll. 145 ff.

centre of the Ancient Hungarian shamanistic religion. Hóman on the other hand gave him a more subordinate place along with *bölcs* ('wise man'), *bűbájos* ('magus'), and *orvos* ('medicine man') and with the sacral tribal chief. Diószegi argued that *tudós* had been at least as important as *táltos*. According to Solymossy (1937b, p. 443) "*táltos* is always well-disposed and wishes to help people. In different places he enters a dwelling as a stranger, asks for milk and eggs to eat, but does not care for bread. He is reticent and quiet by nature, but if he is denied food or turned away with harsh words, he takes revenge by bringing on sudden bad weather and hail." These characteristics are strikingly similar to those possessed by the *garabonciás*. The conclusion is that some of the features associated with this medieval magician originally belonged to *táltos*. It is indisputable that here is a case of motif-blending, in addition it is clear that certain characteristics of witches have become attached to the *táltos*-figure.¹ Further attempts to trace the features of this figure have been made by Szendrey (1914), Gunda (1963, p. 23) and de Ferdinandy (1963, pp. 248 ff.).²

Subsequent to the Second World War, some 120 folklorists have compiled a comprehensive collection of material which so far has been used primarily by Diószegi (1958). There still remains a considerable amount of unpublished material in archives.

The shamanistic features in the Hungarian material have a strongly heterogeneous character. Some of them strikingly recall central-asiatic phenomena,³ others have more in common with north- Eurasian elements.

¹ Cf. Komáromy 1910, p. 778. Klein 1934 stressed this feature in *táltos*, while Róheim 1926 a, p. 35, and Gunda 1963, p. 45, claim that it is insignificant.

² Evidence from the 13th century exists in historical sources, Pais 1958, pp. 273-276; NySz, OklSz: "magus, Zauberer"; adj. "magicus, Hexen". Current interpretations according to MÉSz 6, 1962, p. 462: "magical horse, wise-horse that can talk and swallow fire; the shaman among the ancient Hungarians; a man with miraculous powers who was born with teeth and six fingers; horse; child with extraordinary talents". Related terms are: *táltos ló*; *táltos paripa*, 'magic steed'; *táltosbika*, 'magic bull'; *táltosgyerek*, 'magic child', 'shamancandidate'; *táltosság*, *tátosság*, NySz: "ars magica, Zauberkunst"; (christ.) "priestly occupation". The etymology is uncertain, cf. Finn. *taitaa*, 'know'; mong. *dalda*, *daldu*, "secret, mystérieux; le secret, le mystère" (CzF); Turk. *taltyš*, from the stem *tal-*, *talt-*, "schwach werden, ohnmächtig werden; ermüden, matt machen; schlagen bis zur Ohnmacht" (Pais 1958); "Schläger, Prügler; einer, der bis zum Taumel, bis zur Besinnungslosigkeit schlägt, prügelt" (Gunda 1963).

³ Cf. UG 12, 1955; Eliade 1957; Findeisen 1957.

This mixture of shamanistic elements from different geographical regions has been pointed out by Solymossy (1932, 1937b). He explains it by saying that during their migrations the Hungarians came into contact with Bulgarian and Turkish peoples. This cultural contact is generally accepted by scholars in Ancient Hungarian studies.¹

The shamanistic material divides into two motif-groups, of which one concerns the shaman-candidate, the other the shaman. For the shaman-candidate the following stages are laid down: the call, the sign of election, (shaman-tooth, -finger, "superfluous bones") and initiation as a shaman ("the dismemberment", shaman-trees or heavenly trees). For the shaman's part his equipment has been described (drum or sieve, *táltos*-horse, head-dress in the form of feathers or horns, heavenly ladder) as well as his ecstasy, battles of shamans disguised as animals (horse or bull) or hidden in clouds, or between a white and black shaman, shaman-songs and cultic practices.

The richest material concerns the shaman-candidate, the shaman's equipment (except for the drum), his battles in cloud- or animal-shape. The material on the shaman's ecstasy is based on a word-group (*rejtez*, "hides"; *révül*, "falls into ecstasy") which has shamanistic significance and ethnological associations in Vogulic and Ostyakian. This word-group has occupied the attention of Hungarian linguists for over a hundred years, and their research on it has been recorded by Balázs in 1954 and 1963. Concerning cultic practices the material is less abundant. Research so far has mainly relied on certain exclamations and interjections that have parallels in Vogulic and Ostyakian folklore. Moreover there exist descriptions of ecstasy from the 17th century relating to the Moldau-Hungarians, a group outside the compact area settled by the Hungarians. Traces of cultic practices are found also in records of the witch-trials and in statements on "devilish" songs and rites.² In folk tradition there are formulas for oath-making which are overlaid with Christian concepts.³ There is much room for research here. Battles in animal-shape as well as magical animals have been linked up with totemic ideas.⁴

¹ Hóman 1928, 1940; Németh 1930; de Ferdinandy 1963, pp. 211 f., 217.

² Komáromy 1910, *passim*, and p. 219.

³ Solymossy 1937a, pp. 381-386.

⁴ Solymossy 1937b; Diószegi 1953, 1954, 1958; Balázs 1963; Gunda 1963; de Ferdinandy 1963, pp. 248-250.

What is generally called in Hungarian folk tradition half-*táltos*, such as are born or brought up as half-shamans (Komáromy 1910, pp. 420, 475), have not so far received any thorough treatment. Interesting folklore material on such figures has been set out by Szendrey in 1914 and 1938, and three of these figures (as has been shown above) have been placed on an equal footing with *táltos* by Hóman.

It remains to investigate what these seers, fortune-tellers, incantators, healers, quack-doctors, wise-men and -women, witches, and sorcerers¹ were originally, what social role they played, and in what historical relationship they stood with the ordinary shaman. It could be a question of performers of lesser cultic ceremonies and magic rites, or of shaman-figures that as a result of conquest and consequent social changes lost their former standing and sunk to the rank of black shamans or magicians. A richly diversified collec-

¹ In Hungarian folklore there are several other terms for a seer or magician: 1) *látó*, 'seer', 'clairvoyant(e)'; NySz (16th C.): "propheta, Seher"; *álom-látó*, "interpres somniorum, Traumdeuter"; *isten-látó*, "exorcista, Beschwörer"; Szendrey 1914 (Hung. *lát*, 'see'). 2) *mondó*, 'oracle', 'soothsayer'; NySz: *jövendő-mondó* (16th C.), "propheta, vates, mantis, auspex, haruspex, hariolus, sibylla" (Hung. *mond*, 'say'). 3) *felelő*, 'responder'; Diószegi 1958 (Hung. *felel*, 'respond'). 4) *idéző*, 'conjurer' (of spirits); Diószegi 1958 (Hung. *idéz*, 'conjure up'). 5) *néző* (15th C.), NySz: "pytho, pytho-nissa; Wahrsager"; *oltáron-néző*, "Opferschauer"; *nézés*, "augurium"; *madár-nézés*, "auspicium; Vogelschau"; *barombélnézés*, "haruspicium" (Hung. *néz*, 'look'), 6) *igéző* (18th C.), NySz: "Zauberer, Hexenmeister" (Hung. *igéz*, 'zaubern'). 7) *kuruzsló*, 'quack(-doctor)' (Hung. *kuruzsol*, NySz (18th C.): "incanto, fascino, ope magiae medeor"). 8) *varázsló*, NySz *varásló* (16th C.): "genethliacus, praestigiator, incantator; Zauberer" (Hung. *varázsol*, *varásol*, NySz: "incanto, divino, vaticinor"). 9) *bölcs*, 'wise man'; NySz: "doctus, eruditus, considiosus, literatus, sophus, sapiens, philosophus" (Turk. 'magus'); *varázsló bölcs*, "magus, Zauberer". 10) *bűvös* (15th C.), NySz: "incantator; Zauberer" (Hung. *bű*, NySz: "magia, incantamentum, veneficium"). 11) *bűvölő*, NySz: "incantator; Zauberer" (Hung. *bűvöl*, NySz: "incanto"). 12) *bájló*, NySz: "magus, incantator; Zauberer" (Hung. *bájol*, NySz: "incanto, incantatione utur; zaubern"); *báj*, NySz: "magia, incantatio, veneficium, superstitio; Zauberei, Hexerei"). 13) *bűbajos*, NySz: "magus, incantator; Zauberer" (Hung. *bűbáj*, NySz: "cantamen, magia, incantatio, veneficium; Zauberei, Hexerei"). 14) *boboló*, Szendrey 1938: "saga, midwife" (Hung. *bobol*, "scrying with the aid of beans, maize and sieve" (Hung. *bab*, 'bean'). 15) *jós*, (16th C.), NySz: "magus, saga incantator, incantatrix, pytho, divinus vates; Zauberer, Wahrsager", *javas* (16th C.), the same; *javas asszony*, *javas ember*, "respectively female and male quack-doctor; saga, magus". 16) *orvos* (13th C.), NySz: "medicus; Arzt" (earlier: "magus, wizard"); more detailed material in Pais 1958. 17) *hejgető*, Wichmann 1907: "Weihnachtssänger, Weihnachts-zauberer", corresponding to *regős* among the Moldau-Hungarians. 18) Different types of "wise-men and -women", Szendrey 1938. 19) *sirató*, Orsz: "mourner, weeper."

tion of comparative material also exists in Vogulic, Ostyakian and Samoyedic folklore.¹

In a large group with as many as ten witch-figures² the *luca* and the implement associated with this witch, from a shamanistic point of view, is of a particular interest. The *luca-széke* is a "magic seat, witch-stool, made of different types of wood, nine or thirteen different types." Its occupant can 'foresee', if he succeeds in smuggling it in to Christmas-Day mass, make a magic circle, and sit on the stool within this circle. After this pagan rite the stool should be burnt up. It figures in the witch-trials of the 18th century as a banned and criminal witch-implement.³ The *luca*-stool and other characteristics of the *luca* have together with their European parallels been dealt with thoroughly by Róheim in 1915 and 1916. Sebestyén (1906, pp. 149-168) edited a collection from Dunántúl in western Hungary, where

¹ Munkácsi 1910; Karjalainen 1900, 1921-27; Pápay 1905 a; Lehtisalo 1924; Hajdú 1963; also in other works (UG 12, 1955; Park 1938).

² Except 1) *boszorkány* also: 2) *bába* (12th C.), NySz: "anus, vetula, obstetrix, maga, venefica; Hexe". Motif-blending with *boszorkány* can be shown. In fairy tales appears *Vasorrú bába* (Orsz: "old witch in folktales"), who recalls the primitive, animistic god-images among, for example, the Voguls and the Ostyaks and a widely known goddess from the north- Eurasian area (VNGy 1, pp. LX f.). Such god-images are mentioned frequently in travel-books, as in Strahlenberg, Möller, Gondatti, Pallas, and others. The evidence of *bábabukra*, 'regnbáge', points also to a divine figure (Solymossy 1927). 3) *babona* (16th C.), NySz: "fascinum, superstitio"; *babonds*: "superstitiosus, magicus; abergläubisch, zauberisch." 4) *banya*, NySz "anus, vetula; Hexe". 5) *lidérc* (15th C.), 'nightmare'; NySz: "ephaltes [nightmare in Greek mythology] incubus, cacodaemon, lamia; böser Geist, Feuermännchen". 6) *sárkány*, 'dragon'; MTsz: "dark cloud of rain, typhoon" (Turk.). This figure is of Ural- Altaic origin, derives from the ancient Hungarian religion and is met with in folk tales partly as a fabulous creature and partly as an underworld demon in the shape of a human being (Berze-Nagy 1935, 1958, Solymossy 1937b, pp. 439 f.). 7) *tündér* (16th C.), 'elf, fay'; NySz: "magus, praestigiator, qui se in varias species pro libitu transformat, empusa; Zauberer". 8) *szép-asszony*, MTsz: "elf, fay, witch, evil spirit (fem.)"; *szép-asszonyok szele* or *szép-asszonyok tánca*, 'typhoon'; *Szép Miklós*, a fairy-tale hero' (Berze-Nagy 1935). 9) *tót-asszony* 'witch'; Szendrey 1937 a: "on *Luca*-Eve the *tót*-women (*tót*-witches) go round to frighten the children." This figure might be related to *tátos*. 10) *luca*; *Luca-asszony*, 'female witch'; Szendrey 1937 a: "the demons' chief"; *lucázás*, 'Luca-procession', "band of boys that goes round before Christmas and performs a certain magic rite to bring good luck to animals, etc." Latin texts before the 16th C. speak of witches as *strix* or *striga*, but we do not know which Hungarian figures they are that lie behind these names. (Komáromy 1910, Szendrey 1914; Berze-Nagy 1935; Solymossy 1937 a, 1937 b).

³ Viski 1934 b; Szendrey 1937 b.

the stool is replaced by a tree-stump, a log, a beam or a sheaf of straw, which were probably the objects originally used. The *luca*-stool or the *luca*-stump are probably the same magic requisites as the *sejdhjäll* (the *sejd*-stool) in Nordic regions or the sibyl's tripod among the Greeks. The tree-stump, has, then, developed via the magic seat into the 'official chair', and then 'throne', the chief's sacral seat.¹

Finally, as concerns the *regös*,² the recording of *regös*-songs³ began as early as the 1830's, but as late as the 1890's only eight variants were known. Since the turn of the century the collecting and publishing of material has been thoroughly carried out.⁴

The so-called *regös*-song is a composite "chain"-song of the kolinda-type consisting of different small verses of varying content: introduction, greeting,

¹ On ecstasy in Indo-European, Hellenic and Germanic regions, see Eliade 1957, pp. 358-375.

² Concerning the translation "combibator" for *regus* in OklSz Szabó explained in 1881, p. 558, that this word was not found in Ducange. It must consequently be a medieval ad hoc word-coinage from *bibo*. Szabó claims that *combibator* in the document in question has the same meaning as *joculator*. Hungarian scholars have accepted this explanation and so render *combibator* with "cantor, Sängner, Spielmann". In classical latin, however, there is found *combibo*, -ere; *combibo*, -nis, *combibiones* (Georges), in medieval latin *combibiosus* (Ducange). Of these words, the medieval Hungarian form, *combibator*, could easily have been constructed out of an earlier *convivator*, "Ausrichter des Gastmahles" (Georges), cf. *convivium*, "Gastmahl, Schmaus, Opferschmaus" (Georges, Menge-Güthling) and *convive*. *Regus* or "convivator" could thus have been master of ceremonies at the royal court or among the nobility, where he also performed religious rites, functioned as a story-teller, and later became a minstrel- or jester-figure. This medieval minstrel-type might thus have descended from an earlier, more religiously engaged, royal or general functionary, i.e. a cultic and shamanistic figure. Such an explanation of the evidence *combibator-regus* would be more logical than Szabó's and Sebestyén's 'drinking companions', 'fiddler'.

³ The song that is sung is called *regös ének* (Kel: "Weihnachts-, Zauberved") and the custom itself *regölés* (Orsz: "minstrelsy, recital of ancient popular lays," (Hung. *regöl*, Kel: "Weihnachtszauberved singen"). Belonging to the same stem are also: *reg-* in *Regtelek*, 'reg-field'; *Regvölgy*, 'reg-valley' (14th C.); *regus* (i.e. *reges*, *regös*), OklSz: "cantor, Sängner" (13th C.); "possessionis combibatorum Regalium condicionariorum vulgariter *regus* dictorum" (14th C.), Szabó 1881; OklSz; Sebestyén 1902b; *regelő hét* (16th C.), 'regelő-week', Sebestyén 1902b, pp. 85-88; *regelő hétfő*, 'regelő-monday', Sebestyén 1902b, p. 89; Dömötör 1959; *regös nagy út* (16th C.), 'regös-long way (to heaven)', Vikár 1907.

⁴ Sebestyén 1902: 52 songs with commentaries and 28 musical supplements. MNT 2, 1955, pp. 807-987: in addition 101 songs with notes (nr. 776-876). See also Kodály 1956, 1960.

wedding-song, ox-rhymes, deer-songs, allusions to gifts, altar-motifs, among others. They are linked by the refrain: "haj, regi (regö) rejtem!"¹ According to Sebestyén (1902 b) the Ancient Hungarian elements have been mixed with motifs and customs which are spread over the greater part of Europe.² The custom of going round from farm to farm and from village to village is known from north- Eurasian shamanism.³ In this connection religious rites have been carried out in the different families and a collection made for the shaman's upkeep. Presumably the Ancient Nordic 'sejd' was connected with similar practices.⁴ Such practices presumably lie as a substratum under the Hungarian 'star-boy' procession, the English carols and the Swedish 'Staffansvisorna' (songs of St Stephen), which were subsequently overlaid by ecclesiastical elements.

According to Sebestyén the word *regös* is of Ugric origin. The meaning 'singer' is supposed to have developed secondarily from the older 'magician', 'shaman', which in their turn go back to the *regi*, *regö* in the refrain in the sense of 'song', 'charm'. According to Sebestyén this *regös* was the shaman in Ancient Hungarian religion. The significance of the refrain should therefore be: "Ho! Charm, I (the shaman) produce it (now) by magic!" Vikár (1907, p. 34) takes as a basis a longer refrain made up of certain variants: "Rejtekem régi törvény / haj regul rejtem!" which is, according to Viski's interpretation (1932, p. 20): "Berg' mich recht nach alten Regeln / Hei, ich sage es in Gesang!" that is to say, "mein Zauber ist das alte Gesetz / Hej, ich zaubere es in Gesang!" The obscure refrain has subsequently been interpreted in different ways, depending on the way in which the word *regi* / *regö* ('song', 'ecstasy') is understood. Thus, Róheim on one occasion explains it (1925, p. 235) as follows: "Ho! I am now in ecstasy!", on another (1926 b, p. 364): "Ho, song, I sing!" Pais interpreted the refrain in 1949: "Ho! I now produce magic by ecstasy!" Diószegi (1958, p. 146) takes another reconstructed form as his basis: "révüléssel révülök", which he translates as: "Ho! By ecstatic rapture I lapse into ecstatic rapture!" According to this more

¹ A few variants exist in translation in Róheim 1926b; Viski 1932, pp. 15-27; de Ferdinandy 1963, pp. 241 f.

² Cf. Jahn 1884; Sartori 1910-1914; Usener 1911; Nilsson 1916-19; Caraman 1933; Schneeweis 1935, 1953.

³ Munkácsi 1910; Karjalainen 1927; Nioradze 1925.

⁴ Strömbäck 1935, pp. 142-150.

recent interpretation of *regi*, *regö* as 'ecstasy', *regös* is then an ecstatic and the refrain originally an incantation which the shaman used to call down supernatural powers.¹ Whether the refrain really has this meaning is extremely disputable.²

In connection with the treatment of the *regös*-problem there has been produced a rich literature on the musico-historical standing of *regös*-songs. The basic musical form is of the kolomejka-type, with four beats in 2/4 with an ascending final fifth.³

The investigation into Hungarian shamanism has therefore resulted in the differentiation of four main figures (*táltos*, *tudós*, *garabonciás*, and *regös*) and a series of so-called half-shamans. These are often reduced to one single Ancient Hungarian shaman figure. This idea of one single shaman in ancient times goes back to the 19th century when the main interest was in clan-shamanism. The religion of both the nomadic horsemen and the hunters, however, gives in general a more highly differentiated picture of society with place for various shaman roles. Agreeing with Hóman one can therefore presume the existence of several shaman types among the Hungarians. Traces of these are extant in the related Vogulic, Ostyakian and Samoyedic material, which therefore strengthens such a thesis.

¹ Diószegi 1953, p. 432.

² Corresponding conjurations of gods and spirits, songs, prayers and sacrificial rites of Vogul, Ostyakian, Samoyedic and other tribes show another character (VNGy 2: 1, pp. 311–431; Pápay 1905b, pp. 268–282; Karjalainen 1927, pp. 69–331; Lehtisalo 1947, pp. 469–550). It is true that there is the cry to heaven (Pápay 1905b; Munkácsi 1910, p. 102) in the form of *kaj*, *kaja-juj*, and others which are comparable with the Hungarian *haj* in the *regös*-refrain, but without any mention of ecstasy. The word *kaj* occurs also in the Vogul *kaj-saw*, 'hymn', 'prayer'; *käjji*, 'sing', i.e. 'loud words', 'cry', the meanings of which, however, point to cultic connections.

³ On this, see Bartók 1925 (Hungarian ceremonial music of a special character); Kodály 1935, pp. 39 ff., 1952, p. 56, 1956, pp. 75–81, 1960, pp. 34 ff. (a type of hexachoral melody both primitive and European, which displays a similarity to nursery rhymes as well as gregorian music; some of the hexachord motifs derive from the pentatonic scale, and the refrain points to western european models); Kerenyi 1953 (the melody derives from Hungarian nursery rhymes; the refrain and even the whole song-type can be of Western origin, possibly from the Middle Ages); Vargyas 1957 (ancient ritual music of hitherto unknown derivation, that displays Mediterranean features, not however, Finno-Ugrian melody-style). On the *regös*-problem, see in addition Sebestyén 1902a, 1902b; Vikár 1907; Viski 1932, 1937; Pais 1949; Balázs 1954, 1963; Dioszegi 1958; de Ferdinandy 1963, p. 242; Szomjas-Schiffert 1963.

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