

## Batırkan, a Kazakh Shaman from the Altay Mountains (Mongolia)

D. SOMFAI KARA, L. KUNKOVÁCS and J. SIPOS

BUDAPEST

This field report was based on two expeditions, one by László Kunkovács in the autumn of 1994 and another by Dávid Somfai Kara, who visited the same area two years later in the summer of 1996. Both of us conducted one month's fieldwork in Mongolia among the Kazakhs of the Altay Mountains in the so-called Bayanölgii Region (*aimag* in Mongolian), where Kazakhs comprise 80 per cent of the population. Kunkovács visited this *aimag* to take pictures for his photo exhibition on Mongolia and shamanism, while Somfai Kara travelled there to collect folklore and folk songs among the Kazakhs of Mongolia.<sup>1</sup> During our fieldwork both photographer László Kunkovács and myself had the chance to meet one of the most famous shamans (*baksı* in Kazakh) in the region, Batırkan Abılkasımuli ('son of Abılkasım') of the Kerey tribe (pl. 28 a). Kunkovács not only took pictures, but also recorded a shamanic song sung by Batırkan. As Kunkovács's photographs and sound recording as well as the data collected by Somfai Kara happily explain and complement each other, it was decided that they should be published together in the present article. Furthermore, ethnomusicologist János Sipos was invited to analyze the song. The reader will find his ethnomusicological notes at the end of this article.

During my field trip in 1996, I had the opportunity to interview Batırkan. Later, this information enabled me to transcribe and translate the text and gain a better understanding of the material produced by Kunkovács, who had himself witnessed Batırkan's trance and shamanic dance during his trip.

He was a very tall man in his sixties (born in 1933), when I met him in his brother's yurt (*kıyız üy* in Kazakh, meaning 'felt house'). Inter-

---

<sup>1</sup> Some of this material was published in 2001. See Somfai Kara 2001: 23–28.

estingly, his brother was a famous ‘falconer,’ (*bürkitši* in Kazakh), who actually hunted with eagles. I had a long conversation with the *baksī*, who told me a great deal about his shamanhood. He explained to me how he came to be a shaman and how he acquired his magic axe. This information aided me greatly in understanding some of the expressions mentioned in the shamanic song recorded by Kunkovács. In the interview the *baksī* said that he was attacked by spirits (*jīn*) at the age of six or nine. He fell seriously ill at the age of 28. The “madness” drove him up to the mountains. He could not sleep for days and walked barefoot on the ice of a lake, thus giving him strength. Later, he met Kuseyin, a great shaman, who initiated him into the spiritual world by giving him his blessing (*bata*). Batırkan even mentioned this event in his shamanic song. The old shaman promised him a *dombıra*, a two-stringed instrument, which could help him to make contact with the spirits, but he died suddenly a few days later. After his death, Batırkan started to see him in dreams, in which the shaman ordered him to find his magic axe, which would aid him in his shamanizing. Batırkan eventually found the axe in spite of the fact that a *molda* (a Muslim teacher, a literate man) had hidden it. He still remained ill so he went to another shaman, Abil-mayım, who chased away the evil spirits with a piece of cloth (*šūperek*) placed in boiling water. After that his health improved and he began to shamanize, or, as the Kazakhs say, *dem sal-* ‘to heal.’

On shamanizing, he said the following. When he does a ritual he calls his helping spirits (*jīn šakīrīw*), which appear in the shape of a camel, a snake or an eagle. In order to heal a person the shaman must frighten his free soul (*ūrey*). Healing generally involves the use of heated objects, such as a shovel or an axe. This is called *uškīkaw*. Another method is to blow the evil spirits off the sick person (*ūškīrīw, ūrlep dem salīw*).

When Kunkovács visited him in 1994, Batırkan conducted a shamanic ritual in order to make a prediction about the relations between the Chinese and the Muslim peoples of Xinjiang (the Uyghurs, Kazakhs and Kyrgyz).<sup>2</sup> The prediction was requested by Kazakh relatives from Xinjiang. During his shamanic song (*sarīn*) Batırkan addressed that question to the spirits, but he did not tell us if he received any answer. The ritual was also intended to save his people from all kinds of misfortunes

---

<sup>2</sup> Xinjiang, formerly known as East Turkistan and Jungaria, is now an Autonomous Province of China, where 1.3 million Kazakhs live in its northern parts (Altay, Tarbagatay, Ile).

(*bäleket*). He began the ritual by stripping to the waist and tying a wide leather belt tight around his midriff. Then he asked a local Kazakh to kiss his magic axe (*balta*) before the ritual (pl. 28 b).

This local Kazakh man also tied Batırkan's belt so tight (pl. 29) that one would have thought that he could hardly breathe, a fact which apparently assisted him in falling into trance. Then he took his magic axe and heated it up by the fireplace. He grabbed the axe and started to move around the yurt. Only then did he begin to sing his shamanic song, which lasted for about five minutes. During the song he walked around continuously, hitting his breast three times with the hot axe and shouting "hopp" (pl. 30). When he hit himself the third time he truly fell into a trance, which was indicated by the strange sound he uttered ("phuu brrr"). Apparently, this was the moment in which his helping spirits "entered" his body. After that he stopped briefly and then continued his song but was now calmer. At the end, he hit his breast again and the song ended. He put down his axe, sat down and loosened his belt, which had been digging into his flesh throughout the ritual.

In what follows, I will provide the text of the shaman song with a translation.<sup>3</sup>

*Batırkan baksining sarini*

1.

*Mang-mang, mang baskan*

*Tört ayagın teng baskan*

*Aldıngg(i) örkešin šang baskan*

*Artki örkešin may kiskan*

*Kerdeng, kerdeng, ker jılan*

*Kerdeng demey kel jılan*

*Aynalayın dāw perim*

*Šakirganda kel (perim)*

---

<sup>3</sup> The informant was Batırkan Abılkasımuli, born in 1933. The song was recorded by László Kunkovács in September 1994 at the Tolbo Lake summer pasture, in the Bayanölgii region (Nogoon Nuur county) among the Altay Mountains of Western Mongolia, and it was transcribed and translated by Dávid Somfai Kara.

2.

*Altı Atantay Isämbet*  
*Jaratkan Alla, jär(dem) et*  
*Karati Kerey Kabanbay*  
*Şawkin suw boyında*  
*Akili är kimning tagilim*  
*Süyenşi bir Alda, özinge süyindim*  
*Kudayim jârdem kül*  
*Ata-babam ar(wagı)*  
*Hopp*

3.

*Alda, Kudayim*  
*Merek kör(e) aldı arwagin*  
*Süyindim bata bergen*  
*Atam Kuseyin arwagina,*  
*Kudayim, Tokak jaldı tori aygır*  
*Togay bir örley şapsangşi oy*

4.

*Osı düniyege kelgen bäleket*  
*Alastasın Kudayim*  
*Alla bis(i)milla*  
*Söz söyleymin zaman atam*  
*Koday kör, ata-baba arwagı*  
*Key pende mal körse sonday pisik*  
*Oylasam sonday adam sarga(yad)*  
*Hopp*

5.

*Allam, jarım, Allam, jar*  
*oylasam, biler meken*  
*musılmanım, kuday aw*  
*mında togız düz toksan besinşi jili*  
*bir nârse bola meken, Kudayim*

6.

*akildi osi aytkan narsemdi kabil alip  
koday kor  
düz jüyirma tört ming paygambar  
otüz üš ming sabaka tört šahar  
Phuuuu, brrr, hopp*

7.

*surasang mening akem atı Abilkasim  
öz atim Batirkan  
kelippin Tolba köli, Kök-töbe jagasında  
Ablikasim kenže ulı bop düniyege kelippin  
Elestedi bu düniyem  
Altı jasimnan bastap aw  
Kudayim aw kurmeting arkasında  
Kašip šiktım üš-tört jül boldı  
Hopp*

Shaman Batirkan's Song

1.

It stepped with a beat,  
It stepped simultaneously with four legs.  
Its front hump was covered with sand,  
Its rear hump was full of fat.  
You are a proud magic snake,  
Don't say proud, just come.  
My dear great helping spirit,  
When I call you, come (my spirit).

2.

Isambet from the Altı-Atantay clan,  
God, Creator, please help us.  
Kabanbay from the Karatı Kerey clan,  
By the side of a fast river,  
Everybody loses his mind.  
Allah is our saviour, I pray to you,

My God, please help me,  
The spirit of my ancestors.  
Hopp

3.  
Allah, my God,  
Merek<sup>4</sup> could see the spirits.  
I pray to him who gave his blessing,  
to the spirit of Kuseyin.  
My God, black stallion with the long mane,  
run through the woods.

4.  
The suffering that comes to this world,  
Let it disappear, my God!  
Allah, Bismillah,<sup>5</sup>  
I speak the words of the past generations.  
Support me, spirit of my ancestors.  
Some people are interested in goods,  
Well, these people suffer much.  
Hopp (*He hits his breast with the axe*)

5.  
Allah, my saviour, Allah,  
Do they know,  
My Muslim people, oh my God,  
Here in 1995,  
What awaits them, my God?

6.  
Please listen to my wise words,  
Support me,  
124 thousand prophets,  
33 thousand wise men of four cities. (*He falls into a trance*)

---

<sup>4</sup> As Batırkan explained it to me, Merek was the name of a deceased shaman.

<sup>5</sup> In the name of Allah (in Arabic).

7.

If you ask me, my father is Abilkasım,  
 My own name is Batırkan.  
 I am from Tolbo Lake near Blue Hill,  
 I was born as Abilkasım's youngest son.  
 I have had visions,  
 Since I was six.  
 By the grace of you, my God  
 I was freed (by the spirits) 3–4 years ago.  
 Hopp!

If we examine the text of the shamanic song, we see that in order to achieve shamanic trance, besides Allah, the shaman also invokes several kinds of spirits:

- (a) animal-shaped helping spirits (*jın*)
- (b) the spirit of a shaman (*peri*)
- (c) the spirit of the forefathers (*arwak*) of his tribe
- (d) Islamic saints and prophets (*sabaka, paygambar*)

It is important to note that while shamans in Central Asia usually call their helping spirits *peri* (Somfai Kara and Torma 2005: 185), the Kazakhs of the Altay refer to these spirits as *jın*, which in Central Asia is usually a term for evil spirits that cause illnesses (Divaev 1899: 307). Batırkan mentions a *peri* in the text, but it is the spirit of a deceased shaman, Kuseyin, who was his master. The phenomenon of a deceased shaman's spirit turning into a powerful helping spirit is quite unknown among the Kazakhs of Central Asia, but I found data on this among the Turkic peoples of South Siberia (Tuva *čayaan*).<sup>6</sup>

The text itself consists of six parts:

(1) In the first part the *baksı* calls his helping spirits (*jın*), a camel and a magic snake (*ker jılan*). These are common spirits, which appear in the shape of animals. In the mythology of the Altay-kizhi we also find data on a magic fish (*ker balik*) that carries the World upon its back.

(2) In the second part the shaman turns to the spirits of his ancestors (*arwak*), who belong to the various clans of the Kerey tribe, e.g. Isambet

---

<sup>6</sup> Data from my field trip among the Tuva (Tofa) of Khövsgöl in 1997.

and Kabanbay. He addresses Kuseyin, his master as *däw-perim* ('my great spirit'), who gave his blessing (*bata bergen*) to Batırkan. During this part the name of God is mentioned several times (Alla, Jaratkan, Kuday).

(3) In the third part another very peculiar mythological expression can be observed. The shaman says that a black stallion (*tori aygır*) is running up the hill. This symbolizes the soul of the shaman as it travels on a symbolic mount that carries him to the Upper World. Among Turkic people of Southern Siberia, the shamans (*kam* in Altay-kizhi) turn to their shamanic drums (*tüngür* in Altay-kizhi) as their magic mount.

The shamans (*baksı*) of the Kazakhs and the Kyrgyz do not use drums. In some regions the drum was replaced by a shamanic musical instrument (*kobız*<sup>7</sup>), but it is more common for them to use an ordinary tool that aids them in the trance and can chase away evil spirits (*jın* in Kazakh), e.g. a whip (*kamşı*), stick (*asa-tayak*), shovel (*kürek*) or axe (*balta*).

As far as the heating of the shamanic instrument is concerned, I collected data among the Kazakhs of the Altay region and the Jayık (Ural) river, according to which the *baksı* sometimes heated up a shovel<sup>8</sup> or an axe, licked the hot instrument and blew steam on the ill person (*uşıktaw*) to chase away the evil spirits (Malov 1918: 12). These things were intended to have a psychological effect on the shaman's clients, as in the case of Batırkan, who impressed us with the axe.

(4) In the fourth part Batırkan asks God and the spirits to chase away the evil (*alastaw*). The word *alas* is a magic term used by the Kazakh and Kyrgyz nomads as well as other peoples of the Altay region. The Muslims utter this word during the New Moon Festival of Nawroz (*nawrız* in Kazakh) when they purify their houses with the smoke of the sacred juniper tree (*arşa* in Kazakh). While doing this the Kyrgyz say the following: *alas, alas, alas ar baleeden kalas* 'Alas, alas, alas, save us from all trouble.'<sup>9</sup>

(5) In the fifth part the actual question of the foretelling ritual is asked of God with the help of the spirits of ancestors.

(6) In the sixth part the shaman invokes certain Muslim saints and prophets who are difficult to identify. This was the point at which

<sup>7</sup> See Somfai 2005: 182–187.

<sup>8</sup> On a field trip in Kazakhstan in 1994, Ötemis Salamat (1937), Orda, West Kazakhstan, told me about a shaman who chased away evil spirits (*jın*) with the help of the severed head of a wolf and a hot shovel.

<sup>9</sup> From data collected on my field trip to Kyrgyzstan in 2001.



the Batırkan reached the pinnacle of his trance and almost lost consciousness.

(7) In the seventh and final part the *baksı* regained a calmer state of mind and simply introduced himself to the spiritual world. He also mentioned that he began to have contact with the spirits at the age of six, which is quite young for shamanic initiation.

If we compare Batırkan's shamanic song (*sarin*) with, for example, the shamanic *zikir* (invocation) of a *baksı* named Zamanbek from Sayram (Shymkent) in Southern Kazakhstan from 1994,<sup>10</sup> the difference is quite clear. The influence of Islam is much stronger among the Kazakhs of the Syr-Darya Region, who had direct contact with the Uzbeks, whose sacred pilgrimage places and saints are also always incorporated into the shamanic song of the nomads. While shamans of Southern Kazakhstan always place the emphasis on proclaiming their faith in Allah and his prophet Muhammad, in Batırkan's song the significance of the helping spirits (*jın*) and the spirits of forefathers (*arwak*) is much stronger. Another important aspect is that among the Kazakhs of the Altay there are no "white" or "black" shamans (shamans who have contacts with good or evil spirits). Batırkan had contact with all kinds of spirits and the Kazakhs in Ölgii did not consider the helping spirits (*jın*) as merely evil ones; all shamans could make contact with them. I suggest that this can be explained by the fact that the syncretic element of their faith is much weaker. (We can observe the same process in the shamanism of the Altay-kizhi and the Telengit.<sup>11</sup>)

In regions where Islam influenced shamanism the syncretic religion is characterized by the formation of "black" and "white" shamans and the separation of their activities, while we cannot find this separation of shamanic activities in regions where traditional shamanism survived, a fact which is also indicated in the terminology of the spirits of the shaman. In the Altay the shaman's helping spirits are called *jın*, which in Southern Kazakhstan is the term for evil spirits related to Satan (*saytan*), while the term for helping spirit is *peri* (Basilov 1992: 236) in the South.

---

<sup>10</sup> See Somfai 2005: 182–187.

<sup>11</sup> See Potapov 1991: 92, 132.

## Ethnomusicological Notes on Batırkan Shaman's Song

We have seen a series of melodies described within their cultural context and rounded out with photographic material. What follows is an ethnomusicological transcription and analysis of the melody itself, and a comparison to the musical styles of certain other peoples.

According to the principles of ethnomusicology (Merriam 1964, Nettl 1983), instead of examining only the abstract musical structures we should also explore the social context of the musical performance. However, as the first part of this article has already shed light on the background, these few pages will be devoted to an examination of the music alone.

Though there have been several efforts, the music of a number of Turkic peoples is unfortunately not very well explored. This is also true of the music of the Kazakhs living in Bayanölgiy, but here we can mention at least one useful book: *Mongoliya Kazaktarining Khalik Jirlari*, which contains numerous transcriptions but no information about the performers or any analysis. It should be noted here that the music of the Kazakh people living in Bayanölgiy county (West Mongolia) has previously been studied and compared to Kazakh folksongs recorded in Mangishlak (West Kazakhstan) (Sipos 2001).

In illiterate societies, perhaps one of the most important and frequent uses of music is to assist in religious rituals. Examples include the music and dance of the Bektashi order, the songs of the Dakota singers and Navajo medicine man and that of Mongolian shamans.<sup>12</sup> The musical material of these people is different, but a link usually exists between the songs the shaman sings and other songs of the community of which the shaman is a part.

Even today there are numerous peoples with no system of reading and writing. Their music is referred to as "primitive" though it is often quite complex and developed.<sup>13</sup> At first sight, our melodies also appear to be simple. A layman may feel that the singer is repeating the same melody again and again. In reality, however, every rendering is differ-

---

<sup>12</sup> On the dance and songs of the Bektashi, Dakota and Navajo people, see Koca and Onaran 1998; Birge 1937; Powers 1990; Jurens 1965; McAllester 1949, 1973. On Mongolian shamanic songs, see Birtalan and Sipos 2004: 51–59.

<sup>13</sup> For more details, see e.g. Nettl 1972.

$\text{♩} = 75$

1. 

Mang - mang. mang bas - kan.
2. 

Tört a - ya - gín teng bas - kan.
3. 

Al - dín - gī ör - ke - šin šang bas - kan.
4. 


Artk' ör - ke - šin may kīs - kan.
5. 

Ker - deng. ker - deng ker jī - lan.
6. 

Ker - deng de - mey kel jī - lan.
7. 

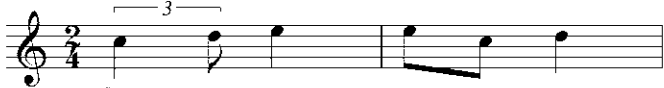
Ay - na - la - yū dāw pe - rim.
8. 

Ša - kīr - gan - da kel phu - un.

9.  Al - ti A - tan - tay I - sām - bet.

10.  Ja - rat - kan Al - la, jār - dem et.

11.  Ka - ra - ũ Ke - rey Ka - ban - bay...

12.  Šaw - kīn suw bo - yīn - ga.

13.  A - kī - li är kim' ta - gī - līm.

14.  Sü - yen - ši bir Al - da.

15.  Ö - zin - ge sī - yīn - dīm.

16.  Ku - da - yīm jār - dem kil.

17.  A - ta - ba - bam ar', hop.

18.   
Al - da. Ku - da - yim.
19.   
Me - rek kōr' al-dī ar - wa - gīn.
20.   
Si - yim - dīm ba - ta bcr-gen.
21.   
A - tam Ku - se - yin ar - wa - gī - na.
22.   
Ku - da - yim.
23.   
To - kak jal - dī tor' ay - gīr.
24.   
To - gay bir ör - ley šap - sang - šī, oy.
25.   
O - sī dūn' - ye - ge
26.   
kel - gen bā - le - ket,
27.   
A - las - ta - sīn Ku - da - yim.

28. Al - la bis - i - mil - la.

29. Söz söy - ley - min za - man a - tam.

30. Kol - day kör, a - ta - ba - ba ar - wa - gı.

31. Key pen - de mal kör - se son - day pı - sik.

32. Oy - la - sam son - day a - dam sar - gay' hop.

33. Al - lam, ja - rım, Al - lam, jar.

34. oy - la - sam, bi - ler me - ken,

35. mu - sıf - ma - nım, ku - day, av.

36. Mın - da to - gız düz tok - san be - sin - ši jı - li,

37.   
 Bir nâr-se bo-la me-ken, ku-da-yim.


38.   
 A-kil-di os' ayt-kan nâr-sem-di ka-bil a-lip,

39.   
 Kol-day kör düz jî-yîr-ma tört ming

40.   
 pay-gam-bar o-tüz üşming sa-ba-ka tört şa-har.

41.   
 phuu, brrr, hop, hop.

42.   
 Su-ra-sang me-ning

43.   
 ä-kem a-tî A-bil-ka-sim,

44.   
 öz-ö a-tim Ba-tir-kan.

45.   
 Ke-lip-pin Tol-ba kö-li,

46.    
 Kōk - tō - be ja - ga - sīm - da.

47.    
 Λ - bil - ka - sīm, ey, ken - je u - lī

48.    
 dūn' - ye - ge ke - lip - pin.

49.    
 E - les - te - di bu dū - ni - yem,

50.    
 Al - tī ja - sīm - nan bas - tap, aw.

51.    
 Ku - da - yīm,

52.    
 aw. Kur - me - ting ar - ka - sīm - da,

53.    
 Ka - šip šik - tīm ūš - tōrt jil bol - di.



ent. They are not merely simple personal variations; here we can admire the continuous remolding of a basic musical idea. In this respect, the performance is similar to that of the Kazakh *terme* songs, but the act of variation happens on different musical foundations.<sup>14</sup>

Before comparing the melodies in question with melodies of other peoples, let us take a closer look at some musical attributes, and then let us examine the series of melodies.

The melody moves on the three tones of the E–D–C trichord, with an intonation of pitches familiar to a Western ear. The three tones are not insufficient: the entire folk music of some peoples is founded on these tones, and they dominate the musical styles of others.

Melodic movement may be ascending, descending or undulating: the melodies in question are undulating with a descending trend. Despite the undulating movement, we have a descending feeling because the first line is dominated by higher tones and ends on E or D, while in the second line the C occurs more often and C is the closing tone. The characteristic movement has a C–D–E–D–C–D–E–D... character; that is, the melody advances on neighbouring tones between the two edges of the C–E interval. Interval jumps can be seen only at the beginning of lines or between the end of a line and the beginning of the next line.

The shaman sings at a comfortable pitch level with a somewhat pressed timbre. Notes with short durational values are sung in a natural way, but we often hear a quick vibrato on the longer ones. There is another interesting phenomenon: the pitch of the long notes descend slightly. The base sound of the melody thus becomes a whole step higher during the four minutes of the performance. The singer sings the two-line musical units without any break.

There is a special tonal organization in the melody. E has a strained relationship with the C closing tone. We might say that D has the sub-dominant tonic function, E the dominant one and C the tonic one. The total duration of the E, D and C tones are equal. Not counting the continuous descent in pitch, the C tonic does not change during the performance; that is, there is no modulation. The tempo accelerates steadily and moderately from the beginning to the end.

---

<sup>14</sup> I write more about the Kazakh *terme* melodies in Sipos 2001, otherwise see Alekseev 1947; Beliaev 1962, 1975; Dernova 1967, Erzakovich 1955, 1957, 1966; Zataevich 1925, 1931, 1935, 1963, 1971; Zhanuzakuv 1964.

The rhythm patterns are quite varied. This may be the aspect of the performance that is most difficult to grasp and describe. At the beginning ♪♪♪|♪♪ and its variants dominate, but here ♪♪|♪♪|♪♪|♪♪|♪♪|♪♪|♪♪|♪♪ too we are in the first half of the performance. At the beginning of the sections the following patterns are common: ♪♪♪||♪♪ or ♪♪♪. The durational values are also varied. Besides dotted rhythm we see eights, quarters, whole notes and breves, with the whole notes and breves usually found at the end of the lines.

Under the *parlando-rubato*-like performance there pulsates a rhythmic pattern, as is also common among the *parlando-rubato* songs of many peoples. The lengthening of final notes—and thus the last bar of the lines—is also a common phenomenon. Importantly, the duration of the lines is very similar, independent of the number of syllables in each line. It is usually the durational value of the final notes that makes the difference: longer lines end with a whole note or a breve followed by a pause, while shorter ones end with a quarter. Some extended lines also last one and half times longer than the usual duration: lines 30 and 32 (10 syllables), lines 36 (12 syllables) and line 40 (13 syllables).

The skeleton of the two sections of the basic melody is as follows:<sup>15</sup>

A = CDEE / ED E<sup>16</sup>

B = ECDD / CC C

Shamans and bards are specialists in the community; they are semi-professional musicians. They must possess the gift of singing long series of songs, improvising, and arousing and maintaining the audience's attention. A drum or other instrument (a lute with two or three strings among Turkic peoples) helps them to fall into trance. In this case we hear solo singing.

The process of the performance has four sections.

(a) Similarly to the great performers, the singer first presents the theme in the most simple 5-syllabic form (lines 1–2), and then follows a 9-syllabic extended variation (lines 3–4). After this for a relatively long

---

<sup>15</sup> It has several variants, e.g. CD E / ED E / DCDD / CC C or CE ED / DC E // ECDE / CC C etc.

<sup>16</sup> The first line typically ends on E, rarely on D, or shows uncertainty between the two notes.

time he varies the most typical 7-sectioned form. The musical form elastically adjusts itself to the lengthening or shortening of the text.

(b) Before the repetition becomes too monotonous, the singer begins to sing longer lines, thus allowing for more extended variations of the basic musical idea and from time to time to tripartite rhythmic forms (e.g. lines 21, 32 and 37).

(c) The most complex form, the climax of the performance, can be found in lines 38–40. Here it is not very easy to recognize the basic melody form. This part ends with a closing cadence (line 41).

(d) The last part is composed of somewhat simple lines, but the musical structures are more complex than those at the beginning of the series of songs. In lines 42–44 we see an AAkB three-line structure, followed by a four-line form (lines 45–48). The series is closed by two short melodies with a *Kudayim!* “My God!” exclamation between them (line 5). After presenting the theme and then varying on different structures, the shaman returns to the basic form at the end.

The scheme of the process of the performance is as follows:

- (a) AB / AB / AB / AB / AB / AB / A... AkB / AB / AB /
- (b) *Kudayim!* A + AB + *Kudayim!* AB / A + B / AAk + B + / A + B+ / AAB / A + B + / A + A + B + closing cad.
- (c) AAkB / AkAAB /
- (d) AB *Kudayim!* AB

Examining the folk songs in Bayanölgüy, we realize that the present *zikir* series has certain features similar only to the lament of the area. However, the laments in Bayanölgüy use the G'–E–D–C tetraton instead of the E–D–C trichord and their melodic movement is always definitely descending in contrast to the undulating, melodic lines of the shaman's songs that have a narrower range. Though there are other melodies in Bayanölgüy with undulating movement, they always have a much wider range.

Among Anatolian laments with a small range, we find similar melodies freely performed, but these are also dominated by descending melodic lines. Similarly to the Anatolian lament, the small form of the Hungarian lament usually has a wider range and descending character. We have not met similar melodies in the folk music of the Karachay-Balkar, Tatar, Bashkir, Cheremis, Chuvash, Kazakh or Kyrgyz peoples. Nor, according to an examination of the folk music of certain

American Indian tribes, do the Sioux or Navajo use this musical form. The closest variants of this style may be found among Azeri laments.<sup>17</sup>

In conclusion, we may think that this simple musical form is common and can be found in the folk music of various peoples. As a matter of fact, as we have seen, it not so easy to find parallels. True, the laments of many of the world's peoples are characterized by a relatively simple musical form more or less freely performed, and in some sense we can list here the improvised and elastic performance of the *ashik* musicians of Asia. However, what makes this melody unique is that the improvisation happens exclusively on the C–D–E trichord with an undulating movement and a descending trend. Despite the small trichord range we see a complex musical world with diversified and genuine musical forms.

## References

- Alekseev, A. 1947. "O kazakhskoi dombrovoim muzyke." *Sovetskaia Musyka* 1, No. 3.
- Basilov, V. N. 1992. *Shamanstvo u narodov Srednei Azii i Kazakhstana*. Moskva: Nauka.
- Beliaev, V. M. 1962. *Ocherki po istorii muzyki narodov SSSR*. Moskva: Gosudarstvennoe muzykal'noe izdatel'stvo.
- . 1975. *Central Asian Music*. Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press.
- Birge, J. K. 1937. *The Bektashi Order of Dervishes*. London: Luzac, Hartford, Conn: Hartford Seminary Press.
- Birtalan, Ágnes and János Sipos 2004. "Talking to the *Ongons*. The Invocation Text and Music of a Darkhad Shaman." *Shaman. Journal of the International Society for Shamanistic Research* 12(1–2), 25–62.
- Dernova, V. 1967. *Narodnaia muzyka v Kazakhstane*. Almaty: Izdatel'stvo Kazakhstan.
- Divaev, A. A. 1899. "Iz oblasti kirgizskikh verovanii 'Baksy kak lekar' i koldun (Étnograficheskii ocherk)." *Izvestiia Obshchestva arkheologii, istorii i étnografii pri imperatorskom Kazanskom universitete XV/3*. Kazan'.
- Erzakovich, B. 1955. *Narodnye pesni Kazakhstana*. Alma-Ata.
- . 1957. "Kazakhskaia SSR." In *Muzykal'naia kul'tura soiuznykh respublik*. Moskva: Nauka.
- . 1966. *Pesennaia kul'tura kazakhskogo naroda*. Alma-Ata: Nauka.

---

<sup>17</sup> See Sipos 2004, melody nos. 22–30.

- Jurrens, J. W. 1965. *The Music of the Sioux Indian of the Rosebud reservation in South Sioux and Its Use in the Elementary School*. Research Study No. 1. Colorado State College, Greeley, Colorado.
- Koca, Turgut and Onaran, Zeki 1998. *Gül Deste*. Bektaşî Kültür Derneği Yayınları. Ankara: Bektaşî Kültür Derneği.
- Malov, S. E. 1918. *Shamanstvo u sartov Vostochnogo Turkestana, (k poiasneniiu kolleksii Muzeia Antropologija i Étnografii po vostochnogo-turkestanskomu shamanstvu)*. Sbornik Muzeia Antropologii i Étnografii, V/1. St. Peterburg. 1–16.
- McAllester, D. P. 1949. *Peyote Music. Publications in Anthropology*. New York: Viking Fund.
- . 1973. *Enemy Way Music*. Kraus Reprint Co., Millwood, New York, N. Y.: Kraus Reprint Co.
- Merriam, A. P. 1964. *The Anthropology of Music*. Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press.
- Mongoliya Kazaktarinëng Khalik Änderi*. 1983. Bayanölgii.
- Nettl, B. 1972. *Music in Primitive Culture*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press (3rd edition).
- . 1983. *The Study of Ethnomusicology*. Chicago, London: University of Illinois Press.
- Powers, W. K. 1990. *War Dance, Plains Indians Musical Performance*. Tucson and London: University of Arizona Press.
- Potapov, L. P. 1991. *Altaiskï shamanizm*. S. Peterburg: Nauka.
- Sipos, János 2001. *Kazakh Folksongs from the Two Ends of the Steppe* (with a CD). Budapest: Academia Publishing House.
- . 2004. *Azeri Folksongs – At the Fountainhead of Music* (with a CD). Budapest: Academia Publishing House.
- Somfai Kara, Dávid 2001. “Collecting among the Kazaks of Bayan-Ölgii in Mongolia.” In János Sipos (ed.) *Kazak Folk Songs from two Ends of the Steppe*. Budapest: Akadémia Kiadó.
- Somfai Kara, Dávid and József Torma 2005. “The Last Kazakh Baksî to Play the Kobîz.” *Shaman. Journal of the International Society for Shamanistic Research* 13(1–2), 181–187.
- Zataevich, A. V. 1925. *1000 pesen kirgizskogo naroda*. Orenburg and Alma-Ata: Kirgizskoe gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo.
- . 1931. *500 kazakhskih pesen i kiui'ev*. Alma-Ata: Narkompros Kazakhskoi ASSR.
- . 1935. O kazakhskoïmuzyke. *LiteraturnyiKazakhstan*.
- . 1963. *1000 pesen kazakhskogo naroda*.<sup>2</sup> Moskva: Gosudarstvennoe muzykal'noe izdatel'stvo.
- . 1971. *Pesni raznykh narodov*. Alma-Ata: Zhasushy.
- Zhanuzakov, A. 1964. *Kazakhskaiia narodnaia instrumental'naia muzyka*. Alma-Ata.

LÁSZLÓ KUNKOVÁCS is a photographer, visual anthropologist and journalist. His main interests are in ethnography and cultural history, and he has done fieldwork in Hungary, the Balkans, the Ukraine, the Volga region, the Ural Mountains, Central Asia, Siberia, Mongolia and Tibet. The themes of his books cover Hungarian folk architecture, fishing and the stone idols of Eurasia. Thematic exhibitions of his photographic work have been held in 15 countries from Estonia to China.

JÁNOS SIPOS (*sipos@zti.hu*) is senior researcher at the Institute for Musicology, Hungarian Academy of Sciences. He conducts fieldwork among Turkic peoples (Turkish, Azeri, Kazakh, Kirghiz, Karachay-Balkar), and has published eight books on Turkic folk music. His main field of interest is comparative analysis of folk music of various Turkic and Mongolian peoples. He has recently published his monograph on Azeri folk music. His main publications include *In the Wake of Bartók in Anatolia*; *Kazakh Folksongs From the Two Ends of the Steppe* and *Azeri Folksongs – At the Fountain-Head of Music*.

DÁVID SOMFAI KARA (*somfai-kara@freemail.hu*) is a Turkologist and Mongol-ist. He graduated from the Department of Inner Asian Studies, Roland Eötvös University, Budapest, and he currently works at the Institute of Ethnology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. In 1993–94 he spent a year in Kazakhstan studying the Kazakh and Kirghiz languages. Between 1994 and 2004 he did fieldwork in Kazakhstan, Kirghizstan, Uzbekistan, Mongolia, Siberia and Western China. He collected oral literature (folksongs and epics) and data on Inner Asian Shamanism among Kazakhs, Kirghiz, Tuvas, Tofas, Altay Turks, Abakan Tatars (Khakas), Sakhas (Yakuts) and Sart-Kalmaks.