

BRIEF SUMMARY

Recording and processing epic traditions associated with the outstanding figures of the past has a history of nearly two centuries in ethnography, though it has not been explored in the past few decades as opposed to other genres of legends. Hardly any records, and no analysis at all, has been made available about the cycle known throughout Europe which has its roots through various motives related to the history of the Order of Knights Templar (called ‘*vörös barát*’ [red monks] in the Hungarian language area and *Rote Pfaffe* in the German language area). This saga may have been one of the most prevalent one in our country towards the end of the nineteenth century as evidenced by records of oral tradition, archaeological and archival documents as well as historical sources.

This work intends to contribute to the collection and processing of historical legends in the past years. Exploring the legend of the Templars is considered a white spot within this genre despite the fact that certain variations of the saga has been recorded since the early nineteenth century. The thesis will prove, by processing and analysis of this cycle, that the legend is prevalent throughout Europe, absorbing a number of local and migrant motives in particular regions.

In the course of my work I have primarily attempted to find relationship between Templar legends and historic reality, explore the reasons they are assessed in an ambivalent manner in past and present tradition, the European areas where such legends were the most popular, and motives that are generally known (migrant motives) and locally known (ethnic specifics).

I have categorised legends into a group associated to red monks the main characters of which are related to red monks or templars, or in which abduction (of women) occurs and it is associated with monks, monk-priests, priests, witch-priests and knights, croises, commendatories or other orders in general.

As the most fragmented cycle in Europe is related to the Knights of Templar within the tradition of legend associated with historic heroes, the small number of typical *sujets* can be reconstructed from sets of fragments collected from the world's 25 states with regard to present borders, which, by concatenating in various manner, create a type group or cycle of legends.

Collecting and systematising oral and written (manuscript and printed) variants of the templar legend has been a research work of many years. The raw material for the thesis include the results of my field research in northern Trans-Danubia between 1988 and 2001, records of the Johannes Kunzig-Institut für Ostdeutsche Volkskunde (Freiburg im Breisgau), the Database for Ethnology of the Museum of Ethnography, the Hungarian Historic Archive of Legends, relevant materials of ethnographic databases of several county museums, monographs published in the 18th-19th centuries in various counties, descriptions in folk poetry, trashy novels, literary works which refer to red monks, educational films and relevant information from the Internet.

The *structure* of the thesis is divided into two parts the content of which are in close relationship. The first (*descriptive*) part describes the regions of Europe where versions of the templar legend are penetrated, while the second (*structural-analytic*) part presents the spread of the motives of the legend. As I deal with a historic legend, I began my thesis with the brief presentation of the history of the Order of the Knights Templar to support understanding the analytical part and comparing to traditional materials. In the concluding part, this work summarises aspects of space and time manifested in type groups, the variation of characters, and certain issues of traditional penetration, in addition to issues of the genre and systemisation, primarily based on versions in proprietary collection but with regard to experiences of information and analysis of the entire material.

The thesis, with the unity of the descriptive and structural-analytic parts, presents relationships of the local motives of the cycle of legend by settlement and geographic penetration of motive groups, highlighting local and regional aspects. I have taken *motive* (as the internationally most recognised category) as the smallest content elements of legends when processing and systematising texts, breaking down each and every narrative to the smallest detail.

The descriptive part presents the geographically diverse material by country and region, and settlement within them. In the structural-analytic part, when mentioning the settlement, I have indicated the region where I connected the particular settlement. As legends come from a large geographical area, settlements are identified in each chapter by way of *map attachments*. Geographical penetration of each motive including migrant motives is shown by maps attached to the analytical part.

I have succeeded to demonstrate general features of legends in the cycle by processing and analysing the legend of templar, in addition to a number of characteristics unexplored in folkloristic research so far. They include:

I. Judgement of the templars is ambivalent in folk traditions

The thesis deals with groups of motives related to the negative, positive and indifferent deeds of the Knights Templar in separate chapters. These parts demonstrate that the ambivalent judgement of the templars in folk traditions is characteristic throughout Europe.

II. The legend of templars is a typical migrant legend built from local motives

Features of migrant legends are also characteristic to the legend of templars in that the three typical *sujets* (types) of stories related to the templars can be reconstructed from the entirety of migrant motives.

III. The legend of templars combines characteristics of several subgenres of the legend

It is a further feature of the legends of templars that they can be classified as historic legends because of the same main character and their function as the story tellers accept these legends and historic facts. In fact, the legends are historic legends changing into stories of credence in most cases.

IV. The legend of templars is a cycle of legends concatenating components of three types

Three types can be separated from the European varieties of the legend of templars. One of them is based on historic events (Heroic castle defenders), while the two others refer to the survivorship of the charges of the process (Robber of women and Robber barons).

V. The three characteristic types is manifested as ethnic specifics in certain European regions

The type of Heroic castle defenders is a German ethnic specifics, while the type of Robber barons shows a mixture, with versions in Western Europe and the Carpathian Basin. The type of Robber of Women is rather characteristic in the Carpathian Basin, with a single Belgian exception, it is a Hungarian specifics.

VI. Features of the legend manifested in spatial and time aspects are also characteristic to the legend of templars

Specification of places refer to localisation in the majority of cases, while specification of time relate to ages known from history. The ancient practice of connecting has attached the original versions to new locations, new heroes and eventually new events in these legends, just like in the case of other types.

VII. The process of standardisation can also be tracked in the varieties of legend of templars

Historic legends usually describe positive heroes who represent the ideal for a particular people. Our legends constitute an exception from this point of view as ethics and the story are dominant in this case: the main character conducting a life deviant from the norms fail at the end.

The relations outlined demonstrate well that the legend of templars carry the general features of legends, in addition to numerous new components and characteristics. By exploring them, the thesis serves with several useful bits of information unexplored so far. Finally, this work demonstrates that an interlaced texture of these legends, in its diversity and penetration, is a common intellectual heritage of European ethnic groups.