

INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS IN THE MORDOVIAN FOLKLORE

**Elena A. Sharonova¹, Alexandr M. Sharonov², Tatiana N. Belyaeva³,
Olga I. Naldeeva⁴, Olga I. Biryukova⁵, Elena A. Zhindeeva⁶
and Irina V. Trubyanova^{7*}**

¹ Prof., N. P. Ogarev Mordovia State University, Russia, sharon.ov@mail.ru

² Prof., State Public Institution of the Republic of Mordovia «Scientific Center of Social and Economic Monitoring», Russia, direktor-rri@mail.ru

³ Asst. Prof., Mari State University, Russia, sokolova_beljaeva@mail.ru

⁴ Prof., M. E. Evseyev Mordovian State Pedagogical Institute, Russia, naldeeva_oi@mail.ru

⁵ Prof., M. E. Evseyev Mordovian State Pedagogical Institute, Russia, philological@mordgpi.ru

⁶ Prof., M. E. Evseyev Mordovian State Pedagogical Institute, Russia, elenazhindeeva@mail.ru

⁷ Asst. Prof., Mari State University, Russia, opleva@mail.ru

*Corresponding author

Abstract

Mordovian (Erzya and Moksha) epic poetry is analyzed in this article. It is devoted to a theme of inter-ethnic relations. It explores the particular qualities and dynamics of national consciousness of Russian-Mordovian contacts. On the basis of a comparison with Russian folklore texts, the specific of the image of the Russian Tsar is shown in the Tushtyan epic and in the plots about the capture of Kazan.

In the songs about Tushtyan which have arisen approximately in the 10-11th centuries and covering all history of the Mordovian people, the Russian tsar is the main reason of destroy of the Erzya civilization. When Tushtyan has learned about approach of Russians, he has refused to fight against the Russian tsar and, being guided by the foresight of the Supreme pagan god, has taken away the nation beyond the sea to save from possible extermination.

The Tushtyan epic estimates the fact of joining the Mordovian lands to the Russian state negatively though in the Erzya folklore of the Volga region there are motives of voluntary submission of the people to the reign of the Russian tsar.

In the 16th century, during an era of active existing of epic forms of folklore and the formation of the genre of the historical song, the plots about capture of Kazan are actualized in collective art consciousness of the people. Historical events and persons become subject of the image.

The Russian Tsar Ivan the Terrible is the main character In the Russian epic songs about the capture of Kazan. He is perceived in whole as the positive, folk hero. Primary focus is on the national confrontation between the Russians and the Tatars. In the Erzya song «Samanka» the leading role belongs to the Erzya girl Samanke, who has ordinary appearance, but great intelligence; an extraordinary bravery. She criticizes the Russian tsar, doubts his military talent, declares determination to conquer Kazan in three hours.

Erzya's song places the emphasis on the moral side of the heroin's act. We observe in her not a national confrontation, but a duel of like-minded person (the Russian tsar and the Erzya). They are driven by one purpose. The birth of the community of the people becomes the result of a duel. In the song «Samanka» Erzya imagines itself as an integral part of the Russian state and for this reason renders the effective help to Ivan the Terrible in his battle to conquer Kazan.

In the article the attention is intended to the similarity of the basic motive of Russian and Erzya songs. It is the capture of Kazan due to the explosion of barrels with gunpowder. It is noted that it is a reflection of the

historical fact, which is known by both: the Russians and the Erzya.

The Russian epic song indicates to the some cruelty of Ivan the Terrible and creates adequate images of his opponents.

Following the logic of objective truth, the creators of the song represent defenders of Kazan as brave persons. They boldly enter into a dispute with the Russian tsar, laugh at him and his desire to take the city.

The community of historical fate of the Russian and Erzya, conditions of their life, which has formed in the 15-17th centuries, were expressed in the community of their song plots.

The same cares, the general holidays, mixed marriages generated not only interaction of cultures, but also contributed to the birth of a new unique ethnic culture.

Keywords: Folkloristics, the Mordovian folklore, the Russian folklore, epic poetry, Russian-Mordovian inter-ethnic relations, the Tushtyan epic, the plots about capture of Kazan.

1 INTRODUCTION

Inter-ethnic relations are a traditionally significant problem of the archaic epic, historical song and epic poem. Each inter-ethnic contact potentially has exert an impact on the development of the contacting peoples. Not by accident therefore that in the Russian and Mordovian (Erzya and Moksha) folklore there are such important events, which have brought influence to bear the changing mentality of peoples, transforming their political, social, spiritual and emotional existence: the Tatar-Mongol invasion and its consequences, the conquest of Kazan, baptism, peasant war under the Yemelyan Pugachev's leadership, the reign of Paul I and others.

The folklore genres, that have a clear formal attitude, selectively refer to the facts and stop their attention only on those, whom can be given an unambiguous assessment. However, any phenomenon in course of time begins to be perceived differently than at the moment of actualization. It belongs also to the Russian-Mordovian international contacts. Folklore texts have reflected the stages of their development, their change in time.

The purpose of this study is to trace the features and dynamics of the national perception of the Russian-Mordovian relations on the basis of the Mordovian (Erzya and Moksha) folk epic poetry and, in comparison with the Russian folklore, to reveal the specifics of the image of the Russian Tsar in the Tushtyan epic and in the stories about the conquest of Kazan.

2 OPINIONS AND DISCUSSION

To trace the logic of the development of the Russian-Mordovian relations, first of all it is necessary to address the so-called Tushtyan epic. He has arisen approximately in the 10-11th centuries and includes seven plots. In the context of the problem, that is designated by us, such parts of the epic as: «Tyshtyan and the Mordovian history», «Tushtyan and the Baby, who was born miraculously», «Tushtyan and the son of the 70-year-old widow», are interesting.

Songs about Tushtyan have the common feature: they try to cover all Erzyan and Mokshan history. They narrated about the creation by Ineshkipaz of the world and the man, about the emergence of the Erzya and Moksha, about the election of the inyazor (leader) Tushtyan, about his reign and about leaving across the sea with the people because of the Russian Tsar's pressure.

In the songs about the inyazor Tushtyan the Russian Tsar is the main reason of crash of the Erzya civilization. Find out about the approach of the Russians, Tushtyan takes away the people beyond the seas to save them from. His flight apparently seems to contradict the logic of his image, because he is endowed by his gods with mighty power and incredible abilities, which is allow to cope him with any opponent. Why does the Erzyan leader give his land without any battlefield engagement?

The answer to this question is given in the A.M. Sharonov's research «Mordvinian heroic epic: plots and heroes» (Sharonov, 2001). Tushtyan makes the decision to leave, being guided by a sign (presage) sent by Ineshkipaz (the supreme deity): the birch grows on the Erzya's land, what is signified the Russian tsar's early offensive. And the inyazor has to either obey him, or go to a new land. Tushtyan prefers the second. He commensurates all the acts with the will of heaven and behaves not as an ordinary person, but as the God's

messenger who does what is prescribed to him by the gods. There is the logic of common sense in the inyazor's decision does not enter to the fight against the Russian tsar. Such a plot version is due to the fact, that the songwriters were guided not only by epic, but also by concrete historical thinking, taking into account real facts. And they testified about the following: the Erzya and Moksha people do not defend their national and territorial independence in the fight against the Russian state.

We will notice that in the Erzya and Moksha folklore there are no works directed against the Russians. The creators of epic songs understood that appearance of the Russians bears the national tragedy for the Erzya and Moksha, but this is the fault of time, rather than the specific people. Besides, the important reason of absence in the Erzya and Moksha folklore of the anti-Russian motives is the initial integration of the Erzya world with the Russian one, what is also evidenced by annalistic Purgasova Russia.

The flawless image of Tushtyan, which is formed in the songs about him, disappears in the text «Tushtyan and the Baby, who was born miraculously», where he acts as the murderer of his potential opponent, who was born on the bank of Sura «with iron heels and a stone top» and associated with the Russian tsar. In our opinion, it is hardly possible to define this act of Tushtyan as a cruel murder of an innocent child. A miraculous infant is not an ordinary defenseless child, he is perceived as the envoy of the heavenly forces hostile to the Erzya. Therefore the punishment which is carried out over him by Tushtyan is not the killing of the child, but the destruction of the enemy and the rival, what doesn't allow to speak about decrease of the inyazor's image and about his vulgarization. Emergence of new details in Tyushtyan's image is connected with change of a situation around him, with the designation of new opponents, with the destruction of the ideal old world. Generally the baby, who was born miraculously and replaces the Russian tsar in this text, is the new phenomenon in songs about Tushtyan. It shows that the mythological tradition hasn't yet sputtered out yet and began to be used to reproduce the socio-political and worldview situation, adapting to new circumstances in other forms. Previously, the governors of the people were born from the marriage of gods with terrestrial women, now they are born by the immaculate conception. The motive of the immaculate conception is originated in the folklore of the Erzya and Moksha, most likely, under the influence of Christianity, and it should be considered rather late phenomenon. This fact also indicates the rapprochement of the Russian and the Erzyan worlds, in spite of the fact, that Christianization was implanted by the church and the state and was the most desperately rejected by the pagans. However, we see that time has once again healed all wounds and has reconciled, it would seem, irreconcilable concepts, having entered both peoples in one cultural space.

The Tushtyan epic, which is written down at Zawolzhian the Erzya and Moksha estimates the fact that their lands are annexed to the Russian state negatively. In particular, it is stated in the «On the Mountains that was on Dyatlovs» song, where the moment of the casual entry of the Erzya into structure of the Muscovy, which has occurred as a result of thoughtless actions of «young people». At the same time, it is noted that the Erzya loses his independence during the solemn prayer to Ineshkipaz, that involuntarily this event of a historical scale connects with the name and craft of the main pagan deity of the people. He seems to bless with his presence a reunion with Russia. The new stage of the Russian-Erzya relations is covered in the «On the Mountains that was on Dyatlovs» song. At the same time epic consciousness, contrary to historical experience of the people and its practical consciousness, «tries to correct breaks of real life, wishing to consecrate the most difficult relations between the Erzya, Moksha and Russia by a charm of poetic imagination and an esthetics of a folklore humanistic thought. The theme of the world order, which forms the basis of the heroic epic, is revealed in this song, taking into account new circumstances in the life of people through its affiliation into the structure of the Russian state» (Sharonov, 2001).

16 century is the time of active existence of epic forms of folklore, the period of formation of the genre of historical song, the image object in which are historical events and persons. Both in Russian, and in the Erzya and Moksha folklore, the first works of the new genre were songs about the capture of Kazan. They were similar in content, but significantly differed by poetic form, because the form is always original and national pertinently.

In the Russian song on the plot about the capture of Kazan, the main character is a Tsar Ivan the Terrible. He makes a sap under the river Kazanka, in order to take unbowed Kazan with the help of the explosion. Ivan the Terrible doesn't change, he is static, energetic, quarrelsome, suspicious, cruel to enemies, just and generous to friends. The emotional portrait of the Russian Tsar, that is imprinted in folklore, accurately reflects the historical image, which is recorded in the documents.

Ivan the Terrible for all his ambiguity is represented as an unconditional positive character. Having assigned to himself a mission of the liberator of Russia from the centuries-old Mongol yoke and conqueror of Kazan, that was emblematic of the stronghold of enemy force, in folklore consciousness he has received the

indulgence on the actions. The fact that this event had the all-Russian scale and influenced life of all Russians, regardless of their social and national status, played the important role. Therefore, the Terrible is perceived as a national hero, surrounded by a halo of perfection. We will notice that in the Russian texts the main attention is paid to national opposition between Russians and Tatars, only accents change from variant to variant.

We see other priorities in the Erzya's «Samanka» song with a similar plot (capture of Kazan). The leading role in it belongs to the Erzya girl Samanka who has an ordinary appearance, but extraordinary mind, extreme bravery. She is from wealthy family. She criticizes the Russian tsar, doubts his military talent, declares about the determination in three hours to conquer Kazan, which has constrained a Russian's siege for seven years yet.

Erzya's song focuses on the moral side of the heroine's action. We don't notice national confrontation in it, but a duel of like-minded people (the Russian tsar and the Erzya girl), driven by a single desire, in the end of which there are no defeated ones, and the result is the birth of a community of people. In most Russian songs, the idea of undermining belongs to the tsar, in the Erzya song to a peasant girl. Introduction of a person from the social lower classes to the number of protagonists in the Erzya song means not only the idealization of the strength of the people, as it was in Russian folklore. It also has a social, political, class meaning: true defenders of the homeland are unremarkable people (nation).

It can be assumed that Russian epics and fairy tales could influence the Erzya song. They could arise such motives as girls' braggings (on gatherings), the appeal to the heroine as to the epic hero, the threat of the tsar to execute the heroine, if she does not fulfill his will, the intriguing plot («tsar's dragoons» somehow appear in Erzya village and eavesdrop Samanka's bragging), the tsar's attempt to thank the girl and the girl's refusal of the award, etc. Folklore community testifies to the openness of the folk culture, its integration with the cultures of other peoples, its ability to remain original, enriched by borrowed motives and plots.

In the song «Samanka» the Erzya people think of themselves as an integral part of the Russian state and that is why they provide effective assistance to Grozny in his struggle for the capture of Kazan. In «Samanka» the main merit in the capture of the city belongs to the Erzya heroine. It means that Erzya people highly appreciate their contribution to the Kazan victory. The high mark led to activation of national and patriotic feelings of Erzya. Samanka alone represents Erzya people, nevertheless she is a real-historical heroine, since her image and actions are concrete, historically true. The subject of the historical song, as well as the subject of the classical epic, is concluded in the events of the country's political history, which are portrayed not empirically, but from the point of view of the people's attitude towards them.

In Russian songs the action on the plot «Capture of Kazan» develops as follows: Tsar Ivan the Terrible makes a dig under the river Kazanka, fills it with barrels of gunpowder, puts lighted candles on barrels. At this time, the citizens of Kazan laugh at him, they say that he would never capture the city. The tsar is angry, suspects treason among his people and threatens to execute all. There is a daredevil, who undertakes to explain to Grozny that the candles burn more slowly in the cave than on the ground, and at that moment an explosion occurs. Kazan gives up. Ivan the IV, cruel, but just, generously rewards his assistants and gunmen. Thus, Ivan the Terrible is a contradictory (both bad and good) person, which goes against the traditional straightforwardness of popular perception. But, in general, the Russian Tsar is represented as an absolutely positive character.

Besides Ivan the Terrible, the songs on the plot «Capture of Kazan» are represented by gunmen helping the tsar to carry out his plan with the digging and blasting of the fortress walls. The gunmen are real artisans who are well skilled in their craft, but dependent on the will of Ivan the Terrible and defenseless before his anger. However, there is a brave gunner, who explains to the king why there is no explosion, and thereby saves his life and the lives of his comrades. For his self-sacrificing act, he is generously rewarded by the tsar, who cheered up with military success. In the song «He walks in the city of the Tartar women...» Ivan the Terrible gives:

... Fifty rubles to all gunmen,

Five hundred rubles to one gunner;

He gets five hundreds for

He has approached the tsar closely,

He has spoken to him (Historical Songs of the XIII-XVI centuries, 1960).

In the song «There Was an Orthodox tsar ...» a gunner, like Samanka in the Erzya song (Oral-poetic oeuvre

of the Mordovian people, 1977), for his act of bravery does not take the proposed award, he asks only to release him to his native countryside. The plot of one of the songs («We sing, brothers, a new song...»), recorded in the Kazan province, has a dramatic development: the brave man is sent by the tsar to the block, «the king took off his head» (Historical Songs of the XIII-XVI centuries, 1960). But even here there is no negative assessment of the actions of the tsar. Regretting about the man who died innocently, the folk song silently forgives this victim to Grozny, admits the possibility of an error in such difficult historical conditions and initially justifies it with extraordinary circumstances.

In the text recorded in 1923 in the Saratov Gubernia, the tsar's threats addressed to the gunners are even more cruel. The tsar became angry with his main masters and threatened to cut them all, put them in a pit, pour lime and sing «Eternal Memory» (Historical Songs of the XIII-XVI centuries, 1960).

Paradoxically, the Russian song creates images of the opponents of Ivan the Terrible adequate to circumstances. Following the logic of objective truth, the creators of the song draw defenders of Kazan as brave, boldly entering into a dispute with the Russian tsar, laughing at him and his desire to capture the city (Historical Songs of the XIII-XVI centuries, 1960). Citizens of Kazan behave defiantly, provoking the tsar to take a decisive action, leaving no hope for peaceful outcome of the situation. They are ready to perish, but to preserve dignity and unyielding will. These qualities are especially emphasized by the fact that the role of «provocateurs» walking through the city walls is most often played by young women. The proud Tatars are accepted as the culprits in the destruction of the city.

In the plot of the «Capture of Kazan» the actions of the heroes of the songs are directly related to the place of their living. The texts discussed above are recorded in the Russian territories lying around the Kazan khanate. In the song «Oh, you, my guests, guests who love ...», recorded in 1956 in Tatarstan, there are no «young Tatar women», who mock the Russian tsar, Kazan is called «mother». In other songs after the tunnel, which blew up the city wall, the Tatar khan is not full of anger and wrath, but embodies absolute humility (Historical Songs of the XIII-XVI centuries, 1960). He reproaches the Russian tsar for violating good relations, in unjustified cruelty to his partials. In this song, the perception of what is happening becomes more subjective, since not destroyed walls and houses are described, but tattered human bodies, mutilated human lives. Here the Kazan people are an innocent victim of the white tsar, they demonstrate goodwill and readiness for friendship, which the Russians reject. In the first group of songs, the action has an impersonal character, as it develops according to a certain scheme, which nobody wants to change. In the second group of songs, the habitual order is violated by the direct speech of the khan who tries to change the course of events by influencing the memory of the Russian tsar. Both in the first and in the second group of songs the main attention is drawn to the opposition of the Russians and Tatars, only accents change.

The song «Samanka», like the song «About the capture of Kazan», is based on the motive of conquering the fortress city through the explosion of barrels with gunpowder under its fortifications. Erzya's song is similar to Russian song because of ideological content and genre features: a similar image of the figure of Grozny, the approval and active support of his policy, realism and concreteness in describing events and characters, the fidelity to history, the emergence of the problem of «the tsar and the people», the desire to comprehend the actions of heroes from the social and political point of view. This similarity is so obvious that V. F. Miller (Miller, 1913) and A. V. Markov (Markov, 1914), considering the Erzya song, came to the conclusion that it arose under the influence of a Russian song of the 18th century. Analysis of the plot, composition, content and images of the Erzya song convinces that it is an original work, and the time of its appearance is the 16th century. It expresses the popular view on the phenomena of the political life of a certain epoch. The similarity of the main motive of the Russian and Erzya songs is the capture of Kazan through the explosion of barrels of gunpowder, which could arise, besides borrowing, as a reflection of the historical fact known to both Russians and Erzyan. The originality of the artistic interpretation of the theme in works also speaks In favor of this assumption.

The community of historical destinies of the Russian and Erzya developed in the 16-17th centuries was expressed in the generality of the song plots, as the communication between people against the background of the same life conditions became closer. The same worries, common holidays, mixed marriages generated not only the interaction of cultures, but also contributed to the birth of a new unique interethnic culture. Alien earlier Russian now began to be perceived by the Erzya as a native. An understanding of the commonality of cultural values arose, the interpenetration of cultures at the everyday level occurred in the most natural way. The similarity of life situations predetermined counter currents in folklore too. A situation is created when the Erzya can listen to the Russian songs and fairy tales, and the Russian can do the same with the Erzyan compositions. In such circumstances the appearance of literary works, the similarity between which is caused by historical, typological, and cultural factors, became a norm. This process is reflected in the

Russian song «Mother-in-law captured by son-in-law» (Historical songs of the XIII-XVI centuries, 1960) and in the Erzya's «On the edge of the forest» (Oral-poetic oeuvre of the Mordovian people, 1977).

It is worthy of note that the Russian-Mordovian similarity is revealed in such ancient works as «The Tale of Bygone Years» and the song about Tyushti's election. The motivation for electing the tsar, cited in Erzya's songs, almost completely coincides with the motivation of calling the Varangian princes by the people of Novgorod. In Erzya's songs, the tsar is elected for the reason that people, not knowing the law and order, can not divide the forests, meadows and arable land, because of this, there are constant strife and wars between them. «The Tale of Bygone Years» says that among the citizens of Novgorod there was no truth, families rebelled against each other, intestine wars and armed clashes began between them. So, the people decided to find a prince who would rule on the principle of justice. By «Novgorod» of course the entire population of the principality was implied. «Considering the circumstance that the Finnish tribes (chud, ved, etc.) participated in the calling of the Varangian princes, it is possible to make an assumption about the influence of the Erzya heroic epic on the "Tale of Bygone Years". There is no motive of calling the ruler, the tsar in the Russian epic. In the era of calling the Varangians, the population of the Novgorod land was predominantly Finnish, and most likely was dominated by the customs, traditions and world outlook of this population, including Merya, Erzya, Murom, Moksha, Meschera, who spoke one or closely related languages and had a single or single-epic heroic epic» (Sharonov, 2002). The given material proves the original community of the Russian and Erzya worlds.

3 CONCLUSION

The phenomena of social life had a noticeable effect on the folk poetry of the Russians and Erzya, but they did not depersonalize, but enriched the works of the Erzya and Russian folklore, filled with new content, ideas, heroes, a fundamentally different ideology and world outlook. Reflecting certain historical events and personalities, the people give the works their assessment, expresses their understanding of their meaning, express their vision of the ways of their development. Each event presented in the song is interpreted from the point of view of its national, social and political perception, as well as the geographical position of the people, the creators of the folklore text. In the Russian and Erzya songs we see a conceptually similar image of historical events and personalities, which indicates the lack of polarity in the perception of the world by the Russians and Erzya, and they, in fact, appear as parts of a single ethnos.

REFERENCES LIST

- Sharonov, A. M. (2001). Mordovian heroic epic: Plots and heroes. Saransk.
- Historical Songs of the 13-15th centuries (1960). Moscow-Leningrad.
- Oral-poetic oeuvre of the Mordovian people (1977). In 8 volumes. Vol. 1. Book. 2: Historical songs of the 16-18th centuries. Saransk.
- Fedoseyeva, E. A. Book forms of the Mordovian heroic epic: the emergence and evolution (2007). Saransk, 212 p.
- Oral-poetic oeuvre of the Mordovian people (1963). In 8 volumes. Vol. 1: Epic and lyric-epic songs. Saransk.
- Miller, V. F. (1913). Russian and foreign legends about the Kazan campaign of Ivan the Terrible / Ethnographic Review. 1913. No 1-2.
- Markov, A. V. (1914). Relations between the Russians and the Mordovians in the history and in the field of folk poetry in connection with the question of the origin of the Great Russian tribe. Tiflis.
- Sharonov, A. M. (2002). Election of tsar Tyushtan / Ryabovs: proetcontra. Saransk.
- Sharonova, E. A., Osmukhina, O. Y., Gudkova, S. P., Dubrovskaya, S. A., Kazeeva, E. A., Hamlet, T. Y. (2016). The mythological plots of the creation of the world and human beings in the erzyan epic, Mastorava / Revista de letras. Vol. 56. No 1. pp. 83-102.