

THE STUDY OF SONG FOLKLORE

The traditional culture of the Eastern diaspora has repeatedly attracted the attention of foreign and domestic researchers. To a greater extent, travel scientists, ethnographers, linguists and folklorists were engaged in collecting information in the territory of the Eastern Udmurts, for example Peter Haidu, Uno Holmberg, Iogann Gotlib Georgi, Maximilian Bukh, Peter Simon Pallas, Ivan Smirnov, Nikita Popov, Nikolai Tezyakov, Ivan Yakovlev, Vladimir Vladyykin, Mikhail Atamanov, Tatiana Vladyykina, Valey Kelmakov, Rif Nasibullin, Ivan Tarakanov, Galina Nikitina, Irina Kosareva, Aleksandr Chernykh, Tatiana Minniyakhmetova, Ranus Sadikov, Galina Shushakova, Eva Toulouz, Nikolai Anisimov, etc. However, the song tradition has not been the object of such close attention, with the exception of individual articles (Minniakhmetova, 1989; Vikár, Bereczki, 1989; Nurieva, 2002; Nurieva, 2013; Smirnova, Bochkareva, 2020; Pchelovodova, Anisimov, 2020; Pchelovodova, Anisimov, 2022) and graduation papers (Kamaltdinova, 2007; Bochkareva, 2020).

All researchers agree that the Eastern Udmurts are ardent adherents of “pre-Christian forms of religious belief” (Nikitina, 2016, p. 42), which today are commonly referred to using the concept of traditional or ethnic religion (Sadikov, 2019, pp. 40–41). It is this aspect of the traditional way of life that still represents the most valuable source of the uniqueness of this diaspora.

Ethnographic sources and folklore works from the late 18th to the early 21st centuries provide only fragmentary information about the song genres associated with the rituals of the Udmurt people of the Eastern region (Pallas, 1788; Georgi, 1799; Bukh, 1882; Smirnov, 1890; Travels to Udmurt and Mari regions, 2014; Vladyykin, 1994, 1997; Minniyakhmetova, 2000, 2003, 2022; Shushakova, 2005; and Sadikov, 2019). Among these sources, we would like to draw attention to the published works of Udmurt scholars Tatiana Minniyakhmetova and Ranus Sadikov. In their studies, they refer to the texts and contexts of songs that are associated with rituals among the Udmurts (Hristolyubova, Minniyakhmetova, Timirzyanova, 1989; Minniyakhmetova, 1989, 2000, 2001, 2003; Minniyakhmetova, Sadikov, 2005; Sadikov, 2001, 2006, 2008, 2019). It should be noted that these scholars are representatives of the Udmurt community from the Eastern area, specifically the Buraevo district in the Republic of Bashkortostan.

The works of the Permian ethnographer Aleksandr Chernykh, who studied the traditional culture of the Kueda and Buy Udmurts (Chernykh, 1995, 2002, 2008a, 2008b) deserve special attention. In his works, the researcher provides a detailed description of the history of the region and the ritual culture of the Udmurt people, as well as the features of their religious and mythological beliefs. However, Chernykh’s work does not focus on the song tradition, and this gap has been partly filled by the release of a music CD with samples of songs by the Kueda Udmurts. The CD, which is based on materials collected during fieldwork in 2007–2008, was released as part of the Golden Fund of the Perm Region series (Anthology...: electronic resource)³.

The traditional culture and contemporary life of the Eastern Udmurts are explored in the third edition of the *Authentic Geography* academic almanac (edited by Svetlana Maltseva and authored by Aleksandr Yuminov). This publication is accompanied by two audio CDs featuring expedition recordings from the archive at the Russian Academy of Sciences’ Udmurt Institute of History, Language and Literature (Authentic Geography, 2011).

The beginning of ethnomusicological research into this tradition can be traced back to the work of Hungarian ethnomusicologists László Vikár and Gábor Bereczki. In 1989, they published a collection of Udmurt folk songs as part of a larger study on the song traditions of the people living in the Volga-Kama region, which included Mari, Chuvash, Udmurt, and Tatar (Vikár, Bereczki, 1989). Regarding Eastern Udmurt songs, these researchers noted a significant influence from Turkic music, with songs based on major pentatonic scales and using ornamental techniques (Vikár, Bereczki, 1989). Regarding the structure of the poetic texts, the researchers noted that half of the songs followed the quatrain form, while the other half were based on the tercet. According to the authors, the latter was not characteristic of Tatar tradition, but rather Anatri culture, a subgroup of Chuvash identified by Vikár and Bereczki.

Ethnomusicologist Irina Nurieva analysed the melodies recorded by Hungarian researchers in the territory of Eastern Udmurtia in the 1970s (Yanaul, Tatyshly and Ilishevo districts in the Republic of Bashkortostan). She noted the widespread presence of genres related to the calendar, particularly those performed during Easter, Shrovetide and water festivals⁴, as well as labour songs (for example tunes for washing yarn). The preservation of these genres in modern fieldwork is a rare and fortunate occurrence, as Nurieva points out in her research (Nurieva, 2013, p. 153).

Based on the songs collected by László Vikár and Gábor Bereczki and field materials from the late 1980s and early 2000s, Irina Nurieva identified two stylistic layers: archaic

³ According to the folk songs of the Kueda Udmurts, a separate music collection is planned to be created under the guidance of Aleksandr Chernykh.

⁴ The authors László Vikár and Gábor Bereczki in their book refer to the tune from the village Votskaya Oshya, Yanaul district, as the tune of the water send-off *vu kelian* (Vikár, Bereczki, 1989, p. 243). However, both in text and melody, this tune is close to the Great Day rite tunes, in particular, to the tunes from Konigovo village and Shudek village, Yanaul district (Nos. 151–152, 168–170).

and recent. If the latter is a consequence of the influence of Tatar musical composition, as evidenced by the use of the pentatonic scale with two supports (a main and a secondary), similar to Tatar songs, and the borrowing of melodies from those songs in the genres of guest and recruiting songs, then the former – the archaic stylistic layer – differs in its narrow range of melodic contours and, in some cases, the single-line structure of the melodic phrase, including calendrical and wedding tunes (Nurieva, 2013, pp. 153–156).

According to Irina Nurieva (2013), calendar songs deserve particular attention due to their distinct musical dialectical characteristics (Nurieva, 2013, p. 156). The Udmurt linguist Rif Nasibullin left behind instructions for song samples taken from the Great Day ritual in the village of Votka, Yanaul District. According to Nurieva's research from 2013 male and female performers recorded these songs in 1970. However, our expedition in 2023 did not confirm this finding, possibly due to the decline in performance of these songs and the overall decline of the *bydjynnal* ritual. Additionally, some isolated examples raise questions that require further investigation and analysis.

Significant additions to the research on the song tradition of the Eastern Udmurts have been made through the graduate works of students of higher education institutions. Alfira Kamaltdinova, in her study Pre-composed and Sung Intonations in the Musical Folklore of the Eastern Udmurts: Field Recording Techniques (under the supervision of Irina Nurieva), identifies two types of intonation and offers two options – graphical, and musical notation – for notating them (Kamaltdinova, 2007). The first type, pre-composed intonation, is represented by *kuriskon*, prayers⁵; the second is explored through the example of guest songs (nine songs) from Vyazovka village in Tatyshly district in the Republic of Bashkortostan. The author's remark on the concept of the *monly*⁶ *kyrjas* is noteworthy. He describes this role as that of a skilled singer who not only performs as a vocalist, leader, and connoisseur of tradition, but is also someone who possesses the ability to execute the most intricate melodic embellishments (Nurieva, 2013, p. 151). This allows them to create a unique sound for each musical piece. This phenomenon, according to Irina Nurieva, was adopted by local Udmurts from Tatar culture. Maria Bochkareva's graduation work, which was defended at the Nazib Gajazovich Zhiganov Kazan State Conservatory under the supervision of Elena Smirnova, formed the basis for the article "The Song Tradition of the Eastern Udmurts: Based on the Results of Field Expeditions 2017–2018" (Smirnova, Bochkareva, 2020). Maria Bochkareva collected expedition materials for her research in Udmurt villages in Tatyshly and Yanaul districts of the Republic of Bashkortostan, both independently and in collaboration with teachers and students from the Conservatory as well as participants in the aforementioned French project (IUF). The article analyses the calendrical and family ritual tunes (wedding, recruitment, funeral and memorial) of the Udmurt people from Tatyshly and Yanaul districts in terms of their melodic and rhythmic characteristics, as well as comparatively with the traditions of the Zavvat Udmurts living in Tatarstan (Nurieva, 1999).

Therefore, musicologist Irina Nurieva differentiates between two stylistic strata, each with its own genre: the archaic, which includes calendar and wedding music; and the late, which encompasses recruiting, guest, funeral, and memorial tunes. The former retains characteristics of the Finno-Ugric tradition, while the latter has been heavily influenced by the Turkic musical culture, both musically and in terms of performance.

⁵ An important component of the rituals is the recitation of prayers by priests selected by the community. One distinctive feature of these prayers is the melodic recitation, which involves pronouncing the text with a certain rhythm. This phenomenon was first noted and analysed by Margarita Khrushcheva in her monograph on Udmurt ritual songs in the musical folklore of the Eastern Udmurts (Khrushcheva, 2001, pp. 26–37).

Khrushcheva notes the combination of a poetic, rhythmic form and a 'musicalised' form in the prayers recited by the priests of the Eastern tradition. In these prayers, rhythm and meter play a significant role, while pitch and intonation reflect the natural intonations of the Udmurt language and contribute to the expressiveness of the speech.

Within the framework of the French grant (IUF) Interdisciplinary Study of an Animistic Minority of Russia: The Rituals, Customs and Consolidation of the Eastern Udmurt Community Today (headed by Eva Toulouze) there is a plan to publish a collection of *kuriskon*, traditional prayers, including musical examples. The texts of these prayers can be found in the book *Kams'ör udmurt'eslen kuris'kon*''essy (2023).

⁶ From Tatar *monly* – adj 1. sad 2. melodious 3. sincere, lyrical (Tatar-Russian...: electronic resource).