

## FOLK HEROES IN THE POETRY OF THE PEOPLE OF THE VOLGA AND URAL REGIONS

Dr. Liailia I. Mingazova<sup>1</sup>, Prof. Foat G. Galimullin<sup>2</sup>, Dr. Alfiya F. Galimullina<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>Lecturer in The history of Tatar Literature and Methodology of Education Department,

<sup>3</sup>Lecturer in The history of Rus Literature and Methodology of Education Department  
Kazan Federal University, Tatarstan (RUSSIA)

Leila69@inbox.ru

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### ABSTRACT

The contemporary literatures of various peoples show growing interest in national traditions. The literature of the Volga and Ural regions is not an exception. The common historical destiny of the Tatars, Chuvash, Mordva, Bashkirs, Udmurts, and Mari finds its clear reflection in their folklore. The common themes and motifs in the folklore of the peoples of the Volga and Ural regions are evident in such genres as myths, legends, fairy tales and songs.

Harmonious images, fascinating stories are known to gradually move into national written literature as well. Among the issues discussed in the article are lyrical works introducing the images of heroes created by popular imagination. They are employed by the author primarily as a means of linking the past with the present. Not infrequently, the images of batyrs (brave men) reveal to the reader the popular philosophy, the way of life of ordinary people.

Large-scale events, such as history, nation, the fate of the earth find their literary and artistic representation through the folklore images as well. Introducing these heroes to the works in order to disclose the conflict between good and evil has its own specific features.

**Key words:** history, folklore, batyr, folk heroes, poetry, poets of the peoples of the Volga and Ural regions, analysis, idea, issue

It is well known that the beginning of the twentieth century in Russia was a turning point for the people of the Volga and Ural regions, particularly from the perspective of development and ethnic integration. Under the influence of the revolutionary upheavals of 1905-1907 in most of them begins the process of formation of the periodical press, literature and publishing.

In the beginning of the twentieth century Kazan, the capital of the Tatar people, as a socio-political and cultural center, had significant influence on the formation of the national intelligentsia and fiction of the Chuvash, the Mari and the Udmurts, which in turn, is an indisputable fact.

Acquainted with the history closely, you can be convinced that a strong friendship between the people of the Volga and Ural regions dates back to time immemorial. Undeniable fact that in the days of the ancient Bulgars the modern Tatars, the Chuvash, the Mari, the Mordovians, the Udmurts, the Bashkirs had a common theme of religious and mythological kind. Furthermore, long-term relationship, similar historical stages of development and natural conditions also affected the traditional rites, religious and everyday life of these peoples.

Common historical destiny clearly reflected in poetry of people – in folklore. Common themes can be traced in such kinds as myths, legends, fairy tales and songs of the people of the Volga and Ural regions. Often these similarities are found in the works that describes great social changes and historical events. It is well known that it is quite difficult to identify origin of the folk works from a particular nation and its further spread. On an example of the literary heritage of the people of the Volga and Ural regions, it may be noted that in the most of the folklore of these peoples, along with fairy tales, "Why so happened" ("Why spruce is evergreen", "Why the rabbit has short tail and cracked lip", etc.) are the following images and stories: "Girl on the Moon", "Shurale", "Waterman", "Kamyr-warrior". As a result, these works are identical and interchangeable from the standpoint of morality and plot-structure. Only individual historical features and details tell us about individuality and mentality of this or that nation.

Works of Tatar folklore anciently were inhabited by historical heroes, Alyp (giant), warriors (heroes): Idegei, Tanbatyr, Kamyrbatyr, Aiga-batyr, Meshek-alyp, Kadysh-Mergen, Zhik-Mergen, Kara Kukel etc. (of course, some of them are found in the folklore of other Turkic peoples). The protagonists of the poetry of the Chuvash people are Chusta-batyr, Uman-batyr, Almas-batyr, Adl, Ulp, Ivan and others. The Udmurt folklore praises Ash-Terek, the giant Alangasar, Toro, the Mordovian folklore praises Siyazhar, Perya-hero, Saban-hero. Nenchyk-patyr, Eppatyr,

the giants Chumblat, Mostyi, Chotkar, princes - Akpars, Yylanda, Chavai are popular in the Mari folklore. Bashkirs are known to reader by their heroes Alpamish, Ural-batyr, Sukem-batyr, Bayazit-batyr, Karanai.

It is known that beautiful images, fascinating stories that were born by people's fantasy gradually move to the national written literature. They are primarily used as a way to connect the past with the present. People's life philosophy, his life and being are often brought to a reader through these images. Folk images are also used for literary and art representation of such large phenomena like the history, the nation, the fate of the land. Using these heroes in the works to disclose the conflict between good and evil has its own features and makes the reader think.

At the same time people gathered in batyr's (warrior) personality their ideas and ideals about the perfect human body and spirit, and afterwards people and then also poets enveloped a hero in a fine art forms. He is the most powerful, the most beautiful, and the most reliable, he provides stability of the world and happiness of the people [1]. For example, Tatar scientist, educator and writer K. Nasyri already wrote in the 19th century: "The story of the Heroes is kept in the Bulgars in every village in the soul of the people. In every village know that if there is a small hill on the meadow, so there was Alyp and he shook sandals. This is the fact and it is proves that giants lived in these settlements" [2:83]. Thus all the best people's ideas about heroes and ideals of a true Person are connected with the word "batyr" in all epic legends, myths, and historical records.

It's generally known that literature of the Volga and Ural regions have rich artistic traditions in using of folk themes and characters. Poets like R.Fayzullin, R.Minnullin, R.Haris, A.Adil, R.Mingalim, I.Yuzeev, Zulfat, S.Chavayn, K.Ivanov, M.Sespele, Y.Uhsay, P.Huzangay, A.Yuzykayn, V.Vladykin, A.Timirkov, F.Syuyn and others skillfully used and still use more sophisticated methods of folk literature. Meanwhile these methods have not only traditional character, because modern Tatar poets often use new symbols. The Eastern tradition intertwines and synthesizes with the Western tradition here, idiomatic stylistic features of poetic thought begin to appear. It should be noted that there is a very valuable reflection in them of updated moral and philosophical foundations of the national perception. There are examples from the works of A.Adel. In the poem "Tales that you told..." he recreates images of heroes that used in folklore and transmits his sense of pride for them:

The birds Simurghs spread the wings?  
Flew over the country.  
Idegei, Alyp, Chura-batyr  
Saddled the fast horses [3: 137].

The poet created lyrical works to strengthen faith, optimism and spirit of the people when he hyperbolically described and praised batyrs. The poet develops this idea further in the poem "Alpamsha" which is dedicated to Kazakh writer Urzabek Badykov. The author transmits his philosophical reflection about love and betrayal, about truth and injustice by using lyrical hero Alpamsha and he gives this meaningful thought to reader:

I am Alpamsha –  
Son of the victory, of the truth!  
Small affairs, do not touch me!  
Keep it in the depth of your memory:  
I am Alpamsha –  
I am alone only in the tale, but in life - I am the people,  
Know this: The People [3: 97].

Then through comparing the poet speaks about the inexhaustible power of the people, he emphasizes that Alpamsha is the son of the people and that the people and Alpamsha inseparable. In the end he concludes that Alpamsha and the people is the truth.

The idea about the unity of the people and heroes in some lyrical works serves to reveal the image of the working man. For example, in the poem "Hills of Russia" Chuvash poet Yuri Aydash connects the fate of people with a history and after describing the events of The Second World War he puts his feelings and experiences back in earlier times and the thought gets following form:

And when I see a hardworking man,  
I recognize the giant Ulyp in him by all features  
... I can feel it from my heart: the time of fabulously epic has come –  
Ulyp's blood and Ulyp's power are in veins of modern people [4: 8].

Of course legends, eposes, dastans and tales that are widespread among the people lay in the foundation of poems about alyps and batyrs. They disclose epic bravery and all the richness and the beauty of folklore in verse form (folk songs are also used in some cases).

The Chuvash poet Fyodor Syuyn in his poem "Ulp" describes the fight between good and evil using people's mind and savvy and in the poem of the Mari poet Sergei Chavain "The last Onar" description goes from past to present and the poet expresses confidence that "batyrs Onar" live even today. Sergei G. Grigoriev (Chavain) - poet, novelist and dramatist, who took the nickname of Mari hero, he pays great attention to the images of Mari heroes and heroic epos. The image of Chavai moves from one of his poems into another. In the poem "Grandfathers" the poet even says that Chavai is his relative.

In another poem "The Mighty Oak" he uses oak as a symbol of the past, animates it and tries to raise the national spirit:

People lived in the world in former times  
They had gigantic strength and height  
The youngest son of those people  
Stepped over the tall oak  
That propped the sky, -

The right part of the giant's caftan was torn [5: 69].  
As we can see, the poet updates history using the legend about Alyp, literary works with it and returns it to the people. He expresses his delight to the Ancient athlete.

S.Chavayn looks for heroes in folklore that fight for the people's happiness, and he finds them in legends, stories, tales and dastans. The tale "Alyp patyr" that was kept in the Mari folklore lays in the foundation of his poem "Baba Yaga", the problem of heroism is generalized in this poem. Then in the poem "Mari heroes" the concrete images of the athletes Mostai, Chavai, Cork are glorified. The national hate for the oppressors expresses through these characters. At the junction of feelings the antipode image of Marshan becomes an object of ridicule being put into a barrel of tar.

Mythical heroes of different nations clear the Earth from various kinds of evil: dragons, snakes, demons; they are independent of any fear and difficulties. That is why it seems to us that people connect their history, origin and future with the name and heroism of their batyrs. As a consequence, the problem of friendship in such poems is also closely intertwined with the names of batyrs. For example, in the poem "Where the sun rises and sets" the Mari poet A.Yuzykayn creates images of Mari Onar Batyr and Hungarian Julian and he glorifies their friendship. The intention to show that the languages of Mari and Hungarian people belong to the group of Finno-Ugric languages is felt in the poem. The author pays attention to the historical roots of the Mari and Hungarian people, he also focuses on the fact that Mari and Hungarians are related people:

Julian Onar's messenger...

He would have said, if he could:

- Far beyond the blue Volga,  
where rivers flow like the time -  
Kama, Belaya and Vyatka,  
Our ancient homeland,

Is faraway, where the sun rises! [5: 44].

Other fine examples of works of Tatar poets confirm above. For example, Renat Haris expresses equality and friendship among nations and their responsibility for the fate of the world and he writes:

Every nation has its own hero.

He is the strongest and the wisest.

Alyp and Ilya stood shoulder to shoulder –

The children of one land, of one Fatherland! Then R.Haris glorifies friendship using images of the folk epos and states the necessity of unity, cohesion of batyrs and thus nations.

It is not their fault, it is rather their misfortune,

That they went to war against each other" [6: 146].

As it was noted above there are a lot of purposes of using giants and heroes in literature. In poems that contain themes of parenting, the call to love nature and everything beautiful ("Alyplar" R.Mingalim, "Dear stars" A.Timerkaev), in poems that transmit zeitgeist ("Ash-Terek" K.Mitrey), heroic thoughts ("Akpars" G.Matpokovsky, "Song of the old hero", A.Korinsky) batyrs also set harmony in that time and space where they were destined to live.

A kind of pessimistic views, lifestyle, thoughts about the fate are reflected through the images of giants and heroes in the Tatar poetry of later times. We could give as an example the poem of Zulfat "Bast shoes":

...There will be no answer for this question –

Alyps are left without bast shoes.

We would also shook bast shoes...

But from what and how should we weave them? "[7: 346].

The poetry of R.Minnullin much differs at that point with optimistic spirit. The poet wants to see the future in the hands of national heroes. We can use following poem as an example: "Today we have sabantui," "missed sabantui", "Sabantui was interesting", "At sabantui." Batyr in such poems as momentous person of clan, as moral and psychological, ideological and mental center of uniting. If we consider that children are the future of our land, of the country then content will become even more significant:

If we need enemies

They will win

When they grow

Someday they will turn in Alyp-batyrs [8: 48].

Hope is the great feeling, faith is the great truth for R.Minnullin. That is why we also think it is necessary to give as an example his poem "Brothers":

One of us is Fen! Other is Rome!

The third is Kim!

We should be proud brothers,

Who are we worse off?

Based on the national attitude, the author glorifies his brothers by identifying and comparing them to batyrs: "Salsal-batyr, Kamyrbatyr, / Alypbatyr / In the fight of enemies / Will win!" [8: 55].

Thereby, the poet emphasizes the plot of the poem and expands the space-time borders of the described. In each verse the reader's attention is focused on the special qualities and exclusivity of the most valuable and essential things for people relationships – they are friendship and unity. Slow rhythm leads to slowness of speech, the author makes the reader to penetrate deeper into the meaning of each word. Laconic style, accentuated metaphoric, triumphal mood of feelings are typical for R.Minnullin. Trinity repeats allow the author to give the

basic idea distinctly. In the work of R. Minnullin Batyr is the high rank, purpose, sacred duty which he must carry for his loved ones and the people:

As long as you alive, Mother is calm.  
And I am calm.  
The country is calm,  
As long as there are such men as you! "[8: 55].

Unity and solidarity are the main conditions of survival in Space, Time and Place of living. Ethnic stability is realized in terms of friendship and unity of different genera and generic units (The Minnullin's genus in this case) and this idea is clearly shown in the poem.

The sense of hope which is associated with heroes also continues in works of another great poet R.Haris. The Tatar poet expresses characteristic features of heroes in verse:

They say that there was a proud Alyp,  
He shook out ground of his shoes –  
And the hill rose in the lowland  
He only once swung at the enemy –  
Enemies fell on the ground [6: 107].

The poem a little differs from those that were discussed above. Because the author does not limit himself with the enumeration of Alyp's characteristics here, but he tries to express the deep sense: "Tatarstan is New Dastan!". Therefore in the future people will speak about Tatarstan in dastans and there is a deep confidence that the people that live here is able to continue the work of heroes. The main idea of lyrical work is connected with these lines.

This idea is more expanded by Garay Rahim. The poem "Heroes" is a good example:

How many heroes were in the history –  
Alyp-batyr, Kamyrbatyr.  
My nation, even today you are not childless  
You have a sagacious son - Timerbatyr!  
So, the heroes still are being born! "[9: 224].

And in the article "Heroes are sons of the people" L.I.Mingazova writes that "...the deep nostalgia for true batyrs upholding justice still lives in the national soul of the people of the Volga and Ural regions " [10:34]. According to above mentioned we can conclude that in the poetry of the people of the Volga and Ural regions the images of giants and heroes are used consciously and very successfully to this day. These heroes are peculiar and ambiguous and the ideals of the people in one way or another even today are connected with the image of Batyr.

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