



Folklore

Electronic Journal of Folklore 63

Folklore

Electronic Journal of Folklore

<http://www.folklore.ee/folklore>

Printed version

Vol. 63

2016

Folk Belief and Media Group
of the Estonian Literary Museum
Estonian Institute of Folklore

Folklore

Electronic Journal of Folklore
Vol. 63

Edited by Mare Kõiva & Andres Kuperjanov
Guest editor: Aimar Ventsel

Tartu 2016

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The journal is supported by the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research (IUT 22-5), the European Union through the European Regional Development Fund (Centre of Excellence in Estonian Studies), the state programme project EKKM14-344, and the Estonian Literary Museum.



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EKM Teaduskirjastus / ELM Scholarly Press

Estonian Institute of Folklore

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ISSN 1406-0957

doi:10.7592/FEJF2016.63

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INTRODUCTION

Aimar Ventsel, Zoya Tarasova

The special issue¹ of *Folklore: Electronic Journal of Folklore* is a collection of scholarly works from and about Kazakhstan. The idea for the issue was born in a discussion with the editors of the journal after Aimar Ventsel's first visit to Kazakhstan. During that discussion the journal editors decided to compile a special issue reflecting the variety of topics scholars in Kazakhstan are engaged with.

Kazakhstan is a dynamically developing country and invests considerable funds into education and science. The initial idea of the special issue was to reflect the current state of affairs in Kazakh academia, and demonstrate to the English speaking audience the variety of topics and research methods existing there. With the exception of two contributors, all of the authors in the volume are from universities in Kazakhstan. After the initial call for papers we received several abstracts from scholars of disciplines willing to contribute to the volume. Unfortunately, some of these authors were unable to complete and submit the final version of their articles. Therefore, for example, legal studies are not represented in this special issue, although the original line up also included one paper from this field. We announced another call for papers and later added a few more papers.

After reading and editing the articles, some common threads in the works of contributors can be highlighted. As is typical of academia in the former Soviet Union, scholars in Kazakhstan overwhelmingly focus their studies on subjects from their own country. The variety of topics represented in this special issue ranges from the analysis of the language politics of the Republic of Kazakhstan, via discussing particularities of the traditional calendar, to a semi-biographic article about the 'ethnographic' writing of a Kazakh writer, Gabit Musrepov. There are several reasons for such 'home research', and these will be discussed in more detail in a concluding chapter. This tendency, however, offers the reader a unique possibility to get a glimpse inside the academia of Kazakhstan, and learn about the relevant topics and approaches. A beginner

in the studies of Central Asian academia is often confronted by the fact that the English language writing on the region offers an analysis through the eyes and methodology of Western scholars. As long as the student is unable to read regional languages and Russian, or has difficulties in finding such literature, he or she lacks the understanding of how local scholars view their culture, region, and meaning thereof in a wider political context. It is not to deny that the view from the 'other side' is helpful in constructing a bigger picture. This bigger picture is useful when preparing oneself for fieldwork in Kazakhstan, or cooperation with scholars from the region. Another reason for compiling the special issue is to acknowledge the different traditions of academic writing. Therefore, the publication of non-Western scholars writing in a style different than in Western journals serves as an example of the multitude of different academic styles and traditions. As scholars who have considerable experience with the academic writing in the former Soviet Union, and especially with scientific writing in Russian, we could argue that the approach of the scholars from Kazakhstan differs significantly from the style of Soviet academic writing, but also from the styles practiced by Russian scholars today. It could be said that Kazakh scholars have their own poetic way of writing, demonstrated by the majority of papers in this journal's special issue. In order to give a voice to that tradition, texts were not edited with the aim to force them to conform to the Western way of argumentation, as it often happens with other academic journals. We did everything to maintain the original style and argumentation of the authors. Through the publication of this collection of articles we intend to contribute to a global academic dialogue between various countries, national traditions, and research methods.

NOTE

- ¹ This publication was supported by the European Union through the European Regional Development Fund (Centre of Excellence in Cultural Theory, CECT) and Estonian Research Council grant (IUT34-32).

PRISON CAMP NO. 29 FOR PRISONERS OF WAR FROM THE SECOND WORLD WAR ON THE TERRITORY OF KAZAKHSTAN BETWEEN 1943–1949

Aimar Ventsel, Baurzhan Zhanguttin

Abstract: This article is the first publication of materials about Pakhta-Aral prison camp No. 29 for prisoners of war. The fate of prisoners of war (both Western and Eastern) remains largely unclear. One reason is because the camps for prisoners of war were subordinated to an extremely closed and classified structure – the GUPVI. To some extent, Pakhta-Aral was an untypical prison camp in the Soviet prison camp system. While most prison camps were established to support industry or resource extraction with labour, then a far smaller number of prison camps were connected to agriculture. The Pakhta-Aral camp was opened as a workforce supply for the cotton growing collective farms of Kazakhstan. Interestingly, archival data show that the need to supply the camp with food and clothes added some liberal aspects to camp life. Some researchers argue that prison camps were a model for the so-called ‘non-Gulag’ society, but the Pakhta-Aral camp shows that at least some civic practices were adopted where they helped to improve the functioning of the camp.

Keywords: Gulag, Kazakhstan, Pakhta-Aral, prisoners of war, repressions

One of the unresolved mysteries of the history of the Second World War was the fate of 3,120,944 prisoners of war on the territory of the Soviet Union, including 1,836,315 Germans, 637,000 Japanese, 425,549 Hungarians, 121,590 Austrians, and also representatives of other nationalities. The reason for the uncertainty was the fact that information about the destiny of prisoners of war was guarded by one of the most closed and classified structures, known only by a circle of experts – the Administration for the Affairs of Prisoners of War and Internees (*Upravlenie po delam voennoplennykh i internirovannykh*, renamed in 1944 as the Main Administration for the Affairs of Prisoners of War and Internees or *Glavnoe upravlenie po delam voennoplennykh I internirovannykh*, GUPVI). This institution was subordinated to the infamous NKVD – MVD SSSR or *Narodnyi Komissariat Vnutrennykh Del* or People’s Commissariat of Internal Affairs – a Soviet ministry for internal affairs). By the end of 1945,

the structure of the GUPVI contained 267 prison camps that included 3200 branches (*lagernye otdeleniia*), 392 labour battalions (*rabochii batal'on*) and 178 'special hospitals'; these facilities were located across the whole territory of the former Soviet republics (Karner 2002: 286).

Difficult access to the data is probably one, but certainly not the only, reason why research on Soviet prison camps seldom focuses on foreign prisoners. For example, two recently published collections of articles on the Gulag (Kritika 16 (3), 2015; Laboratorium 7 (1), 2015), cutting edge literature without doubt, include no paper on prisoners of war (see also Applebaum 2003; Barnes 2011). Institutionally, the Gulag was a separate structure independent of the GUPVI; however, the camps did not differ substantially.¹ This article attempts to contribute to the public knowledge of foreign prisoners of war in the territory of the Soviet Union, both during and after World War II.

Research on the Gulag as a topic has produced an impressive body of literature, despite the fact that these studies emerged in the West in the early 1970s (Alexopoulos 2015: 470). There are different authors with different positions in the field, but only few researchers have studied prison camps in their complexities. The short history of the camp under scrutiny reveals some interesting practices and unexpected features of Stalinist camp life. By examining these early unpublished materials, the Gulag camp appears as a complex structure with its own internal dynamics, unexpected to the reader accustomed to the image of the Gulag as a brutal and monolithic prison camp system. The data reveals that the development of a camp included the co-existence of several ethnic groups, various economic practices and subordination lines. When Khlevniuk and Belokowsky (2015) write that the Gulag became a model of organisation for the 'outside' world – non-Gulag – then our data indicates the opposite process: in order to run the camp with minimum obstacles, the administration adopted or allowed many practices characteristic of the civil society.

This article focuses on only one camp, the Pakhta-Aral prison camp No. 29 for prisoners of war and internees. We wish to illuminate some key moments and facts from the history of the camp and, finally, publish the names of people who died and were buried in the camp. The material in the article is drawn from newly discovered and previously unpublished documents from various archives of the Republic of Kazakhstan, found between 2012 and 2014.

During World War II, and in its aftermath, 49,000 prisoners of war – former officers and soldiers of the German, Italian, Romanian, Finnish, and Japanese armies – were sent to the territory of Kazakhstan. This 'contingent' was kept in prison camps subordinated to the GUPVI (Zhanguttin 2008). Prison camp No. 29 opened in March 1943 by the decree No. 00398 of the NKVD, dated the 1st of March of the same year. By that decree the camp was located in the South-

Kazakhstan oblast (*Iuzhno-Kazakhstanskii oblast*), 90 kilometres from the city of Tashkent and 14 kilometres from the Syr-Dar'inskaia railway station, which was a station on the Tashkent railway line on the territory of a cotton raising collective farm² Pakhta-Aral. The main purpose for establishing the camp was to carry out the construction of a water canal for future cotton fields, to provide them with an enormous amount of water. This connection with agriculture makes camp No. 29 untypical. As a rule, Stalinist prison camps were created to support mining or other industries with workforce. In order to satisfy the process of industrialisation with food and other resources, the NKVD simultaneously established camp complexes with an agricultural focus. One difference between such Gulag camps and camps for prisoners of war was that when in the first case the camp administration was able to pick up prisoners with a required professional profile, then there is no such evidence of the GUPVI camps practicing a similar procedure.

THE BEGINNING

As with most Stalinist prison camps, camp No. 29 was divided into several smaller camps or 'departments'. Six such 'departments' were placed alongside the planned water canal route with a distance of between 3 and 15 kilometres from their future worksites. All these camp units were established by two decrees of the NKVD: No. 00398B from the 1st of March 1943, and No. 001409 from the 13th of August 1943.³

Each of the camp units had not only a number but also a name: No. 1 was the unit named after Felix Dzerzhinsky (the legendary head of the VTsK (*Vse-rossiiskaia chrezvychainaia komissii*, All-Russian Emergency Commission), a security police service established by the Bolsheviks during the October Revolution and the predecessor of the NKVD), No. 2 bore the name of Komintern (an international Communist organisation, controlled by the Soviet Union), No. 3 was called Il'ich (the patronymic of Lenin), No. 4 – Stalin, No. 5 – Pervomaiskii (or the First of May), and No. 6 – Oktiabr'skii (October – in honour of the October Revolution).

The archival data does not reveal the exact date when the first echelons with prisoners arrived, but it is clear that the establishment of the camp did not go smoothly. The official archival documents state that prisoners of war captured at Stalingrad arrived without the support of medical personnel and the necessary medicaments. The 'contingent' was exhausted and full of lice, suffering from spotted typhus. The result of the echelons arriving in such a condition

was that 1,632 German prisoners of war died of dystrophy and spotted typhus (Karner 2002: 48).

Simultaneously, the contingent in the camp constantly increased. After the German prisoners of war other nationalities arrived – Italian, Japanese, and so forth. These groups were sent to Pakhta-Aral around 1944, after mass surrenders and sentencing of enemy soldiers (Shirokorad 2010: 294; Ursu 2009: 104). To house such a number of people, prisoners of war were forced to build barracks. Residential and supplementary buildings in camp No. 29 were mainly barracks built of adobe and framed reed. It seems that contrary to many other Gulag camps, residential buildings in the Pakhta-Aral camp complex had more room for inmates, with scant but still existing comforts like bedding and a bath within close walking range. As the accounting documents state, “Because of local climatic conditions, this type of construction is quite suitable for living”.⁴ Each barrack housed 70 to 120 prisoners of war; the space allocation was three square metres of living space per person. The barracks were equipped with plank beds, and each prisoner of war was also provided with bedding. All the camp units included so-called bathing-laundry blocks, basically bath houses with a capacity to bathe twenty-five men in one hour simultaneously, cleaning their clothes in primitive disinfection chambers. Typical of Stalinist prison camps, the Pakhta-Aral camps were surrounded with an approximately two and a half metre high barbed wire fence.

FEEDING THE CAMP

Looking closer at the archival records, it becomes obvious that life in the Pakhta-Aral camp units predominantly focused on the constant need to find additional sources of food. Theoretically, the headquarters of the Central-Asian military district supplied the camp with all types of needed goods. As it appears from documents, the German army contingent that arrived at the end of March 1943 was suffering from exhaustion and was therefore provided with enhanced supplementary feeding. Apart from the food provided according to Gulag norms, prisoners of war also gathered wild edible plants. In 1943, 28.8 tons of sorrel and 230 kg of various mushrooms were gathered. In 1943, a supplementary farm (*podsobnoe khoziaistvo*) was organised in camp No. 29, which had approximately 20 hectares of territory for growing watermelons, melons, and other suitable agricultural crops. Later on, this supplementary farm became an important source for the camp complex food supplies. The farm also provided the ‘contingent’ with additional vegetables and products of animal husbandry. The importance of the farming activities is obvious because the territory of the

farm quickly grew to 153 hectares in 1946. Substantially, in order to grow more, all the fields were irrigated. The discovered data is impressive and shows how much was harvested and turned over to the authorities. In 1946 the 'production' included 1,503 centners of potatoes, 14,687 centners of vegetables and fruits, and 1,411 centners of maize and rice. Interestingly, the camp administration allowed certain groups to collect their own food in order to cook their national cuisine (*natsional'nye bliudy*). This fact demonstrates a certain liberalism, allowing "non-Gulag practices" (Khlevniuk & Belokowsky 2015) to enter into the Gulag. The Italians and the French, for example, were allowed to use turtles and frogs for food. During one year, the prisoners harvested 10.6 tons of turtles and approximately 1000 kg of frogs.⁵ As a consequence, the use of turtles and frogs for food significantly reduced the cost of feeding prisoners. The costs of maintaining the camp were further reduced when prisoners began to make footwear in the camp, wearing light boots and sandals instead of factory produced footwear in the summer.⁶ Consequently, it could be argued that one of the main concerns for the administration was to find new ways to utilise local resources in order to reduce spending. For that purpose, a certain liberalism and elements of civil life were tolerated.

ORGANISING 'NORMALITY' IN THE CAMP

After the opening of the camp, the administration tried to establish a working routine, a certain kind of 'normality'. The purpose of the Pakhta-Aral camp complex was to provide a workforce for the agricultural collective farm, and, as mentioned above, not especially unusual, but still a rather rare use of a Gulag prison camp, which usually provided cheap labour for industrial or resource extraction enterprises like factories or mines.

During the establishment period of camp No. 29 there was a lack of transport; the number of horses and automobiles was clearly insufficient. As a consequence, the camp administration decided to purchase horses at Skotoimport (Cattle Import), and by the end of 1944 there were 14 cars and 52 horses in the camp that fully met the needs of its economy.⁷

Prisoners of war were used for agricultural work in the cotton fields. The extant documents confirm in typical Soviet bureaucratic language:

At the beginning, because of the lack of skilled workers in the production apparatus of the camp and experience in organising labour, as well as [lack of] guidance from the centre, the productivity and wages of the prisoners of war were very low from 1943–1944. According to the incomplete data

for 1943, of 2082 [prisoners] listed for labour, only 811 people or 39% received salaries. The average daily output per one norm-day⁸ was equal to 3 roubles and 44 kopecks, and labour productivity in the whole camp was only 59.2%.⁹

This is one of the rare documents proving that the financial motivation of prisoners also existed in camps for foreigners. Wages were introduced during the war in order to increase productivity of an otherwise non-motivated forced labour. Some researchers argue that although wages did have their impact, the overall effect was rather low (Rossi 1989: 455–457; Khlevniuk 2004: 338–339).

Guarding of prisoners of war was carried out by the soldiers from the 223rd military convoy regiment, whose headquarters was located six kilometres from the camp. The main communication between the camp management and commanders of the military unit was conducted by telephone. To make guarding of prisoners more efficient, search dogs were kept in four of the camp administration department offices. Entry to the zone of the camp unit territory was permitted strictly only with temporary or permanent entry permits (*propusk*). The standard size of the military convoy when taking prisoners out of the camp for work was three guards for twenty-five prisoners. Often the camp administration set additional posts in places favourable for escape. Not unusual for the Soviet prison camp system was that inmates were sometimes used as guards. In his essay, Alan Barenberg advocates the concept of ‘dezonification’ of the Gulag, where there was no spatial distance between the prisoners, camps, and civil population (Barenberg 2015). Pakhta-Aral was no exception. The guarding of prisoners and running the economy was a process that built a certain bridge between the Gulag and non-Gulag personnel. In addition to military staff, three support teams from among the loyal and proven prisoners were formed. These teams served as guards both inside the camp and during the work tasks outside.

Within the radius of 25 kilometres around the camp complex a security zone was established, where entrance was forbidden to any unauthorised persons. In the security zone 65 ‘reaction brigades’ (*brigady sodeistvia*) were formed, whose task was to search for, and capture, escaped inmates. In an emergency, the brigades could be called immediately into action, or to ‘react’, hence the title. The 293 persons who were members of those brigades were volunteers from among the Communist Party and collective farm activists. During the whole camp history, prisoners made only 17 attempts to escape. In 15 cases runaways were arrested. In one case one escapee attempted to swim across the River Syr-Daria and drowned. The last runaway has been counted since 1945 as being escaped, and has not been found. There is, however, reason to believe that he, also, was killed in an accident.¹⁰

THE CLOSING PROCESS

The decision to begin the process of closing Pakhta-Aral camp was announced with a decree of the NKVD of the USSR No. 00348 addressed to the “peoples’ commissar of internal affairs of the Kazakh SSR, to the commissar of the state security, comrade Bogdanov”, informing him that “the sixth camp complex of the NKVD, camp No. 29, shall be liquidated”.¹¹ Looking at the wording of the decree, it becomes clear that the local power structures had very little impact on whether, and how, camps were established on their territory. As was the case with the opening of the Pakhta-Aral, the closing of the camp was decided in Moscow, and the local government just had to accept it. However, the process of liquidation did not go as smoothly as planned. The difficulties are indicated by the content of the NKVD decree No. 001035 from the 11th of September 1945. The decree announced that 40,000 Romanian prisoners of war should be released from the camps of the GUPVI NKVD. More precisely, in the same decree an order was given to release 230 prisoners of war as part of the post-World War II repatriation policy. The ultimate fate of these released prisoners is unknown. It is known that they were sent “to the territory of Romania via railway through the station of Ungheni, and further over the sea through the ports of Crimea as well as Odessa, Nikolaev, and Novorossiisk, until they reached Constanța (a seaport on the Black Sea coast of Romania)”.¹²

Every released prisoner of war was entitled to receive a document of their release confirmation “signed by the head of the camp, as it was formulated by the decree of the NKVD No. 00955 from the 13th of August 1945”.¹³ The policy of repatriation foresaw “sending released prisoners of war to their homeland forming echelons and [using] individual wagons, following the assigned [*poputnye*] routes, accompanied by officers and guards from camps, in small parties by [the most] direct route – [also using] passenger trains under the guard of the officers of the camps”. The decree also called for concentrating repatriating prisoner groups in the “most convenient” place to form bigger groups and send them to Constanța. “The released Romanian prisoners of war should be accompanied by medical personnel having a sufficient reserve of medicines; the prisoners should also be provided with food for the path.”¹⁴

On the 27th of September, 1945, decree No. 001 097 was issued, according to which camps number 42, 43, and 47 were to be liquidated. By the same decree, “in order to bring the limit capacity of prison camps for the Germans into accordance with the actual presence of these prisoners of war”, instructions were given to “reorganise the existing camps and their camp units for guarding the prisoners of war”. The decrees established a new “limit capacity” of 7,000 people for the NKVD camp No. 29 “at the state farm¹⁵ of Pakhta-Aral in the

South Kazakhstan region”, to be housed in six camp departments: a thousand people in Nos. 1, 2, 3, and 6, and 1,500 prisoners in departments No. 4 and 5.¹⁶

In 1947 the remaining units of the Pakhta-Aral camp No. 29 were disbanded.

Based on the orders of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the USSR No. 00234 from the 3rd of March, 1947, and No. 00528 dated the 19th of May, 1947, camp branches No. 1, 4, and 6 were to be closed. German prisoners of war, kept in the camp, were supposed to be transported to the Spaso-Zavodskii camp No. 99 (to be engaged in coal industry). The Japanese prisoners of war were to be transferred to the Almaty camp. The closing report states that “at the time of the dissolution of the camp, the phys[ical] state of Japanese prisoners of war transferred to camp No. 40 is characterised as follows: category 1 – 1,532 people; category 2 – 506 people; category 3 – 90 people. Disabled – 11 people. OK¹⁷ – 26 people. Sick – 60 people”.¹⁸

In the terminology of the NKVD, the first category of prisoners of war were “practically healthy, fit to perform heavy physical work”; the second category were “partially fit for physical labour, with chronic diseases or disabilities”¹⁹; the third category meant that the prisoners were fit only for light physical work, having serious chronic illnesses or physical disabilities; the fourth category included disabled people. After the “discharge [*razgruzka*] of the camp” by the order of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the USSR No. 0069 from the 24th of January, 1948, the camp management and camp units No. 2, 3, and 5 were disbanded.²⁰

MORTALITY

The Gulag system is associated with the suffering of prisoners, and the camp under study was no exception. As the archival data shows, from the very beginning of the Pakhta-Aral prison camp No. 29, the authorities had to deal with high mortality rates. One reason was the catastrophic condition of the infrastructure during the war years. The transport of prisoners from Stalingrad started in January 1943 but faced serious problems like a destroyed railway network, a lack of wagons and locomotives. Documents show that in some cases German prisoners of war were loaded into wagons that waited a week or more for the locomotives. Most prisoners of war arrived, therefore, in poor health, suffering from cold and hunger. German prisoners of war reveal in their memoirs that during the first weeks of capture they were afflicted by hunger as were almost all the people they encountered:

By digging in the black earth of fields I found a few almost hard potatoes. We boiled them a long time in a small kettle until they transformed into porridge. The colour [of the porridge] was black with slightly blue streaks; it was a non-appetising mass, crunching between our teeth. But it felt so delicious. (Sokolov 2003)

According to estimations of German scholars, one-fifth of the 3,000 German prisoners of war sent to Pakhta-Aral from Dubrovka in European Russia in 1943 died in transit (Karner 2002: 48).

The high mortality of German prisoners also concerned the Soviet officials who put the blame on malnutrition. On the 28th of May, 1943, the officers of the NKVD of the Kazakh SSR sent the following report to Moscow:

Moscow, NKVD. To Kruglov. During the last five days, on May 21–25, [1943], twelve people died in the Pakhta-Aral prison camp No. 29 for prisoners of war. The cause of the deaths is in all cases the lack of protein. This is confirmed by the pathoanatomical opening of the corpses. The opening shows an absolute lack of fat layer under the skin, atrophy of muscles [a longer list of symptoms indicating that prisoners suffered from severe hunger follows]. There are another 60 people in the camp who suffer from the lack of protein. [---] In accordance with the findings, the provision in the camp will be reorganised corresponding to the norms of the last decree No. 25/2329. The camp is stocked with the required food items, with the exception of dried fruits, potatoes, milk, and vegetables. Bogdanov.²¹

Due to a mass outbreak of typhus, the medical service of the camp had to cooperate with the medical officials of the Kazakh SSR in order to conduct prophylactic work among the prisoners of the camp, and also among the ordinary workers of the collective farm. The situation was so dramatic that officials of the highest level had to intervene. A telegram dating from the 11th of December, 1943, was received in the capital of the KSSR, Alma-Ata. It was addressed to the commandant of prison camp No. 29 and informed him that the catastrophic situation with high mortality in the camp had worried the commissar of the state security of the NKVD, comrade Bogdanov. The high NKVD official was disturbed that, notwithstanding the ‘substantial help’ provided by the NKVD in Moscow, 30 prisoners died in Pakhta-Aral camp in October 1943, 27 in November, and 7 prisoners within the first ten days of December.²²

By the end of December, 1943, the NKVD of the USSR issued an order No. 001860. The text of the order criticised the chief of the prison camp, major of security service Dukhovnyi, for the “lack of initiative, mismanagement, inability

to organise and provide health welfare in camps”, which had resulted in a high contraction of illnesses by Italian prisoners of war during the last months. By this order, major Dukhovnyi was removed from office and degraded to a lower post. The decree also appointed a new chief for camp No. 29, Lieutenant Colonel Sorokin, who was transferred to the office from the position of the chief of prison camp No. 99. Sorokin received a strict order to “take decisive action for the full implementation of directives from the NKVD about the therapeutic measures among prisoners”.²³

The camp administration, alongside the medical staff, reacted quickly in order to prevent a huge loss of life among the prisoners of war. At each of the six camp departments infirmaries were organised, systematically carrying out preventive treatment among prisoners. The camp administration also imposed strict control over the sanitary condition of the premises, thus avoiding the spread of infectious diseases. This all eventually allowed the situation in the camp to improve.

The documents allow us to understand the extent of mortality in the camp. In 1943, it was 1,862 people, in 1944 – 86 people, in 1945 – 53 people, in 1946 – 38 people, and 16 people in 1947. In general, reporting data from various camps differs. In some documents it was recorded that “during the existence of the camp [No. 29] 2,055 people died, among them 1,998 Germans and 57 Japanese”; in another document, the total figure amounts to 20,072.²⁴

By the order of the GUPVI NKVD of the Soviet Union, *About the Burial of Prisoners of War*, dating from the 24th of August, 1944, instructions were given for the procedure concerned with the disposal of the dead prisoners. The camp administration was obliged to “establish in the immediate vicinity of the camp or [camp] hospital special areas of free land”.²⁵ The land had to be fenced off with barbed wire and divided into squares. Each square had to be divided into five rows of graves with five graves in each row. On each grave it was necessary to erect an identification mark – a strong pole with a wooden disk nailed to the top of the pole, carrying a number of the grave and the square.

In order to account for the deceased prisoners of war and their places of burial, it was necessary to have a special cemetery book, which was supposed to contain the following information about the deceased: their last and first name, date of birth, nationality, military rank, date of death and date of burial, the number of the grave and the square in which they had been buried. The cemetery book was also accompanied by the plan of the cemetery, mapping the location and numbers of squares, and the numbers of existing graves (Mikheeva 2005: 97).

The archives of the Russian State Military Archive (RGVA) preserved data on prisoners of war buried in the cemetery of the Pakhta-Aral camp No. 29.

Precise data on the exact number of the deceased could not be found. From the documents it appears that “a proper burial in accordance with the order of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the USSR was introduced only in October 1944. Until this time, 1,944 people were buried, but the cemetery where they were buried does not currently [18th June 1949 – dating of the document] exist”.²⁶ And it continues further in dry Soviet bureaucratic language:

*By questioning the old workers in the camp, it was ascertained that in 1943 a typhus epidemic raged, and in connection with the high mortality rate of prisoners of war, they were buried in different places, and in large mass graves. These tombs are now ploughed over and planted with vegetable crops, or in connection with the expansion of the construction of the camp, outbuildings have been built. It is not possible to restore the old cemetery.*²⁷

In addition, from the documents dated the 18th of June, 1949, it appears that graveyards of camp units No. 1 and 4 are “left without supervision and now the cemetery is defunct. Identification signs have been destroyed on some graves, other graves are overgrown with weeds; if we do not take action, the cemetery will be completely destroyed”.²⁸

Researcher S. Bukin, in his studies on the Germans who returned from Soviet captivity, has provided detailed descriptions of how the burials were conducted:

Between the end of September 1944 and the moment I was sent home on September 5, 1947, I changed camp four times, but still remained on the outskirts of the city of Novosibirsk. Thank God that I did not get sick. I was sent to outside work on a daily basis: to a factory for the production of ammunition, to laying railway lines, to the collective farm, to the galvanic station of radio works. Due to the long working hours (during the war more than 12 hours, and the way there and back an additional hour and a half; later on the average working time with coming and going was 10 hours), and in part to the very hard work and malnutrition after returning to the camp, we were tired as dogs, fell on boards and no one thought about each other. So I cannot satisfy any inquiries about names. With regard to mortality, as far as I know, in the winter of 1944–1945, ten people in our camp died every day from malnutrition and dysentery. They were buried far away from any property, in the tundra, without names and the installation of grave crosses. Three times that winter I myself was a digger of large graves. We made only one temporary cross out of wood from packing cases for our colleagues and set it there. (Bukin 2001: 200)

This kind of burial was typical for prisoners of war, and happened also in a similar way in other Gulag camps.

CONCLUSION

Over the entire period of its existence, that is, from March 1943 to February 1948, camp No. 29 housed in total 10,649 prisoners, among them 8,321 people from the Western armies of Hitler's coalition and 2,328 people who were Easterners. Documents about the camp complex were found in different archives, but the picture of the life and functioning of Pakhta-Aral still remains incomplete. There is a great deal of unclarity about the short history of the camp, as well as about the identity of its prisoners. Research on Pakhta-Aral and similar camps helps to fill a gap in the research of Stalinist prison camps for prisoners of war. As stated by British anthropologist Vieda Skultans, "Much of what happened in the Gulag has been left unrecorded, unexamined, and unexpiated" (Skultans 2015: 109). Due to high classification and subordination to another structure (GUPVI), Soviet camps for prisoners of war have been less studied than Gulag camps for their 'own people'. Various archives of Kazakhstan and Russia preserve documents allowing us to learn more about the fate of foreign military personnel and the camps they were kept in. Some of these documents are still hard to find because files are scattered over several archives, distributed between Russia and Kazakhstan, and very often poorly catalogued. Therefore, luck is a friend of the researcher who is interested in learning more about the long-forgotten camps for prisoners of war.

APPENDIX²⁹

List of buried prisoners of war in the cemetery of Pakhta-Aral prison camp No. 29

Camp unit 1

No.	Surname, name, patronymic	Date of birth	Military rank	Date of death	Date of burial	Nationality
1	Privedela, Giuseppe Angelo	1921	soldier	04.10.1944	05.10.1944	Italian
2	Kiodi, Edoardo Nauzarenno	1914	soldier	08.10.1944	08.10.1944	Italian
3	Spampati, Cuarrino Andr.	1917	sen. sergeant	11.10.1944	11.10.1944	Italian

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4	Pisocia, Mateo Vincenzo	1921	corporal	20.10.1944	20.10.1944	Italian
5	Cecetini, Giovanni Gustavo	1918	sen. corporal	20.10.1944	20.10.1944	Italian
6	Marketti, Umberto Primo	1915	soldier	18.01.1945	19.01.1945	Italian
7	Silvestri, Bruno Angel Ait.	1914	soldier	16.04.1945	16.04.1945	Italian
8	Farkash, George Ioi	1916	sergeant 1st class	10.08.1945	10.08.1945	Russian
9	Werner, Wilhelm	1913	sergeant	02.09.1945	03.09.1945	German
10	Iakonetto, Antonio George	1919		26.12.1943	26.12.1943	Italian
11	Apostoe, Petr Teodorv	1916		01.01.1944	01.01.1944	Italian
12	Ripaldi, Antonio Horacio	1917		01.01.1944	01.01.1944	Italian
13	Toldi, Nikolai Iosif	1913		01.01.1944	01.01.1944	Italian
14	Verrastro, Giuseppe Franz	1922		08.01.1944	08.01.1944	Italian
15	Govanelo, Eugilo Rocco	1909			09.01.1944	Italian
16	Raito, Mario Mario	1914			14.01.1944	Italian
17	Viscontini, Antonio Gaitan	1912			24.01.1944	Italian
18	Girogori, Giovanni Giov.	1921			19.04.1944	Italian
19	Gambaro, Vittario George	1920			16.06.1944	Italian
20	Cardinali, Fernando Cez.	1909			13.07.1944	Italian

Camp unit 2

No.	Surname, name, patronymic	Date of birth	Military rank	Date of death/burial	Nationality
1	Degrementis, Luigi Nadzareno	1921	soldier	27.09.1944	Italian
2	Bucci, Rineldo Antonio	1920	corporal	13.01.1944	Italian
3	Fabro, Ottavio Antonio	1921	corporal	05.11.1944	Italian
4	Guarnieri, Angelo Augusto	1916	sergeant	11.12.1944	Italian
5	Agacci, Gino Alfredo	1922	soldier	17.12.1944	Italian
6	Picci, Enco Domenico	1920	soldier	16.01.1944	Italian
7	Polcelli, Generoso Luigi	1921	sergeant	07.02.1945	Italian
8	Uder, Johann Johan	1910	exempted	17.02.1945	German
9	Rabustelli, Giuseppe Stefano	1921	corporal	19.02.1945	Italian
10	Brahm, Franz Wilhelm	1905	sergeant	20.02.1945	German
11	Antenore, Vittore Leopoldo	1922	private	20.03.1945	Italian
12	Neudecker, Eduard Adam	1914	sergeant	20.09.1945	German
13	Arkip, Ion George	1916	corporal	30.03.1945	Romanian
14	Di Carlo, Dameniko Antonio	1921	soldier	02.04.1945	Italian
15	Di Carlo, Petro Felice	1913	soldier	02.04.1945	Italian
16	Pascale, Gaetano Luigi	1922	soldier	11.04.1945	Italian

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17	Prie, Toma Toma	1908	soldier	11.04.1945	Romanian
18	Botani, Ireneo Luigi	1921	soldier	25.04.1945	Italian
19	Levisticci, Oscar Paulo	1911	sen. sergeant	26.04.1945	Italian
20	Ferrari, Angelo Paul	1923	sergeant	04.04.1945	Italian
21	Batrinu, Constantin Ion	1921	soldier	27.05.1945	Romanian
22	Sassi, Angelo Mario	1922	soldier	29.05.1945	Italian
23	Sorrentino, Vicenzo Angelo	1920	soldier	02.06.1945	Italian
24	Agostini, Bruno Amus	1914	soldier	02.06.1945	Italian
25	Goricci, Archimede Ricardo	1916	soldier	03.06.1945	Italian
26	Montanini, Luigi Filiberto	1922	corporal	06.06.1945	Italian
27	Mazante, Rafael Olinto	1917	soldier	11.06.1945	Italian
28	Rubagotti, Faustino Samuele	1917	soldier	02.07.1945	Italian
29	Ravacol, Giulio Guerino	1916	soldier	06.07.1945	Italian
30	Nad, Lazlo Lajoz	1914	exempted	15.07.1945	Hungarian
31	Mala, Ferenz Sandor	1913	soldier	17.07.1945	Hungarian
32	Balestrini, Armando Giobatta	1920	soldier	22.08.1945	Italian
33	Imazhura, Soochi	1913	soldier	26.08.1946	Japanese
34	Hasakawa, Ivao	1910	sen. sergeant	01.09.1946	Japanese

35	Nakasima, Diuken	1906	exempted	09.11.1946	Japanese
36	Homada, Sigidzhi	1920	soldier	19.11.1946	Japanese
37	Sekezima, Iogi	1910	soldier	16.12.1946	Japanese
38	Baba, Madao	1914	sergeant	25.12.1946	Japanese
39	Konno, Sodzhi	1927	soldier	20.01.1947	Japanese
40	Takeyama, Eslnou	1923	soldier	21.01.1947	Japanese
41	Masuda, Tadao	1905	soldier	29.05.1947	Japanese
42	Tanaka, Chuchasaku	1912	sen. soldier	26.07.1947	Japanese
43	Mori, Cucceo	1902	soldier	05.11.1947	Japanese

Camp unit 3

	Surname, name, patronymic	Date of birth	Military rank	Date of death/ burial	Nationality
1	Bertalis, Pelino Luigi	1920	soldier	07.10.1944	Italian
2	Ambrogio, Giuseppe Vincenzo	1917	soldier	24.10.1944	Italian
3	Uloti, Aristide Angelo	1913	soldier	13.12.1944	Italian
4	Bou, Giulio Giulio	1914	soldier	24.12.1944	Italian
5	Radin, Francesco Anako	1915	sen. corporal	28.12.1944	Italian
6	Shira, Giacomo Francesco	1921	soldier	01.01.1945	Italian
7	Ruggi, Silvio Francesco	1922	soldier	03.01.1945	Italian
8	Verardo, Augustino Batisto	1918	soldier	04.01.1945	Italian
9	Rernoks, August Autustovich	1921	sergeant	07.01.1945	German

10	Boffa, Lorenzo Bartolomeo	1921	soldier	07.04.1945	Italian
11	Gussani, Giuseppe Franz	1911	sen. corporal	22.03.1945	Italian
12	Sinezi, Savino Nikola	1922	soldier	26.04.1945	Italian
13	Benazzato, Gus Ollido	1921	soldier	30.04.1945	Italian
14	Greco, Antonio Fedele	1922	soldier	23.05.1945	Italian
15	Emma, Tonio Rocco	1921	corporal	24.05.1945	Italian
16	Orlando, Antonio Francesci	1917	soldier	26.06.1945	Italian
17	Sfellazza, Dominico Salv.	1921	corporal	17.07.1945	Italian

NOTES

¹ On the 6th of November, 1929, the Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars passed a law that imprisonment of up to three years should be carried out in 'regular prisons', whereas confinement from three to ten years should take place in prison camps in remote regions of the country (Prokopchuk 2004). The establishment of a network of prison camps was begun. For the management of the camp system the Gulag (*Glavnoe upravlenie ispravitel'no-trudovykh lagerei, trudovykh poselenii i mest zakliucheniia* or the Main Administration of Labour Camps, Labour Settlements, and Places of Detention) was created, which was subordinated to the NKVD of the Soviet Union. The Gulag controlled, in its heyday, 36 of the so-called 'corrective-labour camps' (sing. *ispravitel'no-trudovoi lager'*); in fact, each of these camps was a conglomerate of several prison camps (Dulatbekov 2010; Gavrilova 2003). The Gulag was officially closed on the 25th of January, 1960 (Ivanova 2006).

² Soviet agriculture was organised in state-governed farms. A collective farm or kolkhoz was theoretically a collective property of its workers whereas a state farm or sovkhoz was a state property. Collective farm workers were able to elect their chairman whereas state farm directors were appointed by the regional ministry of agriculture. In fact, differences between these two kinds of farms were nominal.

³ GARF, f. 9401, op. 1a, d. 137, l. 183.

⁴ GARF, f. 9401, op. 1a, d. 137, l. 183.

⁵ RGVA, f. 1/p, op. 15a, d. 73, l. 12.

- ⁶ RGVA, f. 1/p, op. 15a, d. 73, l. 12.
- ⁷ RGVA, f. 2, op. 17, d. 3, l. 5.
- ⁸ The norm-day was a Soviet work-cum-salary unit which had a fixed price. A worker had to complete a certain amount of work in order to be entitled to a certain amount of income. The monthly salary was a sum of completed norm-days.
- ⁹ RGVA, f. 2, op. 17, d. 3, 2.
- ¹⁰ RGVA, f. 1/p, op. 15a, d. 73, l. 11.
- ¹¹ GRAF, f. 9401, op. 12, d. 176.
- ¹² GRAF, f. 9401, op. 1a, d. 180, l. 106, 107, 108.
- ¹³ Ibid.
- ¹⁴ Ibid.
- ¹⁵ In some documents the prison camp is referred to as a state farm (sovkhoz). The reason for that is probably because agriculture determined the function of the prison camp.
- ¹⁶ GRAF, f. 9401, op. 1a, d. 180, l. 106.
- ¹⁷ OK was a category of prisoners too weak for work. They were housed in a special barrack and provided with additional feeding until they were healthy enough to go to work.
- ¹⁸ No. 99 RGVA, f. 1/p, op. 15a, d. 73, l. 12.
- ¹⁹ No. 99 RGVA, f. 1/p, op. 15a, d. 73, l. 13.
- ²⁰ Ibid.
- ²¹ RGVA, f. 1/p. op. 9 v.d. 3, L. 88.
- ²² RGVA, f. 1/p. op. 9 v.d.3, L. 120.
- ²³ GARF, f. 9401, op. 1, d. 675, l. 490.
- ²⁴ RGVA, f. 24p, op. 26, d. 42, l. 32.
- ²⁵ RGVA, f. 1/p, op. 05e, d. 135, l. 1.
- ²⁶ Ibid.
- ²⁷ RGVA, f. 1/p, op. 05e, d. 135, l. 1.
- ²⁸ RGVA, f. 1/p, op. 05e, d. 135, l. 1.
- ²⁹ The data are based on archival documents: RGVA, f. 1/p, op. 05e, d. 135, l. 9, 10, l. 136, l. 10, 11, 12; l. 137, l. 10.

ARCHIVAL SOURCES

GRAF = Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii (State Archive of the Russian Federation)

RGVA = Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi voennyi arkhiv (Russian State Military Archive)

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RESISTANCE TO IDEOLOGY, SUBJUGATION TO LANGUAGE: A WORKSHOP BY WRITER GABIT MUSREPOV UNDER SOVIET TOTALITARIAN CENSORSHIP IN 1928–1964

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Abstract: This paper examines how, under the control of strong censorship, some of Gabit Musrepov's literary works were published despite their seditious nature. The authors argue that although G. Musrepov was a reputable Soviet writer, the materials presented in the article prove that he worked at the meeting point of resistance and subjugation: resistance to ideology, subjugation to language. The literary analysis of Musrepov's three short stories shows that under the strictest control and actively expressed interest of the authorities in the writer's creative activities, the latter's mastery and the incompetence of censors allowed him to avoid the prohibition of his works.

Keywords: Aesopian language, allegory and grotesque description, censorship, hidden intonation of disappointment in the narration, mastery, national contextuality

INTRODUCTION

In the 1920s, Soviet political censorship was set up as a means of controlling people and society in general. As part of this Glavlit, a centralised censorship body, was set up. The structure of local censorship bodies copied Glavlit at the republican, oblast, and krai levels. Soviet political censorship increased in scale and refinement and operated in a secretive and conspiratorial way. Arlen Blum has noted: "No printed matter having any verbal meaning could appear without the permit of the Glavlit bodies – up to postcards, visiting cards, matchbox stickers, and invitation cards".¹ The censorship system, which aimed to establish control over all forms of intellectual self-expression (including public speeches), proved to be so effective that it existed without cardinal changes until the collapse of the USSR. However, close reading of some works of the founder of the Kazakh national literature, Gabit Makhmudovich Musrepov (1902–1985), reveals that, although they were written during the Stalinist period and during the Khrushchev thaw, they overstepped the limits of the socialist system.

What helped the writer to get around the impediments of censorship and avoid punishment?²

The article argues that, although Musrepov was a reputable Soviet writer, and the materials presented in the article prove this, he worked at the meeting point of resistance and subjugation: resistance to ideology, subjugation to language.

Musrepov lived in the most arduous and contradictory period in the history of Kazakhstan. He was deeply worried about the fate of the Kazakh peoples at a time when the only demand was to obey. Musrepov mirrored a discrepant and complicated epoch in the stories *Glow* (Shughyla, 1933), *Why Are the Backs of Their Heads Itching?* (Zhelkeler nege qyshidy, 1944), *An Ethnographic Tale* (Etnografialyk änggime, 1956), and others. Under the strictest control and active interest of the authorities in the writer's creative activities, the latter's mastery and the incompetence of the censors allowed him to avoid the fate of having his works prohibited.

Musrepov's aesthetic experience proves that even in the most regime-engaged works (*Kazakh Soldier*, *The Image That I Failed to Meet*, *In the Captivity of the Enemy*) the writer was able to remain conventional. In connection with this, we should interpret in a special way one of his philosophical sketches, *The Secret of the Work*, included in the writer's *Diary*. His emphasised amplification of the meaning, given as 'astary' (a subtext, or having hidden motifs or implications) lets us conceive it not as an artistic method but as a worldview, a conceptual approach. Thus, in the writer's vision, a work is not merely content and form. A work has hidden motifs, indirect speech, comparisons. Musrepov (1997: 167) wrote that a hidden motif speaks indirectly through colours, songs, pictures, sounds, and whispers.

The writer's concentration on the moral problems of literature, the style of his works, remarkable for refinement, accurately adjusted, getting deep inside the consciousness, thoughts, and feelings of the reader, at the same time misled the censors and eventually resulted in the publication of his works. The intricate word of Gabit Musrepov indirectly and subversively stimulates a desire to dive into the text, invoking an anxious attitude to the text that envisages an opportunity of perpetual dialogue with the author, as the text is much more interesting than our fantasies, and correct interpretation in fact is an ethical behaviour before the Author. Musrepov often addresses his 'friend-reader', considering that such a co-authorship would provoke allusions and parallels that correspond to Soviet realities.

GABIT MUSREPOV – AN HONEST VIVID PERSONALITY

During the Soviet period, Musrepov was recognised as the founder of the Kazakh literature. For services to the Soviet power he was given state rewards and the most generous premiums; he also earned the highest titles in the country.³ However, a close analysis of his literary works today lets us argue that he worked at the meeting point of resistance and subjugation: resistance to ideology, subjugation to language. His masterly language competence let him remain a deeply honest, decent person. Musrepov belongs to the short list of the Soviet intelligentsia that escaped reprisals but saved face even under the terror of the Stalinist regime.

Musrepov's formation as a writer took place in the years of the Stalinist terror. At that time he held responsible positions and was at the edge of ideological work.⁴ However, between 1938 and 1955, his rapidly developing career was interrupted for almost twenty years.

Gabit Musrepov was one of the first to talk about extremes during the collectivisation of agriculture in Kazakhstan in the early 1930s. For the well known *Letter of the Five* (1932) about the "leftist Goloschekin's methods of collectivisation", which resulted in famine and a high mortality rate among hundreds of thousands of rural inhabitants, and the words to defend B. Mailin (If Beimbet is the enemy of the people, I am enemy too), which he voiced at a party meeting in 1937, G. Musrepov was expelled from the party in 1938. Thus, the 18-year period of so-called 'freelance creative work' appeared in his working biography.⁵

What was he persecuted for? And, at the same time, how could he escape the fate of other representatives of the Kazakh intelligentsia? It was the time when during the first wave of terror the elite of the nation was repressed – people like A. Baitursynov, A. Bokeikhanov, M. Dulatov, M. Zhumabayev, Z. Aimautov – and clouds were blackening over S. Seifullin, I. Jansygyrov, B. Mailin, and G. Musrepov. These people became a school of high intellectual honesty, moral responsibility, and civic courage. During the Stalinist terror, Musrepov became "an enlightened example"⁶ for his people. A contemporary patriarch of the Kazakh literature, Gerold Belger⁷, has called Gabit Musrepov an "honest vivid personality": "In everyday life I remembered him as a person of principle who could openly and precisely voice his opinion to the public and did not conform to the life course to sweeten the authorities and the environment" (Belger 2002).

Thus, Musrepov's protest in the famous *Letter of the Five* to Stalin in 1932 became an act of reckless courage. In July 1932, the first secretary of the Kazakh krai committee of the Communist Party, F. Goloschekin, was addressed by writer Gabit Musrepov, head of the Kazakh State Publishing House Mansur Gataulin, vice rector of the Communist Institute Mutash Davletgaliev, vice rec-

tor of academic affairs of the same institution Embergen Alatynbekov, and head of the energy sector of the state plan of the Kazakh ASSR Kadyr Kuanyshev. Based on the materials of the party fora and works of Stalin, they formulated a number of questions to which they responded themselves. The result of their considerations was summarised as follows: catastrophe in Kazakh agriculture, consequences of the leftist extremes in the politics of the Kazkrai (krai committee) of the Communist Party and party organs in localities. All the authors of the letter were members of the communist party, and their memories perpetuated debates around the viewpoints of S. Sadvokasov, S. Khodzhanov, T. Ryskylov, and others on some aspects of the socio-economic development of Kazakhstan and maintenance of the national traditions of the Kazakh people. Keeping that in mind, the letter was accompanied by a short explanatory note:

The bearers of these issues are in no way 'offended' persons or persons seeking career [...] The only objective is to help the socialist transformation in Kazakhstan by pointing to some serious gaps, raising the troublesome issues in the Bolshevik manner straightforwardly before the krai committee within the framework of party democracy and in terms of self-criticism, which has been the chief weapon of our party. Therefore we are confident that you will respond to our questions, taking them as suggestions coming from healthy comrades of the medium level party officials, not influenced by any names of 'big' persons. (Gribanova 2003)

During the years of the Great Terror (1937–1938), Musrepov desperately defended his friend, another classic of Kazakh literature, Beimbet Mailin. Musrepov made an impressive statement at the party meeting dedicated to denouncing the counter-revolutionary activities of Mailin: “With such an approach I am people’s enemy like him” (Shimyrbaeva 2002). Despite desperate efforts to defend his friend,⁸ Musrepov could not save him from arbitrary denunciation. Mailin was arrested on October 6, 1937, and on February 26, 1938, was executed on a falsified charge of being a people’s enemy, a counter-revolutionary bourgeois, a nationalist rebellious terrorist, and a subversive, a member of a traitorous organisation aimed to overthrow the Soviet regime in a violent way (Beiskulov 2008: 227).

Musrepov was punished for his intercession and in 1937 he was expelled from the party and dismissed from his position of the head of the Culture Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan. He was saved from imminent arrest by Alexander Fadeev, who arranged a secrete departure from Kazakhstan and safety for a year in Moscow (Shimyrbaeva 2002). Musrepov escaped reprisals, but for a long time disappeared from public life and lost his positions and status. For eighteen years Musrepov

was jobless, but did not betray his principles. The writer lived on royalties on his works. During this period he made translations, working on the texts of Henry, Shakespeare, Moliere, Gorky, Sholokhov, Ostrovsky, and Simonov. He prepared for the stage Shakespeare's tragedy *Anthony and Cleopatra*, as well as some comedies, such as *Niggard* by Moliere and *Talents and Admirers* by Ostrovsky. That was a great school of craftsmanship. His civic position, courage, and decency, as well as his multifaceted literary talent allowed Musrepov to rise above others of the epoch. This is the reason why Musrepov is viewed in Kazakhstan not as a writer of a certain epoch but as someone above time frame (Bakhtin 1986: 353).

AN ETHNOGRAPHIC TALE: WHAT DID THE CENSORS MISREAD?

The Anthology of Modern Kazakh Literature published by Columbia University (USA) begins with an ethnographic story by G. Musrepov (2013). The story has an ironic undertone as if the author makes fun of the collectivisation drama. In 1956, as well as many years later, the writer was forced to make concessions to ideological censorship when touching on the hot topic of the establishing of kolkhozes in Kazakhstan. The compromises meant some revision in the original build-up of the story. Their real intonation was expressed by details of the kinetic language – gestures, mimics, posture, and reactions to the on-going process of social transformations of two young companions of Borovsky, a student from forestry technical school (Musrepov 1980: 296).

The author/narrator gives an ironic and discrediting evaluation of the imaginary scenes that were exposed in the new social conditions, i.e. opposition to the ideology and objectives proclaimed by communists. Existential disposition, obviously, is born in the moments of historical cataclysms that blow up the very fundamentals of established human existence.

The characteristic peculiarity of the rhythmical structure of the text in the original version of the *Ethnographic Tale* is in the creation of a moment of simultaneity of experience and the clarity of the visible image. This is shown by the acute and detailed elaboration of impressions of real, existing reality, given in the sketches of the big black yurt of Yesengeldy, its interior decoration redolent of former wealth and present day poverty.

Obviously, out of all yurts that I saw, it would undoubtedly rank first by the number of holes and slits. I have never seen them in such number and size even in the torn-apart yurts of the shepherds. Any shepherd's wife

would mend even bigger holes. Five or six bore the traces of old colours and ornaments. The rest of the sticks resting on shanyrak [the upper dome-like portion of a yurt] seemed to be collected from the world around one by one – some were thin, others without curves, the rest could not even bear their names. Some five or six sticks had lost their colours, and were lamp-black. (Musrepov 1980a: 291)

The author's remarks, with their intonational/semantic validation, do not relieve the overall depressive impression from the detailed reconstruction of the ambiguous character. The functional role of the description of the yurt in the composition does not cause any doubts. The yurt, in such a miserable condition, shows the extreme impoverishment of its owners. In this sense, Musrepov's image has an association with Gogol's *Dead Souls*, where the house as a dwelling place in figurative poetics serves as an efficient means for characterising someone. Here we see also an exact parallel: the abject desolation of the mansion of the landlord Plushkin. In both cases social and psychological aspects of the allegoric mode correlate. The reason for pathological avarice in Gogol's plot and the depressive helplessness, maladjustment to life in Musrepov's text, indicated a caste belonging of personages: landlord and *tore* (aristocrats). Therefore, the contours of a social group's worldview are present as a subtext.

However, the historical perspective of Musrepov's narration also reflects a certain layer of national consciousness that had not yet dissolved into the turmoil of changing times and was not erased from the memory of the people. Kazakh national memory was bred on solid links between traditional customs and ritual, and therefore the story presents a conflict between traditional elders in the Zhanbyrshy aul (a village in Central Asia) and young visitors, Musrepov's companions, who openly ignore traditional customs. The source of the ironic attitude of the newcomers, without any doubt, is their young age, and they grow bolder under the impact of decisive, ruthless revolutionary eradication of the patriarchal fundamentals of the national way of life. But their boldness has limits too. The author-narrator and his young companions react to disparity between the traditional etiquette and the environment where that etiquette is played out with discontent. Nevertheless, they keep their emotions to themselves and "laughed inside themselves, and followed the rule of the game" (Musrepov 1980a: 291). The framework to study this game as part of culture was created by philosopher I. Heizing, who considers game and competition to be elements of a culture formation, which can be found in the interaction of groups (Hui-zinga 1992: 62). Musrepov's young companions understand communication as a form of game. He adds Kazakh ethnic colour to the figurative game. In the first translated edition, the reader notices a certain correlation between internal disagreement and the external restraint of the young actors:

We got in. In that way experienced diplomats receive a delegation from an unfriendly country. Laughing to ourselves, we obediently followed that comical ceremonial.

He left. We again burst into laughter. (Musrepov 1962: 75–76)

In the second translation the hypertrophied laugh of the guests receives more space.

And we three, unable to stop laughing, were rolling around the floor with bulging eyes, clutching our mouths, with tearing eyes, belly muscles aching, and we could not stop. (Musrepov 1982: 494)

Detailed interpretation of the original text of the *Ethnographic Tale* lets us capture a hidden feeling of disappointment, regret, and sorrow in the narration contrary to emphasis on the “happy class” that appears in the Bulgarian interpretation (Musrepov 1977). This disappointment emerges as a result of the dissonance between the beauty of the world and the poverty of human life (Musrepov 1980b: 288):

The road that hadn't been used much led through the thick plants. After a hot day their shadow pleasingly cooled the face. Far ahead groves were appearing as blue semicircles, guarding the entire tract from the dry winds. Lakes kept appearing along the way and the wind blowing on my back kept quieting down in a continuous wall of cane. It seemed as if this little corner was purposely created to emphasise once more the soleness, the beauty, and expanse of our steppes [---] Soon a spacious ravine showed. Approximately ten dozens of yurts looked black in exuberant greenery. Horses walking without a leash started to come across, cows grazed by two, by three, sheep and goats wandered in packs. The first thing that struck the eye,

– How emaciated they were! Like some living skeletons just covered with skin. (Musrepov 1982: 489–490)

It is doubtful that even this exposition of the ‘big picture of destruction’ gives grounds for unbridled joy. All the more so because, in further text, the writer depicts convincingly the detailed process of dying, in which the yurts, like living organisms, are also symbolically the cornerstone of the Kazakh mode of life. The extraordinary behaviour of Musrepov’s heroes, violating most rules of Kazakh education, only emphasises the dramatic situation – the living proof of “living in deconstruction” – showing how young minds misunderstood the fundamentals of the traditional culture.

These episodes raise the necessity to stress the problem of different levels of narration of the author-narrator and the hero. The personality of the author

does not equal the personality of the hero. Moreover, the image of the author-narrator is different from the position of Musrepov as a writer. These contradictions occur in the mind of the reader of the *Ethnographic Tale*. The sub-text of the story becomes more understandable in the light of the controversy with the time of writing the story. In comparison to the officially approved publication date, the year 1956, there is proof that the story was submitted to a publisher in Moscow in 1942 (Musrepov 1982: 502). It seems that under the pressure of censorship the authorised translation was accepted only in 1956. However, if we take the year 1942 as the true date, then the subtext contains even deeper philosophical and ideological aspects. The year 1942 was the hardest year of the Second World War when the scale of victims and suffering could have obviously contributed to the emergence of apocalyptic motives in the writer's work. The image of the aul cemetery symbolised not only the doom of Kazakh aristocracy (*tore*) but also the irreversibility of the tragedy that was experienced during the war.

If we take the year 1942 as an initial date for the completion of the *Ethnographic Tale* then another essay titled *Why Are the Backs of Their Heads Itching?* from 1944 should be linked to the first story. Both pieces demonstrate, on the one side, obvious resemblance to some thematic material and, on the other side, its interpretation. In both cases the description of a yurt is in the centre of the composition. G. Musrepov does not limit himself to one or two expressive details. His careful attention to detail carries an important task in forming the general concept. The extremely compressed story contains issues important for Musrepov, such as philosophical, social, and moral problems. The yurt as a semiotic concept is in the centre of the text structure, where shifted meanings of everyday objects and practices create the image of shifted, unnatural living conditions and way of life.

However, the context of the subject in its historical and creative aspects goes beyond these characteristics. In the *Ethnographic Tale* the kolkhoz theme is a framework for the development of the plot. At the same time the story line is almost lacking. None of the characters, visitors, or local people who live in the aul, tend to 'mark' the starting point in the historical prerequisites of the plot. This is surprisingly similar to the situation in Ivan Bunin's *Antonovka Apples* (Antonovskie iabloki, 1900), a story which matches with Musrepov's conception of re-construction of historical events. The narrator of the *Antonovka Apples* is deeply impressed by the destruction of the thousand-year state. There is a rapid change from 'previous' to 'current' reality. The story line has no breaking events, and the depicted situation is a reason for a nervous shock as well as for inner enrichment. The beginning part of the story structure has something in common with the ending part, to a greater or lesser degree.

In the first sentences of the *Ethnographic Tale* the secretary of a district committee of the communist party calls the narrator for an action. In the end, the same district committee secretary is lost in thought and does not agree with the hasty conclusion of the narrator about the dawn of a new era. G. Musrepov implements the classical version of a circular plot structure, which means that characters acquire experience and change their worldviews while ‘moving’ along the circled structure of the plot. The mood of story-telling changes throughout the plot. In this particular case the change is very significant: from a derisive, ironic attitude to situations of life at the beginning of the story to a philosophical worldview and generalisations at the end of the story. Such contexture and story development is more inherent in an essay. This text passage is organised in order to question the ideology of positive changes under communism. Centripetal action exposes an obvious, clear idea as the story unravels and comes to the end.

As mentioned above, Musrepov very finely uses the genre diffusion of an essay and a story, an essay and a tale, and a story and a tale. A trigger for a process of thought in the plot is the author’s statement: “We were running away from the aul, which was turned into a grave”. The semantic meaning of the buried aul is widely exposed in the *Ethnographic Tale*, but the etymology is minimised. However, the meaning of the expression ‘buried aul’ appears in the text in a wide structural range.

First of all, a poetic element appears in the story’s title – the gradual interrelation between the text and events as a reflection of one epoch, which, according to J. Derrida’s pattern could be presented as an epoch of “being in deconstruction” (Derrida 1985). Ethnography, which by its meaning symbolises the existence of material and intellectual culture, is in this case turned inside out and shows the reversed meaning of what once was a system of values of life for people: abandoned yurts, social etiquette that has become irrelevant, and disintegration of social norms that regulated relationships between people of different ages.

GLOW

BUILDING A KOLKHOZ IN KAZAKHSTAN: A GROTESQUE IMAGE

Emphases on dramatic details in G. Musrepov’s works form tragic accents that create a wider cultural framework. The motif of dramatic accents is combined with actual historic material in his story *Glow*, which dispels the myth of a bright future. On the one hand, Musrepov was deeply sensitive to the troubles

and suffering of his people, and, on the other hand, he was very attentive to the word and its semantics. *Glow* shows violent formation of socialism in the USSR. In spite of allegory and grotesque descriptions, the story reflects numerous elements of real life under Stalin. The failed kolkhoz is a convincing example of the fact that people must not be forced to form a kolkhoz. This story reflects the traumatic experience of the author who witnessed forced collectivisation, which later resulted in the Great Famine of 1932–1933.

In the dialogues, which also include philosophical passages on the Kazakh worldview, the image of a town appears to be as senseless as its name (Musrepov 1980a: 113). Artificially constructed, denying the mentality of a traditional culture, the soulless phantom town represents the tragic historical conditions of forced collectivisation. In the wider context of world literature this image of a phantom town resembles the metaphor of the foundation pit (or *kotlovan*) used by Andrei Platonov in his works.⁹

In this story, a masterpiece of artistic representation, people who left their homes and were expelled from native auls, were more or less able to leave the 'ditch town' created by Musrepov (1980a: 114). In the story, people who did not accept the kolkhoz as a highway to socialism escaped one night. However, similar things did not happen that easily in reality. The transfer from real history to contextual space is shown in the tone of the metaphorical image of the title – *Shughyla* (glow, light, shine). The writer is absolutely familiar with the circumstances; he knows the living conditions of Soviet society, notices the halftones of the picture. In a few remarks (Musrepov 1980a: 104–105) he is able to depict the existing reality without any worldview or ideology. The abstract, a soulless pattern of ideology (*Shughyla*, a popular kolkhoz name in the 1930s) contradicts the reality of everyday life – the warmth, the smoke of the fireplace (*tytini*).

The scene of the suffering cow left in the steppe in winter makes a great impression on the reader (Musrepov 1980a: 105). The owner of the cow was accused of being a *kulak* (rich exploiter); his property was expropriated and he was sent to an unknown destination, most likely to Siberia. Everybody is guilty of this inhumanity – those who dispossess and those who are dispossessed. Collectivised and uncared-for cattle are an extreme symbol of inhumanity in kolkhoz organisation. In order to create a complete picture of a shifted, doomed way of life, the author uses visual evidence of physical emptiness, depopulation in *Alyp* (giant) kolkhoz. This picture shows not only a doomed idea, but also doomed people within the system. It is similar to the idea of *tore* (Kazakh privileged caste) family degeneration if there is no boy child among the children (Musrepov 1980a: 268).

The story of the creation of *Glow* delivers an additional meaning to the essay. Musrepov's explanations, published in 1980 in his three-volume *Selected Works* (Tangdamaly shygharmalar) are given in a reserved form:

I decided to publish it again, even if 42 years has passed. The idea and content have not changed. It was an answer to critics' remarks. As a matter of fact, Shughyla has faced considerable misunderstanding and sharp hostility since it was published. (Musrepov 1980a: 116).

Gafu Kaiyrbekov's book *Eltinzhal*, published in 1990, contains invaluable evidence of late, tardy 'rehabilitation' of *Glow*. This was expressed in his diary:

He [Musrepov] was blamed by critics and went through periods of persecution. It was astonishing to see that even though he knew that this would lead to trouble, he took the risk and expressed his views and judgments in his writings; moreover, he published his works. To write this truth under threat of death was an act of a brave citizen, but understanding the writer's obligation to write the truth is twice a heroic act. (Kaiyrbekov 1990: 216)

Gafu Kaiyrbekov's thoughts are valuable as a source of historical facts that help to understand Musrepov's works and emphasise the outstanding character of the author: acumen, astute long sight, the writer's act of bravery and heroism are revealed in the stories *Glow* and *Why Are the Backs of Their Heads Itching?* (ibid.). Gabit Musrepov gave Gafu Kaiyrbekov a key to his *Glow* story: "Everything related to this tragedy is described in *Glow*, the memory keeps many facts" (ibid.: 205). After that G. Kaiyrbekov writes about Musrepov's remembrances:

A lot of white yurts. Seized property of the bai people [rich people]. It is difficult to imagine that a month or two ago there was a town crowded with people. We enter each yurt – dead silence, dead town. (ibid.)

This dead town has a real geographical location – *Torgai*. From the underlying subtext comes Goloshekin, one of the initiators of collectivisation in Kazakhstan, a process that led to the Great Famine. The author uses Goloshekin's name as a coordinate and a framework to the time period. The main street of the dead town is named after Goloshekin to symbolise the cynicism of proprietors and to be on show as the landmark of legal evil. As a result of the political violence against the rural population, the Great Famine lasted from 1931 to 1933 all over the Soviet Union. During the Great Famine the Kazakh people, however, suffered more than any other. Niccolo Pianciola (2001) states that "Kazakhstan had the earliest and most destructive consequences and experience. This ethnicity suffered from land reforms". Recent data shows that the Great Famine

of 1931–1933 killed 1,450,000 people, which was about 38% of the population. This is the highest rate among all the Soviet Republics (Pianciola 2004: 137).

CONCLUSION

Evaluative rereading of the text material and analytical facts shows that Musrepov was true to himself in his works even during the period of total terror. The writer's works demonstrate that he did not give up on his beliefs; he lived by his own principles and followed his own moral values. Research principles of phenomenological historicism indicate the importance of the personal worldview of the author, and this contributes to the originality of the works.

Censors suspected that the author used an undertone or so-called Aesopian language in his works that was sometimes referred to as 'a middle finger in the pocket'. Musrepov appealed to readers' co-authorship, which has such required characteristics as reading between the lines, the ability to find and understand a hidden undertone and interior meaning in the writing. A search for 'second meanings' in the text and their interpretation was an indispensable and necessary attribute of readers' creativity when reading Musrepov's works.

To summarise the idea, it may be said that the fate of most writings by Gabit Musrepov proves one of Mikhail Bakhtin's assumptions: "In the process of posthumous 'life', the works are enriched with new meanings, the writings are developing and reach a new level" (Bakhtin 1986: 350). The bitter historical truth enters into a dialogue with the official state-approved concept of the events crucial to Kazakhs, and is expressed in literary works as a discussion between different worldviews. The tragic scenes from the life of the 'buried aul' are the evidence of forced 'selection': those who survive will be obedient and patient. In this scope, the dialogs and characters of the mentioned works by Musrepov reach up to the level of eternal symbols of worldwide grief and evil.

The *Ethnographic Tale*, which shows the Kazakh way of life, traditional culture, and aesthetics, becomes a work that shows the true tragedy of the Kazakhs in the 1930s: collectivisation, Stalinist purges, and the dramatic break of people from their previous lives. Grotesque descriptions and undertones in *Glow* and numerous details of life under Stalin point out the cruel and totalitarian system and dispel the myth of a promising future. The essay titled *Why Are the Backs of Their Heads Itching?* was considered as politically destructive, showing the Soviet government from its negative side; however, it appeals to the readers' feelings, making them regret the lost cultural values and traditions.

As a highly educated person, Musrepov was the first to see the implacable cruel nature of a system that destroyed the traditional way of life of the Kazakh

people. The artistic integrity of the three abovementioned works is an epitaph for the destroyed Kazakh traditional culture, showing the hidden life of a suppressed community.

A person of great erudition and sharpened consciousness, Musrepov grasped earlier than others the merciless brutal character of the destruction of Kazakhs' old lifestyle. All the three works show an artistic integrity that is an epitaph to the destruction of Kazakh traditional culture. The integrity is determined by the genre's form, composition similarities, and narrative forms. 'Transparent' topics as intertextual clamps 'cement' the historical chronicle into an integral work of art. Musrepov's artistic space is wide: the cosmic world, the earth world, real and imaginative worlds, the world as a whole universe concurs with the nomadic assumption that the aul is a universal cosmic and life space.

Spatial and temporal concreteness is typical for the works under analysis. The artistic space in which Musrepov works is many-sided: the worlds of the cosmos, the earth, and space – both visible and imaginable – include all the worlds of living beings and draw on imagination about the aul as a universe for the nomad in unity with cosmic and existential spaces. The time of narration is the concrete tragic period of collectivisation with the merciless demolition of the universe, the way of life of the steppe. The organising centre in the minor existence-world is the yurt, widely exploited by the author. The yurt symbolises the motif of the destroyed house (world, existence) of the nomad, but also an irreversibility of violence experienced by the nation. The author connects with great tact ethnographic precision with the moral truth: in the subtext an unhealed national tragedy is shown. In the 1930s, mass literature advocated the idea of collectivisation, protecting 'common life' principles, but Musrepov, contrary to that, depicts the disastrous processes of communalisation of peasants into collective farms. Those contradictions between peasants and the state are revealed throughout the country, and in particular in the region of Kos Shalkar. According to witnesses of that period, when people betrayed friends for personal well-being, Musrepov lived in dignity, loved, wrote his works, and showed fortitude, despite the restricting measures of censorship on writers' works. The talented writer experienced periods of the Red Terror persecution, oblivion, and assault, very often escaping only by chance. He said all he wanted to say and wrote all he intended to write; he did not take part in 'the great conspiracy of silence', and his name and literary heritage are preserved in historical records.

NOTES

- ¹ Cited in <http://analizators.ru/articlematerial5>, last accessed on January 28, 2016.
- ² It is believed that the following methods were employed to get around censorship: allegory (Aesopian language), samizdat (self-publishing), tamizdat (publishing abroad), and other ways. About getting around the censorship limits see: <http://analizators.ru/articlematerial20>, last accessed on January 28, 2016.
- ³ The list of the high awards and titles of the writer is impressive: academician of the Academy of Sciences of the KazSSR (1985), people's writer of the KazSSR (1984), laureate of the Ch. Valikhanov premium for the collection of the literary-critical and publicist works, titled *The Duty of an Artist* (1977), Chairman of the Supreme Council of Kazakhstan (1974–1975), Hero of Socialist Labour (1974). For the collection of stories titled *The Image That I Failed to Meet* (1966) he was awarded the State Premium of the Kazakh SSR in 1968 and in 1970 he got the Abay State Premium of the Kazakh SSR for the collection of stories and novels titled *Once and for All Life*. He was awarded the Order of Lenin three times and he also received other orders and medals.
- ⁴ In 1928 G. Musrepov was the chief editor, and in 1931 head of the Kazgoslitizdat (Kazakh State Publishing House), in 1934 editor of the newspapers *Kazakh Culture* and *Socialist Kazakhstan*. In 1934–1935 he was head of political enlightenment work at the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Kazakh SSR, and in 1936–1937 chairman of arts issues at the Council of People's Commissars of the Kazakh SSR. His biography stated that from 1938 to 1955 Musrepov was a freelance writer. In 1958 he was elected secretary of the Council of Writers of the USSR, and a member of the State Committee of the USSR on Lenin and State Premiums in the Sphere of Literature, Arts, and Architecture (see: Ayagan 2006: 67–67; Ayagan 2004: 648–650; Chernysheva & Saginaeva 1994: 5–7; Narymbetov 1994: 7–11).
- ⁵ See: Musrepov Gabit Makhmudovich (<http://el.kz/m/articles/view/content-13417>, last accessed on February 26, 2016).
- ⁶ This is a reference to Fyodor Dostoyevsky who in his letter to Valikhanov on December 14, 1856, described a similar mission: “to serve his motherland by being an enlightened example to Russians” (Dostoyevsky 1985: 104).
- ⁷ Gerold Belger (b. 1934), a contemporary Kazakh writer, interpreter, publicist, author of 53 books, and over 1800 publications in various languages. He has translated twenty works from German into Russian, and over 200 works from Kazakh into Russian.
- ⁸ Musrepov's position was recorded in the protocol of the meeting of the party organisation under the Writers' Alliance of Kazakhstan, dated October 8, 1937, when the decision on the expulsion of B. Mailin from the ranks of the communist party was made. It was noted that “comrade Musrepov G., being a member of the Writers' Alliance and head of the cultural enlightenment department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, made a speech at the party meeting of the Writers' Alliance in July 1937, to openly defend the enemy of the people, B. Mailin; moreover, he suspended the release of a newspaper issue (not being its editor) with the article denouncing Mailin as a nationalist, and re-wrote the article in favour of Mailin” (Beiskulov 2008: 227). At the party meeting on October 8, 1937, when again the issue of Mailin was motioned,

“comrade Musrepov made a statement and openly defended the enemy Mailin; exploiting his position, he took responsibility in a courageous manner, declaring that he, Musrepov, knew Mailin quite well [---] and that he trusted Mailin politically and was ready to warrant him, and therefore, he, Musrepov, defended and would defend him from the people who accused Mailin of nationalism” (ibid.: 228). “There are many other facts proving the connection between Musrepov and Mailin and other people’s enemies, such as Seifullin, Lebedenko [---] (our information is that they had been arrested by that time). Pass the case of comrade Musrepov to consider his belonging to the party organisation of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan” (ibid.: 229). (The document style is kept without changes – authors.)

- ⁹ Literary critic Per-Arne Bodin asserts that *kotlovan* (the foundation pit) is another comprehensive metaphor in Platonov’s novel with the same title. As Per-Arne Bodin has mentioned, one would think that the foundation pit fully fits in the context of the novel. But in Platonov’s novel the foundation pit becomes a tomb, not the first element of constructing an apartment building for the proletariat. In the novel it becomes a symbol of the region beyond the grave and heroes; indeed, it interprets the foundation pit as a grave (see Bodin 1994: 170–174).

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BETWEEN THE EAST AND THE WEST: REFLECTIONS ON THE CONTEMPORARY ART OF KAZAKHSTAN

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Abstract: The paper analyses a self-cognitive experience performed by Kazakh contemporary art, led by globalisation tendencies, in search of its place in the world. Two decades of independence have become the basis for a new cultural space, where Kazakhstan sees itself both as the most western of Oriental countries and the most oriental of Western ones. Current lifestyles in Kazakh society, as well as the chosen political and economic vectors, considerably affect artistic consciousness, defining boundaries between ethno-cultural identity and the mainstream, which dictates its own terms and conditions.

The present study focuses on art. In our opinion, it is the most illustrative area of visual creativity, which, faster than any other, reacts to each change in social mentality. The world reflected in a picture of one artist could reflect the world of the whole nation. Now the most interesting and important questions for Kazakhstan's citizens focus on this problem. These are the same questions that can be found in the title of an emblematic painting by Paul Gauguin: Where do we come from? What are we? Where are we going?

Keywords: contemporary art, identity, Kazakhstan, search, ways

INTRODUCTION

Culture is a fate...

Lee Kuan Yew

Modern Kazakhstan is a country that continues its transformation from multi-ethnic to mono-ethnic. This historical fact lays at the basis of many modern social processes. After the country became independent, the Kazakhs who not so long ago represented an ethnic minority became the biggest ethnic group in Kazakhstan. In this context, many things have changed, including self-awareness and self esteem. Today these ex-nomads and ex-members of one of the Soviet republics can proudly say: "I am a Kazakh!"

The thing that was strongly eradicated in the recent past was suddenly remembered and has poured out with a huge flow on the pages of books, on city

streets, TV screens, and Internet forums. Ethnic origin has suddenly begun to prevail over Soviet identity. Language, customs, moral and ethic orientations and mentality are only small parts of what now forms Kazakhstan's mainstream.

Is modern society ready to accept it? How is the self-determination process reflected in art? How contemporary is contemporary Kazakh art and does it really respond to the challenges of time? In this paper, we try to find answers to these questions.

Our aim is not to critique or exalt one thing at the cost of another, but to trace the nature of the deep mental processes that characterise Kazakhstan today, using the example of the evolution of artistic consciousness.

The basic analysis here is the artistic one that is directed at two stages in the development of professional Kazakh art. We talk about the art of the Soviet and independent periods: two fundamentally different artistic systems, two worldviews, transmitting the mindset of a society that was formed in less than a hundred years. We believe that art is the most truthful mirror reflecting, with no distortion, the real life of an ethnos.

A CURSORY LOOK AT HISTORY

Kazakhstan had not faced the problem of cultural identity, but then everything changed with a fundamental reverse in the history of Kazakh society in the early twentieth century that modified all the parameters of society's existence; the strongest changes concerned spiritual consciousness and the whole complex of worldview orientations.

In the 1930s the forced collectivisation of the indigenous population became a top priority on the way to inevitable industrialisation. This violated the cultural genotype of nomadism and started irreversible changes in the spiritual mentality of Kazakh society. A colossal reduction of livestock and subsequent hunger created the preconditions for the Kazakh people for an essential transition from a nomadic to a sedentary lifestyle. Radical impairing of social equilibrium, movement of tribal groups in these territories, and a negative effect on the transfer of the memory and traditions of the older generations revealed that coerced sedentarisation had become a fundamental turning point for Kazakh society and, to some extent, accelerated the inverse process of adapting to a new culture (Ogayon 2012).

By means of a rigid 'persuasion' policy, former nomads were forced to swap the freedom of the steppes for the industrial landscape of the city, and nature for the anthropogenic environment. This gave certain results: from 1926 to 1939 the republic's population increased by 2.6% and the population of cities – by

268%. Collectivisation, terrible per se, gave the opportunity to talk about the humanitarian crisis of the 1930s, when “victims of hunger were 1,798,400 ethnic Kazakhs, or 46.8% of total Kazakh population” (Masanov et al. 2000: 376).

By the end of 1966 the number of Kazakh people was close to the level of 1926. This affected the whole population policy, making Kazakhs an ethnic minority in their original historical territory for a long time. So, as a result of active migration processes, by 1989 Slavs constituted already 44.3% of Kazakhstan’s population, 7.2 million people. Due to the high level of urbanisation and education, Slavs dominated the health and social security system of Kazakhstan: 46% compared to 38.5% of Kazakhs; in science 60% Slavs compared to 25.4% of Kazakhs; in management 56.8% Slavs compared to 30.2% of Kazakhs (Zhanguttin 2009).

Physical extermination of indigenous representatives eliminated the main carriers of the gene pool, as simple nomads, keepers of tradition, and the intellectual elite, holders of the spiritual potential of the ethnic group, were under attack.

The formation of Kazakhstan’s professional art school began in the 1930s and coincided with the most tragic events in the history of the Kazakhs. Perhaps the real danger of losing the internal unity of the past and present forced those who were always at the forefront of spiritual awareness – artists and poets – to find a solution. Thus, young Kazakh art manifested itself clearly and authoritatively. Visual arts, theatre, music, and films were inspired by national cultural identity, the spiritual core of which was placed in a “different context where parameters of European genres dominated; it represents a distinctive pattern of cultural symbiosis” (Sharipova 2008: 5).

Contrary to political ‘excesses’, the creative climate of the 1930s was extremely favourable, especially in Alma-Ata (now Almaty). You could say it was a kind of protest made by the intellectuals against terror and violence, expressed through a synthesis of traditional and new, folk and professional. Kazakh theatres annually staged several performances. The authors were Kazakhs: M. Auezov, S. Seifullin, B. Maylin, and others. The Kurmangazy State Orchestra, along with folk music, mastered the classical European repertoire, while the talented self-taught experts and collectors of Kazakh folklore – K. Zhandarbekov, A. Kashaubaev, K. Baiseitova, and many others – became the foundation of modern Kazakh theatre.

Repressions raged more severely and therefore Kazakh artists searched for ways of self-realisation more intensely. Despite the fact that there was no system of art education, their undoubted talents meant that they had the opportunity to study and work, achieving resounding success. N. Khludov, A. Ponomarev, A. Lebedev, A. Antonov, N. Krutilnikov, F. Bolkoiev – these are just a few names

of artists and artisans arrested in Kazakhstan for various (mainly political) reasons. All of them became teachers and mentors for young, talented Kazakhs, who later founded a professional art school; for example A. Kasteev, A. Ismailov, Y. Tansykbaev, and others.

It should be noted that the Kazakh intellectuals of that period always sought to unite rather than divide. Art remained a sphere that artists themselves consciously and purposefully guarded from the intrusion of politics and ideology. Even with an aggressive cultural policy, artists understood the need to preserve traditional culture.

The specificity of Kazakh professional art is mainly expressed by its content and not so much by the fact that it has started from scratch. Because of the nomadic way of life and the cultural identity of temporary art, painting as a kind of spatial art was an absolutely alien phenomenon for the Kazakhs.

Kazakhs fully possessed the required powerful spiritual charge, the core of which consisted of a pure uncomplicated traditional consciousness; all the rest was ‘a trick’ (Sultanova 2012: 110). For talented artists, folklore remained a reserve of high art, an actual experience. Their art was “inextricably linked with folk art, used its ideas and images, filling itself with strength and energy inherent to this type of art” (Sharipova 2008: 6).

Interestingly, it was painting that became a sort of ‘testing ground’ for a new, emerging artistic reality. It should be noted that in Kazakhstan painting grew vigorously between the 1930s and 1950s, in contrast to applied art, which was almost forgotten during this period. The main reason for this was the requirement of the Socialist Realism policy to create art that was “national in form and socialist in content”, as was announced in the decree of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CC CPSU), *On the Restructuring of Literary and Artistic Organisations*, in 1932 (Erengross 2001: 442). The fastest and the most effective implementation of this requirement was possible in painting, a brand new art form for the Kazakhs, with no internal linkage, unlike applied art which always embodied the soul of the nomads.

Adapting to new circumstances, “tradition has breathed its potential, understanding, and values in the professional art. This factor contributed to the preservation of the cultural memory of people, to the survival of traditions” (Ergalieva 2002: 5). And it really allowed the professional art school to continue its existence and to combine harmoniously a true national spirit with a new form, dictated by historical realities, but without becoming an obedient ideological tool.

The true traditional spirit, whatever form it takes, is always independent of place and time and is something constant. It is also a “purely intellectual sphere, the only one where there is no need in efforts to adapt different men-

talities” (Guénon 2004: 189). This may be “a matter of elites only, in the fullest and truest sense of the word: we are talking about the intellectual elite only, and never there is any other, and all the social divisions do not matter” (ibid.). ‘Intelligence’ here is considered not as the mind or the ability to think; it is as certain shrewdness, ascended to the realm of the spirit, which is above the will. Soviet ideology, and mass repression in particular, purposefully destroyed the intellectual elite and, alongside, the Kazakh cultural matrix. The more important mission of professional art, which was made to mobilise all its forces, was to protect the most important, spiritual, core, enclosing it in a radically new visual language.

We believe that this explains the uniqueness of contemporary Kazakh art, which, having virtually no professional basis, can perceive the inner meaning of a completely alien artistic language in a short time.

GUARDIANS OF ETERNITY

Any art school in the process of formation faces the problem of finding a new physical form for the expression of ‘eternal’ values, i.e. traditions. Kazakhstan was no exception here.

The initial stage of the formation of professional art began in the period of the 1920s–1940s, something that Kazakh art critic Raikhan Ergalieva poetically calls a “syndrome of Antaeus” (Ergalieva 2011: 14). Like the mythical demigod Antaeus, the first Kazakh artists were not only inspired, but also nourished, by the energy of their native land.

A specific feature of the new artistic reality was the desire to preserve and transform, in a special way, traditional knowledge hidden in folklore. Folklore, “carrying a charge of emotions, ideas, originality of style, refracting in contemporary art receives double rethinking” (Ergalieva 2004: 6). This is what further defines the identity of contemporary art in Kazakhstan. It should be emphasised that this is not traditionality but rather traditions, and not just a search for an original artistic language.

Understanding the complexity of their task, the artists transformed the national awareness of colours and shapes into a special low-key colour and a certain simplicity of plot. Folk motifs became the bases of many musical and dramatic works in the scenic arts and literature, and artisans on the periphery tried to preserve their traditions in arts and crafts, while urban cooperatives and factories organised mass-production of products that were “national in form, socialist in content”.

The old image system was soon completely gone; its return could have had negative consequences, although no one could prohibit talented people from searching for their own way. They intuitively understood that they were to define the future of art. In order to find the right direction, they had to make a start, inspired by something powerful, immutable, and permanent. Representing the intellectual elite, artists turned to the spiritual 'T' and tried to project oral forms developed over centuries onto canvas and paper. Just as it was before, a vivid, sparkling folklore gave content to unfamiliar forms created with the use of a new plastic language; this marked the future of Kazakh art.

Despite a strongly pronounced national identity, Kazakh art quickly found its place in the context of a long-standing world art system. This happened thanks to a folk basis, which, being original and unique, still represents a part of world traditional consciousness. In folklore, immortal spiritual values are combined with a lively sense of humour and timeless archetypes that everyone can understand.

Abyl Khan Kasteev is considered the founder of Kazakh professional painting. Together with his colleagues, the Khodzhikov brothers, Aubakir Ismailov, and others, he tried to learn the secrets of an art that was new for them, in order to express images and emotions that flowed from the heart. These images were woven of variegated yarns, the colour and weaving of which were prompted by native steppes and mountains. The painters constantly felt an invisible proximity to nature, despite the fact that the city became their refuge. Their style was primitive, yet in the best sense of the word. 'Primitive' in this context should be considered as something natural, simple, and complete, lacking any superficial qualities because "primitive culture is something powerful and unified, highly viable and effective" (Spengler 1999: 43). Pointing to the work of no particular artist, we would like to find something global that lies in common between them and is a kind of national idea which became the dominant concept in search of identity.

In the work of artists of the 1920s–1940s, traditional cultural content animates everything, showing that a new reality can be created not from the ruins of the old one, but on its foundation. Masters did not directly follow folk stories, but, nevertheless, the poetics of their native land, its eternity and its people were the main themes of their artistic searches. Only the language had changed.

Portraits, landscapes, genre paintings, etc., are not just 'covered' with folk motifs, but are immersed in them. It is impossible to separate or remove these motifs because in their artless simplicity and truth they represent life itself. The steppes and the mountains, the pungent aromas of dry plants and animals are not just a background for people, but are the main protagonists, the true heroes without whom the world is impossible.

In pursuit of 'national originality', artists did not resort to purely superficial evidence of their ethnic origin. They embodied the infinite involvement in traditions of the native land that generously fed their talent. Heidegger supposed that art as a process of creating within the creation of truth is poetry. Creation is real only when we detach ourselves from our everyday lives, intruding into an open creation; and then in this way we affirm the truth of our being in the truth of being (Heidegger 2008: 209). This perfectly captures the essence of the philosophy of Kasteev and his followers, which argues that if art is poetry, then folk poetry becomes visible visual art thanks to the talent of the artist.

It can be explained by the special status of poetry and word art among Kazakh nomads. In the culture of the nomads, verbal types crown the improvised pyramid of the arts. Artists managed to express all the wealth and variety of the poetic gift of nomads through special colour sensation, forming a picture of the world.

A striking example are the paintings by Abylkhan Kasteev, *Kolkhoz Dairy Farm* (1936), *Milking the Mares* (1936), *Portrait of a Young Abai* (1945), *Anarkhan* (1953), *Khan-Tengri* (1959), and *Cours Torgai* (1955), and Aubakir Ismailov's *Nomadic* (1931), and *Crimson Autumn* (1931), as well as the works of Ural Tansykbaev, and many other works of art of the period.

The main trend in the Kazakh art of the 1950s could be called 'Land of Grandfathers'. This constitutes the stage of maturity of the national art school (Ergalieva 2011: 56). Moldakhmet Kenbaev, Sabur Mambeev, Kanafia Telzhanov, Sakhi Romanov, and others were a new generation raised by the socialist system. They received a professional education at leading universities in Moscow and Leningrad (now St. Petersburg). Their perception of the world was different, as "Kazakh school of painting, developing in line with Soviet art space, was isolated from the world processes" (Baturina 2009: 64). Social realism as a truly imperial style influenced everything and especially ideological content. It was possible to create only in the 'right' way. But Kazakhstan with its simplicity and ingenuousness did not go very well with the bright, glossy, pretentious decorations of ideologically restrained formal orientation.

The open spaces of the boundless monochrome steppe and extra temporality of the Kazakh relief disposed artists to reflections and to the aspiration to learn about themselves. This was discordant with beauty and the pathetics of collective-farm life where everything was, at least to some extent, always in the public eye.

This acute conflict of form and content forced young artists who had grown up in industrial landscapes to look for inspiration and creative energy in the eternity of nature. Former mental orientations, clearly defined by the first generation of artists, were transformed into epic-romantic poetics. It is impor-

tant that professional art educations obtained in the best academies caused an incredible enrichment of figurative language. Access to the fine art schools of the world let Kazakh artists actively experiment with composition and colour.

Almost all paintings of that period are characterised by bright individuality. Each artist had his own style, but together they all followed the same semantic code, which we would call 'consent'. This term can be considered a fundamental unity of the categories inherent to the philosophy of the life of the nomads: harmony with nature and freedom of spirit. M. Kenbayev's pictures *Conversation* (1958) and *Catching of a Horse* (1961), K. Telzhanov's canvases *On the Earth of the Grandfathers* (1958) and *Page Mambeev at a Yurta* (1958), and many others, are indicative here.

Although for the entire Soviet space this period was marked by political 'thaw', a dissonance between the external and the internal, between the shell and the meaning, continued to deepen. Therefore, it was necessary for Kazakh art to find the delicate balance that would bring together an individual and the world around him. Thanks to this strong and intense energy of national expression, the art of the 1950s became, and remains, the first important period of artistic expression for Kazakh identity.

We should note another key aspect that would be inherited by subsequent decades – improvisation. For the Kazakh worldview, the ability to improvise is the basic ability. This is the core of traditional consciousness transmitted by means of folklore. Developing predominantly not spatial, but temporal arts, the nomads of the Great Steppe honed verbal forms of communication with the world. The greater was the pressure from the outside, the more the creative spirit opposed; with improvisation this went deeper into the ethnic basis.

The 1960s were the period of Kazakh art's 'self-identification'. In contrast to the soft, subtle and heartfelt lyrics of the 1950s, this stage formulated its credo dramatically and fundamentally as a search for a national style. The language of this style should be simple where possible, solid and clear as ancient symbols that have the same meaning in all world cultures.

We can say that in that period Kazakh artists wondered just like Paul Gauguin, who a few decades earlier had left the Old World for a forgotten 'innocence' of soul and heart. Bright, symbolically rich decorative brushwork became a kind of 'message' of civilization. The artists of the Blue Rose creative association sought the truth just like Gauguin, although not in exotic Pacific islands, but in the Kazakh steppes, where little had changed for hundreds of years. 'Eternal nomadism' is imprinted in the paintings of Pavel Kuznetsov as a lost idyllic paradise.

Salikhitdin Aitbayev, Tokbulat Togusbaev, Shaymardan Sariev, Oralbek Nurzhumaev, Abdrashit Sydykhanov, and others inherited a complex range

of traditions, as well as problems of continuity, identity, and political ideology; they were ready to rethink the entire mainstream art system. Constantly improving their technique and intelligence, relying, as we could say, on world artistic heritage, the artists of the 1960s were looking at themselves not just as painters, but also as a link in the chain of generations. In this context, their priority was the aspiration for self-identification and mental separation from cultural unification, for spiritual independence and a search for inner freedom.

They were looking for a way through figurativeness, symbols, metaphors, and allegories of classical oriental art. They were fascinated by the expressiveness and conciseness of traditional Japanese art. They were inspired by the inclination to minimalism, embodied in the special aesthetic categories of “*wabi* – the beauty of poverty, severe simplicity, roughness, and sophistication at the same time, and *yugen* – the inexpressible by means of language truth” (Kanevskaja 1990: 11). The Muslim miniature was also attractive in its perfected technique of “translating life images into the language of art” (Ergalieva 2011: 114).

Awareness of the value of traditional culture and a vast artistic experience of synthesis led to the birth of a so-called ‘severe style’, which characterises the Kazakh art of the 1960s. The artists of this decade drew bold parallels between the aesthetics of ancient nomads and the artistic language of Matisse, Gauguin, Van Gogh, and Cezanne. They were not just experimenting, they were looking for meaning. Thus, they were gradually getting rid of unnecessary shells, and developing a proper, deeply original, Kazakh national style. Crisp and clear, it is distinguished by deliberately simplified forms, even by a certain severity, or, in other words, maturity.

In support of this, we can cite the example of the paintings *Women of My Homeland* (1967) by Ali Dzhusupov, *Young Kazakhs* (1967) by Salihitdin Aitbayev, *Under the Sky of the Motherland* (1970) and *Shepherd* (1969) by Sakhi Romanov, *Kitchen* (1972) and *Birth Song* (1970) by Shaymardan Sarieva, and more.

A canvas by S. Aitbayev, called *Happiness* (1966), can be considered the most significant here as it makes us remember traditional Kazakh felts with their static nature. The images of a young shepherd and his wife are as if they were imprinted, woven into the narrative fabric, and their angularity does not render the composition heavy. On the contrary, they are full of confidence and clarity. The viewer immediately identifies the noble traits of each of the characters, despite the lack of grace and sweetness. Thus, we immediately recognise, in an ancient bronze Saka badge coated with the patina of time, an authentic masterpiece that has nothing in common with the trendy glitter of jewellery alloys.

Here the pictorial space is intentionally simplified to the extreme, refined of all that is strange or unnecessary; the only thing that remains is the foundation on which ornaments of the newlyweds' happy present and future are 'hammered'. The restrained colours echo the compositional structure of the work, and simple, clear tones, natural and expressive, organically supplement the whole picture. With this canvas, Aitbayev sought to create a fundamental image of the native homeland, eternal in its wisdom as the vault of heaven over the vast steppe.

Adepts of the 'severe style' clearly formulated what their precursors were searching for by intuition. The artists of the 1960s created a true national style that combined the solidity of the former artistic language with the dynamics of the current one.

The next stage in the development of Kazakh art is conventionally said to be the 1975–1991 period. It is marked by an active artistic search without any homogeneous cohesive nature, as was the case in the 1960s. A new generation of artists finally adapted to the international art space and constituted a distinctive professional school. It should be noted that knowledge and skills were implemented much more freely. Artists experimented boldly, incorporated new techniques, searched persistently for themselves and their own styles.

The ideological situation of that time created an inertia of utopian ideas, which were increasingly debunked. In political history this period is called 'the years of stagnation', although this aspect does not concern art. A distinctive feature of this stage was latent searches. This can be explained by the fact that under the influence of external factors old heroic pathos was fragmented and heterogeneity of artistic searches took over for each artist. The decisive factor here was the discrepancy between the desired and the actual.

A hero who overcomes time and space is a central theme in the art of that time. This concept is the exact opposite of the traditional worldview and is released by hyperbolic artistic methods. The works of those years are deliberately ambitious and impressive. They feature plenty of air and light and in the foreground there is often matter, altered by human hands and consciousness.

An exaggerated exaltation of man's status that had nothing in common with his real state led to a greater individualism that excluded recourse to spiritual basis and, as a consequence, to dark painful reflections, anticipation, and excitement, which was characteristic of the emotional world of fine art of the late 1970s and early 1980s.

It is in the crucible of doubt and disappointment that around the end of the 1970s and beginning of the 1980s a new artistic vision began to crystallise, seeking to reconcile the needs of real time and traditional cultural constants. In order to find the lost space, artists did not withdraw into themselves, but

actively looked for common ground with everything that was new. The artists of the 1970s were nourished by the environment of companionship of philosophers, poets, writers, artists, and architects. As per the period, all this was often of an informal nature (Iusupova 2009: 8).

‘People of the seventies’ discussed the Moscow and Leningrad (today St. Petersburg) exhibitions with great feeling, greedily listening to those who managed to visit (sources of information other than official were difficult to get). Practically all the ‘people of the seventies’ were well educated, and distinguished by their liberal views from other artists of the era. Their world was formed by national traditions and creativity of postimpressionists, music of The Beatles, Kierkegaard, and Camus’s philosophy.

Unlike the ‘people of the sixties’, who followed, to a greater or lesser degree, the uniform method of socialist realism, since the 1970s there has been an era of ‘loner heroes’, and as part of this identity has realised itself, winning against the instinct, and the slogan, of solidarity of purpose (Malinovskaia 2004: 25). S. Aytbayev, S. Sariyev, and M. Kisamidinov, the brightest and most tragic figures of those years, were constantly in the thick of things, while at the same time feeling like ‘stepsons of the era’. However, the art they created was about building bridges between different schools, instead of destroying or subverting as it used to be in the nineties.

After the success of yesterday’s ‘renegade’ works in the international cultural community, non-conformist art acquired a long-awaited freedom, which allowed artists to expand their creative search. Suffocation in the grip of ideological consciousness began and eagerly absorbed everything. Thus “in the late 1970s and in the 1980s, art briskly outgrew all possible ‘-isms’, gaining the desired experience and the necessary immunity” (Ergalieva 2002: 68).

Kazakh professional art required almost sixty years to become independent and able to determine its own destiny. The creative community in its search for direction referred to the entire world’s cultural and artistic heritage – to the figurative monumentality of Italian Trecento, the oriental miniature, French Post-Impressionism, and Russian avant-garde. Such diversity was dictated by the need to find an intuitive sign of spiritual unity as support for the development of a proper original artistic vision.

For several reasons Kazakh art had to be equal to Soviet art, which, from 1934, in turn headed for ideologically restrained Russian Itinerants (V. Perov, I. Repin, V. Surikov, I. Kramskoi, and others) (Nakov 1991: 135). This fact always pushed progressive artists to seek actively for a national identity, which is particularly characteristic of the stagnant years of the 1970s and 1980s. By the 1990s, a special artistic energy potential had been formed, which was based on the professional school, which outgrew serious and superficial passions

for different, spiritually alien elements from the Western social and cultural environment.

In Alma-Ata in the 1980s, despite a ban, students' exhibitions by the groups Green Triangle, Night Tram, Red Tractor, Intersection, and others, from Karaganda, Guryev (now Aktau), and some other large cities, promoted art more actively. Being, in fact, nonconformists, many gifted artists experienced hard times because of their protests against Soviet cultural policy. Diplomas from art schools and other institutions were withheld from some (K. Dzhapargaliyev, E. Tarasevich, V. Lebedev), while some were tragically lost young, having committed suicide or succumbed to madness (K. Dzhapargaliyev, S. Vorobyova, B. Koroteyev, A. Kim).

For Kazakhstan, the 1990s became a time of transformation of thought and a fundamental reorganisation of national consciousness and national psychology. As E. Malinovskaia writes, "art practice in the 1990s fixed in national consciousness the socio-cultural function of modern art, breaking the stereotype of Soviet ideology about the proximity and clarity of art to the people" (Malinovskaia 2000: 71).

Therefore, it becomes obvious that at each of the stages of the development of Soviet art in Kazakhstan ethnic origin was not lost but carefully guarded, being transformed into a new figurative shape. The harder was the ideological pressure, the more artists opposed this reality. We are talking here about real art reflecting fates of real people, crippled by the system, rather than 'court' officialdom.

THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY: IN SEARCH OF 'HOME'

When Kazakhstan gained its sovereignty, the process of a large-scale development of the national idea strengthened. It was not just the formation of a domestic art system at a new point on the political map; it was the formation of a 'national model of the world', which could be implemented only through culture and art.

In Asia, Kazakhstan, ahead of other ex-Soviet republics, a new reality began to form and, fortunately, it has avoided civil strife and armed conflicts, even if its independence was not so easy to win. Now for Kazakhstan, as for no other country in the post-Soviet space, the problem of self-determination became important. This can be explained in terms of its special geographical position and the resulting cultural paradigm. It seems to be clear: over three thousand years the local society was nomadic, but from the twentieth century it became sedentary, with a rich and distinctive culture. However, it is difficult for modern

Kazakhstan citizens to position themselves unambiguously, as from the political and social point of view we are ‘the most Western of the Eastern countries’, while in mentality – ‘the most Eastern of Western countries’.

Here we mean an interesting and sometimes paradoxical combination of two different planes: a ‘Western’ concept of life and its purely ‘Oriental’ rethinking, characteristic of modern Kazakh youth. Recently, raucous rock music coming from an old transistor radio attached to a herder’s saddle in a steppe that was deserted for two or three hundred miles seemed quite a common phenomenon for Kazakh society. But a youth flash mob action called Kara-Zhorgha¹, held on May 13, 2011, in one of the largest shopping malls in Almaty, generated a strong reaction on the Internet. Opinions were split, ranging from obviously enthusiastic (expressed mainly by young people) to downright negative (expressed mainly by people from the middle and older generations). The essence of the claims was that young people lacked understanding of the history and meaning of the dance in question (although the majority of middle-aged people are also not so knowledgeable about traditions).

However, according to the participants in the flash mob, apart from the opportunity to participate in such an event, there was also a sincere desire just to perform this dance, and in this way popularise national culture; eventually the online community was obliged to investigate dozens of Internet sites looking for information about the Kara-Zhorgha dance, to listen to ethnic music and different artists in this genre. Moreover, the discussion on Internet forums went beyond Kazakhstan, involving young people from other countries. In any case, the action was very important and produced convincing results: nothing else would make young people spend their precious time finding something that interested them.

This event shows different sides of the process of globalisation for Kazakhstan: on the one hand free and broad access to information and education, possibly with a wide choice – where and how to live, study, work. On the other hand there are minuses, “particular fear is caused by the loss of national sovereignty when the status of the independent state is formally preserved” (Shalabayeva 2007: 157). It is clear that globalisation is an inevitable and justifiable phenomenon in terms of mankind’s evolution. Moreover, it is the only sound course in the context of sustainable development, which cannot be performed independently by a single country, separately from the rest of the world. It is also clear that a strategy that is adequate for a particular type of society does not make sense for other countries. Thus, the main thing to consider here is cultural identity.

Today, Kazakhstan as a full-fledged participant in world affairs is rapidly integrating into the global community; this involves not so much the economic,

but peoples' cultural potential. Here we face the fact that today's Kazakhstan is a strongly multiethnic state where the titular ethnic group predominates. Because of this fact, the problem of cultural identity becomes complicated to some extent as it comes into contact with other subject areas, for example religion, politics, etc. We think that for Kazakhstan the Singaporean experience, the key priorities of which are culture and family, is extremely valuable (Fareed 1994). These two concepts are inseparable from each other, because one presupposes the other. Unfortunately, in modern Kazakhstan there are problems with both aspects of this.

Kazakh people came to be in a difficult and controversial situation because for seventy years the society was trying to create a special type of a citizen, satirically called 'homo sovieticus' (Zinoviev 1991). At least two generations were raised with a full sense of this. In the field of art this was felt particularly acutely. Strict censorship, absolute obedience to political ideology and cultural unification stopped any attempt to deviate from the 'correct' course. Those who in some way stood out against this background were immediately noticed. A public response appeared, which was generally negative.

Independence has changed everything and has also highlighted another problem. Now, when everything is possible, any artist whose path to official academic education is forbidden for some reason (or he/she just has no aspiration for it), may exhibit his/her work in an alternative gallery or publish them on the Internet, where there is always an audience. This means that whereas earlier there was a lonely voice, sounding in the silence, now the individual cannot be heard in the general hubbub.

Considering this background, some contemporary artists (especially those from the late 1990s and turn of the 21st century), tried to stand out from the crowd by relying solely on originality. They understood the concept of the return to basics (Malinovskaia 2000: 72) rather superficially and exploited 'national identity', transforming it into a brand that only alienates us from the true home. Sometimes impeccably drawn horses, wolves², and batyrs³ represent only a shell, a shape with no inner sense and content. If we talk about negative aspects of this phenomenon, we can identify weak and sometimes completely absent knowledge of the basis of traditional folklore, liberties with historical facts and established visual forms, such as ornaments. All this, being a manifestation of culture, originates in the institution of family, meant to keep and transmit knowledge and respect for it by inheritance.

We observe certain 'distortions' in the Kazakhstan art of the last two decades. Fortunately, this is not normal, but there is no sense in hiding the obvious. We are not going to criticise anyone in particular. However, considering artistic creativity as one of the most delicate and sensitive areas of human spirit, we

can draw the logical conclusion that contemporary artists are desperately and sometimes literally blindly looking for a way to themselves. But in general, this indicates that the problem concerns the whole nation.

If we continue to reflect on the methods and investigations of independent Kazakhstan's art, it becomes obvious that despite difficulties of a different kind, the 'artistic genius' of Kazakh people has found new possibilities of self-expression. Already by developing habitual forms like painting, graphics, etc., art organically expands its space through innovative forms, for example installations environments and artistic events that go far beyond the 'figurative'. Khalima Truspekova calls these phenomena 'tectonic shifts' (Truspekova 2011: 266).

It should be noted that in the last few years the main trends in Kazakh art have changed. Close attention has been given to the 'old school', which was able to see and not just to look. Today, artists have unlimited opportunities to learn professional skills; there are new materials and technologies at their service (graphics tablets, software, etc.). The desire to identify oneself as part of an ethnic group emerges more and more clearly: apart from subject preferences, this is easily visible in the works. An invisible national character is clearly revealed through this borrowed artistic manner. We see here the consonance of form and content as a harmonisation of professional and spiritual maturity of contemporary Kazakh art.

Recently the interest in ancient archaic cultural layers has increased. An appeal to signs, symbols, petroglyphs, Turkic runes, and tamga⁴ evidences the searches for some initial code as a universal language. At that time the steppe and nomads did not know the strict territorial boundaries and ethnic differentiation that exist now. Society was brought closer together by a common way of life and, therefore, of thinking. We argue that for modern art this is the most important aspect. Artists, despite the media they specialise in (painting or applied art), are trying to construct their own space on the basis of universal symbolism.

In our opinion, one of the brightest and most significant events in the context of this research is a creative contest organised by A. Kasteev, called *The Kazakh National Epos: The History and Traditions of the Kazakh People*, which was held on December 12, 2012, at the State Art Museum of the Republic of Kazakhstan (SAMRK). The initiators and organisers of the contest were the SAMRK and a non-state company called ArLine. This full-scale cultural project was devoted to the Independence Day of the Republic of Kazakhstan and was aimed at "the creation of paintings of high artistic standard, significant by content and level of workmanship".⁵ Only those artists, who had completed higher or specialised secondary art education, were taken into consideration.

Those chosen represented a solely realistic manner of painting, and painted on large format canvases in oils.

The goal of the contest was not only to promote national art, but also to make an attempt to see the true trends in contemporary Kazakh artistic consciousness. Very strict conditions imposed by the organisers had clearly drawn priorities: the combination of the Western academic school and an Oriental awareness of the history and meaning of what is happening now. It is no coincidence that this was a reference not just to history, but to the epos as one of the brightest manifestations of folklore. Epos, customs, and traditions act here as the most important parameters of Kazakh culture, transmitted through family and home.

Three winners – Dosbol Kasymov, Kazakbay Azhibekuly, and Esengali Sadyrbaev – were selected from among 107 participants. We want to note that in the absence of age restrictions, the prize-winners all came from the same generation, ‘generation X’, born in the 1960s.

According to the demographic theory of N. Houva and W. Strauss, the so-called ‘generation X’ or a generation of ‘wanderers’ (nomads) emerges during the time of changes which give birth to new social ideals and spiritual priorities. Such a new generation passionately attacks the established institutional order, and is therefore often remembered later as the group very focused on achieving their goal in a period of turmoil (Isaeva 2011: 292).

Here we mean that the youth and creative formation of these artists fell into the 1980s and 1990s – the so-called period of stagnation and the radical changes subsequent to it. The ‘wanderers-nomads’ are a force, capable of resisting the power structures of the state and society (ibid.: 294). These painters originate from the ‘old’ (professional) school, featuring a steady picture of the world, and ability to see the essence of traditional folklore as an important element of cultural memory.

On the whole, the work of many of the young artists demonstrates only superficial ideas of traditional culture, folklore, and national history, which indicates weakening of their ethnic memory.

For now this contest is the first and only one, but even this limited experience is extremely valuable. Kazakhstan has a very strong school of sign painting, which emerged in the late 1990s. This figurative language has helped in many ways to make the so-called transition from unification to identification and creation of a new art coordinate system. As earlier nomads marked their living spaces with tamgas, symbols, and ornaments, so in the era of independence we have resorted to the same approach. However, the above-mentioned project was aimed at overcoming the eternal East–West dichotomy by means of visual figurativeness and a core semantic combination.

CONCLUSIONS

It is certainly early to talk about the contemporary art of Kazakhstan as about a complete phenomenon: there has been too little time to go through and understand everything without losing the connection between generations. Now professional art is extremely saturated with global ideas that are sometimes difficult to understand. One of these ideas is that of freedom, which passes like a red line through the whole artistic consciousness of modern Kazakhstan, whether we talk about social or artistic freedom.

Endlessly experimenting, artists string lost fragments of ethnic memory on the thread of life, creating not just a new pictorial language, but also a national picture of the world. A familiarisation with proper history, Turkic and Tengrian cultural traditions and the aesthetic categories of the East in all their diversity fully capture the generation that has entered the art of an already sovereign country. Here we can observe the desire to turn Kazakh art back to its harmonious 'Oriental' direction.

Perhaps this can be explained by the absence of a main stylistic trend. At the moment, "there are two directions to find the identity: a visible extraverted manifestation of the national idea and its inner introverted transformation" (Ergalieva & Truspekova 2009: 53). Accordingly, there are realistic and historical-ethnographic layers. The main link here is the artist him- or herself, because it is through them that the contact between present and past is implemented.

Therefore, we can conclude that in contemporary Kazakh art, and in painting especially (as the most demonstrative field), the old mechanisms of perception and national consciousness are still active and function in a discreet but extremely effective way. Being transformed into the core of ethnic worldview, they are responsible for national identity in contemporary culture.

Summarising our short study, we have found that within two decades of independence modern Kazakh society, not without difficulty, has managed to find an equilibrium that constitutes the Kazakh mentality and keeps a balance between East and West. The result of this is the fact that the people of Kazakhstan equally perceive themselves as 'Kazakhs' and as 'citizens of Kazakhstan'. Here a 'citizen of Kazakhstan' is not Soviet heritage. We think that, on the contrary, the Kazakh citizen can be considered a full-fledged element of a unique new society, which is not divided in two different orientations but can balance and unite both.

Art, like no other part of human consciousness, is able to express these processes occurring latently or violently forcing their way out. In a short time, contemporary Kazakh art has managed not only to acquire professionalism, but also to establish its own schools that perfectly fit in with the global cultural space. At each stage of its development Kazakh art has intuitively found

its speciality: the most objective figurative language. This manifests itself as mental codes that cannot be seen but are unmistakably felt as specific visual forms peculiar to different historical epochs.

Now, despite all distortions and excesses stemming from the abuse of 'national originality', the contemporary art of sovereign Kazakhstan continues to evolve, based on the synthesis of old school achievements and the awareness of self-identity.

NOTES

- ¹ Kara-Zhorgha ('black pacer') is an ancient traditional Kazakh dance performed mainly by men, as it probably had a ritual shamanistic nature. In addition, it is believed that this dance was meant to be performed by young men and women, symbolising the harmony of the two principles (Abirov & Ismailov 1984).
- ² The wolf is an ancient Turkic totem known in proto-Turkic culture from the Bronze Age. The first images originate in numerous petroglyphs from Central Kazakhstan (Margulan 2003: 14). The wolf or she-wolf is the main character of genealogical legends of many Turkic peoples, including Kazakhs. In this context, the image of the wolf is the identification of Kazakhs, the embodiment of their best mental and physical characteristics: courage, strength, endurance, the ability to be a part of the pack without losing individuality, etc. (Kondybai 2005: 97–100).
- ³ Batyr (from Turkic 'Bahadur') in Kazakh culture is a warrior, a brave defender of people, who has not only physical strength, but also a broad mind, compassion, and desire for justice.
- ⁴ Tamga is a generic family sign. The etymology of the word dates back to the early Turkic era, although tamgas themselves have been known in the Asian steppes since the Bronze Age. Tamga is a simple geometric symbol based on a circle, a vertical, a square, a rhombus, etc. When a new branch was separated from the main clan, it enshrined the right to its own tamga, which, however, was always a derivative of the initial symbol. Often tamga encrypted general ideas about specific properties of the tribe; for example, the tamga of the Kazakh clan Aday, belonging to a small horde (*Juz*) in western Kazakhstan, represents a stylised image of the arrow. The Aday clan was famous for their military valour, indomitableness, and the best archers (Castagné 1906: 180).
- ⁵ See <http://www.gmirk.kz>, last accessed on January 26, 2016.

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SLAVIC AND KAZAKH FOLKLORE CALENDAR: TYPOLOGICAL AND ETHNO-CULTURAL PARALLELS

Galina Vlasova

Abstract: The study of multi-ethnic folk typology in the ethno-cultural region of Kazakhstan is of fundamental importance in the context of ethno-cultural typological parallels identifying the holiday calendar and rituals. The mechanism of folk typology is observed in ritual structures that compare the Slavic and Kazakh folklore calendars. There are typological parallels between all components in different Kazakhstan ethnic group celebrations: texts, rites, rituals, and cults.

The Kazakh and Slavic calendar systems have a collective character as functional and are passed down from generation to generation. The entire annual cycle of Eurasian festivals is based on the collective existence principle. The Slavic holiday calendar represents a dual faith synthesis of pagan and Christian entities while the Kazakh holiday calendar focuses on the connection of the pagan and Muslim principles.

Typologically, similar elements of Slavic and Kazakh holidays include structural relatedness, calendar confinement, similar archetypical rituals, and ceremonial models. Slavic and Kazakh ethnic and cultural contacts are reflected in the joint celebrations, in interethnic borrowing practices, rituals, games, and in Russian and Kazakh song performances by representatives of different ethnic groups. Field observations of Kazakh folklorists suggest the continuing existence of joint Nauryz and Shrovetide celebration traditions.

The folklore situation in Kazakhstan demonstrates both the different stages of closely related culture innovation of the Eastern Slavs and the typological relationship and bilateral borrowing through contact with unrelated Turkic ethnic groups.

The typological and ethno-cultural parallels as well as positive features of this holiday make it a universal phenomenon important for all members of a social or ethnic group.

Keywords: calendar, celebration, holidays, Kazakh, rituals, Russian

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the article is to identify ethno-cultural and typological parallels between Eastern Slavic and Kazakh ritual folklore. The historical–genetic and historical and typological similarities of these two folk traditions are especially significant in the multilingual Kazakh environment. The historical and genetic

comparison by Viktor Zhirmunsky (1979: 186) shows a “similarity between the phenomena as a result of their relationship to the origin and subsequent historically conditioned differences”. Anikin (1996: 384) calls such similarity a “genetic typology”, which means “the traditional folklore keeping the general original heritage of related peoples”. The highlighted type of historical and genetic typology is clearly detected in the ritual structures of the East Slavic diaspora in Kazakhstan.

According to Zhirmunsky (1979: 186), historical and typological comparison “supporting the similarity of genetically unrelated phenomena by similar conditions of social development” is a leading method in comparative and historical folklore study. Historical and typological similarity, or “typological convergence” (Anikin’s term), appears as a result of the creativity of independent nations and can be enhanced by contact occurring in Slavic and Turkic ethnic groups in Kazakhstan. Anikin (1996) particularly emphasises international relations and the folk-national elements of folk typology.

From my point of view the folklore situation in Kazakhstan demonstrates both the different stages of the closely related cultural innovation of the Eastern Slavs and the contact, typological relationship, and bilateral borrowing from unrelated Turkic ethnic groups.

METHODS

The current work is based on classical and contemporary recordings of Kazakh and Slavic folklore made during the twentieth century. The mechanism of folk typology is observed by the comparison of the ritual calendar structures of the Slavic and Kazakh folklore. The holiday calendars are different in their structural integrity, sacrality, and archetypal content, but both Kazakh and Russian calendars reveal openness, mobility, and worldly content. Cyclical-ity, the internal symmetry, and correlation with the seasons are typical of the holiday tradition of a single nation. It is evident that the different feasts of the ethnic groups include all the components of typological parallels: texts, rites, rituals, and cults.

Slavic holidays consist of two parts: a religious household and a folk rejoicing (carnivals, games, and feasts). The structure of Kazakh holidays includes similar elements: the assembly of all the members of the community to carry out festive ceremonies and a prayer reading, a festive meal, and a prohibition of labour. The main calendar and holy days are marked out in the Slavic calendar: spring/summer (Easter, Trinity Sunday, and Ivan Kupala (Feast of St. John the Baptist)), autumn (the Saviour and the Intercession), and winter

(Christmastide and Shrovetide). The Kazakh holiday tradition consists of the spring festival (Nauryz – vernal equinox), the moving holidays (Ait¹, Oraza² Ait, and Kurban³ Ait), spring/summer holidays (Kymyz Muryndyk⁴, Seyil⁵, and Shokran⁶) and the autumn holiday (Sabantuy⁷).

The collective principle dominates in traditional rituals and festive complexes, and is reflected in collective creation and reproduction and in the performance of rites and texts. Thus the arrangement of family-related meetings and the invitation of guests, meeting with neighbours, and festive meals at New Year, Shrovetide (New Advent), Nauryz (Turkic-Islamic New Year) and Ait (remembering of ancestors) are obligatory. A characteristic feature of Slavic festive culture is the involvement of all the participants in the ritual action and non-discrimination against spectators and participants according to the principal of 'celebration of all for all'. An important feature of Kazakh holidays is their mass character and the inclusion of all the holiday action members, regardless of sex, age, or social status. Community and commune are the most significant elements of any festival. The entire annual cycle of Eurasian folk festivals is based on the principle of collective existence: collectively going from door to door singing congratulatory songs (Christmas carols or *koliadok* and Zharapazans⁸), mass celebrations and family visits on the great calendar days and religious holidays.

The Kazakh and Slavic calendar systems have a collective and conciliar nature; they are handed down from generation to generation. But conciliarity is evident not only in the collective nature. The culture of festive games is not only a form of mass communication. It joins together an individual's ownership of the actualisation of the collective consciousness, collective memory, folklore, and mythological archetypes. Thus the Slavic holiday calendar represents a dual faith synthesis of pagan and Christian entities; Kazakh holidays are also focused on the connection of the pagan and Muslim principles. Ethnic Kazakh culture is formed by the Tengri faiths and beliefs. The religious basis of the ancient Turks was the worship of Heaven (Tengri) and Earth–Water (Umai). Orthodoxy and Islam bear the idea of unity. There "is a very important general point – the principle of conciliarism (*umma* – in the concepts of Islam) and the priority of the spiritual community of people in social interaction over their economic and class distinctions" are in their social doctrines (Ergaliev & Tikhonova 1999: 63).

RESULTS

The ethno-cultural type specificity of the Slavic peoples is revealed through comparison of the moments of support of traditional calendar ceremonies. As for the annual cycle of Russian agricultural festivals, Propp (2000 [1963]) listed typologically recurring items: the ancestor cult, the vegetation cult, ritual food, merrymaking ritual, and death and laughter (fun ritual burial). Following this concept, repetitive and typological elements in celebrations of the two different ethnic groups, the Slavs and the Kazakhs, are distinguished.

The Ancestor Cult

There are many archaic features associated with the ancestor cult in Kazakh ceremony. “It is known, for example, that the nomadic cattle breeders addressed the spirits of the ancestors during Nauryz by making sacrifices and lighting lamps on the graves of the dead ancestors” (Mustafina 2001: 119).

The ancestor cult occupied a prominent place in Kazakh belief. In hard times Kazakhs call upon the names of their ancestors. Animal sacrifice and worship at their graves are arranged in their honour. Such events as the division of the clan into two independent clans, making peace between two warring clans, victory over an enemy, etc., marked Kazakh sacrifice to the ancestor spirits with a white mare or white stallion.⁹

An ancestor cult ritual prescribes prayers for the dead during Kurban Ait and performance of the Dead Remembrance during the Oraza Ait period.

Arriving at the summer site, Kazakhs offered sacrifices to the ancestral spirits and by reading a prayer from the Quran asked for happiness and wealth. Animal sacrifice is a long tradition among cattle breeders. It occupied an important place in Kazakh religious rites. (Kazakh 2002: 147)

Similar ancestor cults are observed in the Slavic culture. A ‘meal’ for deceased parents is arranged during the Christmastide and Shrovetide periods and the funeral rites connected with the commemoration of dead parents and relatives with ritual food are held during the Semik¹⁰ and Trinity Sunday periods. The ancestor cult is seen in the ‘morgue games’ and in giving presents to ‘visitors from another world’.

The Vegetation Cult

Many Slavic rites had ritual magic content and were associated with the vegetation cult. The vegetation cult of the Slavs is expressed in the worship of trees, flowers, and grass. The willow ceremonial,¹¹ Trinity Sunday birch,¹² the first and last sheaf,¹³ Ilya and Nicole 'beard tying' ceremonies¹⁴ were of great importance for agrarian people. Slavic pagan and Christian gods help and patronise farmers; Shrovetide, Kostroma¹⁵, Spring, Ilya, Egoriy, Christ, and the Virgin Mary are the main participants and heroes of calendar rituals and songs. The Kazakh names of agrarian prayer deities are Dihan Baba and Kydyr. The Slavic Ilya watching the fields and the holy Kazakh Kydyr are farmers' assistants. "According to the widely popular belief, Kazakhs usually say that Kydyr helps farmers throw the first grain" (Mustafina 1992: 116). So "in the night of March 21–22 Kydyr visits his folk. His main feature is immortality. The name of Kydyr ('green') indicates a relationship with the plant world, so it is associated with Nauryz" (Kazakh 2002: 147). The name of Dihan Baba symbolises the beginning of the arable period. "Farmers glorified him and asked for rain. A social meal was organised in honour of Dihan Baba" (Kondybai 2005: 103).

The festive meal is one of the main features of any holiday. It is the part of a magical ritual that performs the function of increasing fertility. Ritual food is the integral component of the calendar, family, and religious cycles of Slavic and Kazakh holidays. The most important components of the Slavic dishes are grain and flour meal, cereal, pancakes, baked bread, *kutya*¹⁶, eggs, fish and meat dishes. All of these are prepared for Christmastide, Shrovetide, Easter, and Trinity Sunday. A traditional dish for Nauryz is Nauryz kozhe. "Nauryz kozhe is a ritual meal of seven components, representing seven vital principles: water, meat, salt, fat, flour, wheat, and milk. They symbolise happiness, success, wisdom, health, wealth, rapid growth, and the protection of the sky" (Mustafina 2001: 218). Ritual food is also prepared on *zhailyau* (summer pasture in the mountains) in summer, in the period of the first milking of mares – Kymyz Myryndyk (the First Mare). The winter is a period for *sogum*¹⁷. The same magic pervades the Slavic New Year and Shrovetide: a festive meal (roast pig and pancakes) should be hearty and greasy.

The Cult of Fire and Water

The cult of fire and water is realised in the rites of purification by washing, fumigation, and exorcism before the spring fieldwork and during Lent. The purgatorial power of fire was also described by Chokan Valikhanov:

Fire has a cleansing quality. Purification was accomplished by passing between two fires. The purification rite is called Alasta among Kirghiz tribes. Leaving their winter sites, they walk, one by one, between two fires. The person giving the public oath must also be purified by fire. (Valikhanov 1984: 54)

Valikhanov highlights the magical character of the Kazakh cult of fire: one is not allowed to spit into the fire, one cannot pass through the fire, fire cures, acts as a patron for the home and as a sanctuary in the home.

The Slavs and Kazakhs attribute purgatorial, healing, and protective properties to fire. They worship fire and the hearth. Oil, pancakes, and remnants of *skoromnyi* food¹⁸ are thrown into the fire. The Russians still practice pouring water on Ivan Kupala fires. The Kazakhs practice lighting Nauryz lamps and washing the whole body for the Kurban Ait.¹⁹

The Kazakhs believed in the purgatorial power of fire. Therefore, when leaving the winter sites, they stoked the fires and ran the cattle and the nomadic caravan between them to escape 'the evil spirits' when moving to their summer sites. The summer sites were also fumigated with fire and smoked to drive away the evil spirits. (Mustafina 2001: 34)

During Lent and Oraza purgatorial rites are arranged. The Slavs fast, burn old clothes and shoes, sprinkle the house with holy water, and wash in the bath. The great fast during the month of Ramadan is mandatory for all healthy and ritually pure adult Muslims. Ritual purity, *tahara*, means both an external cleanliness and neatness and the release of all contamination. Bathing, cleaning, lighting a fire and lamps symbolically clean the soul and body of the believer. It should be noted that the purgatorial fire is a human cult, and that in different nations it is implemented in different specific rituals and ritual actions.

Passing from door to door and giving donations is an important element of festive ritual behaviour among the Slavs and Kazakhs. The main activities are carolling during the Christmastide period and Zharapazan singing²⁰, visiting during Nauryz and Kurban Ait, treating children with food and money, giving alms at the end of the fast, gifts to wives and children during the Oraza Ait period, and *aittyk* (small gifts and souvenirs during Ait). The week after Christmastide the carol singers and *volochebnicks* (magicians) go around, congratulating the hosts and bearing gifts for them. During the winter and spring/summer, Kazakh gifting and feast rituals are of great significance. "Every year during the big lent (Oraza) people go to the mosque, present a donation in memory of the dead and read the Quran" (Religion). *Pitir* is not only a religious concept, but also the worship of the dead and a tribute in respect to them. Orphans, widows, and other needy people receive *sadaqah*²¹. The person receiving *sadaqah*

expresses good wishes for the family and relatives of the donator. Donating is the duty of every man.²²

Games and Festivals

Games, entertainment, and dressing up structurally organise the holiday complex of the ethnic nations of Eurasia. There is dressing up at Christmastide and numerous pancake games for the Slavs. For Kazakhs there are performances, the games of *badik* and *baksy*²³, and the mass celebrations of Nauryz and Sabantuy. Like elsewhere in Middle Asia and Europe, festive laughter is associated with fertility and magic. The role of laughter in Slavic and Kazakh calendar ceremonies is related to the renewal of nature festivals. Thus in the rituals of Nauryz the dual nature of the holiday is reflected: it combines birth and death, joy and sorrow. Fun on Pancake Day is universal. The emphasis during the carnival is on the equality of classes and age groups; the mutual exchange of gifts is also typical of many Slavic and Kazakh rituals.

Dual Faith

As previously mentioned, dual faith is the distinctive feature of Slavic and Kazakh festive culture. It is realised in domestic Orthodoxy and everyday Islam. The cult of the saints is at the heart of the Slavic folk calendar: George (the protector of cattle), Ilya (patron of the harvest and fertility), the Virgin Mary (the heavenly intercessor and patron of women in childbirth), Nicola, Kuzma and Damian (helpers and protectors against evil).

Many Christian saints replaced the pagan gods in the national consciousness, accepting their roles and taking their place in the pantheon. According to the pagan scheme every holy person was responsible for a certain sphere of nature or human activity. The saints were asked to help on all occasions with a prayer. Vows were made to them, sacrifices and gifts were offered. Simultaneously, people were offended when the saints did not fulfil requests and therefore punished the saints. (Tolstaia 1995: 151)

Festive forms and manifestations of folk Islam are varied in Kazakh culture. According to Mustafina (2001: 33), the Muslim cult of the saints was formed under the influence of archaic ideas treasuring the notion of numerous Gods. There were the saints associated with the cult of pre-Islamic nature. Kazakhs, among others, worshiped wells and mountains, honoured spirits of the trees

(Julie-Bastau, Kazy-kyrt, Zhylaghan-Ata, and others), the patron of agriculture Dihan Baba, and the patron of sheep Koshkar-ata.

The Kazakh people, like other ranching peoples, preserved customs and beliefs connected with cattle, which for centuries have been transmitted from generation to generation. Thus, the patron saint of horses is Kambar or Zhylkyshi-ata, the sheep patron is Shopan-ata, the camel patron is Oysylkarda, the cattle patron is Zengi Baba and for goats Seksek (Shekshek) ata. The patron of agriculture and farmers in Kazakhstan is Dihan Baba. The giver of all possible blessings and abundance is the prophet Kyydyr. (ibid.: 31)

Using historical and cultural typology (structural analysis) as the most universal method of research in comparing ethnic and cultural traditions of various cultures and studying their interaction, the researchers focus on the dominant motifs and images used to measure the cultural contacts and typological loans. By using such methods we are able to typologically separate the ceremonial ritual and textual and image motifs of Slavic and Kazakh holidays.

The New Year is celebrated by Kazakhs in spring, marking the beginning of a new working cycle. With the introduction of the Muslim calendar, it was timed to March 22 – the day of the vernal equinox. This was exactly in the period of Slavic Shrovetide, coinciding with the celebration of the March New Year. “Of particular importance was the celebration of the New Year, called Ulystyn Uly kyni in ancient times (the most important day of society) and later renamed Nauryz” (Kaskabasov 2000: 151).

As compared to the Slavic Shrovetide, the typologically similar ceremonies at Nauryz are masking, making female effigies, the playful nature of the holiday, and the ritual meal. On this day in every home the luxurious festive menu or *dostarkhan* consists of seven dishes and the traditional cooking is Nauryz kozhe. The host of the house tries to do everything to make his treats especially generous. The ritual holiday menu of Slavic winter and spring rituals features generous and abundant food. So, on Christmas Eve a rich festive meal *vechora* is prepared, part of which is always *koliva* – porridge made of wheat or rice and raisins. One of the seven components of Nauryz kozhe is wheat.

The most significant similarity between Slavic and Kazakh holiday rites is purity. It is believed that when Nauryz, the patron of the year, enters a cleaned yurt where two lamps are lit near the place of honour, no sickness, failure, or adversity reach it. Chetvergova salt²⁴, which is used for performing cleansing and has a protective function, is prepared for house cleaning and washing before Easter. As in Slavic ritual practices, the Kazakhs act to expel evil spirits. A general point is the cleansing power of fire. Two large fires are lit. Between

them, following each other, in order of seniority, people go with torches lit from these fires. They go around the immediate vicinity, expelling evil spirits and all evil, reciting in chorus magic *badikov* spells in poetic form.²⁵

Nauryz, like other holidays, is accompanied by national games, national wrestling, goat tearing, horse race (*bayga*) and spending time on *altybakan*²⁶ swing.

On the first day of the New Year people staged festive games and had fun. The games, Ktyrauyk kamyр kempir (Pretended Old Merzlyachka) and Ak Borane (The White Snowstorm) simulated a battle between winter and summer. Winter was symbolically depicted as an old dough lady, departing (dying). (Kaskabasov 2000: 152)

Similar games resemble the effigy burning at Shrovetide, which symbolises the winter's farewell.

Kazakh folklorists' field observations suggest the continuing existence of a joint Nauryz and Shrovetide celebration tradition. According to informants from the Akmola region, the most joyous celebrations are held when Nauryz coincides with Shrovetide. There are examples of the existence of holiday complexes at the end of the twentieth and beginning of the twenty-first centuries:

The booths were built, trading was organised, and a straw effigy dressed as a woman was constructed and then burned. Pancakes and boursaks²⁷ were baked. A decorated troika drove children. A high pole rubbed with soap was erected in the square and gifts were attached at the top. The one who managed to climb that pole could choose any gift. Nauryz is the Kazakh Shrovetide. (L. Pankratova, personal interview, Semenovka village, 2001)

Nauryz and Shrovetide celebrations are typical of the villages of the Zerenda and Balkash districts in the Akmola region. The performers point out that people treat such 'reconciliation' with approval:

We were cooking pancakes, boursaks and Nauryz kozhe. Altybakan swings were put up and the tie-ups were cut. The effigy was burned. All of this was done to drive away all the hardships and to greet the coming spring. (G. Khlystun, personal interview, Sandyktau village, 2003)

As in all Islamic countries, two annual religious festivals are celebrated in Kazakhstan. They are Razgovenie, or the end of fasting, and the Oraza Ait (Easter Ait) and Kurban Ait 70 days later. Ait is a large international Islamic holiday. Oraza Ait begins 30 days after Oraza. This month is also called Ramadan.²⁸ During the Ait period people wear clean clothes, congratulate each other by saying, "Kytty bolsyn!" (Happy day!), ask for aittyk or for forgiveness for their

mistakes and offences. Those who die during Oraza Ait are considered good people.

The Easter and Trinity traditions of the Slavs have similar stereotypes: going to church, wishing friends and family well (*hristosovaniye*), commemorating the dead, visiting relatives, and observing the prohibition on working.

Another feature of Kazakh folklore ritual is the coincidence of working rites that is typical of Russian autumn rituals associated with the harvest. Such rituals are defined as industrial and domestic.

Rite groups and games have been associated with Kazakh cattle breeders' work. In summer, on Zhailyau, in the period of the first milking of the mares, Kymyz Myryndyk (The First Mare) ritual feast was arranged. It was accompanied by Seyil (entertainment) merriment with songs sung in honour of Zhylkyshy Ata, the patron saint of horses. The same entertainment and ritual feasts were held in the late summer and in the early autumn, when they stopped milking mares. (Kaskabasov 2000: 152)

Sabantuy (the festival in honour of spring sowing), the great holiday of Kazakh farmers, is celebrated during the harvest season. In the autumn the custom of cattle and horse slaughter and in the winter *sogum* are still carried out. The neighbours are welcome to help. It starts with *baata söz* (Kazakh traditional blessing reading) and then a treat is offered. According to the Russian tradition, this period in the autumn (from August 15 to November 14) is called *Myasoed*; it is the period when the church allows meat eating. During the Sabantuy period songs such as *keusen* (The Neighbour Share), *al zhemi* (Horse Food), and *kyrman tasysyn* (Let the Threshing Floor Be Plentiful) are sung. N. Turekulov believes that "Kazakh farming songs beginning with the words 'Sabantuy, Sabantuy! Slay sheep for the toy / Run bull, kop, kop! / the threshing floor is full of grain' are rarely heard today" (Turekulov 1982: 49).²⁹

The herding and calendar songs are traditionally distinguished in Kazakh ritual song culture. The herding songs of Kazakh cattle breeders are considered genetically ancient, preserving magical and religious significance. In particular, the images of animal ancestors date back to the *tört tylik*, the ancient spirits.

The images of Kazakh pet ancestors are of the same type as Russian images, such as Christmas carols, Ovsenya, and Beautiful Spring. The positive songs, ensuring the good quality of animal welfare, are among the best of them. (Silchenko 1968: 129)

For example:

The horns like the cauldron...
The brilliant horns...
The crispy joints...
Is that you, Zengi Baba. (ibid.)

Ideal images of birds and animals (horses, cows, camels, sheep, hawks, etc.), and ideal pastures with ‘heavy grass’ dominate in herders’ songs. The idealised imagery of the Slavic agrarian carols resembles to some extent the imagery of herders’ songs. Kazakh folklore researchers emphasise the utilitarian nature, sustainability of themes, and poetic images about the four types of cattle in the songs.

“Two kinds of ritual songs were associated with the Kazakh calendar: Nauryz and Zharapazan songs (Muslim fasting songs – *uraza*)” (ibid.: 130). These songs, like the Slavic spell songs and the songs of praise, are filled with archetypal content: their main motifs are reduced to the nature spell and the host praising. Obvious similarity is found in two genres of Kazakh and Russian ritual poetry: Nauryz and Zharapazan songs. The structure of the texts is of the same type: praising, good wishes, and gift claiming. People greet each other and wish wellbeing, based primarily on the ownership of livestock, especially its four main types, for example:

<p>Welcome, Let the New Year Be successful for you. We wish the New Year Brings you all four Types of livestock</p>	<p>Come out, people. Watch the sheep-yard. Oh, whose sheep are lambled, Whose rams are born Oh, the white-legged lambs, Oh, the white-horned yearlings Generous evening, good evening. (N. Humeniuk, personal interview.)</p>
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In the comparative table a similar theme of ‘cattle offspring’ is shown, developed in the Nauryz song and the Slavic Carol of the Lord’s cycle.

The similarity in genres was noted by M. Silchenko, who also emphasised the difference in the fact that the Nauryz songs contain didacticism. “They have plenty of direct didactic wishes, such as ‘We wish you great happiness’, ‘Let four kinds of cattle multiply’, and plenty of predictions” (Silchenko 1968: 125–152), for example:

Ulys kuni qazan tolsa, Ol zhyly aq, mol bolar. Uly kisiden bata alsaq, Sonda olzhaly zhol bolar.	If the cauldron is full on the Great Day, There will be an abundance in the New Year. If you are blessed by the venerable old man, Successful will be your way.
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Nauryz songs have structural and motif similarities with Zharapazan songs. The genre differences are the dual faith character and the religious content of Zharapazan songs. They are an appeal to the ancestor spirits (*aruaham*), to Allah, the prophets, and the saints. Zharapazan songs are reminiscent of Slavic New Year songs with their Christian content. The images of the saints and God are central in them. Let us compare the Kazakh Zharapazan and Russian New Year song texts:

The Lord will have mercy The saints will help. Happy is thy portion, Appointed by the Lord To constant existence.	The plough was working in the field. And that plough was operated by the Lord. The Virgin Mary was carrying <i>cassocks</i> ³⁰ And praying to the Lord: The Lord give us wheat and All the <i>pashnitsa</i> ³¹ . I'm sowing And wishing you a happy New Year! (Performed by H. Bykova (b. 1910), Otradnoe village, Makinsky district.)
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The singers (*Zharapazanshi*) improvised using traditional images and motifs wishing calves to cattle, health and welfare for the owners, gifts, etc.

Earlier in the winter and spring holidays the Zharapazan song improvisation was typical among the Kazakh youth. In the evening, the youth wandered from yard to yard with a song beginning with 'Zharapazan aitamys basyna fever' [We sing Zharapazan for one family and for another]. (Turekulov 1982: 57)

Turekulov also notes the similarities of the Kazakh Zharapazan and the Russian carols.

Mustafina (1992: 20) relates Zharapazan to current perceptions of songs from the mid-twentieth century and confirms that the older artists remember fragments of songs and improvisations of a laudatory nature that were sung by 7–15-year-old children, as well as adults, on the days of fasting at the windows of elderly fasting people. Forms and conditions of existence (a time for play,

participation, donation) are of the same semantics of ritual behaviour as for the Russian carol singers and their Ukrainian counterpart – *shchedrovalhschiki*. Let us compare the texts:

<p>Zharapazan to sing, I came to your home. Let your cradle Have two <i>dzhigits</i>³². Anyone who comes to your door, Something should be handed down on a golden dish: Money seized in nuts Its shells to play with. (M. Babaeva, 50 years old).</p>	<p>Archival text: <i>Schedrivochka schedrovala</i>, Was looking into the little window. What have you, dear woman, cooked? What have you baked? Bring it closer to the window, to the window, Be careful, do not break it. Dear people Good evening, generous evening Be well. (Woman (b. 1934), Krasnoselskoe village.)</p>
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From the current comparison it is clear that Kazakh Zharapazan (Zharamazan), Slavic carols, and New Year songs are similar not only in existence, but in the structure and imagery of the text, including good wishes of wealth, health, children, livestock, and gifts: the Kazakhs ask for money, nuts, *dostarhan*³³, and butter, and the Slavs ask for a ritual meal.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Ethnic and cultural cooperation between Russians and Kazakhs was displayed especially in the spiritual life. Researchers believe that the tolerance aspect of Tengrianism allows the Kazakhs to adapt to an environment otherwise dominated by the traditions of non-Kazakh confessions. Ethno-cultural contacts in the spiritual culture are noted by the researchers in Christmastide and Shrovetide clothing in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Thus the Russian peasants and Cossacks wore Kazakh national costume and Russian girls wove coins into their braids. Turkic borrowings are also marked and were reflected in the Siberian Cossack martial arts and similar Kazakh wrestling *kures*³⁴. During the Soviet period, when people of different nationalities participated in many festivals, battle with bags on a log gained popularity among the Russian population. On the other side, several Russian games were adopted into the Kazakh tradition of celebrating calendar holidays.

Examples of supporting different stages of ethno-cultural parallels during the twentieth century include the following. Russian texts actively include Ukrainian and Kazakh words. Ukrainian, Russian, and Kazakh elements are marked in calendar holidays and wedding ceremonies, which were initially perceived as alien ethnic innovation (Nauryz and Shrovetide celebrations in one calendar period, common meal and Russian and Kazakh ritual food on religious and national holidays) and were subsequently transformed into an organic type of reformed holiday.

Since the late 1980s, there has been a growing interest in folk traditions. The activity of religious organisations has increased. The media as well as scientific and cultural institutions have more extensively spread knowledge of folklore, folk and Orthodox holidays. With new forms of entertainment, the media has naturally started to perform the functions that formerly used to be performed by games, holidays, and festivals. Scholars have ascertained some shifts in national mass culture. Television and other mass media in the Republic of Kazakhstan provide information about folk art, folklore, mythology (*aitys*³⁵, ethnographic programmes). The attraction of the Kazakh youth to emulate and respect customs of their ancestors is also noted. In festive and ceremonial life the modern urban and rural religious festivals, old and new, as well as Russian, Ukrainian, and Kazakh folk customs successfully co-exist.

It should be noted that traditional ethnic festivals are updated and have become massive in Kazakhstan and Russia. Such holidays as Nauryz and Ait have really become national. This is due to the fact that the Kazakh ethnic group is in the process of a passionate rise, and representatives of ethnic groups show high levels of passionate tension, allowing them to actively participate in the revival of traditional culture and the formation of the modern ritual. The role of spectacular calendar public holidays in the sphere of leisure, and cultural and community life of the people is determined, as already noted, by the degree of their involvement in the sphere and specific relationships in which the old and the new show the degree of their adoption. In turn, the functioning of these factors depends on a number of historical and socio-cultural conditions. The most important of them are: the historical depth of the celebrations in people's lives, social and cultural characteristics of ethnic groups in the region, and the level and nature of urbanisation and migration processes in the folkloric-ethnographic region of Kazakhstan.

These parameters must be actualised by understanding popular culture as synodic integrity. The idea of conciliarism in the Eurasian holiday culture is reflected in the type of behavioural and collective consciousness, the relationship between the generations and ethnic groups in the dialogue of cultures.

Typological and ethno-cultural parallels as well as the positive features of the holiday make it a universal phenomenon, which is important for all the members of a social or ethnic group.

NOTES

- ¹ Ait is also used as a general word for Muslim celebrations.
- ² Oaza Ait is a three day ceremony that marks the end of the Great Lent Oaza. Oaza Ait is also called a 'small celebration' to be distinguished from the 'big celebration' or Kurban Ait.
- ³ Kurban Ait is one of the most important Muslim feasts that takes place seventy days after the Great Lent Oaza. The ceremony is conducted according to the lunar calendar and therefore the beginning could shift approximately ten days. In early Arabic sources the celebration is also called 'the feast of sacrifice'.
- ⁴ The Holiday of the First Kumys (the time when mares could be milked again).
- ⁵ Collective celebration of holidays when the whole village walks in the street and sings celebratory songs.
- ⁶ Kazakh Thanksgiving.
- ⁷ The festival in honour of spring sowing.
- ⁸ Ritual songs of the Muslim fast.
- ⁹ See http://www.heritagenet.unesco.kz/kz/content/duhov_culture/religia/religia_in_kz.htm.
- ¹⁰ Slavic commemorating of the dead.
- ¹¹ *Verbnoe voskresenie* or a week before the Great Lent celebrating the entering of Jesus to Jerusalem.
- ¹² A fertility ritual when a young birch is decorated and placed at home or in the fields.
- ¹³ The first and last sheaf of the harvest.
- ¹⁴ Ritual finishing of the harvesting period.
- ¹⁵ East Slavic fertility goddess.
- ¹⁶ Ritual sweet grain pudding.
- ¹⁷ *Sogum* is a process of preparing horse meat and beef for winter period. The meat is usually frozen or dried. *Sogum* is part of traditional Kazakh and other Turkic nomadic cultures.
- ¹⁸ Special fat dishes that were not consumed during the fasting period.

- ¹⁹ Kurban Ait is one of the most important Muslim holidays, taking place after seventy days from the end of the Great Lent or Oaza.
- ²⁰ In this case certain ritual singing, performed during and after the Muslim Lent.
- ²¹ Voluntary charity in Islam.
- ²² See http://www.heritagenet.unesco.kz/kz/content/duhov_culture/religia/religia_in_kz.htm.
- ²³ Traditional Kazakh games imitating the fight of warriors.
- ²⁴ Black salt prepared only once a year, on Maundy Thursday before Holy Easter; hence it is called Chetvergova (in Rus. chetverk – Thursday).
- ²⁵ “A particular game associated with working life, which had ritual and magical character, was Bədik” (‘Badik’) (Kaskabasov 2000: 152).
- ²⁶ Traditional Kazakh swing, used mainly by the youth during holidays.
- ²⁷ Traditional Kazakh scones, fried in oil.
- ²⁸ See http://www.heritagenet.unesco.kz/kz/content/duhov_culture/religia/religia_in_kz.htm.
- ²⁹ Kazakh folklore texts are cited in Russian (and translated into English) according to the definitive edition.
- ³⁰ The cassock, or soutane, is an item of Christian clerical clothing used by the clergy of Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Anglican and Reformed churches.
- ³¹ Ploughed field.
- ³² Skilful and brave equestrian.
- ³³ Dish made of different oriental sweetmeats.
- ³⁴ *Kures* is a form of wrestling widespread over the whole Central Asia, Southern Siberia, and Mongolia. Wrestles fight inside a circle drawn on the ground and the goal is to push the opponent out of the circle.
- ³⁵ Contest centred on improvised oral poetry spoken or sung to the accompaniment of traditional musical instruments.

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF LINGUISTICS IN KAZAKHSTAN: NEW APPROACHES AND MODERN TENDENCIES

Sholpan Zharkynbekova, Atirkul Agmanova

Abstract: The article represents an overview of some of the research priorities of Kazakhstani scientists who study the linguistic, socio-linguistic, and methodical parameters of scientific description of a language as a social fact. We describe the language situation in Kazakhstan, which creates a scientific background for theoretical and practical understanding of the language changes taking place in the country. The article shows that the common methodological basis of research is a systemic approach to the problem of multilingual space of Kazakhstan, in which different aspects of this complex phenomenon are consistently and purposefully studied from the standpoint of the theoretical provisions on the relationship of language and society. The sociolinguistic studies focus on the identification of the nature and role of languages in ethnocultural interaction. This way this research provides essential information for the timely adjustment of the language policy and language planning and is useful for management tasks in the field of language regulation.

Keywords: ethnolinguistic identity, language co-functioning, language planning, language policy, multilingual landscape, sociolinguistics

INTRODUCTION

Obviously, the modern linguistics of Kazakhstan is characterised by its development in the context of a new scientific paradigm that defines the state, and achievements, of the world linguistic idea.

A particular place is given to the research devoted to language study as one of the main indicators of human adaptation to the new socio-political and socio-cultural realities. As Russian scientist Leonid Krysin states, sociolinguistics as a comparatively young science distinguishes nationally oriented research trends, and is connected with the fact that in each country, or more narrowly in each ethno-social community, there are specific conditions for a language functioning, the most important or which become the issues that are topical for this national (or multinational) community (as characterised by the unity of the socio-economic and political life) (Krysin 1992: 96). In this respect it is worth mentioning that for Kazakhstani sociolinguistics it is peculiar to address

the issues of linguistic and ethnic identification, preserving ethnical languages in the multilingual state, cross-cultural communication, and ethno-linguistic adaptation. Much interest causes problems in the functioning and interaction of the Kazakh, Russian, and English languages in the modern multilingual landscape of Kazakhstan, and in more effective ways of multilingual personality formation. Of course, these aspects do not comprise the whole range of the studied problems. We have limited our research to a few areas that reflect the current trends of Kazakhstani sociolinguistic science.

LINGUISTIC AND EXTRA-LINGUISTIC BASES

The functioning of two or more languages in the context of the modern Kazakhstani sociolinguistic space allows us to speak about the uniqueness of the situation, related as it is to a targeted official language policy that promotes the idea of the multilingualism (trilingualism) of the citizens of the Republic of Kazakhstan as one of the most important conditions of social and economic modernisation.

The Republic of Kazakhstan is a multilingual state with representatives of more than 130 ethnic groups. According to the results of the 2009 census, the ethnic composition of Kazakhstan is as follows: Kazakhs – 63.1%, Russians – 23.7%, Uzbeks – 2.9%, Ukrainians – 2.1%, Uighurs – 1.4%, Tatars – 1.3%, Germans – 1.1%, Koreans – 0.6%, Turks – 0.6%, Azeri – 0.5%, Belarusians – 0.4%, Dungan – 0.3%, Kurds – 0.2%, Tajiks – 0.2%, Poles – 0.2%, Chechens – 0.2%, Kyrgyz – 0.1%, others – 1.1% (Smailov 2010: 10). It should be noted that the most numerous nationalities are Kazakh (10.1 million people) and Russian (3.8 million people).

This demographic situation of the country is linked to the history of migration of other peoples to Kazakhstan during the Soviet period. From the early twentieth century to the nineteen-nineties there were major demographic transformations in the ethnic composition of Kazakhstan. These changes were associated primarily with the former Soviet policy of forcible deportation of peoples between 1930 and 1950, the famine of 1931–1932, repression of the Kazakh elite in the late 1930s, and labour migration, mainly of Slavic ethnic groups (Russians, Ukrainians, and Belarusians), who formed the backbone of the minorities. Some of them were deported during the Second World War, others have lived in the territory of Kazakhstan for centuries (Sancak & Finke 2005: 132). The total number of members of the different ethnic groups deported to Kazakhstan in the years 1930–1940 was 1.2 million. During the period of industrialisation and development of virgin lands, about 2 million people im-

migrated to Kazakhstan, which significantly modified the ethnic composition of Soviet Kazakhstan. At the same time, more than a million Kazakhs emigrated because of repression, famine, collectivisation, and other causes. According to official census data, the population in the country decreased from 3.63 million people in 1926 to 2.31 million people in 1939.

The phenomenon of mass bilingualism (the ratio of the Kazakh-Russian bilingualism and Russian-Kazakh bilingualism) with a lower Kazakh language proficiency is explained by the influence of historical and political factors, and especially the widespread policy of Russification carried out in the Soviet period. The Russification policy, proclaiming Russian as the language of international communication, changed the linguistic landscape of Soviet Kazakhstan. According to B. Dave and P. Sinnott (2002: 5–8), the so-called “Russified cultural landscape” dominated in Kazakhstan. In 1938, Russian was declared a compulsory subject in all schools including non-Russian schools (Suleimenova 1997). Russian was perceived as a prestigious language, the language of higher education. The presence of this historical fact still significantly influences the growth rate of national consciousness and self-awareness in Kazakhstani society, despite the state’s gained independence. According to E. Suleimenova (*ibid.*), “in those conditions changes appeared in the relationship between the Kazakh and Russian languages when the ethnic, cultural, and linguistic identity was seen as formal by a certain part of the population”. She concludes that the decline in the prestige of Kazakh culture, identity, and history was related to the low prestige of the Kazakh language. The result was passive skills in the native language and the adoption of Russian by a part of the Kazakh population. “Kazakh was forced out of the public sphere and business communication”, and in practice the “‘functional health’ and ‘communicative power’ of Kazakh” decreased (Suleimenova & Smagulova 2005: 70).

The process of integration into the world community, access to modern technology, and the need to implement the results and achievements of the world of science and education in the sustainable development of a country today requires the mastering of English and other foreign languages and an improvement in their level of knowledge.

Increased attention to linguistic processes in Kazakhstan is supported by the adoption of the law on languages,¹ the emergence of television and radio programmes on language themes, conferences, workshops, and scientific seminars, publication of topical articles, research, etc. Therefore, the study of a language as one of the main indicators of the population’s adaptation to the new socio-political and socio-cultural realities has become an urgent theoretical and practical task.

The above confirms the need for a theoretical and practical understanding of the linguistic changes occurring in the country. Based on the analysis of active ethno-linguistic processes and value priorities of a language, scientists are trying to rethink the traditional concepts of language policy and linguistic situation established in the period of independence.

THE METHODOLOGICAL BASES OF THE RESEARCH

The studies included in this review article are characterised by being generally uniform in their objectives, theoretical orientation, and methods of analysis of the linguistic material. Their common methodological basis is a systematic approach to the problem of the multilingual space of Kazakhstan, in which different sides of this complex phenomenon are consistently and purposefully considered from the perspective of the theory of the relationship between language and society, studying the specific peculiarity and the identity of languages and cultures, and priority issues which shape public consciousness under the influence of certain linguistic and extra-linguistic factors.

For the majority of the research, the discursive approach is used as a paradigm of studying functional languages within a broad socio-cultural context. The interdisciplinarity of the research is reflected in the approaches to the studied phenomena, and also in the methods and interpretations. In addition to general scientific methods (inductive, deductive, simulation, comparative, etc.), interdisciplinarity is used as a range of socio-linguistic methods to obtain an in-depth and comprehensive analysis of the following:

- the method of monitoring used for the selection process, to determine specific features of the investigated object, to describe different linguistic situations and trends in the development of various linguistic situations and tendencies within cross-cultural communication development;
- the method of social experiment, where polls, discussions, study, and generalisation in specific socio-situational contexts have great potential to track processes of language functioning;
- qualitative methods, which can study the life of small groups in which the standards of social identification and bases for ethnic identity are formed;
- the methods of experimental research, i.e. group and individual questionnaires, content-analysis, monitoring the speaking activity in various spheres of public life, and the study of written resources and official documents;

- the statistical analysis of data reference of information (including electronic) using SPSS Statistics Programme.

The methodology of this research allows us to ensure the introduction of multilingualism in the Republic of Kazakhstan, as well as the implementation of the priorities of the State Programme for the Functioning and Development of Languages for 2011–2020.

Linguistic and Ethno-Linguistic Identities:

Theory, Results, and Research Prospects

The works of Kazakhstani linguists revealed in detail various aspects of national and Russian bilingualism, within the framework of which was an investigation into the issues of ethno-cultural self-identification, linguistic identification related to language choice in a bilingual person, and the role of the mother tongue in these processes (Khasanov 1992, 2001; Khasanuly 1992, 2002; Kopylenko & Saina 1982; Kopylenko 1997; Karlinskii 1989, 1990, 2001; Suleimenova 1996, 2007, 2011a, 2011b; Suleimenova & Smagulova 2005; Suleimenova et al. 2007; Isaev 1990; Akhmetzhanova 2001; Tezekbayev 1987, 1998; Son 1999; Pak 2004; Altynbekova 2006; Shaibakova 1999).

Recent work that represents the lines of research into identity issues at the present stage deserves a detailed review.

The general context of research into the linguistic aspects of identity study is linked to the analysis of dynamic processes of ethnic and linguistic identification, the main trends of civic identity change, and the ‘crisis of identity’ in the multiethnic Kazakhstan.

In some researches the problems of linguistic and ethnic identity have been examined in terms of a language choice in education, the language of the diaspora, the peculiarities of the speech behaviour of a particular ethnic group, stereotypes of national character, peculiarities in the formative years of a bilingual person in the process of second language acquisition (Altynbekova 2006; Son 1999; Pak 2004; Agmanova 2010, and others).

Olga Altynbekova (2006) considers the choice of the language of instruction in schools and universities to be an indicator of the expression of the ethnic identity of different nationalities in a multiethnic society.

Issues of linguistic and ethnic identity are investigated by Atirkul Agmanova (2010) as part of her description of the extra-linguistic factors that influence the acquisition and use of Kazakh as a second language. The sociolinguistic part of the study allowed the linking of the predicate-centric theory of a second-

language acquisition developed by the author with the experience and results of language planning in the fields of education and the state.

Professor E. Suleimenova conducted a series of research investigations which reflected the issues of linguistic, ethnic, and civic identities of different social groups within Kazakhstan.

The results of this research were reflected in the collective monograph titled *Dinamika iazykovoï situatsii v Kazakhstane* (The Dynamics of the Linguistic Situation in Kazakhstan) (Suleimenova 2010d). This research compared collected data with previous surveys from 2003 and 2005, in order to study different aspects of national, ethnic, and linguistic identification at the individual level and their correlation to the attitudes toward language in the dynamically developing Kazakh society. The collective monograph also presented an analysis of how the civic and linguistic identity of the respondents and their integration into Kazakhstan's society is related to ethnicity, social factors, and age (ibid.).

E. Suleimenova has devoted a number of research papers to the study of the essential manifestations of linguistic and ethnic identity and the features of their modification and development in a rapidly changing linguistic situation among dynamic ethno-demographic processes. On the basis of the theoretical comprehension of identity variability thesis she concludes:

Linguistic identity as any other identity is not something attributing and congenital but is an individual's interiorised characteristic, which can be chosen by expressing in linguistic and socio-cultural behaviour, or changed depending on social, political and ideological contexts. (Suleimenova 2010a: 125)

Linguistic identification is defined as "a constant process of enculturation and integration of the individual into society". Language "helps the individual to socialise, acquire cultural and social norms, and support the relations within ethnic, age, gender, social role, and other groups" (ibid.: 126).

Particular attention in Suleimenova's research is given to the issue of mobility of ethnic and linguistic identities among the younger generation (Suleimenova 2007, 2010a).

The ethnic and linguistic identities of the young Kazakh and Russian respondents were studied from the following points of view:

- correlation of ethnic and linguistic identities with the attitude of the young respondents to their mother tongue;
- correlation of ethnic and linguistic identities with the language competence of the young respondents;
- correlation of ethnic and linguistic identities with the fields of Kazakh and Russian language usage by the young respondents;

- correlation of ethnic and linguistic identities with the attitude (language settings) of the young respondents towards a language/languages.

In the analysis of the correlation between ethnic and linguistic identity and the acceptance of an ethnic language as a native speaker of that language, the Kazakh respondents demonstrate positive dynamics; the Russian respondents demonstrate the opposite, i.e. negative dynamics (in 2009, 0.7% of Kazakhs considered Russian as their native language, and 2.0% of Russians defined Kazakh as their native language).

Data on language competence indicate positive dynamics of the processes of linguistic identification taking place in the country: a high proportion of Kazakh respondents (97%) and Russian respondents (69.8%) claim to be fluent or have some command of Kazakh. This growing competence is seen as an obvious indication of the formation of the Russian-Kazakh bilingualism in the country.

The following conclusion, made by E. Suleimenova, seems to be reasonable:

There must be consistent, deliberate, and conscious change in the language behaviour of all population groups in order to make the declared ethnic and linguistic identities real. The problem of choice of the existing 'register of identity' of the most appropriate linguistic identity, in accordance with the specific socio-cultural and political circumstances of youth, has to be successfully solved, and the existing general asymmetry in the usage of Kazakh and Russian has to be finally overcome. (Suleimenova 2010a: 164)

The understanding that a complete, comprehensive study of linguistic identity in a polynational state is impossible without considering its complicated interaction with the processes of ethnic and civil identification, contributed to the development of civic identity, determining the main vector of its changes in the formation and development of independent Kazakhstan.

In order to define the content of dynamics and trends within civil identity, Suleimenova studied its two important aspects in the work titled *The Main Vector of Civil Identity* (Suleimenova 2010c): a) the extent and character of civil identity; b) the peculiarities of the diffusion of civil identity considered from the point of view of its correlation with the respondents' ages and genders.

The results of the study suggest a conclusion about the obvious positive changes in the understanding of civic identity as the basis of state stability and the consolidation of Kazakh society. It was convincingly proved that there was an obvious increase in civic identity indices (9.3%) during the studied period (according to the survey data in 2005 and 2009 respectively), which in the context of the two major ethnic groups is represented as follows: Kazakh respondents – 90.6% and 98.5%; Russian respondents – 86.6% and 95.4%. The

Tatar, Ukrainian, German, Belarusian, Korean, Polish, Chechen, and Armenian respondents demonstrated complete formation of a Kazakhstani civil identity, while the Kyrgyz, Uzbek, and Uighur respondents demonstrated a decrease in these parameters through a redistribution of the answers in the category titled “I partially consider myself a citizen of Kazakhstan”.

The diffuse civic identity of an insignificant number of respondents was revealed within the context of high levels of awareness of these people (from different age groups) as citizens of Kazakhstan (Suleimenova 2010b: 235–237).

In a multilingual society, “linguistic identification is complicated by the choice of one of the co-functioning languages and the necessity of continuously determining one’s own attitude to those languages and mobile self-assessment of language behaviour” (Suleimenova 2011b: 181). What Suleimenova calls the “crisis of identities”, can be due to the following factors: conflict between ethnic and linguistic identities; switching from one linguistic identity to another, more relevant at a particular time and in a particular place (for example, because of a change of language status); language change by an ethnic group; the preservation of stereotypes by part of a community despite a change of priorities in society at large.

It should be noted that the study of the dynamics of the crisis in ethnic and linguistic identity, within the context of social and ideological transformation, is based on a comparison of sociolinguistic research data received in five-year intervals, which made it possible to fully comprehend the problem (Suleimenova 2010b).

The crisis of ethnic and linguistic identity, perceived among respondents of different ethnic, age, and gender groups is studied in the following aspects:

- the crisis of ethnic and linguistic identity among the Kazakh respondents;
- the crisis of ethnic and linguistic identity among the Russian respondents;
- the crisis of ethnic and linguistic identity among the Tatar, Ukrainian, and German respondents;
- the crisis of ethnic and linguistic identity among the different age groups of the Kazakh respondents;
- the crisis of ethnic and linguistic identity among gender groups of the Kazakh respondents.

The dynamics of the crisis of ethnic and linguistic identity revealed in the study were generally evaluated to be positive, as it seems Kazakhstan has been successful in overcoming the crisis: 1) a general tendency was noted of an equalising correlation of ethnic and linguistic identity over five years for the two groups of respondents – the Kazakh and the Russian (indicators of Kazakh and Russian linguistic identities increased by 6.8% and 4.8%, respec-

tively); 2) the dependence of linguistic identity on linguistic competence was noted among respondents from some ethnic groups: a) full (Ukrainian and German respondents) or partial (Korean, Chechen, and Belarusian respondents) recognition of the Russian linguistic identity, and b) the index growth of the Kazakh linguistic identity of the Tatar, Uighur, and Belorussian respondents; 3) there is a reduction in the gap between the ethnic and linguistic identities of the Kyrgyz, Polish, Armenian, and Uzbek respondents.

This research certainly contributes to the development of empirical data and a deepening of the study of linguistic and ethnic identity in modern Kazakhstan. The findings are important both for a theoretical understanding of the problem, and because they contribute to the practice of language planning and language development.

The considered findings above are similar to the study results of Kazakhstani linguists, which focused on the problems concerned with diaspora language description, its function in the social and communicative space of the country, and the study of the linguistic and ethnic identities of ethnic groups. The researchers' attention to the problem is natural not only because of the diverse ethno-linguistic landscape of Kazakhstan, but also because of the general trend of increasing national consciousness and the desire for revival and preservation of national language and culture. The problem of linguistic and ethnic identity among members of ethnic groups as one of the important aspects in the study of identity in Kazakhstani linguistics was reflected in a number of studies, the focus of which is centred on the issues of diaspora language interaction with Kazakh and Russian. These studies also encompassed information on the functioning of these two languages in the multiethnic and multicultural society, pointing out that this requires the formulation and solution to such problems as native language vitality, language change, and the impact of the processes of change on the processes of linguistic and ethnic identity (Zharkynbekova & Bokayev 2011; Son 1999; Pak 2004; Gazdieva 2009).

The identity peculiarities of the ethnic Ingush living in Kazakhstan, and the characteristics of the Ingush language in Russian-Kazakh bilingualism, are revealed in Gazdieva's work titled *Funktsionirovanie rodnogo iazyka ingushskoi diaspori v usloviakh russko-kazakhskogo bilingvizma* (Functioning of the Ingush Diaspora's Native Language in Russian-Kazakh Bilingualism) (2009). As was evidenced by the study results, long-term Ingush residence in another ethno-linguistic and cultural space in close cooperation with representatives of the Kazakh and Russian people has been expressed in the essential features of their speech and the communicative behaviour of the individual Ingush. The current state of the Ingush diaspora's language was found to be characterised by a constriction in the function in the family and everyday sphere: there are

also transformations in the ethno-linguistic identity of the Ingush in favour of the state identity, while preserving their own culture and language in the non-national environment (ibid.).

In the study titled *Sotsiolingvisticheskie analiz funktsionirovaniia kore mar i russkogo iazyka v koreiskoi diaspore Kazakhstana* (Sociolinguistic Analysis of the Functioning of Kore-Mar and Russian Languages in the Korean Diaspora in Kazakhstan), Svetlana Son (1999) attempted to analyse the linguistic situation among Koreans in Kazakhstan from the point of language change and the setting of criteria for language stability in the process of its loss as a functionally first language. It has been proved that correlation between the notions of ethnic and linguistic communities of Koreans can be solved only with the help of language characteristics; a language choice is realised through a complex of factors – demographic, social, political, psychological, cultural, historical, economic, and others (ibid.).

In the past ten years of ethno-demographic processes the issue of the linguistic adaptation of Kazakh repatriates in the – for them – new social and cultural space, and their integration into modern Kazakh society, has been occupying a particular place. This problem is directly connected with the study of the peculiarities of the ethnic, linguistic, and civil identities of the Kazakh repatriates.

In their monograph titled *Protsessy iazykovoi i etnicheskoi identifikatsii repatriantov Kazakhstana* (Processes of Linguistic and Ethnic Identification of Kazakh Repatriates), Sholpan Zharkynbekova and Baurzhan Bokaev (2011) consider the problem of the adaptation and integration of ethnic Kazakh repatriates into Kazakhstani society through changes in their ethno-linguistic self-consciousness under the influence of the social, historical, and globalised transformations of society and the process of ethno-linguistic identity formation. The study results are based on extensive questionnaire data (carried out in six regions: northern Kazakhstan, eastern Kazakhstan, Mangystau, southern Kazakhstan, Akmola, and Astana city), autobiographical texts, mass media materials, and audio recordings of the live speech of the repatriates.

The respondents, ranging in age from 16 to 60, who had arrived from China, Mongolia, Uzbekistan, Tadzhikistan, Turkmenistan, and Russia, participated in the questionnaire. The following aspects of ethno-linguistic identification of the Kazakh repatriates were considered: 1) the role of native language in the ethnic self-consciousness of Kazakhs; 2) language competence as a reflection of linguistic and ethnic identity; 3) the scope of Kazakh, Russian, and other language usage; 4) the attitude to languages.

According to the authors' opinion, the Kazakh repatriates demonstrated that for them the Kazakh language and its association with the Kazakh ethnic community has a highly actualised, culturally symbolic meaning.

Based on this study, a sociolinguistic portrait of a repatriate was created. A typology of ethno-linguistic personalities was established for the repatriates in 4 types: Kazakh language speakers and Russian language speakers (foreign language speaking), bilingual repatriates who prefer to speak Russian (or another language), and bilinguals who prefer to speak Kazakh. This typology was built on attitudes towards native language as the main means of communication and as a symbol of ethnic self-identification. The authors state that the absence, or low level, of Kazakh language competence explains the discrepancies between ethnic and linguistic identities and hinders the determination of personal linguistic identity (Zharkynbekova & Bokaev 2011).

It is worth noting that a comprehensive analysis of the studied issue was successfully implemented in this work due to a complex research programme using well-established methods and techniques (questionnaire, interview, monitoring and analysis of speaking behaviour, associative experiment, the study of written material, and analysis of mass media material aimed at defining the formation of stereotypical ideas about repatriates).

A. Dosanova (2011) in her work introducing the peculiarities of linguistic adaptation of the Kazakh repatriates studying at universities revealed the cases of language bearers and cultural shock in the process of acculturation. Thus, the object of study in this paper is limited to one social group. On the basis of the correlation analysis of mass questionnaire data and focus interviews the following features of the ethnic, linguistic, and civil identities of repatriates were revealed: a) the diffusivity of civil identity (34.6%), the indirect confirmation of which is contained in the interview, as well as the observed trend "do not rush to get the Kazakhstani citizenship"; b) difficulties of identification processes which hinder a quick integration into a new for them Kazakhstani society and its structures; c) the absence of *crisis of ethnic and linguistic identities*: the correlation of ethnic and linguistic identities is reflected by the general indexes of the Kazakh language competence, Kazakh language usage in intergeneration and within generation language transmission as well as by attitude towards a language (ibid.: 30).

Thus, the multiethnic culture and multilingual society of Kazakhstan, the specific feature of mentality, and the interests of each ethnic group create a peculiar socio-cultural context of the different aspects of the research problem of identity in modern linguistics.

Inter-ethnic harmony and tolerance – the traditional values of the independent Kazakhstan, the basis of national stability and society consolidation – fa-

facilitate a harmonious functioning and developing of the languages and cultures of all Kazakhstani ethnic groups. Study of the ethno-linguistic identification processes can define a range of problems that exist in the new language policy today. These problems can be both inherited from the Soviet period and related to the current political and economic situation in the world in general and in the territory of the former Soviet Union in particular. The solution of problems will make it possible to contribute to the realisation of the idea of peaceful co-existence of ethnic groups living in the territory of the Republic of Kazakhstan, and their languages.

The active work of the Assembly of Peoples of Kazakhstan, established on the initiative of the head of state N. Nazarbayev in 1995, supports the diasporas' growing interest in their native language, culture, traditions, and customs, which generally beneficially influence the preservation of the ethnic groups' identity and are consistent with their increased awareness of their ethnic identity.

Research on the co-functioning of Kazakh, Russian, and English languages in the modern multilingual space of Kazakhstan

Scholars of Kazakhstan are particularly interested in questions of how Kazakh, Russian, and other languages function together at the present stage of development of this multi-ethnic society. One focus of this research is on the readiness of the population to adapt to new social and cultural conditions with the goal of understanding the relationship between the language processes and geographic, ethnic, demographic, and other extra-linguistic factors that influence the linguistic preferences of the population.

Different aspects of Kazakh-Russian bilingualism were widely reflected in the works of Kazakhstani linguists. B. Khasanuly (1992, 2002) focused on the essential fields and consistent patterns of the Kazakh and Russian language functions and the issue of native language in the modern linguistic situation. Khasanuly went on to suggest a regional approach to the problem of the functional development of official and regional (national) languages. Investigating the issues of monolingualism, bilingualism, and multilingualism, B. Khasanuly (2002) shows that it would be appropriate to consider the development of official and regional languages in the context of globalisation – south, west, north, east, and central. Considering the regional linguistic situation and factors influencing its change, the regional approach would provide a solution to the issue of study within the republic.

As Khasanuly (*ibid.*) states, the linguistic situation of the northern region (Astana city, Akmola, Kostanay, Pavlodar, and northern Kazakhstan in gen-

eral) is characterised by a number of peculiarities expressed in such indices as national language competence, monolingualism, bilingualism, and multilingualism.

National language competence in the republic is 90.2%, while for the northern region it is 82.4%; monolingualism is 46.2% and 55.3% respectively; and bilingualism and multilingualism are 53.8% and 43.8% respectively; finally official language competence is 64.4% and 43.3% respectively. Having analysed in detail the researched issues individually by region, and in comparison with the indices for the republic in general, Khasanuly reveals the following: the share of monolingualism is directly proportional to the share of the Russian population within the ethnic composition of the northern region, and vice versa, with a decrease in the share of Russians in the ethnic composition the indices of bilingualism and multilingualism increase (Khasanuly 2002: 38–39).

From the aspect of contrastive linguistics, E. Suleimenova investigates the problems of bilingualism, the main trends in the development of Kazakh and Russian, the question of the cognitive, creative, and pedagogical aspects in the development and existence of the individual in a second language, and the peculiarities of the present linguistic situation in Kazakhstan with reference to the policy of linguistic renaissance (Suleimenova 1996, 2011a; Suleimenova & Smagulova 2005; Suleimenova et al. 2007). Suleimenova uses theories of language vitality to analyse the sociolinguistic situation of Kazakh. The researcher monitors the impact of the republic's language policy on the functional development of the official language and has made a detailed analysis of the status and usage of Kazakh as the official language. Moreover, she has studied the functional correlation of the usage of Kazakh (as the official language) and Russian within the existing common space. Her special interest is in the quantitative and qualitative aspects of language policy in Kazakhstan in recent years. In her analysis, Suleimenova pays attention to how linguistic, social, political, demographic, ethnic, and cultural parameters can theoretically increase the vitality of Kazakh. Suleimenova has assessed the language policy of Kazakhstan on the basis of wide-ranging research as:

- centralised (as it is implemented by the government, which provides a system of required measures);
- perspective (as it is directed to change the present linguistic situation);
- democratic (as it considers the interests of broad masses);
- international (as the development of Kazakh and Russian, and the languages of other ethnic groups, has been chosen as the main strategic direction);
- constructive (as it is directed to the expansion of the sphere of usage, the social and communicative role and vitality of the Kazakh language, and to the support of Russian and other languages in the country);

- exoglossic (as in spite of strong purist tendencies in Kazakh, an international lexis has been developing, as well as a lexis that serves communication within the new spheres of information and technology) (Suleimenova 2011a: 49).

The research devoted to the study of bilingualism allows us to provide an objective picture of the linguistic situation in the country, which, in turn, is the determining factor for the development of bilingualism, which itself influences the process of second language acquisition and productive implementation of bilingual communication in different fields.

The linguistic situation in Kazakhstan has changed under the influence of various factors: Kazakh has acquired the status of the official language. A state programme for the development of languages was implemented, directed to the restoration of the functions of Kazakh in all public fields. This programme was also to provide linguistic and methodological support for the process of official language teaching. The authors of this paper have noticed positive changes in the modern linguistic situation of the republic: an obvious shift in the mastery of Kazakh by the Russian population (1,322,270 people were studying Kazakh in 2000) (Khasanov 2001: 221), the beginning of a new everyday Russian-Kazakh bilingualism not limited by the bilingualism of the classroom, and the beginning of Russian-Kazakh bilingualism in business communication (Akhmetzhanova 2001). However, despite the positive results of the on-going language policy and language planning (the development and production of scientific and methodological literature on the Kazakh language intended for foreign-speaking citizens, active work on the unification of scientific terminology, the expansion of programme broadcasting in Kazakh, attempts to optimise the teaching of Kazakh at all levels of the education system, the implementation of projects for the gradual transition to business in Kazakh, the productive activity of the Centre for the Accelerated Learning of the Official Language, which aims to train state officers, etc.), the problems involved in the proper functioning of Russian-Kazakh bilingualism require a more purposeful development.

The studied peculiarities of the modern linguistic situation undoubtedly influence the process of Kazakh language learning and usage. In order to study the effects of socio-psychological and demographic factors on the acquisition and use of Kazakh, A. Agmanova conducted a questionnaire among university students and government employees who were studying Kazakh at the Centre for Accelerated Learning of the Official Language.² Survey data give evidence that demographic, social, and psychological factors correlate with the level of official language competence and the fields of its usage. It was revealed that among non-indigenous ethnic groups integrative and instrumental motivation

to learn the official language increased. The dominance of a particular language during the pre-education period, and the language used in the family, affect the preservation and level of language competence. The questionnaire also helped to identify the strategic settings of the study and usage of the official language, and the problems that the learners encounter. The results are also of interest in terms of didactics, as they can be the basis for determining those learning strategies that give maximum consideration to all factors that affect the acquisition of Kazakh as a second language by the Russian-speaking population (Agmanova 2010).

The research of E. Zhuravleva (2009, 2010) focuses on the Russian language as a polynational phenomenon that can form national variants, included the Kazakhstan variant. For that she studied the most important functions and spheres of Russian language usage. The results of sociolinguistic research into the Kazakh variant of Russian were described, with the main task to identify the cultural component of language competence of the Russian language speaker's personality in Kazakhstan: the complex of knowledge and understanding of cultural phenomena, political and social realities, precedential names, etc.

As Zhuravleva states, languages that have several centres of development can establish different national variants due to their separate language processes, separate norms, and definite official statuses. She calls such languages polynational. Their differences are characterised by the 'national variability'. A national variant is a form of adaptation of a literary language to the conditions, needs, and traditions of a nation. In other words, a national variant is a specific form of the literary language that functions as an independent "community of communication" within a nation (Zhuravleva 2010). Within Kazakhstan, active language contacts, interethnic integration, legal status (according to the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Russian is a language of international communication), and a scale of how Russian functions in all the fields of official and public life allow us to consider Russian as polynational.

Zhuravleva states:

The areas of Russian language usage in Kazakhstan form a specific socio-functional model that is a complex of existing language forms, within which the speaking needs of the community in all life situations and the ability to consider Kazakh Russian one of polynational variants are implemented. (Zhuravleva 2009: 70)

The study results show a definite picture of Russian and the changes occurring in it. Thus, the influence of Kazakh on Russian is manifested both orally and in written form (texts that include Kazakh language units are very common).

Media texts contain a variety of ‘inserts’ in Russian (text) of different language elements from the contacting system. This forms a lexis that reflects the political structure of Kazakhstan (*akim* – the governor, mayor of the city or region; *tenge* – the national currency of Kazakhstan; etc.); national holidays celebrated in Kazakhstan and everything related to them (*Nauryz* – Eastern New Year celebrated on March 22nd mainly in Asian countries; *Nauryz-kozhe* – a meal prepared specially for Nauryz which has 7 different ingredients: water, meat, salt, milk or yoghurt, one type of grain, chosen from rice, corn, or wheat, and others; etc.); everyday life (*piala* – a drinking bowl; *chapan* – a coat worn over clothes during cold winter months; etc.); the names of dishes (*baursak* – a type of fried dough food, found in the cuisine of Central Asia; it is usually compared to doughnut; *beshparmak* – national dish among nomadic Turkic people, boiled meat mixed with boiled noodles; etc.); religious rites (*sadaka* – a compulsory charity in Islam; *ramazan* – the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, a month of fasting and commemorating the first revelation of the Quran to Muhammad; etc.); national traditions (*bessike saly* – a holiday, hosted when the newborn is put to a cradle (*besik*); *syinshi* – a custom according to which a traveller or any other person who brought home a good message (news) receives a valuable gift from the owners in gratitude); the field of music (*aitys* – a contest between two improvisators-songwriters popularly called *akyns*; *dombyra* – a Kazakh stringed musical instrument played by plucking, with a wooden frame (its length is 1000–1300 millimetres) and two strings; etc.); sport (*kyzkuy* – literally ‘bride chasing’, an equestrian traditional sport among the Azerbaijanis, Kazakhs, and Kyrgyz; *kokpar* – a Central Asian sport in which horse-mounted players attempt to drag a goat or calf carcass toward a goal; etc.); toponyms (cities – *Astana*, *Aktau*, *Atyrau*, *Kokshetau*, and others; rivers and lakes – *Essil*, *Burabai*, and others; mountains – *Zhumbaktas*, *Okzhetpes*, and others); anthroponyms, as well as the units of other fields (Zhuravleva 2010). To refer to the relevant linguistic units in Russian in Kazakhstan, the term ‘regionalism’ was adopted in those cases where these units are either in opposition to vernacular literary standards, or expand their boundaries. The vocabulary of the Kazakhstani variant of Russian is representative of all national varieties, i.e., it is composed of three main layers: “the vocabulary of the literary level, the vocabulary of everyday colloquial lexical items, and, much more rarely, dialect words” (Zhuravleva 2009: 72).

When used in a Russian text, similar lexical units from another language are used as the units of ‘another’ but simultaneously ‘its own’ (i.e. ‘not foreign’) code. Thus, the function of the lexical items is fixed as normal language practice.

Critical discourse analysis based on the study of state documents, the speeches of politicians, public activists, teachers, representatives of the mass media,

and the results of interviews and questionnaires allowed Kazakhstani research (Zharkynbekova & Aimoldina 2012) to define the attitude of the country's citizens towards the policy of trilingualism³. According to this, the three vectors of language policy are the most important to ensure worthy compliance with international standards of development: along with two functioning languages (Kazakh as the only official language and Russian widely used as a language of international communication), the English language becomes more and more popular, which is considered as one of the basic conditions for successful integration into the global economy.

Scholars have noted the positive aspects of the interaction of three language systems also for public employees, who, by analysing and comparing the three languages, will have the opportunity not only to convey information better, but also to think in terms of three cultures and values.

As was defined, the policy of trilingualism positively influences the harmonic development of a personality (74.9%), leads to the position of Kazakh being strengthened (68.5%), and strengthens the position of the English language (61.2%) (Zharkynbekova & Aimoldina 2012).

However, the wide spread of English sharpened the contradictions of the modern language system and intensified its dynamics. Some groups of the population, however, reacted negatively to the increasing popularity of English. From the very beginning, some community representatives saw in the idea of the project a risk for the development of other languages, especially the official language. Others consider the strengthening of English in Kazakhstan as an attempt to oust Russian. The remainder state that the spread of English in Kazakhstan might negatively affect the development of minority languages. Foreign experts consider the introduction of the programme to have been premature.

A. Agmanova, D. Akynova, and A. Akzhigitova (2012) devoted their research to the study of the issues related to language preference among ethnic minority groups and immigrants in Kazakhstan. The data they have gathered shows a positive attitude towards English in the immigrants' environment, which can be demonstrated by the following statements: a) English has become increasingly popular in Kazakhstan (85.2%); b) English language knowledge is prestigious (66.6%); c) learning English is beneficial in economic terms (74.6%); d) knowledge of English is an opportunity to get a good job (81.4%); e) knowledge of the English language allows us to join the world community (85.1%); f) the use of English has increased in various areas over the past five years (60.3%); g) knowing the English language is a sign of the country's competitiveness (75.1%); h) English should be learnt from grade 1 (81.3%). The data reflect the immigrants' opinions concerning the perspectives of language development, as

is shown by the following statements: a) the Kazakh language will inevitably predominate in all areas of society (88.9%); b) the position of the English language is improving along with that of the Kazakh language (56%).

The opinion of ethnic minority communities concerning the significance of English in their lives is supported by the following comments: a) English language proficiency is important for further professional development (75%); b) there is a need to improve one's English language knowledge (72.2%); English language learning stimulates interest (72.2%); c) knowing English increases a person's prestige and builds up a sense of self-confidence (38.9%); d) English language usage has increased in different areas in recent years (63.9%); e) knowing the English language is a sign of the country's competitiveness (94.5%); f) English should be learnt from grade 1 (72.2%). Thus, a vast majority of respondents connect their further professional development with knowledge of English; English language proficiency is considered by them to be one of the essential factors influencing the opportunities to improve one's career.

CONCLUSION

One of the important methodological foundations of modern Kazakhstani research is the peculiarity of the linguistic situation in Kazakhstan, which creates a prerequisite for a comprehensive, systematic study of activities that focus on the optimisation of social communication.

The data from the research mentioned above shows the effectiveness of the policy of extending the areas of the official language, supporting the function of Russian, and promoting English within the trilingualism project.

The studying of processes of ethno-linguistic identification allows us to define a circle of problems that exist today within the framework of a new government language policy. Problems such as Soviet-period inheritance are related to the modern political and economic situation in the world in general, and in the territory of the former Soviet Union in particular. Solving these problems will create the opportunity to contribute to the implementation of the idea of a peaceful co-existence of the ethnic communities in the territory of Kazakhstan, as well as their languages, and to facilitate support for the increasing interest of the diaspora in their native language, culture, traditions, and customs, all of which have a positive impact on preserving ethnic originality.

Thus, the polyethnic culture and society of Kazakhstan, a unique feature of the mentality and interests of each ethnic community, create a specific socio-cultural context for different aspects of research into identity issues in modern linguistics.

The methodology used in this study allows us to follow the implementation of the language planning programmes in the Republic of Kazakhstan, as well as the implementation of the priorities of the State Programme for the Functioning and Development of Languages for 2011–2020.

The sociolinguistic research considered here focuses on identifying the essence and role of languages in ethno-cultural interrelation and gives important information for the timely correction of the language policy and language planning; it is also useful for working towards solutions in the field of language regulation.

NOTES

- ¹ Basic directions of the language policy of sovereign Kazakhstan, which meet the needs of the polyethnic population and consider the peculiarities of demographic and political situation are reflected in the principal legislations of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan (Articles 7, 93) (Constitution), the Law on Languages of the Republic of Kazakhstan (Law 1999), and the decrees and annual addresses of the country's president, N. Nazarbayev. During the years of sovereignty three state programmes for the functioning and development of languages have been adopted. The first one – the State Programme for the Functioning and Development of Languages in the Republic of Kazakhstan for the Years 1998–2000 (State Programme 1998) – formed legal frameworks of linguistic construction in the main fields of the country's public life; the second one – the State Programme for the Functioning and Development of Languages in the Republic of Kazakhstan for the Years 2001–2010 (State Programme 2001) – strengthened the achieved results in three directions: the social and communicative functions of the official language were significantly reinforced, the general cultural function of Russian was reserved, and the development of the other languages of the peoples of Kazakhstan was supported. During the same period the cultural project *Tripartite Unity of Languages* was implemented by the initiative of the country's leader (Nazarbayev 2007). Currently, the State Programme for the Functioning and Development of Languages in the Republic of Kazakhstan for the Years 2010–2020 is also being implemented, having been adopted by Presidential Decree No. 110, from June 29, 2011 (State Programme 2011). The aim of the programme is a harmonic language policy that ensures the full functioning of the official language as the most important factor in strengthening national unity, while maintaining all the languages of ethnic groups living in Kazakhstan.
- ² The Republican Centre for Accelerated Learning of the Official Language was founded in accordance with the Presidential Decree from June 19, 1995, No. 2335, *On State Organisation*, aimed at organising systems of intensive learning of Kazakh by state officers. The main objective of the centre is to manage all the necessary organising, material, and technical conditions, as well as training and the scientific provision of intensive learning of Kazakh for state officers.
- ³ The implementation of the cultural project *Tripartite Unity of Languages* was officially launched by a Presidential Decree in 2007 (Address to the People of Kazakhstan, titled *New Kazakhstan in a New World*; Nazarbayev 2007).

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PEACEFUL LIFESTYLE OR INNOCUOUS IMAGE: ISLAMIC BRANDING USING KAZAKH PROVERBS ON YOUTUBE

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Abstract: The government of Kazakhstan places a high value on Kazakh oral tradition as a resource for societal restoration. At the same time, there has been a resurgence of Islam in the country and the on-going process of defining a form of Islam that is Kazakh. Asıl Arna, the state approved Islamic governing body's media company, posted a video on YouTube that affirms Kazakh oral tradition as part of a message of living from a pure heart. Such an affirmation of a local wisdom tradition is unusual for an organisation that stresses the universal, revelatory significance of Islam for right living. Hence, the author's question: Is the video designed to instruct Kazakh-speaking Muslims or is there an agenda to change societal perceptions of Islam?

Keywords: branding, Islam, Kazakhstan, proverbs, YouTube

This article¹ began when I did a YouTube search using the Kazakh word *maqal* (proverb). After sifting through a few videos that presented Kazakh proverbs, I came across a fascinating video prepared by an Islamic broadcasting company in Kazakhstan. At the outset of this video, the narrator sings the praises of Kazakh proverbs. I was surprised because scripturally-oriented Muslim and Christian Kazakhstanis have, on occasion, warned me about putting too much stock in the truth of Kazakh proverbs. I checked other YouTube videos by this same company, Asıl Arna (Precious Channel), the state approved Islamic governing body's media company. Their other videos are primarily instructional. I was left with the question: Did Asıl Arna produce this video to instruct Kazakh-speaking Muslims or is there an agenda to change societal perceptions of Islam? In order to make this question understandable, we will need to consider both the religious situation in Kazakhstan and the on-going role of folklore in that context.

THE RELIGIOUS CONTEXT FOR KAZAKHS IN KAZAKHSTAN

Kazakhs are a largely Muslim ethnic group who emphasise the values of Islam, communal celebrations as well as lifecycle rites and rituals (Omelicheva 2011). From 1993 to 2007, the percentage of Kazakhs declaring themselves as adherents to Islam increased sharply (going from 46% to nearly 75%), but the percentage of those who faithfully keep the fast increased only slightly, from 32% to 37% (Lubin & Joldasov 2010: 45–48).

Early in the 1990s, Kazakhstan along with other Central Asian nations expressed an interest in allowing greater freedom for Islamic groups within their borders. However, this interest waned with the rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan, threatening Kazakhstan and the events around 9/11, 2001 (Trisko 2005: 374). In May of 2011, Muslim extremists planted a bomb in the western region of Kazakhstan. These events served as the impetus for the passage of severely restrictive legislation concerning religion (Leonard 2011). This law put new limitations on all religious activity in the country. Shortly after this, the government took action to curb foreign forms of Islamic religious expression, even strongly discouraging the wearing of Arab dress by Kazakhstani women (Nazarbayev 2012). The government affirmed the principal of modesty, but directed citizens to express this value in a traditional Kazakh way.

All of these changes put Kazakhstan in the unique situation of experiencing 'Re-Islamization' (Rorlich 2003) while seeking to differentiate themselves from radical Islam and some religious forms that come across as decidedly foreign. It is within this context of seeking a Kazakh form of Islam that the video in question was developed.

FOLKLORE AS A SOCIETAL AND POLITICAL RESOURCE

Contemporary Kazakhs view proverbs as an entrustment and as the traditional resource for defining problems, making moral judgments, and suggesting remedies (Arġnbayev 1996: 94; Ğabdullıyn 1996 [1958]: 5; Tabıldıyev 2001: 17–18). Such a societal valuation helps explain government actions such as the mandate for proverb instruction for pre-kindergarten children through secondary school, and inclusion of a section on Kazakh proverbs in the university entrance exams.

During the Soviet era, folklore was a matter of on-going government interest (Paksoy 1989). Folklore was looked on as a tool for advancing political and societal agendas (Newall 1987: 131). In contemporary Kazakhstan, folklore continues to be a matter of political interest. The Kazakhstani government has looked to what it considers indigenous and historical factors to distinguish

itself as a nation. Folklore, in the form of Kazakh proverbs, has been an integral part of this process.

ISSUES OF KAZAKH IDENTITY

For Kazakhs, both folklore and Islam are resources for identity formation. The government has grappled with each of these resources in what Herzfeld describes for nation-states in general as an effort for “ontological self-perpetuation” and “cultural fixity” (Herzfeld 2005 [1997]: 21–22). Since Kazakhs view both folklore and Islam as part of their identity, they experience both as natural and necessary complements to each other. I have encountered this perspective on the natural and necessary aspects of Kazakh identity personally. Kazakhs over the years have told me, “You have studied Kazakh oral tradition deeply – you must have become a Muslim!”

As resources for identity formation, Kazakh folklore and Islam have different things to offer. For an ethnic group with a nomadic past and contemporary geo-political situation encroached by major world powers, Islam offers Kazakhs a connection to a wider world (i.e. the *Ummah*). Kazakhstan’s 2050 goals stress affiliation with the *Ummah* (Nazarbayev 2012). At the same time, Kazakh folklore provides a background and a linkage with the historical past for the Kazakhstani nation. In this same document, Kazakhstan’s current tri-lingual policy is founded on historical grounds: Kazakh as resource from the distant past; Russian as resource from the near past; English as contemporary lingua franca (Nazarbayev 2012).

Such grounding in Kazakh tradition is especially significant since there is a societal frame that encourages suspicion towards things that are foreign (Nazpary 2002: 130–136). We have to go back to the early Soviet era to understand this dyad contrasting the foreign as dangerous and the indigenous as innocuous. During the Soviet era, this dynamic was present in propaganda warning against foreign capitalism (Bonnell 1997: 201–204). At that time, capitalism was contrasted with the Soviet lifestyle, with the latter being presented as the moral and harmonious way of life. After gaining independence in 1991, Kazakhstani depicted outsiders, whether foreigners or those outside their respective region, as *khitryi* (cunning) (Nazpary 2002: 127–130, 169–170). In contrast to this, Central Asians during the Soviet era were stereotyped as simple and unassuming (Adams 2004: 106). Kazakh intellectuals found this stereotype to be useful. Starting in the 1960s and continuing through the 1980s, they developed an interest in searching out Kazakh ethno-history (Kudaibergenova 2013: 847). Authors realised that when writing in Kazakh and focusing on the nomadic past

they could present matters of significance symbolically (Kudaibergenova 2013: 842). Thus, a frame of reference developed that contrasted the local nomadic tradition with foreign influences.

THE TENSION BETWEEN KAZAKH PROVERBS AND ISLAM

The relationship between Kazakh folklore and Islam is not void of challenges. During the Soviet era, there was a clear effort to de-Islamicise the Kazakhs (Schwab 2012: 175–178). This effort was carried out in part by manipulating the content of Kazakh proverb collections and secondly by affirming the ideals while ridiculing selected practices.

The premier Kazakh proverb scholar, academician Äbduäli Qaidar, estimates that there are over fifteen thousand Kazakh proverbs (Qaidar 2007). Current published collections consist of at most a few thousand Kazakh proverbs, so there are clearly proverbs left out in each collection. If we compare a proverb collection from the early twentieth century with more recently published collections, we will note differences in terms of the Islamic content of the selected proverbs. For example, Barjaqsıulı's well respected collection from 1923, which is still in use today (Barjaqsıulı 1993 [1923]) and which includes religious content such as references to God in Kazakh term *Tängir* as well as Islamic term *Allah* and even a reference to *Sharia*.

The relationship between Kazakh proverbs and Islam has been marked by ambivalence. On the one hand, Kazakh proverbs present Islamic ideals positively, affirming such principles as *ımandıq*, the ideal of being faithful and principled (Tabıldıyev 2001: 60). On the other hand, there are numerous proverbs that critique selected actions of stereotyped Muslim clerics.

TO BE A KAZAKH MUSLIM IS TO AFFIRM KAZAKH PROVERBIAL WISDOM

Earlier on in this article, I discussed how there was an assumption that one's careful study of Kazakh oral tradition would lead one to embrace Islam. At this point, I want to consider whether being a Kazakh Muslim affects one's relationship to Kazakh proverbial wisdom. There are Kazakhs who would affirm their allegiance to Islam and yet go with Kazakh proverbial wisdom if there was a point of disagreement between the two. Still, the historical example below and my personal experience has been that Kazakh adherents of scriptural Islam²

will side with Islamic doctrine, even if an apparent issue between the teachings of Islam and a given Kazakh proverb could be effectively explained away.³

Situation #1: Abai Kunanbayuli⁴

Abai Kunanbayuli wrote during the classic period of Kazakh literature from the 1850s to the beginning of the 20th century. He was familiar with Turkish, Persian, Kazakh, Russian, and Western literature. His father was a ruler of his people (*bay*) and Abai was trained as an orator and leader. In his writings, he frequently quotes or adapts proverbs. Kazakhs consider him as their poet laureate based on his songs, poems, and essays (Paltore & Zhubatova & Mustafayeva 2012). Contemporary Kazakhs often comment that Abai's writings are as relevant today as they were when he penned his thoughts.

Here is the Kazakh proverb that Abai calls into question:

Altın körse, perishte joldan tayadı.

Seeing gold, even the angel will deviate from the path.

Abai's 29th Black Word (Kunanbayuli 1918).

Abai scoffs at the proverb, declaring that angels have no need for gold. However, his main concern is that Kazakhs will use this proverb to excuse their own greed.

The proverb above is an example of hyperbole, rhetorical exaggeration to more effectively get the point across in terms of both understanding and emotion (Clinton 1977: 61). This rhetorical device does not seek to provide referentially accurate data, but rather to connect emotionally with the audience. Hyperbolic statements are flagged for further consideration. Fauconnier and Turner (2002: 332–333) refer to this specific kind of further consideration as the “unpacking principle”. The incongruity of the phrase with the overall discussion indicates that the hearer or reader needs to think outside of this phrase or image to the wider meaning of the proverb. If we acknowledge that this example fits the unpacking principle, then we will affirm that the proverb is not about an angel and gold per se. Rather, the proverb is to be understood as an affirmation of human propensity to err (Kaz. *pendeshilik*).

In contrast, Abai concentrates on the possible negative outcome and rejects the proverb in question. Although he understands rhetorical technique, he treats the proverb as referential and therefore feels free to reject it. In contrast to Abrahams (1971), who looks at folklore as a problem-solving resource, Abai fears the disputed proverbs will serve as a source of problem-generation.

Situation #2: The Truncated Proverb

There is a well-known Kazakh proverb that is recorded one way in proverb collections and then used in a shortened form in everyday speech.

From proverb collections:

Jılı-jılı söyleceñ, jılan ininen shıǵadı, qattı-qattı söylese, musulman dininen shıǵadı.

If you speak gentle words, the snake will be drawn out; if you speak harsh words, it will drive the Muslim from faith.

The version commonly heard in daily conversation:

Jılı-jılı söyleceñ, jılan ininen shıǵadı.

If you speak gentle words, the snake will be drawn out.

The proverb about the snake, as included in proverb collections, follows a common pattern in Kazakh proverbs of contrasting the bad and the good person (Qaidar 2004: 139). Here it recommends fitting speech based on the individual being addressed. If you address someone who is a hard person, then use gentle words to draw them out. If you address someone who is kind, then be careful not to drive them away with harsh words. Once again, here is a hyperbolic use of a metaphorical image intended to be understood figuratively. You should seek to win over the bad/crafty person with kind words and not lose the good/innocent person because you speak harshly.

A Kazakh colleague of mine and I discussed the ‘snake proverb’. She had a doctrinal concern about the person driven from faith. Although she is a literary scholar with a firm grasp of rhetorical method and hyperbole, she could not get beyond the perceived doctrinal issue.

Here is the segment of our conversation based on my best recollection:

Erik: *Can you explain the proverb about the snake [the version from the proverb collection] to me?*

Kazakh scholar: *A Muslim cannot lose their faith permanently! This must refer to the temporary loss of faith described in the Qur’an.*

Erik: *I think the ‘loss of faith’ is meant figuratively.*

Kazakh scholar: *A Muslim cannot lose their faith.*

Erik: *That is not the point. This is clearly a hyperbolic proverb following the Kazakh proverb pattern of contrasting the bad and good person.*

Kazakh scholar: *It is just not right.*

-- End of discussion --

Each of the scholars I refer to attacks the proverb in question because they view it as deviating from the truth. Proverbs as text have standing. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett points out that proverbs, from their structure, tone, and history of use within a group come across as authoritative (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1981 [1973]: 111). Out of respect for the power of words Kazakhs can be circumspect about hyperbolic proverbs that they question. This is especially true of those who embrace a theological, scriptural authority.

For both scholars the textual and practical aspects are linked. Abai's expressed concerns about the angel proverb address both factual and emotive significance. The contemporary Kazakh proverb scholar cannot get beyond the textual/factual issue to even consider the snake proverb as hyperbolic. Thus for the Kazakh adherent to scriptural Islam, Kazakh proverbial wisdom in general is supported, but some proverbs may be deemed unacceptable.

BRANDING AND ISLAM

'Islamic branding' has been used to describe the marketing of products to Muslims (Fischer 2012; Young 2008). However, in this article, I want to consider how Islam in Kazakhstan might be presented in a favourable light by affirming Kazakh oral tradition in a particular YouTube video. I refer to this process as branding because the aim is to have a long-standing association established about the 'product' in question. In this case, the product is Islam.

There are similar efforts underway in neighbouring Central Asian countries. Noah Tucker (2013) explores efforts by the Uzbek government to present 'Uzbek Islam' using sermons by the Mufti of Uzbekistan, the head of the state-approved Islamic organisation. The Kazakhstan Muftiyat⁵ established Asil Arna as a broadcasting company in 2007. Since then, it has developed a webpage and extended its reach through satellite broadcasting (Asil Arna 2014). Like the Muftiyat in Uzbekistan (Tucker 2013), their counterpart in Kazakhstan wants to present Islam as a peaceable religion. Making the connection between Islam and Kazakh proverbs aids them in achieving this objective.

ASSESSING BRANDING IN THE VIDEO IN QUESTION

How do we assess the use of branding in the selected video? We need to consider what is being communicated in terms of key words, metaphors, and lines of reasoning (Quinn 2005). We also need to evaluate language choice, since this both serves the self-presentation of the producers and helps define the expected

audience. Finally, since we are talking about a video, I will consider how the settings and groups in the video situate the viewer.

I am not attempting to determine intentionality. In making the evaluation, I will be looking to the structure of the video. I will ask two questions: 1. What are the messages communicated by the video? 2. Does the content match up with other instructional videos posted by Asil Arna?

THE STRUCTURE AND THE FLOW OF THE VIDEO

Asil Arna's attempt to connect Islam with Kazakh oral tradition is presented in the YouTube video titled, *Din ham Dil men Til: jaqsı söz, jarım ırıs* (Religion, a pure heart and language: A good word is half of prosperity) (Tazabek 2013). The video was posted in March of 2013 and has been viewed six hundred and nine times as of October 3, 2014.

Overview of the video:

00:00–00:25 Islamic greeting, calligraphy 'Allah' in Arabic, calligraphy 'bis-millah' (in the name of Allah) in Arabic; incorporated Kazakh pictures with 'Allah' overlay for the initial inserted video;

00:26–00:30 Kazakh proverb on Kazakh pattern slide: "A good word – half of wealth";

00:30–01:00 Kazakh historical footage with narration about how Kazakhs have passed truth and wisdom down through the ages by means of proverbs;

01:01–01:11 One of Solomon's proverbs (most likely Proverbs 16:24, but no citation is given);

01:12–02:06 Proverbial phrases and proverbs concerning the importance of right speech for passing along wisdom;

02:07–02:12 Slide "*Jaqsı atı ölmeydi, ğalımnuñ .atı ölmeydi*" (a good name does not die; the scholar's letter does not die);

02:12–03:27 Mullah and then a philologist speak about the power of words and the need for a pure heart as the source of good words (a scholar filmed outside the Kazakhstan Academy of Sciences);

03:28–07:08 The importance of words for setting an example;

07:08–07:19 Slide: Abai wrote to be an example to the younger generation;

07:20–10:50 Nature slide with Kazakh proverbial phrases;

Music with English lyrics in the background is "Forgive Me When I Whine", as adapted by Zain Bhirkha;

First mention of 'snake proverb' (08:12);

- 10:51 Importance of good speech among Muslims;
- Extensive use of Arabic with translation and quoting of Mohammed;
- Second mention of the 'snake proverb' on Kazakh patterned slide (13:17);
- Introduction of the theme of faithfulness using multiple forms of the same concept; Third mention of the 'snake proverb' by the narrator followed immediately by the theme proverb;
- 17:35 Törelük: account of Kazakh traditional, communal lifestyle;
- 17:55 Excommunication;
- 18:24 Same sequence as at the outset, but now with credits.

The video starts with an Islamic prayer of praise to God (Allah) accompanied by videos of Kazakh traditional hospitality, a yurt, and mountains. Next, the scene shifts to historical footage of the Kazakhs, accompanied by a discussion of the truth that has been passed down through Kazakh oral tradition. Then, it transitions from historical to contemporary with a short segment of a mullah preaching in a mosque and then longer comments by a philologist, each talking about Qur'anic and Kazakh proverbial instruction on how to speak with others. Each speaker utilises a mix of proverbs, aphorisms by famous Kazakhs leaders, and Islamic teaching. Next, there are nature scenes with pleasant background music along with proverbs and sayings in text form. About two-thirds of the way through there is a long segment by a Qur'anic specialist who reads sections from the Hadith (i.e. traditions concerning the life and ministry of Mohammed) and then explains them. He uses different forms of *īmandıq*, the idea of being faithful and principled (which I discussed earlier). Finally, the video finishes with historical footage, an account of the importance of unity in the camp, followed by a discussion of those who abandoned the faith, and the same prayer to Allah with which it began.

In terms of genre, the video in question is an extended homily complete with stories and reinforcing proverbs. This classification is also supported by the settings represented in the video. Although it does show a scholar and some people in the streets, most of the footage with people is from mosques.

The primary message is the importance of *īmandıq* (being principled). Still the affirmation of Kazakh proverbs as a resource for truth is also important. I will have to examine the proverbial content more closely to assess whether the primary message is consistent with other postings by this media company.

PROVERBIAL CONTENT

The video utilises numerous Kazakh proverbs about how to speak, the importance of wisdom, and the value of silence. What stands out amidst all the proverbial content is the minimal metaphorical content of the proverbs presented in the video, and two proverbs that I will consider.

Kazakh proverbs like the proverbs from many nations are rich in metaphorical content, using references to animals, daily objects, or specific groups of individuals. The proverbs used in the video incorporate metaphors that are so common that they have lost much of their metaphorical force; for example, 'heart' for the centre of one's being or 'gold' to represent wealth in general. The proverb used in the title and then repeated three times in the video is similar: *jaqsı söz, jarım ırıs* (a good word, half of prosperity). Thematically the proverb is an excellent fit for the topic, but it has no metaphorical content.

AN ADAPTED KAZAKH PROVERB

Another proverb is also used three times in the video, but it has more metaphorical content. It is the snake proverb that was considered earlier. Here again is the traditional form of the proverb:

*Jılı-jılı söyleceñ, julan ininen shıǵadı,
qattı-qattı söylese, musulman dininen shıǵadı.*

If you speak gentle words, the snake will be drawn out;

If you speak harsh words, it will drive the Muslim from his faith.

Much like the Kazakh scholar who was described earlier, the producers of the video seem uneasy about the reference to a "Muslim driven away from his faith", which is part of a traditional proverb. In two cases in which they insert the proverb, they leave off the second half. As mentioned previously, this truncated form is common in the speech of Kazakhs in Kazakhstan.

What is more interesting is their adaptation, which is presented near the middle of the video.

Adaptation:

*Jılı sözden, julan ininen da shıǵadı,
Jılı sözder jurek dertin jazadı.*

By gentle words the snake is drawn out;

Gentle words heal the heart.

I could locate this variant neither in proverb collections nor online. The adapted version is missing most of the parallel construction. There is only one agent left and the two verbs at the end of each line have lost the spatial deictic contrast (drawing out versus driving away) present in the standard form. It is an acceptable adaptation, but lacks much of the original's stylistic richness. Clearly, the adaptation has been done primarily for doctrinal reasons. The reworking of the proverb indicates that while the Islamic producers of the video may warm up to Kazakh proverbs, they do so on their own terms. When a selected proverb might appear in tension with Islamic doctrine, they take liberties in shaping or reshaping the content just as other scripturally-oriented Kazakhs would. They are not altering their doctrinal position to affirm the significance of Kazakh oral tradition.

The video effectively integrates the Kazakh proverbs in order to support the overall Islamic message. Concurrently it implements proverbs with minimal metaphorical content and adjusts one proverb to ensure that there are no doctrinal issues.

LIFESTYLE INSTRUCTION OR INNOCUOUS IMAGE?

At the outset, I posed the question concerning the purpose of this video. The other videos posted on YouTube by Asil Arna are clearly instructional videos aimed at Kazakh-speaking Muslims. This video is the only one of their postings that highlights Kazakh proverbs. As such it deserves special attention, since scriptural-oriented Kazakhs are circumspect concerning Kazakh proverbs.

The last two sections of the video before the Islamic prayer provide the answer to my question concerning the purpose. If the video primarily promoted Islamic admiration for Kazakh proverbs, there would be further examples from history of how proverbs have guided the Kazakh nation. Instead, the producers provide a section on community followed by another on excommunication with no mention of proverbs in either segment. Thus, the primary focus of the video is instruction of the faithful.

At the same time, the video presents a picture of Islam as indigenous. It affirms the historical significance of proverbs for the Kazakh people and effectively weaves proverbs into the teaching. There are modifications made to one of the key proverbs, but this follows a tradition of scripturally-oriented Kazakhs making adjustments to Kazakh proverbs on doctrinal grounds. All this is done incorporating Kazakh and Arabic with no Russian except for the Russian endings on family names in the credits. Finally, there is the scholar filmed near the Kazakhstan Academy of Sciences as the only easily recognis-

able locale, which connects the video with Kazakh academics. These various aspects help brand the instruction as 'local', helping allay concerns of foreign aspects of some Islamic practices in Kazakhstan.

Thus, the video succeeds in accomplishing both goals. It is an instructional example to Kazakh-speaking Muslims of how to use Kazakh proverbs as a resource for practical issues of life. The key concept according to the video is *imandıq*, the ideal of being faithful and principled, which was promoted even during the Soviet era. The video also presents Kazakhstani Islam as peaceful both with the theme of living from a pure heart and the multiple associations made between Islam and local traditions and language. Given the concerns about some forms used in Islam and a desire to have a Kazakh Islam, this emphasis is especially apropos. The video is a prime example of effective communication using traditional and contemporary resources in Kazakhstan's current secular, multicultural society.

NOTES

- ¹ This article is an expanded version of a talk presented at the Western States Folklore Society Conference, University of California San Diego, La Jolla, California, on April 19, 2013.
- ² I understand 'scriptural Islam' to have the position that Islam is established on the basis of universally applicable divine revelation expressed authoritatively in the Arabic Qur'an superseding any local wisdom tradition.
- ³ For a comparison of the scriptural and traditional approaches to Islam in Kazakhstan, see Wendell Schwab's (2012) article, "Traditions and Texts: How Two Young Women Learned to Interpret the Qur'an and Hadiths in Kazakhstan".
- ⁴ Here I have decided to go with the Kazakh version of Abai's surname rather than the Russian form (Kunanbayev).
- ⁵ Council of scholars and interpreters of Islamic teaching (muftis) with the Head Mufti being a state appointee.

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CAN WE TALK ABOUT POST-SOVIET SCIENCE?

Aimar Ventsel, Natalia Struchkova

The authors of this essay have the background of a Soviet education. Aimar Ventsel began his studies during the Soviet era, at what was then Tartu State University. Natalia Struchkova graduated from Yakutsk State University, defended her thesis in Ulan-Ude, and continued to work and teach according to Soviet era programmes and methodology. Therefore, both authors have extensively read academic works from the Soviet period during their student years and after. The academic writing that is widespread in Russian and in many post-Soviet countries where the academic language is still Russian, differs substantially from the so-called Western writing. These differences cause misunderstandings between colleagues, but more importantly form a bottleneck affecting the publication and circulation of academic texts. This essay addresses the tensions between different forms of academic writing; a conflict not only of style, as is sometimes argued (Napol'skikh et al. 2014). One problem we both know about is the difficulties Russian humanitarian and social scientists encounter when planning to publish in Western journals. Difficulties accompanied with this process go beyond the lack of sufficient English language skills – language is the least of their problems. It seems that “these people cannot write”, as one editor of a respected academic journal remarked in a private discussion with Aimar Ventsel.

REFLEXIVITY

The programmatic task of anthropology as a discipline is to “understand cultures” (Geertz 1973). However, academic debates point to the conclusion that inside the discipline there is no general consensus about what that means. The polemics around the topic of how an anthropologist understands their field, and data collected in that field, is as old as anthropology itself. The discussion around, and criticism toward, “one-way ethnography” that tends to eliminate

diversity (cf. Clifford & Marcus 1986: 10; Spencer 1989) increased with the spread of the postmodernist approach. So-called modern anthropology was accused of simplification in studied cultures; of a tendency for scholars to have only one explanation of studied processes (cf. Coombe 1991). The postmodernists' argument was, and is, that by analysing their data, modern anthropologists usually knew too little to make sophisticated generalisations, or that the ethnographer is like a trickster: they do not lie, but do not tell the truth either (Crapanzano 1986).¹ With the post-modern school, there has developed the so-called reflexive anthropology, which argues that behind any anthropological analysis is also the personality of the scholar – their education, their own culture, and so forth, i.e. “there is no objective observer” (Jenkins 1994: 443). The understanding and practices depend on knowledge, as stressed by Pierre Bourdieu (1999 [1977]). In short, the ethnographer describes what he knows (Clifford 1986: 8). The anthropologist is a social agent, who is engaged in the construction of social reality of the studied group; they are the representatives of the ‘gaze from afar’, but while doing this they are the ‘product of a national education system’. Besides the educational and cultural background of the scholar, their work is also affected by their position in the studied community, i.e. in the field. And, last but not least, the research of the anthropologist is influenced by what Bourdieu calls the “anthropological field” or the scholar’s position in the “professional universe”, and of the publication, teaching, censorship, etc. politics of his or her institution (Bourdieu 2003: 282, 283, 285). In short, the personal experience of the scholar in and outside of the field very much determines the outcome of their academic research (Ochs & Capps 1996). This approach is summarised in the subtitle of the classic book by Clifford and Marcus, *The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (1986).

Reflexive anthropology raises the issue of relationships between scholars and the people under study. In this essay we are interested in another kind of reflexivity: how foreign and ‘domestic’ academic styles differ from each other in a post-Soviet context.

We live in a world where the term ‘international science’ means publications in high-ranking Anglo-American academic journals. In order to appear in such journals, one has to deliver the text not only in spotless English, but one has to follow certain rules of writing: how to structure the article, how to argue, which works of other scholars to cite, etc. These aspects of academic writing vary in different academic traditions, and some methods of argumentation and analysis of ‘other’ traditions might be unacceptable to the Anglo-American way of writing articles. Therefore, scholars from ‘other’ traditions – including the former Soviet Union – encounter difficulties. The relationship between the ‘international’ and ‘domestic’ traditions can be described as a power relationship:

in most post-Soviet countries, financing of universities and personal careers currently depends on the number of articles published in the 'right kind of journals', i.e. journals indexed in Web of Science or Scopus. These journals are predominantly in the Anglo-American 'international' tradition. While Western scholars are barely interested in featuring in 'Eastern' journals, then the interest from the other side is disproportionately high. Adopting an Anglo-American style does not always go smoothly. Notwithstanding that many non-Western scholars have difficulties in understanding the principles of that particular style, it also means that the huge variety of academic styles is not available for the readers of English language publications to become familiar with.

In many aspects, the relationship contains similar aspects to the researcher-informant relationship. Russian and foreign anthropologists who study Russia share more or less the same field, often even the same field site. However, no-one can claim they overall see the same things or that their interpretations of field data are similar. To go back to the postulates of reflexive anthropology, the experiences that both foreign and Russian scholars have are different. These experiences are different because the proponents are products of different national schools and their position in the field is different. And a different position is caused not only by differences in the size of research budget. Foreign and Russian scholars have a different position in the existing institutional setting. Moreover, people's openness and attitude toward the scholar is very different. It is not unusual for informants to tell different stories to Russian and foreign scholars, presuming that there are things Russian scholars know anyway or foreign people do not need to know. Surprisingly this dualism has caused little discussion in the discipline. There are attempts to define what the difference is between East and West in anthropology. Sometimes these attempts are accompanied with Westerners teaching to Easterners how to be a 'real' anthropologist (e.g. Hann 2003). There are also a few voices who argue that Westerners do not fully recognise their eastern counterparts (Kürti & Skalník 2009). Reading this, one gets the impression that this level of ethnography is as one-way as it is on the level of the scholar-informant, i.e. Western scholars are dominant and their Eastern colleagues dominated. According to our experience not everything is so simple, and problems do not flow in one direction. There is more to it than the obnoxious and arrogant foreign scholars who come and teach Russians / Eastern Europeans how to be engaged with 'real' anthropology, on the one side, and the humiliated, offended, and undervalued Russian / Eastern European scholars on the other side. As noted by Kürti and Skalník (2009: 4), in the Eastern European tradition, scholars sometimes spend their entire time in trying to understand particular processes and culture complexes, which is often dismissed by foreign scholars as leading to "unnecessarily de-

tailed knowledge” or even as “naive navel gazing” (ibid.). From the other side, scholars dismiss the knowledge of their Western colleagues as too superficial and non-professional. As can be concluded by the relatively broad discussion in various academic journals years ago, many Eastern European scholars feel that their work is not sufficiently respected, read, and quoted by their Western colleagues (Buchowski 2004; Hann 2005a). Conflicts can also appear between the different factions within the Eastern European academic world, as was demonstrated by the hot discussion between ‘constructivists’ (i.e. scholars following a Western template) and ‘essentialists’ (people who argue that they maintain the Russian academic tradition) in Russia in 2014 (Napol’skikh et al. 2014). Notwithstanding these debates, the voice and approach of Eastern Europeans is often clouded behind the line of the ‘language hegemony’ (Kürti & Skalník 2009), which often prevents the scholars of former socialist countries from publishing in a way that their work is accessible for a foreign audience.

When switching from general to particular, the post-Soviet anthropology shows, first and foremost, a certain historical focus. As mentioned by Hann in the foreword to Ventsel’s book, *Reindeer, Rodina and Reciprocity: Kinship and Property Relations in a Siberian Village* (Hann 2005b), this is probably due to the fact that in the Soviet Union ethnography was part of the studies in history, reduced to the so-called ‘supplementary science’ of the historical research (see Slezkine 1991 about that development). Another common feature of the post-Soviet style is a reliance on the so-called classic theorists, not only native but often also Western (e.g. Levi-Strauss, Malinowski), i.e. authors that were broadly translated in the Soviet Union.

The collapse of the Soviet Union also marked a certain change in local anthropology. New nations were faced with a globalising world, leaving one that had collapsed and not knowing their place in the changed world. In local humanitarian and social sciences this transformation was reflected by a change in focus. On the one hand, scholars sought answers in how to define ethnic, cultural, and religious identities in a changed socio-political situation, and what direction their people should take in order to develop and establish a modern state. On the other hand, questions linked to the maintaining of cultural heritage and traditions became of importance. Scientific theories were applied to tackle the issues of historical dynamics in the transformation of native traditions, defining factors that affect such processes and attempting to foresee the future, or how to adapt traditional values and the concept of culture in the new modern environment. One big question was and still is: what are those traditions that are essential in the maintaining and developing of peoples’ identity.

Contrary to history, the anthropology and culture studies of post-Soviet countries did not discover a massive amount of new historical records from once closed archives. Most of the ethnographic and folklore data were freely

accessible during the Soviet period. More important was the new perspective on these records, finding new theories and ideas on how to connect such knowledge with new social, cultural, and political processes. In many cases, as is also demonstrated in this volume, already existing publications were re-valued and received another meaning and place in a new national research tradition (look at the chapters discussing the place and importance of Gabit Musrepov in Kazakh culture).

The aim of this special issue was to present a collection of Kazakh authors to an English reading audience. The Kazakh academia is too big to squeeze into one book or book series. Therefore, we acknowledge that the result gives only a limited overview of the questions, methods, and approaches that Kazakh scholars work with and on. This, however, should not deter the reader, and hopefully some of the chapters will inspire some to look for, and find, other works from scholars of the region.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This publication was supported by the European Union through the European Regional Development Fund (Centre of Excellence in Cultural Theory, CECT) and Estonian Research Council grant (IUT34-32).

NOTE

¹ The postmodernist approach is critical to modernist approaches but has had little success in creating the concept of a 'real' approach (Clifford 1986).

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NONVIOLENCE LOVES FREEDOM

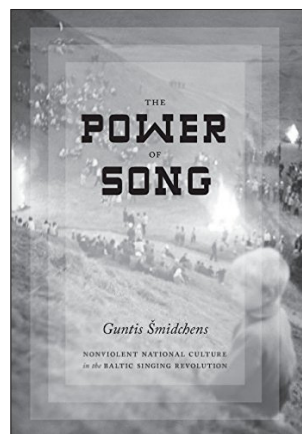
Guntis Šmidchens. *The Power of Song: Nonviolent National Culture in the Baltic Singing Revolution*. New Directions in Scandinavian Studies. Seattle & London: University of Washington Press; Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2014. 416 pp.

This in-depth monograph by Guntis Šmidchens analyses the Singing Revolution, with an emphasis on the role of singing in violent resistance. The process in the Baltic states in the late 1980s was unusual as, first, three small countries managed to secede from the empire and, second, the independence movement proceeded as a sequence of nonviolent music events, such as song festivals, folklore festivals, but also as a singing human wall confronting military forces.

Although the solution was achieved not only by means of singing but also due to relevant political procedures and a favourable historical moment, this happy-ending narrative offers a significant experience to the humanity.

Social topics are associated with ideology, which in turn depends on people's group-belonging and viewpoints. The author of the book, Guntis Šmidchens, from Washington University in Seattle, has been influenced both by the international research tradition and his ethnic Latvian origin. Unlike the earlier treatments of the Singing Revolution (e.g. Ruutsoo 2002a, 2002b; Rinne 2008), Šmidchens focuses on the study of music-related issues: Why did the fight for the independence of the Baltic states come to be called the Singing Revolution? What was sung and what was the role of singing in political success (p. 5)? Whether and how is it possible to combine the principles of nonviolence in the fight for national statehood (p. 6)? In what way did the power of song actually work? Here I would like to mention that I am Estonian folklorist and ethnomusicologist myself and therefore I belong – temporally, spatially, and by my convictions – to the group depicted in the book, and I acknowledge that my writing is influenced both by the subjective group identity and scientific viewpoints striving for objectivity.

The book has found its place among the researches into the past decade, which deal with the role of music in a nation's history, such as *The Music of European Nationalism: Cultural Identity and Modern History* (Bohlman 2004), *Laulava vallankumous* (Kurkela & Rantanen 2008), *The Intersection of Ethnic Nationalism and People Power Tactics in the Baltic States, 1987–91* (Beissinger 2009), *History in Mighty Sounds: Musical Constructions of German National Identity, 1848–1914* (Eichner 2012), and *Laulun mahti ja sivistynyt kansalainen* (Rantanen 2013). To a certain extent, these researches on



relatively close topics and even with rather similar titles could well have been initiated by the Singing Revolution.

In the discourse of nationalism, the author's viewpoint represents nationality and its culture-valuing direction, as well as demonstrates the democratic nature of a small nation's independence movement in a situation where native-language culture and natural habitat are endangered. Another direction that is brought to the fore, for example, in Philip Bohlman's research titled *The Music of European Nationalism* (2004), regards nationalism as a source of threat, which also casts a shadow over nationalistic music. Šmidchens also creates a mental connection between these two books by his own interpretations of several phenomena discussed by Bohlman, such as Herder's heritage, national anthems, the connection of folkloric presentations with the nation state, etc.

Guntis Šmidchens places the theoretical and historical starting point of his research in the period of activity of **Johann Gottfried Herder** (chapter 2), one of the main founders of folkloristics and appreciator of different national cultures. The highlight of this period was the publication of the folk song collection, *Volkslieder* (1778–79), mainly known under the title of its reprint, *Stimmen der Völker in Liedern* (1807). The author mentions Herder and his folk song collection as an example to be followed, as "Herder also pioneered ethnographic methods that remain useful today. He aimed to document humanity as experienced by people 'from inside', in their own words" (p. 25), and the researcher's own goal is "to interpret meanings as Balts themselves may have imagined them when they sang, or, following the lead of Anthony David Smith, to enter the participants' 'inner world'" (Smith 2009: 4). As such, this research belongs mainly in the sphere of **ethnomusicology**, according to the methodology of which music is analysed in its historic context, on the basis of credible material, considering the viewpoint of those inside and observing the relationships between music and society.

Šmidchens also follows the example of another aspect of Herder's activity – to translate, comment on, and publish folksongs so that their influence would reach from their creators to the readers: "Songs have an effect on people who sing them. [...] Such is also the goal of this book" (p. 25). Including Herder in his work as *alter ego* is a tribute to the German philosopher; although the latter's works were not research, he attempted to highlight the common human part in different nations, value the preservation and development of different cultures, mother tongue, and living in peace and love rather than fighting.

The idea to influence readers through songs, chosen and commented by the author, builds a kind of contradiction with the intention of just communicating the insiders' viewpoint. While the author's aim is to influence people through lyrics, his writing is not pure science, but it also subjectively transmits the author's ideas.

Even if we do not to deny Herder's impact on history, his importance in shaping the Balts' nonviolence and singing practice is shown as disproportionately great, for example: "The historical roots of the Baltic Singing Revolution reach back more than two centuries, to Johann Gottfried Herder's discovery of folk songs", or: "When Herder discovered and celebrated the local folk poetry, he also planted hardy seeds of nonviolence in the field of Baltic nation building" (p. 308). The line between Herder's interest in folklore and the evolution of nonviolent joint singing of the Balts is somewhat disrupted both in history and in Šmidchens' text, due to the fact that the older folksongs that Herder had been enthused about faded away during the period of national awakening, and choral

singing, one of the pillars of the Singing Revolution, was based on the polyphonic song of German origin. The role of the folksong was more significant in Latvian and Lithuanian Singing Revolutions than in Estonia, because the former two feature a comparatively smaller gap between the older folksong and the more recent singing culture. During the Soviet period, the Estonian archaic folk song (*regilaul*) with its mysterious dialect texts was well suited to carry a hidden meaning; yet, as Šmidchens admits, it did not wield significant influence in the days of the Singing Revolution. The same contradiction in the interpretation of Estonian music history has been highlighted also by Estonian literary critic Rein Veidemann: although we would willingly imagine that the Singing Revolution emerged on the basis of Estonian folksongs, the older folksong actually played no special role in these revolutionary events (Veidemann 2008). It is mindful of Šmidchens to use for the old Estonian folk song the native term *regilaul*, instead of the Finnish term *runolaul*. If we juxtapose Herder's, Šmidchens' and Bohlman's works, the subjective role of each author in interpreting research material becomes more evident. Šmidchens himself has demonstrated quite well, on the basis of the first print of Herder's collection (1778–1779), its reprint (1807), and their compilation stories how the author, by means of the selection of songs, composition of the book, and comments reveals his own ideas. Herder saw folksongs “in a new frame of universal humanity, as a fundamental expression of human love” (p. 28), and the purpose of their publishing could have been, by his words, that “humans would be friends of humans, and no nation on earth sharpens its swords anymore” (p. 45). Herder's personal life – his love story and abstaining from military service – certainly influenced the thematic division of songs and his comments in the first edition (p. 26). The reprint, however, was compiled by his wife and the editor, who, unlike Herder's idea to classify the songs according to the content, did it by nations. As the reprint also excluded a summary intended by Herder, *Universal Voice of Humankind: Moral Songs. Songs (Gesänge) for the Folk*, his cross-national idea was not highlighted (p. 45).

However, as the first edition soon became a rarity, it was the reprint that was usually read; so, “whereas Herder had envisioned a single, universal voice (*eine Stimme*) of humankind expressed in the songs of many nations, the editors produced a book of many voices (*Stimmen*)” (p. 46). In the above, I can see another, indirect dialogue with Bohlman, who states that “he [Herder] devoted two books to the potential of song to articulate national diversity” (Bohlman 2004: 42).¹ So the posterity somewhat failed to discern Herder's own ideas.

The structure of the book considers the insider's viewpoint: in the opening chapter representatives of the Balts speak, which is followed by the descriptions of the evolution of national identities, valuation of folksongs, and development of the national choral song (chapters 2 and 3), the more belligerent historic events (chapter 4), the persistence of opposition during the Soviet period (chapter 5), as well as the convergence of different music trends in the events of the Singing Revolution (chapters 6–8).

The author inspires great respect for his comprehensive knowledge of the Baltic nations, which enables to depict them as part of a common cultural space. Šmidchens is also able to explain some circumstances not so easily understood by people with a different cultural background. First, he shows the evolution of national processes in the Baltic countries, from strengthening the identity of an ethnic minority and claiming the right for self-determination to becoming a nation, which meant independent

development, and not aggression against other nations; citing Beissinger: “nonviolence and passionate ethnic identity need not be incompatible” (p. 319).

The author’s good knowledge of local conditions is also revealed in his ability to shed light on the Soviet-time two-layered culture, which reflected the inconsistency between the mass culture shaping Soviet identity and the preservation of national idiosyncrasies. Soviet culture featured an official side, seemingly supporting nationality yet actually levelling it, and the hidden ‘true’ side corresponding to the nation’s mentality. This discrepancy was also manifest in folkloric performances (which intuitively could be regarded as an unequivocally national activity): on the one hand, a stylised stage performance in national form, filled with socialist content, and, on the other, so-called authentic ‘true’ presentation reproducing the past heritage. Bohlman has in detail discussed the changing of national culture into state-controlled culture, which brings about the levelling of regional idiosyncrasy; yet, he has not distinctly detached the phenomena of official cultural policy, such as Hungarian military folklore ensemble, from folk culture (Bohlman 2004: 98).

Those who do not know anything about the lack of freedom of speech fail to perceive the subtle difference between real enthusiasm in conformity with ideology, its obedient or naïve imitation, and derisive ‘exaggerated enthusiasm’. Šmidchens presents an example of a situation from the opening concert of a Latvian song festival in 1895, in which the singers’ exaggeration with political correctness changed the meaning of the text and granted them mental victory. The metropolitan of the Orthodox Church, a representative of Russification, was supposed to take the floor there, yet the singers, yielding to the urgent requests of the audience, repeated the Russian anthem as long as the metropolitan was forced to leave without saying a word (p. 101).

The author has been influenced by Havel’s essay, *Power of the Powerless* (1978), on the example of which he calls the real feelings manifested in singing “living within the truth”; the heading of his book, *The Power of Song*, as well as headings of four chapters out of eight also include allusions to Havel’s expressions.

The consideration of the insider’s viewpoint in Šmidchens’ book is revealed in the usage of the word ‘nationalism’ (see also Ojamaa & Labi 2007). In English the word *nationalism* (< *nation* ‘nationality’, ‘people’; also ‘state’) could present a judgement more clearly indicated in the adjectives of the same root – *national* (neutral or positive), and *nationalist(ic)* (negative); the same applies to Latvian and Lithuanian root *tauta*.

Ahti Mänd (1995) has mentioned that the meaning of the word *nationalism* also depends on political context: in general it endeavours to preserve national belonging, yet great powers and their majorities, whose political independence is self-evident, may regard their minorities’ nationalism as a threat to the unity of the state (see also Madisson & Maddisoo 1935–1936). Estonians are a small nation, and therefore the word ‘nationalism’ initially lacked a negative shade of meaning; it is a more recent addition from the position of a great power, to discredit the rather positive message of nationalism directed towards the preservation of identity (Mänd 1995).

The English-language tradition, as it is present in Bohlman’s book, uses both the concepts, *national* and *nationalist*; yet the difference between these two is unclear in places; also the concept *nation* denotes ethnos, nation, or state (Ojamaa & Labi 2007). Due to these overlappings, the concept *nationalist(ic)* casts a kind of shadow over national/ethnic cultures that try to preserve their idiosyncrasy. Yet, Šmidchens in his

text always uses the word *national* in neutral meaning; the concept *nationalist* occurs only in a few places, to translate the derogatory labels applied to the representatives of national cultures by the Soviet Union (p. 292).

Šmidchens' multi-layered, carefully composed work reveals the impact of romantic dualist approach to society; for instance, Herder's differentiation between belligerent and peaceful nations (chapter 4 is titled *Songs of Warrior Nations*). The author's contemplations reveal opposites, such as violent – nonviolent, power – spirit, soviet – national, collective – individual, etc., and indirectly also bad – good. This division into two features knots of opposites, seemingly inconsistent combinations, such as “power of the powerless” (see Havel 1978) or the “singing revolution” itself. Contrasting is also included in the seemingly neutral heading of the introduction, *Three Nonviolent National Cultures*, considering the problem mentioned by the author – the question “whether it is possible to reconcile nonviolent principles with a pursuit of nationalist power” (p. 6). The headings including oxymorons point to the optimistic idea of the book that it is possible to join the seemingly incompatible, for instance, nonviolence and power.

Although Šmidchens aims to show, above all, the positive aspects of singing and mass movement, he cannot deny that music has also been part of less humane systems as well as a way of combat; for instance, martial music. Chapter 4, titled *Songs of Warrior Nations*, is dedicated to military activity and songs, yet the author regards them as non-dominant and places them – hopefully justifiably – into the past:

More than a century of war songs were deeply embedded in the national cultures – as deeply as the peaceful songs presented in the preceding chapters. War has long played an important role in the formation of ethnic identity, and it is a common theme in the discourse of nation building. (p. 108)

However, the chapter is only loosely connected with the dominant ideology in the book and after reading it you feel as if these peoples have proceeded from one victory to another only by singing.

The book presents imposing examples of the victories the spirit has won over the power, yet dwells less on the fact that music could be a feeble weapon in the fight for lofty ideals, and that throughout history music has also been used to make human masses act for less valuable causes. The author has left aside more violent and less victorious periods in the recent history of the Baltic countries, such as the victory in the War of Independence (1918–1920) and the nonviolent surrender to the Soviet Union in 1940. Therefore it is hard to establish in which cases the power of song works.

However, several of the phenomena discussed in the book cannot be categorised as opposites; for instance, nations cannot be divided into militant and loving, the former having many war songs and the latter many love songs – any of them can have plenty of both. Other cultural phenomena also feature uniting of two opposite sides; for instance, in Norse mythology Freya is a goddess of both war and love.

Nor can we claim that Soviet identity was, above all, collective and suppressing the personality, whereas national identity was individual and freeing the personality – the prerequisite for the Singing Revolution was a strong collective national identity. In this respect the description of the Soviet-time music education as a negative example

of suppressing the personality is not convincing: choral singing requires synchronised joint singing, understandable words, and no one's voice standing out (p. 324).

The real influence of music is revealed through the analytical description of the Singing Revolution. Different music styles carried contradictory ideas through the occupation period and became part of revolutionary events, which in turn exerted an impact on creating new music. Choral singing fulfilled the needs of mass movement as many singers knew the common patriotic repertoire. Due to acoustic amplifiers rock music was heard from afar and reacted quickly to various circumstances. Simple-style joint singing united the nation and acquired new meanings in new situations; folklore enabled people to identify themselves with former generations and sing in small groups.

Resistance appears to have taken place not only by singing but also by the power of crowd, which formed a physical and moral barrier. The latter emanates from the fact that, according to human ethics, no-one attacks an armless, peaceful crowd. Šmidchens says:

*In 1991, individual courage, multiplied by the thousands, motivated thousands of people standing on the barricades in Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, unarmed, each of them preparing to receive their Soviet adversary's violence, and **hoping to awaken their attacker's conscience.*** (p. 325, emphasis added)

Songs express the message of the fight to both sides, render meaning to agency, and convince the adversary that no easy victory can be expected.

Also songs help people to perceive mutual support and responsibility:

Nonviolent revolutions rest on the shoulders of disciplined, unified masses of people. They depend upon each individual's active participation, and on an awareness of importance of one's own voice among many others. (p. 206)

The author discusses the difference between the usage of songs as part of violent and nonviolent fight. One of the features of nonviolence was hidden in the lyrics: they focused on the construction and consolidation of national identity and ideology rather than destruction of the opponent (p. 251). However, he admits that this particular feature does not sufficiently define nonviolent singing, because the repertoire also included songs with belligerent content to encourage bravery. Also the author mentions that although the leaders of the movement called for keeping the peace, they were ready to fight (p. 315). So the line between nonviolence and violence was fragile and the headings of the introduction and conclusion, *Three Nonviolent National Cultures* and *Nonviolent National Singing Traditions*, partly remain in the sphere of national myth. Šmidchens elaborates on Baltic **national myths**, complementing the well-known saying "Estonians/Latvians/Lithuanians are a singing nation" with the concept of nonviolence (chapter 3 is titled *Three Singing Nations and Their Songs*). However, nonviolent fight by means of music is inherent not only in the Balts; for instance, American Indians have also offered resistance with music and dance (Brown 1975 [1970]). Germans and Finns have also been called singing nations in connection with peaceful national movements. Substantial parallels with the book under discussion can also be found in Barbara Eichner's study (2012) on the role of music in the development of the German nation, which includes a subchapter titled *German Song Our Weapon: The Male Choir Movement as a Forum for Political Communication*, which refers to the power of song. In Germany the formation

of a civil society was associated with singing, based on a somewhat religious idea that singing makes people better: “Throughout the nineteenth century the male choir movement was one of the main catalysts of the belief in the improving and educating powers of art, especially music” (ibid.: 182). Male choir singing in the mid-19th century was a peaceful movement related to the peculiar German-style development, which specified that nationalism was supposed to remain friendly and liberal; organising public events by making use of the uniting power of song was called *Gefühlspolitik* (ibid.: 190, 192).

Ideas of the Baltic peoples’ power of song also date back to the 19th century; to confirm this, Šmidchens cites Latvian poet Auseklis, who, after he had seen a song contest *Song Wars* in 1873, wrote:

The nation in whose breast there flow and thunder waves of immortal song spirit, akin to the crashing waves of the sea, lives in golden happiness. That nation does not stain steel swords and spears with the precious blood of people. Peace is its stately, proud flag; a shield of songs which repels the spear. (pp. 99–100)

Valuing nonviolence as a positive feature is meaningful from the point of view of ideological developments, as in the 19th century belligerence constituted part of national pride, and a common regretful comment about Estonians was that this small nation did not have great, i.e. belligerent, history.

Speaking about people’s ability to resist by singing creates an image of a special spiritual power, because fighting a strong enemy with music is associated with the supernatural – this faculty has been attributed to gods and exceptional people, such as Orpheus or Väinämöinen.

These myths are not directly confirmed by history; for instance, the first record of Estonians’ music dates back to a plundering raid to the Danes in 1172, when Estonians, before the battle, “*bacchantium more cantu choreisque laetitiam simulabant, Danis tristem silentio noctem ducentibus*” (like bacchantes, expressed their joy by song and dance, while the Danes spent a dismal night in silence) (Saxo: 15–16, see Laugaste 1963). However, there is no proof about Herder having substantially influenced the shaping of nonviolent identity:

Regardless of whether Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians were or weren’t nonviolent nations before Herder, what he wrote about them left an imprint on later interpretations of current national spirit and future national missions. (p. 46)

The national myth presents the emotional truth: Šmidchens creates an impression as if nonviolence and singing are inherent, above all, in the Balts’ national cultures.

Šmidchens builds on the foundation of historical truth, gathered bit by bit, a philosophy of nonviolent peoples and their intrinsic musical way of acting, which, despite certain idealism, makes reading especially enjoyable. The book is carried by hope, on the borderline of reality and **social utopia**, to change the world with the help of spiritual power through song, and one of its manifestations is the very book.

One of the fields of study is **songs** intertwined with historical events: the book presents 112 key texts, worthy of inclusion in the discourse on national identity, selected by the Balts themselves (p. 4). I dare to confirm the competence in the selection and interpretation as concerns Estonia. However, the song material published on the basis

of *Volkslieder* (Herder 1778–1779) and translated repeatedly would have needed a text-critical approach and clarity in the author’s viewpoints as to Herder’s refined comments. When studying source materials (Meyer 1896), I have found translation errors that hinder understanding of the songs. Estonian folklorist Ülo Tedre has published an article, *Eesti rahvalauludest K. Marxi albumis* (Estonian Folksongs in K. Marx’s Album) (Tedre 1961), on the two Estonian folksongs in Herder’s collection, in which he proves that one of them is of Livonian origin.

The published Estonian folksongs represented archaic culture and did not directly express categories (or their absence) essential for Herder – love and belligerence: the suitability of *Venna sõjalugu* (The Brother’s War Tale) as an example of Estonians’ love of peace is rather questionable (see, e.g., Penttinen 1947; Tedre 1974: 233; Oinas 1994); wedding songs and slavery song (according to Estonian original text), however, do not directly express lack of love due to serfdom or hard life as the spouse’s slave, as Herder’s and Šmidchens’ comments suggest (pp. 36–40). Šmidchens admits that Herder’s interpretation helps him to understand the songs according to his views: “Herder wanted songs that would exemplify oral poetry’s power. The new Estonian and Latvian songs did that, and more, when Herder added rhetorical comments about social justice” (p. 37). Furthermore, if we view belligerence as a search for violent solutions, Estonians’ enemy was the local foreign nobility, and war songs were replaced by songs against the oppressors. Estonians’ peaceful mind was necessarily not their intrinsic feature or Herder’s accomplishment, but inevitable silent resistance conditioned by serfdom.

In his study, Guntis Šmidchens has emphasised the beauty of history, in places choosing more suitable facts to achieve a more comprehensive picture. The book full of facts juxtaposes interesting sources; the text is fascinating, emotional, and compositionally complete. The ideological image of powerfully singing small nations is fragile, and its joints are clearly visible, yet I would not like to damage with my criticism this beautiful construct, presenting history from a hopeful point of view. More often than not, research is based on an idea to be substantiated – and it is remarkable even if it results in the exploration of only one side of a phenomenon. In his book Guntis Šmidchens dwells upon outstanding events in history and therewith erects a worthy written monument to the Singing Revolution.

Taive Särg

Note

¹ Bohlman mistakenly refers to the books *Volkslieder* and *Stimmen der Völker in Liedern* with the same years (1778–1779); actually the latter was published in 1807 (Bohlman 2004: 42, 381).

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NEWS IN BRIEF

NEGOTIATING BELARUSIANNES: POLITICAL FOLKLORE BETWIXT AND BETWEEN

On December 16, 2015, Anastasiya Astapova defended her PhD thesis at the Department of Estonian and Comparative Folklore, University of Tartu.

Anastasiya Astapova's dissertation is spread out on 215 pages, with an introduction, followed by a well-informed and up-to-date reference section on 9 pages, and 5 chapters comprised of separate research articles, one of them published and four of them in press. The journals she has chosen for publishing – HUMOR: International Journal of Humor Research, Journal of American Folklore, Western Folklore, and others – are all high-impact international academic publications, which is a remarkable achievement for a young scholar in itself and a sign of Astapova's undeniable talent, devotion to the field, and hard work.

Relying on the concept of vernacularity and Leonard Primiano's suggestion to study what people say, feel, and experience, the author of the thesis presents unique material based mostly on her fieldwork about Belarusian contemporary political folklore in the forms of rumour, humour, and similar formats, without laying strong genre borders and relying a great deal on emic categories. She outlines some of the more important and recurring topics in the process of Belarusian ongoing identity building (and folklore around the biography of Lukashenko, surveillance rumours, and political jokes as stories that support or subvert it). The reader finishes the thesis being much better versed in Belarusian past and present, in beliefs that shape people's opinions and behaviour, and problems that the nation faces. But not only that: the thesis also adds valuable insight to existing polemics and discussions in the field of folkloristics in general. As such, it goes beyond just reporting on the evidence, and becomes a set of articles worth coming back to, re-reading, and citing.

The introduction is convincing and coherent. The parts about the historical background of Belarus stay within the focus of the current work, yet remain sufficient for understanding the content of the articles. Folkloristics-related chapters and an introduction to studies on political folklore in the targeted region follow the chapter on socialist dichotomies as a way of polemising with the latter and as such form an excellent reading material for students of folklore. The introduction also gives a full, compact overview of the problems addressed in the individual articles. Particularly the way in which the thesis tackles the question of truth in folklore is noteworthy. It is an example of a clever choice of previous (abundant) research combined with the author's own observations in a balanced and insightful way.

The methodology the author has used in most of the articles has provided interesting results. The fact that her sample is slanted towards male respondents interested in politics and aged between 25 and 45 is not unexpected, considering the sampling methods she used. Hopefully, in the next studies, she will find a way to compile a more balanced sample and can compare political folklore across the groups.

There is a clear development throughout the thesis in her approach to her main topic, Belarusian political folklore. It starts with the first article searching for categories and structures in her material, and ends with the last article that discards dichotomous categorisations as a too rigid way to look at folk processes. Mirroring this development, the introductory chapter presenting socialist dichotomies (3.1. and subchapters) grows into a discussion of the usefulness of opposite categories (in politics, but also in genre divisions and elsewhere). She concludes that these are not entirely applicable “on the field”, as real life often escapes straight lines and easy classifications, being fuzzy and blended.

The first article, *Why All Dictators Have Moustaches: Political Jokes in Contemporary Belarus* (HUMOR 2015, 28(1), 71–91), tackles the question of reappearing jokes about dictators told in present-day Belarus. She collected the material in oral interviews and also used the comments of the interviewees to analyse the jokes. She found that although many of the jokes told in Belarus in the 2000s were also known in, say, the Soviet Union, the overlap is not as big as could be expected. 18 plots of the entire 46 that she collected were told by earlier Soviet leaders. At the same time, she has proved interestingly that there are some flexible plots that are very productive and easily adaptable for various situations and countries, and indeed not only for targeting dictators but all sorts of ‘heroes’: public figures, doctors, university staff, students, etc. She also points out that the emic definition of political jokes appears to be much broader than the etic one, embracing different kinds of text (e.g. citations of Lukashenko’s words).

The second article is titled *Political Biography: Incoherence, Contestation, and the Hero Pattern Element in the Belarusian Case* (Journal of Folklore Research, forthcoming). In this article the author describes and contrasts the official and alternative biographies of Alexander Lukashenko, concentrating in particular on his birth story. Concerning biographical patterns and backed up by Ruth Benedict’s observation that finding two traits in different cultures does not mean that they do the same job, Astapova argues that stories about Lukashenko’s assumed virility are a good example of folkloric text that may be interpreted as positive or negative, depending on the disposition of the communicator. She concludes that the broader the gap between the official biography and its contested versions becomes, the more manifold the meanings of the elements (p. 52).

The article concerning the practices of window-dressing, *When the President Comes: Potemkin Order as an Alternative to Democracy in Belarus* (Ethnologia Europaea, forthcoming), describes the narratives around such displays and the attitudes they convey. She claims that, in fact, the displays produce and preserve the entrenched Belarusian order in return for social guarantees. At the same time, however, this does not mean that the order itself and the Potemkin villages it creates are outside the limits of humour: on the contrary, the window-dressing practices are often subject to parody and ridicule, bringing a perfect example of how multi-layered people’s attitudes and beliefs are.

The fourth article, *In Search for Truth: Surveillance Rumors and Vernacular Panopticon in Belarus* (Journal of American Folklore, forthcoming) insightfully suggests that rumour is the best term to study stories about surveillance. Parallel terms used in previous works by other theorists, e.g. (contemporary) legend, conspiracy theory, myth, etc., are not as inclusive, and also embrace not only the belief systems they allude to but also the stories themselves. Astapova analyses rumours of surveillance that seem to be sparked off by the low level of democratisation, but also the history of national trauma.

mas and current state politics. The fears of lack of security, e.g. in telecommunication, accompany the vernacular beliefs about persecuting those who think differently, and advances in media technology only make the fears grow. She states (p. 55) that it is not the high level of surveillance but rather the fact that the object of surveillance cannot see back, which makes the panopticon experiences of people (and their acquaintances or strangers known through hearsay only) as profound as it is in Belarus.

In the final article, *In Quest of the Lost Masterpieces, Ethnic Identity and Democracy: The Belarusian Case* (in Marion Bowman & Ülo Valk (eds.) *Contesting Authority: Vernacular Knowledge and Alternative Beliefs*. London: Equinox, forthcoming), Astapova ponders on the tangible tokens of identity and liberalisation that are said to have been lost. The legends surrounding the lost masterpieces give structure to the striving for ethnic consolidation and changes towards the formation of a democratic state.

Anastasiya Astapova is a strong emerging scholar and the publications collected in her thesis prove it. Her background knowledge in folkloristics and adjacent fields is backed up with references from Anglo-Saxon and Slavic scientific space, is up to date and carefully chosen. Being active in talking about her subject, she has been accepted to the international network of folklorists and is a frequent participant of known research forums like SIEF or AFS conferences. The personal references to her motivation or research experience in the introduction and articles are well integrated into the text, bringing the journey of the author closer to the audience. But it is not only folkloristics that she has contributed to: the focus and results of her research have a wider appeal also outside of folkloristics, e.g. surveillance studies (article IV), humour studies (article I), etc.

All in all, Anastasiya Astapova has written a very good thesis. The author describes the practices that explain and make sense of living in “the last dictatorship of Europe”, and does it in an engaging, thought-provoking, and intelligent way. The thesis is a pleasure to read and hopefully will be read – whether as single articles or an entire collection – by future students and scholars alike.

Liisi Laineste
Estonian Literary Museum

TALKING ABOUT PROVERBS: THE 9TH INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLOQUIUM ON PROVERBS IN TAVIRA, PORTUGAL

In 2015, Tavira, in southern Portugal, hosted already the 9th Interdisciplinary Colloquium on Proverbs. As usual, it took place in the first week of November, this time on November 1–8. The economic crisis has not passed Tavira without changes, which was also visible in the organisational side of the colloquium. The hotel that had kindly supported the colloquium for eight times, accommodating the participants, had been closed down. Moreover, as it was pouring with rain, the southern Algarve was hit by so heavy floods that the folklore group from Olhão could not make it to Tavira. However, we counted on Saint Martin's summer, as it is said that "Saint Martin's summer lasts three days and a little bit more". And it was just what happened.

This year the colloquium honoured the memory of Spanish paremiologist José de Jaime Gómez (1921–2014), who had started collecting proverbs and sayings among peasants in his home village. He pursued his interest and acquainted himself with the old collections in libraries all over the country. As many other paremiologists before and after him, he had a huge number of cards telling the origin and age of proverbs. When teaching natural sciences at various schools, he made good use of the proverbs. This time one of the invited speakers was the son of José de Jaime Gómez, José María de Jaime Lorén, from Valencia, Spain. His first address was his father's work and the second one discussed the combination of computers and proverbial expressions.

It is difficult to highlight any of the papers as the most interesting ones. This year, among key notes was Harald Gaski from the University of Tromsø, Norway, who talked about Sámi proverbs. During the years of colloquiums it has happened only twice – in 2007 and in 2014 – that this topic has not been touched upon. Another not so extensively covered topic came from Albania. Ylljet Aliçka and Bisej Kapo from the European University of Tirana, Albania, made a presentation about the use of proverbs as tools of political rhetoric. Especially interesting were proverbs as slogans on hillsides and mountain slopes, written by university students with white stones.

Every year we have had the opportunity to listen to papers on all kinds of subjects related to proverbs as the colloquiums do not have any special theme for annual meetings. Among them are papers in English, Portuguese, and Spanish, including examples of proverbs most often in the mother tongue of the speaker. However, academic papers are usually in English. The titles of formerly published articles can be found at http://www.folklore.ee/ri/fo/koostoo/tavira/index_e.html.

Alongside the colloquium with presentations and discussions, the time before and after these hours is of great importance. It is like continuation of meetings in the form of tours. This year we visited one of the coastal towns, Olhão, where we were treated to very typical Mediterranean sea food – various kinds of grilled fishes. The other excursion was to the mountains of Alte–Loulé. In both resorts we acquainted ourselves with local habits, traditions, and friendly people.



*Participants of the conference on an excursion in the municipality of Loulé, Algarve region.
Photograph by Erkki Herranen 2015.*

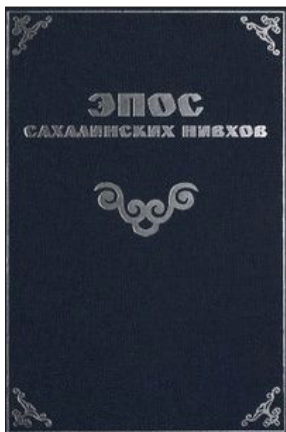
The event was organised by the Associação Internacional de Paremiology (AIP) – International Association of Proverbs (IAP) (<http://www.aip-iap.org/en>). Besides the annual international colloquium, the association organises various events focusing on paremiology and other facets of Portuguese cultural heritage for the general public during the whole year. In 2015 the main interest of the association was Mediterranean diet, which UNESCO has inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (<http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/decisions/8.COM/8.10>) for Portugal, along with Cyprus, Croatia, Spain, Greece, Italy, and Morocco.

The next colloquium will be the 10th in order, held on November 6–10, 2016 (see <http://www.colloquium-proverbs.org/icp/en/>). This means that it is appropriate to expect that it will be an anniversary colloquium with a sense of celebration in the air.

Liisa Granbom-Herranen

BOOK REVIEWS

EPIC OF THE SAKHALIN NIVKH PEOPLE



Vladimir Sangi. *Poselenie bukhty Chernoi zemli. Epos sakhalinskikh nivkhov*. Moskva: IP M.A. Smirnova, 2013. 432 pp.

The book titled *Epos sakhalinskikh nivkhov* (Epic of the Sakhalin Nivkh people), prepared for publication by the famous Nivkh writer, poet, and well-known Russian political figure Vladimir Sangi, is unique in many ways. Nivkh epic (in East-Sakhalin dialect *ɲastund*, *ɲastur*, in Amur dialect *nyzytyndɟ*, *nyzit*) has been known in academia by retelling for more than a hundred years (Sternberg 1900; Materials 1908). Apart from L. Sternberg, Nivkh epic was recorded by B. Pilsudski (see, e.g., Pilsudski 1996, 1999, 2003), E. Kreynovich¹, and G. Otaina (Otaina 1993: 171–208; Nivkh Myths 2010: 67–113). However, this publication happens to be the first in which the epic is presented not in a brief prose retelling, the way it could be recorded by researchers before audio recording devices appeared, but in the form of decoded tales which are sung, namely as a poetic, versicular text. More than a hundred years before the publication of this book, L. Sternberg quite rightly wrote in his famous volume of specimens of the Nivkh epic:

There is nothing easier than to have a chance to listen to a Gilyak storyteller. But it is extremely difficult to record him. First of all, a Gilyak speaks extremely fast, and, moreover, the language of a storyteller is archaic – very different from the spoken one, and many Gilyaks themselves need clarification. In addition, there is a kind of poetry, so-called nastund, specimens of which are recited in ecstasy, often sung and with such a breakneck speed, howls, and modulations, that it is not only impossible to record, but often even to catch the general meaning of the sung text. (Materials 1908: x)

However, Vladimir Sangi managed to do it.

The epic text, *The settlement of the Black land's bay*, was performed by the Nivkh storyteller Hytkuk in 1974. The author of the recording does not tell the reader about the circumstances of the recording or of the storyteller herself, but from the introduction to the book we learn that Hytkuk's "[...] *nasturs* could last several days and nights with breaks for rest, eating, and sleeping. She kept in her mind all the minute details of an event, and revived them so authentically that the audience felt as if Hytkuk herself was a member of the action she was describing. She was so expressive in performing her songs that accompanied her words by emotions, particular facial expressions, hand gestures, exclamations, laughter, and sometimes by crying or long pauses [...]" (Gashilov

& Gashilova 2013: 14–15). What has been said one can experience deeply by listening to the nearly two hours of audio recording of the epic attached to the book on two CD-ROMs.

In our opinion, the composition of the book is commendable as well. It includes not only the original Nivkh text (4316 lines, pp. 20–147), but also a poetic translation of the epic into Russian, made by N. Tarasov (pp. 150–288), and an interlinear translation of the text, made by V. Sangi (4326 lines, p. 305–431). However, in this case, there is a lack of comments with regard to the principles of interlinear translation (taking into account different lengths of the original text and interlinear translation). Explanations concerning the principles of decoding of the sung text would also be appropriate. There is no doubt that the written text is authentic and lively: one can hear constant encouraging shouts from Vladimir Sangi on the record, but neither these shouts (except for a couple of shouts of “Khon!” in the very beginning (p. 20)²) nor the completely prosaic ending of the recording where Hytkuk is talking about herself, is mentioned in the published text.

The published epic text is certainly a fine example of the high epic style and is interesting also in its plot. In particular, we would like to mention the motif of the lonely hero, used in the unfolding of the epic story. The nameless hero is not just lonely. A small baby lies on its side on the main couch in the house, the length and width of which is eight fathoms, eats flies and spiders and defecates underneath him (pp. 305–314). Such exposure can be found in the epic traditions of different parts of the world, but in this case we would like to stress its absolute unity with the introduction of the *nyzit* of the Amur Nivkh people, recorded by G. Otaina:

A poor boy lived all alone in the house, eight fathoms wide and eight fathoms long. And he lay facing one direction only. There are lots of excrements behind him and urine in front of him. When a worm gets into his mouth he eats it instead of the meat of animals running around the ground; when a fly falls into his mouth he eats it instead of poultry meat. (Nivkh Myths 2010: 83)

It is unlikely that in this case one ought to talk about the fundamental difference between Nivkh Amur and Sakhalin folk traditions and specifically that “the folklore genre *nastur* exists only amongst islanders with a self-designation *nivgun*” (Gashilov & Gashilova 2013: 17), that is, only amongst the Nivkh people of Sakhalin. We believe we still know too little about the Nivkh folklore to be able to claim anything with full confidence.

In addition to the above-mentioned extra audio material, the book is also embellished with 16 magnificent colour illustrations drawn by Vladimir Sangi (pp. 289–304). They help to better understand the sometimes quite complex patterns involved in this epic.

This publication can hardly be called academic but, nevertheless, the book as a whole is highly commendable. It will be useful to all who are engaged in folklore and ethnography of the peoples of the Far East, especially linguists and specialists in the Nivkh language.

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Acknowledgements

This review was written within the framework of the project, *Man in a Changing World: Problems of Identity and Social Adaptation in History and at Present* (the RF Government grant No. 14.B25.31.0009).

Notes

- ¹ Recordings of E. Kreynovich are stored at the Institute of Russian Literature of the Russian Academy of Science (The Pushkin House) in St. Petersburg. More about the Nivkh linguistic materials of Kreynovich, see Mamontova 2015: 187.
- ² An interesting fact is that in the interlinear translation this exclamation was given seven times at the beginning of the text, after which it was mentioned that the author gives no further references of this evidence of the live communication between the storyteller and the listener (p. 310).

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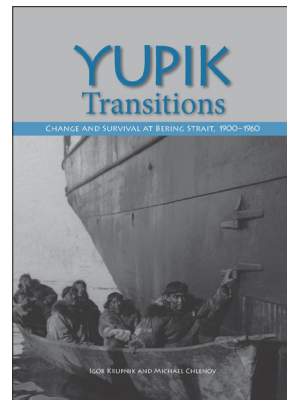
CHANGE AND SURVIVAL AT BERING STRAIT

Igor Krupnik & Michael Chlenov. *Yupik Transitions: Change and Survival at Bering Strait, 1900–1960*. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 2013. 391 pp.

The fundamental treatise, *Yupik Transitions*, written by Washington-based anthropologist Igor Krupnik and his Moscow co-author, anthropologist Michael Chlenov, is devoted to the history of the Asian Yupik society in the 20th century, more precisely 1900–1960. The book is mostly based on the research conducted by the authors in Soviet Chukotka between 1971 and 1990. Igor Krupnik and Michael Chlenov interviewed elders who remembered the 1910s–1950s. These informants had been actors and observers of crucial changes in coastal Chukotka. It is impossible to overestimate the value of the memories of these

Yupik elders, enabling the anthropologists to reconstruct not only such historic events as the onset of collectivisation, establishment of the Soviet socio-cultural system and relocations of the 1950s, but also the complicated cultural traits of a so-called contact-traditional society. An abundant collection of Yupik accounts gathered by Igor Krupnik was published in Russian in 2000.¹ Here the authors draw a fascinating picture of the pre-relocation society based on the interviews published in the former book.

The structure of the book under review is a little confusing and requires attention to understand its logic. The first chapter – *Contact-Traditional Society, 1900–1923* – is dedicated to the description of the Yupik-newcomers' relations in the first quarter of the 20th century; mostly interaction between the indigenous population and American



traders and whalers. It is a common strategy of the authors to destroy the most likely myths and stereotypes about the Yupik. The perception of their old society as a backward and untouched community (an idea that became popular during Soviet times) is proved to be wrong and far-fetched. The Asiatic Yupik were engaged in the American sphere of economic and cultural influence:

The image of the Russian Yupik around 1900 as 'primitive bands of half-savage aliens' was nothing but a myth [--] Perhaps the most compelling proof to the contrary came from the old garbage heaps that we examined at the abandoned Yupik sites from the same era. They contained a little of everything: shards of porcelain dishes, ruined American gramophones with broken records, remains of sewing machines, broken Winchester rifles, cartridge cases, bottles, American tobacco boxes, and a wide range of jars that once held various imported food, from biscuits to olive oil. (p. 4)

Before the 1930s, the Yupik experienced minimal Russian influence. If some of them could speak a language other than their own, that language was English. In the second chapter, *The "Olden Times", 1850–1900*, the authors trace the early history of Yupik communities, most of which were inhabited until the relocations that began in the 1930s and reached their peak in the 1950s. The core chapter, *The Yupik System: A Model*, is dedicated to the complicated social organisation of the Yupik. The authors examine such notions as locus, tribe, tribal group, clan, and lineage, and depict Yupik social system as adaptive to different ecological, economic and political changes. They deconstruct contact-traditional society, showing us the complexity, adaptability, and dynamics of a social system that was preserved to some extent into the 1950s. In the later chapters, the researchers provide the reader with post-trauma reflection of the elders on social losses, and show how a system once thought to be solid and flexible was destroyed by the dramatic Soviet reforms. The fourth chapter, *Along the Shores of Yupik Land in Asia*, is a valuable historic guide through the Yupik oecumene that contains social topography and explanations close to the domain of cultural ecology. In the next chapter, *Community Affairs*, the research focus is narrowed. Here the anthropologists examine the social architecture of the village, travelling patterns, contacts between communities, tribes, and relations with the Chukchi herders. The sixth chapter, *Family and Kinship*, examines family and marriage patterns as well as such social institutions as the boat crew and lineage. In the next chapter, *"Upstreaming": Lifetime of the Yupik Social System*, the authors go backwards and trace the recollections of early travellers back into the 18th century.

The three last chapters are of great ethnographic and historical value. They represent an elaborate investigation of the changes that occurred in the 1920s–1950s. Another myth is then clearly deflated: the 1930s–1940s that are fairly thought to be the most destructive years for the country turned out to be different for this small nation on the edge of the continent. The Yupik did not suffer terribly from the well-known Soviet social intrusions. It was the 1950s that proved most dramatic for Yupik society. By the late 1950s, nearly 70% of the Asiatic Yupik were forcibly relocated. The relocation destroyed their social system, ruined the established wildlife management, and indirectly caused the loss of language and self-identity crisis of this small-numbered Arctic people.

One of the distinctive features of the book is its focus on the social, cultural, and economic dynamic of the Asiatic Yupik society through the course of the 20th century. The research does not describe a stable situation within a short historic framework. It shows a society in transition (as the title itself implies). This methodology enables the authors to reveal the core features of Yupik society – adaptability and in some cases vulnerability, and a capacity to absorb and adjust various external influences. The investigation is far any mere case study or a piece of historic ethnography. The geographical and chronological scope and extent of elaboration are a clear evidence of this. The treatise embraces a range of contemporary anthropological domains – Soviet studies, colonial studies, anthropology of transition, anthropology of trauma, and human ecology.

I would like to finish the review by asserting the potential social impact and value of the book. In 2011 and 2012, I conducted research among the Asiatic Yupik in Chukotka. I was not surprised when I saw, in almost every house, Igor Krupnik's abovementioned collection of accounts by Yupik elders published in 2000 in Russian. This work has become a literal handbook of Yupik culture for present-day coastal villagers. Igor Krupnik managed to preserve the memory of a whole (albeit small-numbered) nation. The reviewed research behind this anthology could be of extreme importance and interest for the Yupik in Chukotka if translated into Russian.

Acknowledgements

Written within the framework of the project, *The resource curse in the circumpolar areas: Russian and international experience in the field of analysis and resolution of conflicts over non-renewable resources in areas traditionally inhabited by indigenous ethnic groups* (RSCF, grant No. 15-18-00112, PI prof. D. Funk).

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Note

¹ Igor Krupnik. *Pust' govoriat nashi stariki. Rasskazy aziatskikh eskimosov-yupik: Zapisi 1975–1987 gg.* (Let Our Elders Speak. Stories of the Yupik Eskimo, 1975–1987). Moscow, 2000.

ABOUT THE ETHNO-POLITICAL HISTORY OF KAZAKHSTAN



Dina Amanzholova. *Na izlome: Alash v etnopoliticheskoi istorii Kazakhstana*. Almaty: Taimas, 2009. 412 pp. In Russian.

The origin, development, and death of the Alash Orda movement in Kazakhstan is undoubtedly a burning issue of historical importance – and there is a reason for this. The attitude of the Soviets toward intellectuals was finally defined in the 1920s. The Soviets, having identified the Alash movement as a threat, started implementing tough socio-economic reforms in Kazakhstan that resulted in repressions of Kazakh intellectuals in 1926–1927.

According to the OGPU (Ob”edinennoe gosudarstvennoe politicheskoe upravlenie – State Political Directorate), on April 4, 1930, more than 40 Alash activists including

A. Baytursynov and M. Dulatov were arrested, exiled and put into jail for different prison terms. Following the OGPU’s decision, M. Tynyshpaev, K. Dosmukhamedov, and more than 20 other representatives of the Kazakh intelligentsia were expelled for a period of five years to the Voronezh region of Russia on April 20, 1932. Imposed by the OGPU, Zhumabaev, Auezov, and Ermekov were forced to make official statements saying that they rejected the ideology of the Alash party. As a result of the trials, a number of other Alash representatives (Aymauytov, Adilov, Baydildin, and Yusupov among them) were sentenced to death, while the others died in prisons and labour camps.

The names and activities of the organisers and leaders of the Alash Orda were forgotten for years, yet their image of ‘ardent nationalists’, ‘reactionary bourgeois politicians’, etc., remained.

Researchers have many questions to answer as to how the Kazakh intelligentsia was formed and what the main factors were. Was the national Kazakh intelligentsia monolithic and unanimous in their views on the future of the Kazakh people? Why did the Soviet government so strongly repress the ideologists of the Alash Orda? Why were their works hidden for a century? And finally, why were their ideas so popular among the people, and how real are they today?

The referenced monograph of Dina Amanzholova has answers not only to these questions but also to some others. In the introduction to her work, the author immediately states her position. In the history of national movements of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the author sees the moral and political importance of the revolution and the Civil War. She quite fairly says that only a profound and objective knowledge of history will provide the patriotic view that fully identifies and consolidates the society and people, social optimism, and successful solution to the burning political, social, economic, and cultural challenges (p. 5). The author very carefully analyses each and every work of those related to the history of Alash. Her aim is to restore the main content of the key development stages as extensively as possible, to define the nature of the ideological and political orientation and the social base, to disclose the relationships with the political

forces and parties in the Russian pre-revolutionary period in 1917, in the context of the Civil War, to show the reasons for the defeat of the Alash Orda and its importance in the history of the Kazakh people. The main focus, as the author writes, is laid on the least-researched period of the Civil War (pp. 35–36). Thus, we can see that the author is puzzled by such difficult tasks.

D. Amanzholova shows the formation of the Kazakh national intelligentsia and its leaders in the chapter titled *The Birth of the Kazakh Opposition Movement*. Based on the examples of Russia and some other European countries provided by the experts, she comes to the conclusion that the Alash Orda followed the laws of the national movement objectively (p. 91). The author also pays attention to the position of the leaders of the national intelligentsia during the difficult period of 1916. The author believes that the integration of new territories into a common political and administrative territorial system was done differently as compared to the Russian policy, where the focus was laid on uniting the strategically important regions (p. 111). It is important to understand the content of the headquarters meeting materials dated 22 August 1916. Given the meeting's importance, the author provides its content in full (pp. 127–140). In addition, readers will find the answer to another important question: Where were the origins of the pacifist position of Alash activists during the events of 1916?

D. Amanzholova also discusses another aspect in the history of the Alash: Was the Alash Orda a party? In response to this question, having analysed plenty of material, the author comes to a very important conclusion. First, she states that the Alash party cannot be viewed as such in the classic sense of the word. Information about the Alash party's central committee and its constitution is not available yet. The draft of the party programme was not discussed or adopted. However, some local party bodies had gradually established themselves in the biggest administrative centres (pp. 183–184). It seems that the Alash had not developed as a party, says the author (p. 350).

The part of the monograph titled *Alash Movement and the Bolsheviks: From Compromise to Confrontation* has evoked the greatest interest among researchers (pp. 188–208). What is the essence of the conflict, we ask. The author answers it very clearly. Relations between the Bolsheviks and the Alash characterised the fundamental differences in the development of society, the incompatibility of the goals and methods of the parties, as well as dominance of an uncompromising approach in the political culture of Russian society (p. 188). Analysing the difficult relationship between the Alash and the Soviets, the author comes to another important conclusion: “the Bolsheviks' approach to the principles of establishing a federation and authority in autonomous regions was different” (pp. 197–198).

As to the chapter titled *Alash in Civil Confrontation*, the author reconstructs the Alash's activities in the local self-managed institutions. This story is quite justified, given the attention that was paid to those institutions in Kazakh newspapers. A large part of the work was devoted to the formation of Alash regiments. And the author is fair here. She notes that regiments were under the Siberian army commander's control, and were initially established as self-defence units (p. 223). The author describes the complexity of the issue and the people's attitude toward those regiments. The study also clearly shows that by December 1919 the manoeuvring and stand-by tactics that the leaders of the western branch of the Alash Orda used had proved ineffective.

Thus, we have developed a complete picture, full of drama, illustrating the complexities of difficult development stages of the Alash. Analysing the monograph, the reader can realise how difficult it was to make those decisions, how difficult was the path to achieve perfection, and how tragic was the fate of the Kazakh intelligentsia. One also understands how cynical and at the same time true Stalin's address to E. Stasova, secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, on Akhmet Baitursynov, one of the leaders of the Alash Orda, as well as on the Alash movement as a whole, sounds: "I did not and do not consider him a revolutionary communist or a sympathiser thereof, yet we need his participation in the Revolutionary Committee" (p. 367).

When making this reference and analysing the material, it is difficult to do without emotions, and not to feel sorry for the Alash leaders.

Of course, one can finish the reference quite academically. In general, Dina Amanzholova's book is a fundamental monograph devoted to the fate of the Alash Orda, and could be of interest both to professionals and to those interested in the history of Kazakhstan. But at the same time it is unfair in regard to the author to view it only as such.

How can one evaluate the enormous hard work, relentless search for evidence in the archives, and maintenance of the material? After reading this monograph, you realise how truly and professionally it is written, and that you must have a big heart and plenty of courage to write the truth about the role and place of the Alash in the history of the Kazakh and other nations.

Baurzhan Zhanguitin

UNFADING IMAGES OF HISTORY

Zhanna Kydyralina. *Alimkhan Ermekov: Sud'ba i vremia*. Astana: Foliant, 2015. 440 pp. In Russian.

In the modern period of the crisis of civilisation, under the conditions of ideological pluralism, powerful intellectual resources are especially important for the understanding of the responsibility of an individual within society and in the global community. To comprehend the issues related to the future of a nation, and development of a country, we turn to the experience of history and images of a brilliant pleiad of national intelligence from the past.

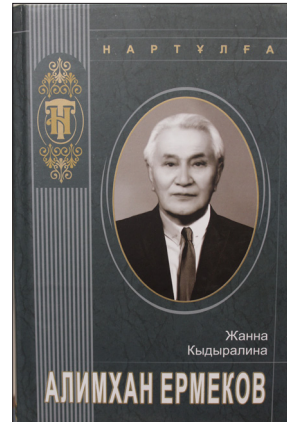
In 2015, the publishing house Foliant in Astana, in the popular series *Nartulgha* (*Vydaiushchiesia lichnosti* (Distinguished personalities)), published a book titled *Alimkhan Ermekov: Sud'ba i vremia* (Alimkhan Ermekov: Fate and Time). The author is Zhanna Kydyralina, Doctor of Historical Science. This new monograph is dedicated to the first Kazakh professor of mathematics – Alimkhan Ermekov (1891–1970), one of the founders of the first Kazakh political party Alash, and a member of the provisional government, Alash Orda.

The history of Alash and its great leaders is truly one of the brightest periods in the national history of the Kazakh people. The appearance of the movement and of the first political party Alash, and the government Alash Orda, signalled an increased civic maturity and the high potential of the Kazakh intellectual and political elite. Under the conditions of acute social conflicts of the early twentieth century, Alash announced its quest to solve the momentous questions of the future development of Kazakh native people. The leaders of Alash raised the national consciousness to the state level. They laid the foundations for the political and socio-economic transformation of modern Kazakhstan. During the Soviet period, the programme and activities of Alash were subjected to total ostracism, labelled as 'bourgeois and nationalist'. The difference of the ideology of Alash from that of the Bolsheviks consisted in denying the class paradigm and defending national positions. The leaders of Alash wanted to achieve the modernisation of Kazakhstan in an evolutionary way – by reform, without bloodshed and violence.

The fight for the preservation of the integrity of the Kazakh territory is a tribute to the tenacity of Alash Orda, which is difficult to overestimate. During Russia's troubled times after the First World War, they were able to clearly and convincingly communicate the right of Kazakhs to their land, which makes up the territory of modern Kazakhstan.

The leaders of Alash enjoyed an unquestionable authority amongst the people. They were talented people whose skills and background complemented each other. They knew several languages, were educators, wrote textbooks, and sought to raise the level of development of the nation to the level of advanced countries, including, for example, Japan.

Under the influence of the great spiritual quest of Alash Orda was a young prominent Kazakh writer Mukhtar Auezov. This is evidenced by an article titled *Japan*, which he wrote at the age of twenty. At the time, the leaders of Alash were looking for examples of countries that had managed to withstand the expansion into Eurasian space by the



West. And it was Japan, which had carried out the Meiji reforms in 1861, that the young Mukhtar Auezov excitedly analysed in this article, paying particular attention to their educational programmes. Japan had started to send its young people to study in Germany and other European countries. As a result, at the beginning of the twentieth century, Japan became a nation that knew how to defend its interests. This example was essential for the leaders of Alash Orda. Akhmed Baitursynov (p. 95) says: “We have to be rich, educated and strong. To be rich, you need to have business, to be educated you need to learn, and to be strong, unity is needed.”

This amazing generation of Alash leaders well served as an example for contemporary Kazakh youth in how to harmoniously balance the values of a nomadic civilisation, Islamic culture, and the European model of development, for the progress of the country and the people. They infinitely loved their country and its culture, and tirelessly devoted all their strength and energy to their cause. The great figures of Alash Orda had a deep insight into the world’s problems, were tolerant, read avidly, translated, and were connoisseurs of the world’s spiritual values. Among others, the great Kazakh poet Abay influenced their formation and worldview. Alash leaders were aristocrats of the spirit, but came from a variety of strata. Alimkhan Ermekov was undoubtedly among these outstanding personalities.

Alimkhan Ermekov came from an averagely wealthy family in Karkarala County, He graduated with honours from Semipalatinsk high school and then from Tomsk Polytechnic Institute with the qualification of a mining engineer.

The author of the book has been able to convey to the reader the main feeling – delight from the depth and richness of the inner ‘I’ of the main character. A. Ermekov is presented by Zh. Kydyralina as a bright politician and public figure, a talented personality, who due to tragic circumstances was devoid of opportunities to fully realise his scientific and creative talent, while retaining his loyalty to the national spirit and national values.

Courage, determination, prudence, and statesmanship earned him the recognition and trust of senior leaders from the movement. Young Ermekov negotiated with different political forces and governments on behalf of Alash Orda.

Ermekov was one of the first who stood at the cradle of the Kazakh Soviet statehood. During 1920 in Moscow, in a meeting with V.I. Lenin, chairman of the Council of People’s Commissars of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, A. Ermekov made a report on the situation in Kazakhstan and its borders. Thanks to his initiative, and together with other representatives of the Kazakh elite, he managed to secure the return of ancestral land to the republic, including a number of strategically important territories like Akmola and Semipalatinsk regions, and the northern coast of the Caspian Sea.

All his life he fought to overcome incredible difficulties. Following the sanctions of the totalitarian regime in the USSR, he spent almost 18 years in prison camps and exile. But nothing broke his will. Even in Stalin’s torture chambers he was bringing the light of knowledge to the people: he instigated a number of disciplines in the high school curriculum for the camp management, and the prisoners in the camp referred to him as Citizen Professor. Alimkhan Ermekov was the author of a textbook on higher mathematics in the Kazakh language, and had considerable experience teaching in a number of leading universities in Almaty.

Any outstanding personality is a product of his time. A major historical figure reveals and explains the modern era. The author of the biography has sought to fully disclose, in all its variety, the social reality of that era. A. Ermekov was supposed to be broken by fate, but was not; he did not lose his spirit, but elevated himself and raised his people in the process.

The talent of the scientist-mathematician, his hard work, the relentless blows of fate, and the inexhaustible power of the spirit – all of this is manifested throughout the book, turning it, in spite of the drama in the hero's life, into a surprisingly good and exciting work.

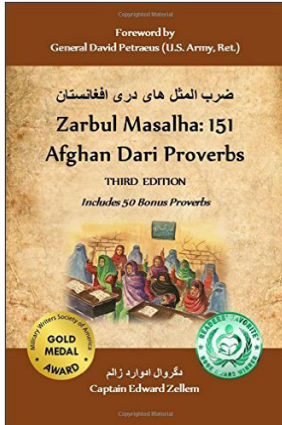
The reader can perceive the interrelationships in time: the state and society, under different political systems, faced some of the same challenges and problems as today. In the current debate and reflection on various issues of modern development – economic modernisation and the democratisation of public life, reforming of education and culture – images and views on the founders of Alash, who were far ahead of their time, appear in the mind's eye.

The book *Alimkhan Ermekov: Sud'ba i vremia* is written in a highly professional manner and can be read in one breath. The advantage of the book is its clear structure, and the skilful and harmonious combination of different methods of presentation. A series of carefully selected, interchangeable, interesting, and often paradoxical facts combine with striking and instructive examples, which recreate the historical background of the era. The paper highlights the dramatic peripeteias of the fates of the wonderful companions of the leaders of the Kazakh intelligentsia, remarkable men and women who left a bright trace in the history of a nation. The study is based on the solid ground of archival sources, memoirs, and evidence.

The unfading image of Alimkhan Ermekov will remain in the eternal memory of historical canons as an example of selfless service to a nation. The ideas of Alash, the highest moral examples of the people, who were a spiritual pendulum for the nation, live in the memory of generations, and have an impact on their deeds and actions. The spiritual world of Alash is the quintessence of the Kazakh national spirit, and it is among the eternal, immortal values.

Askar Altayev

PROVERBS WITH A BONUS



Edward ZelleM. *Zarbul Masalha: 151 Afghan Dari Proverbs*. Third edition. United States of America: Cultures Direct Press, 2015. 223 pp.

The third edition of Captain Edward ZelleM's book, *Zarbul Masalha: 151 Afghan Dari Proverbs*, is distinct from earlier editions in that there are an additional fifty proverbs which have been collected through the unique method of crowd-sourcing. His collection of proverbs, which began as a language learning tool, expanded into a book, drawing various members of the Afghan and American community together to create the first edition. This third edition exploits the cohesive nature of proverb collection and expands the process by using the Internet as a means of connecting people with each other in order to share culturally relevant proverbs.

At first glance it might be odd to learn that Captain Edward ZelleM's third edition of *Zarbul Masalha: 151 Afghan Dari Proverbs* contains 201 proverbs instead of the 151 purported in the title. Nevertheless, it is these last 50 proverbs which are of special interest; unlike the 151 proverbs published in the first edition which were collected through traditional means, the additional 50 proverbs of the third edition were gathered through a unique method of crowd-sourcing.

This book, which is now on its third edition, began with Captain Edward ZelleM of the United States Navy. As one of the first members of the Afghan Hands program, ZelleM focused on learning Dari, one of the two official languages of Afghanistan, understanding Afghan culture, and building relationships with Afghans. Collecting proverbs began for him as a "personal language learning technique... [which] evolved into a hobby, then a passion, then a series of books" (p. v). Through observation and interaction with Afghans, ZelleM noticed the frequency and skilled use of *zarbul masalha*, or proverbs, in everyday speech. As ZelleM began to collect and study proverbs, he noticed that "using them made it easier to communicate my thoughts, ideas, opinions and emotions, and that in turn led to faster, deeper human connections with my Afghan co-workers and friends" (p. vi). The more proverbs ZelleM collected, the more well-known his collection became, leading others to request copies of his list. When a friend mentioned turning the list into a book, ZelleM decided to publish only a few for family and friends.

A meeting with Aziz Royesh, co-founder and civics teacher at Marefat High School (MHS), began to change ZelleM's plan. Royesh suggested holding a contest for the students to paint pictures of 50 of the 151 proverbs to be published in the book and even offered to edit the book for him. ZelleM eagerly agreed. Together with the MHS art master Hadi Rahnarwad, ZelleM and Royesh chose and organized the proverbs and accompanying pictures into the first edition of the book which was published in 2011. A grant from the Department of State provided the funds to publish 40,000 copies and distribute them to over 200 schools across Afghanistan in an effort to support literacy and bilingualism in Dari and English.

The book sparked another book of proverbs, this time in Pashto, the other official language of Afghanistan. Unlike with the Dari proverbs, though, the Pashto proverbs were collected via social media and chosen by Zellem based on the number of “online retweets, likes, favorites, and comments [a proverb] received” (p. xv). The crowd-sourcing of the Pashto proverbs led many Dari speakers to want to participate as well. They, too, sent Zellem their favorite Dari proverbs, and Zellem used a similar method as with the Pashto proverbs to select an additional fifty Dari proverbs for the third edition of the book. This was the first time that such a method had been used to collect proverbs.

Dari language facts, a pronunciation guide, and the alphabet end the front matter. The next 204 pages consist of similarly-formatted Dari proverbs with a break between the original proverbs and bonus proverbs that provides a brief biography and picture of graphic artist and educator Sufi Ashqari. Each page of proverbs begins with the proverb in Dari with a pronunciation of the Dari letters, literal English translation, and English explanation below. Some of the pages include multiple explanations and uses, while others occasionally provide an equivalent English proverb. The equivalent proverb is a nice touch and further demonstrates for the American audience the similarities between Afghanistan and the United States.

In addition to words, as previously stated, fifty of these pages contain drawings of the proverbs. Some of these drawings are easily connected to the accompanying proverb. For example, underneath the first proverb, “seek knowledge from cradle to grave”, is a beautifully shaded drawing of a woman holding a young boy and writing the letters of the Dari alphabet (p. 1). The connection between the two is clear. For other proverbs, though, the connection is murky at best. The forty-ninth proverb, for example, is translated to mean “afraid of one’s own shadow” (p. 49). The picture below, though, has nothing to do with shadows. Instead, a man with a lion’s head helmet holds a knife while straddling a younger-looking man in armor. Thankfully, though, there is a note for the reader to look at the third appendix. In the appendices, there are five stories which explain the background behind the accompanying proverb or drawing. For this proverb, the story is of a man, Rostam, who unknowingly killed his own son because he “without reason had feared him as a rival” (p. 207). These appendices add a richness to an otherwise plain read. While the proverbs are interesting in a cursory way, the stories provide context for the proverbs and therefore a greater insight into the culture and worldview of Afghans. While it is unrealistic to expect stories for each of the 201 proverbs, it is regrettable that so few were included in the book.

Zarbul Masalha: 151 Afghan Dari Proverbs is a quick read, bookended by descriptions and stories which are interesting enough in content to make up for the average writing style, which neither enhances nor detracts from the message. The format of the pages of proverbs is clearly organized, making the proverbs easy to understand and read. The explanations are succinct, and the occasional alternative explanation is helpful for those who want to use this book as a tool for improving communication with Afghans. In short, taken by itself, this book is an interesting, if somewhat shallow, read which should appeal to those interested in either paremiology or Afghanistan.

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On the cover: Shangyrak, the upper wooden crown of the yurt, symbol of national identity in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Photograph by Aimar Ventsel 2012.

