

INTRODUCTION

The idea for this publication was born in 2021, when I discovered that Maria Pavlovna Nikonova, from my own village, in addition to her many well-known talents (she has in- knowledge of depth traditional rituals and customs, sings folk songs very well, and we could pursue the list of her achievements), kept a diary of her observations, of her emotions and of the events around her. As I am a folklorist, and of course, her fellow villager, it was extraordinarily interesting and valuable, a unique phenomenon in the Udmurt traditional culture.

Both in my own life as in my field experience, I had not met many cases of Udmurt tradition-bearers who systematically wrote down their observations and knowledge²³. I could mention Elizaveta Ivanovna Kamasheva's publication "*Лиза апайлэн лякиё шобретэз=Лоскутное покрывало бабы Лизы*" ('Aunt Liza's Patchwork Bedspread'), published in 2012 both in Udmurt and Russian²⁴. Elizaveta Ivanovna was well-known in Udmurtia as a warden of folk traditions as well as for her knowledge of plants and folk medicine; she was also an active public figure. She worked closely with Udmurt biologist and professor Viktor Tuganaev. Her book encompasses biographical remembrances, articles from different authors about her personality, her father's letters, different advice about plants and photos. The book adds that the manuscript included poems and songs composed by her, but for some reason they were not published. However, unlike the case of Maria Pavlovna, the texts had been rewritten and presented in compliance with the Udmurt literary language's rules. There are also some other examples of manuscripts written some time before the author's death and addressed to the writer's kin (for example Anisimov 2017: 229-231²⁵; AFW 2018²⁶; Glukhova, Nikolaeva 2022²⁷).

23 In this context, the works by amateur-local-historians shall not be under scrutiny, as their goals, their tasks and their approaches are entirely different and may not be compared to those that exist in this direction.

24 Kamasheva, E.I. *Granny Liza's patchwork blanket. Essays, remembrances, advice* = Камашева Е.И. *Лиза апайлэн лякиё шобретэз=Лоскутное покрывало бабы Лизы: Очерки, воспоминания, советы*. Izhevsk: Udmurtia / Ижевск: Удмуртия, 2012. 112 с

25 Anisimov, N.V. *Dialogue between the worlds through the lens of Udmurt communicative behaviour* (Анисимов Н.В. «Диалог миров» в матрице коммуникативного поведения удмуртов). Tartu / Tartu University publisher / Тарту: Издательство Тартуского университета, 2017. 386 с.

26 The author's fieldwork, 2018 – In Karamas-Pel'ga, a village in the Kiyasovo district (Udmurtia), after famous keeper of folk traditions' and excellent singer Ol'ga Nikolaevna Solovyova's demise (she was also known as Dzhakapay), some manuscripts were discovered, which describe her life and her thoughts about some events, and she managed to write them a little while before her death.

27 Glukhova, G.A., Nikolaeva, V.N. Man and his time: from to diary-like notes by one inhabitant of Kadikovo, Alnashi district, Udmurtia. *Present problems of Udmurt studies in the context of comparativistics, contactology, and language, literature and folklore typology. Collection of articles*. (Глухова Г.А., Николаева В.Н. Человек и его время: из "дневниковых" записей жителя д. Кадиково Алнашского района Удмуртии. *Актуальные проблемы удмуртоведения в контексте компаративистики, контактологии и типологии языков, литератур и фольклора: Сборник статей*.) Izhevsk: Publishing centre "Udmurt University" / Ижевск: Издательский центр "Удмуртский университет", 2022. С. 80–85.

But in Udmurt folkloristics I haven't happened to find this kind of material in any publication ever.

I remembered that as soon as Maria Pavlovna showed me her manuscripts, I proposed to her the possibility of publishing her manuscript heritage. She did not need to reflect long before agreeing. This was the first step in the intense work to publish her diaries and manuscript notebooks. For me, this discovery was a key moment, for this kind of text can encompass valuable data about Udmurt folklore, culture and traditions.

Before starting work, I showed Maria Pavlovna's manuscripts to the Udmurt folklorists at the Udmurt institute²⁸, who confirmed that publication of these materials would be relevant. This inspired me to work with even more enthusiasm. I started by scan all the diaries and notebooks entrusted to my care. I added scanned copies of Maria Pavlovna's photos and personal documents. I gave her back the originals of the manuscripts and the documents. I went on working on decoding the scanned copies. Most of the text had been written legibly and the decoding it was not particularly complicated, except the latest notes. It was very clear, as Maria Pavlovna herself wrote in the last journals, that reading and writing had become difficult because of the weakening of her vision. Nevertheless I am impressed by her will, her desire to keep everything 'on paper'.

The work on the manuscripts has been fascinating, especially because many of the characters described in the diaries were familiar to me, as well as the place she mentions, and the rituals and traditions. It awoke in me a deep feeling of spleen and nostalgia towards my native region and my childhood. Page after page, notebook after notebook, I followed the life of a simple village woman, whose fate was not easy. Many aspects from her life were unknown by me beforehand, and probably rightly so, because they belonged to her personal sphere, they were her secret dreams and sufferings, which were not meant to be publicly discussed. This led to another topic: would we publish the extremely personal details of the diary? I discussed every single detail with Maria Pavlovna and decided together what we would not include in the publication, and what would remain.

After having decoded the manuscript texts, I organised another meeting with Maria Pavlovna in order to clarify some portions of the text, some sentences and words, especially dialectisms and archaisms, which required additional comments, added as footnotes.

As Maria Nikonova has been my regular informant since 2008, I have in my personal archive many hours of audio and video recordings of the interviews I have had with her in our annual meetings. Therefore, I decided to include some materials from these interviews, which are of peculiar interest to people interested in investigating Udmurt culture, as well as to the Udmurt themselves. These

28 Udmurt Institute of History, Language and Literature, UdmFRC UB RAS (<http://udnii.ru>).

materials include poems and songs, both composed by her and of folk heritage, as well as descriptions of rituals and customs. These fieldwork data represent a valuable enrichment to Maria Pavlovna's written heritage.

As Irina Nurieva, an Udmurt ethnomusicologist, once said after visiting my village²⁹ and meeting Maria Pavlovna: "Kolya, you are living in gold. You don't have to go far away, you have everything at hand". I hope that these treasures of the Udmurt folklore heritage will form a unique contribution to the cultural richness of the Udmurt community.

This book is dedicated to the publication of the diaries, personal materials and remembrances, of scientific and social interest, of Maria Pavlovna Nikonova, an Udmurt woman. Maria Nikonova was born and lives in the south of the Udmurt Republic, in Kiyasovo district. (For more biographical details see later in the text.) In December 2021 she celebrated her 95th birthday, and we expect soon to celebrate her centenary. Her wisdom, her talent and her unique personality draw respect and interest from the people around her. Udmurt folklorists, ethnographers, ethnomusicologists, museum workers, schoolchildren, students, cultural workers, journalists and just other villagers address her to receive advice and knowledge. Maria Pavlovna is an authority in maintaining traditional Udmurt heritage, she is a valuable consultant and a generous informant.

From her childhood, fate was not kind to her. When she was very young, she and her family suffered repression at the hands of the kulaks. She lost her mother, was forcefully relocated and subject to insults and humiliation, as her family was seen as 'rich'³⁰. Because Maria was considered ugly, she was overwhelmed by excessive work in the kolkhoz; she was a timid child by character when she was young, etc. Then followed harsh times during the war, and separation from her brothers and sisters; later an unfortunate first marriage and then the period of political change and social transformation. However, in spite of numerous life challenges, she never lost her resilience, her clear mind and her unwavering energy. Despite her modesty and, at first sight, her fragile appearance, I am impressed by her wisdom and her perseverance in the face of so many difficulties.

29 Dubrovskiy (Udm. *Выль Тӱгьурмен*) – Udmurt village, in the south of the Udmurt Republic, Kiyasovo district.

30 Historically, were called "kulaks" in Russia wealthy peasants, who owned extensive domains, and were opposed to the collectivisation and supported private ownership. Often peasants having middle resources were included among the Kulaks. In the Soviet Union, especially since 1928, they were victims of repression and of collectivisation, which led to mass conflicts and famines. The concept "kulak" may also be used metaphorically, meaning people or groups of people, who oppose change and reforms.

In the pages of her personal diaries and notebooks, which she started in the 1980s, Maria Pavlovna shares the description of her life path, her remembrances, and various events, which are also reflected in her poems and songs. These texts are on the one hand precious reflexive sources by one representative of the Udmurt culture, while on the other hand, they richly illustrate the history of her personal fate, as well as the fates of her family, her native village, her republic, her country and even the world in general.

Among the most precious texts, I must emphasise folk songs, incantations, omens, descriptions of Udmurt festivities and proverbs, sayings, witty expressions, and relationships between the villagers. They are rich source material for the study and preservation of Udmurt folk culture and traditions. The texts of folk songs encompass musical and linguistic heritage, allowing us to understand and transmit the musical and textual richness. The incantations, proverbs and sayings reflect everyday Udmurt life and wisdom, while the witty expressions and the omens emphasise the uniqueness and colourfulness of this cultural tradition. The description of Udmurt festivities and relationships between villagers gives a window onto the customs and rituals of this culture, and an understanding of the values and understandings that accompany the Udmurt's life.

Maria describes her interactions with other people, reflecting thus the human universal qualities of each of us. In the life of each person there are moments of anger and resentment, as well as quarrels, but with time and changing circumstances they can acquire new meaning and give way to sympathy, gratitude and longing.

All these aspects of folk culture, which are represented in Maria Pavlovna's texts, are an important part of cultural heritage, clearly revealing the uniqueness and the plurality of Udmurt achievements and at the same time increasing their significance manifold.

In 2021, by trusting me, Nikolai Anisimov, with her notebooks, this woman expressed the hope not only to have them preserved, but also to share with others her rich life experience. I must add that Maria Pavlovna does not limit herself to writing diaries and composing songs and poems. She also plays the harmonica and the balalaika, makes dolls, and, formerly, made carpets, rugs and many other objects of everyday domestic usefulness. Even today, thanks to her active life, she shares precious advice and teaches local people and schoolchildren, transmitting her love and concern for the past, her language, her culture and her homeland.

Maria Pavlovna's personality is a brilliant example of how one person is able to preserve, accumulate and produce folk culture and history, and present it to the world.

The book includes a preface with Maria Nikonova's short biography, a short overview of her heritage as a creator, her manuscript diaries and notebooks, poems, song texts with musical examples, and data from my fieldwork.

In the published texts, I preserved the original orthography and punctuation as it is in the manuscripts in order to transmit its unique peculiarities. The transcribed audio materials are presented using dialect pronunciation, as it was at the moment of recording.

In order to ease the understanding of the context, I introduced square brackets where I added, omitted or clarified words or expressions. Angle brackets with ellipses show that text has been omitted for ethical reasons, or according to Maria Pavlovna's wishes. Angle brackets with question marks reveal any place that was not totally elucidated.

In footnotes I added comments, included translations from Tatar into Russian and explanations of complicated concepts and expressions both in Udmurt and in Russian.

As an addition to the text content, the book includes a photo addendum with photographs from the Maria's personal archive, as well as from Elena Ponomaryova, her granddaughter, and Denis Kornilov, an Udmurt folklorist, photographer and filmmaker, as well as my own photos.

Pages from Maria Pavlovna's biography

Maria Pavlovna Nikonova (Stakheeva) is a long-lived Udmurt woman. She was born into a peasant family in Nizhnyaya Malaya Sal'ya (Udm. Nennyuk), Kiyasovo district, Udmurtia, on December 12th 1926: *“шоро-куспо, бадзъм но тупаса улӱсь, ужез яратӱсь крестьян семьяын”* (“in a peasant family of middle wealth, big and friendly, loving work”³¹). There were nine in the Stakheev family: the grandmother (the father's stepmother) Takan (1867-1933), the father Pavel Ignat'evich Stakheev (1889-1976), the mother Anna Grigor'yevna Stakheeva (1887-1933), the elder brother Egor Pavlovich Pavlov (1911-1940), the elder sister Afanas'ya Pavlovna Stakheeva (1915-2005), the brother Anatoliy Pavlovich Stakheev (1920-1941), Irina Pavlovna Stakheeva (1922-1934), the sister Luker'ya Pavlovna Stakheeva (1925-1998) and Maria Pavlovna herself.

In 1931, the Stakheev family had to cope with the hard consequences of the kulak repression, which was officially called a 'special relocation'. When the family was chased from their home, Maria's sister's girlfriends came to say farewell and see them off, but at the same moment they were shot at with rifles, although the girls managed to flee and hide in the neighbour's yard. The Stakheevs were

31 Further on we present literal translations, in order to reproduce more precisely the author's style.

sent to Perm kray, where they went with two small children. Maria Pavlovna was but four at the time. They reached Sarapul³² on foot and then, in a freight train, they reached Usol'ye³³, a small town from where they were sent to Dedyukhin³⁴, a workers' village. The old granny, the daughter Orina and two sons were left at home. Later, the mother went to the village to bring with her her daughter Orina. The other children remained with the grandmother. In Perm' kray they were placed in old barracks. They did not even live there one year because they decided to flee and go back to their native village. When the father and the elder son came back, they decided to find part-time employment in the Alnashi district in Udmurtia. According to Maria Pavlovna, her mother had to spend the night wherever she found a place. In 1933 the grandmother died, and the whole family was again chased from their lodgings. They settled in the home of the grandmother's father. Later the same year, their mother died suddenly of a disease, leaving six orphan children. In 1934 they were relocated again, and they started living in a barn. The same year the sister Orina became ill and died in a single day. As Maria Pavlovna wrote, as children they buried their sister themselves, as neither father nor mother were around. In Autumn the father came back and built a sheepfold for the family to live in.

Later the family had their wealth confiscated, including probably the recently built home, a cage, the barn, the *kuala*³⁵ ritual prayer building, the new sheepfold, the new barn, the drier, etc.

After some time, the father, who worked as a proletarian in the Udmurt village of Kuzebaevo (Alnashi district), got acquainted with a woman, Nadyozha (Nadezhda). The elder brother Egor moved to live in Izhevsk. Later the father decided to take the two smaller girls, Luker'ya and Maria, with him to Kuzebaevo, and left the two elder children, Afanas'ya and Anatoliy, in their native village: *"Тйни озьы ог кылысь, тупаса улысь бадзым семьямы таралюз"* ("Thus, our big family, who lived in concord and friendship, crumbled").

In 1935, Maria's sister Afanas'ya married in Dubrovskiy, a village in Kiyasovo district. The other brother, who was fifteen, remained alone: *"...воксё огназ улыны, ассэ ачиз сюдыны кылиз..."* ("...he remained fully alone, to find food by himself..."), *"Кот тырон понна ачиз араз, ачиз тыршиз"* ("In order to fill his belly he had to find ways himself"). At that time the teenager also worked part time as a hired shepherd.

32 Sarapul – one of the oldest towns in the Kama region, situated in the south-eastern part of the Udmurt Republic, on the right shore of the Kama.

33 Usol'ye – town in the Perm' kray, administrative center of the Usol'ye district, on the right shore of the Kama.

34 Dedyukhin – a village that has now disappeared, in the North of what is now the Perm' kray, on the left shore of the Kama. In 1952, its territory was flooded when the Kama water reservoirs were built.

35 Kuala – sanctuary in the Udmurt traditional religion. It is a small log building with an open fire, where took place family and calendar rituals and sacrifices to *Vorshud*, the protector of the clan. The family *kuala* was situated within the homestead - in the yard or the vegetable garden.

The small Maria and Luker'ya endeavoured each summer to come back to their native village despite having to walk 40-50 km to do so. Separation from their brother was hard, and every time they parted, they cried bitterly.

In 1938, Anatoliy went to his elder brother in Izhevsk³⁶. Next summer, the father led Maria to her brothers in town because, as he said of the food shortage: “Нянь өвөл, агайёсыд сюдозы но дышетозы но” (“There is no bread, your brothers will feed you and teach you”). Meanwhile, times were not easy for the brothers. Once Egor said: “Діськутэ аламаись, котьку но адямиос бере султывса фотографироваться кариськылі” (“Because of my poor clothing, I was always photographed standing behind people”).

On January 14th, 1940, after military preparation, Egor was sent to the Finnish war³⁷. Maria and Anatoliy remained living together. Egor attempted to keep in touch with them with letters from the front. However, one day a letter arrived in unfamiliar handwriting. It was from one of Egor's friends, who give them the hard news of their brother's demise. The official information *pokhoronka*³⁸ came later, on February 23rd, 1940. In Autumn 1940 the other brother was also called up and joined the army. Maria went back to her father in Kuzebaevo, and went on studying in Golyushurma³⁹ while working with the elder in the kolkhoz.

On June 22nd, 1941 came news of war with Germany: “Люгьит шундыё нунал ик пеймыт луиз кадъ” (“A bright sunny day immediately became dark”). Their brother Anatoliy, as most of the male part of the population, was sent to the front. Now all of the hard physical work fell on the women's shoulders. On September 11th, Maria received a letter:

“Прок Илья шуиськом вал, калека инвалид со. Гожтэт ваиз. Конверт учки, Натоля агайлэн кыыз өвөл. Дугды али чай юэм берам усьто. Өз чида сюлмы усьтй. Усьтй но лыдзисько Героически погиб рядовой Стахеев Анатолий Павлович вуи но бёрдыны кучки. <...> Озы Натоля агайлэн похоронноез вуиз. 31 августэ бырем, 11 сентябре похоронноез вуиз”

(“[He] was called Prok Il'ya, he was crippled, disabled. He brought the letter. I looked at the envelope, it was not brother Anatoliy's handwriting. I thought, I'll wait, have a tea, then I'll read. My heart could not stand it so I opened it. I

36 Izhevsk – capital of the Udmurt republic.

37 The Finn war – armed conflict between Finland and the Soviet Union at the end of 1939 and the beginning of 1940. The Finn war took place from November 1939 up to March 1940, and was concluded with the Moscow peace.

38 Information about a soldier's death, a document called in Russian *pokhoronka* – widely used in colloquial Russian, information as short non official information sent from the front about a military person's demise.

39 Golyushurma – Russian village by now disappeared, in the Alnashi district of the Udmurt Republic. In 1967 this village was flooded because of the construction of the Lower Kama hydroelectric power station. This event led to the disappearance of the village, and its territory became part of the water reservoir.

opened and read: 'Private Anatoliy Pavlovich Stakheev has heroically fallen'. I went back home and wept. <...> Thus came the official information of my brother Anatoliy's demise. He died on August 31st, the information arrived on September 11th").

Thus, the war took the lives of two brothers. Their father and stepmother were overwhelmed with grief: they doubly mourned their dead. Suddenly, the hope for a quiet and carefree old age had disappeared: *"Азьло анай-атай вёзы ни кыльыса, ни сюдэ-вордэ вал бере, осконзы, сюдйсьсы быриз"* ("Earlier, a son remained with the parents, he fed them and cared for them, but any hope of support and guardianship disappeared with their death").

In 1943 Maria Pavlovna, who was sixteen, started working in the local kolkhoz in Kuzebaevvo as a brigadier. She describes this period as extraordinarily hard, requiring lots of effort and work. Because of her young age and insufficient experience, she found it difficult to cope with the huge number of tasks. It happened that she was scolded and people were dissatisfied with her work, but she never lost heart and tried with all her energy to learn and to improve: *"Уйзэ 3 часын гынэ изьыса, нуназе ял карыны выдылытэк, жыт сиськыкум синьёсы кыльылйськызы, кийсьтым сиськон пуньые усъылйз"* ("Going to bed at three in the morning, without resting during the day, in the evening at dinner my eyes closed and sometimes the spoon fell from my hand").

In 1945, the young girl joined the kolkhoz staff as an accountant. In spring, on May 9th, the happy news came that the war with Germany had been won. From 1946, Maria Pavlovna worked in the kolkhoz as an ordinary worker, fulfilling various tasks. She also became a member of the audit commission, which is not surprising considering that many people at that time were illiterate: *"Азьвыл аръёсы но Зина эшеним каникулъёсмь дыръя ревизия ортчытъяны юрттылймы, гуртын грамотной адямиос 4 класслэсь трос дышетскемъёс öжыт вал"* ("In the former years I and my friend Zina helped with the audit during the winter holidays, for in the village there were few people with more than four grades"). Later, their father introduced the children to their new step-mother, Anna, who was their late stepmother Nadyozha's adopted daughter. In the same year, after finishing the 10th form Maria Pavlovna and her friend Zina applied to the Asanovo technical school. However, she did not study there for long, and she went back to work in the kolkhoz. Later she received a proposal aimed at those who had finished 8th and 9th grades: to go to Verkhnyaya Sal'ya village in Kiyasovo district. This village was very close to Maria Pavlovna's native village, so she immediately agreed. Thus began her pedagogical activity.

In 1948 she entered the pedagogic institute in Sarapul for distance learning. She sometimes also took distance learning classes in Izhevsk, and finally completed her studies in Mozhga⁴⁰.

After two years work in this school, she went to work to Dubrovskiy, where her sister Afanas'ya was married. In 1949 she married in Kalashur, in the same district, but she did not manage to live with her husband and one year later they parted ways. It is in the same village that in 1953 she met her future husband, Viktor Alekseevich Nikonov. The day of the wedding was on the day of elections, as often happened at that time: *“Куке мыл потэ, соку сюан öз карылэ, карылызы кыче ке праздниклы тупатськыса. Милесьтым сюанмес выбор дыръялы тупатйзы, соку выходной сёто, мукет дыръя выходнойёс öй вал гужем но тол но колхозын”* (“Then, people did not organise weddings when they wished, but according to some other festivity. Our wedding happened on election day when the workers had a day off, there were no other free days, neither in summer nor in winter”). Six children were born to this marriage: Vladimir, Roza, Antonina, Igor', Evelina; one child died as an infant from meningitis.

After thirty years of teaching experience, Maria Pavlovna was sent on a well-deserved vacation. However, afterwards, she still worked at school for some years, replacing absent teachers. Finally, her general work experience, including work in the kolkhoz, totalled more than 41 years. For her diligent work, she was awarded the medal For Valiant Work in World War II 1941-1945, and the Veteran of Labour award.

Maria Pavlovna was also one of the initiators of the Dubrovskiy folklore ensemble. With other women in this group she performed older Udmurt songs, dances and games. They attended different concerts and events. Often the participants themselves composed the texts of their songs expressing their own stories, fates and emotions in relation to different events. Today, songs from Maria Pavlovna's repertoire are performed by the folklore ensemble of the village, *Тйгырмен кенакъёс* (the Tigyrmen Aunties).

In 1993 she experienced the tragic loss of her husband. Afterwards, Maria Pavlovna lived alone for a long time, although she now lives with her daughter Roza. The other children and grandchildren sometimes visit her and help her with household chores.

40 Mozhga – town in the Udmurt Republic, administrative center of the Mozhga district, while it is not included in it. This town is situated at the south-west of the Republic, at the confluence of the Rivers Syuga and Syugailka.

Special features of her creation as a tradition-bearer and culture warden

The example of Maria Pavlovna, as mentioned above, is a unique phenomenon in Udmurt folkloristics, for she not only transmit her culture orally, but also in written form, fixing her life experience as the creation of a tradition-bearer. She reflects and writes down her thoughts, relying on her values and on the meaning she gives to her existence. Thanks to the extensive material that we have, we can establish a detailed portrait of a representative of Udmurt culture, and observe her fate, the transformations, the behavioural stereotypes, and her reactions to the evolution of her cultural, social, political and historical surroundings.

Maria Pavlovna's manuscript materials may be related both to so-called written folklore, and to post-folklore⁴¹. The particular feature of this genre is that it relies on written materials, meaning that it will be preserved for future generations to research and to study. Written folklore texts have some advantages when compared to oral folklore. Firstly, they have a more stable dimension and do not depend on the performer's individual peculiarities. This allows the original meaning to remain content and excludes the possibility to change the text, as can happen in oral transmission. Secondly, written folklore is more easily accessible to researchers and scholars, allowing detailed analysis and investigation of different aspects, such as topic, structure, language and style. Thus, written folklore or post-folklore plays a considerable role in the maintenance and research of cultural heritage contributing to the preservation of original texts and encouraging expansion of our understanding and knowledge of different aspects of folklore and culture.

As Maria Pavlovna acknowledges, she started writing her diaries in 1987, because she was sorry for her granddaughter, who was going through a difficult period: *“Дневник (нуналъян) гожъяны кутски пичи Алёна жаль потэмысь. 1987 арысен”* (“I started writing my journal because since 1987 I have felt sorry for small Alyona.”). Her granddaughter faced her parents' divorce, not understanding what was happening around her, then experienced suffering for her first, unrequited, love, after which, as a young girl, she died tragically in a car crash. At the same time, as she writes, she wrote every day, later less, from time to time. She did not

41 For more details, see: Neklyudov, S.Yu. After folklore. *Living antiquity*, 1995, N.3, pp.2-24 (Неклюдов С.Ю. После фольклора. *Живая старина*, 1995, № 1. С. 2-4); Bakhtin, V.S. The reality of written folklore. *Fieldwork discoveries from the last years: folk music, orality, and rituals in notes from the 1970-1990s*. Articles and materials. Saint Petersburg: Publishing house “Dmitriy Bulanin”, 1996, pp.151-159 (Бахтин В.С. Реальность письменного фольклора. *Экспедиционные открытия последних лет: народная музыка, словесность, обряды в записях 1970-1990-х годов*. Статьи и материалы. СПб.: Издательство «Дмитрий Буланин», 1996. С. 151-159); Neklyudov, S. *Folklore traditions of today's town*. Source: <https://www.yumpu.com/xx/document/read/29782434/> (visited on October 16th, 2023). (Неклюдов С. *Фольклорные традиции современного города*. Источник: <https://www.yumpu.com/xx/document/read/29782434/> (дата посещения 16.10.2023)).

show her diary to anybody, therefore it was a real discovery to learn that my co-villager wrote a diary...

In some notebooks dedicated to her story, she repeats central events, which probably reveals their relevance in her fate, and that she endeavoured to keep the memory of them alive for future generations. Some texts are written in separate papers, which are inserted into the notebooks, making it hard to establish a sure chronology and topicality in some cases.

In the diary Maria uses her own personal terms for some Russian notions, thus enriching her text and the Udmurt language in general: for example, journal is *ну-налъян*, exhibition is *адзъитон*, and bookshelf is *шёрлык*. She explains the archaisms and dialectisms with notions from literary language, or analogues in other dialects, which reveals her deep knowledge of her language: for example, *пинал – егит, та-зами – куаи, маёвка – гырон быдтон*, etc. Thus she attempts to preserve and enrich her language. This use of terms and language could be important in preserving Udmurt and Udmurt culture.

In her diary pages she beautifully transmits with deep emotion her feelings of sadness after her children and grandchildren left home. Each line is filled with infinite love for her kin and an unspeakable bitterness created by their absence and departure:

“Ой сюлмы – сюлмы! сюлмыд весь ке таёе улйиз, кызъы улыны быгатод та дун-неын? Корка пуш но, азбар но, муш сад но – ваньмыз кёшкемыт, мёзмыт, кытчы гынэ уг учкисъкы, котъкытын Машалэн шудэм бервылыз, котъкытын Сашалэн кутэтъёсыз но штанъёсыз. Коркасьтыд котъ пегъыса кошкы. Кулэм-ышем бер-выл кадъ ик, эшишо кётэз урод карыса, атасьёс чоръяло”

(“Oh, my heart, my heart! If it will always be thus in my heart, how is it possible to live in this world? At home, and in the yard, and in the pasture, everything is sad, creepy, wherever I look, there are traces of Masha’s games, every where Sasha’s diapers and trousers... I would just run away from home. Just like after a death, a loss, and just to depress the mood, the cock crows);

“Жыт 6 часын Володя кошкыз, берзэ учкыса кыли укноетй, пичи сюрес вылтйм бус-бус лымы коласа. Кёты урод луиз, бёрдыса кыли. 79 аресъем нэнэзэ кельтыса Тйгырмен гуртлэн самой пьдлось сзрегас. Жаляса кошкыз меда, өз меда? Изъыны выдыкум но бёрдыса куараен выдй”

(“At six in the evening Volodya went away. I followed him through the window, while he walked on my small path through the deep snow. I felt like weeping. He left his 79-year-old mother in one of the remotest corners of Dubrovskiy. Was he sorry to go, was he not? Even when I prepared to sleep, I laid down weeping loudly”);

*“Эх, анай сюлэм, ваньмыз нылпиос одйг кадесь, котькудзы ке но бертылыса
кошко ваньзы бере сюлэм чигыса кыле”*

(“Oh, a mother’s heart, all my children are the same, when each of them leaves,
my heart is sad”).

On the other hand, the coming of children warms her heart and colours her life
brightly:

“Сюлмам мар ке шуньт луиз кадь, одйгез пие бертйз но”

(“One of my sons came home and my heart seems to be warm again”).

In order to forget her sadness, her nostalgia, she goes out to meet people.
Conversations and village chores help to quiet her agitated heart:

*“Їукна султйсько, кѳт урод. Жьит вуэ кѳт урод. Весь бѳрдэме потэ, весь бѳрдйсь-
ко, синкылиосы асьсэос вияло. Нокытчы пырон инты уг шедьтйськы. Кытчы ке
мынысал, кинэ ке адьысал. <...> Калыклэсь мѳзмоно, нылпиослэсь мѳзмоно. Мѳз-
мемъям сьѳсь кадь черсйсько, керттйсько аслым норма сѳтыса. Кытын меда
мѳзмон ѳвѳл? Калык пушкын мѳзмон буйга”*

(“In the morning I stand up, my heart is anguished. Evening comes, my heart
is in anguish. I always want to cry, I do cry, tears flow by themselves. I don’t
find any place. I went somewhere, met somebody. <...> I miss people, I miss
my children. Yearning like crazy, I knit, I set myself a norm. Where shall I find
quiet? Among people melancholy disappears”);

*“Мон весь огнам улыса, калыклэсь мѳзмисько. Кытчы гынэ калык люкаськоно
кадь, сое возмасько”*

(“Because of my permanently solitary life, I miss people. If only people would
gather, I don’t wait for anything else”).

Maria also observes song performance by men, which is rare today in Udmurt
villages: *“Викторен Прокофей агайѳс весь одйг веранзэс вераса кырзало. Прокофей
агай весь “каллен гынэ лѳгиське”. Виктор весь “Учы чырдон араматы кыдѳкын улэ”*
(“Viktor and his uncle Prokofey always sing the same songs. Uncle Prokofey always
sings Just Quietly He Steps. Viktor always sings He Lives Far from the Grove Where
the Nightingale Sings). This fact confirms the former existence of men’s singing
in the Udmurt villages, as has been observed by Irina Pchelovodova and Nikolai
Anisimov (Pchelovodova, Anisimov 2020⁴²).

42 Pchelovodova, I.V., Anisimov, N.V. Southern Udmurt songs. Izhevsk: UdmFits UrO RAN; Tartu:
Estonian literary Museum, 2020, vol. 4, 376 pp. (Udmurt folklore). (Пчеловодова И.В., Анисимов
Н.В. Песни южных удмуртов. Ижевск: УдмФИЦ УрО РАН; Тарту: Эстонский литературный
музей, 2020. Вып. 4. 376 с.: ил. (Удмуртский фольклор)).

Maria's texts offer interesting descriptions of dreams, with their consequences for our heroine. She pays close attention to each dream and omen. In her dreams, the images and events are in general harbingers of future life events. She also notes the time and the circumstances of her dreams.

The text permanently comments on life changes, transformation of values for the younger generation, as her former hard life, which was at the same time more joyful, etc.:

“Улон-вылон котькызы берга. Кызбы ке тулыс лымыез огкадь уг шунты, сыче ик”

(“Life turns, spins all the time. As in spring snow melts unevenly, thus”);

“Ваньзэ валаса ум вуттйське ни кадь. Музьем сярись сюлмаськись өвөл ни кадь”

(“We don't manage to understand everything, it seems. There is nobody who would feel concerned for the earth, it seems”);

“Улон-вылон саян оломар но луэ. Колхозмы быриз, скалжёсыз ваньзэ келяллям. Табере клубез но быдтозы-а мара ини? Вуриькон инты карыны туртто. Көня ке адыми пе ужаны кыле на”

(“Anything could happen in everyday life. Our kolkhoz is no more, all the cows have been sent [to be slaughtered]. Will they now close the culture house? There is talk about opening a sewing factory. There are only a few people left to work”);

“Улон та вакыт шимес аляк. Чукналы быдэ радиовысь кылоно: уйлы-нуналлы быдэ трос тылпуос, машинаосын, мотикжёсын адымиосыз лёгало, лушкаськисьёс туж трос луизы, квартираоссы өсьсэс сөрылыса пе пырало, озы ик урамжестй ветлйсьёсыз талало.

Кыче ке «Планетянинжёс» сярись но верасько. Выльысь ваньзэ вашкала дырзя марлы ке оско вал, соосыз верало: инмар, туно, пелляськись, ведйнь. Соос ваньмыз ик вань лэся. Адымиос но гуртын туж алякесь, уродэсь, сьёсь кадесь луэмын”

(“Life has become strangely restless. Every day, on the radio you hear: there are many fires, people crash a lot in cars, on bikes, there are lots of thieves, they enter apartments by breaking down doors, they may even rob those who pass by in the street.

There is talk about aliens. There is talk about those, whom people believed in old times: Inmar⁴³, healers, sorcerers, witches. They all exist, it seems. And people in the village are very agitated, they are angry, like wild animals”);

“Улон воштйське но воштйське, инмарлы оскыны кучкизы, ымусьтонлы выходной сётйллям”

43 The supreme God living in the heavens.

(“Life changes and changes, people started believe in God, for Christmas we got a day off);

“Улон-вылон олокызьы но берга. Инмар өвөл, Инмарлы осконо өвөл шуыса 1930 аръёсы черкъёсыз сөрүлйзы, кудзэ клуб, кудзэ ю тырон склад карылйзы. Табере сөрүлэм черкъёсты тупатъяло, Инмар вань, Инмарлы осконо”

(“Life spins all the time. In the 1930s, saying ‘there is no God, it is forbidden to believe in God’, they destroyed the churches, in some of them they made culture houses, in others grain warehouses. Now they restore the destroyed churches: ‘God exists, you must believe’”).

Maria also writes down her observations about old age and the process of getting old. She describes the changes that happen to her from year to year:

“Малы меда сюлмы таће нокытчы пырон инты уг шедьты? Котькинлэн таће меда пересъмыкуз? Жьит но чукна но, весь бёрдэме потэ”

(“But why does my heart not find rest? Is it the same with everybody when they get old? In the evening, in the morning, I only want to weep”).

“Мон туэ киуж трос уг ужаськы ни. Синьёсы лябзйзы, синьёсме утисько кожасько. Азьло кадъ мыло-кыдо өвөл ни сюлэм но. Улйсько режимен порма, весь одйг кадъ”

(“This year I will not do much craftwork. My eyes are weaker, I thought I would protect them. And also my heart is not as frisky as it was. I live according to a regime, all the time the same);

“<...> чик кужыме өвөл ни. Сюлэмлэн гынэ лэсьтэмез потэ на” <...>

(“I haven’t any strength left. Only my heart wants to work”);

“Кызьы мар карыны ик паймисько. Киуж ужаны уг быгатйськы, синьёсы лябзйзы. Пыдйыл ужаны но чик мылы уг поты ни, кыче сюлэм шумпотыса ужано вал. Пельпумы но суйы гырпумозям висе, гожъяськыны но уг чида ни, стежоной одеял но секыт потэ, суйы шобыртйськыны уг вормы. Эх кытчы пыриз ужаны быгатон, пинал дыр, ужаса улыны ик каньыл вал”

(I do not understand anymore what to do. I can’t do craftwork any longer, my eyes are too weak. I have no wish to work on my legs, although formerly I worked with such joy! My shoulders and arms ache up to the elbows, they do not stand to write anymore, my quilt blanket seems so heavy, I have no strength left to cover myself. Oh, where has my ability to work gone, my youth, it was easy to live working”);

“Пересъмиськиз лэся, ужамлэн нокыче азинэз өвөл”

(“I have got old, apparently, work does not proceed”).

Maria Pavlovna pays particular attention to folk and secular holidays in her village community: celebration of the New Year (*Виль ар*), dances and masquerades, matchmaking (*курап*), the ritual of gift giving обряд принесения подарков, for the distribution of livestock and birds when her daughter got married, as well as any gifting, for example to any kin (*бекче юон*), weddings (*сюан-ярашон*), housewarming celebrations (*корка туй*), the ritual celebrating a new-born, (*каша*), burials (*кулэм ватон*), commemorations (*кисьтон*), spring commemorations (*тулыс кисьтон*), autumn commemorations (*сйзъыл кисьтон*), Easter (*Бьдзын нунал*), the celebration at the end of fieldwork (*маёвка*), seeing off soldiers (*армие келян*), Christmas (*Ылмусьтон*), Old New Year (*Вуж Виль ар*), birthdays (*вордйськем нунал*), the commemorative ritual of sacrifice to a dead parent (*йыр-пыд сётон*), commemorative sacrifice (*виро сётон*) etc.

Many events in the village, district, republic, country history, and even world history, find a place in her journal, and she expresses her thoughts about them. For instance:

- Optimisation in 2007: *“6 июне медпункт усьтоно кариськизы. Клубез люкизы. Оптимизация каро, пичи расходэн улоно мед луоз шуыса. Кызъы луоз ини?”* (“On June 6th they intended to open a medical station. The culture house has been divided. They make an optimisation, so that we could live spending less. What will happen?”);
- Event for the 80th anniversary of the creation of the district: *“Малмамтэ шорысь 17 ноябре нош ик Киясае куное ветлй. Район кылдэмлы 80 ар. Мыным но сомьнда ик луэ ини. Кыре-буре потано ке, трос гынэ тодмоосыз адзано, тодмотэмзэ тодмано. <...> Тодмо муртгёс туж капчи вазисько”* (“On November 17th again I went visiting in Kiyasovo. Eighty years from the formation of the district. I have as much. If going out meeting people, one meets lots of acquaintances, one gets acquainted with new people. <...> Known people are welcoming”);
- Earthquake in Armenia in 1988: *“Пиосмуртгёссы но бёрдыса верало, нылкышноосыз мар веранэз. Соос бёрдэмъя мон но бёрдыса пукисько”* (“Even men talk weeping, so what can we say about women. I sit and weep with them”);
- Conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan: *“Азербайджанэн Армениен куспазы кёня тэрытэк уло ини. «Долой Советская власть!» шуыса пе кесясько, телевизор возматэ. Асьсэ куспын котьмар мед вырозы вылэм но, озъы гынэ дугдыны уг быгато ни, салдатгёсыз кутто. Куанер пинал пиос нош бырылозы ини”* (“How much Azerbaijan and Armenia fight with each other! ‘Down with the Soviet power!’, they shout, as the TV shows. Whatever they do among themselves, they are no more able to stop, they call for soldiers. Poor young guys, again they shall die!”);

- Indonesian tsunami in 2004: “*Ми медам адзе уни сыче адзонъёсыз. Мед шуд ваёз Выль 2006-тӱ ар*” (“Let us avoid such an [unhappy] fate. Let [the forthcoming] 2006 bring happiness”).

In her diaries, Maria Pavlovna included her essays, articles and poems, written for her beloved granddaughter Alyona, who, as we mentioned above, died tragically in a car crash in 2003, which left a deep wound in her grandmother’s heart.

Stories about different events and those close to Maria were put into poetry, revealing the author’s wish to share these experiences and to emphasise their relevance. Some of these personal stories became songs. Maria Pavlovna acknowledges that she did not compose the tune herself, she took it from folksongs, known songs, or tunes she once heard from somebody. For her, composing poems and songs is a particular form of art, not given to everyone, as her texts show: “*Кылбур но пӧрмоз меда но, кыр(ы)зан но пӧрмоз меда? / Верано кыл(ы)ёсме вераны быгато меда?*” (“Does a poem form? A song? Shall I be able to express my thoughts?”). These poems and songs, relying on biographic events, reveal this woman’s mastery of musical and poetic forms and may be interesting for researchers in Udmurt folklore, among others.

Maria’s experience in versification clearly belongs to naive literature, or folk writing⁴⁴, where the main task of the text is to reflect the ‘truth of life’, as opposed to the ‘truth of art’. Unlike the aspiration towards ‘images’ of the highest literature, she feels closer to folklore prose. Maria Pavlovna’s poems are characterised by deep sincerity and simplicity, which comes from emotional experience. She does not aspire to complicated forms or styles, more precisely she has no such knowledge, she uses everyday language to express her feelings and thoughts. However, albeit with simplicity and a certain naivete, her poems transmit the depth and the complication of human experience. They compel the reader to reflect on the meaning and the emotional content, not losing its directness and sincerity. In general, her versification style contains elements of naivete, folklore and personality, which makes them particularly attractive to the reader.

44 For more details about this phenomenon, see : Neklyudov, S.Yu. *Folklore and post folklore. Structure, typology, semiotics*. Source: <https://www.ruthenia.ru/folklore/bookenter.htm> (visited on October 6th 2023) (Неклюдов С.Ю. *Фольклор и постфольклор: структура, типология, семиотика*. Источник: <https://www.ruthenia.ru/folklore/bookenter.htm> (дата посещения 16.10.2023)); Kikas, K. Collecting folklore as folk writing: the establishment of writing’s social position in Estonian in the 1890s. *Mission accomplished: Perspectives of folklore studies*, SATOR 19, Tartu, The Estonian Literary Museum’s scientific publisher, 2018; pp. 17-40 (Кикас К. Собираение фольклора как народная письменность: становление социальной позиции письма в Эстонии 1890-х гг. *Миссия выполнена: Перспективы изучения фольклора*. SATOR 19. Тарту: Научное издательство ЭЛМ, 2018. С. 17-40); Dmitrieva, L. The phenomenon of naive production in the Udmurt literary process. *Today’s Udmurt culture*. Vol II. Tallinn: University of Tallinn’s publisher 2021, pp. 34-70 (Дмитриева Л. Феномен наивной словесности в удмуртском литературном процессе. *Современная удмуртская культура*. Том II. Таллинн: Издательство Таллиннского университета, 2021. С. 34-70).

Undoubtedly, I have not by far enumerated all the topics, themes and peculiarities of this woman's production. My task was not to cover the whole spectrum, but to extract the most expressive features. This publication is supposed to offer researchers in Udmurt culture and dialectology a rich basic material.

Maria Pavlovna's notes might also be of interest to the wider audience of those interested in cultures and histories of Russia's peoples. Her journals, songs and poems reflect the story of a simple woman who presents a unique model of Udmurt culture. She helps us understand the traditions and customs of this people, as well as the mentality and the thoughts of people living in small villages.

Moreover, Maria Pavlovna's notes can stimulate and motivate others. Her example shows how it is possible to preserve and transmit one's culture and traditions, remaining faithful to one's principles and values, even in a rapidly changing world.

Nikolai Anisimov