

PRACTICAL VIEWPOINT

UDMURT FOLKLORE MATERIAL IN THE FOLKLORE ARCHIVES OF THE ESTONIAN LITERARY MUSEUM AND ITS COLLECTORS: A BRIEF REVIEW

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Abstract: The digitisation and preservation of language and folklore sound collections are highly relevant issues for many archival institutions in the Russian Federation. The folklore archive of the Udmurt Institute of History, Language and Literature in Izhevsk has not been an exception to this. The first folklore and language recordings on analogue magnetic tapes appeared in the early 1960s. In subsequent years, local folklorists and linguists made numerous expeditions to survey all areas of Udmurtia and the neighbouring regions where the Udmurts lived. Estonian researchers also participated in the recording of the Udmurt language and folklore during expeditions both in Estonia and outside. The article covers the joint efforts of Estonian and Udmurt scholars in collecting Udmurt folklore and language materials, which are currently stored at the Estonian Folklore Archives.

Keywords: Estonian Folklore Archives, Udmurt folklore, Uralic peoples, folklore, ethnography, disciplinary history

The Estonian Folklore Archives (EFA) of the Estonian Literary Museum, which celebrated the 90th anniversary in September 2017, has a long tradition of collecting oral folk art. Its collections store folklore materials of various peoples inhabiting not only the Republic of Estonia but also other regions.

The analysis of the catalogues of the Estonian Folklore Archives and available literary sources showed that the EFA collections contain also extensive folklore recordings of the Uralic peoples (Finno-Ugric and Samoyedic), collected from the late 1950s to the present. In the total volume of the EFA sound collections these recordings make up about 10% or 16,914 recordings – 1,224

storage units (Oras & Tamm & Västriik 2009a: 234). Among these collections the recordings of the Mordvins (Erzyas) (2,513 recordings – 328 storage units) and Ingrian Finns (6,158 recordings – 233 storage units) are most fully represented. The Udmurt materials are presented somewhat more modestly – 730 recordings or 44 storage units.

The first recordings of the Udmurt folklore, dating from the years 1957–1959, were made by Irina Travina, a researcher of the People's Music Cabinet of the Moscow Conservatory. These recordings were carried out on the territories of the Yukamensky, Alnashsky, Balezinsky, Seltinsky and Karsovaysky (nowadays Balezinsky) districts of the Udmurt ASSR during expeditions organised by the Folklore Commission of the Composers' Union of the RSFSR. Apparently at that time there was an agreement on the exchange of Finno-Ugric folklore materials between this organisation and the Estonian Academy of Sciences or the Estonian Composers' Union.

In 1964, Sándor Kallós (Sandor Kallosh), a Soviet composer of Hungarian origin, visited Sizner village in the Mari-Turek district of the Mari ASSR. There he recorded an Udmurt rural choir headed by Semyon Romanov. Since these materials were collected by Kallós as a member of the Folklore Commission of the Composers' Union of the USSR, later they were also transferred to the EFA.

A famous Hungarian musicologist, folklorist and ethnographer László Vikár (1966–1968) actively conducted recordings of the Udmurts in the Mari-Turek district of the Mari ASSR as well as in the Baltasinsky and Kukmorsky districts of the Tatar ASSR. As a rule, he worked together with his colleague Gábor Berecki (1928–2012), also a well-known Hungarian linguist and collector of singing folklore. Their recorded materials also ended up in the EFA.

In 1970 and 1973, I. Sviridova, a fellow worker of the People's Music Cabinet of the Moscow Conservatory, on the instructions of the Folklore Commission of the Composers' Union of the USSR, conducted recordings in the Debessky and Sharkansky districts of the Udmurt ASSR. The materials were also transferred to the EFA.

In 1973, joint folklore and ethnographic expedition of the Udmurt State University and the Udmurt Scientific Research Institute of History, Language and Literature (UdNII)¹ conducted recordings among the Udmurts in the Mari-Turek district of the Mari ASSR and in the Baltasinsky district of the Tatar ASSR. The recordings collected by this expedition are also stored at the EFA.

The first joint Estonian-Udmurt expeditions were organised at the very beginning of the 1970s. Initially, these expeditions were mainly of a museum nature. For the first time Kalju Kõnsin, a researcher from the Estonian National Museum, came to Udmurtia in 1970 and then in 1973 (Rüütel 1989: 80). During

the 1970s–1990s Estonian research expeditions visited various regions where local Udmurt groups lived (Udmurtia, Tatarstan, Mari Republic, Bashkortostan, Kirovsky, Permsky oblasts and Krasnoyarsk Krai). Scientists, photographers, artists, cameramen, students of the University of Tartu and the Estonian Academy of Art participated in the work of those expeditions. From the Udmurt side researchers from the National Museum of the Udmurt Republic named after Kuzebay Gerd, scientists and students of the Udmurt State University and the Udmurt Scientific Research Institute were involved in the field studies. Materials of the Estonian-Udmurt expeditions of 1971–1993 are now stored at the Estonian National Museum, and the video data shot by Aado Lintrop in 2002 and 2003 – at the Estonian Folklore Archives (Rüütel 1989: 85).

Folklore and folk music of the Udmurts, as also of other kindred Finno-Ugric peoples, have always been of interest to Estonian researchers (Boiarkin 2006; Karm 2013). But recordings of the Udmurt folklore began in the middle of the 1970s. In 1975, a well-known folklorist and musicologist Ingrid Rüütel and an archive sound engineer Olav Kiis recorded Mikhail Atamanov, a native of the Grakhovsky district of the Udmurt ASSR, who came to study in the postgraduate courses at the University of Tartu.

Aleksei Peterson, who for a long time had been working as the director of the Estonian National Museum, was keenly interested in traditional folk culture of kindred Finno-Ugric peoples as well as of the Udmurts. During the years 1977–1980 he visited several districts of the Udmurt ASSR: the Zavyalovsky, Alnashsky and also the Vyatsko-Polansky and Malmyzhsky districts. In addition to collecting materials for documentary films on the ethnography of the Udmurts, he also conducted folklore recordings.

Margarita Khrushcheva, a musicologist and researcher of musical folklore of the peoples of the Volga region (today professor at the Astrakhan Conservatory), recorded folk songs in the village of Uzey-Tuklya of the Uvinsky district in Udmurtia in 1982. These recordings were transferred to the EFA via the Folklore Commission of the Composers' Union of the USSR, where she had been working from 1980 to 1992. It was on her recommendation in 1985 that Ingrid Rüütel and Jaan Sarv, a musicologist from the Estonian Radio, visited the same Uzey-Tuklya village where they recorded folklore of the Udmurts. In the same year in Yoshkar-Ola, I. Rüütel, together with A. Tammik, recorded performances of a popular student ensemble Chipchirgan and other folklore groups from Udmurtia.

Academician Paul Ariste, an outstanding Estonian scientist, was also interested in the language and folklore of the Udmurts. In 1983 in Tartu, together with his colleagues, well-known Estonian folklorists Otilie Kõiva, Kristi Salve,

and Einar Sinijärv, they recorded Udmurt informants Svetlana Denisova (from the Malopurginsky district) and Valentin Kelmakov (from the Kukmorsky district of the Tatar ASSR).

In 1987, Marina Khodyreva and Tatiana Vladykina, researchers of the Udmurt Scientific-Research Institute, were on an expedition to the Udmurt villages of the Zuyevsky and Uninsky districts of the Kirov Oblast. Copies of the collected recordings were transferred to the EFA, and the originals are kept in the collections of the Udmurt Institute.

In 1990, Urmas Oras, a folklorist, and Janika Oras, an ethnomusicologist and teacher of the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre, recorded in Tartu Tatiana Minniyakhmetova, born in Bashkortostan.

Aado Lintrop, a well-known Estonian ethnographer, repeatedly visited Udmurtia. For the first time in 1970, as a cameraman, he participated in the filming of the Udmurt ethnographic material. Later, during joint Estonian-Udmurt expeditions, he also recorded folklore material. For example, in 1992 he conducted folklore recordings in Izhevsk, in the Yarsky, Alnashsky and Kiyasovsky districts of the Udmurt ASSR. In June 2002, together with the Udmurt researchers Galina Glukhova, Irina Nuriyeva and Lidia Dolganova, he visited the Agryzsky district of Tatarstan and the Krasnogorsky district of the Udmurt Republic. During the same period, Aado Lintrop and Irina Nurieva recorded several Udmurt folklore groups at the festival of Finno-Ugric peoples of the Urals and the Volga region in Izhevsk.

Thus, from 1957 to 2003, through the joint efforts of Estonian and Udmurt scientists, significant amounts of Udmurt folklore and linguistic recordings were collected, which are now stored in the collections of the Estonian Folklore Archives together with the recordings of other Uralic peoples. According to the EFA staff, by 2009 only about 10% of these recordings had been digitized (Oras & Tamm & Västriik 2009b: 418). The small number of sound engineers and the large volume of Estonian folklore recordings that need to be translated into digital format do not physically allow to fully process the sound materials of other Finno-Ugric languages stored in these archives. In that situation, it would be better if Udmurt scientists, together with doctoral students studying at the University of Tartu, and with the help of Estonian colleagues, made efforts to digitize, describe and compile a catalogue of the Udmurt folklore and linguistic materials stored at the Folklore Archives of the Estonian Literary Museum.

NOTES

- ¹ Later the Institute was renamed as the Udmurt Institute of History, Language and Literature of the Ural Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences, and now it has lost its legal independence and joined the newly established Udmurt Federal Research Center of the Ural Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences as a structural unit.

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