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**BILINGUAL ACADEMIC SERIES "EPIC OF THE PEOPLES OF**  
**EUROPE AND ASIA"**

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**Abstract**

One of the famous institutes in Russia is A.M. Gorky Institute of World Literature of the Russian Academy of Sciences (IMLI) was founded in Moscow in 1932, where in 1953 the department of Folk Art of the Peoples of the USSR was established (since 1986 – the department of Folklore). The article recreates the history of the bilingual academic series "The Epic of the Peoples of the USSR" in the department of Folklore IMLI. Currently, this department together with the research institutes of the Republican Academies of Sciences has published 20 epic monuments (in 26 books). Many researchers in England, France, USA, Israel, Mongolia, Turkey, Bulgaria, Hungary widely use the volumes of the Series in their scientific works. In addition to the pre-revolutionary publications, the volumes conclude the most scientifically reliable texts stored in archives, most of which were first included in the world epic context. An important advantage of the Series is that in many of its volumes there are musicological articles, in which samples of scores for epic songs are given (some of them were written in the 19th century). At present, A.M. Gorky Institute of World Literature resumes work on the preparation of the next volume of this Series, which is now called "The Epic of Europe and Asia".

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## 1. Introduction

At present, the scientific paradigm is changing in Russian folklore studies. The methods of constructing the subject of folkloristic research are changing, as well as the approach to the choice of principles and methods of research, in particular – the textology of folklore. A serious help in solving these problems can be the study of the textual experience already accumulated by the national science of folklore on the material of the unique bilingual academic series "The Epic of the peoples of the USSR" (since 1992 – "The Epic of the peoples of Eurasia"), published since 1971 by the Department of folklore of the A.M. Gorky Institute of World Literature of the Russian Academy of Sciences (Aliyeva, 2008).

This is the first representative bilingual edition of oral folk poetry in its finest examples, most accurately representing both the epic of the peoples, and the epic heritage of the country as a whole. This is the enduring significance of the bilingual academic series "The Epic of the peoples of the USSR". It consists of the monuments of different genre versions (heroic, heroic-romantic, lovingly-romantic epic), representing different stages of the history of the epic literature (from the archaic mythological – like Yakut, Khakass, Nart epic of the Caucasian peoples, to the late works like the Ukrainian duma (folk ballad)) and various types of compositional organization of this genre with different intensity of cyclization (from a separate relatively small volume of tales, as the Karelian-Finnish runes, to grandiose epics, like "Manas"). The Series also presents different forms of existence of the epic - transmitted by storytellers from mouth to mouth, existing in the form of "folk books" and even a poem recreated on the basis of works of folklore. Before the publication of the first volume of the Series "Khurlukga and Khemra. Saiat and Khemra (Mirbadalevoj & Kidajsh-Pokrovskoj, 1971). Turkmen romantic epic" (Mirbadalevoj & Kidajsh-Pokrovskoj, 1971) a lot of preparatory work was done.

## 2. Problem Statement

The beginning of decisive changes in the approach to the collection, publication and study of the unique epic heritage existing in the territory of the Soviet Union was the discussion of the problems of the Kyrgyz heroic epic "Manas". In June 1952, the department of Literature and Language of the USSR Academy of Sciences and the Presidium of the Kyrgyz branch of the USSR Academy of Sciences held in Frunze (now Bishkek) scientific conference devoted to this monument. One of the most important decisions was "to establish a single scientific center for the study of folk art in the system of the USSR Academy of Sciences" (Balikoev, 1952, p. 69).

Soon the issue of the "The Epic of the peoples of the USSR" was approved by the Presidium of the USSR Academy of Sciences as crucial; the management of this project was entrusted to the Institute of World Literature (IMLI), where the folklorists from all over the country started the systematic work.

## 3. Research Questions

On 14-18 June 1954 in Moscow all-Union meeting on study of epics of peoples of the USSR, organized by IMLI and the Institute of Oriental studies, USSR Academy of Sciences (OPSNPA, 1958), which identified key research challenges for the near future, in particular, conducting of scientific

conferences dedicated to the epic of the Slavic peoples, Kyrgyz, Uzbek, and Nart epic of the Caucasian peoples.

In 1956 IMLI together with the Academy of Sciences of the Uzbek SSR held in Tashkent a conference on the epic of "Alpamysh" (Babakulov, 1959), and in 1957 in the city of Ordzhonikidze (in cooperation with the North Ossetian research Institute) the institute held the conference devoted to the epic "Narts" (Nart, 1957).

#### **4. Purpose of the Study**

At the end of 1957, a new Program of Work for the IMLI Department of Folk Poetry was adopted, which until then was mainly concerned with the problems of Russian folklore. This sector was now entrusted with the task of researching the folklore of the peoples of the Soviet Union, taking into account the fact that the study of Russian folklore should be concentrated mainly in the IRLI of the USSR Academy of Sciences (Pushkin House).

#### **5. Research Methods**

In 1958, the publication "On the Basic Principles of Collecting and Scientific Publication of the Epic of the Peoples of the USSR" was published as a manuscript. These were the abstracts for a meeting scheduled for November 20, 1958 at IMLI to develop a unified instruction on this issue, prepared under the auspices of the Scientific Council for Folklore of the USSR Academy of Sciences under the leadership of Orbeli (1963). They formulated the most important tasks facing the Soviet epic scholars. The document emphasized that it is necessary to organize folklore archives in all centers, national republics, functioning as a manuscript library, and on the basis of the materials collected in them, to prepare scientific editions of epic monuments.

The academic publication was to be accompanied by an introductory article, comments and notes. The article was supposed to give a brief and accurate description of the historical and ideological and artistic significance of this epic, to reveal the features of its poetics, linguistic structure, etc.

It was emphasized that the commentary to the academic publication (except for the set of variants, which can be more detailed or more brief depending on the real possibilities) should include brief scientific and biographical information about the author of the record, the geographical distribution of the epic work, with names and orienting data about other storytellers who perform it (according to the file Cabinet folklore archives); it is necessary to give explanatory notes to difficult words, ancient or local (dialect), to special names and geographical names, to national customs and social relations mentioned in the epic." Special attention was paid to the problems of translation of the epic.

The theses "On the basic principles of collecting and scientific publication of the epic of the peoples of the USSR" became the basis for another document - guidelines issued after the 1958 meeting (OPSNPA, 1958). They formulated the rules for recording, storing, textological preparation of epic monuments for publication and the scientific apparatus for them.

In all research institutes of the country, work has begun on the implementation of these areas. In 1967, the editorial and publishing council of the USSR Academy of Sciences approved the bilingual

academic series "The Epic of the Peoples of the USSR". The IMLI was responsible for scientific and coordination work, for the republican institutes - the preparation of volumes, and for the main editorial office of the eastern literature of the Nauka publishing house - the implementation of the publication of the Series.

## 6. Findings

At present, the IMLI Department of Folklore, together with the research institutes of the republican Academies of sciences, has published many epic monuments. Here is a list some of them as they were published: "Narty. Ossetian heroic epic" (Khamitsaeva & Bjazirov, 1990); "Dzhangar. Kalmyk heroic epic" (Khamitsaeva & Bjazirov, 1990); "Narty. Heroic epic of Balkars and Karachais" (Ortabaeva et al., 1994).

Thus, 17 of them are unique, original epic monuments of Turkic and Mongolian peoples. Five books of the academic series are dedicated to the Nart epic - the Adyghe, Ossetian (3 books) and the Karachai-Balkarian version of the «Nartiada». For this, quite a lot of work was done: one of the first meetings on the epic of the peoples of the USSR (1964) was dedicated to the Nart epic. In the reports of its participants, a general description of the versions of the Nart epic was given, its place in the history of the epic and its relationship with the monuments of material culture were determined. On the basis of the decisions of this conference, volumes of the Adyghe, Abkhazian, Ossetian, Karachai-Balkarian Nart epic were included in the publication plan of the academic series "The Epic of the Peoples of the USSR". The compilers of these volumes had to conduct a textological study of the material at their disposal (sometimes significant in volume and unequal in quality of fixation) and select a representative text for publication. But the most difficult thing was to determine the principles of the textual preparation of each epic, taking into account its genre features, the degree of study of the monument, the accumulated (or absent) traditional experience.

At present, the folklorists of Abkhazia are preparing a volume of the Abkhaz Nart epic. The Chechen-Ingush version of the Nart-Orstkhoi epic was published outside the academic series - it is devoted to the fundamental research of U.B. Dalgat (Korigov, 2016), in which not only a scientific description of this version is given, but also a number of problems of the theory of the epic are solved with reasoning.

An essential feature of the Nart epic is that its versions that exist among different peoples have common features: a single naming of epic heroes as Narts, common names of the central characters and plots associated with them. At the same time, in every version of the Nart epic there are characters known only to her. Differences are also significant in the poetics of each version of the Nart epic, which in a peculiar way combines common Caucasian features with the traditions of folklore of one or another people.

The academic series presents not only a heroic, but also a romantic epic, including works of heroic-romantic and love-romantic content. It is generally accepted that the heroic and romantic epics represent different stages in the development of the epic, which not only coexisted, but also, according to Zhirmunsky (1936), were in constant creative interaction. The romantic epic, the origin of which the researchers attribute to the beginning of the 16th century, fruitfully developed among the Turkic-speaking peoples until the first half of the 20th century. Its sources are diverse: folk legends, legends, plots of religious books and works of folklore or literary origin.

Many of the romantic legends are common among a number of Turkic-speaking peoples of Central Asia, Kazakhstan, the Volga region. The publication of one of the outstanding examples of the Uzbek

heroic- romance epic contains the volume of the Series “Rustamkhan (Kidajsh-Pokrovskaya & Mirbadaleva, 1972).

The books of the series contain sections: the text of the epic in the original language and its translation, made with the maximum attainable adequacy; a brief study that provides historiography, historical assessment and artistic characteristics of the published monument; comments and dictionary for translation; information about the versions and storytellers from whom the text of the epic was recorded; an article about the peculiarities of the execution of epic works; musical notation, etc.

In the comments to the texts, passport data are given (performer, age, place and time of recording, collector) are given in their entirety as they are recorded in field materials. It gives an interpretation of archaisms, ethnographic, everyday concepts, etc.

An important advantage of the Series is the fact that many of its volumes also contain musicological articles, in which samples of musical notations are also given (some of them were recorded as early as the 19th century).

It should be noted that since 1866, when the Russian Academy of Sciences began to publish the series "Samples of folk literature of the Turkic tribes", the generally recognized founder of which is the outstanding Turkologist Radlov (1886), - the series "The Epic of the Peoples of the USSR" is the first publishing project in the national folklore studies, which presented to the scientific world unique samples of the epic poetry of the peoples of the USSR. In addition to pre-revolutionary publications, her volumes were the most scientifically reliable and artistically perfect texts stored in archives, most of which were first introduced into the world epic context.

The significance and uniqueness of the Series is recognized by both domestic and foreign scientists. So, doctor of historical Sciences N. A. Alekseev speaking about the creation of the famous multi-volume series "Monuments of folklore of the peoples of Siberia and the Far East" notes: "Work on our Series began in the 80s of the XX century under the leadership of academician A. P. Derevyanko (as cited in Kuzmina, 2013). At the initial stage, several scientific conferences were held in Novosibirsk, Gorno-Altaysk and Ulan-Ude, during which the principles of the series publication were determined. At the same time experiments of the serial edition of folklore works, such as "The Epic of the peoples of the USSR "were taken into account. Kuzmina (2013) writes that the series "The Epic of the peoples of the USSR" is focused on the publication of epic monuments on a modern academic basis with the disclosure of the musical nature of the works. Support published of the monument is scientific and very informative reference books, folklore translation, focused on adequate disclosure of imaginative and style system tales become a fundamentally new approach to editorial agencies practice. She further emphasizes that the scientific principles implemented in this Series have become the fundamental basis in the formation of another unique series "Monuments of folklore of the peoples of Siberia and the Far East (Kuzmina, 2009).

## **7. Conclusion**

Doctor of Philology, folklorist Mirbadaleva (1995), who was directly involved in the preparation for the publication of several volumes of the series "The Epic of the peoples of the USSR", rightly emphasizes: the Series is a large-scale program of scientific bilingual edition of the epics, which is an

important research and editorial agencies practical direction in the study of folklore, meaningful, and in a broad international context.

Many researchers of England, France, the USA, Israel, Mongolia, Turkey, Bulgaria, Hungary widely use volumes of a Series in the scientific works. In 2014, in the IMLI series "The Epic of the peoples of Europe and Asia" published in English translation of the Karachay-Balkar academic volume "Narts" (Ortabaeva et al., 1994). The translation was made by English Professor David Hunt (Khadzhieva et al., 2014) a well-known translator, researcher and popularizer of the folklore of the Caucasian peoples. He also made a translation of the Ossetian volume (Khamitsaeva & Bjazirov, 1990), which is being prepared for publication by scientists of SOIGSI. Many of the texts of the Adyghe academic volumes "Narts. Adyghe heroic epic" translated into English and published by the famous Canadian linguist John Colarusso (Aliyeva et al., 1974). Most of the volumes in the Series have been translated into Turkish and published by the Institute for Turk studies at the Aegean University.

IMLI Folklore Department continues its work on the preparation of the next volumes of the Series. In addition, the Department together with Institute of Language and Literature, National Academy of Sciences of the Kyrgyz Republic it is planned to prepare small volumes of epics of the Kyrgyz people "Kodjodjash", "Er-Teshtyuk", "Kokul" and "Karach Doo". These poetic epics, based on the ancient mythological and cosmological beliefs of the Kyrgyz, many scientists are widely attracted not only as a comparative material, but also devote special research to them. So, "Er-Teshtyuk" was translated to French by researchers of Turkish literature and folklore Pertev Naili Boratav and Louis Bazin. "Er-Teshtyuk" and "Kodjodjash" were translated and published in Turkey. Only their poetic translations have been made in Russian.

In November 2013, IMLI hosted the international scientific conference "The Epic of the peoples of Europe and Asia. From the plot index to the text: methodology and practice of systematization of folklore heritage". It was attended by scientists from 15 cities of Russia, as well as from Ukraine, Armenia, Abkhazia, Kyrgyzstan and Lithuania. Summing up the results of the work, all speakers noted its high scientific level and bright opportunities for cooperation in publishing folkloristic works, especially in the series "The Epic of the peoples of Europe and Asia".

The department plans to prepare and publish volumes of historical and heroic songs of the peoples of the Russian Federation and Neighboring countries within the academic bilingual series "The Epic of the peoples of Europe and Asia". Based on modern academic publishing practice, each volume will contain in addition to the text corpus (in the original language and in translation) philological, historical, ethnographic, and ethnomusicological articles, as well as musical notations and multimedia applications. The volumes representing different stages of history of national epic literature will be accepted to consideration.

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