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## On the Literary Sources of M. G. Khudiakov's *Song of Udmurt Heroes*

*Vilu mulle virttä virkkoi,  
Sae saatteli runoja.  
Virttä toista tuulet toivat,  
Meren aaltoset ajoivat.  
Kalevala 1964 I:65–68*

The subject of these short remarks lies on the crossroads of Anna-Leena Siikala's interests: the Finnish epic *Kalevala*, intercoursing of different cultures, role of the individual in tradition and, finally, the culture of the Udmurt people, which, to the best of my knowledge, became familiar and maybe even dear to Anna-Leena during the last decades.

Udmurt legends about ancient heroes and myth-like stories (Christian apocrypha in origin) about gods were collected in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries by various scholars. No great cycle comparable with the Karelo-Finnish epic has been found and therefore no 'Udmurt *Kalevala*' has been written – notwithstanding the attempts undertaken in 1910's and 1920's by Udmurt writers I. Jakovlev and Kedra Mitrej (see ShklyaeV 1986). In Soviet times, when the ruling ideology demanded not only the creation of the national *intelligentsia* and working class but also of national versions of every branch of the arts (opera, ballet, architecture etc.), the absence of a national epic cycle, being in fact rather a general rule than an exception, was regarded as a fatal shortcoming. The lack of a national epic became an acute problem after the revival of international Finno-Ugric cooperation during the 1960's, and the idea of the necessity of having 'our own *Kalevala*' also survived the crush of Soviet power. This longing for an epic was not only felt by the Udmurts – for example, the *Mastorava* which may be called the modern Mordvin epic, was composed in the 1990's (see Mokshin 1996).

It is clear, therefore what a sensation it was to discover the manuscript "From the national epic of the Udmurts. Songs, legends..." written by Russian historian and archaeologist G. M. Khudyakov. The manuscript contains the rough copy of the poem of 2750 lines and the final variant of its three first songs of 418 lines. It was found in 1966 by the historian of Udmurt literature F. K. Ermakov in Khudyakov's papers kept in the Saltykov-Shchedrin State Public Library in St. Petersburg (Ermakov 1966). Khudyakov's poetic interpretations of Udmurt legends and myth-like stories taken mainly from the collections of N. G. Pervukhin, B. G. Gavrilov, B. Munkácsi and various other publications<sup>1</sup> was written in Russian (most probably the author did not speak Udmurt at all). The poem was cast in *Kalevala*-metre and composed in a cycle of ten songs beginning with introduction very similar (though far shorter) to that of *Kalevala*. Therefore – indeed thanks to the above-mentioned intention of looking for something to call 'our own *Kalevala*' – even the first publications of these poems suggested comparisons with *Kalevala* and the idea of *Kalevala*'s inspiring Khudyakov and making him write his poem was expressed (Ermakov 1970:247).

Some extracts from Khudyakov's poem were already published in the first publications of its finder (Ermakov 1970:243–247). In 1986 Udmurt poet and literature historian D. A. Yashin published the poem under the title *Song of Udmurt Heroes* (Yashin 1986; SUH<sub>1</sub>). He made some ideological omissions and left out the last song: these parts seemed to be too anti-Russian and pessimistic to pass through Soviet censorship. The full version of the ninth and the tenth song were first published by S. F. Vasil'ev and V. L. Shibanov in 1997 (Vasil'ev & Shibanov 1997:296–302; SUH<sub>2</sub>).

In his publication, Yashin wrote: “the author [Khudyakov] should know, that in this genre there existed a classic example – the Karelo-Finnish epic *Kalevala*, which influenced the creation of a series of national epics”. However, he gave only two examples to demonstrate his thesis of *Kalevala*’s influence on Khudyakov: the metre of the poem and the introduction to *Kalevala* and Khudyakov’s *Song of Udmurt Heroes* (see below). Yashin also mentioned Henry Longfellow’s *Song of Hiawatha*, but only as an example of a previous case of *Kalevala*’s influence on an epic poem. (Yashin 1986:92.)

This reference does however deserve more attention. In discussing Khudyakov’s poem it should be taken into consideration, that it was written in Russian by a Russian intellectual and was thus a product of Russian culture at a given time. In the first decades of the 20th century these two translations of great epic poems played an important role in Russian literature: L. P. Bel’skij’s classic translation of *Kalevala* (1977) and the translation of Henry Longfellow’s *Song of Hiawatha* made by the great Russian poet Ivan Bunin. The publication and destiny of these two translations form a fascinating parallel. Bel’skij’s translation of *Kalevala* was first published in the end of 1880’s, it received later the Pushkin Award from the Russian Academy, and the revised and corrected version was printed by the popular publishing house of brothers Sabashnikov in 1915. Bunin’s translation of the *Song of Hiawatha* was first published by a local newspaper *Orlovskij vestnik* in 1898. Thereafter it was printed by other publishers, then it too received The Pushkin Award and the final version was also published by the Sabashnikov brothers in 1916. So, in the pre-revolutionary years, both translations had become renowned in Russia and would have been well-known to M. G. Khudyakov, who was a student of the historical department of Kazan university between 1913–1918.

According to Yashin’s conclusions, Khudyakov could not have begun writing his poem earlier than 1917. In his notes to the manuscript of the *Song of Udmurt Heroes* Khudyakov mentioned that the Udmurt epic *Dokjavyl*, which he had used in writing the poem (see endnote 1), had presumably been discovered by K. P. Chajnikov in 1917, and its preliminary version was finished in February 1922 (the date put on the manuscript) (Yashin 1986:86–87). Therefore not only Bel’skij’s translation of *Kalevala*, but also a masterpiece of the Silver Age of Russian poetry, Bunin’s translation of the *Song of Hiawatha*, could have influenced him. It is a hard task to prove this theory: the contents of Khudyakov’s poem, its motifs and personae are taken from Udmurt tradition (and, partly, from the author’s fantasy) and there seems to be no substantial borrowing from *Kalevala* or *Song of Hiawatha* (see, however, below). On the other hand, the form in all three poems is too similar (despite the very low poetical quality of Khudyakov’s creation – especially when compared with Bunin’s version of the *Song of Hiawatha*) to find any distinctive features coming from either *Kalevala* or *Song of Hiawatha*. Nevertheless, I shall attempt to show some of the peculiarities to demonstrate the influence of the *Song of Hiawatha* on Khudyakov – taking into account, that the idea of *Kalevala*’s influence does not meet any objections and is almost undoubted, though not yet seriously proven.

For my analysis I will use the Russian texts of the *Kalevala* (Bel’skij’s translation) and the *Song of Hiawatha* (Bunin’s translation) because Khudyakov could have used only translations, since at least at the time of writing the *Song of Udmurt Heroes* he had no knowledge of either English or Finnish<sup>2</sup>.

First of all let us see the general position of the author of the poem. In the *Kalevala* the author speaks on behalf of his own people and on the language of this people. In the *Song of Hiawatha* and the *Song of Udmurt Heroes* the author retells in his own language (English, Russian) the legends of another people, which he calls by the name (Ojibwa, Udmurts), and uses only some terms (folk-names, names of heroes etc.) in the native tongue. The idea of writing an epic poem for a foreign people could hardly have been inspired by *Kalevala* – all the more so because Khudyakov was acquainted with the potential ‘Udmurt Lönnrot’, Kuzebaj Gerd. Instead, this idea was initially very typical for Russian intellectuals and, secondly, might have been strengthened by the example of Longfellow.

From the author's position follow the sources and origin of the story, which is explained in the introductory song. In *Kalevala* the author says, that he had heard the songs from his parents and had been 'gathering' them since his childhood surrounded by the nature of his homeland. In the *Song of Hiawatha* and the *Song of Udmurt Heroes* the author says, that he had heard the songs (or the whole poem) from a native singer, whom he knows by name (Nawadaha, Ozhmeg):

Bunin's translation	Longfellow
Повторяю эти сказки, Эти старые преданья По напевам сладкозвучным Музыканта Навадаги.	I repeat them as I heard them From the lips of Nawadaha, The musician, the sweet singer.
SUH <sub>1</sub>	My literal translation into English:
Эти песни мы слышали от столетнего Ожмега из Большой Докьи, из рода темно-серого медведя.	These songs we heard from hundred-years-old <i>Ozhmeg</i> from [the village] Big <i>Dokja</i> , from the clan of the dark-grey bear.

This "dark-grey bear" may in fact also be a trace of the *Song of Hiawatha*'s influence: there is actually no clan of the dark-grey bear in Udmurt society and tradition (there are no totemistic clans at all) and, moreover, the bears of European forests are normally dark-brown and the same are those in Udmurtia (hence Russ. *бурый* should be expected). What comes to mind in this case is the grizzly bear native to North America and North-Eastern Siberia, cf. the description of *Mishe-Mokwa* the Great Bear in the *Song of Hiawatha* (my underlinings):

Спал медведь, тяжёлый, грузный, Как утёс обросший мохом, <u>Серым мохом</u> в бурых пятнах.	As he [Great Bear] lay asleep and cumbrous On the summit of the mountains, Like a rock with mosses on it, Spotted <u>brown and grey</u> with mosses.
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Bunin's translation mentions the grey colour as the principal one. In contrast to this are the golden and honey colours of the bear (*otso*) in the *Kalevala*.

In describing the land, where the native singer lived and where the songs were born, the author says in the *Song of Hiawatha*:

<u>“Средь долины Тавазэнта,</u> В тишине лугов зеленых, <u>У излучистых потоков,</u> Жил когда-то Навадага. [...] <u>Те веселые потоки</u> Были видны на долине	<u>In the vale of Tawasentha,</u> In the green and silent valley, By the pleasant <u>water-courses,</u> Dwelt the singer Nawadaha.[...] "And the pleasant <u>water-courses,</u> You could trace them through the valley,
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По разливам их – весной,	By the rushing in the Spring-time,
По ольхам серебристым – летом,	By the alders in the Summer,
По туману – в день осенний,	By the white fog in the Autumn,
По руслу – зимой холодной.	By the black line in the Winter;
Возле них жил Навадага,	And beside them dwelt the singer,
<u>Средь долины Тавазэнта,</u>	<u>In the vale of Tawasentha,</u>
В тишине лугов зеленых.	In the green and silent valley.

This may be compared to the first lines in the *Song of Udmurt Heroes* (SUH<sub>1</sub>):

<u>В том краю, где реки быстры,</u>	In that land, <u>where the rivers are quick,</u>
<u>где река Чепца синее,</u>	where <u>the river Cheptsa</u> is blue,
где в лесах живут медведи,	where there in forests live bears,
где отважно смелы люди,	where people are boldly brave,
там возникли эти песни,—	there had appeared these songs,—
эти древние легенды,	these ancient legends,
эти славные сказанья.	these glorious stories.

It is interesting, that there is no mention of any river or stream at all in the introductory *runo* ('poem') of the *Kalevala*.

In the introductory song of the *Song of Udmurt Heroes* (SUH<sub>1</sub>) we find the enumeration of the peoples living in the Udmurt lands:

В том краю живут удмурты,	In this land live the Udmurts,
Племена Ватка, Калмезов	the tribes of <i>Vatka</i> , <i>Kalmez</i>
и народ Шудзя могучий.	and the mighty people <i>Shudzia</i> .
Рядом с ними поселились	Close to them settled down
чужеземные бигеры,	the foreign <i>Bigers</i> ,
многочисленные поры.	the numerous <i>Pors</i> <sup>3</sup> .

This list has no parallels in *Kalevala*, but closely resembles the catalogue of tribes in the *Song of Hiawatha*:

Вдоль потоков, по равнинам	Down the rivers, o'er the prairies,
Шли вожди от всех народов,	Came the warriors of the nations,
Шли Чоктосы и Команчи,	Came the Delawares and Mohawks,
Шли Шошоны и Омоги,	Came the Choctaws and Camanches,
Шли Гуроны и Мэндэны,	Came the Shoshonies and Blackfeet,
Делавэры и Могоки,	Came the Pawnees and Omahas,
Черноногие и Поны,	Came the Mandans and Dacotahs,
Оджибвеи и Дакоты [...]	Came the Hurons and Ojibways [...]

The resemblance becomes more evident, when what follows is compared. In the *Song of Udmurt heroes* (SUH<sub>1</sub>) it is told about the legends of the heroic deeds of ancestors of the above enumerated nations:

эти славные примеры	these glorious examples
входят в душу молодёжи,	come into the soles of young people,
зажигают в ней отвагу,	light there valour,
<u>светлый пламень жажды славы.</u>	<u>the bright flame of thirst of glory.</u>

The *Song of Hiawatha* describes the attitudes of the warriors of different tribes:

В их очах – смертельный вызов,	In their faces stem defiance,
В их сердцах – вражда глухая,	In their hearts the feuds of ages,
<u>Вековая жажда мщенья,</u>	The hereditary hatred,
роковой завет от предков.	<u>The ancestral thirst for vengeance.</u>

Notwithstanding the differences in what is described, the poetical means used by Khudyakov seem to be a direct citation from Bunin's translation of the *Song of Hiawatha*.

What follows in the *Song of Hiawatha* is Gitche Manito, the Great Spirit, who speaks to the warriors:

Гитчи Манито всесильный,	<i>Gitche Manito</i> , the mighty,
Сотворивший все народы,	The creator of the nations,
Поглядел на них с участием,	Looked upon them with compassion,
С отчей жалостью, с любовью,–	With paternal love and pity;
Поглядел на гнев их лютый,	Looked upon their wrath and wrangling
Как на злобу малолетних,	But as quarrels among children,
Как на ссору в детских играх [...]	But as feuds and fights of children! [...]
И величественный голос,	Spake to them with voice majestic
Голос, шуму вод подобный,	As the sound of far-off waters,
Шуму дальних водопадов,	Falling into deep abysses,
Прозвучал ко всем народам,	Warning, chiding, spake in this wise :
Говоря: “О, дети, дети! [...]”	“O my children! my poor children! [...]”

Similarly in the *Song of Udmurt Heroes* (SUH<sub>1</sub>), the Udmurt god Kyldysin speaks to the Udmurts, who prayed to him, asking him to come back to the Earth:

Кылдысин, отец-податель,	<i>Kyldysin</i> , father the giver,
к людям сжалился, как к детям,	felt compassion for the people like for children
и спросил их: “Что вам надо?”	and asked them: “What do you want?”

There are many examples of this kind. However, I am sure, that all of them may also be brought to question. There is no verified way of proving such a vague hypothesis as an example of the influence of not only one but two formally similar poems on a particular author, who did not borrow a single theme or image from either of them.

To conclude, I'd like to compare the final part of the *Song of Udmurt Heroes* (SUH<sub>2</sub>) and of the *Song of Hiawatha*. Both of them deal with the coming of a new nation: the Russians (the tribe *Dziuch*, Udm. *žuč* 'Russian') in the *Song of Udmurt Heroes* (SUH<sub>2</sub>) and the white men in the *Song of Hiawatha*. The result of these events is more or less similar in both poems. The future is reflected in the prophetic dream of Hiawatha:

Он открыл мне в том виденье	I beheld, too, in that vision
И грядущее,— все тайны	All the secrets of the future,
Дней, от нас ещё далёких.	Of the distant days that shall be.
Видел я густые рати	I beheld the westward marches
Неизвестных нам народов,	Of the unknown, crowded nations.
Надвигавшихся на запад,	All the land was full of people,
Переполнивших все страны.	Restless, struggling, toiling, striving,
Разны были их наречья,	Speaking many tongues, yet feeling
Но одно в них билось сердце,	But one heart-beat in their bosoms.
И кипела неустанно	In the woodlands rang their axes,
Их весёлая работа:	Smoked their towns in all the valleys,
Топоры в лесах звенели,	Over all the lakes and rivers
Города в лугах дымились,	Rushed their great canoes of thunder.
На реках и на озёрах	Then a darker, drearier vision
Плыли с молнией и громом	Passed before me, vague and cloud-like;
Окрылённые пироги.	I beheld our nation scattered,
И потом уже иное	All forgetful of my counsels,
Предо мной прошло виденье —	Weakened, warring with each other:
Смутно, словно за туманом:	Saw the remnants of our people
Видел я, что гибнут наши	Sweeping westward, wild and woeful,
Племена в борьбе кровавой,	Like the cloud-rack of a tempest,
Восставая друг на друга,	Like the withered leaves of Autumn!
Позабыв мои советы;	
Видел с грустью их остатки,	
Отступавшие на запад,	
Убегавшие в смятенье,	
Как рассеянные тучи,	
Как сухие листья в бурю!	

Hiawatha's dream can be compared to the 9<sup>th</sup> song of the *Song of Udmurt Heroes* (SUH<sub>2</sub>):

Но теперь беда другая:	But now there is another trouble:
На Ватка пошли набеги,	on the <i>Vatka</i> there begun attacks,
наступают племя дзючи.	the tribe <i>Dziuch</i> is advancing.
Племя дзючи беспощадно,	The tribe <i>Dziuch</i> is ruthless,
их сердца жестоки страшно,	their hearts are horribly cruel,
их вожди неумолимы.	their chiefs are merciless.
Как весной вода большая	Like the great water in spring
заливает все долины,	overflow all the valleys,
как река, прорвав плотину,	like a river, breaking through a dam,
устремляется потоком –	flows in a stream –
так идут к востоку дзючи,	so the <i>Dziuchs</i> march eastwards,
наступают на удмуртов.	offencing the Udmurts.
Не удержат их герои,	The heroes can't hold them,
силачи не остановят:	the strong men can't stop them,
всё идут, идут без краю,	they still go without an end,
без конца идут к востоку.	endlessly they go eastwards.
На плотах плывут удмурты,	The Udmurts go by rafts,
Дзючи едут в лодках косных,	the <i>Dziuchs</i> sail in hard boats,
ездим мы на волокушах,	we travel by travois,
Дзючи ездят на колёсах [...]	the <i>Dziuchs</i> go on wheels [...]

The pessimistic prophecy in the 10<sup>th</sup> song ends with the words:

Так погибнет постепенно	So will step by step perish
Человечья вся порода.	all mankind.

There is a great difference between the *Song of Hiawatha* and the *Song of Udmurt Heroes* (SUH<sub>2</sub>). In the *Song of Hiawatha* the white newcomers are described according to the *Kulturträger* position and to the American idea of the 'divine nation' as bringers of progress met by Hiawatha and his people as honorable guests and good friends, yet the future destiny of the Indians is not immediately connected with the white conquest. In the *Song of Udmurt Heroes* (SUH<sub>2</sub>), the opposite occurs: the coming of the Russians is considered a catastrophe and the beginning of the death of not only the Udmurts, but of all mankind. Strangely enough, this may be seen as one of the most evident traces of Longfellow's influence on Khudyakov: the latter took the theme of the coming of the white man, but, as a typical Russian 'democratic intellectual' with a flagellant attitude to his own nation and culture, turned the moral of the story upside down. Here Khudyakov follows the historical concepts of his teacher, Mikhail Pokrovskij, according to whom the Russian conquest gave nothing good to the peoples joined to Tzarist Russia. Since there are no Udmurt legends on the coming of the Russians other than Khudyakov's version (at least nothing substantial or developed beyond a mention), there is serious ground to suppose, that here we have the only motif of the *Song of Udmurt Heroes*, which may be considered as borrowing from the *Song of Hiawatha* – although it is changed somewhat in line with the author's ideological position.

## NOTES

1. M. G. Khudyakov mentioned also, that he used some fragments from the otherwise unknown Udmurt epic *Dokjavyl* presumably collected by K. P. Chajnikov (= renowned Udmurt poet Kuzebaj Gerd): the stories about ancient giants *zèrpal*, about heavens having long ago been closer to the earth, about the origin of Udmurt psalteries *krež* and about magic horses lived in the Vala river (Ermakov 1970:243). However, almost all the motifs of these stories are known also from other, published sources. There has not been made any detailed analysis of the motifs of Khudyakov's poem, and nobody has ever demonstrated at least one theme to have appeared exclusively there.

2. In his papers kept in the staff department of the Saltykov-Shchedrin Library, where he worked in 1925–1931 he marked only German and French as foreign languages he could read and speak (Archive of the staff department of the Saltykov-Shchedrin Library, file 4297, 31.01.1925), the same two languages were mentioned in 1931, when he came to work to the Academy of History of Material Culture in St. Petersburg (Archive of the Academy of History of Material Culture, fund 2, record 2, sheet 716), and these very languages he asked the Finnish archaeologist A. M. Tallgren to use in correspondence. I'd like to thank my friend, Dr. Sergej Kuz'minykh from the Institute of Archaeology of Russian Academy of Sciences (Moscow) for providing me with this information.

3. Udm. *biger* 'Tatar', *por* 'Cheremis' other ethnonyms are names of subdivisions of the Udmurt people.

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Archive of the Staff Department of the Saltykov-Shchedrin Library, St Petersburg

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Song of Hiawatha: see Longfellow 1967

Song of Udmurt heroes (SUH<sub>1</sub>): see Khudyakov 1986

Song of Udmurt heroes (SUH<sub>2</sub>): see Khudyakov 1997

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