

The Theonym Khizyr-Ilyas in Local Traditions of the Tatars and Its Parallels in the Turkic Languages¹

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Abstract

The article examines local variations of the theonym Khyzyr-Ilyas in Tatar traditions, stable combinations with this name and also highlights parallels in other Turkic languages. In the corpus of material extracted from the field records of the author collected in the folklore and dialectological expeditions the dialect and ethno-cultural features of this theonym prevail. The purpose of this study is the reconstruction of the diversion nest with the vertex word Khyzyr-Ilyas in the texts of the Tatar conspiracies and spells. Motivational reconstruction of linguistic fact is depicted in a cultural context. In the article the patron spirit Khyzyr-Ilyas is ambivalent but if you violate the rules of communication with him it can punish a person. The author distinguishes two motivational lines: on the one hand, the theonym Khyzyr-Ilyas lives in the language as a precedent name, on the other hand, in the texts of culture theonym is described most closely to the local variants of the culture of the Tatars within their own ethnocultural space. It was also proved that depending on the motivation of a given theonym with its internal form this name becomes an appeal.

Keywords: Local Variants of the Tatar Culture; Turkic Parallels; Semantic-Motivational Reconstruction; Theonym, Khyzyr-Ilyas.

1. Introduction

In recent years many studies have emerged in the national onomasticism that are addressed to the semantic-motivational reconstruction of the theonym, which present the principles of its analysis (Berezovich, 2014; Feoktistova, 2016). These studies do not only reveal the connotative features of theonym but also carry out its

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semantic-motivational reconstruction, build a model for describing onomastic semantics. As Toporov (1980) emphasizes “personal names are the only source by which one can judge the entire mythological system and, in particular, individual myths or their motives” (Ivanov et al., 2018), therefore the reconstruction of a separate theonym using method of semantic-motivational analysis is the most relevant. The method of semantic-motivational analysis will allow, firstly, on a concrete example to show the internal connection and semantic parallels of the theonym in different local variants, secondly, to determine the semantic parallels of the mythological systems of related Turkic traditions; thirdly, to identify the motives - features of the language image of the carrier of the name. In the Tatar culture for the semantic-motivational analysis, we chose the theonym Khyzyr Ilyas, which is leading in the area of prevalence, activity in the Tatar local culture variants and in the Turkic context in the materials of conspiracies and spells. Many researchers have pointed out the role of distributional frequencies in determining the relative accessibility or ease of processing associated with a particular lexical item or sentence. These approaches are known by a number of names constraint based, competition, expectation driven or probabilistic models but all have in common the assumption that language processing is closely tied to a user’s experience, and that distributional frequencies of words and structures play an important (though not exclusive) role in comprehension (Varlamova et al., 2018; Tambunan, (2019).

2. Methods

The main empirical base of the article was the field records of the author, collected in folklore and dialectological expeditions in the Republic of Tatarstan and in the territory of the Russian Federation where Tatars live as well as materials from the Treasury of Scientific Expeditions series published at the Institute of Language, Literature and Art. Ibragimova AS RT (MNM, 2008). Folklore-ethnographic texts of conspiracies and spells were chosen as material for the study which help to discover the motivations of linguistic units and serve as arguments that fall within the competence of ethnolinguistics in a broad sense. As well as in conspiracies and spells there is an inextricable link between the word and the action which determines the functional orientation of the text content.

In the common Turkic context, the first experience of studying the mythological and ritual tradition on the materials of theonymy is traced in Ahmed Ibn-Fad-lan's work “Journey to the Volga”. Then theonyms are found in the historical works of Abu Hamid al-Garnati (X – XI centuries), “Codex Kumanikus” (XIV century), “History of Kazan” (XVI century). In the work of the XVIII century. Miller "Description of the pagan peoples living in Kazan Province" for the first time presented the terms of a mythological nature and Russian translations of theonyms (God - Tere Gudai, Devil - Shaitan, Mountain - Ata, Bugor - Im-ata h.b.). At the end of the XIX century. Katanov conducts the lexicography of the proper names of the

Turkic folklore, which were later reflected in the work “The Alphabetical Index of the Proper Names Found in the First Volume of Folk Art Samples of Turkic Tribes Collected by Radlov” (Seleznev et al., 2009). In his Index, an ethnolinguistic analysis of the theonyms is given, as well as the functioning of the characters in folklore, and lists traditional epithets containing an additional part of the semantics of a personal name. This work is an important research in the field of the ethnocultural space of the Turkic peoples and does not lose its significance even now. Noteworthy is the work of the Tatar enlightener K. Nasyri in which theonyms are collected, systematized and studied in comparative terms with other Turkic peoples.

At the beginning of XX century the works of Sh. Mardjani and R. Fakhretdin were turned to the theonyms of the Tatars. At the end of XX century, the authors (Kh. Yarmi, F. I. Urmancheev, M. Kh. Bakirov, Kh. Sh. Makhmutov, G. Giylmanov, L. Sh. Zamaletdinov, A. Kh. Sadekova, F. Z. Yakhin) touch upon the fundamentally important questions of theonymy which can be an aid to their further study in the onomatological aspect. Recent trends in modern linguistics associated with interdisciplinary research have contributed to the activation of the study of mythological vocabulary in folk-ethnographic texts. In Turkic studies in this respect the work of Kh.A. Babayeva “The image of Hızır Nabi (Ilyas) in Azerbaijani folklore (in the context of Turkic folklore)”, which highlights the functional features of the image of Kızır-Ilyas in the Turkic dastans “Manas”, “Dede Korkyt”, “Alpamysh”. The author emphasizes that the study of this cult provides an opportunity for a deeper knowledge of the theonyms not only in the context of folklore, but also in the context of Sufism. Kazakh folklorist Serikbol Kondybay highlights the similarity of the name Kydyr with the name Kodar, representing a minor character in the gallery of images and names of Kazakh folklore. As the author notes, the main function of Kydyr Ata is the connection of this image with the “drinker of the poetic gift”, and the image of the Kazakh character Kodar is also closely connected with water. Therefore, the author writes about the proto Turkic origin of the Khidr / Khizr image (Gordlevski, 1962). It should be noted that the name of Teonym Kydyr-Ata recorded in local variants of culture correlates with the Kazakh names of Sufi saints (such as Beket-Ata). Tatar folklorist A.Kh. Sadekova connects the image of Hızır-Ilyas with the water element. Tatar folklorists believe that, unlike Uzbeks and Kazakhs, the image of Khyzyr-Ilyas is not associated with the pre-Islamic era, and in folklore texts there is often a connection with the symbols of the Koran, with the element of water (Khisamutdinova, 2010). Etymology of theonim Khyzyr R.G. Akhmetyanov associates with the meaning in the Sumerian language “green, forever green” (Yudin, 1997). In the cult practice of the Siberian Tatars, the image of Hızır-Ilyas is the most important link between the popular Islam of Siberia and the mystical, Sufi trend in Islam. These ideas are the essence of the Sufi trend, which played such an outstanding role in the spread of Islam in the Siberian region. The cult of Kysyr-Ilyas and Kysyr-Nabi in Western Siberia is the so-called “Bukharians”, i.e., immigrants from Central Asia and Kazakhstan.

In the “Mythological Dictionary of the Bashkir Language” the theonym Khyzyr-Ilyas is presented as “the name of a prophet wandering on the earth in the form of a wanderer in white or poor and coming to help at the right moment; the spirit of the road” (Khisamutdinova, 2010). Thus despite the rather extensive literature and the presence of individual studies in Turkic studies all aspects of the study of the cult of Khyzyr Ilyas are not presented in comparison with other local variants of the Tatars and with other Turkic languages. Therefore, this study is designed to fill this gap. When creating textbooks, test papers, tests and other methodological tools, the authors are interested in the fullest understanding of the material presented. Most of the information is contained in the text, and the way this text is perceived by readers, largely determines the quality of educational material (Solovyev et al., 2018).

3. Results and Discussion

In the Tatar traditional culture, the cult of Hyzyr-Ilyas is an invisible, mysterious traveler helping those in difficulty. At the heart of the Khyzyr-Ilyas cult are deep folk pre-Islamic ideas about the spirit-patrons of nature and cultural objects. In the popular conception, the patron spirit spirit Khyzyr Ilyas is ambivalent, but if he violates the rules for communicating with him he can also punish. In the Tatar culture Khyzyr-Ilyas is called the spirit of the road (Zhul Iyase). Coming out of the house wishing a happy journey they read the prayer addressed to Hızır-Ilyas: “Let Hyzyr Ilyas be a traveler, oh God help me to go the way without unhappiness. When you go out on the road - let there be a way for you; riches more, let you be a traveler Khyzyr Elias. Wherever you are, wherever you live, let Kızır-Ilyas be your traveler”. In the Bashkir culture, in folklore texts he stands out as a traveler pointing the way: “Thank you, may Khyzyr-Ilyas be a traveler in your way”. Some folk texts indicate the need to pronounce the name Khyzyr-Ilyas in order to warn yourself of the dangers.

In the folklore and ethnographic texts Khyzyr-Ilyas appears as a helper from disease or disasters. The semantic block which includes language units points to subject symbols that visualize the cult of Hyzyr Ilyas. In the folk texts only the details of the descriptions and linguistic units gathered together from the numerous versions of the texts are able to form an idea of the character’s appearance. The most important subject symbols that visualize his portrait or movement are his clothes and whip. In the folk-ethnographic texts Khyzyr-Ilyas is presented as an old man. The object that serves as an instrument or object of certain actions is endowed with symbolic meaning of the action performed by it (or with its help), metaphorically correlated with other performers, objects and circumstances (Vinogradova, 1993). The Corpus is a valuable instrument for discourse studies as its data and flexible search system provide a solid foundation for comparative research of modern Russian texts and enables deep insights into patterns and dependencies of different text features (Solnyshkina et al., 2018). Owing to the existing lack of available corpora Russian

discourse studies at the moment are viewed as underdeveloped (Seleznev et al., 2009).

The message of the Qoran that Hızır Ilyas urged his compatriots not to worship Baal goes back to the biblical story but according to the Qoranic scheme it is emphasized that people did not heed his sermons. The Muslim tradition develops plots of the biblical tradition, in which the emphasis is placed on the fact that Khyzyr-Ilyas was made immortal by Allah (MNM, 2008). Ilyas and Khadir are considered patrons traveling on land and at sea. According to Muslim tradition the main quality of Khyzyr is immortality, so it is often identified with Ilyas Khizir / Khidr in Muslim mythology, the character who absorbed the features of different mythological characters of the pre-Islamic Middle East.

The Qoran is not mentioned but commentators almost unanimously identify him with the "slave of Allah" - the protagonist of the Qoranic story about the journey of Musa. The Qoranic legend goes back to ancient epic cycles about the search for "living water" and about the testing of faith. The cult of Xyzyr became widespread both in the Muslim book tradition and in folk beliefs. Muslims consider Xyzyr the patron saint of those traveling by sea. In Central Asia, X. (Hazrati Khizir) was presented in the guise of a pious old man endowed with abundance and happiness of those who personally saw him (MNM, 2008).

In the common Turkic context in the local traditions of the Tatars there is the antropomorphism of Kızır, which is also associated with the pre-Islamic mythical image. A trait that unites all the features of a character and is almost universal for everyone is the ability to help people in need of help.

In Turkey a holiday closely associated with the cult of Hyzyr-Ilyas is called Hydrelles and is celebrated at the beginning of spring the vernal equinox when everything is in bloom (Dogus, 2015). In Turkic culture a whole day is spent in prayer with a wish for well-being, health and wealth. Its quality is reflected in the Turkish saying: "arrive in time as Hızır", i.e. come to the rescue at the right time. In the Azerbaijani culture on the holiday of Khydrrelles, flour or dairy products are left at the door which are called "Khizir pieces". In the Turkic world beliefs about Hizir are the most common phenomenon. In folk literature and in the Sufi direction it appears in a mythological way, symbolizing immortality which helps people who give well-being in everything.

4. Summary

The cult of Khyzyr-Ilyas is widespread in the plots and spells of the Tatar people. The peculiarity of the genre of conspiracies and spells is the influence on the world around us the challenge of a desirable phenomenon, the appeal to religious images. Therefore, the spell formulas are based on images of Aisha-Fatima, Iskander, the prophet Suleiman, and Hızır-Ilyas. In the local traditions of the Tatars, the name

Khyzyr-Ilyas is presented in several versions. However, all these parallels have a different onomasiological status and different pragmatic functions. These properties and features do not destroy the integrity of the image, but rather in a certain relationship help to reconstruct this image in the folk tradition. In the Turkic peoples there is also a variation in the names Khyzyr-Ilyas: *Azerb.* Hızır-Nəbi, Kızır-Ilyas, Kızır-Zəndi, Kızır-əllərəz. In local versions the words “ata” and “babay” are added to the name of Khyzyr-Ilyas.

The locative characterization of mythological characters is the most important identifying attribute that motivates their names-names. Fixing a habitat for a mythological character can fully realize its magical power. The time of appearance of a mythological character is typical of all demonological creatures. In folk traditions, the fact that Hızır-Ilyas travels on Friday stands out. Therefore, on Friday pray for Hızır-Ilyas.

In the Tatar language depending on the motivation of this theonym with its inner form and role there is a tendency to sacralization and mythologizing this theonym turns into an appeal. So in the Tatar language the saying Khozyr Ilyaslyk in the meaning of "good deeds" is noted.

5. Conclusions

Thus, in Turkic context the theonym Khyzyr-Ilyas occupies a special place. In the folklore traditions of the Tatars the theonym Khyzyr-Ilyas is composed of a combination of Muslim elements which are reflected in a variety of its genres - in fairy tales, proverbs and sayings, conspiracies and spells. In the popular representation of the Tatars the theonym Khyzyr-Ilyas is predominantly a cultural hero associated with the spirit of the road.

Each Turkic culture embodies its own color and describes in the cultural texts the closest types to its local variations within its own ethnocultural space, therefore, in the Turkic context in this image various types are reconstructed. However, transformations have not lost their original mythology, sacredness, archaism of this image which in local variants of culture is perceived as the spirit of the road. Beliefs about Hızır-Ilyas in local traditions fulfill the function of uniting and equating between living and inanimate objects.

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