A festschrift for

Vasilii Vasilievich Illarionov
The Graduate Institute of Applied Linguistics (GIAL) is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) to award Baccalaureate and Masters degrees. Contact the Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097 or call 404-679-4500 for questions about the accreditation of the Graduate Institute of Applied Linguistics.

Please send editorial correspondence to the editor:
Pat_Feinberg@gial.edu
Graduate Institute of Applied Linguistics
7500 W. Camp Wisdom Road
Dallas, TX  75236
U.S.A

Editorial Board
Dr. Doug Tiffin, President
Dr. Michael Boutin, Chair, Applied Linguistics Department
Dr. Steve Walter, Chair, Applied Anthropology Department
Note to the reader: This issue of GIALens celebrates the 70th anniversary of Vasilii Illarionov’s birth and highlights his contribution to Sakha folkloristics and in particular the study of the Sakha epic tradition of olonkho. The articles featured in this issue have been written by some of his colleagues and friends in Yakutsk, Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), Russian Federation, and translated and edited by a team at GIAL’s Center for Excellence in World Arts, where the Sakha arts, among other forms of expressive arts, are studied at the graduate and undergraduate levels.

Disclaimer: The views expressed in documents served by this site do not necessarily reflect the views of the Graduate Institute of Applied Linguistics nor any departments contained therein. Views are the sole property of the respective authors.

Festschrift for an Epic Scholar: Vasilii Illarionov……………………………………1
Robin Harris, Director, GIAL’s Center for Excellence in World Arts

The Illarionov Phenomenon……………………………………………………………………3
Svetlana Mukhopleva and Nadezhda Pavlova, Institute for Humanities Research and Indigenous Studies of the North
Translated by Anya Ezhevskaya, MATI, translator and interpreter, NASA International Space Station Program
Edited by Robin Harris, GIAL’s Center for Excellence in World Arts

Musicological Observations of Vasilii Illarionov’s Recordings of the Olonkho “Uol Dugui Bukhatyyr” (“The Warrior Hero Uol Dugui”) ..............7
Anna Larionova, Institute for Humanities Research and Indigenous Studies of the North and Alexandra Tatarinova, Bosikov Higher School of Music of the Sakha Republic (Yakutia)
Translated and edited by Robin Harris, GIAL’s Center for Excellence in World Arts

Darya Tomskaya’s Olonkho “Yuchygey Yudyugyuyen, Kusagan Hodzhugur”: Tradition, Plot Features, Images ……………………23
Anna Daniilova, Aitalina Kuzmina, and Nadezhda Orosina, Institute for Humanities Research and Indigenous Studies of the North
Translated by Anya Ezhevskaya, MATI, translator and interpreter, NASA International Space Station Program
Edited by Robin Harris, GIAL’s Center for Excellence in World Arts

Folklore Interactions in the Unified Cultural Space of Yakutia …………………29
Olga Charina and Anna Larionova, Institute for Humanities Research and Indigenous Studies of the North
Translated by Anya Ezhevskaya MATI, translator and interpreter, NASA International Space Station Program
Edited by Robin Harris, GIAL’s Center for Excellence in World Arts
Festschrift for an Epic Scholar: Vasilii Illarionov

Robin Harris, Director of the Center for Excellence in World Arts at GIAL
email: robin_harris@gial.edu

I first met Professor Vasilii Illarionov in Borogontsi, Yakutia, at a festival of Sakha (Yakut) culture on June 19, 2009. As the senior epic scholar in Yakutia at that time, his name was well known to me, and I remember feeling a bit awed that I had finally met the legendary Vasilii Vasilievich. Since then, I’ve had the privilege of spending time with him in a variety of contexts on both sides of the Atlantic, and have grown to deeply appreciate him as a scholar and a mentor of many fine scholars.

This issue of GIALens celebrates Professor Illarionov’s prodigious output of close to five decades of fieldwork, research, and publications, a body of work that truly qualifies as a longue durée study (Lee 2012) on the olonkho epic tradition and its performers. In addition to his phenomenal body of work, Professor Illarionov has always demonstrated a deep dedication to mentoring and helping younger scholars, a trait that has endeared him to many. When I brought a group of American ethnoarts interns to Siberia, he went to great lengths to engage an olonkhosut to perform for them and answer their questions. That day stands out for them as a highlight of their time in Yakutia.

My own studies of olonkho, which began during my dissertation work (2008–2012) and resulted in a recently completed monograph (2017), greatly benefited from his research. In addition, he helped provide key materials for teaching about olonkho in the Expressive Form Analysis class of the World Arts program here at GIAL. As I look back on the time I’ve known him, however, my favorite memories of Professor Illarionov come from his visit to America, when I served as driver, secretary, interpreter, and co-presenter with him in symposia organized by Eduard Alekseyev at Harvard University and Dartmouth College.

And so, dear Vasilii Vasilievich, it is with great pleasure that I join your colleagues, the article authors of this issue, in celebrating your achievements of the last five decades. Personally and professionally, it has been a privilege to know you and to learn from you. May you be blessed with joy in all that you’ve accomplished, and with the fruit of warm friendships in both our countries.

1 The moment of our meeting was documented in a video recording by my husband, Bill Harris, who was gathering footage for my dissertation work on olonkho. See https://youtu.be/rQGFJU_zp-A?t=1m2s.
2 See http://guides.library.harvard.edu/c.php?g=310562&p=2072272#s-lg-box-6326507 for a summary of the symposium at Harvard University.
References


The Illarionov Phenomenon

Svetlana Mukhopleva (Candidate of Philological Sciences, senior research scientist) and Nadezhda Pavlova (Candidate of Philological Sciences, junior research scientist), Institute for Humanities Research and Indigenous Studies of the North, Russian Academy of Sciences, Siberian Branch
Translated by Anya Ezhevskaya (MATI), translator & interpreter, NASA International Space Station Program
Edited by Robin Harris (PhD), GIAL’s Center for Excellence in World Arts

1 Introduction

Vasilii Illarionov—well-known Russian folklorist, researcher of Yakut olonkho epic storytelling, PhD in philology, head of the Department of Folklore and National Culture at the Institute of Languages and Culture of the Peoples of Russia’s North-East—celebrates his seventieth birthday in the same year that the second “Decade of Olonkho” launches in the Republic of Yakutia. As an outstanding representative of the Yakut school of olonkho studies, Illarionov followed in the footsteps of his teachers—G. U. Ergis, I. V. Pukhov, and N. V. Emelyanov—promoting the living tradition of olonkho through its period of decline during the 20th century and into the 21st, when a new age of recognition for the olonkho epic dawned and it was named a Masterpiece of Oral and Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

2 Education and Early Years

Illarionov’s passion for the olonkho Yakut heroic epic and the folklore of his native people blossomed into his life’s work, but his interest can be traced back to his years as a university student, where he participated in an olonkho research club. A talented student, he was noticed by his future scientific advisor, the famed Yakut folklorist Nikolai Emelyanov. In 1970, with the blessing of his mentor, Illarionov embarked on his first period of fieldwork, collecting data in the Tattinsky and Khangalassky regions as a member of the folklore expedition organized by the Institute of Language, Literature, and History under the Yakut Branch of the Siberian Department of the USSR Academy of Sciences (hereafter ILLH).

Upon graduation, Illarionov worked for a year as a teacher at the N. G. Chernyshevsky Pedagogical School in Vilyui. But after a year there, he turned his gaze toward Yakut folkloristics and never looked back. In 1975–78 he did his postgraduate studies, earning the Candidate of Philological Sciences degree with a dissertation on “The art of Yakut olonkho singers” in 1981 at the Institute of Literature and Art (Academy of Sciences of the Kazakh SSR), while a researcher at ILLH. He defended his PhD thesis in 1997 in Ulan-Ude, “Storytelling in the system of folklore traditions of the Sakha people,” while working as an assistant professor at the Yakut Literature Department in the School of Yakut Philology and Culture at Yakutsk State University.

3 Research, Publications, and Mentoring

The key theme of Illarionov’s scientific research is the oral tradition of the Yakut olonkhosuts (olonkho singers). Illarionov stands out among his colleagues in the sphere of olonkho studies as one who applies a rigorous, systematic, historically-grounded approach to the subject of his
research. He explores the olonkhosut as a performer, and the epic story itself through an ethnocultural lens grounded in archival documents and his own field studies, inquisitively analyzing the life and work of both master and fledgling olonkhosuts of the past and present as well as studying the rich repertoire of the olonkho genre.

Thorough comprehension and analysis of this vibrant material has enabled Illarionov to become a prolific author and editor. For example, he is active as editor and publisher of the 21-volume serial publication of the *Sakha Booturdara* (Sakha Heroes) epic, of which 16 volumes are now in print. He is also one of the leaders of the Yakut branch’s participation in the academic series, “Monuments of Folklore of the Peoples of Siberia and the Far East,” participating in the preparation of the following monographs in that series: *Kyys Debiliie: Yakut olonkho epic; Yakut ritual poetry; Yakut folk tales*; and, in 1996, *Moguchy Er Sogotokh* (Mighty Single Man), an olonkho created initially by the respected olonkhosut Vasilii Karataev. Illarionov was the one who discovered this previously little-known olonkhosut, recording and publishing his singing in 1975, 1982, and 1986.

Illarionov researched the creative oral artistry of olonkhosuts using—for the first time in Yakut folklore studies—the technique of repeated recordings of their epic repertoire, along with recordings of an epic story told by the same narrator at different times. Many years of intense fieldwork all over Yakutia, and especially his method of working with primary-source olonkho performers such as Darya Tomskaya and Vasily Karataev, honed his unique style of collaborating with the performers of olonkho and resulted in the following books: *The art of Yakut olonkho singers* (1982); *Olonkho singer A. S. Vasiliev: Life and creativity* (2002); *Epic storytelling and olonkho revival* (2006); *The Verkhoyansk epic tradition* (2013); and numerous articles.

In his books, Illarionov addresses the following issues: the personality of a narrator as a tradition bearer, guardian, and creator of the folklore text; an analysis of the relationship between improvisation and tradition in the performance of epic works; a study of the narrator’s relationship to the folklore text; and an analysis of the oral-poetic storytelling tradition. Illarionov demonstrates that family traditions lie at the core of the epic environment, and that the folkloric environment plays an important role in the development of all tradition bearers: olonkhosuts, singers, shamans, and storytellers.

Illarionov’s writing exemplifies the value of studying traditions diachronically, promoting the view that traditions are dynamic, evolving systems. His research and creativity have been marked not by a series of desk jobs but by fieldwork dedicated to the collection, preservation and revival of olonkho storytelling, the *oho.ukhai* circle dance, and the *Yhyakh* traditional holiday.

Teaching and academic advising play a prominent role in Illarionov’s professional life. Under his mentorship and guidance, L. P. Gerasimova, A. N. Danilova, O. N. Dmitrieva, A. A. Kuzmina, V. A. Nogovitsyn, and N. A. Orosina defended their theses for Candidate of Philology degrees with a specialization in folklore studies.

The years of the first “Decade of Olonkho” (2006–2015) served as a fertile ground for the implementation of Illarionov’s theoretical views as an expert in epic poetry. It was a pivotal period of keen observation in which he was able to apply his rich experience to track the genre’s development. As a true professional deeply engaged in Yakut folklore studies, he used the
internet prodigiously during these years, sharing his observations and conclusions about the implementation of new national programs on olonkho through various social media and news outlets, and discussing new possibilities for the blossoming of narrative folk art. These efforts are reflected in a recent collection, *Ysyakh Olonkho: Results* (2015).

Currently serving as head of the Department of Folklore and National Culture at the Institute of Languages and Cultures of the Peoples of the North-East (Russian Federation) at the M. K. Ammosov North-Eastern State University, Illarionov is also the head researcher of the Yakut Folklore Sector at the Institute for Humanities Research and Indigenous Studies of the North, Russian Academy of Sciences, Siberian Branch.

### 4 Festschrift Dedication

The lifelong work in the field of olonkho studies carried out by Vasilii V. Illarionov became a crucial factor in olonkho’s nomination as a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO. In celebration of that wonderful legacy, we, his colleagues, friends, and students, congratulate him on the anniversary of his birthday and wish him good health, happiness, and much success in his creative and academic work. May his labor of love further the development of olonkho studies within the world epic studies.
Musicological Observations of Vasilii Illarionov’s Recordings of the Olonkho “Uol Dugui Bukhatyyr” (“The warrior hero Uol Dugui”)

Anna Larionova (Doctor of Arts), Head of the Yakut Folklore Division, Institute for Humanities Research and Indigenous Studies of the North (IHRISN), professor at the Bosikov Higher School of Music of the Sakha Republic (Yakutia)
Alexandra Tatarinova, (Candidate of Arts), instructor at the Bosikov Higher School of Music of the Sakha Republic (Yakutia)
Translated and edited by Robin Harris (PhD), GIAL’s Center for Excellence in World Arts

1 Introduction

Vasilii Illarionov is the leading olonkho expert in Yakutia and is also respected as a collector of Yakut folklore. Since beginning his university studies, he recorded numerous genres of Yakut folklore and developed a primary interest in studying olonkho. The audiovisual archives of the Yakut Folklore Department at IHRIS contain 163 items of digitized Yakut folklore material, 41 of which have been contributed by Illarionov since the 1970s. This material includes the following: autobiography—1, algys—3, kepseen—3, ohuokhai—1, fragments from olonkho—14, full olonkho—4, legend—2, toyuk—4, tuoysuu song—1, chabyrgakh—2, song—6. Four full olonkhos, along with fragments of others, are the collection’s predominant materials. Illarionov’s material demonstrates that until recently, Yakut traditional folklore comprised a wealth of archaic forms. Among these, the most significant genre is the heroic epos of olonkho, the Sakha people’s highest form of poetic creative expression.

2 Analysis of Kardashevskiy’s olonkho “Uol Dugui Bukhatyyr”

The IHRIS archive contains seven reel-to-reel tape recordings of the olonkho “Uol Dugui Bukhatyyr” (hereafter “Uol Dugui”) performed by Egor Ilyich Kardashevsky (b. 1894), an unschooled carpenter from the settlement of Chapayev-Oktym in the Ordzhonikidzevsky district of the Khangalassky region. The recording was made on June 24, 1970, by Vyacheslav Okorokov and Vasilii Illarionov, then a third-year student of Yakut State University. This recording is the most outstanding example of an olonkho performance from the Khangalassky region of Yakutia.

Kardashevsky’s olonkho recounts the heroic acts of an envoy from the Upper World, the bogatyry (warrior) Uol Dugui. This hero not only demonstrates his prowess as a great soldier, battling the abaasy (evil spirits) of the Lower World (Liibiginey and Taas Dyurulaanky), but also establishes order on the earth, as seen in plot elements such as: delivering an Upper World bogatyry and his powerful horse from the Shaman of the Lower World (Liibiginey); courtship and marriage to the beautiful Kyys Tuigun; finding a wife for the Tungus friend Ardzhamaan-Dzhardzhanaam; and guidance of the young athlete Uot Syndyys.

“Uol Dugui” is characterized by singing rather than narration. Thus, the total duration, 6 hours, 17 minutes, 25 seconds (6:17:25), includes a verbal narration of only 2:29:25, whereas the

---

3 Digitization of audiovisual material is ongoing, increasing the number of audio recordings.
4 In Sakha the term for “warrior” is transliterated bukhatyyr; in Russian, bogatyry.
singing parts total 4:29:40—that is, twice the length of the spoken component. This olonkho comprises 87 songs. Each character in a Yakut epic has its own motif (melodic theme) that carries the words of the character throughout the olonkho. This song is familiar to listeners, because its variants appear in other olonkho tales. They are cultural patterns, or codes, in the music of the Yakut epics.

“Uol Dugui” is an example of the Central (Lena area) style of singing called “tardan ylyyr” (“drawn-out singing”—a term introduced by Eduard Alekseyev), a type of “highly ornamented singing replete with kylyhakh” (Alekseyev and Nikolaev 1981). Olonkho songs include two main types of Yakut singing: dieretii yrya (drawn-out, smoothly flowing song) and degeren yrya (lively, rhythmic song). Songs of olonkho’s positive characters are sung in the dieretii song style, whereas the degeren song style is used for images of trickster-servants. Characters representing the Lower World are marked by a rude, exaggerated intonation, contrasting with the song styles of other characters.

Olonkho singing styles are strictly assigned to each character of the tale and are based on a traditional binary of good and evil. Songs of positive characters are performed in dieretii song. Alekseyev relates the dieretii song style to the genre of toyuk. The type of dieretii song that marks the positive heroes of the Yakut epic is closely related to well-wishing, praise songs, departure songs, and blessing songs (algys). Algys is often used in the epic tales of the Yakuts. The genre of algys is found six times in “Uol Dugui.” An interesting example of well-wishing is the algys of the parents of Kyys Tuigun Kuo (see Appendix A, Example 1). According to traditional norms of Yakut folklore, this example is performed in the style of dieretii. The algys of Kyys Tuigun’s parents starts with the tone row $d—e$. Then a minor-third interval, $c\ sharp—e$, is introduced and preserved throughout the performance. The last line of the algys ends on $e$. Within the endings of each phrase, however, $c\ sharp$ can also occur as part of the tone row. Sung ornamentation (kylyhakh) is introduced by the singer on the established tone of $c\ sharp$.

Analyzing the notated transcriptions of audio recordings of Kardashevsky’s “Uol Dugui,” researchers discovered that the improvised toyuk genre is used for positive characters—for example, in the songs of Uol Dugui himself, Kyys Tuigun Kuo, Kyys Syybyidaan, and Ardjamaan-
Dardjamaan. Toyuk singing is also found in the singing of the spirit of Aal Luuk Mas. The character of Simekhsin-Emekhsin is demonstrated through the degeren song style.

The modal foundation of the songs of olonkho relates to ancient developmental stages in the formation of modal structures, when clear differentiation of tones and interval correlations were only beginning to appear. Russian ethnomusicologists have described this phenomenon as a raskrivayuschi (“opening out”) mode, generally translated as “unfolding mode” (Grigoryan 1956). Thus, the initial minor-third interval $g-e$ and $g-e-g$ slowly transforms into $e-g$ sharp and $g$ sharp—$e$, due to a slight upward movement of the foundational tone $g$,\(^5\) beginning from the last sound of the twenty-fourth line in the “First Song of the Hero of the Middle World the Warrior Hero Uol Dugui” (Example 2), a song performed in the style of dieretii. The note $g$ sharp rises still further, becoming an $a$ in the thirty-eighth line. Preparation for this upward movement in line 21 is achieved through the emergence of a $b$ flat, resulting in the tritone $b$ flat—$e$.\(^6\)

This tonal combination accentuates the beginning of the new line. The malleability of the tone row is therefore visible through a change in the upper of the two foundational tones. The malleability of the upper tone in Kardashevsky’s singing is a characteristic feature of dieretii songs in his performance practice.

The metrical-rhythmic basis of Kardashevsky’s singing demonstrates the freedom of the dieretii song style and the strict nature of the degeren song style. The metrical-rhythmic structure of the Yakut dieretii song style is based on the syllabic rhythm of the text. A more strictly arranged metrical-rhythmic structure is typical of the degeren song style, sung primarily in a duple meter, with the verbal content in submission to the rhythm. In some degeren songs, however, a change of meter results from the structure of the verbal text.

In the musical folklore of the Yakuts, the dieretii song style starts with an intoned section which plays an important role as an introduction for the song. For instance, beginnings in dieretii songs become specific markers for certain epic characters. Beginnings such as “Je!””, “Je subu!” and “Je ere!” have an important function in marking sections of the olonkho and referring to cultural attributes. The main elements of the introduction “Je-buo!” are concentrated as

---

\(^{5}\) [RH] Often in Sakha modal organization of dieretii songs, two tones serve as “tonic.” These are referred to in Russian ethnomusicology as “foundation tones.”

\(^{6}\) To underscore the upward pull of the higher tone toward the interval of a tritone, this notation of the song employs a $b$ flat rather than an $a$ sharp.
elements for subsequent development, including the elements of the tone row. The structure of this traditional cry is rather stable and is similar to the all songs sung in the dieretti style. Thus, the opening sequence “Je-buo!” is marked by a longer note on the second beat of the upper tone, with rising intonation toward the first beat represented by a subtonic (lower tone). The intervallic relation between these tones is a minor third (m3) in this olonkho. Repetitions (pulsations) of the lower foundational tone often occur during the cadences.

In addition to “Je-buo!” other opening sequences mark various olonkho characters. Female characters singing in dieretti style display such markers. Their entrance is based on an onomatopoeic cry. The song “Cry of the girl-crane” (Example 4) starts with an exclamation, an imitation of crying: “Yyiibyan! Aaiabyn!” Such crying imitations are specific to the female characters of many Yakut epics.

In this olonkho, chants of characters from the Lower World are characterized largely by singing without the normal foundational tones, including continuous tremolos, vibrato, and tones of imprecise pitch height. The song-cry of the warrior-hero Uot Suorun (Example 5) has a tone row e flat—f—g—a flat—b flat. The singer establishes the mode early on and sings it clearly, without intonational ornaments. But beginning in the fourteenth line—“Je kenehegin keneges, hoiutun hoiut”—the clear pitch of almost every note in the tone row is gradually obscured due to the introduction of tremolos, micro-tonal mordents, and glides between notes. In all such cases, the degeren song style is preserved by the pulsing rhythm of the steady duple meter.

The opening sequence, “Echikeeiym!” of the song of Abaahy kyyha Libiginei in the “Uol Dugui” olonkho is sung in the degeren style (Example 6) and begins with the rising notes f sharp—b. Accented tones emphasizing almost every note portray the limping, jumpy gait of this character. The pitch range of the melody is rather wide, encompassing the interval of a major sixth. The metrical-rhythmic aspect of the song is based on a trochaic structure and duple meter.

The most interesting aspect of the musical text is the image of a heroine Uot Kutaalai Udaghancha, who changes from a girl demon from the Lower World into a girl from the Middle World. At first glance, the melodies in the musical images of the Lower World girl and the Middle World girl remain the same: degeren singing styles are used in these opposing guises; the chants are built on trochaic duple meter; and they start with the tremulous movement of a major third (Examples 7, 8). But analysis of the tonal organization of these two songs reveals significant differences which reflect the miraculous transformation of the girl. When depicting Uot Kutaalai Udaghancha as the girl demon (Example 6), the tone row features a structure of P4—M3—m2 (c—f—a—b flat). At the beginning of the third phrase, the pitches modulate to c sharp—f sharp—a sharp—b. It’s difficult to determine which version is the primary modal structure of the chant, because the singer intentionally switches from one mode to another. Depicting Uot Kutaalai Udagancha as a girl from the Middle World (Example 7), the singer uses the tone row d—g—a—b. The interval structure of the tone row is similar to the previous tone row, with a difference only in the last interval (P4—M3—M2). Notably, the mode height remains constant throughout the song. The foundational tone of the song doesn’t change; almost every line ends with g. In this
manner, the two sides of Uot Kutaalai Udagancha are highlighted with different modal structures related to one tone row.

The expressive resources related to timbre are very important in Yakut music. As a key manifestation of this timbre-focused aesthetic, Yakut kylyhakh has characteristic sonic features often connected to a regional style of performance as well as the individual capabilities of a singer. Each Yakut singer has unique ways of performing these “side tones,” which resemble a type of grace note. Kardashevsky’s falsetto side tones function as parallel pitches, emphasizing the lower foundation tone with constant accompaniment. The upper tone is rarely ornamented with kylyhakh. A kylyhakh side tone accompanying the lower foundation tone resembles an overtone sounding at an interval of a perfect octave above the lower pitch.

Kylyhakh, the ornamental “overtone side tones” in Yakut dieretii singing, are a complex aggregation of timbral expressivity that include elements of vibrato, grace notes, mordents, slides, glides, and harmonic tones. Thus, kylyhakh may simultaneously combine a grace note with an “overtone” of an octave higher than the fundamental pitch. Dieretii songs by Kardashevsky contain this type of kylyhakh in nearly every line of singing accompanied by a lower reference tone. Kardashevsky also employs kylyhakh with a narrower intervallic relation to the foundational pitch.

Intra-syllabic vocalizations play a major role in Yakut musical folklore and are a characteristic feature of dieretii style. Sometimes one syllable is vocalized on one note, but more often, two or more notes expand the length of one syllable. These vocalizations have very diverse properties in terms of metrical-rhythmic properties and pitch. Intra-syllabic vocalizations are governed by the syllabic rhythm of a phrase and, at the same time, they increase the duration of a line of verbal text. A peculiarity of Kardashevsky’s singing is the absence of long vocalizations on one syllable, something which is normally typical of the Yakut dieretii song style. His vocalizations average approximately four notes per syllable.

Intra-syllabic vocalizations have a particular structure in the dieretii song style, expressed by melismatic and timbral ornaments in the form of grace notes or kylyhakh that separate one or more repeated tones. This type of short vocalization is foundational in the dieretii song style of olonkho songs. In addition, pitch and rhythmic elements of the melodies may be influenced by the performance style of a singer or as a means for the olonkhosut to demonstrate the distinctive features of a character in the story.

Kardashevsky’s manner of vocalizations varies widely, but short chants with triplets or two eighths on one pitch dominate. He also employs vocalizations with two eighths in falling minor thirds or major third melodic movements as well as two or three eighth notes in various pitch combinations with intervals of a third predominating. This wide variety of vocalizations is characteristic of the Central (Lena area) performance style.

3 Plot structure of “Uol Dugui”

The plot structure of the olonkho “Uol Dugui,” along with other storylines about the protectors of the Middle World, is related to tales about the progenitors of all people on earth (Emelyanov 1980). This plot structure always includes a storyline about the marriage of characters in the epic. In this
olonkho, we see marriages between Uol Dugui and Kyys Tuigun Kuo and between Arjamaan-Darjamaan and Uot Kutaalai Udaghancha. The olonkhosut pays special attention to the marriage of Uol Dugui and Kyys Tuigun Kuo and describes their engagement and wedding. The wedding description resembles a traditional wedding rite. It includes a bride song addressing the parents and algys (blessing) songs of the bride’s parents and Taas Surulaany on behalf of people of Uol Dugui’s native land. The storyline of the olonkho wedding rite also includes the lament of Simekhsin Emeekhsin. After that, the olonkhosut introduces the farewell song of Kyys Tuigun Kuo, in which the bride says goodbye to her parents and the place where she grew up. Such farewell laments were also sung in traditional wedding rites. The song of the bride Kyys Tuigun Kuo is performed in dieretii song style and is based on the tone row $e \text{ flat} – g$ (Example 9). The foundational tone here is an $e \text{ flat}$—almost every line starts and ends with this note. The oppositional note is $g$. The singer lengthens this sound at the end of each phrase, thus intensifying the tension in relation to the foundational note $e \text{ flat}$. The last cadence has a different modal structure: $e \text{ flat} – g – a$. This new note ($a$) falls on the second syllable of the line, as well as at the ends of phrases. This introduction of a new tone on the second syllable defines its function of opposition to the foundational tone of $e \text{ flat}$. Unlike the chants of Uol Dugui, the song of Kyys Tuigun doesn't employ the raskrivayuschi (unfolding) mode; each pitch of the tone row is fixed.

4 Conclusion

Kardashevsky’s performance practice, although representative of the canonized foundations of olonkho, is distinct in its originality, particularly in the way it expresses the Khangalassky tradition of the Central (Lena area) singing style of the Sakha.

References


Appendix A

Example 1: Algys (blessing) of the parents

Пример 1

المثال 1

Appendix A

Example 1: Algys (blessing) of the parents

Пример 1

المثال 1

Appendix A

Example 1: Algys (blessing) of the parents

Пример 1

المثال 1
Example 2: First Song of *Uol Dugui*

00-10_1_1

Первая песня Уол Дугуй

Пример 2

2. Дөө бөө

2. Дөө бөө

2. Дөө бөө

2. Дөө бөө

2. Дөө бөө

2. Дөө бөө

2. Дөө бөө

2. Дөө бөө
Example 3: Fourth song of Uol Dugui

Четвертая песня Уол Дугуй

Пример 3

1. Дээ су – бу(o)!

2. А-бис ай-рыр му-нэ-лээх,

3. То-бус го-лу-руур су-пхэх-тээх,

4. Кун о-бо-то ко-лем!

5. Дээ бул-ла-бин

6. Див –нээх хаан-наах
Example 4: Cry of the girl-crane

Плач девушки-стерха

1. Ний-мий-бян! Ний-мий-бян

2. Аай-аай-бян!

3. Дю эст-тэ айым кулук (сит)

4. Уд-бян эдий-дэ-рим

5. Дю кун булун,

6. Та-нгара булун,
Example 5: Cry of the abaahy (evil spirit) Uola Uot Suorun

Плач Абааны Уола Уот Суорун

Пример 5

00-13_1
Example 6: Third song of the demon-girl

00-11_2 Третья Песня Абааны кыына

Пример 6

11,51

1. Э-чи-кин-йиэм, э-чи-кин-йиэм,

2. И-чи-лик-пин та-њы-лъин-нын

3. Ю-ръу-кә-бин - ко-тъу-кә-бин

4. Ый-деен-(деен) кер э-рэ

5. Дъэ но-йисон,

6. А-ны мин то-5ус хо-нон ба-рам-мын
Example 7: Song of the Lower World girl Uot Kutaalai Udaganacha

Песня девушки нижнего мира
Уот Кутаалай Удабанча

00-14_2

Example 7: Song of the Lower World girl Uot Kutaalai Udaganacha

Песня девушки нижнего мира
Уот Кутаалай Удабанча

00-14_2

Example 7: Song of the Lower World girl Uot Kutaalai Udaganacha

Песня девушки нижнего мира
Уот Кутаалай Удабанча

00-14_2
Example 8: Song of Uot Kutaalai Udaghancha
after her miraculous transformation

Песня Уот Кутаалай Удабанча
после чудесного превращения

Пример 8

13,26

 после чудесного превращения

13,26

 после чудесного превращения

13,26

 после чудесного превращения

13,26

 после чудесного превращения

13,26
Example 9: First song of Kyys Tuigun

Первая песня Кыыс Туйgün

Пример 9

"Дыа, до - бор!"

"А - тас" дизх - пин а - нымъ-рын-дын

Дъэ тусх дизх - пиний до бор?!

Ал - бян аат - таах дю - нун сур - хат - таах

О - тут кун-нуку си - ри - ын о - люо - ду-ын ох-сул - лар

От - тоон мас - таан а - нымыр

Ул - гум - шу у - лан ат - таах

Уол Ду - гуй туй - гун бу - ха - тыыр
Darya Tomskaya’s Olonkho “Yuchyugey Yudyugyuyen, Kusagan Hodzhugur”: Tradition, Plot Features, Images

Anna Danilova (Candidate of Philology), Aitalina Kuzmina (Candidate of Philology), and Nadezhda Orosina (Candidate of Philology), Institute for Humanities Research and Indigenous Studies of the North (IHRISN), Russian Academy of Sciences, Siberian Branch

Translated by Anya Ezhevskaya (MATI), translator & interpreter, NASA International Space Station Program

Edited by Robin Harris (PhD), GIAL’s Center for Excellence in World Arts

1 Introduction

The Yakut heroic epic known as olonkho is a monumental example of oral folklore tradition which reflects, through its vibrant artistic form, the worldviews and moral values of the Sakha people. Olonkho is the most widely practiced epic genre of Yakut folklore, telling the heroic exploits of male and female warriors. On average, it comprises from 9,000 to 20,000 lines of verse, though it can sometimes stretch even to 50,000 lines. In 2005, UNESCO proclaimed olonkho a Masterpiece of Oral and Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) developed a program to preserve, study, and raise awareness of the olonkho epic—the first “Decade of Olonkho” (2006–2015)—and another program to create positive conditions for the spiritual and cultural development of the peoples of Yakutia (2012–2016).

2 Regional performance traditions

Given these current developments and the academic and society-wide focus on the revitalization of olonkho, the study of regional olonkho performance traditions in Yakut folklore research is very relevant today. A thorough study of the development and systematization of local olonkho traditions will help flesh out the regional characteristics of the Yakut epic. Professor and renowned epic poetry specialist Vasilii Illarionov identified three geographical loci as birthplaces of the Sakha epic storytelling tradition: the central, northern and Vilyui regions. The first group includes the following geographically rooted performance traditions, with examples of a few select representative performers from those traditions:

- Tatta (Uluu Keempes, I. N. Vinokurov-Tabahyrov)
- Amga (T. V. Zakharov-Cheebii, U. G. Nokhsorov)
- Megino-Kangalas (N. A. Abramov-Kynat, I. I. Burnashev-Tong Suorun)
- Ust-Aldan (D. M. Govorov, P. A. Okhlopkov-Naara Suokh)
- Churapcha (Iev Novgorodov, I. G. Teploukhov-Timofeev)
- Khangalas (E. Kardashevsky, A. A. Alekseev)
- Nam (N. V. Sivtsev-Murun, P. P. Yadrikhinsky-Bedjeele)
- Gorny (A. P. Kolesov, S. G. Alekseev-Uustarabys)

---

7 Officially known as Sakha, “Yakut” is a widely used term denoting the largest group of indigenous people in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia). It is also used to refer to their language. In this article, the editors retain the original terms used by the Sakha authors.
The second group is related to the northern tradition:

- Verkhoyansk (D. A. Tomskaya-Chayka)
- Srednekolymsk (P. N. Nazarov)
- Allaikha
- Sakkyryr

The third group is the Vilyui area performance tradition, discussed by Illarionov in several volumes related to the art of olonkho storytelling (1982: 27–31, 2006: 45–47).

Illarionov notes that some talented olonkhosuts (olonkho performers), were able to create their own localized performance traditions, and their individualized features were inherited in turn by many younger narrators, thus creating a new localized performance tradition for olonkho. He also believes that a supportive epic environment (sreda) which valued and supported talented olonkhosuts, was critical to the formation of various storytelling traditions. Of these schools, the Vilyui epic tradition (Kuzmina 2014) and Tatta performance tradition (Orosina 2015) have already been studied. The study of regional and local traditions begun by Illarionov is ongoing among researchers in Yakutia.

Folklorists of the Institute for Humanities Research and Indigenous Studies of the North (IHRISN), including Illarionov himself, are now studying one of the most vivid schools of the northern group: the Verkhoyansk epic tradition. Illarionov worked closely with a respected tradition bearer, olonkhosut Darya Tomskaya (who used the pseudonym Chayka), to analyze her epic repertoire. As a result of this work, Illarionov formulated his own method of working with primary-source consultants.

3 The olonkhos of master olonkhosut Darya Tomskaya-Chayka

A talented bard born in 1913, Chayka was recognized at age 27 as the best olonkhosut in the Verkhoyansk style (Tomskaya 2011: 6). Even when the olonkho tradition flagged in popularity, she continued to perform this epic genre. After UNESCO recognized olonkho as a Masterpiece of Oral and Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2005, she was awarded the title iye olonkhosut (master olonkhosut).

Unlike other olonkhosuts, Tomskaya’s olonkho were recorded almost in full by folklorists. Specifically, the archives of the Yakut Centre of Sciences (Russian Academy of Sciences, Siberian Branch) houses three of her olonkho texts: Eliter Bergen buhatyyr (Warrior Eliter Bergen), Old Lady Elgeen Ieyehsit, Old Man Kemyus Mësyulyukeen, Haan Ilbisteen buhatyyr (Warrior Haan Ilbisteen). The Yakut folklore department of IHRISN has audio recordings of the abovementioned olonkho, plus Kuhn Kyuësengse (2 cassettes), Sure-footed Myuldzhyu Bege (4 cassettes), Yuchyugey Yudyugyuyen, Kusagan Hodzhugur (2 cassettes), Kulun Kullustuur (2 cassettes), Kuoha Daasyn (2 cassettes), and Kuocha Daasyn (1 cassette).
4 Textual analysis of Yuchyugey Yudyuguyuen, Kusagan Hodzhugur

Tomskaya’s olonkho *Yuchyugey Yudyuguyuen, Kusagan Hodzhugur* was recorded on audiotape by A. A. Tomskii and V. S. Nikiforova in 1987, and was subsequently transcribed, prepared, and published by V. S. Nikiforova and V. V. Illarionov in 2011.

Although the content of the Yakut heroic epic is limited by the scope of the genre and by traditional themes (epic time and space, the system of images), the plot structure is rich and varied. The main theme of olonkho is the creation of a family. As a result, matchmaking and courting becomes an integral part of the hero’s biography. Another important plotline centers on protecting the tribe of the *aiyy* (good spirits) from the *abaasy* (evil spirits).

Folklorist N. V. Emelyanov places the plots of Yakut heroic epic tales into three thematic groups: olonkho about the Uraanghay-Sakha tribes settling the Middle World; olonkho about the ancestors of the Uraanghay-Sakha people, and olonkho about warriors and defenders of the *aiyy* and Uraanghay-Sakha tribes (Emelyanov 1980, 1983, 1990, 2000). The structure of the olonkho storyline is consistent, comprising the following components:

1) Expository introduction, which describes the world in which the hero lives, the sacred tree, the home of the hero, his wealth; in short, it draws a portrait of the protagonist

2) The protasis or buildup of the plot conflict

3) Storyline development: the heroic quest or journey, overcoming obstacles

4) The climax, when the tension culminates in armed combat, resulting in battle scenes between the hero and the antagonist

5) Denouement: the hero returns home, on the way overcoming intrigues and machinations created by defeated enemies and their relatives

6) Conclusion: the story traditionally ends with the hero’s victory, wedding, Ysyakh festivities, and a peaceful, constructive life on Earth. (Emelyanov 1980: 11)

In terms of its composition, Tomskaya’s olonkho *Yuchyugey Yudyuguyuen, Kusagan Hodzhugur* is quite short. The recitative (narrative) portion is told primarily in the form of a story, and the characters’ speech can also be expressed in prose, although it is more often sung in verse. In contrast to the Vilyui epic tradition, there is no "Kuturuk salayar toyuk" song at the conclusion of the olonkho.

The plot of this olonkho was first analyzed in terms of musical motifs by Nikiforova, who divided the epic into nine melodic blocks (Tomskaya 2011: 6). In terms of folklore, we have divided the text into two parts.

The first part tells the story of the marriage of Yuchygey Yudyuguyuen to a girl who is half crane. The content of this part of the olonkho is adopted from a folk tale called "Yuchyugey

---

8 Uraanghay-Sakha is an ancient name for the Sakha (Yakuts).
Unlike the traditional epic canon, this story does not have an elaborate introduction. As in the folk tale with the same title, here too the older brother, Yuchyugey Yudyugyuyen, goes hunting, and the girl-cranes swoop down to his younger brother Kusagan Hodzhugur and distract him from his chores with games and fun. When the girl-cranes arrive for the third time, the older brother conceals himself as a wood chip (or, in the folk tale, a flea). Then he catches one of the girls, hides her bird skin and feathers, and marries her.9

While her husband is out, the girl-crane outsmarts the younger brother, Kusagan Hodzhugur, and then finds her skin and feathers and flies away to the Upper World. Yuchyugey Yudyugyuyen sets off to look for his runaway bride, and along the way receives help from the wise old man Seerkeen Sesen, who lives on the lower branch of the Aal Luuk Mas world tree. By way of comparison, in the central epic tradition it is Aan Alahchyn Khotun, the spirit of the Earth, who lives in the sacred tree, while in the Vilyui tradition, it is sometimes the latter (Aan Alahchyn Khotun) and sometimes the former (Seerkeen Sesen).

In the Upper World, the hero, Yuchyugey Yudyugyuyen, finds a bird-nurse singing his son to sleep in a yurt. The hero turns into a bumblebee and stings his son, thereby causing the baby to cry. When the mother approaches her baby to soothe it, Yuchyugey Yudyugyuyen burns her feathers and she dies. But the hero revives her and they all return home to live happily ever after.

Here we can distinguish the folk tale elements: the transformation of the crane into the girl and back again; the brother helping the crane girl; the help of the wise elder Seerkeen Sesen; the protective behavior of the bird towards the protagonist’s son. Thus, in the first part of the olonkho plot we can identify the influence of another genre of Yakut folklore: folk tales.

The second part of the olonkho is devoted to the life of the protagonist’s son, Kytygyras Bayaachchay, and tells the story of his growing up, marrying Nuoralzhyn, and returning to his motherland. The story includes traditional motifs found in many olonkhos: getting a name and a horse; obtaining a blessing from the parents; duel with the evil-spirited warrior Sёdyuёke; help from patrons of the Upper World; a heroic courtship; magical advice and the good wishes of a mother in the guise of the mythical bird (eksekyu); combat with Sёdyuёke’s sister; and, finally, the blessing of the bride's parents.

9 The olonkho of the Vilyui region has a marriage motif where the hero weds a werewolf bride, who then turns into a pup (Kuzmina 2014: 65), confirming that the theme of a wedding to a female werewolf exists in olonkho.
Toward the end of the tale, the couple meets unexpected obstacles as they travel: the wife breaks the command not to look back at her parents’ home, and mountains grow out of the ground to thwart their passage. Also, there is a struggle with a female evil spirit competing for the role of wife.

The episode begins with the motif of returning the bride's dowry, characteristic of all epics told by Tomskaya. The old woman cowherder, Simekhsin, calls loudly to the cattle that are following the daughter as she departs on her wedding journey. When the cattle hear the call they turn back, and the wife involuntarily turns back after them, inadvertently breaking the command not to look back, incurring upon herself and her husband the consequences of mountains rising out of the ground and blocking their way. Then Nuoraldzhyn performs the ritual feast of the spirit of rock, asking the spirit not to disturb them, and the mountain suddenly grows stone steps. Such miraculous overcoming of obstacles is often found in folk tales. In olonkho narrations of the central and Vilyui regions, the motif of the sudden appearance of mountains is never found, which means that this motif is an innovation of this Verkhoyansk storyteller, Tomskaya, reflecting the mountainous areas of Yakutia in which she lived.

Folk tale influences are also evident in the ban violation motif. For example, Kytygyras Bayaachchay disobeys his wife and lifts a four-cornered black stone from the ground to play with it, but the stone turns into an evil spirit maiden. The warrior is forced to fight her, and nearly loses, when his shaman-wife comes to his rescue.

Then the olonkhosut tells of the marriage of Kytygyras Bayaachchay’s sister to a warrior from the Upper World. The plot here too revolves around typical olonkho motifs: the warrior’s courtship; the blessing of parents; the warrior’s battle with a rival evil spirit; battle with the evil warrior, who appears to avenge his murdered brother; and receiving help from a brother.

At the end of the olonkho the good warriors decide to put an end to the fighting with the evil warriors and live peacefully, their offspring spreading to the far ends of the earth. The legend ends with Tomskaya’s traditional folk tale formula—"And there’s the smoke rising from their chimneys" (2011: 291)—which "makes the children in the audience believe in the folk tale and links the events described in it with the immediate realities of the present" (2011: 32).

In this olonkho’s storyline the fate of Kusagan Hodzhugur is not developed, and at the end of the tale he becomes a slave to his older brother. In many olonkhos, no hero is left without a wife. In Duyakov’s olonkho Kyys Juuraya buhatyyr (2011), for example, the protagonist Ogo Duksuur finds a wife for his brother and his friend. It’s possible that Kusagan Hodzhugur only serves as a folk-tale hero, which would explain why his character in the epic is not further developed.

Notably, the second part of the story is based on the canonical structure of the olonkho, with its standard motifs of heroic courtship, the struggle with rival evil spirits, intervention of female spirits, help from the shaman woman, and so forth. According to Emelyanov’s classification, Tomskaya’s olonkho is more closely connected to the type that talks about the ancestors of Uraanghay-Sakha; but at the same time, the third part of the tale contains elements about warriors, defenders of the aiyi aimagha (‘good created ones,’ or good beings), and Uraanghay-Sakha tribes.
Only 15 epic personalities play key roles in olonkho plots. The actions of these epic characters are limited by their characteristic roles (Danilova 2014: 22). All personalities in olonkho are divided into two main groups: aiy (deities) and abaasy (evil spirits). Our material demonstrates that members of the aiy group, higher beings that are instruments of good, play the key roles and include inhabitants of the Upper and Middle World. These supernatural spirits live in the Upper World and control the destinies of the inhabitants of the Middle and Lower Worlds. Although in Russian aiy can be translated as bozhestvo (god), it can also refer to people from the “tribe of light” (Uraanghay-Sakha). In all analyzed olonkho, the fate of the aiy people always depends on the will of the deities. The Yuchyugey Yudyugyuyen, Kusagan Hodzhugur olonkho includes only 12 aiy characters and three abaasy characters. The evil spirit group includes mythical monsters which oppose the clans of the good deities. The abaasy live mainly in the Lower World and disturb the peaceful lives of the aiy people. They are endowed with all conceivable vices, including anger, cruelty, lasciviousness, and uncleanness. Abaasy warriors attack people, rob and loot their country, and kidnap women. This olonkho also depicts two types of abaasy women: the shaman and the she-warrior. The evil-spirit shaman named Timir Chokulukuon was called upon by those from her tribe and wreaked havoc on the inhabitants of the Middle World. The other woman, the she-warrior Timir Deliye, was one of the hero’s most formidable enemies.

5 Conclusion
Tomskaya’s olonkho Yuchyugey Yudyugyuyen, Kusagan Hodzhugur is thus a striking example of northern epic tradition, characterized by short length, strong folk tale influence, many characters from the aiy tribe, a lack of an elaborate introduction, and a wedding feast at an ysyakh (festival) in the conclusion.

References
Orosina N. A. 2015. Tatta local Yakut epic tradition olonkho: forms of existence, the basic images and motifs (Thesis for the candidate of philological sciences). Yakutsk.
**Folklore Interactions in the Unified Cultural Space of Yakutia**

Olga Charina (Candidate of Philological Sciences, senior research scientist), Institute for Humanities Research and Indigenous Studies of the North, Russian Academy of Sciences, Siberian Branch

Anna Larionova (Doctor of Arts), Head of the Yakut Folklore Division, Institute for Humanities Research and Indigenous Studies of the North, professor at the Bosikov Higher School of Music of the Sakha Republic (Yakutia)

Translated by Anya Ezhevskaya (MATI), translator & interpreter, NASA International Space Station Program

Edited by Robin Harris (PhD), GIAL’s Center for Excellence in World Arts

1 **Introduction**

The Yakut Folklore Department of the Institute for Humanities Research and Indigenous Studies of the North (IHRISN) has long been the home of Vasilii Illarionov, expert in the field of Yakut folklore. This department investigates the Yakut heroic epic *olonkho* as it is enacted by *olonkhosuts*, master performers of the genre. The department also studies the grassroots creative expressions of the *starozhily* (‘old-timers’), the long-time Russian residents of Yakutia. Illarionov’s colleagues from the Folklore Department have been studying Yakutia’s Russian folklore in two places: on the Lena River, and on the Kolyma and Indigirka Rivers, where the *starozhily* of Yakutia have lived for years in tight-knit communities.

2 **Historical background**

The development of the northern territories of Russia began in the 16th century. The territories of Siberia and the Far East were acquired during a relatively brief period, and Yakutia became part of Russia in 1632. Interactions between the indigenous local population and the first Russian settlers soon began, as settlers moved north along the Lena, Kolyma, Alazeya, and Indigirka rivers and initiated language and cultural contacts with locals. To establish a settlement at the mouths of the Kolyma and Indigirka rivers, the settlers formed unique subethnic communities, today known by the scientific world as the “Pokhodchane” and “Russkoustintsy,” the Russian Arctic old-timers. Prior to the period of 1930–1950 (characterized by the beginning of eradication of illiteracy and the mass influx of Russians from the parent state), contacts between the outsider and native populations took place in relatively isolated conditions, and most typically as close neighborly relationships. In terms of textual and musicological studies, the artistic expressions of the Russians living in Kolyma have been especially well analyzed.
3 Method
Locally resident groups of Russians separated from their home regions always inspire scientific interest. For example, the popular culture, language, and folklore of the Russians in Indigirka are comprehensively represented in the collection *Folklor Russkogo Ustya* (Azebekev & Meshcherskii 1986). *Russian old-timers of Siberia* (Vakhtin, Golovko, and Schweitzer 2004) considers the social and symbolic aspects of the identity of several groups of descendants of Russians in Russia’s Northeast. The expedition materials and lessons learned through collaborative research also shed light on these mutually supportive insights.

This textual and ethnomusicological analysis considers the folklore of the Kolyma old-timers, and shows the reciprocal links with the folklore of Yukagirs, Yakuts, and Evens, and the adoption of the folklore in the time of its popularity: the 19th and early 20th centuries. We used a comparative method of research to study these examples of textual and musical ethnic folklore.

4 Results
Modern folkloristics not only pays close attention to the folklore of specific areas and regions, it also examines diasporic phenomena—when communities become separated from the original home country but are influenced by the language and folklore of the peoples that have become their more recently adopted neighbors. In this light, the interactions of the folklore of Russian old-timers in Yakutia becomes an interesting topic of study. For example, the genre and repertoire of the Russian folk songs sung by the Russian old-timers in the bilingual conditions of the Lena region has been thoroughly studied (Larionova 2007, 266–271).

---

10 [RH] The Lena region is in central Yakutia, south of the Kolyma region being discussed in this article. The map of the Kolyma region is in the public domain, accessed at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kolyma.jpg on June 25, 2017.
The folklore of Russian old-timers is a special part of the Russian folklore heritage. Textual folklore, along with other kinds of intangible culture, contains specific features reflecting the relationship between that vocabulary and the folklore genres representative of another, indigenous, nation.

The Russians began to settle in the north of Yakutia in the 17th century. They came from northern Europe to the mouth of the Indigirka River. The Russians came to Kolyma at about the same time, but through Yakutsk, to collect tribute and do other work in the northern cities and settlements.

In Kolyma, there is an obscure but beautiful song called “Kuksha.” It was recorded in both the 19th and 20th centuries and, more recently, at the beginning of the 21st century. We recorded it in the village of Chersky of the Lower Kolyma District in 2005, performed by 45-year-old Yevdokia Mikhaylovna Paklina (Daurova), who noted at the conclusion of the song that it is a lullaby:

Kuksha ty, kuksha,
Kuksha-ikroedka.
Ne na kogti ne popasti,
Na kamen ne popasti,
Detushek dostasti.

The song has 25 verses. It is sung in a measured, calm manner, and is structured in a typical Russian compositional style. It is a two-part composition, in which “kuksha” initially does not give a girl the things she needs. In the second verse, it answers that it will bring the desired kogti (claws) to the singer. The main character acts as a mother who has to get to her detushki (children), while her husband is absent. Much of the song is understood differently, however—especially when we consider the earlier versions.

Druzhinina provides part of the song “Kuksha,” recorded in the Lower Kolyma District in the middle of the 20th century. The recording demonstrates that the song was associated with the twists and turns of the drama between birds: loons and Siberian jays.11 We also have documentation of the same song made by Bogoraz in the late 19th century from Elena Daurova in the Regional Dictionary of the Kolyma Russian Dialect:

Ai, kuksha, ty kuksha,
Ty day mne kogti,
Na kamen popasti,
Gagaglyu dostasti! (Bogoraz 1901, 224–225)

The song has 14 verses and is without repetitions. Bogoraz explains that “Gagaglya (or gagagyay) refers to the outerwear for women made of reindeer skin” (1901, 37). Due to its roots from the word rebyachyi (children’s), he believed this song was part of a tradition of songs intended for children. “Such songs are sung for nurturing or lulling children to sleep,” he said, adding, “There is clear evidence of their Yukagir origins” (1901, 12).12

11 Druzhinina writes that the Siberian jay (Russian—kuksha) is “a forest bird with a partlet on the head and gray wings” (2007, 40) and she believes that gagaglya refers to the loon (Russian—gagara) (2002, 3).
12 The Even-Russian Dictionary defines Gagagli (from Koryak) as “kukhlyanka—women’s wear, with fur on the inside” (Robbek 2005, 71).
From the example provided by Bogoraz, we see that in the first verse, the singer addresses *kuksha*, and the second verse begins with an address to *petishka* (*ptichka*: bird). Thus, the song contrasts these characters. *Kuksha* refuses to help the singer, but *petishka* helps her. The third verse, in which the singer contrasts herself with the “sour ones who disappeared,” strongly emphasizes the idea that the girl had just escaped a difficult situation, but there is no hint of her husband or children.

Bogoraz also recorded a Russian tale of Yukagir origin. Here is the beginning of the tale: “*Raz yukagiryi zhili: u nikh byla odna dochka. Ona vyshla po sneg. Prishel vikhor i unes ee. Podneslo k kamnyu: ot zemli do neba stoit kamen.*” [There once lived some Yukagirs: they had a daughter. She went out on the snow. A whirlwind came and took her away. It brought her to the stone: the stone reached from the ground to the heavens]. Next comes the dialogue of the girl and the birds, and the second bird brings the desired thing. Then the wind brings two more girls. The first girl prudently escapes. She is saved and sings:

\[
\begin{align*}
    Kakaya udalaya, \\
    Kakaya bedovataya! \\
    Na kamushek popala... \\
    [I am so clever, I am so daring. I fell on the stone...]
\end{align*}
\]

Then she sings about *kuksha* and *petishka*. The tale develops as follows: she enters a house that belongs to a “one-sided man.” All work in the house is done by “frogs, mice, ermines, different worms, mosquitoes, flies, and so on.” The girl “cooks them.” Then the “one-sided man” appears and requires service, but no one serves him. He finds the girl and tells her that now she needs to do all the household chores by herself. She must go with “three herds” along a specific path. She copes with this work, singing a song:

\[
\begin{align*}
    Kakaya udalaya, \\
    Kakaya bedovataya! \\
    Utrom rano soskochila \\
    I vsya ubralasya. \\
    [I am so clever, I am so daring. I got up early in the morning and cleaned the entire house].
\end{align*}
\]

Then we learn about the construction of a *ruyta* (tent), and the waiting for a husband’s arrival. Finally, there is a young man, the girl’s husband Lygynaka. He has to prove his status: it turns out that he *is* the “one-sided man.” In the end, the young couple comes to a camp of Lamuts.\(^\text{13}\)

“Perednya ruyta stoi chyorny chum, pechal’ny takoy - iya otets-mati zhivut, pakochevali. Starukha i starik vyskochili, obrasovalis; tut zhe srazu raspalil kak pepelok. Tol’ko.” [The first ruyta is a black tent. Their mother and father have come and stayed. The old man and woman came out and appeared; then crumbled like ashes. Just.] (Recorded from a peasant Maria Viligina in Sukharnaya). (Bogoraz 1901, 124–126)

We can see that this story told in Russian is therefore of Yukagir origin, as its context relates to the search for a groom and to creating a family.

There is also a Yukagir recording called “Ob odnoy podnyavesheysya skazka” [A tale of one risen], collected by V. I. Iokhelson in 1900. It is a short, terse story about the ups and downs in the life of the heroine, one of three sisters. The youngest saves herself using “caviar” and an “awl” and then finds a home, to which later a young man comes (Iokhelson 2005, 36). The girl does not sing a song, nor is there a nomadic motif or search for relatives. As a result, there is no return to the beginning of the tale. Many things become clear, however, including the use of glue and sharp objects to escape from the mountain, and the elimination of the rival sisters or rival servants (mouse, frog).

Zhukova highlights the main motifs, which serve as an underlying theme: “native land” and “road” are associated with the motif of passing by “footprints of all animals” (Zhukova 2008, 123). She also notes that “The groom not only lives in some unknown, foreign land, but is probably a representative of another nation,” and determines that the servants in the house, such as the “frog girl” and “mouse girl,” are also representatives of another nation (Zhukova 2008, 119–120). But we don’t know how the original tale evolved into the Russian folklore of the Kolyma inhabitants, nor how the tale gave birth to the song.

In Bogoraz’s tale, the girl’s song is sung three times, and its continuing storyline resonates with the plot of the tale itself: the girl’s defeat of her rivals with common objects; the girl withstanding her husband’s tests: the driving of the reindeer, and the building of the yurt. The tale ends with the typical Yukaghir folklore technique: “Starukha i starik…rassypalil kak pepelok” [“The old woman and the old man…crumbled like ashes”]. Judging by the vocabulary of the songs and the emotional nature of the motifs in which the girl triumphs, we see that the song, despite its measured rhythm, was not only a lullaby but was also emotionally charged and lively.

Iokhelson wrote that this and other tales “are told much more beautifully and thoroughly by the Russians of Kolyma and even by the Chukchis” (Iokhelson 2005, 20). Still, the tale becomes multi-layered by the richness of meaning due to its Yukagir origin. We conclude that the Russian song was borrowed from Yukagir folklore and began to be sung separately, just as petishka and kuksha merged into one image. Over time, the song acquired the compositional style characteristic of Russian songs.
The folk music of Russkoye Ustye\(^{14}\) is also rich and diverse in genre composition. Even though the Russian performance tradition was preserved, the folk music is distinctive in its uniqueness and originality, because of the mutual influence and interpenetration of the cultures of the indigenous peoples of Yakutia: the Evenkis, Evens, Yukagirs, and Yakuts.

Mutual enrichment is one of the central trends of cultural development in general and folklore in particular. The productivity generated by an oncoming flow of traditional cultures is demonstrated through the continuous replenishment of the folklore repertoire by the plots, images, separate works and even genres which arose outside the ethnic environment. The exchange of cultural value in more active forms accompanies the development of folklore traditions in areas of direct contact of various ethnoses, ethnic or ethnographic groups. Folklore interrelations are multilayered and are found in different layers of a comprehensive traditional culture. (Leonova 1995, 355)

Despite the relative stability of the inherently Russian foundations of musical culture in Russkoye Ustye, people created new, original genres unique to this area, such as the semi-improvised love songs—*andylshchina*—and the “Omukanovo” and “Rassokha” dance tunes.

The traditional folklore of Siberia’s Russian population has been studied in terms of ethnography, folklore, philology, and music. A fairly wide variety of musicological studies have addressed topics related to the music, genres, and themes of folklore connected to the Russian old-timers of Siberia and the Far East. Despite broad knowledge of the traditional folklore of the Siberian Russians, however, the musical folklore of the Kolyma Russians has not been adequately studied. Individual genres have been most often studied in this local musical tradition. Some examples include heroic ballads, *vinogradya* Christmas greeting songs, and instrumental melodies in the records collected by Bogoraz and Iokhelson in 1900–1902. They were transcribed and analyzed by Yakubovskaya in the article, “Traditional folklore of the Russian population of Anadyr and Kolyma, recorded by V. G. Bogoraz and V. I. Iokhelson” (2008). The article included 25 transcribed samples, recorded in the village of Markovo and in the Mariinsk outpost of the Anadyr region. In Yakubovskaya’s opinion, “the first three tunes—’Mishenka Danilyevich’ (No. 1)\(^{15}\) and two versions of the Russian heroic ballad about Duk Stepanovich: Markovo’s (No. 2) and from the Mariinsky Outpost (No. 3)—belong to the widespread declamation type widely presented in traditions of the Russian North (Siberia) and ranking high in the collection of Kirscha Danilov” (Yakubovskaya 2008, 187). Similarly, Yakubovskaya compares tunes of the Russkoye Ustye to song traditions from the collection of Kirscha Danilov, concluding that Bogoraz and Iokhelson’s tunes are more ancient than those presented in Kirscha Danilov’s collection. Yakubovskaya’s article also features “Kamarinshkaya” instrumental folk tunes.

Vinokurov’s collection, *Song traditions of Kolyma* (2014), included some *andylshchina*, Middle Kolyma and Pokhodchan’s *vinogradya*, “vechorochny” (yesteryear) tunes, folk songs, dance tunes, songs of exiled people, gulag songs, and lyrical songs. The *vinogradya*, Christmas congratulatory songs published by Vinokurova in the form of a cycle, in Yakubovskaya’s opinion,

\(^{14}\) [RH] Russkoye Ustye—the “Russian Estuary” region of northeastern Yakutia includes the Kolyma area and is the focus of the peoples and folklore described in this article.

\(^{15}\) The numbering reflects that of the transcriptions which were included in the original article.
“were performed according to tradition and composed, as verified by V. G. Bogoraz and other collections, a peculiar sort of game suite. V. G. Bogoraz did not leave behind a description of the congratulatory ceremony on Anadyr, assumingly believing it to be identical to that of the Kolyma, which he described in *The Dictionary of the Kolyma Regional Idioms*” (Yakubovskaya 2008, 198).

In addition to heroic ballads, *vinogradya* Christmas greeting songs, instrumental tunes of “Kamarinskaya,” lyrical songs, and other genres of music folklore of Russkoye Ustye, Shentalinskaya made a thorough study of an original, territorially localized love-song genre, *andylshchina*, typical only of northeast Yakutia. In her opinion, “*andylshchina* are sung monologues, sincere outpourings about love or about the fate of oneself or close ones. Typically, men composed and sang them while hunting” (Shentalinskaya 1995, 141). They were created with the influence of the song culture of another ethnic environment. Similar mutual enrichment is confirmed by Leonova, who writes: “Various groups of the Russian old residents of Siberia had strong economic, marital, and other types of relationships with indigenous people, that led to the formation of a distinctive ethnic and cultural personality for the Russian Siberians and their traditions…” (Leonova 1995, 355). Shentalinskaya indicates that “the genre’s foundation as an improvised monologue, an individuated personal song, is typical for situations of creative performance (for example, during a hunter’s solitude, a traveling song, or as a declaration of love) undoubtedly bring together the *andylshchina* with the culture of Siberian aboriginals. One of Kolyma’s inhabitants said: ‘*Andylshchina* in Yakut means “I sing what I think, what I see ahead of me’”’ (Shentalinskaya 1995, 149).

In fact, *andylshchina* songs are similar to the Yakut song culture represented by the *tuoysuu yryata* genre. *Tuoyuu yryata* are love songs of a woman or a man: *djakhtary tuoyuu, er kihini tuoyuu*. There is only one record of *tuoysuu yryata*: the “*Tuoysuu yryata*” (Song of sadness), recorded in Verkhoyansk from Kh. E. Afanasyeva in 1987 (Larionova 2000, 121–133). The song has a humorous beginning as it tells the love story of Nikolay and Nastasya with a slightly erotic tinge, and then shifts to the opposite sentiments, sharing the woes of a woman’s tough life. The text reflects a modern reality with some borrowed Russian words. At the same time, there is also the image of a trickster called Legentey, typical of Yakut folk songs.

The tune itself exhibits archaic features. It seems logical that, having survived the test of time, a melody would remain the same while the text is modernized. The tune is based on duple
meter with continuous repetition of a rhythmic formula of VS VS S. The tune resembles the rhythmic formula of the Yakut ceremonial circular dance, *ohuokhay*, pointing to its multifunctionality as a genre.

The song’s duple rhythm melody is ornamented with grace notes reminiscent of *kylyhakh* (guttural overtones). The possible occurrence of unusual timbre decorations in *andylshchina* songs is confirmed by T. S. Shentalinskaya. Analyzing the ensemble performance of *andylshchina* songs, she wrote, “Particularly noteworthy are the unique guttural decorations on a syllable performed by an older woman in a low voice” (Shentalinskaya 1995, 147).

The structure of the lines of text is heptasyllabic, alternating suddenly with octosyllabic. Change to the basic duple beat is related to the physiological nuances of performance—in particular, with pauses during breath taking. In addition, metric changes can occur because of the performer’s desire to put an octosyllabic verse in the melody without changing its basic framework. Similar structures are present in *andylshchina* songs, in which the “melodic and poetic phrase is focused on the rhythmic outline of a syllabic verse of the ‘8+7’ type with the division of hemistichs (half-lines) into the following syllabic groups: 4+4+4+3” (Shentalinskaya 1995, 144). In Yakut singing, in addition to the *andylshchina*-like structures there are other divisions of the octosyllabic and heptasyllabic structures in the following form:

Heptasyllabic: 2+2+3; 4+1+2
Octosyllabic: 5+3; 2+3+3; 3+2+3; 2+2+4

In *andylshchina* songs, unlike Yakut, the four main accents expressed by certain pitch positions do not coincide with grammatical accents, which lends them a certain originality.

The difference between a Yakut tune and *andylshchina* lies mostly in the melody. While *tuoyssu yryata* is based on a duple rhythm, with a major second (M2) based, pendulum-like melody from the beginning to the end of the song, the melody of an *andylshchina* song develops in a broad ambitus and is close in character to spontaneous singing. According to Leonova, “Spontaneous singing can be subdivided into ‘individual’ (almost all tulatinsky [Altai – A.L.] singers like to sing ‘for themselves,’ quietly singing during times of work, on the road, reflecting their internal mood); ‘sociable’ (that is, singing during feasts); and ‘besednoe’ (conversational). The latter of these arises spontaneously during ‘sittings’… a phenomenon left over from traditional forms of public life; a sitting-around tradition in the evening, when people are gathered together after completing the main chores of daily home life” (Leonova 1995, 98). Based on this classification, the *andylshchina* can clearly be labeled as an “individual” type of singing. Shentalinskaya argues,

The main distinguishing “attribute” of *andylshchina* is its unique tune. The bizarre, zigzag pattern of the melody fills an extremely wide (for day-to-day singing) auditory space (in some samples, up to two octaves). The tertian, quartal movement almost entirely crowd out intervals of a second, while wide interval steps and some turns (lifts and drops, reaching to the interval of an eleventh) makes the song spontaneously unpredictable and, most importantly, dissimilar to Russian songs. The intonational originality, special style of singing (the lack of consistent, accurate fixed pitch of notes and glissandos), which is now

---

16 VS – very short; S – short.
typical of many artists of the older generation, combined with the specific soft speaking that is even more difficult to understand, amazes and continues to amaze the uninitiated ear with its exoticism. (Shentalinskaya 1995, 142)

This slide from pitch to pitch and the lack of precisely fixed tones, is typical of the singing of northern ethnic groups: the Evenkis, Evens, Yukagirs, and Yakuts. Jumps of an interval of an eleventh and an ambitus of two octaves render andylshina tunes closer to the contrastive-register of the α melodies, which, according to Alekseev (1986), indicates an archaic type of singing. In α melodies there is no clear pitch and no modal coordination of tones. It is possible to see in them only the rudiments of the formation of truly melodic singing. Similar α tunes belong to contrastive-register singing, in which there are no clear pitches or modal coordination of tones, and certain pitches are absent altogether. For example, the Yukagirs’ tunes also developed a fairly wide pitch range. “Melodies of Oduls [Middle Kolyma Yukagirs - A.L.] are based on hemitonic scales with an ambitus of a fifth or an octave, with the tonal center in the middle” (Sheikin 1996, 80).

According to Charina, the folklore of Russians in Yakutia does not demonstrate “any significant Yakutization of the images and vocabulary of the Russian texts. However, the vocabulary of the folk rhymes often includes some Yakut or Yakut-like words and phrases” (Charina 2009, 61). In the Russkoye Ustye folklore, foreign ethnic words are not very popular. Related to this is an interesting phenomenon demonstrated by the song “Kuksha,” a genre of lullaby that includes Yukagir words in Bogoraz’s recordings. Vinokurova published a transcription of the song (2014) and E. M. Pashina (b. 1959) performed the song in 2011 during an expedition to the Chersky settlement. Vinokurova writes:

The text of this song was written down for the first time by V. G. Bogoraz (“Songs of ‘Porechane’ Russians on the Kolyma,” 1901), confirming the ancient origin of this work. Unfortunately, we cannot do a comparative analysis of tunes since V. G. Bogoraz wrote down only lyrics about a “little birdie”—a kuksha-ikroyedka….Possibly, the word “petishka,” i.e., a birdie, could be the result of a variant Yukaghir pronunciation [R.H.: ptichka]. Thus, in this example, penetration of another ethnic lexicon into Russian speaks to the considerable rapprochement of the Russian and Yukaghir cultures. In the modern text, we can no longer see the presence of Yukaghir vocabulary. (Vinokurova 2014, 89).

In the version of the song recorded by O. I. Charina in the Chersky settlement from the performance of E. M. Paklina (Daurova) in 2012, there is likewise no borrowed vocabulary or melody. It is sung at the same pitch as the previous version of the tune written in the key of e minor. The melody begins as the previous version, with a lyrical minor sixth (m6), and ends on the e tonic. The rhythm of the song is clear, in a duple meter. The difference between the two versions of the song “Kuksha” is that the first version, starting from the sixth line of text to the words “Ya o chyom tebe kazaya” (What I told you about), is transposed from e minor to f minor. In the second case, there is no such transposition. Also, in the presentation of the second version, the song is not performed from the very beginning: it lacks the first three lines and the beginning of the fourth row. In the later recordings of 2011–2012, the Yukagir influence is evident neither in the vocabulary nor in the tune. They are typical Russian melodies.
The popular Russkoye Ustye dance tune “Omukanovo” seems to be an original, distinctive phenomenon. It has a Yakut song title but has the melody of a typical Russian dance tune. The originality of the melody is strengthened by the absence of instrumental accompaniment, present only in an imitation form through vocables—words without lexical meaning—sung in a dance rhythm. Interpretation of the text is virtually absent; only the obviously dance-like rhythm of the song prevails. The tune is sung with syllables such as hil-la-la-dar hil la-la-da. Using the pharyngeal “h” is very common in the dance culture of the indigenous peoples of Yakutia, for example, in Even—“See D’e”, in Yukagir—“Londol,” and Yakut—“Ohuokhay.”

Another version of the “Omukanovo” dance uses these syllables: “dikh-dokh dir-li-li-dar; tur-la-la-dam tir-li-ti-dam.” All of this is accompanied by the stomping of feet and occasional exclamations of the dancers on the syllables “eh-ikh-ikh-okh.” This rousing tune gradually attracts the involvement of all those present.

Another dance tune, “Rassokha,” includes a meaningful verbal text, although in one version of the song, vocables such as “ti-dya, ti-dya, ti-dya-dam” accompany the melody. The dance reaches its climax slowly, and at the time when all the dancers are involved, the song sounds in two-part harmony. The higher voice sounds one third above the main tune. In another version of the same song notated by Vinokurova in 2011 and performed by I. P. Borisova (b. 1957) from Chersky, the text sounds like “ti-da, ti-da, ti-da, ti-da, ti-da ta” (Vinokurova 2014, 52–53). About this version of the tune, Vinokurova writes:

In the village of Chersky, I. P. Borisova performed for us the Rossokha tune, and also showed the main movements of the dance and told us about the participants. According to I. P. Borisova, the man entered first with a small hop, holding his hands behind him, inviting the woman to dance. The woman met him halfway, walking towards the middle, covering herself from the man with a scarf, moving it from side to side. He “spies upon her,” bending to the left and right. Then the dancers get up to the middle, and, folding their hands together, at the elbows, the dancers move from one side to another. The feet of each dancer are put thus: toes and heels are pressed to each other and the movement is done by turning both heels to the right, then both toes to the right, then to the other side. Then the woman waves a scarf and speaks: “Die!” and the man “pretends to die,” bends back, still holding his folded arms before him. The woman moves around about the dancer, waving a scarf and “driving away mosquitoes.” The audience shouts “Die off!” after that the dancing couple moves with the same gait as in the beginning, circles, then comes to the middle and bows. (Vinokurova 2014, 52–53)
In areas of ethnic contact, like Yakutia, local subethnic groups—like the Russkoye Ustye—form and successfully integrate into the surrounding cultural environment. Russkoye Ustye folk music shows its adaptability by creating new, original genres while at the same time preserving its distinctive ethnic identity.

5 Conclusions

In summary, we note that the Russian folklore of the Kolyma old-timers was significantly influenced by indigenous folklore until the early 20th century. The Russian songs we’ve examined were taken from Yukagir folklore, but they began to be performed independent of their original tales. The songs feature a compositional style typical of Russian songs, and they continue to be sung to this day.

In the example of Russkoye Ustye in Yakutia, we can see how local subethnic groups are formed in areas of ethnic contact, and then successfully integrate into the surrounding culture. Having preserved their traditional musical culture, the Russian settlers took over certain song genres and standards of harmony and scales typical of the songs of the northern ethnic groups living in Yakutia. Until the 18th and 19th centuries, these effects were more significant, but in the 21st century the reciprocal processes have become blurred, although they have not disappeared.

Acknowledgments

This article was written by a collective of authors. O. I. Charina examined the subject of folklore texts and their influence on the folklore of neighboring peoples. A. S. Larionova researched musical particulars connected to the reciprocal nature of Russian folklore performance.

References


Bogoraz, V. G. 1901. Regional dictionary of the Kolyma Russian dialect. St. Petersburg: Collection of ORYAS.


GIALens Volume 11 Number 2
~ Contributors ~

Anna Danilova
danilova.aanchyk@yandex.ru

Aitalina Kuzmina
aitasakha@mail.ru

Nadezhda Orosina
onadya88@mail.ru

Svetlana Mukhopleva
muhopleva@mail.ru

Anna Larionova
degerenan@mail.ru

Alexandra Tatarinova
sasha.sakha@mail.ru

Nadezhda Pavlova
nadya.sanaaya@yandex.ru

Olga Charina
ochar@list.ru

Robin Harris
Robin_Harris@gial.edu

Anya Ezhevskaya
anya.ezhevskaya@gmail.com