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**INTERACTION OF FOLKLORE AND EARLY LITERATURE:  
A STUDY ON THE DESCRIPTION OF THE YAKUT MODEL OF  
THE EARLY XX CENTURY**

**ВЗАИМОДЕЙСТВИЕ ФОЛЬКЛОРА И РАННЕЙ ЛИТЕРАТУРЫ:  
ОПЫТ ОПИСАНИЯ ЯКУТСКОЙ МОДЕЛИ НАЧАЛА XX ВЕКА**

**ESKİ EDEBİYAT İLE FOLKLOR ARASINDAKİ İLİŞKİLER:  
XX ASRIN BAŞI YAKUT MODELİ TANIMININA YÖNELİK BİR DENEME**

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**ABSTRACT**

This article attempts an analysis of the Yakut model of the formation of the literary tradition in the early twentieth century. Despite the reliance on oral tradition, the emerging literature is developing in other way from the very beginning, fundamentally differently from folklore. The subjects of the work include the process of separation of the Yakut newly created written literature from folklore, its separation from the oral tradition and the related early phase of development of literature. In this case, the Yakut material of early literature is intentionally analyzed in typological perspective of transition from oral to written traditions, from folklore to literature.

**Key words:** oral tradition, genesis of literature, newly created written literature, tradition of the early literature, manuscript tradition

**АННОТАЦИЯ**

В качестве объекта анализа в статье рассматривается якутская модель возникновения литературной традиции в начале XX века. При всей опоре на устную традицию возникающая литература с самого начала развивается другим путем, принципиально отличным от фольклора. Процесс размежевания якутской младописьменной литературы с фольклором, ее отрыв от устной традиции и связанный с этим ранний этап становления литературы является предметом обсуждения в работе. При этом якутский раннелитературный материал специально анализируется в типологическом ракурсе перехода от устной традиции к письменной, от фольклора к литературе.

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**Ключевые слова:** устная традиция, генезис литературы, младописьменные литературы, раннелитературная традиция, рукописная традиция.

## ÖZET

Makalede tahlil konusu olarak XX asrın başlarında Yakut edebiyat geleneğinin oluşum modeli tetkik edilmiştir. Sözlü geleneklere dayanmasına rağmen oluşan edebiyat baştan beri sözlü edebiyattan farklı olarak gelişmektedir. Yazıya yeni dökülen Yakut edebiyatının sözlü edebiyat geleneklerinden ayrılması ve böylelikle edebiyatın erken gelişim aşamasına kavuşması araştırmamızın esas konusu olmuştur. Bununla birlikte Yakut erken edebiyatının sözlü edebiyattan yazılı edebiyata geçiş süreci tipolojik açıdan da ayrıca tahlil edilmiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Sözlü gelenek, edebi ürün, yeni yazılı edebiyat, ilk edebiyat geleneği, elyazma geleneği.

One of the typological perspectives of folklore and literature interaction is the problem of influence of the oral tradition on the emerging literature. The typological aspect of this influence gets particular significance, which is connected with the determination of the degree of folklore participation, and more – of the entire oral tradition in the genesis of newly emerging literature. This perspective of interference is especially relevant in those traditions which are conditionally designated as "newly created written". "Newly created written" traditions have not any written tradition at the moment of their development and are based mainly on autochthonous folk tradition. One of the examples of such socio-cultural situation is the beginning of the twentieth century, the period of upraise of one of the national literatures– Yakut literature. The genesis of the Yakut "newly created written" literature just occurs during the first two decades of the XX century.

In general, the immediate "transition" from the oral tradition to written (so-called "early literary" stage) cannot be observed. However, in the "newly created written" literatures, because of their "accelerated" (Gachev, 1988: 23, 31-33, 51) development, many phases of evolution are reduced. It makes possible to retrace the general laws of the transition from folklore to literature more clearly. The feature of newly created written literature is that, even as a result of acquisition of writing, the oral tradition does not lose its relevance and keeps its productivity both in the period of their formation and in the course of their subsequent evolution.

The Yakut literature refers to newly created written literature of the XX century, which has had no prior experience of development of book traditions. The sufficient level of documentation of the Yakut material (not just folk materials, but also early literary) makes it possible to trace the exact transition "from the singer to the poet" and "emphasis of the concept of Poetry" (Veselovsky, 2007: 317-318, 328), from folklore to literature (Historical poetics of folklore, 2010: 17-35), from the oral tradition to the written tradition.

However, the process of separation of the Yakut newly created written literature from folklore, its separation from the oral tradition and the related early phase of development of literature have not been a subject of close examination yet. Thus, one of the tasks of the article is to study of the Yakut early literary (mostly - poetic) material in a broader context of typological transition from the oral to written traditions, from folklore to literature

(Meletinsky, 1986: 3-4). Veselovsky A.N., as the founder of historical poetics, once justified need of study of the transition phase, defined by him as a movement "from the singer to the poet", which created a whole epoch in the history of literature.

*The experience of the formation of the Yakut early literary tradition.*

In this regard, the work of the founder of the Yakut literature –A.E. Kulakovsky - is considered to be documented to the fullest extent. Many of the general phases of the "accelerated" formation of the Yakut literary tradition are reflected in the poetry of A.E. Kulakovsky.

Despite the existence of different prose experiments, the early Yakut literature is presented mainly in poetic forms. The works of A.E. Kulakovsky and works of numerous, often anonymous authors of the manuscript tradition were written in verses. The significance of A.E. Kulakovsky's poetry and other first poetic experiments of the manuscript tradition is determined by the fact that, first, transition from one type of text to another, from folklore to the actual literary text (written - in the broadest sense) emerged in poetry, not in prose. Second, in the Yakut poetry it was considered to be a formation of actual literary Prosody, in which continuity with the oral poetic tradition acquired paramount, although not the only, importance.

*The actuation of the oral tradition in the work of A.E. Kulakovsky.* The poetry of the first Yakut poet is analyzed in this work as an independent poetic phenomenon, the origins of which should be seen, on the one hand, in a totally new perspective of the development of autochthonous oral tradition, and, on the other, in the formation of a new type of authorship in comparison with the folklore, which is unknown to oral tradition. However, the integrity of this poetic system is defined by a new type of poetic expression, which is based on creation of own poetic language and the formation of individual stylistic manners. In particular, the emerging literature is based on autochthonous traditions, based on the existing by that time system of the folk genre. However, the poetry of A.E. Kulakovsky demonstrates various aspects of transformation of folklore genres in individual creativity. The main body of Kulakovsky's texts, which are consciously oriented on folk "fundamental principle", can be roughly differentiated by genre features directly correlated with the parameters of folklore genres. In using the genre designations, such as "algys", "andagar", "chabyrgakh", "yrya" and etc., Kulakovsky uses not the old genre forms, as commonly cited, but through new forms (including unknown to folklore) he recreates the original genres of traditions. The stylistically complicated proliferation of forms should be defined as an essential feature of genre transformations (of literary origin), which ultimately enables these genres be different from folk.

Special analysis of poetic texts of A.E. Kulakovsky makes it possible to conclude that the formation of the early genres of literature and their own literary evolution is governed by the laws of literary development. Its internal logic is defined by the main direction of the process of the formation of the early literature: the beginning of the formation of the actual verbal clues in the organization of a text. In the perspective of the formation of the national literature it meant the evolution of the singing text to reading, and in genre relations it was represented by evolution of song and song-verse to verse, to the poetical form, free of melody.

The results of the analysis lead to the conclusion that, although the early literature attracts almost all the existing genres of tradition, the early literary poetry is characterized

by selectivity, sometimes actualization of "forgotten" layers of verbal culture, the ability to capture genre changes of the tradition itself, or to reproduce genre trends, which is a relic of the earliest folk ideas. Song genres (yrya) of the first poet, small genres and genres of charms and spells of his works are considered to be the most undergo modifications. The basis of all genre changes is that the "speech" factor is put as dominant not only in "talk" genre, but also in the "song" genre, where rhythms and poetic basis becomes determinant, and also specific suppression of the melodic aspect takes place. Thus, the early literature selects the genre forms of the tradition, development of them is on the way, which is different from folklore, and in many ways is a predefined evolution of literature itself (Pokatilova 1999: 94-96).

*Correlation of autochthonous and borrowed aspects in the early literary situation.*

Since Kulakovsky in the Yakut tradition art literature has formed, developing exclusively by the laws of literature. There are three ways of Kulakovsky's attitude to the previous traditions of the texts: 1) as a targeted focus on the whole folk (oral) poetry as an attempt to present it in a "shot form"; 2) as a "rejection" of the early literary experiments of Yakut manuscript tradition; 3) as a focus on the experience of Russian literature.

In this context, the specific formation of manuscripts is of particular importance. They were identified in extensive archival materials (Pokatilova 1999: 70-93). In the Yakut literature, before the first proper literary experiments, a special manuscript tradition has been formed. The texts of the manuscript tradition distinguish fundamentally "written" character, orientation not on autochthonous samples of folklore, but on the samples of Russian written literature, which in this case is an attempt to dissociate with "own" oral tradition. Common aspects to this tradition were trend to gradual suppression of the song (melodic) aspect, forming of poetic speech in it, that is, *hohoon* (poetry) - in the broadest sense of the word. Facts of the manuscript tradition confirm that it has already formed the realization of self-worth of written forms of texts. All this makes it possible to state a transitional character of manuscript tradition between folklore (oral tradition) and the actual literature (poetry of A.E. Kulakovsky).

The importance of interaction of the two cultural factors of the Yakut tradition (the influence of the experience of the Russian classics and national folklore) was noticed by a Yakut researcher – V.T. Petrov (Petrov, 1987). However, A.E. Kulakovsky emphasized other importance of the type and nature of the orientation on the oral tradition as a whole. In this regard, it should be recognized that the deliberate and conscious focus on folklore covered all his work and has been exponential for all stages of its evolution. However, this orientation is properly actualized in the early period of the formation of literary texts. The emerging literature is based on autochthonous traditions, building on the existing system of the folk genre. Moreover, the first poet made wide-ranging attempt to introduce a kind of encyclopedia of genres of oral tradition. The poet put his attention mostly to the archaic genres connected with the ancient charms and spells. The task of the poet was to replenish of what was lost at that moment in the literature. The author's reflection of the folklore includes the moment of archaization and ancient origins of the genre of the text. Thus, the work of A.E. Kulakovsky suggests that in the period of the emergence of the literary tradition there were a tendency of archaization of the genres and of folk style. In this case, the tendency to archaism is presented in the poet's work as attempt to present the oral tradition as a whole, in all the richness and variety of its genre and stylistic forms. It leads

to the diversity and completeness of literary simulations of archaic genres by Kulakovsky ("Ancient Algs", "Oath-andagar of the ancient Yakut").

Traditionally it is believed, that autochthonous folklore plays a core role in the genesis of "newly created written" literature, and it completely determines the nature and progress of the evolution of the "early" and "newly created written" literature. It is this role that defined a specific feature of the newly created written literature genesis. The genesis of the literature in this case cannot be reduced to folklore and is not determined only by the oral tradition, for all its significance for the "newly created written" literature. In the process of the origin of this literature different nature of focus on the folk (oral) tradition can be discussed.

*Typological perspective of interaction of the oral tradition and literature.*

The analysis shows that the genesis of the Yakut literature is determined by correlation of various elements of folklore and non-folklore origin, which define the formation of the literary tradition. In the formation of the literature autochthonous and borrowed beginnings are involved, and both function almost at the same time. Focusing on other examples and assimilation of the borrowed material, as a rule, is followed by intensive development of means of the autochthonous traditions. Countdown of new tradition (early literary in this case) begins only at the point of intersection of previous traditions, their simultaneous effects. When there is no intersection of these two principles, the situation of formation of the literature does not occur.

Typologically there is another feature in the genesis of the "newly created written" literature. Change of systems - the literary to folklore - is not gradual, as would be expected, but instant, as a kind of evolutionary leap. So, in this case, there are two different (perhaps - stage) factors. The first is associated with functional changes in the texts - appearance of literary function. In this case, the starting material can be "own" tradition ("Centenary woman's song") and also borrowed ("Oath of the Demon" - "Abahy's Oath"). The second factor is due to the changes in the functions of traditional elements (Pokatilova, 2010: 67). Systematic and purposeful nature of this change involves a change in the elements themselves and their gradual replacement by others - literary by function and literary by elementary organization (literary simulations of folk genres).

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The regularities of the early literary formation on the Yakut material clearly demonstrate the importance of typological perspective in the study of this process - replacement of one art system (folk) by another (literary). From the very beginning of the literature both systems are presented as two completely independent, having different specificity and mechanisms of functioning. The very process of this change can be conceptualized in a broader context of typological transition from oral tradition to written, which allows to bring into focus synchronous aspects of this "transition" in a research plan.

One of the aspects of the synchronous nature of this process is that the formation of the literature is accompanied by the beginning of developments of the elements of self-reflection of emerging literature both in relation to itself and to the oral tradition as a whole. The moment of self-reflection in the early Yakut literature is seen in the plane interpretation of the traditional verse by the first poet, and in formulaic tradition and genre system of autochthonous folklore.

Methodologically significant conclusion on materials of the Yakut cultural model of the early twentieth century is the conclusion that despite its connections and dependence on oral tradition from the very beginning, the literature is developing in its own way, which is different from folklore. Thus, the starting point of this investigation is to understand literature as an independent field of literature, going back to the fundamental differences of folklore and literature, established by P.G. Bogatyriov and R.O. Jacobson (Bogatyriov, 1971: 369-383). The material at issue reaffirms the fundamental importance of the statements developed by these researchers.

*The problem of authorship in the oral tradition and in the early literature.*

On the basis of works of the first poets of the manuscript tradition and A.E. Kulakovsky's poetry the evolution of author origin is traced in these texts. In this regard, there is attempt of typology of author's narration in the early literature. In the manuscript tradition the literature of the first Yakut poet seems to be the most revealing. His texts are examples of the formation of type of authorship, unknown to the oral tradition, which is associated with the creation of own poetic language and the formation of individual stylistic mannerisms. The poetic texts of A.E. Kulakovsky are characterized by the appearance of the position of "outside observer", additional author intentions in the words of hero, the growth of the system of motivations, leading to the author's digressions.

Yakut literature confirms the need of study the early stages of the formation of literature as a justification of a special type of individual authorship, coming, according to the concept of M.I. Steblin-Kamensky, to replace the archaic stage of "unconscious authorship" (Steblyn-Kamensky, 1978). In turn, M.I. Steblin-Kamensky's development of evolutionary concept of authorship is the development of some of the statements of historical poetics by A.N. Veselovsky, relating to the transition "from the singer to the poet" (Veselovsky, 2007: 328). This model of the formation of a newly created written literature demonstrates the very real research parameters, which determine the fundamental difference of archaic type of works in the oral tradition from the latest-early literary, in this case.

That preference for "private materials" (Steblyn-Kamensky, 1978: 128-129), which is one of the methodological approaches of the study, has allowed represent in more detail the origins and ways of forming the Yakut early literary tradition. Model of the formation of the Yakut early literary tradition can be presented in a rather particular view, at the same time its specificity does not change the general typological regularities in the formation of newly created written literature in general. The originality of this model appears, on the one hand, in the fact that the poetry of A.E. Kulakovsky reveals a very different type of autochthonous development of oral tradition, on the other, - it is marked by the formation of a literary type of authorship from the very beginning.

The results of the analysis suggest a rather specific nature of the evolution of the newly created written literature: early Yakut poetry retains its genetic connection with the forms of oral tradition, but at the same time it is developing in a completely independent way, in the end, due to the specifics of literature itself.

There were different types of texts in Yakut literature of the early twentieth century. These are the texts: ascended to the oral tradition, but which has been developing in a different cultural (literary-written) context as a result of literary simulations and adaptations of folklore; or written, but retaining some features of orality (in manuscript tradition); or

the actual literatures, which are composed and get further development as fundamentally different from folklore. Thus, there are the following interactions in the early literary situation: (a) of oral, (b) of written (manuscript), (c) of literary traditions. These interactions define the uniqueness of the Yakut model of the early twentieth century. Holistic analysis of the poetic system of the first Yakut poet – A.E. Kulakovskiy - in the context of the genre transformations and radical change of type of authorship allows to determine the specificity of the literary text, as opposed to folk and manuscript/written.

The period of the literary establishment in the Yakut culture was marked by a sufficient complexity and undifferentiated types of texts, which at the same time emphasizes the duality of this very situation.

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