

G.F. MILLER — ACADEMICIAN, EDITOR, RESEARCHER OF CULTURE OF CHUVASH PEOPLE

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Abstract

Article examines the activity of the editor, the researcher of the Chuvash culture, academician G.F. Miller, the member of the Great Northern Expedition. The year 2020 will be the anniversary year, as it will mark the 225th anniversary of G.F. Miller's birthday. The aim of the study is to analyze the creative development of G.F. Miller, academician, editor, famous researcher of culture of the Chuvash people. It is noted in the article that G.F. Miller was the editor-composer of the renovated St. Petersburg Vedomosti newspaper published by the academy; he selected materials, translated news from the foreign press, proofread, and supervised the publication of issues. Miller also edited Primechaniya (Notes) to St. Petersburg Vedomosti. Miller was the editor of the first Russian popular science journal of the Academy of Sciences. The monthly journal was a great success among readers. Essays by Miller, works on the history, geography, and ethnography of Russia were published in it. Miller studied the ethnography of the Chuvash people during the Great Northern Expedition. Getting acquainted with life of different peoples of Russia, Miller wrote down examples of their languages, made up dictionaries. G.F. Miller left a lot of ethnological works. In Kazan, Miller got acquainted with V.G. Putsek-Grigorovich, who worked as a teacher of the seminary at Zilanovsky monastery at that time. It played an important role in the career of Putsek-Grigorovich. He began work on "Essays belonging to the grammar of the Chuvash language", which was destined to go down in history as the first national grammar of the Chuvash language. With Miller's help, he published his work in the printing house of the Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg. With this work, the Chuvash language was presented to the scientific world for the first time. For a long time it remained the main and only source of information about the Chuvash language. The authors conclude that the facts on ethnography of the Chuvash people, obtained by the members of the First Academic Expedition, are fragmentary, and yet they are of great value for the modern science, as they have brought unique information to us. All of Miller's material was used by the following foreign and Russian researchers of the Chuvash culture. G.F. Miller's researches are of great scientific and historiographic interest nowadays for comparative study of history, material, and spiritual culture of peoples inhabiting the Volga region. The reported study was funded by RFBR and Chuvash Republic according to the research project № 19-412-210003.

Keywords: Ethnic journalism, Chuvashia, Culture, History.

1. INTRODUCTION

The first scientific works containing information about the culture of the Chuvash and other peoples from the Middle Volga region date back to the XVIII century. The St. Petersburg Academy undertook scientific

expeditions at that time. From a number of expeditions of the XVIII century (there were 50 of them), the expeditions of 1733-1743 - the Great Northern Expedition - and 1768-1774 - the Academic Expedition - stand out. One of the first researchers of the Chuvash culture in this period - academician G.F. Miller - was a member of the Great Northern Expedition. The year 2020 will be an anniversary year, as it will mark the 225th anniversary of G.F. Miller's birthday.

2. METHODOLOGY

The methodological basis of this study is the principles of historicism, consistency, and holistic study, which allowed to analyze the general laws of historical and cultural processes. Consideration of peculiarities of the issues under examination, their interrelation with social, political, and cultural changes in the society were carried out on the basis of historical and typological method. The interdisciplinary approach at the intersection of different sciences was used in the work.

3. RESULTS

The future academician of the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences Gerard Friedrich (in the Russified version - Fedor Ivanovich) Miller was born on October 29, 1705 in the city of Herford in Germany. He died on October 22, 1783 in Moscow. He studied at the University of Leipzig. In November 1725, he came to Russia and was enrolled as a student of the Academy of Sciences. At the same time, Miller began teaching Latin language, history, and geography in the academic gymnasium (Zapadov, 1973, p. 28). From the same time on he started conducting research work in the field of Russian history.

In 1728-1730, G.F. Miller was the editor-composer of the renovated St. Petersburg Vedomosti newspaper published by the academy; he selected materials, translated news from the foreign press, proofread, and supervised the publication of issues. The newspaper had supplements. In total there were 12 issues presenting additional materials.

From 1728 to 1742, "St. Petersburg Vedomosti" was published with an annex. Miller also edited Primechaniya (Notes) to St. Petersburg Vedomosti. In October 1742, Primechaniya was closed. In 1765, several collections with reprinted articles from Primechaniya were published in Moscow, which indicates that the reader's interest in this issue remained.

In 1755, Miller became the editor of the first Russian popular science journal of the Academy of Sciences. The journal was published from 1755 to 1764. The title of this edition changed several times: "Monthly essays for the benefit and amusement" (up to 1757), "Essays and translations for the benefit and amusement" (1758-1762), "Monthly essays and news about scientific affairs" (1763-1769). The monthly journal was a great success among readers. Essays by Miller, works on the history, geography, and ethnography of Russia were published in it. The outstanding work of P.I. Rychkov "Orenburg topography" was published in it.

Miller studied ethnography of the Chuvash people during the Great Northern Expedition in 1733. Getting acquainted with life of different peoples of Russia, Miller wrote down examples of their languages, made up dictionaries. G.F. Miller left a lot of ethnological works.

In October 1733, the expedition members arrived in Kazan. Due to mud-locked roads they stayed for two months here. During this time, they studied Kazan and the region. Miller and Gmelin addressed to the provincial chancellery and asked to find them one or two old and decent persons from each tribe who could be questioned about their faith, life, trade, trades, customs, and history. The provincial chancellery did not manage to find "decent persons of various tribes" quickly.

It found only interpreter of four local dialects - Tatar, Chuvash, Mari, and Udmurt. But they joined the expedition only in late November. Since there was little time left to work with them, Miller limited himself to writing down the words for the dictionary and translating the prayer "Our Father" into Chuvash and Cheremis (Mari) languages. "In Chuvash language, the prayer "Our Father" is translated literally from German and, we can say, is a scientific experiment as its text is not absolutely clear for the Chuvash people" (Skvortsov, 1984, p. 11).

From the interpreters, Miller received some information concerning ethnography of the peoples of Kazan province and studied the Bulgar materials and documents available in Kazan, as he did not have time to visit Bulgars.

In Kazan, Miller got acquainted with V.G. Putsek-Grigorovich (1706–1782), who worked as a teacher of the seminary at Zilanovsky monastery at that time. And it has probably played an important role in the career of

Putsek-Grigorovich. He began work on "Essays belonging to the grammar of the Chuvash language", which was destined to go down in history as the first national grammar of the Chuvash language. With Miller's help, he published his work in 1769 in the printing house of the Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg with a circulation of 608 copies. With this work, the Chuvash language was presented to the scientific world for the first time. And for a long time it remained the main and only source for getting acquainted with the Chuvash language (Husari, 2001, p. 76).

Based on materials from the expedition, Miller wrote an ethnographic work. Full title of the publication: "Description of the pagan peoples living in the Kazan province, such as Cheremis, Chuvash, and Votyaks, with description of their settlements, political institution, bodily and mental talents, the clothes they wear, the food they eat, their trades, the language they speak, the arts and sciences, their natural and fictional pagan law, as well as all the rituals, customs, and habits they practice; with numerous words in seven different languages, such as Kazan-Tatar, Cheremis and Chuvash, Votyak, Mordovian, Perm, and Zyrian, and the attached translation of the Lord's Prayer "Our Father" in Cheremis and Chuvash languages" (Danilova, Egorov, 2001, p. 55).

The work was originally published in Russian in 7-9 issues of the Academy's Monthly "Essays for the benefit and amusement" in 1756. Then it was published in German in the third issue of «Sammlung mssischer Geshichte» in 1759, which was also published under his guidance. Finally, the new Russian edition was published in 1791. It contains additions to the texts of previous editions and has 8 drawings of women's costumes, made in 1733. Part of the text of the amended edition was published in 1791 and was called: "Extract from the description of the pagan peoples living in the Kazan province ..." in the journal "New Monthly Essays". This work by G.F. Miller contains detailed descriptions of clothing, everyday and festive hats, religion, etc.

When the expedition arrived in the Ilyinskaya Pustyn (modern Ilyinka of the Morgaushsky district of the Chuvash Republic), the members of the First Academic Expedition met with the Chuvash people. It turned out that the wooded barge could not navigate due to the strong bottom wind. Miller and Gmelin were accompanied by an interpreter, two servants and four soldiers, two of whom were baptized Chuvash. They went to Cheboksary by boat. They stopped when they saw a fire on the bank of the Volga River and met the Chuvash.

When the researches approached the fire, they met two Chavash. They were busy with flaying a sacrificially stabbed ram. Above the fire, there was a kettle hanging with inners of the ram being cooked in it. It was the sacrifice to Kiremeti. Materials about religious rites and ancient faith can be found in Miller's researches.

In Cheboksary, the expedition members received some data on the number of the Chuvash people, the Chuvash calendar, and learned the fact the Chuvash considered Friday as a holy (non-working) day. Then G.F. Miller notes that the Chuvash people perform a divine service on their biggest holiday and the date of its holding is determined annually.

4. CONCLUSION

The facts on ethnography of the Chuvash people, obtained by members of the First Academic Expedition, are fragmentary, and yet they are of great value for the modern science, as they have brought unique information to us. All of Miller's material was used by the following foreign and Russian researchers of Chuvash culture: P.S. Pallas, I.I. Georgi, A.M. Kurbsky, V.I. Lebedev, I.I. Lepekhin, V.P. Vishnevsky, H. Paasonen (Danilova, Danilov, 2016, pp. 37-41) and others. G.F. Miller's research "Description of the pagan peoples living in the Kazan province..." is of great scientific and historiographic interest nowadays for comparative study of history, material, and spiritual culture of peoples inhabiting the Volga region.

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