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On the issue of loci communes in folklore studies

Modern folkloristics as an independent science solves a number of important problems: comprehends its subject, creates its own theory, and develops folklore research methods. The area of poetic style in folklore is essentially important among the specified problems. It covers various aspects of structural and figurative organization and artistic expressiveness of folkloreworks. The complexity of a research of these questions comes from the need of their consideration at the different levels of folklore poetry: mental (as an expression of national consciousness), verbal (as the component of the verbal text) and functional (as the method of performing practice). We do not claim to give inclusive solution of the problem; in this article the subject of our research is one of particular manifestations of folklore art style – loci communes or so-called «typicality» representing the poetic device which is the most widespread in the world folklore.

Keywords: folklore, loci communes, ceremony, metacode, genesis, semantics, typicality, animism, anthropomorphism, symbolism, methodology of folklore research.

The scientific literature devoted to the problem of loci communes in folklore is extensive enough. We do not aim to characterize absolutely all works in which loci communes are described in folklore. This task is challenging and not enough effective within one article.

In our opinion, it is more expedient to define the main tendencies, prominent aspects, urgent points of view, in the light of which loci communes were researched in folklore in different time. This position will allow us, remaining within the limits of historiographic material, present it not as the amount of diverse factographic sources, but as a progress of scientific idea in the solution of identified problem. In this respect, if necessary, we will consciously infringe the principle of source study chronology, as it is not essential for the selected approach in presentation of historic issues.

The review of research material in terms of chronology convinces that the problem of loci communes had been stated in the past centuries. Thus, in the second half of the XIX century, the collectors of the Russian oral folk arts, among which we especially point out A.F. Hilferding, V.V. Radlov, P.N. Rybnikov, G.N. Potanin, noted that the narrators had adhered to a certain «framework» in presenting epics, using «ordinary expressions». V.V. Radlov, who studied the epic tradition of the northern Turkic tribes, also notes that the narrator owned a fund of epic descriptions, and his art consisted «only in the clever combination of the ready pieces into one whole picture <...> he is able to depict one and the same picture with a few strokes, to depict it more thoroughly, or, blurring in small details, to begin a detailed description» [1; 16]. As we see, originally loci communes attracted collectors' attention only as a purely technical method of telling.

In the works of A.N. Vesselovskiy, the problem of loci communes was indirectly declared and solved to a certain extent. Developing the theory of psychological parallelism, its formulaic nature, A.N. Vesselovskiy explained the nature of loci communes by their content and forms of expression. So, he wrote: «...Near common places of living, correspondingly, the same phenomenon in the field of style developed: it became typical ... The singers had their own household songs – a reflection, sometimes frozen, of everyday life: the heroes are equipped in a certain way to fight, call each other to fight; sit at table together; this all is expressed by certain formulas repeating whenever the case demands it» [2; 210]. As we see, A.N. Vesselovskiy proceeded in his searches in the field of poetics and determined the content plane and expression plane of common places. The scientist's views will still play a role in the theoretical interpretation of common places, which we will witness in the further presentation of the material.

V.F. Miller, referring to the problem of loci communes in the epic, adhered to the views of A.F. Hilferding, highlighting the transitional and typical places of the epic. Simultaneously, V.F. Miller demarcated them according to their functions, noting the plot-forming functions of transitional places and ornamental functions of distinctive places. He noted: «In general, more changes are included in the description of the course of action, in the so-called transitional places. Often remembering only the general outline of the plot, the narrator introduces these or other details into the story, according to his own taste, using usually

ready-made images from the reserve of his memory, that is, transferring some trait he liked from one epic to another» [3; 16].

In his turn, M.N. Speranskiy, considering the problem of loci communes from the point of view of the composition and presentation by the narrator of the epic, revealed the genre-forming functions of common places: «For the singer the composition of the epic is reduced to the following: the plot, which he must master with the help of his memory, not repeating the essence of content, especially strenuously; then a typical, definite distinct figure of the hero or characters appearing in a number of epics, and therefore more easily retained in memory; finally, typical common places, the stock of which, at his discretion, is managed by the singer depending on of his artistic tasks. The melody of epic is also here, and is selected in the same way as typical places, from the stock of musical motifs at the narrator's disposal» [4; 17, 18].

The researchers at the beginning of the twentieth century also observed that the storytellers had a «stock of ready-made samples», a fund of common places, from among which they chose those that they considered necessary for that case. So, A.M. Astakhova notes that on the basis of common places in the process of improvisation new the texts of epic stories are created: «These epic formulas are the results of collective, artistic searches and polishing. Due to their repeatability, these general pictures selected by the masters of epic creativity are remembered more easily than other parts of the epic. «Common places» formed the fund of ready-made images, which helped the storytellers to recreate the acquired epic, as well as create their own, new editions of the stories and add new epics» [5; 192]. Thus, A.M. Astakhova reveals the technical function of loci communes.

Therefore, we see that the scientists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries note two constituent parts of the epic text, transitional places and typical places. As it turned out, by «transitional» the researchers understood more voluminous formations, according to our hypothesis – common places, and by «typical» – formulas. The scientists intuitively understood that there had been two constituent parts of the loci communes, which were delimited by the signs of transitivity and stability, by their functions in the plot and style of the folklore work.

The hypothesis put forward by the scientists of the nineteenth century was confirmed by the further development of science. Thus, N.P. Andreyev notes that common places consist of smaller entities: «Common places are repeated only in basic features, while details vary with singers, each in its own way. Besides, the combinations of these ready-made formulas are different from the rest of presentation» [6; 21]. Proceeding from this provision, the common place consists of «variable details», «combinations», that is, according to our hypothesis – formulas. N.P. Andreyev delimits the volume of common places and formulas and notes that «the common place» is formed from ready-made formulas. As we can see, A.F. Hilferding's concept of transitional and typical places finds its continuation, but with each new research it is supplemented, corrected and refined.

Thus, P.D. Ukhov, who dealt specifically with the problem of «typical» places, came to the conclusion that the narrators did not memorize the «typical» places when mastering epic stories, but as a result of frequent repetition of epics they produced a fixed text of typical formulas specific to each narrator. Thus, «typical» places of one narrator, as a rule, acquired strictly chased verbal design» [7; 98]. As you can see, P.D. Ukhov supplemented A.F. Hilferding's position about typical places, and gave a more precise and capacious concept of «typical formula». In addition, he notes that «typical» formulas still are not sung in the same way, but depending on the content, the formulas of one narrator in different subjects can be modified. Consequently, loci communes are, according to the scientist, the criterion for distinguishing the creative manner of the narrators.

P.D. Ukhov for the first time considered the problem of common places as a means of passporting the epic. He has come to the following conclusions:

«Because of frequent repetition of epic, the story tellers of all categories usually produce the fixed text of typical formulas. These formulas are specific for a certain narrator, different from those of other narrators. These formulas developed by the narrator are used in all the plots they perform (in those plots where they are needed during the course of the action).

Depending on the content, the formulas of one narrator in different scenes can be modified, but usually the distinctive features of these formulas are traced everywhere» [8; 136-137]. Therefore, each storyteller has his own formulas worked out, that is, their ready stock. They point at the plot-forming function of common places.

Recognizing the merit of P.D. Ukhov in solving the problem of loci communes as a means of epics passportization, we should note that the scientist does not give a clear definition of typical places and does not distinguish between typical places and formulas, which, most likely, was not the task of his research.

This «fuzziness» in the delimitation of concepts is also traced in the further development of folklore studies. Thus, N.S. Smirnova in her monographic study «Kazakh folk poetry», solving the problems of the Kazakh epic, noted along with loci communes – typical places, common places, as well as traditional epic clichés, typical formulas – all related to one and the same poetic reception. N.S. Smirnova, in addition to the structure-forming function of common places, reveals the genre-forming one: «... the composition as well as the structure of the images of the hero and other epic characters is associated with the heroism of reality characteristic of the epic: with the hero's exceptionality, with the grandeur of events. They stand out and are shaded by «loci communes», that is, typical, and, therefore, stable descriptions and habitual repetitive plot situations. Typical or common places adorn the appearance and behavior of the hero, give them significance» [9; 73].

The researcher of the Kazakh heroic epic A.S. Orlov notes that «certain expressions, metaphors and even entire episodes are identical or almost identical» [10; 26]. As you can see, the scientists pointed to the fact that common places and formulas coexist in folklore, but they did not distinguish between these concepts, at least, they did not set such a goal. Thus, E.A. Kostyukhin distinguishes short and detailed formulas in fairy tales. The researcher establishes that along with the formulas there are broader, more developed formulas: «Traditional formulas incorporate national ideas about the beauty of people and objects, about the human character. They are concise and contain an extremely general evaluation of objects and phenomena, highlight the most characteristic features. However, the Kazakh fairy tale contains not only short formulas, but wide detailed descriptions» [11; 211, 212].

Developing the narration theory on the materials of the art of Central Asian epic singers, V.M. Zhirmunskiy, relying on the experience of the Russian scientists, investigated the problem of the relationship between tradition and improvisation, traditional-typical and individual-creative principle in the living and rich epic art. Solving the problem of improvisation and creative memory, V.M. Zhirmunskiy singles out common places and formulas that are creatively implemented in the text of the narrator. They serve as a means of preserving the epic tradition; they are components of the epic memory of the narrator. In addition, the researcher delineates the common places and formulas by their functions, revealing the structure-forming functions for common places and the stylistic function for formulas. Hence, he writes: «The singer does not sing a learned text, he improvises, at least partially, following a certain scenario, in which, apart from consecutive episodes and situations, there are traditional common places (horse saddle, heroic horse races, description of battles, etc.). Of course, such improvisation is important only in the framework of a certain, firmly established tradition – not only plots, motifs and images, but also permanent stylistic formulas, epithets, comparisons, phraseological phrases and the like that the poet improvisator uses as a kind of poetic language. Only this combination of tradition and improvisation <...> can explain the amazing memory of many outstanding storytellers <...>. This is not about passive memorization, but about a special creative memory that, in the process of performance, recreates and creates the singer's familiar content (script) of the poem» [12; 635-636]. It is easy to see that the science of folklore, accumulating new knowledge about common places, goes to new levels of study of the problem of loci communes.

Thus, one of the modern theorists of folklore V.P. Anikin points out the historicity of common places, their genre-forming function: «... the common places of the epic are not simply a stylistic expression, but mostly an expression of the genre way of reproducing the historical past in heroic-idealizing light, and the stability of such descriptions testifies to the character of the genre that has an unquestionable connection with fairy tales... On the other hand, it must be recognized that the traditions of the epic common places are historical» [13; 258]. In addition to the stylistic functions, the scientist distinguishes the structure-forming function of common places. V.P. Anikin sees the uniformity of compositional construction and poetic-stylistic means of epic in the fact that «the epics use steadily more or less widespread methods of poetics and what is called common stylistic places – formulas of habitual images in some situations repeating from epic to epic. These situations are the galloping of the hero through the wall, feasting in the greenhouse ...» [13; 258]. As you can see, the author also does not make a distinction between common places and formulas.

In the work by Sh. Ybyrayev, devoted to the poetics of the Kazakh epic, the author gives a detailed description of the poetic device of «common places». In general, proceeding from the traditional understanding of common places as a repetition, Sh. Ybyrayev functionally correlates them with the epic motifs that are gradually transformed into epic formulas. So, he writes: «Sometimes epic repetitions describe whole plots, in science they are called «common places». In their content and form, they are close to the motives. <...> Common places are used in typical situations of the motif and are gradually transformed into formulas» [14; 265-266]. R. Berdibayev speaks about the formulality of folklore as a whole: «Formulas are short phrases, permanent epithets, stable comparisons that are repeated either in one line or in several lines» [15; 125].

Thus, the problem of loci communes in folklore has a fairly long history of its study. As a phenomenon of folklore, common places were seen as early as the nineteenth century, and the evidenced is in the works of leading collectors and researchers of Russian folklore (A.F.Hilferding, A.N.Veselovskiy, V.F.Miller and others). In this regard, the scientists of the 19th century defined and terminologically identified common places of epic works, their genre-forming, structure-forming and stylistic functions.

In the future, the science of folklore focused on a detailed study of this phenomenon, resulting in the formula theory of folklore (M.Perri, A.Lord, N.Roshiyanu, B.Sh.Abylkassimov and others). This approach allowed not only to expand ideas about semantics and functions of common places in folklore, but also «brought to life» a number of new and complex problems, in particular, the delineation of common places and formulas, their scope and forms of representativeness in the oral text.

In modern folkloristics, the works that attempted to consider the loci communes as a form of realization of the folklore tradition (V.P.Anikin, G.I.Maltsev, S.A.Kaskabassov, Sh.Ybyrayevand others) have acquired particular urgency. This makes it possible to explore common places systematically in the context of ethnographic, cultural and linguistic aspects of folk culture.

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Фольклор туралы ғылымдағы «loci communes» мәселелері

Қазіргі фольклортану — бірқатар маңызды мәселелерді өзі шешуші ғылым: өз мәнін терең ұғындырады, өзіндік теориясын жасайды, фольклорды зерттеудің әдістемесін дамытады. Аталған мәселелердің шеңберінде фольклор шығармаларын көркем мәнерлі және құрылымдық-бейнелік ұйымдастырудың әр түрлі аспектілерін қамтитын ауыз әдебиетінің поэтикалық стиль саласы маңызды негіз болып табылады. Бұл мәселелерді зерттеудің қиындығы — олар ауыз әдебиеті шығармашылығын әр түрлі деңгейде қарастыру қажеттілігін туындатады: ділдік (халықтың таным-түсінігін кеңейту), ауызша (ауызша мәтінге құрылған) және функционалды (тәжірибені орындаудың мезгілдері). Фольклордың көркем стилінің жеке көріністерінің бірі — loci communes, немесе ерекше таралған, өзіндік «жалпы жер», деп аталған атауды біз осы мақаламыздың шеңберінде біздің зерттеуіміздің мәні ретінде тандаймыз, яғни басқа ауқымды мәселелерді шешуге таласпаймыз.

Кілт сөздер: фольклор, «жалпы жер», салт, метакод, анимизм, антропоморфизм, символизм, фольклорды зерттеудің әдістемесі.

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К вопросу «loci communes» в науке о фольклоре

В статье с новой позиции осмыслены современное состояние фольклорной науки, ее основные теоретические положения и методы исследования фольклорного текста. В кругу названных проблем принципиально важной является область поэтического стиля устного творчества, которая охватывает различные аспекты структурно-образной организации и художественной выразительности произведений фольклора. В рамках настоящей статьи изучено одно из частных проявлений художественного стиля фольклора — loci communes, или так называемые «общие места», представляющие собой самый распространенный поэтический прием мирового фольклора. Авторами рассмотрены «общие места» в фольклоре на разных уровнях устно-поэтического творчества: ментальном (как выражение народного сознания), вербальном (как составляющая словесного текста) и функциональном (как прием исполнительской практики).

Ключевые слова: фольклор, «общие места», обряд, метакод, анимизм, антропоморфизм, символизм, методика исследования фольклора.

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