

2. The Kazan Tatars

Research history overview

Of the three Turkic peoples living in the Volga region, the greatest wealth of historic sources available (of both internal and external origin) concern the Tatars, as it is this people which represented an independent political force in the region after the Mongol era – the Tatar Khanate of Kazan existed until the middle of the 16th century. Nevertheless, hardly any descriptions can be found about their beliefs before the end of the 19th century.

Naturally, the great expeditions of the Russian Academy sought to explore the Tatars, too, so Tatar vocabularies and descriptions of grammar were published as early as the mid-18th century (e.g. Müller 1756; Pallas 1786).

The vast majority of Tatars had been followers of Islam for several centuries and the conversion missions of the Orthodox Church hardly yielded any results. A small Tatar minority became Christian during the 16-17th centuries and then in a second wave in the 18th century (about 7% of the total Tatar population). Since the majority of Tatars appeared to the Russian Church simply as Muslims, the Orthodox clergy only dealt with the majority of Tatars in the context of the struggle against Islam. The relatively large literature on this was summarized, for example, by Mozharovski (1880) and in the second half of the 19th century by the Kazan-based journal, *Миссионерский Противомусульманский Сборник* (*Anti-Muslim Missionary Collection*), which was launched in 1874 because large masses of Christian Tatars, as well as Chuvash, Udmurts and Maris, who were Christian in theory but pagan in reality, suddenly converted to Islam. Getting to know the daily religious practices and folk religiosity of Muslim Tatars was not set as a goal. Until the second half of the 19th century, the Tatar Muslim intelligentsia also showed no interest in studying and describing folk religiosity.

We already have some data from the second half of the 19th century on the beliefs of Christian Tatars, to whom the Orthodox mission

paid more attention. Several of the local representatives of the Russian clergy sought to research and record the religious-ritualistic practices of Christian Tatars, although their main focus was on how many superstitious misconceptions and beliefs the Christian Tatars had that were completely incompatible with Christianity.

In the second half of the 19th century, the first records relevant to our subject concerned the beliefs of Christian Tatars. Among them, the earliest were published in Budapest in 1875 and 1877 in the two-volume linguistic and ethnographic collection by the Hungarian researcher, Gábor Bálint of Szentkatolna.⁴⁷⁴ Coincidentally, Mashanov's material collected among Christian Tatars was published (1875) and a year later, Maksimov published a study on mythical beings. In 1877, Sofiyskiy published two articles on Tatar beliefs based on the material he had collected: one about the *kiremet*-worship of Christian Tatars and the other about magic healing and the incantations used in it.

One of the most important Tatar ethnographers of the 19th century, A. K. Nasyrov, was the first to write a study about the mythical beings of Muslim Tatars in 1880, and he also collected and published Tatar folk tales for the first time. Three decades later, Koblov published two basic works: one in 1908 on the religious rites and customs of the Muslim Tatars and the other in 1910, a summary study of mythical beings, in which he used the existing literature while aiming to clarify and supplement it with his own on-site observations.

At the beginning of the 20th century, several folklore records were published, including many anthologies of more or less scientific accuracy, as well as volumes of tales and legends, most of which were based on the collection of Tatar researchers, teachers, writers and publicists. Ignác Kúnos, to whom we owe the beginning of the collection of Ottoman Turkish folk tales, collected folk songs from Tatar prisoners of war during the First World War (e.g. Kakuk

⁴⁷⁴ Its critical re-edition: WD (1988). As to why Bálint collected among Christian Tatars, see: Berta 1994.

2004; 2005). Finnish researcher Paasonen also published several Tatar folk poems and tales.

From the 1960s onwards, several scientific ethnographic expeditions began with focused primarily on the collection of epic genres (mainly tales and legends) and folk songs. Some of these and earlier records were published in the 1970s, when a series of texts entitled *Tatar Xalik Idžatı (Tatar Folk Poetry)* was compiled, which was republished in an extended edition in the 2010s. However, collection specifically concerning beliefs or mythical beings only started in some smaller areas and only after the turn of the millennium, (e.g. the Tulvin collections that I also use). The only outstanding counter-example was Gyył'manov's two-volume book on Tatar mythology. However, since Gyył'manov wrote his work in Tatar, it did not make its way into the Russian-language literature and, apart from Tatar researchers, it is only referred to in the Turkish scientific literature. The book does fill a gap, yet we must set it down against the author that he uses the word Tatar in a very broad sense and that his scientific apparatus is weak, thus rendering many of his data and conclusions questionable. Because of these factors, I used his data only as a supplement (in the case of mythical beings that exist elsewhere).

In addition to Russian and Tatar folklorists, some researchers in Turkey have also addressed the issue of Tatar mythical beings in recent decades. Their articles are summary studies and overviews based on previous research (e.g. Atnur 2007; Çetin 2007).

Transcription table

(modified) Cyrillic	Trans- literation	English sound value	Notes
а	a	(as in <i>sun</i>)	open back vowel
б	b	b	
ц	ts	(as in <i>fits</i>)	only appears in Russian words
ч	č	ch (as in <i>child</i>)	
д	d	d	
ж	dž	j (as in <i>join</i>)	(only in Tatar)
е	e ye yī		In word or syllable initial position: [ye] [yī]
э	e	e (as in <i>end</i>)	
э	ā	(as in <i>man</i>)	near-open front vowel
ф	f	f	
г	g	g (as in <i>go</i>)	
х	χ		voiceless velar fricative
и	i	i (as in <i>in</i>)	
ы	ī		velar <i>i</i>
й	y	y (as in <i>yard</i>)	
к	k	k	
л	l	l	
м	m	m	
н	n	n	
ң	ŋ	ng (as in <i>song</i>)	velar-uvular nasal
о	o	o	
ө	ö		front rounding mid vowel (as German <i>ö</i>)
п	p	p	
р	r	r	
ш	š	sh (as in <i>shed</i>)	
с	s	s	
т	t	t	
у	u	u (as in <i>put</i>)	

Y	ü		front rounding close vowel (as German <i>ü</i>)
B	v	v	
3	z	z	
ж	ž	(as in <i>genre</i>)	voiced post-alveolar sibilant

Kazan Tatar Mythical Beings

Abzar iyäse

I. ‘protector of the farmyard’ (Mak. 10); ‘master of livestock (horses and cattle)’ (Nas. 253); ‘protector of livestock’ (Kobl. 419); its further forms: *saray (at) eyäse* ‘stable-elf’ (Bál. 61) [‘stable’s master’]; *abzar xudžası* ‘stable’s master’ (GG. I, 216); ‘(myth.) house spirit’ (TRS 17); ‘spirit living in the stable or penfold’ (TRS 183; ME I, 22); dial. (SibTat.) *mal iyäse, zängi baba, sänki baba, päše ana*⁴⁷⁵ (GG. I, 216); (Chun.) *aran iyäse*, (MounTat.) *kirtä iyäse*,⁴⁷⁶ (Nok.) *abzar äbiye*, (UrTat.) *abzar iyäse, ap-aksakallı babay*⁴⁷⁷ [lit. ‘snow-white-bearded old man’] (GG. I, 217); (TulTat.) *azbar xudža, azbar äni, Gambär ana, mal xuža, zänki baba, zänki babay* (Tul. 219). **II.** *abzar* ‘stable, sty, penfold’ (TRS 17) + *iyä* ‘master, owner, landlord’ (TRS 183); *xudža* ‘master, owner’ (TRS 617). **III.** The Tatar word *iyä* is of Turkic etymon. The Old Turkic *ïdi* ‘lord, owner’ (cf. Cl. 41; DTS 203) has remained in the majority of Turkic languages, with the meaning ‘master, lord’ – Turkic data: Rad. I, 694-695; Egor. 67; Räs. 169; Fed. I, 161. In Tatar and Bashkir, it has the meaning ‘master spirit’. **IV.** mythical story (memorat): Kobl. 426.

The spirit (master) of the stable or livestock usually lives in the stable. It is usually imagined as a man (master, old man), although some of its names suggest a female character (mother, old woman). It is hardly seen during the day, and if someone goes to the stable at night, they can meet it in a human or animal shape.⁴⁷⁸ Some accounts describe it as some kind of fiery, glowing sphere (Mak. 10; Kobl. 425).

There are many descriptions about the spirit of the stable preferring certain animals, giving them extra fodder and plaiting the mane of its favourite horse at night. However, for some reason, it dislikes other animals, takes away their hay, torments them, puts them into the manger, from where they can only be freed with great difficulty

⁴⁷⁵ In Bashkir, *päšä ana* is one of the names of the forest spirit (Bash. → *Urman eyähe*).

⁴⁷⁶ It also exists in Bashkir in the forms *kärtä, qartalı, qaraldı eyähe* (Bash. → *Ađbar eyähe*).

⁴⁷⁷ The white-bearded, white-caned or white-clad old man is a form of the guardian of the farmyard in Bashkir, too (Bash. → *Ađbar eyähe*).

⁴⁷⁸ According to one record, one must not kill the snake found in the garden because it might be the master of the livestock (*zänki babay*) (Tul. 340).

(Bál. 146). Such animals become emaciated and may even die. The farmer tried to get rid of his animal disliked by the spirit of the stable as soon as possible (Mak. 11; Kat. 8; Nas. 253; Kobl. 426). Nevertheless, its main task consisted of protecting the animals. As a good master, it made sure that the trough was clean and there was enough feed. If, for example, a man urinated in the water-pail of the animals, the spirit of the yard would certainly take revenge on him or on the animals by inflicting some disease on them. The spirit of the stable was able to cause rinderpest, pestilence or the infertility of the livestock, as well as various eye diseases, leg pain and headache to people. In such cases, it could be placated with sacrificial porridge (Mak. 11; Kobl. 463). When the sacrificial porridge was offered to the spirit at night, people took care that only its favourite animals would be in the stable, and the other animals were housed elsewhere (Bál. 147). Furthermore, once a year, usually in the autumn, a black lamb was sacrificed in its honour (Mak. 11).

Albasti

I. ‘evil spirit belonging to the order of *peris* (Mak. 27); ‘a being that pushes people and sucks their blood’ (Nas. 251); ‘a certain force that pushes people’ (Bál. 149); ‘impure force, evil spirit’ (Kobl. 436); ‘1. Evil spirit living in houses’ (TRS 31). ‘1. evil spirit that pushes people at night; 2. evil force, *aždaxa*’ (TTS 45). **II.** ‘2. (metaph.) monster (of a person)’ (TRS 31). **III.** For the notes on the etymology of *albasti*, see Chuvash → *Alpas*, → *Alpastă*. Here, we only summarise briefly which etymology has been preferred by Tatar scholars. a) *el* ‘hand’ + *basmak* ‘to push’ *albasti* ‘pushing by hand’ (Nas. 251; Kobl. 436); b) *alt*, *ald* ‘front, front of sg’ + *basmak* ‘to push’ *albasti* ‘pushing in the front (on the chest)’ (Mak. 27; Nas. 251; Kobl. 436). Akhmet’yanov supposes a compound *al+bars*, both parts of which he considers to be of Iranian origin (Akhm. 17). The relevant beliefs of Turkic peoples are summarised in the ME I, 58. **IV.** mythical story (memorat): Mak. 28-29; Bál. 63; Kobl. 437-438.

On the basis of the records, it is primarily a night hag but, as far as its nature and appearance are concerned, in certain areas, its figure was heavily mixed with other mythical beings, mostly with the → *Ubir* and the → *Öräk*.

The Tatars imagined the *albasti* as living primarily in the wilderness or in meadows, fields, at crossroads or near bridges, but it

would also happily occupy abandoned houses (Mak. 27; Kobl. 437). According to Maksimov's collection among Christian Tatars, people usually could not say what the *albasti* looked like, but if somebody happened to see it, they remembered it as some kind of big stack (Mak. 27). Nasyrov, on the other hand, wrote that it was rather similar to a man, and it was actually the → *Öräk* that appeared as a stack or rick (Nas. 251). A few decades after Maksimov's and Nasyrov's different descriptions, Koblov wanted to clarify the issue, so he asked both Christian and Muslim Tatars in various places what the *albasti* looked like. His data-providers supported Maksimov's previous information and told Koblov that the *albasti* would appear to people mostly as a wagon, stack or rick (Kobl. 437).

As a nightmare, *albasti* causes pressure and pain in humans at night in their sleep or while they lie awake. During this, the people cannot move and they feel a heavy push around their heart and a choking tightness in their throat (Nas. 251; Bál. 149; Kobl. 437). The victim can escape from the pushing by moving their little finger (Nas. 269). According to Maksimov's collection among Christian Tatars, the *albasti*s mainly attack at Christmas, when they run into people from the front, push them down onto the ground and put their full weight on them, rendering them unable to move (Mak. 27).

In Nasyrov's information, the *albasti*s not only push people but also suck their blood (Nas. 251). Koblov sought to collect data in several places on this issue, too, and found that the blood-sucking nature could not be clearly linked to a single mythical being. Some of his data providers said that the *albasti* was a blood-sucker, too, but according to some others, only the → *Ubir* sucked people's blood, whereas a third one related this feature to the → *Öräk* (Kobl. 437). Nasyrov also recorded that in colloquial speech, *albasti* was a synonym for a lazy, indolent, idle person, whereas *ubir* was applied to hard-working, industrious people (Nas. 251). Modern data show otherwise: the *ubir* is associated with binge eating and gluttony, and gluttony is associated with Satan (Tul. 368).⁴⁷⁹

⁴⁷⁹ I quote a shot note about this under Tul. 368/2.

Ashmarin also recorded some other Tatar beliefs from Buin County (after Tokmakov). According to a belief there, the *albasti* appears as a boy to girls and as a girl to boys; it is beautiful in the front but its back is disgusting, and when it leaves it tells people not to look at its back. It beats those who do not listen. According to another notion, it appears after sunset, fights people in their sleep and disappears when the cock crows (Ashm. I, 167).

Arpa

I. ‘stye, or its spirit’ (Sof. 42). **II.** ‘1. (noun and adj.) barley; 2. stye’ (TRS 39-40). **III.** A word from a Turkic etymon (OT. *arpa*: Cl. 198), which exists in several Turkic languages; in Bashkir and Tatar, also meaning ‘stye’, cf. e.g. Sev. I, 176; Räs. 27 – Räsänen only mentions the meaning ‘stye’ in Tatar; GTJ 460; WOT 77-79. **IV.** incantation: Sof. 43.

As Christian Tatars believed that a stye was caused by some spirit, they cured it with incantations. The incantor showed a fig⁴⁸⁰ and touched it to the eye affected by the stye while incanting (Sof. 42-43).⁴⁸¹

Aždaça

I ‘dragon-snake, dragon, which comes from a snake living over a hundred years (Nas. 245; Kobl. 449); ‘huge snake’ (Tul. 308-309); ‘1. dragon (TRS 25); ‘dragon, infernal snake’ (Ost. 3). **II.** ‘2. (metaph.) monster, very bad person’ (TRS 25). **III.** The word *aždaça* exists in several Turkic languages (e.g. Osm; Tkm; Az; Bash; Kyrg; Uzb; Nog; Chuv.) usually meaning ‘dragon, dragon-snake, evil spirit’; for its linguistic data, cf. e.g. Räs. 53; belief background: ME I, 50. The word is of Persian origin (cf. e.g. Bud. I, 38; Räs. 53); see also at Chuvash → *Aštaça*. **IV.** mythical story (memorat): Kobl. 449; Tul. 309.

It is a widespread belief in the Volga region that a snake living for a hundred years becomes a dragon and a dragon living for five hundred or a thousand years becomes a → *Yuça*. The snake becoming an *aždaça* (dragon) is not believed to be dangerous, as a great cloud

⁴⁸⁰ When curing a stye, the Bashkirs also showed a fig to it, attested by two incantations: BashText 154-156; Khisam. III, 36.

⁴⁸¹ I quote the incantation under Sof. 43.

takes such a dragon to an island far away from people (Nas. 245; Kobl. 449). It has been seen by many that the cloud would lift the gigantic body of the dragon while it would strike the air violently with its tail.⁴⁸²

The dragon is also one of the antagonist-type figures in Tatar folk tales, and of the various types of dragons, the *aždaça* is the zoomorphic creature that is the most destructive to humans (in more detail: Dallos 2009, 114-199).

Bičura

I. ‘house spirit, the same as the Russian *кукумор* (*kikimora*)’ (Nas. 252; Kobl. 426; Tul. 218-219, TRS 75); ‘(myth.) house spirit, master of the house, house devil (*päriye*)’ (TTS 171); lower-ranked spirits in Tatar beliefs (ME I, 173); ‘treasure-hoarding imaginary figure’ (Mész. 49).⁴⁸³ IV. mythical story (memorat): Kobl. 427-428; Kobl. 428.

The *bičura* lives in the nooks and crannies of houses (in the oven, cellar, spare room), but is not identical with the → *Öy iyäse*, partly because not every house has a *bičura* and partly because the *bičura* is not a protector, but rather a mischievous being playing practical jokes on people.

The two records from the late-19th and early-20th century paint slightly different pictures. In Nasyrov, the *bičura* is a rather unpleasant spirit, to be evicted from the house (Nas. 252), but in Koblov’s collection, on the contrary, the Tatars tried to please the *bičura* that had moved into the house in order to keep it there (Kobl. 428). Later data are not uniform, either; according to the Tatar-Russian dictionary, the *bičura* and the devil (→ *Şaytan*) are friends (TRS 75). However, the monolingual Tatar dictionary gives the forms → *Öy iyäse* and *öy päriye* as synonyms of *bičura* (TTS 171).⁴⁸⁴

⁴⁸² I quote such a story under Kobl. 449.

⁴⁸³ Mészáros mentions this Tatar data in connection with the Chuvash being → *Kuykäräš*.

⁴⁸⁴ Basilov, in the *Myths of the Peoples of the World*, relates the Turkish figure *ee bekçisi* (*ev bekçisi*) with the Tatar *оӱ иясе, йорт иясе*, the Bashkir *өй эйәһе*, as well as with the Chuvash *херм-сурм* (with Turkological transliteration used in this book: Tat. → *Öy iyäse*, *Yort iyäse*; Bash. → *Öy eyähe*; Chuv. → *Xěrt*

According to Nasyrov's description, although the *bičura* does not cause great damage to people, it annoys them in countless ways: it makes noises, giggles, whispers, shouts, throws things around, makes a mess and sometimes even moves people to another place in their sleep. Because of these actions, people would like to get rid of the *bičura* if it moved into their house. One way to do so is to take home a bear, which scares the *bičura* so much that it runs away never to return. However, if it is not scared of the bear, there is no other way of ousting it than pulling the house down and building it anew (Nas. 252).

In Koblov, the *bičura* is a female being, about 140-150 cm tall, wearing an *irpaq*, a Tatar headdress. It usually moves into the cellar or the bath, and people put food and drink out for it every night in an unused room to make it move in there. If, for some reason, it is not satisfied with the hosts, it overturns and breaks the dish in which the food is placed. Although it scares people with its voice and annoys them with its mischief, and may even push them at night⁴⁸⁵, it is usually not chased away because people usually get rich in the house where the *bičura* moves to, and chasing it out threatens them with impoverishment (Kobl. 426-428).

Bizgäk

I. 'fever, or the spirit causing it' (Sof. 50-51). **II.** 'fever, malaria; feverish, having malaria' (TRS 70). **III.** The word already existed in Old Turkic: OT. *bäzgak* 'malaria' (Cl. 391.), from the verb *bez-* 'shiver, tremble, shudder' (Cl. 389). See also: Doer. II, 387. **IV.** mythical story: Sof. 50-51; incantation: Sof. 52.

şurt). According to Turkish beliefs, this house spirit appears before people in the form of a snake or as a misshapen black-skinned man, and the owner will seek to sell the house which it has moved into. This being also likes abandoned buildings (ME I, 173). Due to its evil nature, the Turkish figure is certainly not related functionally to the basically good house spirits. Of Tatar and Bashkir beings, it rather shows similarities with the *bičura* or *bisura*.

⁴⁸⁵ Katanov also has data claiming that the house spirit pushes children as well as adults at night (Kat. 7), but as he does not give the name of the house spirit in Tatar, it can be the *bičura* or the *öy iyäse*, too.

According to Christian Tatars, diseases accompanied by fever are caused by a demon that attacks humans in the shape of various creatures⁴⁸⁶ (Sof. 51-52). Several cures were known against such diseases. One of them was sticking a pole decorated with colourful ribbons at a crossroads, which the fever would play with, leaving the sick person alone. Another one was making a doll⁴⁸⁷ that they sent the disease into and then threw away at the crossroads.⁴⁸⁸ Another cure was based on the frightening of the fever spirit.⁴⁸⁹ The patient was laid down at a place where a pig had lain before, or a place where a bear had been before, as the fever spirit is believed to be scared of these animals. A similar reason must lie behind the cure when a piece of a black dog's stool is wrapped in a rag which is then wound round the patient's neck (Sof. 52). Katanov recorded that the snake (→ *Yılan*) was used to cure fever (Kat. 10).

Büki

I. 'mythical-fantastic being which children are scared with' (TTS I, 219); child-scarer, also known in the following forms: *müki*, *mökäy*, *bökäy*, *sakal* (GG. II, 204–205). III. Isänbät presumes the ComTurk. word *buqa*, *bīqa* 'bull' as the background of the Tatar word (GG. II, 205).⁴⁹⁰ Various equivalents within the Tatar language (with word-initial *m*-, as well as with palatal equivalents) do not support it. See also Bash. → *Bapaq*.

The *büki* (and its variants) is a child-scarer well-known among all Tatars, used to restrain overly naughty children: "Stay put or the *büki* will take you!" Although this being was considered invisible,

⁴⁸⁶ I quote such a mythical story, in which the fever appears in the shape of a fly, under Sof. 52.

⁴⁸⁷ The Orenburg Bashkirs also used the method of sending it into a doll (Bash. → *Biögäk*).

⁴⁸⁸ They also recited an incantation when sending it into a doll, which I quote under Sof. 51.

⁴⁸⁹ Among the Bashkirs, too, the most widespread curing process was the frightening of the fever-demon, several ways of which were applied, see Bash. → *Biögäk*.

⁴⁹⁰ This identification is presented by Gyył'manov, but he does not give any accurate reference as to which of his works Isänbät suggests this in.

according to some records, it was imagined as half man, half goat, with long grey hair, a goat-beard and small horns (GG. II, 204–205).

Büser

I. ‘the spirit of hernia’ (Kat. 9). **II.** ‘hernia’ (TRS 96, TTS I, 243). **IV.** incantation: Kat. 9/1.

In the imagination of the Tatars, hernia is caused by some evil spirit; therefore, this disease can be cured with incantation (in the same way as the Bashkir → *Büder*).

Čäčäk anasī, čäčäk iyäse

I. ‘smallpox’s mother or master’ (Nas. 253, Kobl. 456). **II.** *čäčäk* ‘1. flower; 2. smallpox (TRS 650)⁴⁹¹ + *iyä* ‘master, owner, landlord’ (TRS 183); *ana* ‘1. mother, 2. female’ (TRS 35); the word *ana* appears in the names of various mythical beings. In addition to (→ *Su anasī*), Akhmet’yanov lists the following: *ariš anasī* ‘ergot [lit. rye’s mother]’, *basu anasī* ‘field’s mother’, *džil anasī* ‘wind’s mother’, and Mishar Tatar: *ez anasī* ‘house’s mother’, *koyī anasī* ‘well’s mother’ (Akhm. 9).⁴⁹² **III.** The word *čäčäk* (‘flower’) already existed in Old Turkic, and it also had a meaning ‘skin rashes, especially, smallpox’ in early sources (cf. Cl. 400–401); on further mediaeval and later data (with both meanings): Doer. III, 57–58; WOT 231–234. On the Turkic word *ana*, meaning ‘mother’, see e.g. GTJ 298–299.

The Tatars believed that the being that had caused the disease lived in the bigger blisters of smallpox (Nas. 253). According to other records, the spirits of smallpox and measles lived in the bath (Kat. 8). To cure smallpox, a white duck was killed and when the symptoms eased, porridge was cooked (*čäčäk butkasī* ‘*čäčäk*’s porridge’), and a ceremony was held (Nas. 253).

⁴⁹¹ The TRS devotes separate entries to the two meanings, regarding them as homonyms, but I do not share this view.

⁴⁹² Unfortunately, Akhmet’yanov did not provide any kind of reference to accompany his imposing list. Similar mythical creatures can also be found in Gyył’manov’s work (GG. I) and, although he provides descriptions, too, these do not include data referring to the exact time and place of the collection or the name of the collector and the data provider, which questions their usability.

Although *čäčäk anası* is primarily the mother of smallpox, losing one eye and blindness were also attributed to it (Kobl. 456).

Diyü päri

I. ‘a being of various characteristics, appearing in various shapes’ (Nas. 256); ‘numerous, invisible, shape-shifting beings similar to *džinns*’ (Kobl. 454); *diyü* ‘demon, evil spirit’ (TRS 133). *diyü päriye* ‘spirit, (fairy-tale) giant’ (TRS 133); ‘gigantic monster, dangerous to humans’ (TTS 308); as well as *diyü päriye* ‘fairy-tale monster’ (TTS 308); the two types of inferior spirits are *diyüs* and the *päris* (ME I, 386). III. Equivalents of the Tatar *diyü* can be found in several Turkic languages (Osm; Kum; Bash; Kaz; NeUyg.), meaning ‘gigantic; large, significant; evil spirit, devil’. The word got into Turkic languages from Persian (cf. Räs. 137); in modern Persian: دیو (*diw*) ‘spirit, demon, devil; giant’ (Gaf. I, 360); on the background of the belief: ME II, 286-287; see also → *Pärey*.

Mythical and fairy-tale being, which has integrated various notions. In some stories about them, the *diyü päris* live in the forests or meadows or where treasure is hidden in the ground. In the latter case, it appears to people as a haystack (Nas. 256).

According to a different notion, the *diyü päri* likes to appear in human form, which can be done in two different ways. One type tries to establish a sexual relationship with a human, or even marry them. In several stories, however, the human-shaped *diyü* simply wants to destroy people. It may invite the careless person to dinner or into the bath. If the person says “in the name of God” before dinner, the meal turns into horse or cow dung and thus, the *diyü päri* is revealed. But if somebody goes to the bath with such a *diyü päri*, then it will beat them to death with the whisk and bury them under the floor of the bath (Nas. 256; Kobl. 454).⁴⁹³

The *diyü päri* is also one of the anthropomorphic antagonist-types of fairy tales, who lives in castles and kidnaps princesses.⁴⁹⁴

⁴⁹³ Such a mythical story is quoted by Koblov (Kobl. 455-456).

⁴⁹⁴ In their articles, both Nasyrov and Koblov blend and blur the characteristics of the mythical and the fairy-tale beings. For a detailed description of the fairy-tale *diyü-päri*, see Dallos 2009, 109-154.

Džinn

I. ‘a being of various characteristics, appearing in various shapes’ (Nas. 255); ‘invisible beings between humans and angels’ (Kobl. 410-411); ‘a being usually identified with the devil’ (Kobl. 452); *džen* ‘evil spirit’ (Bál. 64; TTS III, 756); *džin-päri* ‘wind-devil’ (Tul. 367-368). **III.** The word is of Arabic origin: Ar. *جنّ* (*ǧinn*) ‘spirits, demons’ ARS 140); it exists in Turkic languages (Chag; Osm; Bash; Kum; Kaz.) with the meaning ‘evil spirit, demon, devil’ (cf. Räs. 126). The roots of the mythical being among Turkic-language peoples originate from the Islamic tradition. This and further roots of the notion has a huge literature; two essential summaries with further literature: Zbinden 1953; Voorhoeve 1991 (IsE II, 546-550); at the same time, the notion has been mixed with several local beliefs everywhere. **IV.** mythical story (memorat): Tul. 367, 368/1.

The notion of the Tatar genie comprises a mixture of various beliefs. On the one hand, it was imagined as an invisible being flying through the air, and if somebody knocked against such a *džinn* by accident, the *džinn* was forced to move into the person, which caused great misfortune and diseases for the person and the *džinn* alike (Nas. 255; on the *džinn* hiding in humans: Bál. 64).

On the other hand, in several stories the *džinn* is a demon appearing in various forms: human (man, woman, travelling blind or lame man) and animal (dog, cat, snake), and the person who sees it can fall into severe (primarily neurological) diseases (Nas. 255; Kobl. 453). Besides, being scared was also considered the *džinn*’s wrongdoing (Nas. 266).

In yet another view, the *džinns* seek out human company, even aim for sexual intercourse with people, when they appear as the person’s spouse. No child is ever born of such a union (Nas. 255; Kobl. 453).

Different from these is the notion of *džinns* that are dangerous to pregnant women and babies. If babies were not protected enough, *džinns* would change them, taking them not only from the cradle but even from their mother’s womb (Nas. 255).

Its compounds with the *päri* (*džinn-päri*) are related to the wind, storm, whirlwind and, in some other descriptions, to the privy.⁴⁹⁵

⁴⁹⁵ I quote the relevant texts under Tul. 367 and Tul. 368/1.

Džir iyäse

I. ‘earth’s spirit’ (Mukh. 186). II. *džir* ‘earth’ + *iyä* ‘master’. III. Both parts of the compound are from a Turkic etymon – OT. *yēr* ‘ground, earth, place’ (cf. Cl. 954), has been retained in Modern Turkic languages, too, cf. Sev. IV, 191-192; GTJ 53; as well as *iđī* ‘master, lord’, also already present in Old Turkic (cf. Cl. 41), which has gained various other meanings in Modern Turkic languages, also keeping its earlier meanings, cf. Sev. I, 237-240; also see Chuvash → *Iye*. IV. incantation: Mukh. 187/1, 187/2; prayer: Yus. 356/1, 356/2, 356/3; Çetin 2007, 5.⁴⁹⁶

The spirit of the earth in this form can only be found among the Mishar Tatars, although, according to some brief references in the literature, beings with similar functions were widely known among all Tatars. For example, it is suggested by the custom that, after harvesting the grains, they not only requested a good harvest for the next year from the earth, but also strength for themselves.⁴⁹⁷ (The prayer asking the earth for strength for people after the harvest also exists among the Chuvash, → *Ana turri*.) After falling on the ground, because of touching the earth’s suffering (*džir zäxmäte kagilu*),⁴⁹⁸ they poured salt water or butter onto the ground by way of atonement, or buried an iron nail, an egg, or a live cockroach into the ground, or a piece of thread as long as the person’s height. They would say the formula asking for strength at this time, too.⁴⁹⁹

During their work in the fields, the Mishar Tatars would always give from their food to the master of the earth first⁵⁰⁰ and would also offer an annual sheep sacrifice. The place of the sacrifice was called *kärämät* (see also → *Kirämät*).

⁴⁹⁶ Çetin might cite the prayer text from Mukhamedzhanov 1982. If it is so, then this is a Tatar text collected along the River Ik in Bashkortostan.

⁴⁹⁷ I quote two such short prayers under Yus. 356/1 and 356/2.

⁴⁹⁸ The Tatar form *džir zäxmäte* also exists in Chuvash: *šēr seymečē* ‘name of a deity’ (Ashm. XIII, 95; see also Chuv. → *Šēr*); in Bashkir, the phrase, which is identical in Tatar, *zäxmät qagılıu* means ‘to fall ill (due to harm inflicted by some mythical force)’ (BRS2 196).

⁴⁹⁹ I quote this under Yus. 356/3.

⁵⁰⁰ At such occasions, they would say: “Earth’s master! Sit down with us and eat with us!” (Mukh. 186).

The earth's master could also cause diseases to people: it would cause bellyache to those who desecrated a place on the earth protected by taboos (which was usually the sacrificial place, or *kärämät*, itself).

Gayšä-Fatïyma

I. A name appearing in incantations (GG. I, 273); its further forms: *Ayša Batman* 'creator of the incantation' (Nas. 268); *Ayšä-Batman* (GG. I, 273). **III.** A compound coined from the names of Mohamed's wife (عائشة) and daughter (فاطمة), which can be found in this set form among all three Volga Turkic peoples, primarily in incantations (Chuv. → *Ašapatman*; Bash. → *Ğäyšä-Fatima*). **IV.** incantation: Nas. 267-268.

This compound name appears in Chuvash, Bashkir and Tatar incantations alike. Nasyrov believed that the creation and first practice of incantation was somehow linked to her (Nas. 267). Mészáros had a similar idea who, on the basis of the Chuvash material, assumed the memory of a once-time sorceress (Mész. 340-341). Of the Turkic languages, the being combined from the names of Mohamed's wife and daughter primarily exists in the folk culture of Volga Turkic peoples, but it is also sporadically found elsewhere (more details on this at the Chuvash entry → *Ašapatman*).

In Tatar incantations (similarly to Bashkir texts), the formulas "Not my hand, *Gayšä-Fatïyma*'s hand" (GG. I, 273)⁵⁰¹ or "not my word, *Ayša-Fatïma*'s order" (Kat. 13)⁵⁰² often appear.

Yılan

I. '1. snake' (TRS 145); in compound form: *yort yılanı* 'protector of the house and family, ensurer of their happiness but, if angered, it bankrupted the family or even put it on the brink of extinction' (Yus. 354). **II.** '2. (metaph.) enemy, evildoer, criminal' (TRS 145). **III.** *Yılan* is a word from a Turkic etymon, already present in Old Turkic (DTS 266; Cl. 930), and present in several Modern Turkic languages,

⁵⁰¹ I quote such an incantation under Nas. 267-268.

⁵⁰² Katanov mentions that this formula is also used by Christian Tatars and, as they do not really know who *Ayša* and *Fatima* were, they cross themselves after saying these words.

meaning ‘snake’ (cf. Sev. IV, 277; Räs. 200; GTJ 180). **IV.** incantation: Kat. 9/2; mythical story (legend of origin): Mész. 103-104.⁵⁰³

According to a belief widespread among Turkic-language peoples in the Volga region, if a snake lives for a hundred years it will turn into a dragon or dragon-snake → *Aždaχa*, and then into a → *Yuχa*. The Tatars also share this belief, but Koblov described a longer line of metamorphoses: a snake that is older than one year but younger than eight years is called *χayat*, the one from age eight to one hundred is *afgi*, followed by the *aždaχa*, and finally the *yuχa* (Kobl. 448).

Besides the above, the snake is a special animal in Tatar beliefs for other reasons too. It can be the shape that a spirit or demon takes (e.g. → *Džinn*, → *Abzar iyäse*);⁵⁰⁴ in some places, the house spirit is called the ‘house’s snake’ (Yus. 354), but it can also cause diseases. Katanov recorded in the 19th century that the snake king caused people’s headaches, which were cured with incantation (Kat. 9).⁵⁰⁵ Also Katanov recorded that the spirit of fever was believed to be afraid of the snake king; therefore, snakes were used to cure fever (Kat. 10).

Yuχa

I. ‘thousand-year-old dragon, capable of turning into something else’ (Nas. 245; Kobl. 448); ‘multi-headed snake that devours people and animals’ (TRS 697). **II.** ‘2. hypocritical (person), boot-licker, flatterer, ill-willed person’ (TRS 697). **III.** Besides the Turkic languages of the Volga region, the word also exists in Turkmen and Uzbek (and of non-Turkic languages, in Tajik, too). Scherner suggests that it might go back to the Iranian word *dahāka*, which, he presumes, might have made its way into Proto-Turkic (cf. Scher. 123). This word is the second part of the Mod-Per. word *aždahā* < Avestan compound *Aži Dahāka*, which got into several Turkic language with the meaning ‘dragon, dragon-snake, evil spirit’. Scherner’s idea is witty but rather problematic. **IV.** mythical story (memorat): Kobl. 450; Tul. 310.

⁵⁰³ This legend in fact explains the forked tale of swallows, but it is also interesting because of the double approach to snakes (positive and negative at the same time).

⁵⁰⁴ They do not kill the snake in the yard, in case it is the spirit of the yard or the stable (see → *Abzar iyäse*).

⁵⁰⁵ I quote such a text under Kat. 9/2.

A snake living for one hundred years becomes a dragon, → *Aždaça*, and the dragon living for five hundred or a thousand years becomes a *yuxa*. The *yuxa*, in contrast with the *aždaça*, is dangerous for humans, as it can appear in various animal shapes, such as a cow, dog or cat, as well as in human form, as a beautiful young maiden (Kobl. 449-450). In these shapes, its main aim is to destroy people.⁵⁰⁶ The *yuxa* is only able to live on earth in such an animal or human form for 49 days, after which it turns back into an *aždaça* (Kobl. 450).

There are many stories of young men marrying such a *yuxa*, in the shape of a beauty, and then becoming increasingly emaciated, weakened, or subjected to other forms of misfortune. (Kobl. 449). Although the *yuxa* can take a human form, it can be recognized from some signs. The *yuxa*-maiden has bad breath; according to some accounts, a particularly putrid smell emanates from her mouth, and she can also be recognised from not having a navel.⁵⁰⁷ The *yuxa*-girl is also characterised by her enormous need for water. She needs a whole bucketful of water for the night, or even more, in which case she goes to drink to the lake at night in the shape of a snake (Nas. 246; Kobl. 449-450).⁵⁰⁸

Kirämät

I. *Kirämät* ‘superstition, misbelief’ (WD. 291); (obs.) ‘1. sacred place near the village, where sacrifices are offered; 2. spirits to whom the sacrifices are offered’ (Kobl. 457); ‘spirit; sacrificial place, sacrificial ceremony’ (Sofi. 678); *kirämät* ‘(obs; relig.) sacrificial sacred place among Finno-Ugric peoples, 2. miracle’ (TRS 259); *kirämätle* ‘(obs; relig.) pagan [lit. *kiremet*-like]’ (TRS 259); *kāramāt* ‘(obs; relig.) miracle, miraculous force’ (TRS 320); Mish. *kārāmāt* ‘place of sacrifice, where the annual sacrifice was offered to the earth’s master’ (Mukh. 186); ‘a unique spirit among the Chuvash, Cheremis and Christian Tatars’ (Ost. 121). III. The word

⁵⁰⁶ I quote a story about a *yuxa* adopted in the form of a cat under Kobl. 450.

⁵⁰⁷ This characteristic and the great demand for water are also typical of the Bashkir → *Yuxa*.

⁵⁰⁸ In the descriptions so far, fairy-tale and mythical storylines are mixed up. In the case of the *yuxa*, they are really close to each other.

is of Arabic origin; on its Turkic background, see Chuv. → *Kiremet*. **IV.** prayer: (see Tatar incantations): Kobl. 458; Sofi. 684.

Among Muslim Kazan and Mishar Tatars, the *kirämät* is not a mythical being (for the former, it is ‘miracle’ and for the latter, the place of a specific annual sacrifice). Among Christian Tatars, it is a mythical being known until the mid-20th century and related to the Chuvash being → *Kiremet* in several aspects.

In Sofiyskiy’s material, collected among Christian Tatars, the word appears with three different meanings (he has it in the form of *kiremet*): (1) name of a particular spirit or group of spirits, (2) name of the place where sacrifices are offered to these spirits, (3) sacrificial ceremony dedicated to the *kiremet* spirit (Sofi. 678). Once a year, the Christian Tatars offered a bloody animal sacrifice to the *kiremet* and in addition, smaller sacrifices of porridge or coins were offered to it at other times. Sofiyskiy also recorded that some *kiremet*s were known to all Christian Tatars and had their own names, such as the *tängre kelüyi* or, by another name, *tärelär kiremete* (Sofi. 679-680). The Tatar word *tängre* means ‘God’⁵⁰⁹ and *keläü* means ‘prayer’⁵¹⁰ thus this *kiremet*’s name is ‘God’s prayer’. In the other form, the word *täre* means ‘icon’ in Tatar, thus the name means ‘icons’ *kiremet*’.⁵¹¹ Apakov recorded a *täre ügeze* form, which he translated as ‘divine bull’ (Apakov 1876) and, although the translation is certainly not accurate in this form, the meaning ‘icon’s bull’ would be hard to interpret. According to Apakov’s record, the *täre ügeze kiremet* had to be offered a sacrifice of porridge and money whenever a child was born. Sofiyskiy also has compound forms

⁵⁰⁹ The word is of Old Turkic origin and exists in all Modern Turkic languages. I provide more detailed data under Chuvash → *Turä*.

⁵¹⁰ The Tatar word *keläü* means ‘(dial.) prayer, praying’ (TRS 246). It also exists as a mythical being among the Chuvash, see → *Kělě*.

⁵¹¹ Besides the meaning ‘icon’, Sofiyskiy also gives the meaning ‘sky’s God’, but he takes this from Old Turkic inscriptions; there is in fact no Tatar data for this meaning from this period. In addition to the meaning of ‘icon’ in Tatar, all meanings of the word refer to a pictorial or symbolic representation, for example, *täre* ‘pendant’ or the meaning of ‘clubs’ as a playing card suit (cf. Ostroumov 1892, 211-212; TTS III, 225).

in which *kiremet* and *keläü* are synonymous, such as *χudžalar keläü* ‘masters’ prayer’ and *χudža kiremete* ‘master’s *kiremet*’.

Besides the *tängre kälüyi*, *tärelär kirämäte* and the *χudžalar keläü*, *χudža kiremete*, all Christian Tatars also know a great *kiremet* called *tür ügeze*. *Ügez*, meaning ‘bull’ also appears among the names of water spirits (see → *Su ügez*),⁵¹² and *tür* is the front, honoured corner of the house (TRS 581).⁵¹³ Sofiyskiy gives a different meaning: in his translation, the compound form means ‘original, elemental bull’ (Sofi. 679).⁵¹⁴ This translation is hard to interpret and probably incorrect, yet it is worth considering a piece of Mashanov’s data in this context. Christian Tatars had a concept that the souls of the dead gather underground, in the horns of an enormous bull holding the world. At the last judgement, the horns would break off and the souls would come forth (Mashanov 1875, 17). The bull that holds the world underground between its horns may have an attribute such as ‘original, elemental’, but there is not a single reference in any dictionary to such a meaning of the Tatar word *tür*. In addition, Sofiyskiy himself believes that this name actually originates from the animal offered to the *kiremet* as a sacrifice. Whereas the above-mentioned *kiremet*s, *tängre kälüyi* and *χudža kirämäte* were usually offered lamb sacrifices, the *tür ügeze* was offered bulls. If this name indeed comes from the sacrificial animal, then Mashanov’s data about the bull holding the earth naturally cannot be related to it. Sofiyskiy also believes that sacrificial animals appear in the multiply compound forms that are found, for example, among the names of the field’s *kiremet*: *kir kirämätenen kizil tanası* ‘field’s *kiremet*’s red calf’, *kir kirämätenen kizil tanasınin aldinnan džöröy torgan ak tākäse* ‘white lamb going before the field’s *kiremet*’s red calf’. Sofiyskiy believes that the phrase ‘going before’ in fact means ‘slain before’ (Sofi. 682). It is not a possibility to be ruled

⁵¹² It also appears in Bashkir: *hiu ügeđe* ‘water’s spirit [lit. water’s bull]’ see Bash. → *Hiu eyähe*.

⁵¹³ The connection of the word with the Chuvash form *tür kelli*, the name of a spirit, would deserve further study (see Chuv. → *Kělě*).

⁵¹⁴ Apakov also gives a similar meaning: ‘original, old bull’ (Apakov 1876, 332).

out; however, perhaps it is also worth mentioning here that the Chuvash pantheon abounds in deities and spirits whose names include this form (e.g. *Pülëχśě* going before God, good one going before *Kiremet*); furthermore, these Tatar names also appear as the names of specific spirits. In the Chuvash material, there are also several examples of the place of the sacrifice, the prayer said there and the sacrifice offered there all becoming the names of independent deities or spirits. Such a process might have taken place here as well.

Koblov mentions records from the mid-19th century⁵¹⁵ about some Tatars putting a small sack of money in a corner of their house to be spent on buying a sacrificial animal, which was a black horse or goose. Tatars believed that springs, lakes, rivers and forests were the dwelling-places of the *kiremet*-spirits; therefore, they sacrificed money or animals at these places. By the beginning of the 20th century, however, the belief in *kiremet*s had completely disappeared, its only trace remaining in the goose sacrifice offered by Christian Tatars at the time of the harvest, when they would ask for blessing and health for the next year. Although the words of their prayer were addressed to God,⁵¹⁶ Koblov believed that this prayer was originally meant for the *kiremet* (Kobl. 457-459).⁵¹⁷

The worship of solitary trees was widespread among Tatars, and sacrifices were also offered at several of these. Such trees sometimes have names like *kirämätle kayın* ‘*kiremet*-birch’, as well as compound names such as: *kelävle karama* ‘prayer-elm’, *iyäle agač* ‘tree with a master’ (Yus. 354).

⁵¹⁵ Unfortunately, Koblov does not name his source.

⁵¹⁶ Although it is a prayer recorded among Christian Tatars, God appears in it as *Allah*. This phenomenon is not at all unique. Mashanov, for example, recorded that Christian Tatars often used the words *iblis* and *käpir* (*käfir*) as swearwords (Mashanov 1875, 17). In the Quran, *Iblīs* is one of the names of the devil and the Arabic word *kāfir* means ‘infidel’.

⁵¹⁷ I quote this short prayer under Kobl. 458.

Očan

I. ‘bloating in infancy and its spirit’ (Sof. 39). **II.** ‘bloating’ (TRS 416); ‘bloating in childhood’ (TTS II, 484). **III.** Perhaps the word could be related to the ComTurk. verb *učun-*, which exists in the other Turkic languages and is used in connection with various diseases (e.g. yellow spots on the teeth, epilepsy; cf. Sev. I, 616). However, this possibility is rather problematic; see also Bash. → *Ösyan*, → *Osoq*. **IV.** incantation: Sof. 40-42.

According to the belief of Christian Tatars, bloating in infancy was caused by a spirit, therefore it was cured by a specialist. In this case, the healer would take off his slippers made of bast, or use some other, definitely old, footwear, put it on the baby’s belly and incant upon the disease.⁵¹⁸ Afterwards, the footwear was thrown out over the threshold. If the bloating would persist after such a healing session, the next time, the healer would not use footwear but a spider, which he would squash on the baby’s belly (Sof. 39-42).⁵¹⁹

Öy iyäse

I. ‘protector of the house’ (Mak. 6); ‘house elf’ (Bál. 145); ‘house’s master’ (Nas. 252); ‘house spirit’ (Kobl. 419; TRS 183); its further forms: *yort yılanı* ‘protector of the house and the family, ensurer of their happiness but, if angered, it would bankrupt the family or even put it on the brink of extinction’ (Yus. 354) [lit. ‘house’s snake’]; *yort xudža*, *izba xudža* ‘master of the house and the yard’ (Tul. 218). **II.** *öy* ‘house’ (TRS 737) + *iyä* ‘master, owner, landlord’ (TRS 183); *yort* ‘house, building, dwelling place’ (TRS 191); *izba* ‘house’; *xudža* ‘master, owner’ (TRS 617). **III.** *Öy* is an early Turkic word present in several Turkic languages (cf. Sev. I, 513-515; OT. *ev* ‘tent, house, dwelling place’, see DTS 189; Cl. 3-4); *izba* is a Russian loan word, for Russian (*уздба*) and Slavic data, see Vas. I, 473-474. The word *iyä*, meaning ‘master’ is from a Turkic etymon, see Chuv. → *lye*. **IV.** mythical story (memorat): Bál. 60; Tul. 340/1-4, 341.

The *öy iyäse* is primarily the protector and patron of the house and its inhabitants. It is similar to the stable’s spirit (→ *Abzar iyäse*) in some respects, and some other features relate it to the → *Bičura*, but fundamental differences are also well outlined.

⁵¹⁸ I quote the incantations recited at such occasions under Sof. 40-42.

⁵¹⁹ I quote this incantation under Sof. 42.

The Tatars believed that every house had a spirit or, it rather seems from the data that this being was not necessarily related to the house, but rather to the family. This is indicated by the records that when the family moved into a new house, they tried to take the *öy iyäse* with them during a night ceremony (Mak. 7).

It was always imagined as an old person; in Maksimov's description, it could be either a woman or a man (Mak. 7). Nasyrov and Koblöv described it as an old man, and one of Bálint's data providers recounted that the house spirit appeared to him in the form of their mother (Bál. 146).⁵²⁰ There were also various beliefs as to its dwelling place. It was mainly believed to live in the cellar, from where it would come up to the house at night, but accounts claimed that it lived near the stove or in one of the corners (Mak. 7).

According to the records, the *öy iyäse* is active at night, when it can be heard shuffling and breathing and sometimes even working; for example, continuing the spinning left undone. Several accounts claim that, like the → *Abzar iyäse* plaits the mane of its favourite horses, the *öy iyäse* plaits the people's hair at night. Such plaits must not be undone, because if somebody would do so, they would incur the wrath of the house spirit, who would in turn make them ill or unfortunate in some other way (Kobl. 424). The *öy iyäse* would also warn people of dangers, for example, if a fire broke out at night, it would wake them up by jerking their legs (Kobl. 423).

The *öy iyäse* could also foresee the future, which it showed in the form of signs. For example, if it walked up and down at night, sighing a lot, it could be known that the inhabitants of the house were facing some difficulty (Kobl. 419). Nasyrov provides a whole range of signs. From the night activities of the *öy iyäse*, it could be concluded that the family was about to get rich – the spirit was minting money and made a “chick-chick” sound. If it was spinning, it would refer to getting rich through some craft, and if it was turning pages and scratching a pen, it referred to some “scientific” work

⁵²⁰ I quote this mythical story under Bál. 146.

(Nas. 252-253). In Koblov's collection, the sign of wealth to come was the *öy iyäse* sifting the flour at night (Kobl. 423).

In order to keep its benevolence or to placate it if it was somehow offended, the *öy iyäse* was regularly offered a sacrifice of porridge or sometimes a duck (Bál. 145; Mak 8).⁵²¹ Maksimov recorded among Christian Tatars that the house spirit was given copper coins in a small bag hung below the roof, which was forbidden to spend. Families that did become rich offered a bigger animal sacrifice of sheep or cattle to the *öy iyäse* every three to four years (Mak. 8-10).

On the other hand, the *öy iyäse* would punish people if it was dissatisfied with them for some reason. For example, it revenged the person with a disease who urinated in the cellar, continued its spinning (Kobl. 423-424) and who quarrelled or fought in the house (Tul. 218). At such times, it would most often give people scabies, various boils and furuncles. They could get rid of the diseases and placate the *öy iyäse* with a sacrifice of porridge (Kobl. 423-424).

The notion of the *öy iyäse* has by now changed significantly. Today, it is imagined as some frightening, invisible being or as one appearing in an animal shape (especially as a snake or a bird) and disturbing people at night. Its figure is connected with the notion of the souls of the dead returning and, these days, people try to protect themselves against it by praying or reading the Quran (Tul. 218, 339-343).⁵²²

Öräk

I. Урҗак 'soul of a person who died an unnatural death, continuing to live on earth' (Nas. 251; Kobl. 439); 'ghost, spirit' (TTS III, 706). III. Nasyrov traces it back to the verb *ör-* 'to breathe' (Nas. 251), whereas Räsänen starts from the Old Turkic verb (*h*)*ürk-* 'get scared, be afraid' (Räs. 522). Nasyrov believed that *öräk*, the derivative of the verb *ör-* could have meant 'soul' earlier in Tatar. The primary meaning of the Old Turkic verb *ürk-* was 'to blow' (Cl. 195). The word exists in several Modern Turkic

⁵²¹ Koblov records that alms were given to the house spirit for this purpose from time to time (Kobl. 423).

⁵²² I quote some relevant descriptions under Tul. 340 and Tul. 341.

languages with the same meaning, as well as with the meanings ‘to breathe, incant, whistle’ (cf. Sev. I, 635). **IV.** mythical story (memorat): Kobl. 441-442.

In Nasyrov’s record, the *öräk* comes from the souls of people killed in the forest and on the road. It screams next to the dead body in a heart-wrenching voice. They can be invisible or appear in the shape of a haystack or a person. In order not to see or hear the *öräk*, Tatars avoid places at night where a dead body is lying (Nas. 251-252).

In Koblov’s collection, the *öräk* lives where human blood was shed. Here, the soul of the victim lives on and appears in human form. If somebody meets such an *öräk*, they will lose consciousness. Besides, the *öräk* will distract people from their way, or get on their wagon, which the horse can then barely pull. If somebody is accompanied by an *öräk*, they cannot get rid of it by praying, only by cursing and swearing profusely (Kobl. 439-442).⁵²³

Nasyrov thought that the word meaning ‘soul’ in Tatar may have been *öräk* before converting to Islam, because when somebody gets terrified, they say: *öräkim kupti*.⁵²⁴ Nasyrov translates the phrase as ‘my *öräk* has flown away’, but its meaning is closer to ‘my *öräk* has been left behind’. Thus, Nasyrov argues that everybody has an *öräk* (Nas. 552).⁵²⁵ Because of the contemporary meaning of the word, Koblov rejects Nasyrov’s theory (Kobl. 440). I would like to add that, although the saying exists in modern Tatar, too, the first word is in fact not *öräk*, but *yöräk*, meaning ‘heart’ (cf. *yöräk kubu* ‘get very frightened’ TRS 292).

Päri, Päreı

I. *Päreı* ‘group of evil spirits’ (Mak. 21); ‘evil spirit’ (Bál. 64); *päri* ‘impure force, devil’ (TRS 443). **III.** The word of Persian origin exists in several Turkic languages;

⁵²³ I quote a memorat about it under Kobl. 441-442. In the Bashkir material, there are also examples of diseases curable by swearing (Bash. → *Ösyän*).

⁵²⁴ Nasyrov notes down the Tatar word in the form уряк, which corresponds to contemporary transliteration. (In Nasyrov’s notation: урягым купты.)

⁵²⁵ He originates the word from *ör-* (in his note: урмяк) ‘to breathe’ (Nas. 251); actually, the verb *ör-* means ‘to blow’ (TRS2 II, 118).

in more detail, see Bashkir → *Pärey*. **IV.** Mythical story (memorat): Mak. 22-23; (belief description): Mak. 24-25; (mythical legend): Mak. 27.

Among the majority of Tatars, this being exists in the compound form *diyü-päri*, and the independent form *pärey* can only be found in the records of two 19th-century collectors of Christian Tatars' beliefs: Maksimov and Bálint. It incorporated the characteristics of several other mythical beings.

Bálint claims that the *päris* are evil spirits just like the → *Džinn* and the → *Šaytan*, but their main activity is going in the dust with the whirlwind in windy weather (Bál. 64).

According to Maksimov's longer description, which is different from Bálint's, the *pärey* is a whole group of evil spirits. They appear in human form and can be women, men, young, old, or even children. Nevertheless, they look frightening: their faces are black, they have one eye on their forehead, their teeth are snarling and their unkempt hair stands on end like a pig's bristles (Mak. 21-23).

There were also various ideas as to their dwelling place. According to one of them, they live in the house and in the bath, and according to other beliefs, they live chained up far away from people, and are only released on Christmas Eve, when they wander all over the earth in large numbers.⁵²⁶ At the end of Christmas Eve, they again take up their chains and shackles. A third belief claims that the *päreys* attack on roads and in the forest, and try to abduct people. This can be prevented by the person not sitting down or, if they must have a rest for some reason, they must spit on their seat after getting up.

The *pärey* is dangerous to pregnant women and babies because it can steal the foetus from the womb or, after it is born, exchange the baby for its own young.⁵²⁷

⁵²⁶ In the collection of Maksimov, Christian Tatar, it is also typical of the *albastis* to attack people mainly at Christmas (→ *Albasti*).

⁵²⁷ I quote a relevant text under Mak. 24-25.

Šaytan

I. ‘evil spirit’ (Bál. 64); ‘Satan, the devil, evil, impure force; devilish’ (TRS 653)

II. ‘3. cunning person’ (TRS 653). Mythical story (memorat): Tul. 357; 360; 365/1-2; 368/2.

In Bálint’s description, the *šaytan* is an evil spirit just like the → *Džinn* and the → *Pärey*, yet it differs from them in its acts, as the *šaytan* not only does wrong to people but also tempts them to do wrong (Bál. 64). The figure of the *šaytan* did not appear in the other, earlier records.

According to recent collections, the concept of *šaytan* has assimilated several earlier notions: it has mainly taken on the characteristics of the bath’s master and of the evil being that exchanges babies (Tul. 219-220). Furthermore, there are a great many ideas regarding its appearance as well as its dwelling place.

Data providers described the *šaytan* as a human-like being whose body is covered with bristles; it may be one-eyed, one-toothed, but may appear in the form of a dog or cat, in which case it has only one eye on its forehead or its legs are really long. It abides in the bath or, in other accounts, in the forest or by crossroads.

In some accounts, the *šaytan* distracts people from their path in the woods; in other texts, if a person does not say *Bismillah* ‘in God’s name’ at night, before falling asleep, the *šaytan* will push them during the night. However, beside the forest spirit and the demon oppressor, some data suggest the contamination of *šaytan* with the → *Öräk*, too. There is one piece of data about the *šaytan* moving into a house because a man had previously died there with his blood spilling all over the place.

Šom

I. ‘fever and the spirit causing it’ (Sof. 50). **II.** ‘restlessness, confusion, fear, anxiety, excitement, superstitious dread’ (TRS 661; TTS III, 511). **III.** The word is of Arabic origin: Ar. شوم (*šūm*) ‘disaster, misfortune’ ARS 423); already present in 12-13th century sources of Central Asian Turkic languages (Borovkov 1963, 365).

According to Sofiyskiy’s collection, fever and the diseases accompanied by it are all caused by the fever demon that appears in the

shape of various creatures. The name of this demon (and the disease) in Tatar is *bizgäk* or *šom* (Sof. 50). In fact, the two names do not mean the same: the fever itself or the febrile illness is → *Bizgäk*, and *šom* refers either to the condition accompanying the fever or to the cause underlying the illness. In everyday language use, *šom* tends to mean restlessness, fright or excitement. Beside the Tatar example (→ *Bizgäk*) of the connection between a febrile illness and fright, there are also Bashkir data for the same (Bash. → *Biðgäk*).

Šüräle

I. ‘forest spirit’ (Bud. 675; Bäl. 63; Mak. 20; Nas. 254, Kobl. 429; Sof. 46-47; TRS 670; TTS III, 541); ‘forest spirit with three fingers; it attacks people and tickles them hard’ (Ost. 238). III. Bashkir and Tatar scholars are in disagreement about which people’s forest spirit the *šüräle* originally is (for more details, see Bashkir → *Šüräle*), but the *šüräle* not only exists among Volga Turkic peoples but also among the Kazakhs (cf. e.g. Valikhanov 1904, 277). Räsänen, however, originates the first part of the word from Chuvash (although with a question mark), citing one of Benzing’s earlier assumptions: Chuv. *šěvër*; *šür* ‘sharp, pointed, thin’ + *alě* (< *älig*) ‘hand, -handed’ (Benzing 1947, 80-81; Räs. 450); Jamaletdinov, on the other hand, originates the first part of the word from the word *šär* ‘trouble, difficulty’ (Jamaletdinov 1979, 117). The word is not included in the Tatar–Russian dictionary, but appears in the monolingual Tatar dictionary: *šär(r)* ‘(archaic, literary) trouble, difficulty, hard work’ (TTS III, 535). This word is of Arabic origin: Ar. شر (*šarr*) ‘trouble, difficulty, misfortune’ (ARS 397); ModPer. شر (*šärr*) ‘bad, trouble, damage, misfortune’ (Gaff. II, 497) got into several Turkic languages with Persian mediation. Besides Tatar, it exists, e.g., in Kazakh, Osmanli, Azeri, as well as in Chuvash (cf. e.g. Fed. I, 437; Ashm. XVII, 132; AFS 782 – partly with a broader etymology, with less clearly relevant Yakut and Mongolian data: Egor. 331). Gysl’manov considers the Tatar word also a compound, whose first part he equates with the verb *šürlä-* ‘be afraid, get frightened’ (GG. I, 153). Basilov suggests the possibility that the word *šüräle*, just like the second part of Chuv. → *Ar-šuri* would be related to the god-name *Ščur* of Slavic mythology (ME II, 654). The etymology of the word cannot be considered resolved. IV. mythical story (memorat): Kobl. 432; (belief description): Mész. 51.

Šüräles are forest spirits living in the woods in large numbers, which are harmful to humans, but also easy to trick, due to their stupidity.

Their appearance is human-like, although their size is huge. According to the descriptions, it has long, black hair and is naked, with

its bones barely covered with flesh. Its fingers and breasts are very long and it carries its breasts hung over its shoulders – however, it is not clear whether it is male or female (Mak. 19; Nas. 253; Kobl. 428-429).

The *šüräle* distracts the solitary person walking in the forest from their path, calls them in a human voice, asking them for help (Kobl. 429) or approaching them with roaring laughter (Mak. 20), but its aim is always only to lure them into the thick of the forest. Once there, it suggests that they play tickles, and if the person agrees, the *šüräle* will tickle them to death (Kat. 8; Mak. 20; Bál. 63; Nas. 254; Kobl. 429). People especially have to be careful that the *šüräle* does not see their teeth (Kobl. 429).⁵²⁸

There are various ways to protect oneself against the *šüräle*. If possible, one should not go into the forest alone. If they are two, the *šüräle* does not go up to people, and it is also afraid of dogs, so somebody going alone ought to at least take a dog with them (Kobl. 429). It is also a good solution not to answer the *šüräle*'s questions. Yet, if somebody talks to the *šüräle*, it can be trapped with a trick. One must drive a wedge into a tree and make the *šüräle* put its long finger into the gap. If, in the meantime, the *šüräle* asks "Who are you?", the person must answer: "Got stuck last year", and leave the *šüräle*. When it notices that its finger is stuck, it will start shouting and screaming, making the other *šüräles* throng there. When the one in trouble tells them who had done it, the other *šüräles* will not help it, thinking that it had "got stuck last year" (Nas. 254; Kobl. 430). The *šüräle* is also afraid of water, so people must cross the stream if possible, because the *šüräle* will not follow them to the other side. If the *šüräle* asks where the source of the stream is, one must point to the opposite direction, because the *šüräle* is such a fast runner that it can quickly go around the source and threaten the person again. If, on the other hand, it is sent in the direction of a bigger river or the sea, people can escape it (Kobl. 429-430). Nevertheless,

⁵²⁸ Kobl. does not mention why but, on the basis of the Chuvash material, the reason must be that the tickling forest spirit likes removing people's teeth (see Chuv. → *Ar-šuri*).

it is not worth beating or killing the *šüräle* because a new being will rise from every drop of its blood (Bál. 63).⁵²⁹

Another characteristic of the *šüräle* is that it loves riding horses and it buckets them at night until they foam. If the owner sees that his horse is exhausted in the morning, he spreads tar on its back in order to catch the *šüräle* with it. If, however, they kill such a *šüräle*, it can curse people (Kobl. 430).

Bálint records that the *šüräle* guards treasures and if somebody defeats it and then lets it go, it can make that person rich (Bál. 63).

Already at the beginning of the 20th century, Koblov wrote that the *šüräle* was only known by the elderly, and this being was getting slowly forgotten (Kobl. 421). In today's collections, some features of the *šüräle* that have remained are riding and bucketing horses and shouting loudly in the forest (Tul. 337-339).

The Tatar figure of *šüräle* was made known in fiction by Abdullah Tukay's short story. Thanks to this literary work, this Tatar mythical being received greater attention among scholars, partly because of comparisons between the short story and the mythical being and partly because of the influence the artwork had on the later development of this folklore creature (e.g. Berezin 1947; Jamaletdinov, 1979; Öner, 1991; Atnur, 2007).

Su anası

I. 'water's mother (one of the water spirits)' (Nas. 244; Kobl. 442-443). **II.** *su* 'water, of water' (TRS2 261-262) + *ana* 'mother, motherly; female' (TRS2 99-100). **III.** Both words are from a Turkic etymon; for the etymology of *su*, meaning 'water', see Chuv. → *šiv*; Turkic data of *ana*, meaning 'mother': GTJ 298-299. **IV.** incantation: Kobl. 463, 464.

According to Koblov, the relationship of *su anası*⁵³⁰ with → *Su babası* 'water grandfather or water ancestor' and → *Su iyäse* 'water's master' cannot be accurately clarified. In some stories, it seems that the water's mother is the wife of *su babası*, and some other times of

⁵²⁹ These characteristics fully correspond to the Chuvash figure of → *Ar-šuri*.

⁵³⁰ Koblov consistently spells the Tatar word meaning 'water' as *süu*.

su iyäse, and its character is also mixed with the features of these other beings. A water spirit sitting on the shore combing its long, black hair, reaching almost to the ground⁵³¹ can equally be the mother or master of water. However, both the water's grandfather and mother are regarded as man-eating (Kobl. 442-443; similarly, although more briefly: Nas. 244-245).

Of the three water spirits, the one most frequently appearing in modern collections is the *su ana*, as if it had finally integrated the characteristics of the other two beings into itself. In these records, the *su ana* is very dangerous: it pulls people into the depths and at sunset, grabs those who go near the water and makes ill those who disturb it. Of its old features, its long hair has remained and there are still several stories about it sitting on the shore combing its hair (Tul. 325-327).

Su babasï

I. 'water's father (one of the water spirits)' (Nas. 244; Kobl. 443). **II.** *su* 'water, of water' (TRS2 261) + *baba* 'grandfather, ancestor, father-in-law (the wife's father)' (TRS2 181). **III.** Both words are from a Turkic etymon; for the background of *su* 'water', see Chuv. → Šiv. The word *baba* already existed in Old Turkic; today, in one part of Turkic languages, it means 'grandfather, ancestor', and in the other part, 'father' (Räs. 53; GTJ 294, 305, 654-655). **IV.** incantation: Kobl. 464.

The relationship of water spirits (see also → *Su anasï*, → *Su iyäse*) to each other is difficult to clarify, but there are some characteristics that are more typical of one or the other. As opposed to the other two water spirits, the *su babasï* is invisible according to most records: it never comes out of the water and lives mostly in lakes. It is the cruellest one; it resides where the water is the deepest, it grabs people, pulls them down into the depth and destroys them. It can cause huge storms, which also kill many people (Kobl. 443-444; similarly, although more briefly: Nas. 244).

⁵³¹ There are also examples of a water creature combing its long hair on the shore among the Kumyks and Karachay-Balkars (Yus. 360).

Su iyäse

I. *Su eyäse* ‘water elf’ (Bál. 61); ‘disease-causing water spirit’ (Kat. 8); ‘water spirit stronger than man but weaker than a bear’ (Nas. 244); ‘water spirit, water’s master’ (Kobl. 442); its further forms: *su xudža* ‘water spirit, water’s master’ (Tul. 217). **II.** *su* ‘water, of water’ (TRS 487) + *iyä* ‘master, owner, landlord’ (TRS 183); *xudža* ‘master, owner’ (TRS 617). **III.** Both words are from a Turkic etymon; for the background of *su* ‘water’, see Chuv. → Šiv. The word *iyä* already existed in Old Turkic, see Chuv. → Iye (for the data on *xudža*, see Chuv. → Xuša). **IV.** mythical story (memorat): Bál. 62; Mak. 14, 15, 16-17; incantation: Kobl. 463, 464.

The water’s master is one of the water spirits, which sometimes appears as the somewhat stupid son of the two older water spirits, the water’s grandfather and the water’s mother (→ *Su babasī*, → *Su anasī*), and sometimes as the greatest lord of waters. Some authors do not differentiate between water spirits but call all of them “water’s master” (e.g. Kat. 8; Bál. 61-62; Mak. 13-16), yet the different beings can be separated on the basis of other, more detailed descriptions.

In Maksimov’s description, the spirit of water is a very dangerous being, who sometimes, at least once a year, pulls somebody down into the depths with itself. Therefore, the Tatars were afraid to go near the water’s edge alone after sunset. Water millers offered an animal sacrifice to the spirit of water once a year so that it would allow the wheel of the watermill to turn. If it comes out to the shore, it can be seen in the shape of a pig or a human. As a human, it can take various forms – it can be young or old, a man or a woman and, as the latter, it would even go to the market to do the shopping (Mak. 13-16).

Katanov describes the various diseases associated with the spirit of the water: the *su iyäse* is responsible for fever, cold and general malaise. It sits out on the shore of the water at sunset and combs its red hair.⁵³² Bálint also recorded a brief story about a water spirit combing its hair on the shore (Bál. 61-62) and he also confirmed Maksimov’s data on the water spirit pulling people down into the

⁵³² According to other descriptions, this is typical of the → *Su anasī*.

depths.⁵³³ Bálint records about the diseases (primarily, cold) attributed to the *su iyäse* that these were cured with a sacrifice of bran and salt, tied inside a rag and taken to the spring where the disease-causing water had been drunk. He also notes the custom that, when people drink from a spring they had not drunk or carried water from before, they draw a thread from their shirts, throw it into the water and say: “Kerchief to you, health to me” (Bál. 61).⁵³⁴ Koblov also records this custom, but in a slightly different way: women throw a hair from their head and men from their beard into the water (Kobl. 444-445).

On the basis of the stories, Nasyrov believed that the *su iyäse* must be the somewhat clumsy and stupid son of the *su babasï* and *anasï*, who is mostly his father’s messenger and executor. This being is stronger than a man but weaker than a bear (Nas. 244). Koblov came to a similar conclusion. In his description, the *su iyäse*, which can be found in lakes, rivers, streams and springs alike, cannot cause such great troubles and misfortunes to people as the *su babasï*, but rather annoys them with mischievous acts like driving the fish away from fishermen, trying to loosen the dam at the water mill and pushing animals and people underwater (Kobl. 444-445).

Koblov also recorded that the name *su iyäse* can equally denote a male or a female being in the texts. It is characteristic of the female *su iyäse* to sit on the shore combing her hair and jumping into the water if disturbed, leaving her golden comb on the shore. If somebody takes this comb, she will keep visiting that person’s house at night until she can get it back. These stories are very similar to the ones about the *su anasï* (Kobl. 445-446).

Su ügez

I. ‘water bull’ (Tul. 328). **II.** *su* ‘water, of water’ (TRS 487) + *ügez* ‘1. bull, 2. very big and strong’ (TRS 744). **III.** Both words are from a Turkic etymon; for the data

⁵³³ I quote this under Bál. 62.

⁵³⁴ This custom is also typical among the Bashkirs (→ *Hïu eyähe*), and can also be found in incantations, see Bashkir incantations, e.g. BashText 277, 321, 327). The words *saulik* ‘health’ and *yaulik* ‘kerchief’ rhyme in Tatar, too.

of *su*, see Chuv. → Šřv. The Tatar word *ügez* < OT. *öküz*, has been retained in several Turkic languages (Cl. 120; GTJ 439-440; WOT 663-667). **IV.** mythical story (memorat): Tul. 328.

It did not occur in earlier records, but exists in the new collections from Tulvin with three different natures. On the one hand, it is a water monster that grabs and pulls people into the water and drowns them (in early-20th-century records, this was a characteristic of the → *Su babası*). On the other hand, other data providers give a similar meaning, but claim that the *su ügez* is a child-scarer. When bathing for too long, children were threatened that the water bull would come and pull them into the water. The third concept is completely different from the previous two: here, the water bull appears as a creature holding the world,⁵³⁵ which lives until the end of the world (Tul. 327-329).

In earlier data collected among Christian Tatars, the word *ügez* (bull) occurs several times among the names of *kirämäts* (*täre ügeze*, *tür ügeze*; → *Kirämät*).

The Bashkirs also know the compound ‘water’s bull’, and this is what they call the water’s master (Bash. → *Hiu eyähe*) in the central Ural region.

Ubir

I. ‘at times, a separate supernatural being, but most often, a demon living in humans’ (Nas. 247); *ubirlikši* ‘*ubir*-man (person engaging in witchcraft)’ (Nas. 247); ‘witch’, *ubirli* ‘witch-like (person having an evil spirit)’ (Bál. 63); ‘blood-sucker, creature feeding on human blood’ (Kobl. 432); ‘1. creature turning into an animal or object, vampire’, *ubirli karčik* ‘(myth.) witch’ (TRS 582). **II.** *ubir* ‘2. gluttonous’; *ubirli karčik* ‘evil, cantankerous old woman’; *ubir uti* ‘will o’ the wisp [lit. the *ubir*’s fire]’ (TRS 582). **III.** The Tatar word *ubir* is of Turkic etymon; it already existed in Old Turkic and still exists in several Modern Turkic languages. For its Turkic background, see Chuvash → *Vupär*. Two relevant Tatar data in Bálint: *up*-‘swallow’, *upkin* ‘gluttonous monster; whirlpool, depth’ (WD 268). **IV.** mythical story: Bál. 64; Tul. 368/2, 3; (belief description): Mész. 45-46.

⁵³⁵ I also write about this being briefly under → *Kirämät*.

In Tatar mythical stories, the *ubir* partly appears as an independent being and partly as a demon that possesses people, who in turn become witchy or “*ubir*-like” (*ubirli karčik*, *ubirli keše*, *ubirlikši*).

The *ubir*-like person can be recognised by a dent on top of their head (Kobl. 433) or their hollow armpit(s),⁵³⁶ which is the hole through which the *ubir* can go in and out of the person (Nas. 247). It can take various shapes at night, such as a pig, black cat, black dog, a fire wheel or a fireball (Kobl. 433). It cannot be caught because it disintegrates into sparkles in an instant (Kobl. 432). However, if one manages to injure it in some way, it can be recognised the next day by the injuries on the body of the person it inhabits (Nas. 248; Kobl. 434).

Its main activity is to suck people’s blood at night (Kobl. 433), and Nasyrov adds that it also pushes people in their sleep (Nas. 247). According to Koblov’s data providers, only the → *Albasti* and the → *Bičura* push and the *ubir* does not (Kobl. 435).

The *ubir* does not attack strong men, but it is dangerous to women (Kobl. 433), especially pregnant women and animals with young, because it can steal the foetus from women’s and animals’ wombs. It is also dangerous to new-born human babies as well as lambs, kids, foals and calves as it likes to steal these, too (Kobl. 433-435). Nasyrov provides a piece of different, though relevant data: pregnant women can recognise the *ubir* flying through the air in the form of fire (Nas. 248).

The *ubir* can also cause diseases such as the paralysis of the hands and various skin diseases involving scabs and blisters, as well as hysteria, which is cured with horse sweat (Kobl. 435).

The person possessed by an *ubir* poses a threat even after their death, as the *ubir* continues to live in their corpse and comes out of the grave at night through the dead person’s mouth. Such an *ubir* not only harms people and causes them diseases but also swallows clouds, thus causing fatal droughts. To prevent this, the Tatars bury

⁵³⁶ A hollow armpit is typical of some Bashkir mythical beings, too, see Bash. → *Aždaxa*, → *Yen*, → *Šüräle*, → *Ubir*.

the person who was known to be an “*ubirlī keše*” in their life differently. They put them into the grave lying on their front, piercing their back and chest with an oak stick (Kobl. 496).

Bálint’s collection is different from the above at several points. He claims that the *ubir* is mainly associated with inflicting harm and, although it can also be dangerous to people, it usually spoils the water, thus causing diseases.⁵³⁷ It most often appears in the form of fire, but it can also take on a human form. People can protect against it with rowan or with salt sprinkled on the stove and by praying. The salt sprinkled on the stove also helps people to recognise the witch (*ubir*-like person), on whose face a boil is suddenly formed (Bál. 64).

The *ubirlī karčik* is also a common character of Tatar folk tales. In his essay, Nasyrov does not separate the witch of folk-tales from the witch of beliefs; for example, he quotes at length a tale that does not say much about Tatar beliefs, but is widely known from Northern Europe to East Asia.⁵³⁸

Urman iyäse

I. ‘human-shaped, black-faced forest being’ (Mak. 17); ‘forest elf’ (Bál. 148); ‘forest spirit’ (TRS 183). **II.** *urman* ‘forest, forest estate’ (TRS 591) + *iyä* ‘master, owner, landlord’ (TRS 183). **III.** Both words are from a Turkic etymon, well documented since the Old Turkic era and existing in several Modern Turkic languages: OT. *iđi* ‘master, owner, lord’; in Muslim sources, it is one of god’s synonyms. For the Old Turkic data and its modern equivalents, see e.g. Cl. 41; Räs. 169; Sev. I, 237-241; OT. *orman* ‘forest’ for its early and modern data, see e.g. DTS 371; Sev. I, 472. **IV.** mythical story (memorat): Mak. 18; Tul. 329/1-2; Tul. 330; (belief description): Mész. 51.

According to Maksimov’s record, the forest spirit is not a particularly dangerous being which distracts people from their path. They

⁵³⁷ Bálint recorded a memorat about a deadly contagious disease caused by the *ubir* and how to get rid of it, which I quote under Bál. 64.

⁵³⁸ A tale appearing in tale catalogues under № AaTh 480A / ATU 480, “The diligent girl and the lazy girl”-type tale. I have also dealt with the witch figures of Tatar tales in detail (Dallos 2009, 201-245).

will then wander in the forest for a long time, but it does not harm them in any other way. It usually asks people for food and does not harm those who give it something. Therefore, the Tatars going into the forest will take bread and honey with them to treat the spirit of the forest (Mak. 17-18).

In Bálint's collection, the *urman iyäse* also appears as a being that distracts people from their path, taking various shapes. Appearing as a person, it is large. Bálint also knows about an animal sacrifice offered regularly by Christian Tatars to the *urman iyäse*. They killed a white cock in the forest, left its head and legs for the forest spirit and took the rest home and ate it (Bál. 62-63).

Furthermore, according to Yusupov's description, several other stories are about the *urman iyäse* tickling people to death (Yus. 361), which relates this being to the Chuvash → *Ar-šuri*.

Ülät

I. 'impure force which causes pestilence in the farmyard' (Yus. 361). **II.** 'pestilence' (Yus. 361); 'mass death, epidemic' (TTS III, 730). **III.** The word is a derivative of the Turkic-etymon verb *ül-* 'die' (OT. *öl-* 'to die' Cl. 125-126). OT. *ölüt* means 'murderer', and *ölät* in Middle Turkic languages means 'epidemic, sudden death' (Cl. 130; Räs. 371).

A disease-demon, to which diseases of the farmyard were mainly attributed. It could appear in the form of a dog or a human (Yus. 361). During large epidemics, they ploughed around the village⁵³⁹ or all the inhabitants, armed with sticks, symbolically chased the *ülät* to the river.⁵⁴⁰

Marjani records that during the plague epidemic in Kazan in 1654-1655, the Tatars offered a great joint sacrifice on the Volga,

⁵³⁹ On this occasion, young girls or young widows were teamed in an old yoke and the procession was led by an old woman with a chipped scythe (Yus. 361).

⁵⁴⁰ The rite of chasing to the river was used by the Bashkirs to stop the spread of anthrax (Bash. → *Möstän*).

called *ülät kurbanı* ('*ülät*'s sacrifice'), when they killed goats (Marjani 1882, 50, 58).⁵⁴¹

Ziyandaş

I. 'epilepsy and its spirit' (Sof. 47). **II.** 'epilepsy' (TRS 157); as well as: *ziyan* 'damage, harm, disturbance, hindrance' (TRS 157); *ziyan zäxmät* 'damage, loss' (TRS 157). **III.** The word is of Persian origin. Besides Tatar, it exists in Bashkir, Kazakh and Chuvash, too (see e.g. Bud. 609; Scher. 66). The Persian word زیان (*ziyān*) 'damage, harm, want, lack, loss' (Gaf. I, 427) exists in several other Turkic languages, e.g. Osm; Az; Kum. (cf. Räs. 531; AFS 220). **IV.** incantation: Sof. 48.

The demon causing epilepsy can be ousted with an incantation (called *ziyandaş tele* '*ziyandaş*'s incantation'). Unfortunately, Sofyskiy only recorded the text without the method of healing.⁵⁴²

⁵⁴¹ In the original Tatar text, written in Arabic script, Marjani used the Arabic-origin word *vaba* to mean plague or cholera (it exists in modern Tatar, meaning 'cholera'), but in the name of the sacrifice ('plague or epidemic sacrifice'), he used the Tatar word *ülät*. (Radlov translated it into Russian, which is included in the article published in 1884, along with the Tatar original.)

⁵⁴² I quote this under Sof. 48.