

Ašapatman old woman came across the Volga,
with golden hair and silver teeth.
Thunder and lightning!
Huge thunder and lightning!

House eyes, outer eyes,
fatherly eyes, motherly eyes,
evil eye, a thousand eyes,
earthly eyes, water eyes,
red eyes, white eyes,
blue eyes, light eyes,
bulging eyes, upturned eyes!

The Sun turns, let it turn!
Heavy trouble (*χayar*)!
The Moon turns, let it turn!
Hardship came from the evil eye,
hardship turned into suffering.

The Sun turns, let it turn!
The Moon turns, let it turn!
Let the bad, the trouble (*usal-těsel*) scatter!

Was it taken from flesh and bone,
was it taken from its own nature or on top of it,
was it taken between skin and hide,
was it taken from eyes or head?

When the black bad (*χayar*)
hits the black water turned muddy,
then it may hit this man!
When it hits the creepy-crawly black snake,
with an evil eye,
then it may hit this man
with an evil eye!
When the crawling black cloud

is hit by the evil eye,
then this man
may be hit with the evil eye!

The Sun turns, let it turn!
The Moon turns, let it turn!
Let the bad, the trouble (*usal-těsel*) scatter!

Mercy be from God,
healing be from man!

Elle 47-52¹⁸

Prayer 1

God!
I beg with a pure heart,
with sweet talk,
with my household,
with my livestock,
with all that lives in the house.
Have mercy, good God!

Prayer 2

Pülěχsí!
With my household,
with all that lives in the house,
with a pure heart,
with sweet talk,
with my livestock
I ask thee!

¹⁸ Flat bread sacrifice, offering 33 flat breads and *yusmans*, everybody in their own house.

(From here onwards, the text of the prayer is identical with prayer 2, with only the invoked changing; therefore, I only note the number of the payer and the invoked deity or spirit.)

Prayer 3

Great house *kěľě*'s mother!

Prayer 4

Great house *kěľě*!

Prayer 5

Middle house *kěľě*'s mother!

Prayer 6

Middle house *kěľě*!

Prayer 7

Small house *kěľě*'s mother!

Prayer 8

Small house *kěľě*!

Prayer 9

Great water surface *kěľě*'s mother!

Prayer 10

Great water surface *kěľě*!

Prayer 11

Middle water surface *kěľě*'s mother!

Prayer 12

Middle water surface *kěľě*!

Prayer 13

Small water surface *kěľě*'s mother!

Prayer 14

Small water surface *kěľě*!

Prayer 15

Great village-*kěľě*'s mother!

Prayer 16

Great village-*kěľě*!

Prayer 17

Middle village-*kěľě*'s mother!

Prayer 18

Middle village-*kěľě*!

- Prayer 19
Small village-*kělē*'s mother!
Prayer 20
Small village-*kělē*!
Prayer 21
Great road-*kělē*'s mother!
Prayer 22
Great road-*kělē*!
Prayer 23
Middle road-*kělē*'s mother!
Prayer 24
Middle road-*kělē*!
Prayer 25
Small road-*kělē*'s mother!
Prayer 26
Small road-*kělē*!
Prayer 27
Great upper-good's mother!
Prayer 28
Great upper-good!
Prayer 29
Middle upper-good's mother!
Prayer 30
Middle upper-good!
Prayer 31
Small upper-good's mother!
Prayer 32
Small upper-good!
Prayer 33
Passing *kělē*'s mother!
Prayer 34
Playfully¹⁹ going *kělē*!

¹⁹ We can read about the “play” of the *kělē* in Paasonen: “*kəl-tum xajarə* ‘disease originating from the spirit of the sacrificial place (*kələ*), which sticks to a man

Elle 52-54²⁰

(Prayer 1)

Good fire's mother, have mercy!
 With a pure heart,
 with sweet words,
 with all my family,
 my household,
 with those living in the house,
 with my livestock,
 with my hens and chickens.

Good water's, fire's father!
 Give us good things and health!
 Forgive us (*Kaśar*)!
 When we drink water
 forgive us (*Aša kaśar*)!
 From diseases protect us!

(Prayer 2)²¹

Good water *vutāš*!²²
 Have mercy!
 Send no hardships unto us!

(Prayer 3)

Good fire mother!
 I call thee,
 with a pure heart,
 with sweet talk!

who approaches the spirit's abode when it plays there on its own or in company'." (Paa. 63)

²⁰ Prayers of fire and water. They are recited on the bank of the stream with flat bread and porridge sacrifice.

²¹ They throw a piece of flat bread, which had been on the ground so far, and a spoonful of kissel into the water while reciting this prayer.

²² The form *вутьшь* appears in the text, which is probably the *vutāš*.

Good fire mother!
Be in the right place!
Go not to another place,
take it not to another place!
Be on a down pillow!
Have mercy!
Forgive us (*Aša kašar*)!

Fuks 141²³

God have mercy!
God forsake me not!
Upper God²⁴
have mercy!
Earthly Padishah!²⁵
Son, daughter,
grain, honey
God, give!
To drink, to eat,
health
God, give!

Geor. 178

God,²⁶ have mercy on us!
God, forsake me not!
Provide me with sons and daughters!
God, gift me with mountains of grain,
fill my granaries and stores!
Lower for me grains, honey,
things to eat and drink,

²³ According to Fuks's description, the Chuvash recited this prayer every day.

²⁴ In Chuvash, *sūlti Tură*, whose exact meaning is 'upper God'; Fuks translated it as 'almighty God'.

²⁵ In Chuvash, *šerti Patša*.

²⁶ Georgi notes that the being invoked in the prayer may be God or some lesser deity.

good fortune and peace!
 God, fill my farmyard
 with horses and cattle,
 sheep and goats!
 God, bless my abode,
 let me welcome the wanderer,
 let me put him to rest,
 let me feed him and warm him!
 God, bless the owner of the land!²⁷
 Amen!

Lep. 213²⁸

Have mercy, God!²⁹
 Forsake me not!
 What I ask, give plentifully!
 Give sown grain!
 Give of livestock!
 Give of children!
 What I pray for, give that, too!
 Give the grain abundance, too!
 Amen!

Magn. 8-9³⁰

Kiremet, have mercy!
 When thy door opened,
 I came to thee.

²⁷ Here, Georgi adds that it is the “most merciful ruler”. Unfortunately, Georgi did not provide the original text, but we can probably assume that the form *šerti patša* appears here, which also occurs in several other prayers.

²⁸ Prayer of a sacrifice offered to God with beer and honey at a *kiremet*.

²⁹ I translated Lepekchin’s record according to Skvortsov’s transcription and interpretation. Lepekchin also provided a Russian translation, which is the following in English: “Have mercy, God! / What I ask of you, give! / Give sown grain! / Give the growth of the livestock! / God, give children! / Great state, what I ask of you, give; God, give money! / Amen!”

³⁰ Sacrificial prayer recited at a *kiremet*, at the so-called Koshtan Ivan *kiremet*.

Give us good things and health!
I have come with the soup, the bread and the beer.
Have mercy, (spirit of) sacrifice!³¹
Now, one and only *kiremet*, have mercy!
Forsake not this people,
give good things,
give health!
Give sown grain to the livestock,
give children to the house,
give wealth to money!
Where something is given from, may it not be
noticed,
to whom is given, may never run out!
Forsake me not!
Respect those
who honour and respect me,
respect not
who honour and respect me not!
(Spirit of) sacrifice, have mercy,
forsake me not!
Amen!

Magn. 20³²

Hey, *pešmelle*!
One and only God, forsake me not!
Good earth's master,³³ have mercy!
The master has opened the barrel,
to honour ye.

³¹ In the Chuvash original, the word *čük* appears, which means the sacrifice; but in the prayers, it is the being invoked. Some scholars, including Magnitskiy, interpret it as in fact being the spirit of the sacrifice (→ *Čük*).

³² Prayer recited during the spring yoke-feast (*aka-tuy*).

³³ Magnitskiy translates the Chuvash word *yış* as 'family' ('sacred earth's family'); Ashmarin gives the meaning of *yış* as 'master' (Ashm. I, 83) or 'lord' (Ashm. XIII, 91).

Forsake me not!
 Guard me somehow!
 Going out to the field,
 give wealth to the field!
 Coming into the house
 give abundance to the house!
 Forsake not
 this master's buildings, livestock and children!
 Guard them from yoke-feast to yoke-feast!
 (Spirit of) sacrifice, have mercy!
 Bitter to thee, sweet to us!

Magn. 28³⁴

Oh God,
 with thy great generosity
 give us grain,
 and also rain!
 Give us all kinds of benefactions
 and health!
 Oh God have mercy,
 forsake me not!
 Therefore we hold a common prayer
 and worship thee,
 we sacrifice bulls and sheep.
 Oh God!
 Amen!
 Have mercy, forsake me not!

³⁴ Sacrificial prayer recited during the three-day feast of *üčük* (field sacrifice).

Magn. 30³⁵

Peśmelle!
One God!³⁶
Forsake me not!
Have mercy!
Going out to the field,
give gain to the field!
Arriving in the village,
give gain to the village!
Going to the threshing yard,
give gain to the threshing yard!
Going into the pantry,
give gain to the pantry!
Amen!
Give benefactions!
Sacrifice to thee,
bitterness to us!
We remember for the seven kinds of grain.
Have mercy!

Magn. 33³⁷

For the sacrifice given,
have mercy, God!
God, give us rain!
We ask thee with all our children!

³⁵ Prayer recited to nine deities and spirits in Maslovoy during the *učük* (field sacrifice).

³⁶ Here, they recite the prayer nine times to different deities each time. First, the only God is invoked and then in turn God's mother (*Tură amășě*), *Pülěχšě*, *Piḡampar*, *Xěrlě-šīr*, *šěr-yiš*, the earth's father (*šěr aššě*), the earth's mother (*šěr amășě*) and the guardian of earth and water (*šěr-šiv kēten*).

³⁷ Prayer recited during an animal sacrifice held for rain.

Magn. 43-44³⁸

Pěšmelle!

Guardian of the grain-drying barn!

Have mercy!

Going to the field,

give gain to the field!

Going to the threshing yard,

give gain to the threshing yard!

Going to the stack,

give gain to the stack!

Going to the house,

give gain to the house!

Going into the pantry,

give gain to the pantry!

To the family and our livestock,

give health and happiness!

Find it worthy to attach

half a penfold to the house each year!

Let it grow that

its trunk may be like reed,

its top like an egg!

Amen!

Mercy be on the sacrifice!

Magn. 44-45³⁹

Alas, God forsake me not!

Alas, give us gain!

Give us even more for next year!

Let us grow in eating and drinking!

Take not from it!

Give us good fortune!

³⁸ Prayer recited at the end of the threshing, during the *avăn pătî* feast in Maslovoy.

³⁹ In Cheshlam village, they rake up the threshed but as yet unsieved grain and the threshers walk around this pile three times while reciting the above text.

Magn. 45/1⁴⁰

Guard it from the front!
Guard it from the back!
We are unable to protect ourselves,
protect us from fire,
from jumping sparks!
Dispel all evil!

Magn. 45/2⁴¹

Have mercy, great God!
We greet thee with a big cauldron of porridge.
Have mercy on us!
We greet thee.
Save us!
Let us gather the grain from the barn with luck!
Let it dry by the fire with luck!
Have mercy, great God!
Forsake me not!

Magn. 46⁴²

Pěsmelle!
Good *kiremet* spirits!
Forsake me not!
Have mercy!
I will bring thee a small loaf,
porridge and sacrificial flat bread.
Give me health!
Give me good luck!
Give me plenty to drink and eat!

⁴⁰ They hang a sheaf of unthreshed grain on top of the grain-drying barn, which will be its guardian during the next year. In the Bishev diocese, this prayer is recited at this occasion.

⁴¹ Prayer recited during the porridge or beer sacrifice held at the end of the threshing.

⁴² Prayer recited in Maslovoy during the celebration of the freshly threshed grain.

On my whole household and children,
have mercy for the sacrifice!
Amen!

Magn. 46-47⁴³

God, give!
I offer beer, too.
Give us success in the harvest, God!
Give us health and good luck!
Let the good wish come
and the ill wish go!
Let the cold wanderer
get warm,
accompany the hungry when fulfilled!
Give a son-in-law next to the door,
and a bride to the women's place!
Give health and good luck!
With my livestock and family,
my *kibitka*⁴⁴ and children,
together with my whole household
I pray.

Magn. 49⁴⁵

Pěsmělle!
One God, forsake me not!
To the family, children and livestock
give happiness!
Let this new bread

⁴³ Prayer recited in Cheshlam for good yield during the grain harvest.

⁴⁴ The word *vot* appears in the text, which Magnitskiy translates as 'kibitka, covered wagon'. Ashmarin does not know of such a meaning; the primary meaning of *vut* is 'fire (spark, conflagration)', and also 'firewood'. None of these fit into the prayer text (perhaps, if we also attributed the meaning 'hearth' to fire, but I am not aware of any such data in Chuvash in connection with *vut*).

⁴⁵ Prayer recited during the making of the first bread from the new flour.

be enough to feed us year after year!

Magn. 50⁴⁶

Hey, *Xěrt śurt*, have mercy,
forsake me not!
As the gain of the house,
give abundance to the house!
Have mercy, *čūk*!
Amen!
To thee we sacrifice porridge and flat bread.
Have mercy!
Protect the house and the outbuilding!
Protect it from fire and water
and from hateful enemy!

Magn. 51⁴⁷

Have mercy, *χěrt śurt*!
In the month of March,
with all the family, all the children,
we bend our knees,
with a whole pailful of cheese,
untouched raw material
and buttered porridge.
Protect us carefully!
Protect us from trouble,
from fire, from sparks,
from wind, from water
and from thieves!
Save us!
Find us worthy of
all kinds of grain,

⁴⁶ Prayer recited at the sacrifice offered to the *χěrt śurt*, recorded by Magnitskiy in the village of Maslovoy.

⁴⁷ Prayer recited at the sacrifice offered to the *χěrt śurt*, recorded by Magnitskiy in the district of Yadrin.

bees and merry-making drink!

Magn. 52⁴⁸

Hey, *pěsmělle*!
 Have mercy
 farmyard's shepherd,
 farmyard's wealth,
 farmyard's foundation,
 farmyard's guard,
 farmyard's master!⁴⁹
 I give thee buttered porridge.

Magn. 53/1⁵⁰

Have mercy!
 Forsake me not, God!
 Let the new-born livestock
 be in good hands!
 Let the unborn
 be born!
 Let the farmyard be so big
 that one end be at the corral
 and the other at the water!
 Forsake me not, God!

⁴⁸ Prayer recited in Maslovoy village during the sacrificial feast held in honour of the farmyard's spirit.

⁴⁹ Magnitskiy translates the Chuvash word *yış* as meaning 'family, clan'; I myself have retained Ashmarin's correction when I gave the meaning 'master'.

⁵⁰ Prayer recited in Bishev village during the sacrificial feast held in honour of the farmyard's spirit. The prayer was recited in honour of *Tură* (God) and *Pereket* (in Magnitskiy: 'god of abundance'), to whom flat bread was offered.

Magn. 53/2⁵¹

We are holding the farmyard's prayer.
Piḡampar, have mercy!
Hold back thy dog-beasts!
Protect our livestock
and make them breed!
Let one end be at the ice-hole,
and the other at the farmyard!

Magn. 54⁵²

Hey, *pěśmelle*!
Water-dwelling good one (*irǎ*)!
I have come to bow before thee.
Have mercy on us!
When we are winter-bound,
dry it out not!
When we are summer-bound,
flood it not!

Magn. 56⁵³

Water *vutǎš*, have mercy on me!
Torturous disease
send not unto me!

⁵¹ Prayer recited in the Alikov diocese during the sacrificial feast held in honour of the farmyard's spirit. Here, this feast was held in March in honour of *Piḡampar*, building a fire in the farmyard and offering porridge.

⁵² Prayer recited at the sacrifice held for the water's spirit (*šiv nimerě*) in Maslovoy. During the sacrifice, barley flat bread and sour soup is taken to the spring, well or stream from where the water is carried.

⁵³ One could get rid of a febrile illness, which was supposed to be caused by falling into the hemp-soaking pit, by burying an egg at the edge of the pit while reciting this prayer (collected in Maslovoy).

Magn. 58⁵⁴

(Prayer 1 of the beer-sacrifice)⁵⁵

Hey, *pěsmelle*!

Have mercy, God!

Give us good grain!

With sons and daughters I invoke thee,
have mercy!

Make the stems of the grain

like reeds,

make its seeds

like eggs!

Give a son-in-law (to sit) by the door,

give a bride to the lad!

Fill the farmyard with livestock,

let one end be at the yard

and the other at the green flood!

Make me a rich man!

Amen!

Čük, have mercy!

Give mercy!

The hateful man,

God, take away!

Let their eyes see us,

but their hands not reach us!

Let the well-meaning

come and drink beer with me!

Let us, God,

make up for the lack with this ladle!

⁵⁴ Prayer recited during the beer sacrifice in Maslovoy.

⁵⁵ The prayer was recited fifteen times, invoking a different deity or spirit in each “round”. Each prayer invoked nine beings. In the rounds with fewer names, deities or spirits from previous rounds would be supplied. Magnitskiy provides a list of the beings invoked on pages 62-84.

(Round I)⁵⁶

God!
Pülěχśě!
God's mother!
Piχampar!
Xěrlě-śir!
Earth's master!⁵⁷
Earth's father!
Earth's mother!
Earth-water's guardian!

(Round II)

Home-creating⁵⁸ God!
Oldest mother!
Worker!⁵⁹
Stopper!⁶⁰
Guardian!
Foundation!⁶¹
Guard!
Flower creator!
Flowers' father-mother!

⁵⁶ I provide the Chuvash form of the names of the deities and spirits invoked, according to Magnitskiy's notes and transliterated in Latin characters according to present-day Chuvash orthography in the sub-chapter entitled "Names of deities and spirits occurring in the beer sacrifice in Magnitskiy".

⁵⁷ In Magnitskiy's translation: 'earth's family'. Ashmarin corrects this to the meaning 'earth's master (or: lord)': Ashm. I, 83; XIII, 91.

⁵⁸ Meanings of Chuvash *śurat-* in Ashmarin: 'to bear; create, be born' (Ashm. XII, 263). Magnitskiy usually gives the meaning 'grower' or 'giver' to this word; I, following Mészáros, translate it as 'creator'.

⁵⁹ Literally: 'doer'. Magnitskiy here gives the meaning 'worker'. He interprets the word in another list as the helper of other deities (Magn. 85-86), and at a third place he explains it as 'helper with all kinds of peasant work'.

⁶⁰ In Magnitskiy: 'guard, keeper', and in another list: 'stopper (who stops the Chuvash from wrongdoing)' (Magn. 88).

⁶¹ In Magnitskiy: 'foundation's leader'.

(Round III)

Son-daughter creator!

(Round IV)

All kinds of grain creator!

(Round V)

All kinds of livestock creator!

(Round VI)

Wealth-creator!

(Round VII)

Bee-creator!

(Round VIII)

Steel-lowerer!⁶²

(Round IX)

Bright world!

Kăvak χuppi!

Momentary light at the time of darkness!

God's whip!

God's wrath!

God's punishment!

Divine guard!

Wind's father!

Wind's mother!

(Round X)

Wind's wrath!

Wind's punishment!

⁶² Chuvash *χorś* means 'steel' (Ashm. XVI, 229); Magnitskiy translates it as 'strength, stability'.

Wind's force!
Wind's guard!
Sun's father!
Sun's mother!
Sun's ears!
Sun's wings!
Sun's legs!

(Round XI)

Kepe!
Kepe's kiremet!
Great *kěľě!*
Small *kěľě!*
Trouble-sender!
Misfortune-sender!
Grain's grower!
Grain's raiser!
Grain's waver!

(Round XII)

Sweet-giver!
Bitter-giver!
Good one resting in the bright lake!
Life-determiner!
Prohibition-determiner!
Restrainer!
Week's old woman!
Good one going on the orad!⁶³
Great good one!⁶⁴

⁶³ Magnitskiy translates it as 'Good travel-companion'.

⁶⁴ In Magnitskiy: 'Chief guardian'.

(Round XIII)

*Elmen's guard!*⁶⁵
Xay crevice!
Kiv-yal!
Karak-šāvar!
Xěrlě-šir!
 Good one of Cheboksary!
 Good one of Sviyazh!
 Good one of the Makar wilderness!
 Good one of Kazan!

(Round XIV)

Field's abundance!
 Threshing yard's abundance!
 Stack's abundance!
 House's abundance!
 Farmyard's abundance!
 Shed's abundance!
 Fire's mother!
 Fire's father!
Xěrt-surt!

(Round XV)

Melēm-χuša!
Avan kělli!
Tür kělli!
Yěřěχ!
 Birthing birch tree!
 Overseer of alms!
 Distributor of sacrifice!
 Gap-filler!
*(Aša kašar!)*⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Elmen is the name of a town.

⁶⁶ Probably not an invoked being; see → *Aša kašar*.

Magn. 59-60

(Prayer 2 of the beer sacrifice)⁶⁷

God!

Give us good things, give us health!

For the new grain I give thanks and I bow.

Let one seed sown yield a thousand!

From future trouble and misfortune,
from thieves and conflagrations, save us!

During a voyage on the great water,
save us from breaking the oar,

(and) in big waves, from the rocking of the boat!

What we must sell,

let us sell at a good price!

If a starving man comes,

let us feed him to the full!

If a shivering man comes,

let us warm him up!

For three kinds of grain,

give three baskets

for us to fill!

Give us the wealth of the pocket!

For three kinds of livestock,

give us three penfolds!

Give the proliferation of hair (?),⁶⁸

give a thousand hairs in the place of one!

Give foals to the mares,

give calves to the cows,

give lambs to the ewes!

Let the road rejoice with gain!

Let us take it out of the ground!

Let us lower it from above!

Let the earth rejoice with gain!

⁶⁷ Prayer recited during the beer sacrifice in Bishev.

⁶⁸ In another prayer, it appears as 'let the animals breed like their hair'— see: Magn. 115-116.

Let the drying-barn rejoice with gain!
 When thou put it in the grain-bin,
 let the grain-bin rejoice with the gain!
 Let the milled flour never run out!
 Let the bought salt never run out!
 Give the fullness of three corrals in three
 meadows!
 God!
 We live trusting thee.
 God!
 From all kinds of trouble, evil and misfortune,
 save us!
 Let these not be!
 God!
 Amen!
 Have mercy!
 Forsake us not!
 God!

Magn. 83⁶⁹

Birthing birch tree!
 Forsake me not!
 To deliver this baby
 give me lightness!

⁶⁹ Near Maslovoy village, women about to give birth took sacrificial money to a birch tree standing at the edge of a gully and recited this text. In the beer sacrifice god-list, the “birthing birch tree” is the 83rd invoked spirit.

Magn. 84-87⁷⁰

God!
Pŭlěχśě!
Xěrlě-śir!
God's mother!
Piχampar!
Earth's master!
Earth's father!
Earth's mother!
Earth-water's (country's) guardian!
Earth's vapour!
Abundance!
Abundance's mother!
Great God!
White world!
Sky's gate!
Sun's mother!
Sun's wings!
Wind's mother!
Wind's wings!
Distant looker!
Doing Good one!
Going doer!
Kepe!
Kepe's mother!
House-guarding God!
Pŭlěχśě!
Mother!
Doer!
Protector!

⁷⁰ The invoked deities of the prayer recited during the Bishev beer sacrifice. The Cyrillic forms noted down by Magnitskiy, with the Latin transliteration of present-day orthography, are found in the sub-chapter entitled "Names of deities and spirits appearing in the beer sacrifice in Magnitskiy". The prayer text can be read under Magn. 59-60.

*Rśa!*⁷¹
 Happiness!
 Foundation!
 Guard!
 Wealth-creating God!
 Grain-creating God!
 Field's abundance!
 Abundance's mother!
 Field's *rśa*!
 Field's guard!
 Livestock-creating God!
 Rein-holding Good one!
 Farmyard's shepherd!
 Son-and-daughter-creating God!
 Steel-creating God!
 Sweet-giver!
 Lowerer!
 Abundance!
 Bee-creating God!
 Queen-bee giver!
 Waver!
Tür kēlli!
 Prohibition-giver!
 Life(?)-giver!
 Recognisable from a false accusation!
Yulaš upaška!
 (*kiremets*:)
 Great Good!
 Great one's Mother!
 Bad!
*Kartaluy!*⁷²
 Small *kiremet*!

⁷¹ Cf. MagnBi. № 30.

⁷² Cf. MagnBi. № 59.

Tipiri!
*Uras puxti!*⁷³
Xěrlě-šir kiremet's mother!
Going before it!
Its misfortune!
Its trouble!
Threshing-yard's abundance!
Grain-barn's guard
Helper in the selling!
Misfortune on the road!
Trouble on the road!
Bad on the road!
Good one going on the road!
Valēm χuša!
Resting in Kazan!
Resting in Sviyazh!
Resting at Sumbu!
Resting in the barn!
Minkes (village)!
Resting in Cheboksary!
Going in front of every house!
Distributor!
Guardian of life!
Kepe kiremet!

⁷³ Cf. MagnBi. № 62.

Magn. 91-92

(Prayer 3 of the beer sacrifice)⁷⁴

Glory to God,
to the guardian of health,
to the life-giver,
to the saver from evil demons!
Glory to the punishing God,⁷⁵
to the one living in gullies and crevices!
Glory to the soul-creating God!
Glory to God
who, by his own grace,
created grain and other earthly plants!
Glory to the bright world!
Glory to the Sun's father and mother!
Glory to the opening of the sky!
Glory to *Piḡampar*!⁷⁶
Glory to *Xārpan*!
Glory to *Pereket*,
to *Pereket*'s father
and *Pereket*'s mother!
Glory to the bright lake's father and mother!⁷⁷
Glory to the wind's father,
to the wind's mother,

⁷⁴ Prayer recited during the beer sacrifice in the Bayteryakov diocese of the Tetyush district (a Chuvash diaspora in Tatarstan). Magnitskiy lists the deities invoked in Chuvash on page 91, and then gives the text of the prayer in Russian on page 92. The translation of the prayer text is perhaps not accurate at some points, but unfortunately, as Magnitskiy did not provide the Chuvash text here, it cannot be checked. The Chuvash names of the invoked deities can be read in the sub-chapter entitled "Names of deities and spirits appearing in the beer sacrifice in Magnitskiy".

⁷⁵ In the original, it is perhaps not the 'punishing god' but *Xērlē-śir*, who appears here in the list of those invoked, and the structure of the prayer follows the invocations.

⁷⁶ Here and in the next two lines, I did not follow Magnitskiy, who had translated the names *Piḡampar*, *Xārpan* and *Pereket*.

⁷⁷ The invocations only include the Bright lake's mother.

to the wind's plague,
which spreads from every direction due to the
whirlwind!
Glory to the earth's father and mother,
To its vapour,
Which spreads all kinds of plague!
Amen!
Have mercy!

Magn. 108-109⁷⁸

Hey, *pěsmělle*!
Earth's master!
Forsake me not!
Forgive me!
Forgive this farmer,
let him build a house!
Give us plenty of food and drink,
(and) of livestock and children (too)!
Have mercy, *čūk*!
Amen!

Magn. 115-116⁷⁹

Hey, grain-creating God!
Have mercy!
Deprive us not of the grain,
let not the grain-bin run out!

Hey, livestock creating God!
Have mercy!
Take not from the livestock!
Make the livestock grow,

⁷⁸ Prayer recited during the sacrifice held when the foundation for a new house was laid, *nikês pätti* ('foundation's porridge').

⁷⁹ Prayer recited during the ceremony *vilě tavraš*, held to prevent the destruction of the farmyard.

like its hair grows!
Stable's chief!
Do it!

Any amount of cake,⁸⁰
any amount of porridge
we offer.
God resting in a bright lake!
Have mercy!
Forked wagon-shaft's god!⁸¹
Have mercy!
Deprive me not of the forked wagon-shaft!
Protect me from the wind!
Xārpan God!
Have mercy!
Anger not!

Piḡampar!
Have mercy!
Let not thy dogs unto the livestock,
restrain them!

Bright-world-creating God!
Have mercy!

⁸⁰ The name of the cake is *kuk ḡoraně*. Paasonen also writes about it as a sacrificial food: “a small, round cake with a dip in the middle, where butter and a piece of lead are put; it is held in a linden basket, together with the doll-shaped image of the spirit called *ḡarəḡ* [→ *Yěṛěḡ*]” (Paa. 74). It was also sacrificed to a *kiremet*, about which: Ashm. VI, 255-256.

⁸¹ Of the word *turta*, appearing in the Chuvash text, Ashmarin only knows the meaning ‘forked wagon-shaft’ (that is how Magnitskiy translates it, too); however, in two other works, Ashmarin tried to discover the origin of this strange form. He presumed that it perhaps went back to the word *tala*, of obscured meaning, which would originate from the Arabic word meaning ‘the most high’. (For some more details, see entry → *Turā* and the footnote to item 34 of the sub-chapter entitled “Nikifor Pavlovich’s Simbirsk list”).

We plead with thee,
we trust in thee,
have mercy!

Magn. 120⁸²

Xiťām, have mercy!

Magn. 146-147⁸³

Hey, *pěsmělle*!
One and only God, forsake me not!
Phwoo!
May mercy come from God!
May goodness come from the padishah!
May the healer's healing be beneficial!
Phwoo!
Begone, *iye*!
Begone, *vupār*!
Begone, *šatīn*!
Phwoo!

Magn. 146-147/2⁸⁴

House's *iye*, *vupār*, *šatīn*, begone!
Bath's *iye*, *vupār*, *šatīn*, begone!
Farmyard's *iye*, *vupār*, *šatīn*, begone!
Meadow's *iye*, *vupār*, *šatīn*, begone!
Forest's *iye*, *vupār*, *šatīn*, begone!
Mill's *iye*, *vupār*, *šatīn*, begone!
Road's *iye*, *vupār*, *šatīn*, begone!

⁸² It was said to the *xiťām* during a food sacrifice when porridge and lamb were offered. The Chuvash did not eat the food prepared for this occasion but threw it on the ground at some distance from their house.

⁸³ Prayer and incantation recited during the healing of an illness involving stabbing or throbbing pain.

⁸⁴ First incantation recited during the healing of an illness involving stabbing or throbbing pain.

Crevise's *iye, vupār, šatīn*, begone!
 Water's *iye, vupār, šatīn*, begone!
 I hit them forty-one times,
 I burn them with forty-one fires.
 Phwoo!

Magn. 147⁸⁵

Phwoo!
 Three kinds of evil (*osal*),
 begone!
 To oust thee,
 I have brought water
 From forty-one seas.
 I wash thee with it,
 I cleanse thee with it!
 Phwoo!

Magn. 151⁸⁶

Hey, *pěsmělle*!
 One and only God, forsake me not!
 Phwoo!
 May mercy come from God,
 may goodness come from the padishah,
 may healing come from the healer, the incantor!
 Phwoo!
 Snakebite, begone!
 To oust thee, here have gathered:
 the snake-padishah,
 the snake's father, mother,
 Gammer *Ašapatman*,
 the healer-incantor.
 I blow, I spit.

⁸⁵ Second incantation recited during the healing of an illness involving stabbing or throbbing pain. Ashmarin also cites this text (AshmVv. 45).

⁸⁶ Incantation against snakebite.

Phwoo!
Begone Snakebite!
Black snake's bite,
white snake's bite,
yellow snake's bite,
colourful snake's bite,
brazen snake's bite,
white-headed snake's bite,
smoky snake's bite
begone!
Phwoo!
Across the sea,
across the Volga,
came Gammer *Ašapatman*.
She blows, she spits on the snakebite.
Begone snakebite from this man's body,
from his bone, from the marrow of his bone,
from his trunk, head, eyes!
Phwoo!
Begone snakebite!
The Tsar in his own place,
fate in its own place,
the Sun in its own place,
the Moon is in its own place.⁸⁷
Let this sick man heal from his wound!
Phwoo, phwoo, phwoo!

⁸⁷ In these lines, the Chuvash verb *larat-* appears, which is very hard to translate. It means, 'sit, stand, is situated, is held', which I translated more simply as 'is in its place'.

Magn. 152⁸⁸

Its dead one, its live one
 bless him!
 Cemetery's chief, cemetery's judge
 bless him!
 Road's dead,⁸⁹
 bless him!
 Meadow's dead,
 bless him!
 forest's dead, gully's dead
 bless him!

Drink this, eat this,
 begone!
 The grabber, the swallower,
 when it tasted it, swallowed it,
 begone!

Magn. 187–188⁹⁰

Hey, *pěsmělle*!
 Forgive me! (*aša kašar*)
 Give us plenty (*pereket*) to eat and drink!

⁸⁸ Incantation for diseases caught on the road. The healer circles around the patient's head with pieces of bread, chanting this incantation.

⁸⁹ Magnitskiy translates this as 'death on the road', but in fact, the Chuvash *śol villi* in the text means 'dead of the road', as *vilě* means 'dead', not 'death'. The situation is the same in the case of the dead of the meadow, forest and gully in the subsequent lines of the incantation – Magnitskiy also translated these as 'meadow's death', 'forest's death', 'gully's death'.

⁹⁰ Prayer recited at one of the sacrifices commemorating the dead (*śuraśma*). As for the meaning of *śuraśma*, Magnitskiy provides 'reconciliation, making up', whereas Ashmarin gives the meaning 'asking (to marry)' (Ashm. XII. 266). The verb *śuraś-* means: 'reconcile; agree; ask (to marry)' (Ashm. XII, 265). This sacrifice was usually held when a recently deceased person was thought not to have completely left the world of the living. Mészáros also wrote about a similar ritual, although under a different name ("mixing the dead to one place") (Mész. 238-239).

Give health to the livestock!
Give health to us and our children, too!
Give us health from atonement to atonement!⁹¹
We cut a slice of bread for thee to drink and eat.
Come from sacrifice to sacrifice!
Come in time!
When it is not time, come not!
Let it not give torturous diseases!
Let there be not even a morsel!
Let it give blessing!

Mész. 15⁹²

In the name of God!⁹³
Amen, God!
We ask for health.
In the name of God!
God's mother!
I, too, listen to it,
I, too, do good,
thou, too, save me!

Mész. 21⁹⁴

I have taken a bride ("new man"),
I could afford a house,
I lay down *χěrt śurt*'s porridge,
Have mercy, have mercy, have mercy!

⁹¹ From one annual atoning sacrifice to the next.

⁹² Incantation against jaundice.

⁹³ Mészáros does not provide this text in Chuvash, so it can only be assumed that the incantation starts with "*Pěšmělle*".

⁹⁴ At the first visit of the wife-to-be, porridge is sacrificed in honour of the *χěrt śurt*, when this prayer is recited.

Mész. 23⁹⁵

Hey, *Piḡampar* have mercy!
Silence thy dogs,
Make them not destroy the livestock!

Mész. 24⁹⁶

Xitām, have mercy!
Raise the livestock and sheep nicely,
kill them not!
I give thee a lamb.

Mész. 25⁹⁷

Auntie *Yěřěχ*, have mercy!
Give me health!
I give thee mush,
give dumplings, too,
hang money also,
Have mercy!

Mész. 42⁹⁸

Iye!
Stick not to him!
Forgive!

⁹⁵ Part of a prayer recited by the Northern Chuvash during the beer sacrifice.

⁹⁶ When a lamb died, they roasted it and threw it into the river as a sacrifice to the *χitām*. That is when this prayer was said.

⁹⁷ Prayer recited by the sick person during the healing of diseases caused by the *yěřěχ* (boils, eye-diseases).

⁹⁸ If a baby cries a lot or is sickly, they make five or seven dumplings, which they throw out of the window to the street while reciting this.

Mész. 60⁹⁹

Earth's father, earth's mother!
Avert the evil-bad!
Give health to this child!

Mész. 67¹⁰⁰

Field, give me my strength,
when I go home, give me sour cream,
give strength to my waist,
sharpen my sickle,
gather up the waste!

Mész. 68¹⁰¹

Field, give me strength,
sharpen my sickle,
gather up the waste,
when I go home, give me a ram's head
and curd with sour cream!

Mész. 74¹⁰²

It was not me who drank,
but the Russian and his wife drank!

⁹⁹ Incantation recited during an illness caused by falling on the ground. Mészáros provides this same incantation on page 296, too, where he describes the way of healing in detail and also adds a prayer.

¹⁰⁰ Prayer recited during the harvest. When they finish harvesting a plot, the farmer throws a handful of grain on to the stubble while chanting this (the invoked field in Chuvash is *ana*).

¹⁰¹ Prayer recited during the harvest. A version of the previous harvest prayer, used in Tayapa village (here, the invoked field in Chuvash is also *ana*).

¹⁰² Before somebody drinks from a spring or a stream, they throw a straw or a piece of wood, which they first break into two, into the water while chanting this to prevent the water's father and the water's mother from sending a disease unto him.

Mész. 75¹⁰³

Water's head living in this lake as a master!
 I appease thee.
 Give me visible gain,
 Show me gain!
 The fish in this lake,
 driving them all here, give them to me!
 I offer thee arak and white bread.
 Have mercy!

Mész. 126-127¹⁰⁴

(Prayer 1)

Great good one!
 I give thee flat bread,
 have mercy!
 Whatever sin there might be,
 forgive it!

Small Good one!
 I give thee flat bread,
 have mercy!
 Whatever sin there might be,
 forgive it!

Aleksey's good one!¹⁰⁵

I give thee flat bread,
 have mercy!
 Whatever sin there might be,
 forgive it!

¹⁰³ Prayer recited during the sacrifice of bread and arak at the start of lake fishing.

¹⁰⁴ Sacrifice before ploughing, with porridge and 12 flat breads offered to the "12 good ones" (*kiremet*s).

¹⁰⁵ Mészáros added that the residence of this *kiremet* was in the field of a man called Aleksey.

Yelim's good one!¹⁰⁶
I give thee flat bread,
have mercy!
Whatever sin there might be,
forgive it!

Malti good one!¹⁰⁷
I give thee flat bread,
have mercy!
Whatever sin there might be,
forgive it!

Vălărî good one!¹⁰⁸
I give thee flat bread,
have mercy!
Whatever sin there might be,
forgive it!

Xërlě-šir!
I give thee flat bread,
have mercy!

¹⁰⁶ I agree with Mészáros's claim (Mész. 126) that *Yelim* is probably the same being which is called *Melim* *χúša* in Magnitskiy.

¹⁰⁷ Mészáros translates it as "first good one". This translation does not fit into the hierarchic order of *kiremet*s invoked in the prayer. Although the Chuvash word *malti* indeed means 'first, frontal', Ashmarin's dictionary contains a lot of compound toponyms (names of streams, meadows, forests) whose first part is this word (cf. Ashm. VIII, 182). In all probability, this, similarly to the previous and the following *kiremet* names, is the name of a *kiremet* associated with a specific place. This is supported by two other pieces of data, also in Ashmarin's dictionary: *Malti-Xuränsur kiremečë* (Ashm. XVI, 224), which is the name of a *kiremet*, and *Malti čirkü* (Ashm. VIII, 182.), which Ashmarin says is the name of a spirit – the word *čirkü* in the compound means 'church'.

¹⁰⁸ Mészáros notes on the word *vălăr*, *vîlăr* that it is the name of a village according to the Chuvash. *Vîlărî iräsem* appears in several other mythical stories – it already occurs in Mil'kovich (for the most important data, see: Ashm. V, 198).

Whatever sin there might be,
forgive it!

Going good one!
I give thee flat bread,
have mercy!
Whatever sin there might be,
forgive it!

Good one going before bad one (*χayar*)!
I give thee flat bread,
have mercy!
Whatever sin there might be,
forgive it!

Trouble-avertter!¹⁰⁹
I give thee flat bread,
have mercy!
Whatever sin there might be,
forgive it!

Guardian!
I give thee flat bread,
have mercy!
Whatever sin there might be,
forgive it!

Good one going on the road!
I give thee flat bread,
have mercy!
Whatever sin there might be,
forgive it!

¹⁰⁹ Mészáros translates the Chuvash word *sinker* as ‘plague’. In Ashmarin, the first four meanings of the word are ‘misfortune, unexpected trouble, contagious disease, terrible thing’ (Ashm. XI, 149-150).

Mész. 127¹¹⁰

(Prayer 2)

I give thanks, I bow my head,
I sacrifice porridge before ploughing.
God, we go out to work into thy hands.
Give us health, wholeness and lightness, amen.

Mész. 128¹¹¹

(Prayer 1)

I give thanks, I bow my head,
for seven kinds of grain,¹¹²
I sacrifice the seed's porridge.
Sowing one seed, give us a thousand!
May its stems be like reeds, its head like
reed-mace,
its seeds like peas!
Amen, God, forsake me not!
Those who come starving
let us send them on their way fulfilled,
those who come cold,
let us send them on their way warmed up!
Two parts out of three
let us save!
One part, let us eat and drink!
Amen God, have mercy!
From us, let it go to *Kepe*,
From *Kepe*, let it go to god!

¹¹⁰ Prayer recited inside the house after the previous prayer (Mész. 126-127) during the sacrifice before ploughing.

¹¹¹ Prayer recited by the Southern Chuvash during the spring sacrifice held after the ploughing and sowing, called "seed's porridge".

¹¹² Mészáros records the names of the seven grains: wheat, rye, barley, double row barley, oat, millet, buckwheat.

Mész. 129/1¹¹³

(Prayer 2)

I give thanks,
I bow my head.
With its nose and navel.
Amen God!
Forsake me not, have mercy!

Mész. 129/2¹¹⁴

(Prayer 3)

I give thanks,
I bow my head.
May its seeds be as large as eggs!
Amen God!
Have mercy!

Mész. 129/3¹¹⁵

(Prayer 4)

May its seeds be as large
as eggs!
We gave it into God's hands.
May God kindly let us take it in our hands!
Amen!

¹¹³ Prayer recited during the second part of the “seed’s porridge” sacrifice, which the host says turned eastwards while dishing out the three “noses” and the “navel” cut from the fried flat bread.

¹¹⁴ Prayer recited during the third part of the “seed’s porridge” sacrifice, which the host says with an egg cut in half.

¹¹⁵ During the fourth part of the “seed’s porridge sacrifice”, after consuming the sacrificial food, the host takes the leftover porridge and the “nose” and “navel” of the fried flat bread, along with the egg cut in half, to the sown field and buries it while reciting this prayer.

Mész. 130¹¹⁶

Oh God, I sacrifice seed-porridge, have mercy!
Give a thousand seeds from one!
Make their stems like reeds,
and the seeds in their heads as large as peas!
God, kindly let us take them in our hands!
From wind, storm,
conflagration
and hail, save us!
Have mercy!

Mész. 131¹¹⁷

I give thanks, I bow my head,
I sacrifice porridge before the flock.
We let the animals into God's hands,
driving them to pasture.
Let them walk in good health until autumn!
Amen God have mercy!

Mész. 133-134¹¹⁸

(Prayer 1)

Have mercy amen God!
We offer a meadow sacrifice,
with its raw meat, we stand to prayer
with warm faces and sweet words
we stand to prayer.
With the black people, we bow our heads, we plead.
Have mercy, amen!

¹¹⁶ Prayer recited by the Northern Chuvash during the “seed’s porridge” sacrifice. It is only held if they have a small (walnut-sized) hen’s egg in the house.

¹¹⁷ After the snow melts, before the animals are driven out to pasture for the first time, they hold the “porridge before the flock” ceremony, which is rather similar to the seed’s porridge sacrifice (see the texts under Mész. 127-130). It is also a ceremony offered to the 12 “good ones”. The prayer is recited by the elder leading the ceremony, before killing the sacrificial animal.

¹¹⁸ First prayer recited during the meadow sacrifice (*učuk*).

From wind and storm, guard us,
 from conflagration, guard us,
 from robbers and thieves, shelter us, guard us,
 from harmful rain shelter us!
 Health and soundness give us!
 If we sinned by saying anything,
 forgive it!
 Talking with men of a different faith,
 talking with Christian men
 if we sinned,
 erase the stranger's sin,
 forgive ours!
 If we sinned by saying anything fallibly,
 have mercy!

Mész. 136¹¹⁹

(Prayer 2)

Have mercy, amen God!
 Before, we stood to prayer with its raw meat,
 Now, we pray with its cooked meat.
 For two kinds of grain
 we give thanks, bow our heads.
 Sowing, one seed, let us take a thousand seeds!
 Its stems like reeds,
 its heads like reed-mace,
 its seeds like peas each!
 From harmful rain, hail,
 windstorm, protect us, guard us!
 Have mercy!
 Amen!

¹¹⁹ Second prayer of the field sacrifice, recited after the killing and cooking of the sacrificial ram.

Mész. 139¹²⁰

In God's name, amen God!
From god we ask for health.
In the house, at home, give us health,
in the children's place, give us health,
to three kinds of animals, give health, too!
From wind and storm, God, guard us!
For seven kinds of grain
together with the people, we sacrifice.
For the black people, for the world.
As we stand hopeful,
God, thou guard us!
Amen!

Mész. 144/1¹²¹

(Prayer 1)

Have mercy amen God!
I offer a night sacrifice with my household,
let me do good for my house-home!
Give us health and soundness!
Have mercy!
Amen!

Mész. 144/2¹²²

(Prayer 2)

Have mercy amen God!
I offer a night sacrifice with my household.
Before, I prayed with its raw meat,

¹²⁰ After the sacrifice of the new fire, held every three years, the people of the whole village, along with their animals, pass through a tunnel dug into a hill. Meanwhile, the healer sprays water from the hill on those passing through the tunnel. He previously recites this incantation unto the water.

¹²¹ First prayer of the night sacrifice, recited after washing the sacrificial ram with water.

¹²² During the night sacrifice, three rams are killed over the course of three days: for the household, for the grain and for the livestock. This prayer was recited on all three days after killing the animals.

now I pray with its cooked meat.
 Let me do good for my house-home!
 Give us health and soundness!
 May the doing, the start and
 the proper sacrifice be proper!
 Have mercy!
 Amen!

Mész. 146¹²³

Have mercy, amen God!
 I pray to thee with a white ram.
 From windstorm, God, guard us!
 From hail, God, guard us!
 From conflagration, God, guard us!
 Have mercy!

Mész. 238¹²⁴

We mix ye to one place.
 Go together with the old, long-deceased dead!
 We remember thee from time to time.
 Remember us not when it is not time!
 Come not outside of its time!
 May it be before thee; go now, giving thy blessing!

Mész. 240¹²⁵

I light a house candle.
 With my household, with my *χěrt* and my *śurt*
 give us health and soundness!

¹²³ Prayer recited during the autumn ceremony, *Tură čükě* ‘God’s sacrifice’, in which a white ram was offered.

¹²⁴ Five days after the great funeral feast, the Southern Chuvash hold a smaller feast called “mixing the dead to one place”. Food is set out for the deceased and this text is recited.

¹²⁵ On the annual candle day, when they remembered their dead, they also lit a candle for the house spirit while reciting this prayer.

Mész. 241

Ye, without relatives,¹²⁶
may it be before ye!
Here is some rye flat bread,
eat, drink and leave!

Mész. 252¹²⁷

Dead man, wherever thou come from,
forgive us!
I fly flour and groats.

Mész. 294¹²⁸

Old ones,
forgive me!
Father, mother, children,
forgive me!
Even if I sinned,
come ye not outside of its time!
May it be before ye!

Mész. 341¹²⁹

Gammer *Ašapatman* has come,
one tooth in her mouth,
one hair on her ass.
She heals, she cures.
She mounted her white horse,

¹²⁶ Here we had to deviate from Mészáros's translation – he blended together the figures of those who died on the road and those who died without relatives, and translated this part of the text as “died on the road”. In fact, in the Chuvash text, the plural of the word *kamalšar* appears here, which means “without relatives, without a family”.

¹²⁷ When remembering the souls of unknown people who died on the road, they threw flour and groats to the wind while reciting this prayer.

¹²⁸ Prayer recited when they offered flat bread to appease the deceased at the time of toothache caused by them.

¹²⁹ Incantation against the evil eye.

spread her white blanket over herself,
 took her white dog beside her.
 Lo, a black cloud is coming,
 the sky is thundering,
 lightning is lightning,
 it falls on the building,
 falls from the building on to the black ground,
 falls and cleanses.
 In the same way, may the evil eye go from (Ivan),
 may it cleanse him!
 Whether harmed by black eyes,
 whether harmed by yellow eyes,
 whether harmed by brown eyes,
 whether harmed by blue eyes,
 whether harmed by white eyes,
 whether harmed by crossed eyes,
 whether harmed by grey eyes.

This Gammer *Aṣapatman* has come,
 She heels, she cures.
 She cuts with her golden knife,
 sweeps with her golden broom.
 Sweeps and cleanses.
 In the same way, may (the evil eye) go from (Ivan),
 cleansed!
 May it be gone by evening,
 may it be far away by tomorrow!
 May he be good, may he be big,
 may he be healthy, amen!

Mil. 503¹³⁰

Fire-mother!¹³¹
Have mercy, forsake me not!
To my household, to my children
give health!

Müll. 119¹³²

God, have mercy!
God, give!
God, give livestock!
God, give children!

Nik. I, 373¹³³

Silver sea,
in the silver sea
grows an oak tree,
the oak tree's branches grow downwards,
the branches' leaves grow downwards.
When the *iyē*
hits these leaves,
only then may it hit
this child!

Paa. 193

Protecting Good one!¹³⁴
Thou guard me!
Thou protect me!

¹³⁰ Prayer said to the fire.

¹³¹ Mil'kovich's invocation *vodoma* was changed to *vutām* by Nikol'skij – in my opinion, it is actually the form *vut-ama* 'fire-mother', of which we have other data, too.

¹³² According to Müller, the Chuvash usually say such short prayers and this one is the most common, most important prayer.

¹³³ Incantation recited by the healer against children's diseases caused by the *iyē*. It is also cited by Ashmarin (AshmVv. 46).

¹³⁴ In the Chuvash text, *Upram iră* appears, which can be interpreted in various ways, as both *upram* and *iră* can be the name of a spirit or deity.

Pal. 159¹³⁵

God have mercy!
God give!
Bless us!

Pav. 26¹³⁶

(Prayer 1)¹³⁷

To God!
To God's mother!
To *Pülěχśě*!
To *Pülěχśě*'s mother!
To the Good One going before God!

God!
God's mother!
Pülěχśě!
Pülěχśě's mother!
Good One going before God!
Give good things, give health!
Keep the evil spirits away from us!
From idle talk,
from conflagration,
from robbers, from thieves
protect us!
Give good things,

¹³⁵ This translation of the prayer is provided by Pallas, who also recorded it in Chuvash. However, his transliteration is hard to interpret. On the basis of a corrected transcription, Skvortsov provides the following translation: 'God have mercy / God be a giver / Let him be a rich man!' He also notes, however, that this formula is not typical of Chuvash prayers (Skv. 165). As Pallas himself did not speak Chuvash, perhaps it is worth starting from the translation that presumably his Chuvash assistant provided for the text.

¹³⁶ Prayer recited to avert the harm caused by evil spirits.

¹³⁷ The names of the invoked deities in Chuvash can be read in the first table of the sub-chapter "Nikifor Pavlovich's Simbirsk list 1883-1884" (Prayers recited in case of harm inflicted upon humans by evil spirits).

give health,
give a restful night's sleep!
Receive it with appreciation!
Amen!
Have mercy!

Pav. 27/1¹³⁸

(Prayer 2)¹³⁹

To Great God!
To Great God's mother!
To Great *Pülěχśě*!
To Great *Pülěχśě*'s mother!
To the Great Good One going before Great God!
Have mercy,
if we said haughty¹⁴⁰ words!
Whether it was us who said it haughtily,
or our father or mother said it haughtily,
have mercy!

Pav. 27/2¹⁴¹

(Prayer 3)¹⁴²

God, bringing the soul into the world!
God's mother, bringing the soul into the world!
Pülěχśě, bringing the soul into the world!

¹³⁸ Prayer recited to avert the harm caused by evil spirits.

¹³⁹ The names of the invoked deities in Chuvash can be read in the second table of the sub-chapter "Nikifor Pavlovich's Simbirsk list" (Prayers recited in case of harm inflicted upon humans by evil spirits, Prayer 2).

¹⁴⁰ The phrase *măn sămaχ*, which appears in the prayer text, was already obsolete at the beginning of the 20th century. When asked by Ashmarin, some people interpreted it as 'haughty', and others explained it as meaning 'rough, bad' (Ashmarin 1921, 33).

¹⁴¹ Prayer recited to avert the harm caused by evil spirits.

¹⁴² The names of the invoked deities in Chuvash can be found in the second table of the sub-chapter "Nikifor Pavlovich's Simbirsk list" (Prayers recited in case of harm inflicted upon humans by evil spirits, Prayer 3).

Pülëχśě's mother, bringing the soul into the world!
Good One going before God, bringing the soul into
the world!

Have mercy on us
at the birth of the soul,
at the growth of the body!
Unto the unborn,
give birth,
unto the ungrown,
give growth!

Pav. 27/3¹⁴³

(Prayer 4)¹⁴⁴

Soul-giving God!
Soul-giving God's mother!
Soul-giving *Pülëχśě*!
Soul-giving *Pülëχśě*'s mother!
Soul-giving Good One going before God!
Have mercy on us
at the birth of the soul,
at the growth of the body!
Define the undefined for us,
give life to the defined!

Pav. 27/4¹⁴⁵

(Prayer 5)¹⁴⁶

Adam God!
Adam God's mother!

¹⁴³ Prayer recited to avert the harm caused by evil spirits.

¹⁴⁴ The names of the invoked deities in Chuvash can be found in the fourth table of the sub-chapter "Nikifor Pavlovich's Simbirsk list" (Prayers recited in case of harm inflicted upon humans by evil spirits, Prayer 4).

¹⁴⁵ Prayer recited to avert the harm caused by evil spirits.

¹⁴⁶ The names of the invoked deities in Chuvash can be found in the fifth table of the sub-chapter "Nikifor Pavlovich's Simbirsk list" (Prayers recited in case of harm inflicted upon humans by evil spirits, Prayer 5).

Adam *Pülëχśě*!
Adam *Pülëχśě*'s mother!
Adam helper's ¹⁴⁷ mother!
Adam helper!
Create the uncreated,
make the created grow!
.....¹⁴⁸

Pav. 27/5¹⁴⁹

(Prayer 6)¹⁵⁰
Adam protector!
Adam protector's mother!
Soul guard's mother!
Soul guard!
Soul-protecting Good One's mother!
Soul-protecting Good One!
.....

Pav. 27/6

(Prayer 7)¹⁵¹
God Debate's¹⁵² mother!
God Debate!

¹⁴⁷ Ashmarin cites a manuscript by S. N. Karamalov in connection with the explanation of this form, where the author provides the translation: 'helper with the work' (Ashm. 1921, 33 /e/).

¹⁴⁸ Here and hereafter, I retain the dotted lines of the original manuscript.

¹⁴⁹ Prayer recited to avert the harm caused by evil spirits.

¹⁵⁰ The names of the invoked deities appearing here can be read in Chuvash in the sixth table of the sub-chapter "Nikifor Pavlovich's Simbirsk list" (Prayers recited in case of harm inflicted upon humans by evil spirits, Prayer 6).

¹⁵¹ The names of the invoked deities appearing here can be read in Chuvash in the seventh table of the sub-chapter "Nikifor Pavlovich's Simbirsk list" (Prayers recited in case of harm inflicted upon humans by evil spirits, Prayer 7).

¹⁵² Ashmarin translates the Chuvash word *Tala* as 'the most high' and identifies it with the Arabic word *تعالى* (Tatar *tägälä*) already earlier (Ashmarin 1902, 119, 121), and then here, too (1921, 31) (Ar. *الله تعالى* *Allāh tacālā* 'Allah supreme' ARS 536). In my translation, I started from the following data: Chuvash

God bad one's mother!
 God bad one!
 Enmity's bad one's mother!
 Enmity's bad one!
 Have mercy at times of enmity!

Pav. 27/7¹⁵³

(Prayer 8)¹⁵⁴

Slanderer's¹⁵⁵ mother!
 Slanderer!
 Oath-swearer's mother!
 Oath-swearer!
 Have mercy at false speech,
 at speaking falsely!

...

Pav. 27/8¹⁵⁶

(Prayer 9)

Piḡampar's mother!
Piḡampar!

tav 'debate, argument', from this: *tavlaš-* 'to debate, to argue', *tavlă* 'debated, debatable'; *tavlă šēr* and *tal-šēr* (toponyms); *tal* (shortening of *tavlă*) 'debated', *tala-* 'to debate'. Ashmarin's Arabic etymology may be correct, but it does not affect the meaning of the word for the given community. The interpretation suggested by me also fits far better in the semantics of the names of the gods in this section and the prayers said to them.

¹⁵³ Prayer recited to avert the harm caused by evil spirits.

¹⁵⁴ The names of the invoked deities and spirits in Chuvash can be read in the eighth table of the sub-chapter "Nikifor Pavlovich's Simbirsk list" (Prayers recited in case of harm inflicted upon humans by evil spirits, Prayer 8).

¹⁵⁵ In addition to interpreting *yulavša* as 'false accusation, slander; pretence', Ashmarin also suggests another solution (Ashm. 1921, 13-16), see → *Yulavša*.

¹⁵⁶ Ninth prayer recited to avert the harm caused by evil spirits. (In fact, it only contains two invocations; probably one of the previous texts was recited here, too, indicated by the dots).

Pav. 27/9¹⁵⁷

(Prayer 10)

Xārpan's mother!

Xārpan!

Dry it out not,

wither it not,

fade it not!

Pav. 27-28¹⁵⁸

(Prayer 11)

Earth god!¹⁵⁹

Earth god's mother!

Earth's *Pülěχśě*!

Earth's *Pülěχśě*'s mother!

Earth's father!

Earth's mother!

Earth's breasts' mother!

Earth's breasts!

Earth's master's mother!

Earth's master!

Earth's bad one's mother!

Earth('s) bad one!

Earth *Xārpan*'s mother!

Earth *Xārpan*!

Have mercy,

when we are harmed

by falling on the ground!

Amen!

¹⁵⁷ Prayer recited to avert harm caused by evil spirits.

¹⁵⁸ Prayer recited to avert harm caused by falling on the ground.

¹⁵⁹ The names of the deities invoked in the prayer can be read in Chuvash in the eleventh table of the sub-chapter "Nikifor Pavlovich's Simbirsk list" (Prayers against harm caused by falling on the ground).

Pav. 28¹⁶⁰

(Prayer 12)

Water's God!¹⁶¹

Water's God's mother!

Water's *Pülěχśě*!

Water's *Pülěχśě*'s mother!

Water's father!

Water's mother!

Good one going before the water's God!

Kělě-on-the-water's mother!

Kělě-on-the-water!

Water's bad one's mother!

Water's bad one!

At the fright caused by falling into the water,
have mercy!

At sinking into the swamp, too,
have mercy! ...

Pav. 28-29¹⁶²

God!¹⁶³

Pülěχśě!

1. God's road's mother!¹⁶⁴

God's road!

Good God's road!

¹⁶⁰ Prayer recited in the case of falling into water.

¹⁶¹ The names of the deities invoked in the prayer can be read in Chuvash in the twelfth table of the sub-chapter "Nikifor Pavlovich's Simbirsk list" (Prayer in case of falling in water).

¹⁶² Prayer said for grain and for man, which was recited thirty-three times with thirty-three different invocations. The first invoked being is always God, the second is *Pülěχśě*, and the names of the subsequent deities and spirits vary. I refer to this by numbering.

¹⁶³ The Chuvash names of the deities and spirits invoked in the prayer can be read in the sub-chapter "Nikifor Pavlovich's Simbirsk list 1883-1884" in the table entitled Prayer for grain and man).

¹⁶⁴ God's way (and its various compounds) can also be interpreted as 'God's year' (Ashmarin is more inclined to this solution, while I myself to the previous one).

2. Mother of Good One going before God!
Good One going before God!
3. *Kepe*'s mother!
Kepe!
4. Bright world's mother!
Bright world!
5. Bright world's¹⁶⁵ mother!
Bright world!
6. Mother of World-holding Good One!
World-holding Good One!
7. Mother of Good One going on the road!
Good One going on the road!
8. Mother of country(= earth-water)-holding Good One!
Country(= earth-water)-holding Good One!
9. Mother of Good One resting in Lake Milk!
Good One resting in Lake Milk!
10. Mother of Good One lying in the white *χun*!
Good One resting in the white *χun*!
11. Mother of Good One resting in the yellow *χun*!
Good One resting in the yellow *χun*!
12. Mother of Good One resting on the red bank!
Good One resting on the red bank!
13. Mother of Good One resting in *Văl*!
Good One resting in *Văl*!
14. *Valēm χuśa*'s mother!
Valēm χuśa!
15. Blush of dawn's mother!
Blush of dawn!
16. Midday's mother!
Midday!
17. Sun's mother!
Sun's wings!

¹⁶⁵ The fourth and the fifth invoked deities are not identical in Chuvash, but their meanings do not differ. About this, see entry → *Šut tēñče, šut šantalāk*.

18. Wind's mother!
Wind's wings!
 19. Storm's mother!
Storm's wings!
 20. Frost's mother!
Frost's bad one!
 21. Dew's mother!
Dew's bad one!
 22. Fog's mother!
Fog's bad one!
 23. Warmth's mother!
Warmth's bad one!
 24. Dry fog's mother!
Dry fog's bad one!
 25. Going Good One's mother!
Going Good One!
 26. Rein-holding Good One's mother!
Rein-holding Good One!
 27. *Kāvak χuppi*'s mother!
Kāvak χuppi!
 28. Mother of Good One opening *Kepe*'s door!
Good One opening *Kepe*'s door!
 29. *Aslati*'s mother!
Aslati!
 30. Lightning's mother!
Lightning's wings!
Good One going before the lightning!
 31. Whirlwind's mother!
Whirlwind's bad one!
 32. Whirlwind's *kělě*'s mother!
Whirlwind's *kělě*!
 33. Winged Good One going with the whirlwind!
- Give us good days and years!
Give good things,
give health!

What we ask of the sky,
give from the sky!
What we ask of the earth,
give from the earth!
From thieves and robbers
protect us, guard us!
From fire and conflagration
protect us, guard us!
While eating our food
and giving our due¹⁶⁶
protect us, guard us!
When we buy,
when we sell,
protect us, guard us!
Have mercy!
Amen!
Receive it with good will!

Rek. 1898, 184-185¹⁶⁷

Great God!¹⁶⁸
We invite thee on this day,
With a potful of porridge,
with unbroken bread,
with a bowl of flat breads.
I bow from my heart
with all my children,

¹⁶⁶ Ashmarin interprets this line completely differently: “in the food that we are going to eat / and in the payment that is generated during the production of it” (Ashm. 1921, 31). The Chuvash original is *šiyaś šimeren / paras parāmran*.

¹⁶⁷ Prayer recited during the “household’s porridge” sacrifice.

¹⁶⁸ They recite this prayer 13 times, invoking a different deity each time. The thirteen invoked deities are 1. God, 2. God’s father, 3. God’s mother (Rekeyev provides the first three in Russian and the rest in Chuvash), 4. *Šēr-šiv tuna tură*, 5. *tiră-pulă šuratakan*, 6. *Pülěχšě*, 7. *Pülěχšě*’s mother, 8. *Pereket*, 9. *Pereket*’s mother, 10. *Šēr*, 11. *Šēr aššě* (earth’s father), 12. *Šēr amăšě* (earth’s mother), 13. *Šēr-yiř*.

with all my household.
 Keep me in everything good!
 The seeds of seven grains
 I plant into the ground.
 Give wealth!
 For one seed sown
 Give a thousand seeds!
 Give me straw
 whose stem is like reed,
 give me ears
 like maces,
 give me roots
 like hardness,
 give its top fullness,
 give us seeds
 like peas.
 Let us harvest what we sowed,
 let us gather
 what is fallen and scattered!
 In sheaves, stacks and ricks,
 give us wealth!
 In stacks, drying-barn,
 storehouse, grain-bin
 and flour, give us increase!
 Give us the opportunity to sell
 and buy
 and feed the hungry!
 Protect us from the wind,
 from storm, hail,
 mice and locusts!
Čük, have mercy!
 Receive the prayer with good will!
 Amen.

Vish. 239-240¹⁶⁹

Great God, have mercy!
Great God's mother, have mercy!
One before the Great God, have mercy!
Pülěχśě, have mercy!
Pülěχśě's mother, have mercy!
Piχampar, have mercy!
Kepe, have mercy!
Great good, have mercy!
Universe-holder, have mercy!
Universe-holding God's mother, have mercy!
Universe-holding *Pülěχśě*, have mercy!
Universe-holding *Pülěχśě*'s mother, have mercy!
Universe-holding *Kepe*, have mercy!
Earth-water holder, have mercy!
Earth-water holding *Pülěχśě*, have mercy!
Earth-water holding *Pülěχśě*'s mother, have mercy!
Earth-water holding *Kepe*, have mercy!
Sun, have mercy!
Moon, have mercy!
One lying in the bright height, have mercy!¹⁷⁰
Pülěχśě, lying in the bright height, have mercy!
Pülěχśě's mother, lying in the bright height, have
mercy!
Čük, have mercy!

Bring good fortune and happiness
from the mouth of the Volga,

¹⁶⁹ Prayer said to God.

¹⁷⁰ Skvortsov presumes that this unusual, hard-to-interpret form may be a slip of the pen, and we should correct Vishnevskiy's record of *śut śülte vīrtan* 'resting in the bright height' to *śut külte vīrtan* 'resting in the bright lake', well documented in other sources (Skv. 252).

from the mouth of the Sur,
from the bottom of the sea!¹⁷¹

Fill the farmyard with livestock!
Give abundance to the grain!
What is given to the earth, destroy it not with hail!
What is given to us, scatter not!
Let not evildoers come over us!
Give not bad things!
Joy be to life!
Čük, have mercy!¹⁷²

Vish. 240-241¹⁷³

Great *kiremet*, have mercy!
Great *kiremet*'s mother, have mercy!
One near to the great *kiremet*, have mercy!
Great *kiremet pülěxšě*, have mercy!
Great *kiremet*'s head, have mercy!¹⁷⁴
Great *kiremet* bad (*çayar*), have mercy!
Great *kiremet tipiri*,¹⁷⁵ have mercy!¹⁷⁶
Misfortune (*sinker*) give not!
Trouble-misfortune give not!
Sadness-grief give not!
Cruel disease give not!
Send health unto us!
Merry and joyful life give us!
Čük, have mercy!

¹⁷¹ The last three lines frequently occur in incantations, too, meaning 'from everywhere, from every direction' (Skv. 252).

¹⁷² Vishnevskiy translates the last line as "Indeed have mercy!"

¹⁷³ Prayer said in honour of the *kiremet*.

¹⁷⁴ Vishnevskiy translates it as "one who opens the door of the great *kiremet*".

¹⁷⁵ On the difficulties of the interpretation of the Chuvash word *tipiri* or *těper*, see → *Tipiri*.

¹⁷⁶ Vishnevskiy translates this sentence as 'Cleaner of the *kiremet*, have mercy!'.

Mythical Stories

Ashm. I, 308-309¹⁷⁷

[*Ar-šuri*]

The Chuvash have a belief that a long time ago, in the forests lived the *ar-šuris*, monkey-like beings, which tried to meet people in the forest. They loved to feast on people's teeth; therefore, they tickled people, took all their teeth out and swallowed them. They found people by their voices, deceitfully answering their cries.

Ar-šuris were terrified of rivers and streams, of water in general. When approaching people, they would ask:

"Are you going upstream or downstream?"

The resourceful Chuvash answered:

"Downstream."

In this way, they escaped the *ar-šuri*. The point was not to say they were going upstream because the *ar-šuri* would then quickly run around the source of the stream or river and get on to the same bank as the man. But if they answered downstream, the *ar-šuri* knew that it was impossible to go around the mouth of the river, so it left the man alone.

Ashm. I, 310¹⁷⁸

[*Ar-šuri*]

The *ar-šuri* lives in the forest. The *ar-šuri* comes from a child who was born after the girls played around with the boys. Later, when the girl gives birth, she often kills her baby in her shame and throws it into a hidden crack. Because such a girl acts precipitously, she does not throw even a single clump of earth on the baby. Thus, because the mother killed her living child and did not inter it or take final leave of it, the child goes to the forest and turns into an *ar-šuri*. They say that, on the day when it was born, the *ar-šuri* walks around screaming.

¹⁷⁷ Originally recorded by Rekeyev.

¹⁷⁸ From a collection in Churachiki.

Ashm. I, 311¹⁷⁹

[*Ar-śuri*]

The *ar-śuri* frightens people. It is an evil spirit. They say that the *ar-śuri* comes from a person who dies unexpectedly in the forest, without repentance and sacrifice. They say that it appears before people and frightens them in the form of the person who had perished. When it appears in the form of someone who froze in the forest in winter, it always wears a fur, even in summer, and rides a sledge. When it appears in the form of someone who was struck down by a tree, it keeps screaming, and if in the form of someone who fell off a tree while logging, it cuts down and breaks trees. Some of them run up to people passing and shout out their name.

Ashm. I, 314¹⁸⁰

[*Ar-śuri*]

I saw it on the road. Something tall and fat was standing on the road. It was some kind of a womanly shape, but very tall, about twice as big as me. It had its back to me and its hair hung down to the ground. When there were some ten sazhen¹⁸¹ left between us, I stopped. This being started to call me by my name. Its voice resembled the voice of a friend of mine who died while we were in the army.

It called me three times. Then it turned around and came up to me. Its breasts weighed a pood each.¹⁸² I called out God's name and crossed myself three times, all the while throwing sticks at it. The forest began to crackle, the branches of the trees began to break and the trees fell by themselves. The being disappeared in the forest, breaking the trees in its path. I could hear the cracking for a

¹⁷⁹ Recorded by Ashmarin in the village of Shorche-kasy in the Cheboksary district.

¹⁸⁰ St. Chekurskoye, Buin district.

¹⁸¹ One sazhen is slightly over two metres.

¹⁸² One pood is approx. 16 kg.

long time. I crossed myself again and started running. I ran three versts,¹⁸³ all the way out of the forest.

I myself was amazed by what I had seen. Could it have been the *ar-śuri*?!

Ashm. XII, 173¹⁸⁴

[*Śiśem*]

They say that once God was chasing the devil. In the end, the devil could only escape by getting into a house through the chimney, which was not closed. (Apparently, this is the origin of the belief that during a thunderstorm, the doors, windows and even chimneys must be shut.) Chasing the devil, the lightning flew into the house through the chimney in the shape of a fireball, and hit the evil spirit so hard that its blood splashed all over the wall of the house. The place where the blood splashed immediately caught fire and caused a conflagration.

AshmVv. 48

[*Esrelě*]

They say that a long time ago, *Esrelě* and Eskemer lived peacefully together. Eskemer had an iron coffin made for him to be laid in after he died. *Esrelě* saw the coffin and asked:

“What have you got here?”

Eskemer replied:

“A coffin to lie in when I’m dead.”

Esrelě said:

“I will come then to take away your soul.”

Eskemer then starts to persuade him:

“You wouldn’t take my soul, would you, as we’ve been such good friends? There are so many people in the world, leave me alone!”

Esrelě answered:

“No, there’s no pardon.”

¹⁸³ One verst is approx. 1 km.

¹⁸⁴ The description was adopted by Ashmarin from Okhotnikov.

Once, Eskemer wanted to try out the coffin, so he lay down in it. Just then, *Esrelě* came to see him. Eskemer says to him:

“This coffin is the perfect size for me. C’mon, you try whether you fit in it.”

Eskemer shut *Esrelě* in the coffin and caused it to sink in the lake that lay there behind him. *Esrelě* disappeared.

Some thirty years passed, they say, without a single person dying. People grew so old that they started to put on their moccasins back to front. God started to look for *Esrelě*. He gathered the birds, snakes and fish from all directions and asked them if they had seen *Esrelě*. He noticed that one of the fish from Eskemer’s lake was missing. He called this fish to himself and asked:

“Why did you not come?”

The fish answered:

“I am blind, I cannot see, that’s why I didn’t come.”

“And how did you become blind?” asked God.

The fish said:

“One night I swam to the surface to bathe and play. The Moon was shining brightly. Suddenly, a large object fell into the water and blinded my eyes.”

“What kind of object? Let’s go see!”

They saw *Esrelě* in the coffin, hardly breathing. God healed him and made him invisible.¹⁸⁵

AshmVv. 50/1

[*Vupār*]

The *vupār* can turn into an old woman. After that, she eats the moon and pushes people. If you see the *vupār* eating the moon, you must throw ashes to the window and they say then the *vupār* will leave the moon alone.

¹⁸⁵ Another version of the legend is recorded by Rekeyev (Rek. 296-297). In this one, the old man incarcerating death is one who does not want to die. The end of the story is somewhat different, too: that is when God orders that people would not only die when they are old, but God himself will decide already before their birth how long they should live and write it on their forehead.

AshmVv. 50/2

[*Vupār*]

When the *vupār* pushes the man, he is as if dead. Some time passes before he is able to regain his senses. The *vupār* comes to push people when they are asleep; it enters the house through the window, turning into a cat.

Once they trapped the *vupār* at a window. The people went to sleep and soon enough, the *vupār* appeared in the shape of a cat and jumped into the house. As soon as it was inside, the people locked the door, put the light on and tried to catch it. Then the *vupār* turned into a kitchen stool. When they hit it, it turned into a pillow. They started hitting the pillow, when it turned back into a cat. They hit the cat, and it turned into an old woman. They said that she took care never to show her face by any means. When they chased her out to the yard, a dog pounced on her. Then the *vupār* turned back into a cat and disappeared from sight in the blink of an eye.

AshmV2, 17

[*Vutāš*]

There is no river without a *vutāš* living in its depth. They say that it is very similar to humans, except that it has a blue body and long hair. In warm weather, it often comes out to the shore and combs its hair there. Sometimes it falls asleep in the sun. If somebody then steals close to it and makes the sign of the cross over it, they say it cannot return to the water. Therefore, it pleads with the man to free it. Any amount of money that the man wants, it will give him.

Inf. 19-22

[*Keremet*]

Once upon a time, Keremet¹⁸⁶ was the firstborn son of *Šūlti Turā* (the upper God) and lived together with him in the sky and was

¹⁸⁶ Throughout Infanteyev's text, the word *kiremet* appears in the form of *Keremet*', or *keremet*'. In my translation, I have retained the form *Keremet* as a proper noun, and use the evil spirit's name in the standard *kiremet* form.

good.¹⁸⁷ This was a very long time ago, when people were not like they are now. First, the upper God created them to be weak, ugly and stupid; they walked on all fours, ate grass and were unprotected from wild beasts and bad weather. Then the upper God took mercy on them and ordered *Čon Šuratan Toră* (soul-creating God) to create the multitude of human souls. He united some of these souls with the people already living on earth and left the others for the children in the celestial abode and for the successors of the first humans.

Now, when God united these souls with the people, they became smart, walked on two legs, tamed the wild animals and ate their meat and took possession of the land and everything they needed. Soon, man became the master of earth and all that existed upon it. The earth yielded all kinds of fruit and grain in abundance, without man having to fertilise, till or take care of the ground. There was an abundance of goods, wealth was given equally to everyone and people did not know hard work or deprivation, sorrow, worries or diseases. All this prosperity was showered on them by the upper God's first-born son, Keremet. In his magnificent chariot, to which his white horses were harnessed, he travelled the earth ceaselessly, bringing abundance, wealth, prosperity and happiness to all. But Satan envied this happiness and began to tempt people to do bad things. The people, listening to his words, became lazy and boastful; drunkenness and gluttony appeared, and fighting, quarrelling and enmity spread among them because of drunkenness. Each of them wanted to be bigger than the other and rule over the others. Finally, overshadowed by their conceit and incited by Satan, they committed the most heinous crime: they killed their benefactor, Keremet and, to cover up their evil deed from the upper God, burned the body of his slain son and scattered his ashes in the wind. And behold, where his ashes fell, trees grew, in which Keremet was reborn, but no longer as one, but as innumerable evil deities hostile to man. This is how the multitude of *kiremets* came to be, which are

¹⁸⁷ In the Chuvash original, *iră ǵăvat* appears here, a noun phrase meaning 'good power'. Infantev translates it as 'good God'.

now bound to earth and can no longer live in the sky with the good deities. Their numbers later multiplied when they got married and had offspring. Since then, the furious *kiremets* have taken revenge on people for being killed by them and losing their celestial home. They plague people with all kinds of trouble and suffering, and if they had not been appeased with sacrifices, they would have long wiped people off the face of the earth.

This is why, whenever a new village is built, some *kiremets* are relocated to its vicinity. However, they can only be consecrated under some special guidance, which can be a prophecy through a dream or some other miraculous procedure performed by the healer or an elder. So, that is why there is always one or a few *kiremets* near every Chuvash village.

Because they killed his son, the upper God scattered people all over the earth and entrusted them to his old servant, the god *Kepe*, to assign each one their own fate. It is since then that there have been so many different states, generations and languages among people. The seventy-seven languages were invented by the upper God himself. And since then, every time a child is born, *Kepe* orders his fortunate or unfortunate fate, and *Pülëχśě* and *Piχampar* lead him and fulfil that order.

Kam. 8-9

[*Vopkän*]

Once upon a time, two neighbours, Vasily and Ivan, lived in a village. Vasily was rich, Ivan was poor. As the poor Ivan was not industrious and did not work, he remained poor. He had a wife.

Well, Ivan, seeing that he was waiting in vain for prosperity in their village, set off with his wife early one morning to leave the village. On their way out of the village, Ivan remembered that he had left his axe at home by the door. So he went back to fetch it. As he reached the yard, he saw a fire from the house through the window. He opened the door and saw that some man had lit the kindling-wood and was sitting on the chair, putting on his shoes. Ivan took the axe, put it on his shoulder, walked over to the stranger, and asked:

“Who are you and what are you doing here?”

The other one answered:

“I am your *vopkăn* and I am setting out to go with you.”

Hearing this, Ivan hit him with the axe, put him in a coffin, took him to the edge of the forest and buried him. He went home and carried on living in his house. By and by, Ivan and his wife were living better and better, they had everything and were even growing rich.

The neighbour Vasily saw this and was very surprised. Ivan once invited him to his house. Vasily kept asking how Ivan had got rich. Ivan told him everything as it had happened and showed Vasily where he had buried the *vopkăn*. Vasily envied how quickly Ivan got rich, so he grabbed his axe, went out into the forest and dug the *vopkăn* out of the ground. As soon as he opened the coffin, the *vopkăn* jumped out and shouted with great joy:

“Thank you, my friend! You have saved me and therefore I will stay with you.”

Vasily shouted at it:

“Oh, no! I freed you, therefore you must obey me! Go to Ivan and do not come with me!”

“No, I am not going to him” said the *vopkăn*, “because he would kill me again. You freed me, so I’ll go to you!”

As Vasily could not persuade the *vopkăn* to go to Ivan, it joined him. Thus, with the unearthed *vopkăn*, poverty fell on Vasily. He soon became almost destitute, and Ivan became a rich man.

Magn. 2-3¹⁸⁸

[On the origin of the *kiremet*]

During a great storm, a Chuvash woman was home alone. When she looked out the window at the sky, she saw a man walking in front of the cloud. The next moment, this man was right beside her and asked her to hide him under the bench and not to say anything, should anyone ask about him. The woman agreed and hid him and sat back by the window. Soon, another man came in and asked her if

¹⁸⁸ From Magnitskiy’s collection in Maslovoy; also cited by Mész. 33-34.

she had seen a man passing in front of the cloud. The woman replied that she had not. Then she asked this man who he was and who he was looking for.

“I am God and I am looking for the *kiremet*”, said the visitor. The woman insisted that she had indeed not seen anyone. God believed her and left the house. The *kiremet* then came out from under the bench and said to her:

“You have saved my life, now give me something to eat!”

“What shall I give you?”

“Buttered porridge.”

The woman cooked the porridge, the *kiremet* ate it and went back to sleep under the bench. The next day, he asked the woman to cook him a duck. But she did not obey him. The *kiremet* became furious, turned on her and beat her half to death, then hid. Meanwhile, the woman’s husband came home from work, asked what had happened to her, but then soon went about his business again. Then the *kiremet* came forth and said to the woman:

“You’d best cook that duck and you’ll be healed, or else you’ll die.”

So, the woman got out of bed, killed the duck and cooked it for him. When he ate it, he left the house and went who knows where. And the woman began to get better, to heal.

Some time later, the *kiremet* came to her again and ate a goose, then a sheep, an ox, and a horse. Then, when he visited the woman for the last time, he told her that if he ever got sick again, she should cook him porridge. If it didn’t make him better, she should cook a duck, and if that didn’t heal him, a goose, and then a sheep, an ox, and a horse. The woman should be his helper and heal the people when they were sick.

He told her that he lived on high mountains and in streams and forests.

Magn. 29

[The chief of the wolves]

There was once a man who asked God to make him rich. God granted his request and the man had a lot of livestock and grain. Then the man asked God to make him equal to Himself. God did that for

him, too. In the end, the man asked God to make him bigger than Himself. God got angry, and the man's riches were destroyed: his flour turned to dust, his dogs to wolves and his horses to beasts. And the man himself became the chief of wild animals.

Magn. 120

[*Χῑτᾶμ*]

A girl, when she got married, did not offer a sacrifice in honour of the *χῑτᾶμ* and did not pray. Her animals began to die off. She asked her brother what to do.

“Have you gone to our father's house to pray to *χῑτᾶμ*?” he asked.

“No” she replied.

Then, when the girl went to her father's house and prayed to *χῑτᾶμ* there, no more animals died in her farmyard.

Mész. 14¹⁸⁹

[A peasant shoots *šuyttan*]

One stormy day, a peasant was walking along the stream with a rifle. The sky above thundered and on the bank of the stream, the *šuyttan* pointed his behind towards the sky, mocking God. When the peasant saw this, he got his rifle and shot the *šuyttan* stone dead. At that moment, the thunder stopped and God descended from the sky in front of the peasant and said to him:

“You've been stronger even than me. I have been chasing this *šuyttan* for seven years, but never have been able to capture it.”

Mész. 29¹⁹⁰

[The *šuyttan* and the deceived woman]

One night, a woman was sleeping in the pantry. While she is sleeping, a man goes up to her, shakes her awake and says:

“Come on quick, the Tatars are stealing your geese!”

¹⁸⁹ From a data provider in Viš-pürt village, Civili district.

¹⁹⁰ From a data provider in Viš-pürt village, Civili district.

The woman gets up and they set out together. The man leads her towards the stream. They are going straight to the water. They were about to step into the water when the woman cried out in fear:

“Oh, God, have mercy!”

With that, the man disappeared from her side. It was the *šuyttan* itself, and it would have drowned the woman if she had not called on God.

Mész. 35-36¹⁹¹

[The origin of the *kiremet*]

Once upon a time, there was a man named Makar, who lived two or three versts from Poshkart. He wanted to acquire a large estate in some way or another. So, this is what he did. He dug a pit into each corner of a large plot of land, put one of his sons in each of them and covered them thinly with earth. He instructed his sons that if they were asked from above who this land belonged to, they should say that it belonged to Makar.

Then, he began to quarrel with the people that this and this land should be his and they should give it to him. Of course, no one listened to him. Then he said to them:

“Go to the four corners of this land and ask who it belongs to.”

The people went to all the four corners, and indeed, voices came out of the earth, saying that this land belonged to Makar. The people let him have the estate, but his four sons died in the pits. By and by, people began to visit these four places to offer sacrifices to the *kiremet* or, as it is called in the Poshkart region, to the *keremet*. And this piece of land is called “Makar’s lands” still to this day.”

¹⁹¹ It was recorded by Mészáros in Poškart, Kozmodemyan district, and a rather similar version of the same mythical story was recorded by Magnitskiy (Magn. 4).

Mész. 36/1¹⁹²

[The origin of the *kiremet*]

[...] the *kiremet* used to be an angel and was going before God. But it did not obey him, and therefore God cast it down from the sky. The people were afraid that if it had quarrelled even with God, it would cause them all kinds of plagues and troubles; so in their fear, they began to offer sacrifices to it.

Mész. 36/2¹⁹³

[The origin of *kiremets*]

[...] a long time ago, those had been rich landlords, who in their life oppressed and tortured the people of the poorer, weaker lands in every way. When they died, they were buried in the forest, because that was the custom in most places among the northern Chuvash. But even after their death, the people feared that their souls would return from the grave and cause disease and harm to them. So, people would go to their graves and offer all kinds of sacrifices in order to keep them at bay. These graves then became places of sacrifice for the *kiremets*. If a *kiremet* appears to somebody in his sleep, it is seen in the image of such a lord, in white dress, on a troika with three white horses. He orders people in their dreams what kind of sacrifice to offer to him.

Mész. 36/3¹⁹⁴

[The origin of *kiremets*]

[...] *kiremets* are believed to come from spellcasters, people who befriend Satan, after they die. Throughout their lives, spellcasters only do harm and damage, and even after death, their soul cannot rest but causes diseases and grabs and harms those who offend their graves, who as much as talk loudly at their graves. For these, sacrifices are brought to the place where they were buried.

¹⁹² Collection from Vompú kašši.

¹⁹³ Collection from Vompú kašši.

¹⁹⁴ Cited by Mészáros, based on his collection in Čandār.

Mész. 37¹⁹⁵

[The origin of the Yersu *kiremet*]

In the old days, in the forest around Yersu, robbers killed a Russian icon merchant, stole his money and left his body and his icons on the ground. As soon as news of the robbery ran through the countryside, the healers began to mention it to the sick people who turned to them for healing:

“Hey, you’ve been grabbed by the Yersu’s sacrifice! There are a great many gods (*turǎ*),¹⁹⁶ there, lying scattered all over the ground; that must have grabbed you!

And people began to offer sacrifices at the place of the murder, following the advice of the healers: they took money, small wax candles and cakes into the forest of Yersu.

Mész. 43¹⁹⁷

[*Esreylǎ*]

My neighbour, so the old man told, was very ill. He was close to his death. One night, as I lay awake in bed, I couldn’t sleep, I saw a horrible-faced, very skinny man come up to me, who was nothing but skin and bones. It was *Esreylǎ*. When I saw him approach me, I kicked him off, and he said this:

“I have lost my way; I should not have come here but to your neighbour’s!”

And so my neighbour died soon afterwards.

Mész. 44

[*Esrelǎ*]

In the cemetery, *Esrelǎ* used to ask each new deceased if there was anyone else in the village who was close to death. But, so that the dead man could not give out any information about anything, it was

¹⁹⁵ Mythical story collected in Yersu village in the Cheboksary district.

¹⁹⁶ Mészáros translates the word *turǎ*, which appears here in the legend, as ‘god’, which also means ‘icon’ in Chuvash.

¹⁹⁷ Collected by Mészáros in Tayapa from an old man.

the custom among the northern Chuvash to stuff his mouth, nostrils and ears with small pieces of silk at home, and to lay two small pieces of silk over his eyes. After this, the following dialogue took place between *Esrelě* and the dead man in the cemetery:

Esrelě: "Is there another one coming?"

Dead man: "I did not see, the eyes were sealed."

Esrelě: "Did you not hear it?"

Dead man: "I did not hear; the ears were plugged, too."

Esrelě: "Did you not smell it?"

Dead man: "The nose was blocked also."

Esrelě: "Why did you not ask?"

Dead man: "The mouth was stuffed, too."

Now, *Esrelě* does not ask the dead any more questions.

Mész. 46¹⁹⁸

[*Aştak*]

It is sometimes seen at night in the form of a flashing brightness in the air. It goes to the women and fornicates with them all night. To the woman, it is usually seen in the image of her husband, but only from the front because its back is like the entrails of a sheep. That is how you can recognise it. Once it gets into the habit of visiting a particular woman, it would go to her every night and fornicate with her until she dies. To scare it away from the house, it must be shot at with a rifle when it is seen flying through the air, which frightens it and it does not dare to go there again. Another way to get it away from the woman is if her husband puts on her clothes in the evening and lies down in her bed. When the *aştak* descends on him at night, he must turn on it and give it a thorough whipping, so it won't dare go there ever again.

¹⁹⁸ Collected by Mészáros in Ulğaš.

Mész. 49

[*Kuykārāš*]

It is believed that if a cock lives for seven years, it will lay an egg in the seventh year. If one ties this egg under one's armpit and hatches it there, it will become a *kuykārāš*.

Today, they don't know any more what shape it is, whether it has a human or an animal form, but it talks, that much they know. It keeps asking its master for jobs to do, and whatever possible things they ask him to do, it does them all. It hoards treasure and money in the house. It must be occupied all the time because it doesn't stay idle for a moment and doesn't leave its master alone if he does not give him a job. But if they've run out of wishes and want to get rid of it, they order it to make the black footcloth white. That it cannot do. This makes it so ashamed that it leaves its master for good and finds itself another one.

However, all the treasure and possessions it hoarded in that place, it now takes to its new house.

Mész. 50¹⁹⁹

[*Upătě*]

A long time ago, a man was chopping wood on a clearing in the middle of the forest. He also had his dog with him. Suddenly, an *upătě* came out to the edge of the clearing and shouted to him from afar:

"Hey, Ivan, shall I go there?"

"Come here", shouted the man back and hid his dog.

"Have you got black eyes (i.e. a dog)?"

"I haven't", replied the man.

The *upătě* went up to him, but when it got near him, the man released his dog, which pounced on the *upătě* and mauled its back.

"I won't come here, I won't come here!" cried the *upătě*, and ran away into the forest.

¹⁹⁹ Collected in Tayapa.

Mész. 50-51²⁰⁰

[*Upătě*]

The shepherds and the stable-boys would graze here next to the forest every day. Now and then, the *upătě* would come out of the forest, mount a particular horse, always the same one, and spend the whole day galloping. It completely ruined the horse. What to do about it? One day, they smeared a thick layer of pitch on the horse's back. The *upătě* mounted that horse again, but as his body was hairy, he got stuck to it. The horse ran back to the village with the *upătě* on its back. It wanted to dismount, but could not. In a childish voice, it was whining from the horse's back:

"If my little hands come off, my little butt won't come off. If my little butt comes off, my little hands won't come off".

Of course, it was held on by the pitch. People ran out to the street with sticks and clubs and gave it a good thrashing. It ran back into the woods, crying. It never rode their horses ever again.

Mész. 86²⁰¹

[**The *šuyttan* and the lightning**]

On a cloudy day, a man was out in the field with his wagon, mowing hay. It was lightning in the distance, the rain was coming, and he set out to go home so as not to get soaked. As he drove down the road, he saw a crying child on the side of the road. The child begged the man to let it ride on the wagon. So he did. As the lightning got closer and closer, the child asked the man to hide it in the clay jug on the wagon. The man scolded the child. At this, it jumped off the wagon and stopped on the road. Suddenly, there was great thunder and lightning. The man looked back and saw that the child disappeared at that moment. God struck it with the lightning.

²⁰⁰ From Yuk-yel village, in the Tetush district of the Kazan governorate. Ashmarin recorded a very similar mythical story in St. Chekunskoye village (Buin district); but his horse-riding mythical being is the *ar-šuri* (Ashm. I, 314-315).

²⁰¹ Collected in the Buin district.

Rek. 418-419

[*Pülěχśě*]

Once a housewife cooked kissel and was dishing it out. Her husband said:

“Lo, God has given us kissel today, let’s eat!”

His neighbour, who was also sitting there, remarked:

“Although God has given it, if the *Pülěχśě* had not ordered it, this kissel would not get into your mouth!”

“What do you mean it wouldn’t?” objected the host. “It has been dished out, it’s here on the table, and we’re sitting here, taking our spoons and we’re going to eat!” he said, sitting down at the table.

But no sooner had he grabbed his spoon than somebody knocked on the window and shouted that his horse was drowning in the river. The host threw away his spoon and ran to his horse. He spent a long time fussing over it.

Meanwhile, those in the house ate all the kissel and didn’t leave him even a taste.

Rek. 419

[*Pirěšti*]

Once, two brothers were grazing the flock. One of them lay down on the ground and fell into a deep sleep, while the other was guarding the flock, moving away a little from his sleeping brother. When he returned to him, he saw a little whitish animal running straight toward his brother’s open mouth. He hurried over to him and quickly put his oak whip upon the brother’s mouth. After that, the little animal ran to and from the sleeping man’s mouth, but could not enter. At last, the brother took away his whip, and the little animal ran into the mouth. The sleeper woke up at that moment and said, “Oh how I suffered in my sleep! It was as if I was walking in a forest, and suddenly, a huge oak tree lay in front of me, which I could not get over in any way. This oak tree has really exhausted me!” From the story, the brother understood that the little animal was none other than his brother’s *Pirěšti*.

The Chuvash say that the only place the *Pirěšti* does not go with its master is the bath, because it is afraid of the steam. It remains

invisibly at the door of the bath, impatiently waiting for its master to come out, grieving and crying incessantly, lest its master exhaust himself too much.

Sometimes, the *Pirěšti* is seen before a person dies. The Chuvash say that not long before the soul leaves, the *Pirěšti* comes out of the man and goes to God. Then the man's soul will also depart.

Zem. 156²⁰²

[On the origin of the *kiremet*]

The *kiremet*, it is an escaped lord. He walked before God, but he was disobedient and escaped from him. God had searched for him for three years before he was found. He was brought before a tribunal and the judges ruled that he should be imprisoned forever. God found this judgment strict, and he said to the judges:

"Listen, my children, let him live by every stream and in every forest and let him live on what he is given, whether it be money or lambs."

As they decided, so it was. The *kiremet* settled by the stream and started harming people. They would bring him money and animals. Later, all the *kiremet*s issued from him. He got married and his children multiplied tremendously on the earth. That is why there are such a lot of *kiremet*s now, and all the descendants of this escaped lord have their own stream or forest, and the Chuvash offer sacrifices to them in order to appease them.

Zem. 157-158²⁰³

[On the origin of the *kiremet*]

A peasant had three sons, the eldest of whom wanted to marry, and he begged his father to marry him. His father was a smart man and thought he would not marry his son until he had discussed it with

²⁰² Collection from the Yadrin district; also cited by Magn. 6; Mész. 34.

²⁰³ Collected in the Yadrin district. Although both Magnitskiy and Mészáros recorded the mythical text, they did not record Zemlyanitskiy's questions about the legend, nor the answers given to them.

God. So, he went to see God. But God did not allow him to marry his son that year. The father told his son the will of God, but he did not believe the old man and sent him back to God. God answered the same again. The son sent his father for the third time. At this time, God became angry, and said to the old man:

“Well now, if your son wants to get married by all means, there is a bride for him in the stream!”

The devils took this old man’s son into the stream. From that time on, no one ever saw him again. Now he had a wife, but had nothing to eat. Now, he himself went to God and asked Him for some food. God ordered that he should have the blood of the animals that are slain.

He lived on that for a long time, but once it so happened that a peasant, when he slaughtered the cow, poured its blood into a vessel and ate it himself. The old man’s son was angry about this and went to God to complain that his food was taken away from him.

“Well, why do you give it to the people?” asked God.

“I wouldn’t give it to them myself, but they take it by force.”

“So be it; then I give you the soul and life of the animals, too, and if somebody doesn’t offer you sacrifices, you can harm them in any way you want.”

That is where the *kiremet* comes from. It had children and, in order to appease them, the Chuvash offer sacrifices to them.

When the Chuvash finished the legend, I asked him whether the man who had three sons that the *kiremet*s eventually originate from, was a holy man. He replied:

“No, he was just like me.”

“But in that case, how could he go to God and how could he see Him?” I asked.

“Well, of course”, he looked at me in complete amazement, “back then, the sky used to be close to the earth, so close that if someone went up on to the roof of his cottage, he could reach the sky with a stick. So, if he propped up a ladder against his house, he could go up into the sky.”

To my question that if it used to be that way, why the sky is so high today, the Chuvash could not really answer. He said:

“It used to be that way, but why the sky is so high nowadays, who can tell?”