The sole number of the Tatar journal *Heberçi*

Abstract

This is a short overview of a Tatar journal *Heberçi* of 22 (+2 title) pages published in 1952 in Stockholm, the content, and the language features of which were unknown to the specialists up to now. It was called issue number 1. The publication was realized by a group of well-known Tatar writers, scientists and journalists who lived at that time in Sweden as immigrants. The copy of the journal which was at my disposal was received from Stockholm. The study of this bulletin may give new information about the duration of the keeping or not keeping of the immigrants’ mother tongue in a foreign language environment. Also, one can regard it as a source for research of the social status of the immigrants in Europe in the middle of the 20th century. This article will present the following: 1. an overview of the content of the bulletin, 2. an analysis of the language of the journal in comparison with the Modern literary Tatar language, 3. the translation into English of 2 texts from the bulletin and 4. 5 pages of facsimiles of the texts.

Keywords: Tatars, Turkic languages, written sources, *Heberçi*, emigration
I would like to refer the reader to the introduction of the paper for some brief information concerning the Tatars’ presence in the Nordic countries. There are quite a few Tatars both in Sweden and Finland: The Muslim Sunnis as well as the Orthodox Christian-Kriashens. They prefer the term “Northern Turks” as a self-name, instead of “Tatars”. Their exact number is not known. Nevertheless, historians know that there were waves of Tatar emigration from Russia since the time of Tsar Ivan the Terrible. The great wave occurred after the Stockholm Exhibition in 1897. Many new immigrants got married in Sweden; also, many of them brought their household and their old friends from Russia to Sweden. All of them integrated well but maintained their own religion. But when they died, they were buried in Finland because there was no Muslim cemetery in Sweden. At last, in 1949 a Turkic-Muslim-Cultural organization in Stockholm was formed, and the journal Heberçti (“Bulletin”) was published in 1952 under its aegis. At the same time, the Muslim cemetery in Stockholm was inaugurated which was mentioned in the journal in the story Yazmiş, “The Fate”.

The translation of the journal’s full title is as follows: “The Heberçti is published periodically by the Stockholm’s religious, cultural, Turkic, Islamic organization. No. 1. Dec. – 1952 – Stockholm” (Image 1). It should not be supposed that there were following numbers of the journal. The number 1 is the sole number. The Bulletin with an indication of the volume of the issue (20 pp.) was mentioned in the large bibliography of 157 names compiled from several sources by Harry Halên which was published in 1981. It is placed under number 45 in a section of “Other periodicals”. There the Heberçti is named “Contributions in the Tatar magazine Heberçti”. There is an additional remark in square brackets, ‘all appeared, published by some unknown Tatar’.

About the nature of the content, it should be said that the journal has more of a secular character rather than religious. In its content there are materials on the history of the Tatars, e.g., the imposing article by Prof. Tamurbek Dawletshin, ‘The Bulgar Khanate’, on the history of the state of the Bulgars and interrelations with the other states (see the Translation N1, Image 3).

I would like to extend my thanks to Dr. Elżbieta Święcicka (Uppsala University) for her information about the journal, and to Prof. Simon Sorgenfrei (Södertörns University) who found this copy in 2019 in the Türkerc Kökkan’s private archives in Stockholm and gave me an opportunity to study and publish the issue. It is acknowledged that my present work was partly financially supported by the Södertörns University. I would also like to thank Ms. Susan Cohen (National Library of Israel) for her correcting of my English language in this paper.


An impression I received at the time of my visit to the Tatar community in Helsinki in 1992–93.


Tatarskij Enciklopedicheskij Slowar’, ed. Mansur H. Khasanov, Kazan 1999, p. 165. I wish to express my gratitude to Prof. Elida Bashirova (Kazan University) for this information.
the study of the USSR in Munich. His well-known work is “The Soviet Tatarstan: The Theory and Practice of Lenin’s National Politics” (London, 1974). Another author in the journal Heberçi is Hassan Khamidulla (1895–1988), a famous writer and a publisher, who since 1915 lived in Finland. He is the author of 11 books of poetry, and the novel “The Emigrant’s Happiness”. There are two of his poems in the journal: “A Son of the Turkic People” and “Substitution of Banners” (Image 4).6 At the same time there are journalistic descriptions of the celebration of the Muslim feast of Eid al-Fitr in Stockholm in the story “The Fate” (see the Translation N2), and information about the electrification of the city of Mecca. The bulletin contains both a page for children and detailed information about a new collection of Tatar songs (Image 5). The organizers of the journal, who were also the authors of the articles and the publishers of the bulletin, aimed to consolidate the former tribesmen and to preserve the mother tongue in the new foreign environment. Such are the declarations which are presented on the beginning pages of the bulletin as a proposal. They called on the readers to take part in the journal, not only financially but also creatively. In connection with the latter, they gave notice that they will not publish any political materials. It is worth noting that they included a poem about Kemal Atatürk (who died in 1938).

Works of belles-lettres are always popular in the Tatar milieu. The great need of the people for literary art is confirmed by the many manuscripts and books of poetry, prose and other works written from the Middle Ages until now.7 Thus, the idea of publishing a periodical for the Nordic Tatars was right.

The content of the bulletin is as follows (Image 2):

1. Title page in Latin letters page 1.
2. Contents page 2.
3. Copy of the title page in Arabic letters page 3.
10. Holy city of Mecca is electrified page 17.
11. Ibrahim Gomerkay is 75 years old page 17.
15. Songs of our people page 22.
17. The plan of subjects for the future publications page 24.

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6 Ibidem, p. 626.
Analysis of the language

As to the language of the bulletin as the source for linguistical analyses, it is written in the literary Tatar language. Both the lexicon and the morphology are equal to the words and forms and idioms of the Modern literary language. The comparison with the Modern Tatar language demonstrates some typical features of the development of the first-generation immigrants’ mother language in a foreign, i.e., Swedish language environment. Almost all the journal is printed in Arabic characters according to the new Tatar orthographic rules called \( yanya \) imlӓ which was adopted in 1920.

There are some orthographical features which were typical of the Old Tatar language. The spelling of Russian borrowed words and words that came into Tatar from Russian show that their Tatar pronunciation differs from the Russian, e.g., \( čirkäü \) [церковь in Russian] ‘church’ (4b), \( gäzitä \) [газета in Russian] ‘newspaper’ (7b), \( nigr \) [негр in Russian] (7a) etc.\(^8\) In Modern Tatar the Russian loan words are spelled like in Russian. However, in the text of the bulletin in some graphical cases it is impossible to make out the features of the pronunciation of the Tatar words from the Russian ones, e.g., \( tænxika \) [мехника in Russian] ‘engineering’ (6a), \( zal \) [зал in Russian] ‘hall’ (8a) etc.

It is interesting to see the spelling of the name of the capital of Sweden as \( istukxulm \) ‘Stockholm’ which is changed according to a known Turkic phonetic rule: at the beginning of a loan word a prosthesis vowel appears in a cluster of two consonants, especially if it is an occlusive consonant with a slotted one.\(^9\) We all know the other case which is the most well-known instance of such a change: ‘Istanbul < Stambul’. There is another example in the text: \( espas \) rayonü ‘Spas district’ (4b), \( isviçdegi \) ‘which is in Sweden’ (title page).

The spelling of the word \( yaurupa \) ‘Europe’ (3a) shows a labial character of the consonant ‘v’ in Tatar in the language of the bulletin’s publishers. Later, it was substituted by a labial-dental consonant ‘v’.

In the language of the journal, we see the spelling \( torganlar \) ‘they lived’ (5a), \( satkanlar \) ‘they sold out’ (4b), \( salib \) birgänläř ‘they built (for somebody)’ (5a), \( ülänlär \) ‘herbs, grass (pl.)’ (3a), while in the Modern literary Tatar language \( toryannar, satqannar, salip \) birgännbär, \( ülännär \), because the joining of the plural suffix -lar/-lär provoked the progressive assimilation of the root nasal consonants of a word with \( m, n, ŋ \). This linguistical phenomenon was used in the Tatar language and already was noted by specialists of that time.\(^10\)

The Modern literary Tatar language has a law of progressive assimilation which is fixed as the rule for Tatar orthography with respect to the consonants \( d, t \) at the beginning of the affixes, e.g., \( at-ta \) ‘on the horse’, \( at-tan \) ‘from the horse’, \( at-tü \) ‘he/she shot’.\(^11\) However, according to the Old Tatar’s rule in the language of the bulletin, when the

\(^8\) Here and below the numbers in parentheses to the refer to the page and the letters column of the text.
\(^11\) Kurbatov et al., Sovremennyj Tatarskij, p. 98.
voiced version of the Ablative case suffix is joined to words with voiceless consonants at the end of them, instances appear such as these, e.g., tašdan ‘from the stone’ (5a), ber yaqdan ‘on one side’ (4a), kemešdän ‘from the silver’ (4a), balčїqdan ‘from the clay’ (5a) etc. In Modern Tatar they are taštan, ber yaqtan, kemeštӓn and balčїqtan. Also, the third person Past Tense suffix singular and plural appear often in voiced version, e.g., čїqdї ‘he went out’ (7a), kũrsӓtdelӓr ‘they showed’ (8a), tӓbriklӓšde ‘he greeted somebody’ (8a). As to the Locative suffix present in the texts, it has two versions, i.e., both with a voiced and with a voiceless consonant, e.g., vaqїtda ‘at the time’ (5a), bӓylӓnešdӓ ‘in the connection’ (3a), but tarixta ‘in the history’ (3a).

In contrast to Modern Tatar, in the language of the bulletin the Persian loan words dust ‘friend’ and šad ‘lively’, in conjunction with the Turkic suffix -lїk, kept their final consonants in the words, e.g., dustlїk ‘friendship’ (8b), šadlїk ‘gladness’ (8b). In Modern Tatar it is duslїk, šatlїk.

The Modern Tatar adverb in the suffix -ip/-ip is written in the bulletin traditionally with the voiced consonant as -ib/-ib. Many times, one can see the traditional spelling of the word urли ‘his/her son’ while now they say and write ulї. The old postposition ilӓn ‘with, together’ (7a etc.) is used in the journal equally with the modern word belӓn. Some Arabic loan words used in the bulletin were later replaced by loan words from Russian, e.g., tӓrakkїy [прогресс in Russian] ‘progress’ (4a).

In three places in the bulletin Latin letters are used: they are the first of two title pages, the left half of page 15 and nearly the whole of page 20. It is interesting that it is neither the Romanized alphabet adopted in 1927 in Kazan nor the Turkish spelling. Maybe the instances in Latin letters show the journal publishers’ attempt to create new Romanized orthography for Tatar. Now, like all the Turkic people of Russia, the Tatars use the Cyrillic alphabet adopted in 1939.

Unlike the Arabic script, the texts written in the Roman alphabet show the publishers’ Mishar dialectal pronunciation of Tatar. One can see three noteworthy letters with very similar spelling. They are as follows: i; õ; and i. Like in Tatar the first of them is sometimes used for the designation of the front high vowel [i], e.g., millet ‘nation’ (20) [милләт in Modern Tatar]. But two others apparently correspond to two vowels which had to have a principal difference from each other, e.g., vakтлї ‘periodical’ (title page) [вакытлы]. Sometimes the use of these letters looks inconsistent, e.g., bir ‘one’ (15) [бәр] but birинцї ‘first’ (20) [беренчє]; alіgїz ‘take’ imperative, 2nd person, plural (15) [instead алыгыз] etc.

Most often these letters were used instead of the letter e of the Tatar literary language, for instance the last letter of the word heberçї which in Modern Tatar orthography is хәбәрчә. Here the front lower vowel ø is used twice and the neutral vowel e only once. This is a demonstration of the vowels narrowing, which is one of the typical features of the Mishar dialect of Tatar. Another instance is a substitution of the letter e of the literary Tatar by the e in the journal, e.g., bilen ‘with’ (15) [instead белән], millet ‘nation’ (20) [instead милләт], hem ‘and’ (20) [instead хәм], kisek ‘piece’ (15) [instead кисәк]. There is not enough material in the journal for more detailed study of Mishar reflections in the
script. There is no Swedish linguistic influence on the Tatar language of the authors of the journal, as there are no loan words from Swedish.

A comparison with the Modern Tatar language shows that the instances of the journal’s language illustrate both the conservation of the Old Tatar language and some features of the Mishar dialect of Tatar. Besides, in contrast to the journal’s language in the motherland’s literary language new loan-words from Russian are assimilated together with their pronunciation and alterations of use of affixes are developed in a new fashion. Thus, the development of the first-generation immigrants’ Tatar language in Sweden begins to differ from the Modern literary Tatar language.

Two texts of the bulletin translated into English

1. The Bulgar Khanate

Now the Tatar people are the most numerous nations among the many Turkic peoples who live between the river Volga and the Ural Mountains. They constitute the second largest body of Turkic people after the Ottomans. This people came into being in the Middle Ages as a result of unification of some Turkic nations. In this article we will not consider the questions when or why they were named Tatars; the subject of the article is a discussion about the ancient Bulgars, who were their principal ancestors. The Bulgars are one of the Turkic people who were important in history. Theirs was a very well-organized state with a high living standard. They had developed trade and industry, and constructional engineering. The people were the first to convert to Islam in the Volga district. The first time in history that the Bulgars are mentioned was at the end of the 5th century. At that time, they lived in the steppes to the north of the Black Sea, near the mouths of the Danube, the Dniester, and the Don rivers. There had been no mention of Bulgars before than for the simple reason that they roamed from place to place together with different Turkic tribes (e.g., Qutughur, Uttuguz, Anagur) and they were called by other names.

Between 660–670, when the Bulgars’ leader Kuwrat-khan died, his five sons divided the people into five parts and dispersed them in different directions. Two of them moved to the area of modern Hungary. One of them (Asparuh) settled on the right bank of the river Danube and built there the State of Bulgaria. The oldest of them, called Batbay, remained in his former place. The Batbay Bulgars are still there today. Formerly they were called Black Bulgars; now they are called Balkars.

The Kuwrat-khan’s second son, together with his people, went to the north. He settled at the place where the Volga joins the river Kama. In history they are called Volga or Kama Bulgars. The Kuwrat-khan’s children had been forced to abandon their beautiful places against their will. They were forced to look for new lands for themselves.

because they could not bear the oppression of their eastern neighbouring Turkic people, the Khazars, any longer. Bulgars had the good luck to find a convenient place to live in the Volga valley. They were closely connected with Western European countries by way of the Upper Volga; by way of the Lower Volga, they related to the highly cultured Eastern countries. By way of the Kama River, they related to the Urals and Siberia. There were good natural conditions, so the well-being of people improved very rapidly, and their country became larger and stronger. Their agriculture developed well thanks to fertile soil, and for the animal husbandry there were spacious meadows. Enormous forests were full of wild beasts for hunting, and the rivers were full of fish for fishing. The people made good use of the forests’ trees for building houses. When they adopted Islam, they built wooden mosques.

One part of the Bulgar people lived in towns, and another part lived in the country. They had many towns, which was unusual at that time. The country people were occupied with agriculture, animal husbandry, hunting, fishing, and wild-hive beekeeping. The town dwellers were merchants and craftsmen. Bulgars made use of cattle power in order to plough the earth in their highly developed agriculture. They even had an iron plough.

In the 10th–11th centuries they sold grain to their neighbours the Suzal Russians, who had suffered some years of famine. The trade was a very significant occupation of the Bulgaristan’s life. They traded with neighbouring Russia and Finland on the one hand, and with Central Asia, Iran, Afghanistan and the other Eastern countries on the other. Bulgars traded in dressed skin and fur, in honey and wax, in fish and caviar, in hazelnuts, sheep and horned cattle, and even in wild beast meat.

Thanks to the fact that there were good natural resources in the country and because of the progress of commerce, different handicrafts developed very well. From the precious stones, the gold and silver mining in the Urals, the Bulgars manufactured rings, seal-rings, earrings, and bracelets like stars in the sky. They also made wooden tableware, spoons, decorated pots, different adornments, iron things. Besides that, they made weapons, such as bows, quivers, etc. The Bulgars made great progress in the building business. There were beautiful palaces built from stone, and mosques with many minarets in the capital city named Bulgar. Also, there was an urban water-supply, built from clay pipes which transferred water from springs to the city’s houses. And what is more, there was a heating system in the houses. The capital city Bulgar was in the Spas district of modern Tatarstan. There are ruins of the city Bulgar in that place, but until now there has been no proper scientific research on it. There were many good builders in the Bulgar country; it is known that the Bulgar masters built beautiful palaces and churches for Russian princes.

When the Bulgars came to the Volga valley, they found the descendants of the Mari people, Erzya, Moksha and other Fins living there. They sowed cereals and lived in earthen houses. They joined with the Bulgar State and paid a tribute to it, but they had their own administration. On account of the Bulgars’ influence, their economy and culture began to flourish. The Bulgars adopted Islam in 922, in the time of Almas-khan. According to the Arab scholar Ibn Fadlan, in 921 the Bulgar khan Almas appealed to the Mighty Khalif with a request to send them some teachers of Islam. In 922 the Mighty
Khalif acceded to the request; Ibn Fadlan was one of them. In the Bulgar country Ibn Fadlan wrote down all that he saw and heard. His memoirs give us valuable information about the ancient Bulgars.

At that time the Bulgars lived between the Khazars, whose people had adopted Judaism, on the west, and pagan Russian people on the east, who had not yet adopted Christianity. The fact that the Bulgars adopted Islam shows that they were in close contact with the Islamic world. Indeed, the Bulgars were in contact with Islamic countries not only by means of trade, but they also learned how to develop industry and the building business from there. Their craftsmen made use of imported mounds for their handicraft jewellery. According to the writings of the [famous] historian Gutenburng [so! – I.I.], the state of Bulgar was immersed in Eastern culture long before they adopted Islam. If we remember that at that time Islamic civilization was at its height, then it is no difficulty to understand that the Bulgars were a highly cultured people. In consequence of adopting the Arabic script the Bulgars learned to read and write. There were schools attached to mosques both in towns and in villages. The Bulgar scholars wrote books on history and on medicine. Among them there were astronomers too.

According to writings the Bulgar people lived quietly and happily. The time of prosperity of the state was in the 10th–11th centuries. Then the State of Bulgar stretched on the north to the middle stream of the river Kama, on the west to the rivers Oka and Sura, on the east to the Urals and river Yayik (Ural), and on the south to the place of the present town of Kuybyshev (Samara). At that time the former strong Khazar state was already in ruins. In its early history the Bulgars were reputed to be a warlike people. However, when they migrated to the Volga river valleys, little by little they lost their warlike character, and became a peaceful people. They were at war very seldom, and only in order to defend themselves from any aggression or to protect the trade routes from robbers. They lived so for hundreds of years, until the Tatar Mongols arrived from Siberia. (T. Dawletshin).

2. “The Fate”

It’s our feast-day, ending Ramadan. This year the feast-day fell in the middle of the year, on the longest day of the year. Today, sunrise is at 2:35 a.m. and the sunset at 21:05 p.m. the length of the day is 19 hours and 10 minutes. For the feast of Eid al-Fitr, they have taken the Palace of National Culture which was built according to new principles. When I came up to the building, the Pakistani ambassador’s car, decorated with the Pakistani flag, arrived and stopped near the Palace. Wearing the national dress, the ambassador and his aides alighted from the car. Before long the Egyptian ambassador and his aides came in their car decorated with the Egyptian flag. Then the Turkish delegates came and others too. The square in front of the Palace of National Culture was full of cars decorated with different Islamic countries’ beautiful flags. There were many spectators who gathered to see the different ambassadors wearing different national costumes alight from the cars.
When all the guests who came to the Eid feast occasion took their seats, the greetings began. Suddenly I caught sight of a black man sitting on the side. “Perhaps, he is a driver of one of the ambassadors”, I thought. He was absolutely black. One could see quite well only the white of his eyes and his flat beautiful white teeth on the black skin of his face. He was a man of strong build, and he was sitting somehow sidewise. When I came nearer to him, he raised himself a little. I saw he is ready to greet me. I said how do you do. He answered, “Galeykum-salam” [the Arab greeting] and shook my hands. He came to this feast occasion because he read about it in the newspapers. He came here as a Moslem from Africa. I also got to know he works at a factory. When Gayid Feter finished, a young Turkish student read from the Koran with a very melodic voice. The large hall of the lofty building gave a start and rang out with the verses of the Koran. At that time, one could see the tearful eyes of all the Moslems: both ambassadors and of the ordinary workers. When we finished our prayers, congratulations began. The Pakistani ambassador congratulated everybody by clasping each person to his breast, first on the right side and then on the left side of his breast. Soon everybody began to congratulate one another thus with embraces and touching by breast to breast and cheek to cheek. They showed their true adherence to Islam and sincere friendship with each other for ever. When I saw such friendship, I felt as if an electric current passed through my body. When that black man and I embraced each other too, I heard his unusual heartbeat. I realized his heart was full of Moslem feelings. On his smiling face I saw the joy of the great occasion.

We went out from the Palace of National Culture. The weather was unusually mild and fine. We decided to walk a little. My black friend was walking in advance slightly. He had a book in his hand. He was walking and looking into the shop windows. When I saw him, I mended my pace to invite him for a cup of tea in my house. But he crossed the street, turned into an alley and vanished from sight. I was lost in thought if the poor wretch was ashamed of his black skin. He disappeared into the dark alley. I wondered if I would meet him once again. I never met him again. There was a wreck in the factory where he worked. The [steam]-boiler which operated with oil blew up. He was burnt badly and died in hospital. His last words were: “Let Moslems bury me in their cemetery with ritual bathing and shrouding the body, facing the Qibla and followed by prayer from the Koran.” His Stockholm friends reported these words to the religious, cultural, Turkic, Islamic community in Sweden. In order to fulfil his last wishes, it was decided to bury him in one of the graves purchased by the community some years ago. The old men offered to take part in the ritual bathing of the dead body. Some women prepared sheets for shrouding him. All of Stockholm’s Moslems came to attend the funeral. The prayer Janazah was said. The corpse was then buried by the Moslems. The funeral words were said. The Koran was read. Thus, one Moslem from hot Central Africa named Guyah Mamadoo received the first grave in the Moslem cemetery in Stockholm. Who could know he would come from hot Africa to end up in a cold northern grave? Nobody does. Only God knows. We know nothing about where and who could burn us, who can adorn our graves with beautiful flowers. Nobody can change his own destiny. My God, I offer my prayers with firm belief in You might. (Abu Bekir).
HEBERÇI

ISVICDEGI
DINI-MEDENI-TÜRK-ISLAM
OYUSMASI KARSlNDA VAKTILi
REVISTE CIÇARILADIR

N:o 1

DEK. - 1952 - STOCKHOLM

Image 1. The facsimile. Title page
THE SOLE NUMBER OF THE TATAR JOURNAL HEBERÇI

Image 2. The facsimile. Content page
باکره تاریخی

شاوی دوزیا همراهی دارد که جهان جهانی، تمام بی‌نتجه‌ی قابلاً بار سکنی، باید گرفت. تاریخ.

این‌دیه مه سبدلی، ره‌حسن‌سی، اورش‌نا توریان پارسیا لازم آق تازن، کی‌ک‌پ، جو بی‌ک‌لم بارجا پارسا.

الله اورنودا حضرت جوبیک، بی‌گاه باش بارسیجا، باش بالالای تعالی، نیورن جوی‌گاهی پایه‌ی باری سیدا.

کرم‌پام هم که د Input نمی‌خواهد. به‌ک‌چرخه پاد شائار جهانی، می‌کسیمی باردا، اورگه‌اوه ده، تاریخ‌نا ناز.

یورت تنیاک ای عادت، این‌دیه بودن، ای نیست؛ برو آتو می‌بارم، به‌گوش‌دیل، آی‌اپ مباری، باریمی.

قابل‌های با قیس، قاراهان، نادارن، هم به‌ آسانی، آلت‌بون، آتش‌تون، کوه‌ه‌م قاراکرن.

جد قاراهان توی‌بی‌چه، آسا دا اینسان، پارسیان، بارلی اول معیاگی، احیاء آنک‌سویش نی باریمن.

حسن عیسی‌آلا.
Вот первый номер журнала "Ийерчи".

Также включены факсимиле первого номера журнала."
Image 5. The facsimile. 19th page
References