

Legends Devoted to Abylai Khan in the Manuscripts by Mashkhur-Zhusip

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Abstract: This article analyzes the historical legend of the Abylai Khan (one of the rulers of the Kazakh people of the XVIII century.) Collection of a famous Kazakh poet Mashkhur Zhussip Kopeev (1858-1931 g) The majority of folklore samples collected Mashkhur-Zhusip, are legends and stories. Among these traditions, dedicated to: geographical names, saints, historical figures, prophets, etc. Most of them have not been released. Features Mashkhur-Zhusip in collecting activities, in comparison with other scientists folklorists, are, first, Mashkhur-Zhussip is the first scholar and folklorist of his people, after Sh.Ualikhanov and secondly, a perfect command of Kazakh and other languages; third, Mashkhur-Zhusip typical full collection of materials in the aggregate of the plot and content, as did GN Potanin and other scientists and fourthly, akin quickly Arabic letters they wrote hear texts; fifth, while recording he did without the help of a translator, a correspondent, sixth, Mashkhur-Zhussip collected materials on special order; seventh, akin collected and recorded its standards cyclical method; eighth, collected the materials and the expedition and the stationary method ninth, perform all the basic requirements for scientists folklorists to collect samples of oral literature. Many of the stories collected Mashkhur-Zhusip from the mouth of the people, did not reach the readers. Most of the stories are describing the history of the Khans, biys warriors.

Key words: Folklore • Folklore • Historical legends • Traditions and collecting activities • Publishing • Research • Oral literature

INTRODUCTION

Folklore (from English “folk”-people, “lore”-wisdom) is the term, denoting folk art, beliefs and traditions. The word “folklore” was first used by the English scholar William Thoms in the letter, published in London journal “Athenaeum” in 1846 [1]. The science, which studies folklore, is called Folklore Studies. A folklorist Alan Dundes (1934-2005) from the University of California at Berkeley asserts that Folklore studies denote a specific area of research [2]. Legends are one of folklore types. A legend, as a rule, is a short, episodic and traditional narrative. The original stories can be found in the writings of John Fox’s “Book of Martyrs” [3]. The legends are used as a source of folklore, which provide historical information on culture and so on [4].

actions, which are perceived by the narrator and the listener [5]. An English scholar Norbert Craft defines a legend as a historically grounded fairy tale [6].

Unfortunately, most of the legends collected by Mashkhur-Zhusip did not manage to reach modern readers. In the majority of cases those legends were devoted to khans, biys and batyrs. For example, “Zhaqsy Gabdolla khan”, “Qoqan khandarynyn tarihy” [7], “Shaibani khan Amir nasilinen”, “Kenesary” [7], “Atasynyn aty bilinbei oz aty shyqqan erler”, “Stambul halifasy Gushman qazy”, “Rossiaga bagynyp qaragan son Qasym urpagy ne sebepten bulinshilikke tusken”, etc. [7]. Among these works the compositions dedicated to Abylaikhan can rivet out attention [7]. The number of such compositions, collected by Mashkhur, is 16. Here are they:

The Main Part: Around the world the legends (from Latin, “things for reading”) are the narratives about human

- Abylai aspagan sary bel;
- Abylai khan;

- Qazaqtyn buryngydan qalğan sozderi;
- Abylai khan men Baltakerei Tursynbai batyr turasynda; 5. Abylai khan dauiri;
- Abylai khan zamanynnda;
- Abylai khannyn sozderi;
- Bir ertegi;
- Abylai khannyn tusi;
- Zharylgap pen Abylai khan;
- Ablaidyn khan bolyp koterilui;
- Ablaidyn qalmaqtyn khany Qaldan Serenge tutqyn bolgan hikaiasy;
- Abylai khan men Qaldan Serennin araqatynasy turaly;
- Zhanibek batrdyn tusin Abylai khannyn zhoruy;
- Abylai khan zamanyndagy batyrlar turaly;
- Abylai tusyndagy zan-zhoralgyar. Eight texts out of mentioned sixteen are kept at the “family archive”. Let’s describe them [8].

Sh. Ualikhanov was first Kazakh researcher who gave the information concerning Abylai khan. His work “Istoricheskie predania o batyrah XVIII veka” [9] comprises fourteen short stories about Abylai khan and his milieu. Those stories are remarkable for their conciseness and brevity. The story describing Abylai khan held captive by Qaldan Seren has more historical than legendary features if compared to that by Mashkhur-Zhusip. The wife of Qaldan Seren who was keen on killing Abylai khan was depicted as a totally different person in the manuscript by Mashkhur. She was described as a sage woman who helped her husband make right decisions. Other 13 stories of Shokan Ualokhanov were not found in the manuscripts by Mashkhur-Zhusip.

The works by V.V. Radlov, the scholar who collected folklore samples before Mashkhur-Zhusip, contain two variants of compositions concerning Abylai khan [10, 280-281]. The first one is about the Khan of Bukhara and Abylai khan, the second one is consonant with Mashkhur’s story “Abylai aspagan sary bel degen sozdin magynasy”. Both variants (Mashkhur-Zhusip’s and Radlov’s) contain some differences. For example, in the variant by V.V. Radlov, which is short and unfinished, it is the wife of Abylai khan who is represented as his advisor and supporter. On the contrary, in the work by Mashkhur-Zhusip (The story “Abylai aspagan sary bel degen sozdin magynasy” was taken from the “family archive” - N. Zh.) Abylai is depicted as a very wise and farsighted person. One more thing to be mentioned: if in the manuscript kept at the “family archive” Abylai is

described as being a clever person himself, in another one which is kept at The Scientific Academy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Central Fund of Manuscripts Abylai’s wife is pointed out as his advisor like in the work by V.V. Radlov [11].

Another peculiarity: if in Radlov’s version it is Qazybek bi, who arranged the assault on Abylai, in the variant by Mashkhur-Zhusip Qazybek’s son Bekbolat acts as the attacker.

The main idea of the composition consisted in the necessity of unity and harmony among the people, in the necessity to obey one ruler, one khan.

The plot of the story describing the murder of Botakhan became the basis of such zhys as “Abylai men Olzhabai”, “Botakhan” which were included in the collection “El qazynasy-eski soz” (compiled by Uakhatov G., Qasqabasov S.A., Matynzhanov K.S.) [11, 319].

The academician N. Smirnova confirmed the existence of such event in history and pointed out the following statement made by Sh. Ualikhanov: “Abylai khan violated the ancient traditions of Kazakh people. He killed Botakhan and captured Zhanai turning by those actions the whole Middle Horde against himself. The tribe elders gathered together ready to attack. But the Abylai’s warriors suppressed the rebellion...” [10, 605]. From this passage it becomes clear that Mashkhur’s story is based on the historical events.

Mashkhur-Zhusip did not forget to indicate the volume of his samples. For example, in one of his manuscripts he wrote that the information concerning Abylai khan comprised 38 sahifa [12], in another one he noted that the volume of the stories “Abylai”, “Kenesary, Nauryzbai” is amount to 50 sahifa.

Two variants of the materials mentioned before were preserved at the Mashkhur’s manuscript funds: first in the chest of the author’s younger son Phazyl and his wife Nurila, in other words at the “family archive”, second one at the Scientific Academy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Central Fund of Manuscripts. The latter saw the light in such editions as the journal “Parasat”, newspaper “Egemendi Kazakhstan” and the book titled “Abylai khan” (Sahifa-Arabic word-translated as “leaf”, “page”).

The source of information is indicated in all those editions, only the pages are not known. The compositions devoted to Abylai khan can be found both at the “family archive” and at the Scientific Academy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Central Fund of Manuscripts. The manuscripts were written in a particular order. In both variants the stories are grouped according to

Abylai's age, development, the significance of his deeds, etc. It proves that Mashkhur-Zhusip had fully acquired the cyclic method used in the folklore collection that consisted in gathering and distribution of the information concerning certain character or hero.

The narration about Abylai khan started when he did not reach the age of twenty and then depicted his first coming to his motherland, his feats, taking the reins of government as the khan, etc. At the end of the story we learn about his intention to besiege Bukhara, changing his mind after seeing the dream and finally about his death on his way back home. So, we can make the conclusion that the way the story was written has some autobiographical features [11,301-343]. Using the cyclic method while collecting the folklore samples, putting them in a right order—all those examples show that Mashkhur-Zhusip's collection work was implemented properly and had certain peculiar features.

Let's compare the manuscripts written by Mashkhur-Zhusip to those written by S. Dautov. Both of them are devoted to Abylai khan [11]. The analysis revealed some differences between two variants. For example, the beginning of the sample by S. Dautov (The materials concerning Abylai khan are also kept at the "family archive"-N. Zh.) is written in prose, while the work kept at the "family archive" begins with the lines of the poem: "Galabda on segiz zhan bolypty" [11, 318].

In general in the study of folklore there exist several principles that help to compare and differentiate one folklore sample from another. Here they are:

- Are there any differences in the plot and contents of the story?
- Did the characters change?
- Are there any differences in the words and actions of the characters?
- Are there any differences in the language or style of the story (abridgements or different ways of narration)?

All those features remain unchanged in two variants of the samples collected by Mashkhur-Zhusip, the only difference consists in the actions characters perform.

For example, if in the first variant the person who makes right decisions and gives advices to the khan is his wife, in the second variant the khan himself is represented as a wise and farsighted ruler. In the first variant the author gave certain explanations concerning Botakhan and Zhanai (we will dwell upon them later) that

can not be found in the second one. The funny thing is that in his explanation Mashkhur-Zhusip wrote that Botakhan had died of fury, by himself, whereas according to V. V. Radlov (The first variant is kept at the "family archive, the second variant is that published by Dautov S) and S. Dautov [10, 280] he died when Abyli khan ordered to let him out of prison. From our point of view, the first assumption is closer to the truth. Consequently, the variant given by Mashkhur-Zhusip is more verisimilar and historically substantiated. And the first main criterion of the folklore samples is to be persuasive.

Also at the end of the first variant the author wrote: "Abylai aspagan sary bel atangan zher osy eken" ("This is the very place called "the height that Abylai was not able to overcome") and adduced the poem by Tolegen qozha in order to prove it. This fact can not be found in the second variant either.

When the author was alive only one legend about Abylai khan was published under the title "Qazaqtyn buryngydan qalghan sozderi" in the newspaper "Dala Ualaiaty" [13] (1893, #13). Whether the text had undergone some changes or not remained unknown. The second variant of the story is kept in the manuscripts by Zholmurat. The first difference between those two variants is the difference in their volumes. The published variant is more extensive if compared to that of Zholmurat.

There are no linguistic or stylistic differences between the two variants. The contents, plot of the story, the actions of the characters are also the same. The manuscript begins with the following words: "One day the biis of three hordes appear before Abylai khan..." and then describes the scene of Abylai's asking questions. In the newspaper "Dala Ualaiaty" the poems and the state of affairs are given before the main events. If in the manuscripts by Zholmurat there are no names of the biis (elder people of the hordes) mentioned, in the published version the names are given as follows: Qazybek's son-Bekbolat bi, Zhanibek's son-Dautibai bi, Shobalai's son-Zhanke batyr, Tolebai bi's son-Edige bi, Bogenbai's son-Torenyal bi.

Instead of the question "what does not die?" in the newspaper there is another one "is there something that cannot be worn out or somebody who cannot die?" the manuscript. The answer in the newspaper: "the earth", "the mountain", "the water", the "Moon and the Sun"; in the manuscript: "the earth", "the mauntain", "the water", the "Moon and the Sun" and "the iron".

The names of the characters are also different. For example, in the newspaper the person who had given

the correct answer remained unknown, while in the manuscript his name is Zhudas sheshen from the ribe Qypshaq-Taimas.

In general, the variants are very similar, though the manuscript by Mashkhur-Zhusip published in the newspaper is more voluminous and detailed.

There exist other similar stories devoted to Abylai khan. For instance, in the book "Qazaqtyn bi-sheshenderi" the meaning of the phrase "Abylai aspagan sary bel" is connected with Baidaly bi [13, 475-476]. In this story Baiteli bi, the uncle of Baidaly bi, was convicted for killing people. But impressed by the eloquency of Baidaly bi Abylai khan agreed to replace the death penalty by the lifelong imprisonment.

On analyzing all variants mentioned before, we came to the conclusion is more reliable and verisimilar.

We have already told that the plot of the story "Abylaidyn qalmaqtyn khany Qaldan Serenge tutqyn bolgan hikaiasy" [14, 292-293] can be found in the work by Sh. Ualikhanov.

R. Berdibayev, the noted academician, proved that Qaldan Seren himself was responsible for Abylai khan's escape and gave a estimation to the historical verisimilitude of the story [9].

Another sample very similar to that written by Mashkhur-Zhusip can be found in the newspaper "Dala Ualaiaty" (1891, # 1) under the title "Qazaqtyn maselesi" [11, 3-34]. There is also a reference indicating the author of a legend: "Zhazushy Pokrau elinin qazagy Muhamedgali Ibragimugly" (the author is Muhamedgali Ibragimugly, Kazakh who lives in Pokrau) [13, 314-315].

The legend depicts the following events: Qaldan Seren's sending and ambassadors to Abylai, their death, subsequent war, Abylai's capture, etc.

The plot describing Abylai's escape is also connected with the diplomatic mission led by Qazybek bi [13, 637].

The academician S. Qasqabasov wrote: "In the legend, as it ought to be in a folklore composition, there is no description of what Abylai felt or suffered uring his captivity. The most important thing is to show two major events: Abylai's capture and Abylai's escape. But Sh. Ualikhanov's version has one episode depicting Abylai's life as a captive" [14, 108-109]. So, it is clear that Abylai's life in captivity was described only in the work of Sh. Ualikhanov.

In our opinion Mashkhur-Zhusip's version supplements the information given before. If the variant by Sh. Ualikhanov contains only one episode describing

his life as a captive, the collection written by Mashkhur-Zhusip contains scenes depicting his ordeals and covers ten days of his captivity. First torture lasted 7 days. Abylai spent seven days without anything to eat or drink. After 7 days he received some food which was inedible. Abylai got angry and refused to eat it proving that he was of high blood. Second ordeal checked his courage: four warriors burst into the room he was kept and raise their swords threatening to kill him. Abylai did not move a muscle.

The academician S. Qasqabasov pointed out that the fact that Abylai was depicted as an exceptionally clever, brave and eloquent person was stipulated by the historical reasons. Some of those features could be exaggerated [15].

The legends devoted to Abylai in captivity can be divided into four examples: first one was written by Sh. Ualikhanov [15, 176], second one was published in "Dala Ualaiaty" [9], third group comprises the stories concerning Abylai's escape (Ibragim ugly M. Qazaqtyn maselesi // Dala ualaiaty gazeti. 1891, # 13.), fourth is the legends collected by Mashkhur-Zhusip that describe Abylai's capture, his ordeals that lasted 10 days, his bravery, wisdom and quick wit and all qualities that helped him stay alive.

Thanks to those four examples it becomes possible to understand people's attitude to various historical events. For example, according to the first variant Abylai was captured when he was hunting, while in the second version he was taken prisoner in the war. In the third story he was captivated for killing Qaldan's brother Saru. The fourth variant was written as the mixture of the first and third versions, in which Khan kills the brother of Qaldan Saru in the battle and got captured when he was hunting.

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