

A STUDY OF THE BASHKIR AND TATAR VERSIONS OF THE ALPOMISH EPIC

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Abstract

This article compares the Bashkir and Tatar versions of one of the most famous epics of Uzbek folklore, “Alpomish”. In both versions that we have analyzed, the development of events is once again strikingly similar to the Uzbek version of the epic. Both folk epics consist of two parts, and the plot of each part is distinguished by the same set of motifs.

Keywords: Epic, bakhshi, performance, variant, version, comparative study, translation.

Introduction

Of particular note are the dozens of scientific articles and books published about the famous heroic epic of the Uzbek people - the epic “Alpomish”.

According to Zhirmunsky, the Alpomysh epic originated from the Kungrat tribe of Uzbeks, known among Uzbeks, Kazakhs, and Karakalpaks. According to historical sources, at the time of Mukhammad Shaibani Khan at the beginning of the 16th century, this tribe had not yet migrated to the Baysun-Darya valley, but was located around Termez on the border of present-day Afghanistan. This means that the “Kungrad version” of the epic must have appeared after it moved north, towards Baysun, that is, before the 16th century [1; p.88-89].

Literature Review

The Bashkir version of the epic is partly related to the Tatar folk epic Alpamsha. [2; p 30-38].

Research Methodology

There was a little shepherd. One day he found an orphaned wild goose and took care of it until it recovered and flew away. An old man told him about the beautiful Sandugoch, who would marry the man who carried three millstones to the top of the hill and threw them at the king’s feet. The old man Alpamsha was the only candidate who could participate in the competition, fulfill this condition, and win the bride.

Analysis and Results

King Kiltap also summoned the Sandugoch and threatened to take it away by force. To repulse his attack, Alpamsha and Sandug'och chose a horse for themselves and went to battle at the head of their troops. When they reach Qiltap's kingdom, Alpamsha intends to steal Qiltap's Aqbuzi in order to easily defeat Qiltap. Alpamsha finds Qiltap sleeping and whispers in his ear:

Qiltap aǵay,
Qiltap aǵay,
Aqbúz atıñ birsāñ, aǵay,
Sanduǵaǵıñ úzeñä bulsın.

Қилтап оғай,
Қилтап оғай,
Оқбұз отинг, берсанг оғай,
Сандуғоч сизники бұлсин.

(The translation is ours – D.K.)

In his sleep, Kiltap reveals the secret of where to find Akboz. Alpamsha catches Akboz and, together with Sandugoch, waits for Kiltap to attack. Waiting for the attack, Alpamsha gets tired and falls into a deep “alpine sleep”. At the same time, Kiltap attacks the guests and is defeated by Sandugoch, who puts on his armor and rides Akboz. Kiltap returns with his army, defeats Alpamsha's men, who have managed to escape with Sandugoch, captures Alpamsha, who is still sleeping in his tent, along with his horse Akboz, and throws him into prison. Qiltap again asks for Sandugoch's hand in marriage, but his father delays him. Twenty-four days later, Alpamsha wakes up to find herself in captivity. When he saw a flock of wild geese flying away, he called them:

Qıyǵaq qazlar,
qıyǵaq qazlar,
barmıysızımı
bezneñ yaqqa?
Äger barsañ bezneñ yaqqa,
xat yazayem qanatıñqa.

Қийғоқ ғозлар,
Қийғоқ ғозлар,
Бормайсизми, биз томонга,
Гар борсангиз бизнинг ёққа,
Хат ёзайин қанотингга.

(The translation is ours – D.K.)

Among the geese was an orphaned goose raised by Alpamsha, and the goose took the news to Sandugoch. Sandugoch sent one of Alpamsha's friends, who had brought him a hundred sums from her husband, but he refused to help Alpamsha. Then he calls another friend, who was once given a job by Alpamsha to make shoes, and the friend agrees to take food to the hero in prison. When Alpamsha hears footsteps approaching the prison, he calls out:

Dõp itken,
dõp-dõp itken
ayu miken, búre miken?
Älle minem
yõz sum birgen
dustim miken,
dustim miken?
Дўп этган,
дўп-дўп этган,
айиқмикан, бўримикан?
қўли билан,
юз сўм берган,
дўстимикан,
дўстиммикан?

(The translation is ours – D.K.)

When he did not get a clear answer, he asked again:

Dõp itken,
dõp-dõp itken
ayu miken, búre miken?
Älle minem
šõšle birgen
dustim miken,
dustim miken?
Дўп этган,
дўп-дўп этган,
айиқмикан, бўримикан?
қўли билан,
ином берган,
дўстимикан,
дўстиммикан?

(The translation is ours – D.K.)

This time, Alpamsha gets the answer. His friend gives her the food which Sandugoch sent. When his friend leaves, Alpamsha asks him to tell Sandugoch that she will wait five years for him before remarrying.

One day, Qiltap sends his daughter and wife to Alpamsha's dungeon to poison him. As they approach, they hear the prisoner playing the drum:

Aldan kilä,
aldan kilä,
aldağisi kölä kilä,
artağisi džirliy kilä;
bu nindi ğadžäp
ešlär bu,
bu nindi ğadžäp
ešlär bu?

Олд тарафдан келаётган,
олд тарафдан келаётган,
шуниси жилмайиб келади,
орқадагиси йиғлайди.
Бу қандайин
тилсимот бўлди?
бу қандайин
тилсимот бўлди?

(The translation is ours – D.K.)

Kiltap's daughter pours the poison into the ditch, not into Alpamsha's prison. The women return to the palace and convince the king that the prisoner has been poisoned. The girl takes pity on Alpamsha and brings him the miraculous sword that is kept in her father's chest. Alpamsha manages to free herself with the help of a sword and, taking Akboz back, returns to Sandugoch.

When he returns home, he takes lodgings from an old woman in the guise of a poor man. The next day, he finds out that Sandugoch is getting married. Alpamsha reveals herself at the wedding party, where Sandugoch's sister recognizes her despite her beggar's clothes. To gain confidence, Sandugoch knocks over the bread intended for the beggar and, when Alpamsha bends down to pick it up, takes off his headdress. Alpamsha's wife recognizes him by his birthmark. When he is brought to the throne, the king demands that he prove his identity. Alpamsha whistles for his horse Akboz, mounts him, takes a rifle that thirty or forty men could not lift from the ground, and fires it. The new groom runs away in terror, and Alpamsha is reunited with his wife.

Conclusion/Recommendations

A study of Turkish oral epic poetry prompts a comparison. After all, the descriptive analysis of Turkish oral epic poetry opens the way to study its relation to neighboring oral traditions. Because some of its features are strikingly similar to the oral epic traditions of neighboring

and non-neighboring peoples. These parallels invite the reader to think about why it is consistent with other epic traditions.

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