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CULTURAL AND LITERARY TIES OF KHOREZM AND THE VOLGA REGION
IN THE 19TH – BEGINNING OF THE 20TH CC.
(ON THE EXAMPLE OF THE MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS
OF THE SOUTHERN ARAL SEA REGION)

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Abstract: *The paper is dedicated to the collection of manuscripts, lithographs and early printed books of the Karakalpak Institute of Humanities (Branch of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan) that combines receipts from various sources (these are individual entries from individuals, and the receipts of whole collections associated with the name of a particular collector –for example the so-called “Chimbay collection”). The work on the description of the entire fund, its systematization and compilation of a general catalog of manuscripts was started by the staff of the Karakalpak Scientific Research Institute of Humanities, and subsequently the author of this paper. Many manuscripts and early printed books represent the area of reading of a Muslim of that epoch (19–first half of the 20th century) and are one of the illustrations of the close literary and cultural ties between the Aral Sea region and the Volga region. Among them are such works as “Fiqh” al-Kaydani, “Bakirgan kitabi” and many others that were printed or copied in the Volga region (Kazan) and came to the libraries of Karakum-ishans in Khorezm and used in the educational programs of mektebs and madrasahs. The print and manuscript copies of dastan epic texts (such as “Garip Aşık”, “Köroğlu”, local versions of the “Idige” epic cycle and many others) indicates that the oral tradition of performing dastans connected with the other Turkic folklore (including the Volga region), as well as their written existence, was preserved in Karakalpakstan the 20th century for quite a long time.*

Keywords: collections of manuscripts, Turkic folklore and literatures, arabographic manuscripts and early printed books, Chimbay, Karakalpakstan, book culture.

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The Fund of Oriental Manuscripts of the Karakalpak Institute of Humanities of the Karakalpak Branch of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan (Nukus, Karakalpakstan) has several hundred manuscripts, early printed books and lithographs in Arabic and Turkic and, to a lesser extent, Persian languages and combines receipts from various sources.

The work on the description of the entire fund, its systematization and compilation of a general catalog of manuscripts was started by the staff of the Karakalpak Scientific Research Institute of Humanities (Makset A. Karlybaev, Abdusalam R. Idrisov – they also conducted active field work on the search and identification of manuscripts), and subsequently the author of this paper (T.A. Anikeeva) joined them.

The sources of replenishment of the library of the Institute of Humanities (which also includes old printed books and lithographs) are different: these are individual entries from individuals, and the receipts of whole collections associated with the name of a particular collector (for example, A. Pirnazarov, U. Rakhmetullayev), as well as manuscripts and books received from the Institute of History, Archeology and Ethnography as a result of the reorganization and the merge of library funds.

In the course of work in the manuscript collection of the Karakalpak Institute of Humanities (Branch of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan), a collection of manuscripts, lithographs and old-printed books was identified. It consists mainly of new arrivals (the so-called “Chimbay collection” at the place of origin of most of the manuscripts, from the city of Chimbay, formerly Shakhtemir now in the Republic of Karakalpakstan).

Among these new arrivals of the Oriental Manuscripts Fund of the Institute, the so-called “Chimbay Collection”, which received its name from the place of origin, is of particular interest. This collection is undoubtedly of great importance for the history of the Karakalpak culture and literature in general: it includes unique works such as “The History of the city of Chimbay” (under the authorship by M. Orazymbetov), poems by the poet of the Karakalpak classics Azhiniyaz (1824–1878), Berdakh (1827–1900) and many others.

Chimbay (karakalp. *Shymbai*) is a city in Karakalpakstan, located in the south-eastern Aral Sea region, on the Kegeyli River (the Kegeyli Canal). It is generally believed that the first information about the city of Chimbai dates back to the 18th century (in the early Middle Ages, the city named Kerder was supposedly located on the site of Chimbai) – it is mentioned in reports of military, Russian and Persian ambassadors, in the works of travelers [Abishov, 2019]. During this period of time, Chimbay was called Shakhtemir and, according to a number of researchers, was “the second main center of trade of northern Khorezm after Kungrad” [Abishov, 2019]; it became known by its modern name already in the first half of the 19th century (see also the map of Khorezm in the 18th–19th centuries [Bregel, 2003, p. 67, map 33]).

The collector of manuscripts and books of this collection is Uzak Rakhmatullayev, who was born in 1920 in the Kuyyin locality in the territory of the modern Chimbay district of the Republic of Karakalpakstan¹. Uzak Rakhmatullayev’s father, Rakhmatulla Seyilkhan-uly, studied at the *Karakum-ishan madrasa* (Kutly-khoja *ishan*) in his youth. It is known that the library of this *madrasa* was very rich, and it was considered one of the largest manuscript and book collections in the region [Karlibayev, 2020, p.112]. The fate of the library, according to the data received from informants, was most likely tragic: many books and manuscripts were burned [Karlibayev, 2020, p. 112], but some of them, judging by the handwritten marks of U. Rakhmatullayev on some bindings, still survived and have been saved.

The largest collection of books and manuscripts, judging by the field data of Makset Karlibayev, was owned by the Karakum Ishans (in the period of the late 19th – early 20th century). In the spiritual life of the peoples of Central Asia, including the Kazakhs of the Turkestan region, *ishans* played an important role as guides of the Muslim religion, enlightenment, local traditions of healing, folk psychology and pedagogy). There are different opinions about the fate of this library. According to some, the collection of books and manuscripts stored in the State Museum of History and Culture of the Republic of Karakalpakstan is part of that library, but there is no confirmed data

Among these manuscripts (along with the works mentioned above) are works on Muslim dogmatics, Korans (and fragments of Korans), poetic works (verses by Suleiman Bakyrangani, various *destans*), treatises on the grammar of the Arabic language (“*al-‘Awāmil*”), stories, examples of calligraphy on separate sheets, etc. – in Arabic and Turkic languages (Chagatai, Tatar, Karakalpak). In most cases, these manuscripts are incomplete, fragmentary, missing start and

¹ His biography see at: [Anikeeva, Idrisov, 2021].

end pages. Most of the works date back to the 19th – early 20th century. The collected materials characterize the social system, ethno-cultural processes. The private and public collections that we studied can be divided into the following groups:

- works (both manuscripts and early printed books) included in the educational programs of mektebs and madrasahs;
 - literary works (except for those included in educational programs);
 - rare publications on various issues of social and everyday life (on morality, medicine, etc.).
- Of these, the largest group is made up of books covering issues Islamic law, as well as Arabic (grammar, lexicography, rhetoric). There are a lot of literary works: the works of the poets Jami, Mashrab, Bedil, as well as the hikmats of Yassavi and Hakim Ata, written versions of poems and dastans.

Together, they represent the area of reading of a Muslim of that era (19–first half of the 20th century) and are one of the illustrations of the close literary and cultural ties between the Aral Sea region (then the Khanate of Khiva), the Volga region, and the Ottoman Empire (where a number of manuscripts were copied).

In the previous article devoted to this manuscript collection [Anikeeva, Idrisov 2021], we mentioned some manuscripts and early printed books related to Kazan and the Volga region primarily by their origin. Basically, these are books and manuscripts on theology and Islamic law, for example, the fragment of the manuscript with a number of damages (inventory no. R-10) of “Fiqh” al-Kaydani (فقه كيداني), a work known throughout the Muslim world on Islamic law (compiled by Lutfallah Nasafi al-Fadil al-Kaydani in the 14th century); copies of this work are kept in almost all major collections of Arabic manuscripts. It was used as a textbook in many madrasah of the Russian Empire (mainly in the Volga region), has been reprinted many times. The place and time of copy of this manuscript are missing; it seems that the manuscript was copied in the 20th century from the Kazan typograph edition of 1904 (Kazan, the publishing house of the Karimov Brothers Trading House), as it is reported by the imitation of the output data of the printed book on fol. 1.

Another example of such cultural ties between Khorezm and the Volga region is the publication of “Jami‘ al-rumuz [kitabi]” (جامع الرموز) by Shams al-Din Muhammad al-Kuhistani (inventory number L-30). This is a popular work in the Muslim world (especially among Muslims of the Russian Empire²) on fiqh compiled by the Bukhara mufti (hanafite) Shams al-Din Muhammad al-Kuhistani (d. 950/ 1543); and it is a commentary on the work “Mukhtaṣar al-Wiqāya fi Masa‘il al-Hidaya” by Ubaydullah Sadr al-Shari‘a al-Thani. This is a typograph print edition, the language of the text is Arabic. Published in Kazan, 1880, 605 pages. There are traces of water stains on the book. There are seal impressions on the title page and on the last page: “Muhammad Sufi Serdi (Sardi) 1301” (Serda is a village in Sabinsky region of Tatarstan now). On the front flyleaf is an inscription in blue ink (ballpoint pen), made by Uzak Rakhmetullayev: “1131 hijri 1880... Seyakhan ugly Rakhmatullanyan Kara-Kum madrasinda okynan kitabi.” (that means that this book belonged to his father and comes from the library of the madrasah of Karakum-ishan).

Among literary monuments of this collection connected with Kazan it is worth to mention so-called “Bakirgan kitabi” (باقیرغان کیتابی). This is a collection of poetic works attributed to Turkic Sufi poets: mainly to Suleiman Bakyrqani (the anthology includes his poem “Akhir zaman kitabi” – an eschatological poem about the end of the world, and the poem “Hazrat-i Maryam kitabi”), as well as Khoja Ahmad Yasavi and others. Typograph printing. The language of the text is Turkic. Kazan: Printing house of the Karimov Brothers Trading House, 1906. 58 p. A ballpoint pen on the title page made a mark (Arabic) with the name of the Decree of Rakhmatullayev and the inventory number L-28. Kazan editions (it is known that in the period from 1846 to 1916

² For its manuscript copies, see: [Bulgakov, 2017, p. 317].

Bakyrangani's works were published in Kazan 61 times) were extremely widely distributed and were very popular in the homeland of Suleiman Bakyrangani in Central Asia, and, apparently, this explains the absence of Central Asian editions of "Bakyrghan Kitaby" and other works of the poet [Yazberdiev, 2001, p. 93].

In my opinion, special attention should be drawn to the samples of traditional Turkic literature and folklore of various genres that are kept in the Institute's fund. They are presented both in the form of manuscripts, and in lithographs and early-printed books and are very diverse in their composition, as well as heterogeneous in chronological terms. These are epic dastans that were obviously popular and circulated in various handwritten lists, lithographs and partly oral performance in the Southern Aral Sea-Khorezm of the 19th – early 20th centuries – both those that are associated with the general Turkic folklore tradition ("Garib Ashik"), and those that represent local versions of major epics (for example, "Gorogly", "Idige"), as well as works dating back to the medieval Arabic literary tradition ("Rumuz Shah"), samples of classical so-called "framed prose" popular in Ottoman Turkey and the Middle East ("The History of the Forty Vezirs"), didactic works ("Malika-yi Danyshmand ve hezar savoli").

The epic cycle of tales about Idige (*Edige*, *Idigey*, *Edigey*) in various numerous versions and variants is very common among many Turkic peoples from the Caucasus to Siberia and from Crimea to the Altai.

It is generally believed that this rather chronologically late epic originally appeared in the Nogai environment, in the Golden Horde, and therefore subsequently became a common heritage for many Turkic-speaking peoples, primarily those that were part of the Ulus of Juchi. "The Nogais are a young Turkic tribe. It was born before the eyes of history. Nogai, a powerful prince in the Golden Horde, led the Mangyts. After his death (circa 1300), the Mangyts became known as the Nogais. Apparently, over time, many alien clans and tribes joined the main core of the Mangyts, and the former name of the tribe ceased to correspond to reality. Then the name 'Nogai' served for a new name. The Nogais had an extremely interesting history, which was reflected in their epic..." – so wrote the turkologist Pavel A. Falev (1888–1922) in his work devoted to the epic tales of Idige (it is still remains unpublished, see at: [Anikeeva, 2018]).

Undoubtedly, the remark of Pavel Falev about the historical basis of the epic "Idigey" and the legends about Chora-batyr adjoining them – these are events that took place in the 15th–16th centuries in the Nogai Horde. In the center of the epic legends is the story of a Murza named Idigei (Edige, Edigei), as well as his associates and descendants (these are the Horde princes Nuradin / Nuradil, Musa Khan, Urak and Mamai, Ismail, Yamgurchi), Idigei's feud with the Golden Horde Khan Tokhtamysh (Toktamys) and his close associates – the vizier Yambay (Dzhanbay) from the Keneges clan, the son of Kadyr-Berdi, Baryn and Saryn.

After Tokhtamysh's quarrel with Amir Timur and Tokhtamysh's exile (1395), Idige was the de facto ruler of the Golden Horde for a long time, until Tokhtamysh's sons forced him to flee in 1412 to his Nogai ulus, where he was killed eight years later during a battle with one of them. Nevertheless, the researchers of the epic (in particular Viktor Zhirmunsky) note that "the foreign policy activity of Idige, known from the Russian chronicles, including the war with Vytautas in 1399 and the march on Moscow (1408–1409), was not reflected in the epic".

Although the source of the epic cycle about Idige is a monument of medieval literature of the Nogais, its existence has been fixed and recorded at various times in many versions among many other Turkic peoples – the Kazakhs, Karakalpaks, nomadic Uzbeks, Turkmens, Bashkirs, among the Turkic peoples of the steppe Crimea and Southern Siberia (the Siberian Tatars and the Teleuts). According to researchers, this is another proof of the fact that the legend of Idige was formed in the Nogai Horde: "The wide geographical spread of the legend ... – from the Crimea and the Black Sea steppes to Siberia and Kazakhstan corresponds to the historical framework in which

the movements of Nogai nomads took place, especially after the collapse of the Nogai ulus in the 16th–17th centuries” [Zhirmunsky, 1974]. In addition, the legend of Idige, in turn, gave rise to other, secondary epic cycles, dedicated already to the descendants of the Horde Murza and also having their own historical basis as, for example, the story of Urak and Mamai or the legend of Chora (Shora)-batyr. The legend “Urak and Mamai” talks about discord among the descendants of Idige in the 16th century. Musa Khan’s son Ismail (a historical ally of Ivan the Terrible) kills his brother Urak (see at: [Trepavlov, 2002]).

It is also known about the existence of many local short epic legends that exist among various Turkic peoples and are associated with the circle of characters in the epic “Idige”.

It must be said that the legends about Idige among the Turkic peoples existed not only in oral form – many versions have come down to us both in handwritten form and as part of other works. For example, it is known about the version of the legend, which is contained in the Golden Horde historical work of the 17th century (according to other sources – the 16th century) “Daftar-i Genghis-name”, written by Utemish-haji Muhammad Dosti. The first texts of the Idige epics and its individual parts are recorded in the Volga-Tatar written sources of the 17th–18th centuries; it is known about the manuscript version of the epic “Idegey”, recorded in 1854 by Gabidulla Akhmetzhan ugli (see: [Khairullina, 1999]). The existence of the epic in the book tradition is already noted by P.A. Falev in the 1910s.

There are several manuscripts of the local versions of the Idige epic cycle in the Fund of Oriental Manuscripts of the Karakalpak Institute of Humanities:

Inventory R-237. “Ibn Tugay. Qyssa-yi Idige” (ابن توکای قصه ایدیکا).

Manuscript. Language of the text – Turkic. Wood binding, 15 × 20 cm. Black ink, *naskh*. 155 pages. Date and place of copy is unknown but there are the dates 1925 and 1345 (H) on the last folio.

Inventory R-197. “Idige”. Manuscript. Notebook in the cardboard binding, 18 × 30 cm. Language of the text – Turkic. Blue ink. 203 pages. Apparently, this is a record made from the words of the narrator or storyteller in the 1930s. (the binding on the inside is pasted over with office paper with dates 193...).

Another famous and widespread among Turkic people epics is “Köroğlu” (“Köroğlu”, “Gurugli”) which is a cycle of epic tales, which are extremely widespread in Central Asia, the Caucasus, Iran and Turkey. The tales of this cycle are an integral part of the oral tradition of both the different Turkic peoples (the Turks, Azerbaijanis, Turkmens, Kazakhs, Crimean Tatars, Karakalpaks, Uzbeks, Uighurs) and the Armenians, Georgians, Tajiks, Kurds, etc. It can be attributed to the Oghuz epic only formally according to the place of its origin. It is considered that the main plot of the epic was formed in Azerbaijan at the end of the 16th century, from where it spread to the North, West and East.

All versions of this epic cycle are united by a commonality of its storylines, and the figure of Köroğlu (Köroğlu, turkm. Gorogli) – *aşık*³, the people’s avenger, the brave man and the defender of the destitute – is in the center of all the tales. The main theme of the epic is the struggle of Köroğlu and his companions (40 *djigit*-horsemen) against various enemies and oppressors. The versions of the epic are usually divided into two groups, conventionally called Western (which is closer to the Oghuz Turkic people and spread in Turkey and the Caucasus among the Turks, Azeris, and also Armenians and Georgians) and Eastern (which is spread among the Turkmen, Uzbek, Uighur, Tajik in Central Asia). The Eastern group of versions is distinguished by the common motif of the birth of the main hero in the grave (from persian *gur* “grave”, *Gur-ogly* is “son of the grave”),

³ *Aşık* (tur.) – a minstrel, poet, singer who accompanies himself with a *saz* (lute). Oral folk poetry of *aşıks* is an important and essential part of Turkish and Azerbaijan literary tradition.

while in the Western group *Köroğlu* is represented as a son who first of all takes revenge for his blinded father (*Köroğlu* in Turkish means “son of the blind”, *kör* (tur.) – “blind”).

The legends about *Köroğlu* are based on quite specific historical events – the South Azerbaijani, Turkish and partly Turkmen versions of the epic reflect the rebellions of the Celalis in the 16th century (among which probably there was a certain person named *Köroğlu*), as well as some other popular unrest of later times – for example, the uprising against Nadir Shah in Iran and the Caucasus (18th century). The plots of individual chapters, or parts, of the epic cycle about *Köroğlu* are combined in a series of episodes and adventures (the courtship of *Köroğlu*, his military campaigns and attacks, rescue from captivity, etc.).

The versions of the epic differ in form and volume, as well as in the degree of popularity: for example, more than 60 chapters of the cycle are known in the Uzbek language, and the poems in this version alternate with rhymed prose; the legends of the Bukhara Arabs about “*Gurogli*” are prose short stories of five episodes of the cycle; the Armenian texts of the cycle were written only in verse, etc. [Reichl 2008]. In the course of its spread, this epic cycle was supplemented with tales about *Köroğlu*’s adopted son (named Avaz, Aviz Khan, Ovez), grandchildren (Nurali) and even a great-grandson (see the Uzbek version), and its main character from the vagabond *aşık*-minstrel and the robber (in Turkish versions) turned into a padishah in Central Asia. By the opinion of researches, the distribution of the about *Köroğlu* epic cycle among the peoples who speak Turkic and other languages is a good example of how not only folk tales, but also the epic overcomes language boundaries in an environment of linguistic and cultural interaction [Reichl, 2008, p. 330].

The example of the *Koroglu* epic in the collection in Nukus is early printed book: *کور اوغلی رساله سی*. Typograph print. The language of the text is Turkic. The beginning is missing (from the 3rd page). 88 pages. Petropavlovsk (now in Kazakhstan), 1880. The inscription in blue ink on the back of 11.: “Gorugly. 88 p. 50 rubles.”, on the cover: “Gorugly. 88 p. 50 rubles”.

The print and manuscript copies of dastan epic texts (such as “*Garip Aşık*”, Khorezm versions of “*Idige*” and others) – these are either texts received from storytellers by collectors, or texts rewritten by readers themselves, “listeners”⁴ – in this period indicates first of all that the oral tradition of performing dastans connected with the other Turkic folklore (including the Volga region), as well as their written existence, was preserved in Karakalpakstan the 20th century for quite a long time.

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⁴ Handwritten copies of epic dastans received from storytellers can be divided into a special group. They are also kept in the Fund of Manuscripts of the Karakalpak Institute of Humanities and, undoubtedly, need a separate study and publication.

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