



KARAKALPAK FOLKLORIST QOBIL MAQSETOV'S SCIENTIFIC HERITAGE

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Abstract:

The article discusses the scientific legacy of Professor Qobil Maqsetov, a scholar who contributed to the development of Karakalpak literary studies and folklore studies. A scientific analysis will be conducted on Q. Maqsetov's work on recording folklore materials from the people, from bards and storytellers, organizing them, editing and publishing them, and researching the collected materials from a scientific and theoretical perspective. It is noted that the scientist wrote more than 300 scientific works, of which more than 140 were published in various collections and journals, and more than ten major monographs were published. In the article, the scholar's research is studied in four areas, and the theoretical and practical significance of each work is evaluated.

Keywords: Literature, folklore, epic, bard, bakhshi, theory, scientific research, monograph

INTRODUCTION

One of the dedicated scholars who made significant contributions to the formation and development of Karakalpak literary studies and folklore studies from the mid-20th century until the end of his life was Qobil Maqsetov (1929-2002), Doctor of Philological Sciences, Professor, and Honored Scientist of Uzbekistan and Karakalpakstan.

Professor Q. Maqsetov began his research work during his studies at the Faculty of Karakalpak Language and Literature of the Karakalpak State Pedagogical Institute in 1949-53, and during his tenure as a senior lecturer and head of the Karakalpak Language and Literature Department at the same faculty in 1953-54. In the 20th century, that is, after the 1920s and at the end of the 1930s, in the 1940s and 50s, there were some obstacles in collecting the national folk heritage and folklore samples of the former Soviet republics. In particular, some critics view folk epics as feudal heritage that speaks of the wealthy and opposes the people. However, in 1954, a all-Union meeting of scholars from the M. Gorky World Literature Institute and the Institute of Oriental Studies was held in the former Soviet Union. From that year onwards, the collection, publication, and research of folk heritage continued comprehensively, systematized for specific scientific purposes. In the same year, that is, in 1954, K. Maksetov entered the postgraduate program of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the former USSR Academy of Sciences in Moscow and in 1958 successfully defended his candidate dissertation on the topic "The Karakalpak heroic epic "Forty Girls." The epic poem "Forty Girls" was recorded in 1938 from the renowned Karakalpak bard

Qurbonboy Tojiboyev (1876-1958), first published in 1949[1], and later published in Karakalpak folklore multi-volume collections (Volume XX, 100 volumes). In 1946, journalist and translator O. Kozhurov translated the poem literally into Russian. Thus, the epic poem "Forty Girls" has attracted the attention of local and foreign scholars and has been widely studied in the scientific community, translated into the languages of several peoples, and recognized as a world-renowned epic heritage.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For example, the epic poem "Forty Girls" has been translated into Uzbek, Kazakh, Turkmen, Kyrgyz, Azerbaijani, and Turkish, sparking the interest of scholars worldwide. In those years, a special study of the dastan was carried out by Q. Maqsetov, and the scholar's dissertation was published as a book by the Karakalpak State Publishing House in 1962. Despite the scarcity of scholarly works written on heroic epics in Central Asia and the limited practical methodological experience, Q. Maqsetov wrote a valuable research work on the "Qirq qiz" epic [2].

In 1966, Q. Maqsetov successfully defended his doctoral dissertation on "The Poetics of Karakalpak Heroic Epics." This research was crucial for that period, as research on the poetics of epics and their artistic features had not yet been written. In his research, Q. Maqsetov selected Karakalpak heroic epics and was among the first to write this fundamental work on their artistic language, the skill of the *jirows* in using the vernacular, and the unique use of figurative language.

Starting in 1953, during his 50-year conscious life, Q. Maqsetov made significant contributions to



introducing the Karakalpak people to the world through our national folklore oral heritage. He traveled throughout all districts of Karakalpakstan, recording more than 15 epics from talented folk storytellers, not to mention minor folklore genres. He published them as a book and conducted research based on them. Together with the members of the folklore expedition he headed, he visited Karakalpaks living outside of Karakalpakstan, in particular, Andijan, Fergana, Samarkand, Bukhara regions, and showed dedication in collecting our national heritage. As a result, over 1,000 folktales, over 5,000 proverbs and riddles, and nearly 150 epic poems, considered the rich spiritual heritage of the Karakalpak people, were recorded and passed down as a legacy to future generations.

Q. Maqsetov tirelessly worked on collecting examples of folk oral literature from the people, from bards and storytellers, organizing them, editing and publishing them, recording valuable information about the biographies and creative repertoire of bards and storytellers, and conducting scientific and theoretical research of the collected materials.

From the 1960s, scholar Q. Maqsetov actively participated and led the preparation and publication of collected folklore materials. Taking into account the aesthetic demands of the people, he actively participated in the publication of the 20-volume collection of Karakalpak folklore. He/She directly participated in all of this, leading, being the responsible editor, being a member of the editorial board, and writing the foreword. He was one of the publishers of volumes VI, IX, XIV, XVI, XVII, XVIII, XIX. He personally prepared the XIII volume for publication and published the "Sharyar" epic in this volume based on texts recorded from O'teniyoz jirov and Qulamet jirov by Q. Maqsetov and A. Shamuratov. Professor Q. Maqsetov played a significant role in the first publication of the epics "Alpomish," "Qurbonbek," and "Davlatiyorbek," recorded from Esemurat Jirov, as well as the book "Karakalpak Legends and Anecdotes," in the 1960s. Today, 100 volumes of the multi-volume "Karakalpak Folklore" were published in 2007-2015, and volumes 101-106 were published by "Ilim" publishing house in 2024. Regarding this, folklorist J. Xoshniyazov states: "...the majority of epic information in Karakalpak folklore consists of epic works collected during the folklore expeditions led by Qobil Maqsetov and in which he participated for many years" [5.58].

Throughout his life, he wrote more than 300 scientific works, more than 140 of which were published in various collections and journals, and more than ten of his major monographs were published. Author of textbooks for university and academic lyceum students.

In each of the scholar's books, new problematic issues related to the history and theory of Karakalpak folklore have been analyzed and found their solutions.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

"We have the opportunity to evaluate Professor Q. Maqsetov's extensive and substantial works by dividing them into four main areas," writes J. Xoshniyazov and K. Palimbetov, scholars who have studied the scholar's scientific career. The first is his works discussing theoretical issues in Karakalpak folklore studies. This includes "Poetics of Karakalpak Heroic Epics" (Tashkent, 1965), "Aesthetics of Karakalpak Folklore" (Nukus, 1971), "Karakalpak Folkloristics" (Nukus, 1989), and "The Karakalpak Heroic Epic 'Forty Girls'" (Nukus, 1962).

Second: The works of jirov-bakhshi performers of Karakalpak folk epics, reflecting their life journeys, performance and creative skills, mentor-disciple traditions, and repertoire. This includes "Karakalpak Epic" (Tashkent, 1976), "Karakalpak Jirov Bakhshis" (Nukus, 1983), and "Dastans, Jirovs, Bakhshis" (Nukus, 1992). The scholar's thoughts and observations about Karakalpak bards are among the first experiments in Karakalpak folklore studies. He was the first scholar to bring this matter abroad. In 1973, he participated in the International Congress of Anthropologists and Ethnographers in Chicago with a presentation on the topic "Contemporary Folk Storytellers and Their Role in the Viability of Traditional Epics." That same year, the English translation of this scientific report was published in Moscow.

Thirdly, one of the significant areas of Professor Q. Maqsetov's scholarly work is the study of the interactions of the Karakalpak cultural environment, literature, and folklore with other neighboring peoples, as well as the ways they interact with each other. In 1987, his book "The Connection of Karakalpak Literature with the Literatures of Fraternal Peoples" was published by the "Karakalpakstan" publishing house. It compares Karakalpak literature with the literatures of the peoples of Russia, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Bashkortostan, Tatarstan, Turkmenistan, and Dagestan, revealing the long-standing literary connections between them and revealing the unique characteristics of each national literature.

Fourthly, the scholar's textbooks, programs, and methodological books prepared for students of higher educational institutions, colleges, and lyceums are practical in nature and are aimed at educating our youth in the spirit of independence, deeply studying and valuing our national values.

The textbook "Karakalpak Folklore" (Nukus, 1979), published by Professor K. Maksetov in



collaboration with A. Tajimuratov, provides information on all genres of Karakalpak folklore, highlighting their role, functions, and educational and aesthetic significance. This textbook was the first experiment designed to provide students with relevant information about Karakalpak folklore. Later, this book was revised by the scholar and published under the title "Literary Oral Works of the Karakalpak People" (Nukus, 1996). Furthermore, Q. Maqsetov's "Folk Literature of the Karakalpak People" (Nukus, 2002) for Academic Lyceums and Vocational Colleges (co-authored with R. Maqsetova), as well as programs and methodological guides for the philology faculties of Nukus State University, are valuable for their adaptation to various educational institutions. One branch of his practical work is intertwined with the collection, publication, and preparation for publication of Karakalpak folk art. For example, "Karakalpak Tongue-twisters" (Nukus, "Bilim" 1993), "Karakalpak Traditional Songs" (Nukus, "Bilim" 1997), prepared jointly with his student K. Palimbetov, consist of specially organized textual information that had not been previously published separately. It should be noted that some of these works have already been prepared for publication but have not been published. Among them, "Karakalpak Love Songs" (published later in 2020), Tengel Bakhshi's epic poem "Sayatkhan-Khamra," "Answer Debates," "Myths," and others are preserved in manuscript form, prepared for publication. He is the scientific director, editor-in-chief, and one of the members of the editorial board of 20 volumes of the multi-volume "Karakalpak Folklore." Prepared by specialists under the leadership and direct participation of Qobil Maqsetov, the 20-volume collection is valuable for its beneficial contributions, which have truly given a second life and eternity to the folk art of our ancestors, which has emerged and flourished over millennia. Because most folk oral traditions had already ceased to exist at their stages of development due to the loss of their current viability. Today, they have been transformed into volumes of books, becoming a spiritual heritage of our people. Professor Q. Maqsetov did not limit himself to analyzing folklore in his scholarly articles. He also wrote about the problems of literature in various fields. For example, he began his research path by writing reviews of published books, and then dedicated himself to monographic research addressing issues related to the history of literature and folklore. His thoughts on the stages of transforming epic plots into dramatic works, the peculiarities of their stage performances, and his scholarly opinions on the connection of staged epics with the national living environment are noteworthy.

CONCLUSION

The content of a series of articles by Q. Maqsetov, dedicated to the study of the works of representatives of national classical literature of the 18th-19th centuries, explores the interrelationships between written literature and folklore, the use of folklore creativity methods in enriching poetic works, and the issues of their mutual influence. In their opinion, no genre of literature can bypass folklore. Especially in the field of poetry, practical and scientific factors confirming the strong influence of creative traditions that have long been customary for our people have become the constant criteria of the scholar's articles. Q. Maqsetov's scholarly articles, monographs, and books encompass much of the attention-grabbing information from the present day to ancient times and are rich in facts reflecting the scientific significance of our national folklore, ensuring the consistency of its developmental stages.

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