REGIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF BAKHSHI ART IN KASHKADARYA

Fozil Qo‘yboqarov

Independent Researcher, Karshi State University

https://orcid.org/0009-0006-4814-4114

fozil1226@gmail.com

tel:919531216

Abstract. *In this article, the territorial characteristics and specific aspects of the art of the Kashkadarya oasis are described based on historical sources.*

Key words: *bakhshi, epic, bakhshi, traditions of epics, folk epics, schools of epics, Shahrisbaz school of epics, Kamay school of epics, Chirakchi school of epics*

The epic storytelling schools that developed in the southern regions of Uzbekistan possess distinctive local characteristics that distinguish them from other epic storytelling schools in the country. In particular, representatives of these schools perform epics and terma mainly in a muffled vocal style accompanied by the dombra. Furthermore, the epics “Malla Savdogar,” “Balxuvon,” “Zaydaqul,” “Qo‘ng‘iriyot,” “Xonimoy,” “Ollonazar Olchinbek,” “Xurso‘na,” and “Toshbosar,” which have traditionally been performed by representatives of the Qamashi, Qamay, and Chiroqchi epic schools, are not found in the repertoires of other epic storytelling schools.

The epic “Alpomish” is an expression of the historical heroism and centuries-old hopes and aspirations of the Uzbek people. The versions performed by Fozil Yo‘ldosh o‘g‘li and other bakhshis are considered versions that emerged after the advent of Islam. Hundreds of bakhshis contributed to the formation and development of the epic, while its earliest origins can be traced back to the life and struggles of our ancestor Alp Ertunga. Xushboq Bakhshi Mardonoqul o‘g‘li, Chorsha Bakhshi Rahmatulla o‘g‘li, Qora Bakhshi Umirov, and Shoberdi Bakhshi Boltaev made significant contributions to the creation and preservation of complete versions of the epic “Alpomish.”

In the twentieth century, the Shahrisabz epic storytelling school was one of the major epic centers. Certain characteristics of this school have been preserved in the creative work and repertoire of Abdulla Nurali o‘g‘li (1874–1954), one of the leading bakhshis of his time, who was born in the village of Qaynar, Kitob district. Bakhshis belonging to this school were distinguished by their performance of epics in a lively, cheerful, and uplifting spirit, as well as by the pleasantness of their melodies.

Abdulla the Poet was considered a disciple of Rajab the Poet, who was connected with the famous Shahrisabz epic performers of the nineteenth century, including Khidir the Poet and Ernazar the Poet. Although the performances of Abdulla the Poet were frequently observed by folklorists, more than ten epics from his repertoire were never properly recorded. The version of the “Alpomish” epic recorded from the poet during the final years of his life did not fully preserve all the characteristics of the version he had traditionally performed. Nevertheless, his distinctive performance techniques alone provide us with a certain understanding of the Shahrisabz school of epic storytelling.

In the last century, there was also an epic storytelling school associated with the villages of Qamay in Qamashi district of Kashkadarya region. The Qamay school united bakhshis who emerged in Qamashi district, Dehqonobod district, and the neighboring areas of G‘uzor district. The Qamay epic school maintained close ties with the Shahrisabz epic performers. More than sixty bakhshis are believed to have emerged from the Qamay epic storytelling school.

During the second half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, talented bakhshis such as Mulla Kholnazar, Oynazar, Jo‘ra Bakhshi, To‘lak the Poet, Shomir, and Elmurod Ko‘r were representatives of the Qamay epic storytelling school.

The formation of the Chiroqchi epic storytelling school dates back to the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Oynazar Bakhshi, who lived and worked in

the village of Qamay in Qamashi district of Kashkadarya region, was one of the outstanding masters of words of his time. Together with such bakhshis as Shomir the Poet and Elmurod Qori, he is considered one of the founders of the Qamay epic storytelling school. His son Erka Oqsoqol was also a distinguished bakhshi.

Rustam the Poet was one of the renowned bakhshis who lived and worked in the village of "Qipchoq Saroy" in Chiroqchi at the beginning of the twentieth century. Rustam Bakhshi became famous for his masterful performance of epics from the "Go'ro'g'li" cycle. According to the findings of the folklorist A. Qahhorov, Rustam Bakhshi performed 32 epics belonging to the "Go'ro'g'li" cycle before the bek over a period of 90 days.

Iskandar Bakhshi was one of the talented bakhshis who lived in the village of To'qboy in Qamashi district in the middle of the nineteenth century. The poets of Chiroqchi, Qamashi, and Jom had a significant influence on his creative work. He himself also served as a teacher to many accomplished bakhshis. In particular, by teaching Rajab Bakhshi and To'ra Bakhshi, who belonged to the Qirq clan of Chiroqchi, he made a significant contribution to the development of the traditions of the Chiroqchi epic storytelling school. To'ra Bakhshi, in turn, was the teacher of Mardon the Poet, while Rajab Bakhshi was the teacher of Abdulla Nurali o'g'li. Thus, the genealogical succession of Chiroqchi epic storytellers was formed.

One of the major bakhshis of the nineteenth century, Abdukarim Juyruk, was a highly eloquent and quick-witted poet with a remarkable ability for improvisation. According to Professor T. Mirzaev, this bakhshi, who lived in the village of Qoraqo'ton in Qamashi district, is associated with the following popular legend.

One day, when the Emir of Bukhara, Muzaffarkhan, came to the city of Karshi, he ordered Abdukarim Juyruk to be brought before him. However, upon learning that the bakhshi was seriously ill, the emir ordered: "Bring him on a stretcher." Abdukarim Juyruk then called his disciple Khidir Bakhshi and instructed him to go before the emir

pretending to be Abdukarim. He told him not to perform the epics "Alpomish" or "Go'ro'g'li," but instead to praise the emir's arrival in Karshi. Thus, Khidir Bakhshi reportedly sang about ordinary events from the emir's daily life, saying, "Thus it happened, Your Highness." Impressed by his skill, the emir is said to have awarded Khidir Bakhshi the title of "Chorog'asi."

Abdukarim Juyruk trained many disciples. Among those who continued his artistic traditions in the nineteenth century were Mulla Kholnazar from Sartbugajili village, Khidir Bakhshi, To'lak the Poet from Ulmas village (the father and teacher of Mamatqori Bakhshi), Elmurod Bakhshi from Qorapo'choq village, and Bobonazar the Poet from Qorapo'choq village. His grandson, Murod the Poet Kho'jayor o'g'li, was also a talented and eloquent bakhshi of his time.

During the second half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, Kholnazar Bakhshi lived and worked in Sarbugajili village of Kashkadarya region. He was popularly known as "Mulla Kholnazar." According to a widely circulated story among bakhshis, whenever a bakhshi-poet performed an epic before Mulla Kholnazar and failed to complete poetic stanzas, neglected rhyme, or allowed deficiencies in the performance, he would immediately interrupt the performer and reprimand him.

This was because Mulla Kholnazar, who performed epics beautifully and masterfully on the dutor, paid particular attention to ensuring that each stanza consisted of four complete lines, that the rhyme was perfect, and that words were used appropriately in each line. Kholnazar Bakhshi died in 1910.

Mardon the Poet (1880–1919), son of Mahman the Poet, gained considerable fame for continuing the traditions of the Chiroqchi epic storytelling school and for his role as a teacher. He trained more than ten disciples in the districts of Chiroqchi and Ko'kdala (present-day Yakkabog' district), as well as in Samarkand. He was also

highly respected among the bakhshis of Samarkand. Mardon the Poet died at the age of thirty-nine. Unfortunately, none of his performances were recorded.

The distinctive characteristics of the Shahrisabz epic storytelling school, which was one of the major epic centers in the nineteenth century, were preserved in the creative work and repertoire of Abdulla Nurali o‘g‘li, a leading epic performer of the twentieth century.

Abdulla the Poet Nurali o‘g‘li belonged to the Qatagon clan and was born in 1874 in Qaynar village of Kitob district, Kashkadarya region. He lost his parents at an early age and was raised by his half-brothers. For fifteen years, Abdulla the Poet worked as a shepherd. While tending sheep, he learned to play the dombra from his fellow shepherds and learned to perform traditional terma and songs that were widely popular among the people. He became known among shepherds as a skilled dombra player.

At the age of twenty-one, he began composing short terma and poems. From renowned master bakhshis, he thoroughly learned the techniques of epic performance, the secrets of the bakhshi tradition, and the texts of various epics. In this way, by the age of twenty-five he had become an accomplished epic performer.

Rajab the Poet from Quchchi village of Chiroqchi district played a major role in the formation of Abdulla the Poet as a bakhshi. Rajab the Poet maintained strong creative connections with the Shahrisabz bakhshi-poets who lived in the nineteenth century and, in particular, frequently interacted with Ernazar the Poet.

Rajab the Poet was one of the outstanding, eloquent, and knowledgeable bakhshis of his time and became renowned for training disciples. When Rajab the Poet came to Qaynar in 1901, Abdulla the Poet visited him and played the dombra for him. Impressed by Abdulla’s skill, the master bakhshi took him to Chiroqchi for one year and trained him personally.

As a result of his diligence, great talent, enthusiasm, and powerful memory, Abdulla quickly mastered the epics and terma from his teacher Rajab the Poet's repertoire, as well as the techniques of epic performance. By the age of twenty-five, he had become an independent epic performer. The people gave him the honorary title of "poet," and he became known as "Abdulla the Poet."

Abdulla the Poet did not stop there. He continued to study outstanding examples of verbal art from renowned bakhshi-poets living in Kitob and its surrounding areas, thereby enriching his artistic repertoire. He reworked the epics and refined them artistically. He created new lively and cheerful meters and melodies suited to the epic songs.

In particular, he performed heroic epics among the people with great enthusiasm, energy, and passion. Abdulla the Poet Nurali o'g'li performed such epics as "Alpomish," "Sohibqiron," "Kuntug'mish," "The Birth of Go'ro'g'li," "Avazkhan," "Xilaman," "Malikaiayyor," "Saydimkhan," and "Yusuf and Ahmad." He was distinguished by his lively performance style and the pleasant melodies of his dombra playing.

In conclusion, the Shahrisabz, Kitob, Chiroqchi, and Dehqonobod epic storytelling schools of Kashkadarya region differed from one another to a certain extent in terms of their performance styles and artistic traditions.

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