

Kazakh Diaspora Literature in Turkey

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Until Kazakhstan gained independence, Soviet ideology remained an obstacle against studying the socio-economic, political and spiritual life of Kazakh people who are living abroad. Moreover, diaspora and emigration studies did not receive proper attention. Only after gaining independence, Kazakh scientists had an opportunity to study the life of Kazakh people abroad. Concepts such as diaspora literature, emigrant literature, Kazakh foreign literature, only recently became the object of scientific research. This article is part of the latest research in Kazakh literature. It is about the memories of Kazakh people living in Turkey, the genre, artistic and ideological aspects of their writings, their style and nostalgic motives inherent in the memories. The historical and cognitive nature of the memories is also examined. Due to the political and ideological pressure of the Chinese authorities, Kazakh people who lived in East Turkestan in the 1930s-40s had to move to foreign countries. Turkey provided political accommodation to Kazakh refugees, creating acceptable conditions for them. As a result, many Kazakh emigrants finally settled in Turkey. Representatives of Kazakh intelligentsia such as Hassan Oraltai and Khalifa Altai were among Kazakh emigrants in Turkey. Later, Kazakh emigrants who were arrested during the World War II and frightened of returning to the country because of the policy of the Soviet regime joined them. One of them is the famous musician Alim Almat. The representatives of Kazakh emigrant intelligentsia had the opportunity to develop their work in Turkey. As a result, historical memories were written and published by H. Oraltay, H. Altai, A. Almat about the life of Kazakh diaspora abroad. The present paper is the study of Turkish period of Kazakh diaspora literature.

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1. Introduction

Kazakh people began to settle in Turkey about 70 years ago. The ancestors of today's Kazakh people of Turkey moved here in the second half of the 1930s from the Altai, Barkul, Sauan, Gaskol regions of East Turkestan. First they passed through Hansa, Shynkai, crossed the deserts of the Himalayas and Taklamakan, and through India and Pakistan reached Turkey. Many of those who took up on this path died during the period of resettlement. About two thousand Kazakh people survived and settled in Turkey.

The Turkish government favored Kazakh immigrants. They were assisted so that they could live with dignity on the land of fraternal Turkey. Adnan Menderes, former Turkish Prime Minister, was a prominent supporter of the policy to shelter the first Kazakh immigrants. As a result, Turkish Kazakh people annually visit Menderes Mausoleum in Topkapi district of İstanbul, where they read the Qur'an to express their gratitude to Turkish people. Later, in 1991, when Kazakhstan declared its independence, fraternal Turkey was the first to recognize this young state among other countries of the world.

Science is closely connected with the development of society and evolves to meet society's emerging needs. Indeed, scientific novelty is usually the result of relevance and necessity. This applies not only to the technical, technological sphere, but also to the political, social, humanitarian spheres. After Kazakhstan gained independence, new tasks were set before the country's science. One of them is conducting research on the life of Kazakh people living abroad, on their traditions, literature and culture, ethnography, the reasons for and the stages of their resettlement.¹

Currently, over 5 million Kazakh people live outside of Kazakhstan, who are spread over 25 countries. This is about one-third of the whole Kazakh people in the world. Many Kazakh people are permanent residents in Russia, Turkey, China, Mongolia, Uzbekistan, Western Europe and US.

In different countries of the world, Kazakh people have different political, economic, cultural and social status. Yet, to the present

¹ A.B. Zholmakhanova "Kazakh Diasporal Literature: formation, development and features" *Gazi Türkiyat*, no. 22 (2018):215-223.

day, Kazakhs have not had the opportunity to explore the lives of their compatriots abroad. "After all, until independence, the culture of foreign Kazakh people was not studied, moreover, in the system of social sciences there was no diasporology that would deal with the problems of our compatriots living far from the homeland."²

There are several reasons for this. The most important of them was the fact that under the Soviet Union, the republics, did not have the opportunity to independently defend their interests or to form their own ideology. In this regard, research work was subordinated to the "center." Soviet labelling and denigration of national science as "chauvinistic" also influenced the development of Kazakh science.

After Kazakhstan gained independence, new horizons and new opportunities were opened for domestic science. The "blank spots" in national history were rethought and explored again, which allowed researchers to take a fresh look at many events of the past. In social sciences, research has taken new directions such as studying the problems of Kazakh people abroad.

2. Kazakh Diaspora Literature: Turkish Period

In literature the latest topics, such as Kazakh foreign literature, Kazakh foreign folklore, diaspora literature, emigrant literature, have become the object of research, as researchers learned about the history, formation and development of Kazakh foreign literature, about its representatives, and got acquainted with their work. Kazakh literature of Turkey, where about thirty thousand Kazakh people live, occupies special place among these studies.

Many examples can be given related to Kazakh diaspora literature of Turkish period.

Artistic and journalistic works of authoritative, eminent personalities like Dalelhan Zhanaltay, Alim Almat and others were published and made available to Kazakh people. This paper deals with two of them, Khalifa Altai and Hassan Oraltai.

² B.U. Azibayeva *Foreign Kazakh folklore*. (Almaty: Evo Press, 2014).

2.1. *Khalifa Altai*

The writer Khalifa Altai, known for his civic identity among the Turkish people, was born in 1917 in Altai Territory of East Turkestan. His parents were quite authoritative, intelligent people. Together with Kazakh people who opposed the pressure of the Chinese authorities in the 1930s, he moved to India through Tibet in 1941. For more than ten years, Khalifa Altai lived in India and Pakistan, where he received his education. In 1951, he created society of Kazakh immigrants in Pakistan, under the name *Sharki Turkestan*, becoming its secretary.

Having united them around the society of Kazakh immigrants he did much to educate Kazakh people of Pakistan and to preserve the national language and religion. In 1953-1954, through this society, he organized the resettlement of Kazakh people of Pakistan to the Republic of Turkey.

In Turkey, Khalifa Altai continued his educational activities and made a great contribution to the preservation and development of national history, literature, culture, native language among the Kazakh people of Turkey.

As a result of his activities, a positive attitude towards the Kazakh people who were engaged in trade was formed in Turkey, which contributed to the improvement of their living conditions and chances for receiving education. In 1977, his first book, *Kazak Türklerine Aid Şecere (Genealogy of Kazakh Turks)* was published in Istanbul.

Khalifa Altai was an expert theologian who had deeply mastered the history and theory of Islam, and a polyglot who spoke several Eastern languages.

Among his works, the work *The Way of the Quran and the Requirements of Faith*, which was published in Kazakh in 1980, is of particular importance. He is also one of the first translators of the Quran.

In 1988, together with Dalelhan Zhanaltai in Istanbul, he published *Interpretation of the Quran in the Kazakh language*. He also translated several books into the Kazakh language such as *Biography of the Prophet Muhammad Alaissalam, Selected Hadith*, and *A Brief History of Islam*. Khalifa Altai's books such as *Gibadatul Islam, The Alphabet of the Quran and the Conditions of Faith, Sharia, Imanshart*, and *Science* are his main contributions to the Kazakh theology.

The theme of the fate of Altai Kazakh people plays special role in the work of Khalifa Altai. In his memoirs - *My Memoirs, From Fatherland to Anadolu, People Relocated from Altai*, he tells about the fate of Altai Kazakhs since the resettlement of their ancestors, about Kazakh *batyrs* who showed courage in overcoming the difficulties of resettlement during their fight against enslavement.

My Memories was published in 2014. In the preface of his work, Khalifa Altai noted that, whenever possible, he tried to accurately indicate, along with the dates of events, the names of localities and the people.³ What he tries to do is one of the requirements for recollection, and at the same time its foundation. Khalifa Altai, who set himself this task, achieved his creative goal. The events, which are narrated in the memoirs, reflect the real picture of the resettlement of Kazakh people who suffered from Chinese repression.

It is impossible to read pages about the difficulties Kazakh people faced, once they left the land of their ancestors and the repressions that fell on their lot, without excitement. In his book of memoirs *People resettled from Altai* Khalifa Altai wrote:

“Who knows what fate will curse us for, the local authorities again look at us. If only one would give us helping hand, he suggested what to do. Dungans forcibly take horses from Kazakh people, forced to relocate from their native places. They take by force selected horses and put their stamps. We have lost our swift horses.”⁴

Khalifa Altai, knew several Turkish and Oriental languages and deeply studied the history and theory of religion. From his youth he lived in various countries. Despite some remoteness from Kazakh people and Kazakh speaking environment, he did not use borrowed lexis in the narrative language.

The fact that H. Altai expressed the events that fell to the lot of Kazakh people who migrated from East Turkestan was narrated in the form of memoirs, testified to the author’s creative approach and his search for new genres.

In two of his works, *My Memoirs* and *The People Resettled from Altai*, the core of subject of the narrative and the description is the same

³ H. Altai, *My Memories. Chronicles of the Story*. (Almaty, 2014), 6.

⁴ H. Altai *People Resettled from Altai*. (Almaty: Daur, 2014), 27-28.

event, implying that there was an artistic search beyond conveying of information. Such artistic searches were ahead of their time in the history of literature.

One of the features of the memoir genre is that the composition, reflecting real life, at the same time tells about the national history. These qualities of memories make them especially valuable for literary science. In this regard, it is necessary to note the historical significance of the memoirs of H. Altai.⁵

His works can be regarded as an invaluable resource in which the author without any embellishment tells about the difficulties of that time, about what he saw, about the nostalgia of compatriots on the land of their fathers. At the same time, it paints vivid pictures of the multi-layered history of Kazakh people.

2.2. *Hassan Oraltai*

Speaking about Kazakh literature in Turkey, one must pay more attention to the work of Hassan Oraltai. He is the author of several journalistic and historical works written in Turkish, Kazakh, English, German and other languages. It can be said that his research and journalistic works, *Kazakh Turkish of East Turkestan on the Way to Freedom* (Izmir, 1961), *The Great Turkologist Magzhan Zhumabayuly* (Izmir, 1965), *Main Problems in the History of East Turkestan* (Istanbul, 1975), *The Fight Against Communism* (Izmir, 1965) indicate the existence of a rich Kazakh diasporal literature and science.

At a time when social scientists and historians in Kazakhstan were not able to conduct research on Alash intelligentsia, he published research papers about "Alash movement," "Alash Orda" party, and Alash.

Hassan Oraltai studied the activities of representatives of Alash movement on the way of national liberation, such as A. Bokeikhanov, A. Baitursynov, M. Tynyshbaev, M. Dulatov, Zh. Dosmukhamedov, H. Dosmukhamedov, M. Shokai, M. Zhumabaev, R. Marsekov, T. Ryskulov, S. Asfendiyarov, N. Torekulov, O. Zhandosov, S. Kozhanov and others.

⁵ A.Б. Zholmakhanova "The historical significance of Khalifa Altai memoirs" *Vestnik RK. Series on Social and Human Sciences* 5, no. 309 (2016):164-167.

Beginning from 1967, he worked at Azattyk radio station in Munich and put a lot of effort in conveying truths about history, society, and contemporary affairs to Kazakh people around the world. Hassan Oraltai was one of the first to give fair assessment of the December events of 1986.

Hassan Oraltai is the successor of the first Kazakh emigrant Mustafa Shokai. Oraltai was the son of Kalibek Hakim, who during the national revolution in Xinjiang, mobilized Kazakh people of East Turkestan to the national liberation struggle. The name of Kalibek Hakim, is on the same row with the name of Ospan Batyr, one of the leaders of the national liberation movement of Turkish people in Xinjiang.

In his book of memoirs, *Elim Ailap Otken Omir (My life passed with saying "Oh Motherland")*, Hassan Oraltai writes about the life of foreign Kazakh people, taking as the basis of the narrative the events that he himself witnessed. In the selection of melodies and motifs Oraltai employed a symbolic subtext. The book tells about the events and historical figures of the period of the 1940s and the beginning of the 21st century.

Nurgali, analyzing the genre features of the book, noted that this work "of one of the prominent representatives of the foreign Kazakh diaspora, journalist, writer Hassan Oraltay can be called an autobiographical novel."⁶

The volume of the book (50 printed pages), and indeed, the narrative on the coverage of the time period corresponds to the genre of the novel. However, if we analyze the work from the point of view of the requirements for epic works of art (conflict, creation of images, imagination, etc.), then, as the author himself noted, this book belongs to the genre of memories.

Being an experienced journalist, the author conducts his narrative in journalistic style, trying to truthfully and objectively describe the events and images of historical figures. In the preface of the book, the author notes:

"Despite various obstacles, the book *Elim-ailap onken omir* reached readers of independent Kazakhstan. Eight hundred copies of the

⁶ R. Nurgali, *100 Kazakh Novels*. (Astana: Foliant, 2004).

first edition are distributed in Kazakhstan. At the same pace, the book reached Mongolia and my native East Turkestan. The desire of some to prevent the distribution of the book in Kazakhstan, had the opposite effect and contributed to the advertising of the book. In publications in English, Russian and Kazakh, articles were written which criticized those who said that "import of book of memoirs of Khasan Oraltai was banned in Kazakhstan." This also contributed to an increase in the number of people wishing to read the book and find out what is forbidden. The editor-in-chief of the weekly Azat newspaper Batyrkhan Darimbet, who noticed this, began to publish excerpts from the book."⁷

After Kazakhstan gained independence, relationship was established with Kazakh people abroad. Researchers began to study the socio-economic, cultural and spiritual life of Kazakh diaspora. For the first time in Almaty, meeting (kuryltai) of foreign Kazakh people was held, where compatriots from several countries of the world were gathered.

Banning of reading Hassan Oraltai's works, is related with that time when he worked 40 years as a journalist and editor of Radio Liberty. Since then the problem has been resolved. Hasan Oraltai has been to Kazakhstan several times and has taken his proper place among Kazakh intelligentsia.

3. Conclusion

The memoirs provide numerous information about Kazakh life abroad and the fate of the people who moved from the East Turkestan. The authors tell of the difficult days of trials and the difficult fate of our compatriots. The reader is especially touched by the nostalgia of immigrants for their native land, the land of their ancestors, their memories of the past unforgettable days in their native land. Foreign Kazakh literature is an integral part of the national literature. We can also say that Kazakh diaspora literature in Turkey, the representatives of which we discussed above, made significant contributions to the development of the national art and literature.

⁷ H. Oraltai, *Elim-ailap Otken Omir* (Almaty: Bilim, 2005), 5.

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