

The Kazakh Professional Song Traditions

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The purpose of this study is to determine the features of singing traditions which were formed in the 2nd half of the 19th century in the Western region of Kazakhstan. In the course of this study, historical, musical-theoretical, comparative and other methods were used. Prior to this study, only two singing traditions were distinguished, whereas in this article the existence of three singing traditions was scientifically proven, with identification of another singing tradition in the history of music of Kazakhstan. In the musical culture of Kazakhstan, songs of the western region were known as “songs in a heroic spirit”, but this article discovers different temperament of songs. The latest songs are composed by “kayki”. “Kayki” is a person who sings and composes the song. They are called “kayki” only in the Mangystan region. The third Zhylyoi singing tradition, which was almost forgotten at present, was discovered for the first time in Kazakh music history. The third Zhylyoi tradition has been becoming an individual singing tradition influenced by the other two traditions. As a result of collecting and studying for 20 years, songs of Zhylyoi were introduced to the educational program of the Kazakh universities.

Key words: *Music, song, genre, instrumental music, singing, composer, kyui, musical form.*



Introduction

Folk songs are the most popular and widespread type of Kazakh music. The song culture of Kazakhstan originated from the ancient folklore has been continuously developing. The national worldview, traditions and ways of thinking have always been closely linked to music.

The Kazakh songs are both simple and complex. It is very important to study the songs context, poetic structure, sound system, rhythm formula, development and movement of melody as well as the aspects of performance of the regional song schools, accompanying a traditional and professional singer on the dombra (the Kazakh national musical instrument), and the variety of oral performance skills which have been passed on from generation to generation.

The spiritual world of the Kazakhs for centuries has been absorbing a variety of cultural influences, melting and assimilating them in the core of their native steppe Turkic traditions. These traditions were so deep and enduring that neither political catastrophes and wars, nor the cultural expansion of great neighbors such as China and Iran, nor Arab and Mongolian influence, nor Islamization could change them radically (Nysanbayev, 2016; Oghbaee H. 2019).

The history of instrumental music is closely intertwined with the history of the people. Through the centuries and millennia, dombra carried the memory of the first pages of the history of the nomads, the times when the instrument itself and the music were still included in the ancient cult actions and rituals. Dombra kyuis reflected many historical events that played an important role in the life of the Kazakhs (Alsaitova, Kanabekuly & Yryskeldy, 2015). The stable link between the instrumentalism and verbal folklore led to the formation of a special type of musicians, called kyushishi, who were not only wonderful musicians, but also skillfully mastered the word, which contributed to the formation of a specific genre of syncretic kyui – the unity of word and music, connected in meaning and composition (Arynova, 2017). The capability of kyui music to attract attention and, in the language of psychology, “to join” is a special vertical overtone principle, underlying in the Kazakh traditional musical language (Shakerimova et al., 2016). The ability for music to trigger empathy can explain the feeling of ‘oneness’ and solidarity that is found when people sing together (Habecker, 2018). Music may provide social cohesion; members can, despite their differences, unite around common expressive music practices (Erol, 2012; Alinejad M, et al 2019).



The heritage of the 20th century has to be considered very carefully. The following issues are important in studying Western regional music which is an integral part of our national culture.

Materials and methods

During the study, the following research methods were used: survey methods, musical-theoretical analysis, musical-poetic analysis, historical-cultural method and generalization. The collected materials have been recorded for 20 years. They are generally analyzed and systematized. As a result, the obtained scientific collections are used for higher specialized educational institutions.

In this paper, the creative works of Muhit Meraliuly (1841-1918), who is a founder of the oral professional vocal art school, and the Manghystau regional legacy “Adai’s seven styles” were deeply analyzed, and similarities between them were identified. The vocal art of Western Kazakhstan has not been previously fully studied.

The vocal art of the Western region has combined local traditions, the way of life and folklore as well as the 19th-century professional authors’ compositions, and it has succeeded a lot. Muhit and the “composers” of lyrical songs have found the solution only in combination with the local folklore that had been inspiring them.

Results and Discussion

The song tradition of the western region

The western region is the present Western Kazakhstan region which includes Atyrau, Mangystay and Aktobe. The issue of borders caused certain problems in studying the song tradition and culture of the region.

Until the 1930s, these areas included Oral, Orynbor (Russian territory), Aktobe provinces, Adai, Guriyev, Bokei and other regions including the present bordering territories. For example, the famous ethnographer of the Kazakh songs and kyuis Alexander Zatayevitch in his collections (1925, 1931) wrote that Orynbor province is the south and the center of the present Orynbor region, Bokei province consists of Kaztalovka, Furmanov, and Zhanibek districts of the present Oral region, Dengiz district of Guriyev region and Zelenginsky district of the Astrahan region. At the beginning of the last century, the tribes who had lived in those regions used to travel to the Russian territories which do not belong to Kazakhstan and stayed there every season. While investigating the migration process of the region over the last three centuries scholar Sdykov (2004) said: “In the 17th century the Lesser zhuz (a horde, one of the three tribal divisions within the ethnic group of the Kazakhs) live a sedentary lifestyle. In

summer they inhabit the northern part of the region and in winter – the southern part, up to Caspian and Aral Sea regions.” Thus, the Lesser zhuz tribes¹ had been moving around the territories freely in the early 1900s. The names of the lands and rivers were used in the songs of the region. For example, the Adai tribe which lived in the Ustirtin district of the Manghystau region moved to favorable places for domestic animals to Synghyrlau in Oral and to Tuztobe and Akbulak in Orynbor region.

The people of the Zhylyoi region inhabited the Caspian lowland and down by the river Zhem. In spring they lived in the beautiful and favorable places of Oyil and Kyil in Aktobe, farther in Tuztobe of Orynbor and Syghyrlau of Oral regions. These places of so-called free spirit are famous for their poets and singers.

Historically, the Manghystau population, which borders with Russia in the north and with Turkmenistan and Karakalpak in the south, used to move to the Orynbor region in the north and to Turkmen territories in the south.

This kind of integration resulted in the emergence of singers and kyui player Oskinbay, common to the two brother Turkic countries. Scholar K. Sydyikov, who had investigated the singers' legacy of the Manghystau region, in his research work wrote that the Manghystau, Karakalpak, Tadjik, Ozbek and Turkmen Kazakhs have saved Kalnyaz, Sugir, Kozhai, Muryn, Karasai, Aktan and other singers' songs and kyuis. Atyrau and especially Manghystau poets and singers also had a close relationship with Turkmen and Karakalpak musicians. He also noted that Otembet was on good terms with Maktymkul, Karakalpak poets, singers and kyuishis (a musician who plays 'kyui' pieces of music on the musical instrument) and the good relationships between Karakalpak singer Nurbauily and Kazakh singer Adai Karasai was a sign of fraternal friendship (Sydiykyuly, 1996).

The talented folk singers played an important role in Kazakh vocal art. They traveled around the country and performed on stages. They were highly praised by the people and were called “the sweet-voiced nightingales”. Orality of musical art left its mark on the relationship of the artist-performer and audience. Musician in the steppe is the artist who creates in public. Whether he improvised or read previously written by him or by another composer but his work is always in contact with the audience (Khasyanova, 2016).

“Sal-seri” (versatile people) were representatives of the oral tradition. They also composed songs (sometimes took part in “aitys”, oral competition among poets and singers), poems and were professional singers. They could play the dombra very well. They were considered true representatives of the professional oral tradition in society.

¹ The Lesser zhuz – Alty ata (six grandfathers) Alim, Zheti ru (seven tribes), On eki ata (twelve grandfathers) Baiuly – were divided into twenty five tribes.

“The professional oral tradition” in musicology has been considered an academic discipline since the 1970-80s. This term was initially introduced by Doctor of Arts F. M. Karomatov. However, during the Soviet period the terms “professionalism of the unwritten/nonliterate tradition” and “professionalism of the contact type” had been used in this field.

Before listing the types of the above-mentioned tradition it is necessary to identify the theoretical principles of professional music. Folklorist A. E. Alekseyev discussed the problems of professionalism. He noted that we have to try to give a true definition of professionalism within the framework of the academic discipline. But a comprehensive and meaningful concept does not fit within one discipline. Apart from the social aspect, one can clearly notice psychological and aesthetic grounds (Alexseyev, 1988; Ameen AM et al., 2018). He noted that the main problem of professionalism is the lack of concrete criteria and a single term, which is why the term has several meanings.

Musical scholar Sohor in his work “Sociology and music culture” (1973) considered this tradition from a social perspective. Having identified the professional music criteria, he highlighted that people cannot be considered professional musicians unless musical activity becomes the main and most important aspect. Sohor stated, that: “There are three ways to identify it. Firstly, the main source of their income must be their music activity. Secondly, the music world has to be their main activity and thirdly, their music activity must be highly praised by the society they are living in. Only then will people be considered professional musicians in the society.”

As true mastery in art, professionalism “can live independently” at a certain level and from the social point of view one can reach this level without being professional. Professionalism may disappear just as it appears. Musicologist Zholdybaeva (2018) said: “In order to maintain the professional level in the culture, we need a special and constant mechanism and reproduction.”

This mechanism is carried out with the help of the “master and student” system which has developed orally in the Kazakh land over the centuries. The relationship between the master and student over many years is not necessarily limited to music.

Nowadays one of the main tasks in Kazakh music culture is to research different unique vocal schools in order to understand the nature of the centuries-old art and its structure.

There are several regional song traditions in our country such as Arka (central Kazakhstan), Zhetisu (south-east), Syr (south) and the western song tradition. These regions were famous for absolutely different traditions and talented singers and composers with their own styles.



The oral professional tradition in the 19th century originated from the folklore. In the musical heritage of our prominent figures, there are elements of music, poetry, musical instruments they had played and dramatic stage performance. Musicians were called “sal”, “seri” (these two words have the same following meanings artist, singer, poet), “kaiky” (a versatile person, composer) and *singer*, and their songs were very popular throughout the whole country and were passed orally from generation to generation.

Music was not a hobby for a “sal-seri” (poet, singer). It was the meaning of their life. Their music activity not only had a great aesthetic meaning but also social and cultural value. Sal-seris paid a lot of attention to their melody and poetic continuity, their meaning and performance skills which helped them win the hearts of the local community. Then it turned into a concert genre, as the number of compositions of talented musicians had been gradually increasing. Sal-seris always worked hard to improve the beauty and aesthetic sense of their songs and performance as well as the structure and intonation of their compositions. Their individual professional activities were changed to the author’s version with time.

Sal-seris of the Arka region began their carriers as poets, however, researchers say that the song tradition of this region goes back to the school of ancient poets. Along with this, *kyuis* also had a great effect on them with their distinctive style.

Western Kazakhstan is considered the centre of the traditional literature and the main characteristics of their poets are bravery and heroic poems as mentioned by scholars K. Zhumaliyev, A. Marghulan and E. Ismailov.

The regional singers grew up in the traditional narrative environment and were the representatives of that tradition too. It shows that they were closely related to the epic culture. Academician Zhubanov (2001) stated: “The *zhyrzhys* (storytellers) played a great role in the Kazakh music culture, including songs.”

Along with that, there are several lyrical songs, epic poems and more than 20 *kyuis* of Oskinbay, one of seven composers from the Manghystau region. People called him a *zhyrau* (narrator), singer and a *kyuishi* (a *kyui* performer). Oskinbay made a significant contribution to the *kyui* tradition and was called “kaiky” (a versatile person, a talented composer) in the vocal art. Also, “aitysker akyn” (a poet who takes part in a debate competition) Bala Oraz Otebayuly was known as a prominent singer. For example, Bala Oraz’s song “Guriyev”, Kozhantay Koibas’s songs “Kybyr-zhybyr”, “Manghystaumen koshtasu”, “Kikym kol”, Sarysholak’s famous song “Tileu-Kabak”, “Auhattin ani”, Kisa’s “Saghyndym Zhayik”, “Kisanin ani” and other poets and *zhyrshys*’ songs were quite popular among the community. When investigating their works, it is important to remember that they were poets and *zhyrshys*.

Here it is seen that the vocals and zhyrshy (narrative) art are closely interconnected. In the future, the regional vocal and zhyrshy school, as well as the melodies of epic poems, should be deeply studied from musical and theoretical perspectives. In the national musicology, the musical and theoretical problems of the art of the zhyrshy have not been studied yet.

It is known from history that a lot of fairs were held in different parts of the country which played an important role in economic, cultural and political life. One of them was the *Kokzhar fair*, which had a great impact on the activities of national composers such as Muhit, Kyzyl, Bala Oraz as well as Manghystau composers.²

It was very important for the musicians to participate in fairs and perform in public for audiences who came to the fairs not only to buy goods, but also to listen to singers. Fairs were a gathering place for singers who had performed in public. At fairs, people could listen to songs and kyuis and later promote them in the local communities, and thus, the singers became popular.

The Kokzhar fair started in 1867 in the Kazibek village of Aktobe region and lasted until the autumn of 1929. The Kokzhar was the third fair to be held in Kazakhstan and people came from Orynbor, Omby, Semei, Karaotkel, Kazaly, Turkistan, Buhar, Hiua, Turkmenstan, and Ozbekstan. Famous singers and composers such as Kashaghan, Bitegen, Muhit, Sherniyaz, Kyzyl, Uzak, Bala Oraz, and “Adaidin zheti kaikysy” (Adai’s seven composers) performed at fairs, which were held twice a year in spring and autumn.

Before analyzing the famous regional singers’ composition as works of national professional composers, it is necessary to discuss briefly the data and folklore and ethnographic expedition materials.

Here, the important information about the unknown authors and their works, which previously had been prohibited, are given. Unfortunately, there is very little information about those singers and composers to date. It is possible to understand how talented and extraordinary they were only from the data collected from the community. This subject is too large to be covered in this article and requires more information. Due to the limited amount of information, the legacy of well-known composers of the oral professional art tradition should be analyzed.

² In 19th century Russian traders began to use a new type of business in Kazakhstan called a market trade. It was a flexible way of trading in the large area with a small population who had led a nomadic way of life and without roads which could connect it with other areas. The first fair opened in 1832 in Bokeiorda, Han orda and played an important role in Western Kazakhstan in 1870-80s.

In conclusion, while studying the works of the oral professional art representatives it is possible to say that the Western regional artists were also singers, poets and composers like the Arka regional professional singers and composers. In order to preserve the richness and diversity of styles that were inherited from kyuishi, Anshi, Zhyrau and zhyrshi, their creative and performing traditions must be carefully preserved (Omarova, 2016; Dias GP, 2019; Madrid MJ et al, 2019).

Here, let us begin with the autobiographies of Muhit sal, his contemporaries and students.

Muhit Meraluly's legacy

One of the traditional performance schools in the oral professional culture of the 19th century is closely connected with Muhit's name.

A. V. Zatayevich, who had been working with Kazakh singers for many years, notated valuable examples of music compositions. The great importance of his recordings lies in the fact that for the first time he recorded in noted and written form the different genre samples of Kazakh folk and folk-professional music of oral traditions, making them open to the public. Collections of A. V. Zataevich are the first editions of Kazakh music, striking with abundance of remarks, not just about the peculiarities of timbre and dynamics, but detailed comments to the musical text (Kurmanaev, 2017). Having seen how careful, accurate and responsible the oral professional singers were in their work, he was very surprised and noted: "Many methods of mastery (deep breathing, sound extending, plasticity phrasing etc.) could baffle a professional and qualified vocalist as to how they create such an art full of aesthetic and technically organized vocal performance" (Zatayevich, 1963; Akhmadiev RB et al, 2018).

Singer, poet and composer Muhit (Mukambetkerei) Meralyuly is the founder of the Western regional large vocal school. He composed a lot of songs. His songs were different from others.

In recent years, two professional vocal schools have been found as a result of research efforts. These schools have followed the tradition of Muhit's school and "Adai's seven composers" of the Manghystau region which were called "*the tradition of kaiky*". The performance traditions of those musicians have not been studied yet.

Sal-seris' songs were delivered to professional musicians not only by professional singers but also by amateurs and were written in music notes. For example, let us look at Muhit's legacy.

Ethnographer A. V. Zatayevich was the first who notated *Muhit's 22 songs* and *Muhit's 3 song examples* in his ethnographic collection. However, they are absolutely different from what the professional musicians and followers of Muhit's school have delivered and different from what they are singing.

It is clear only by identifying whether informers are professional performers or not. A professional performer is very keen on songs and takes a very careful and responsible approach. Whereas, amateurs cannot sing songs like professional singers. Therefore, the songs in A. Zatayevich's collections passed on by non-professional performers and the songs in professional singers' repertoire are sung at a different level.

Muhit's "master and student" legacy, which had been transmitted orally, was preserved by his grandsons Shyntas and Shaiky. It was later passed to singer Gharifolla Kurmanghaliyev. Muhit's school requires very good performance skills.

A singer's voice must be strong and have a wide register. He or she has to play the dombra very well and know difficult styles while accompanying a song.

Composer Muhit's songs that are accompanied by the dombra and various difficult playing techniques show that he was a very talented kyuishi. Muhit expertly played kyuis by Boghda, Tazbala, Abyl-Koshkar and Saulebay who had lived in the same region. Thus, while singing Muhit's songs, a singer has to play the dombra to accompany them.

The most important thing in studying the song traditions of the region is to deeply study the Muhit's legacy, because this regional school has a unique cultural tradition and is very important and valuable for the whole Kazakh nation.

Due to the lack of information about the singer's autobiography, it is difficult to identify his songs in their exact chronological order.

In our opinion, Muhit's "Aidai" songs were written in a different period of time. As far as the term "aidai" is concerned, it is considered to be one of the lexical words such as "Haulau", "Gakku", "Haudyr" which are used by professional composers. The word "aidai" has no meaning.

It is well known that Muhit had a good relationship with famous poet and singer Bala Oraz Otebaiuly who had performed at the Kokzhar fair in the Oyl community.

These songs are called “Kishi Aidai” or “Kishi Oraz”, “Ulken Aidai” or “Ulken Oraz”. Muhit was so impressed by Bala Oraz’s story that he composed the song “Kishi Aidai” (or “Horseman”). According to F. Ongharsynova the two “aidais” were probably devoted to his friendship with Oraz.

“Aidai” is a non-lexical word, usually used in the chorus of a song. Here are the examples of similar words translated as words used in chorus in the collection of songs “1000 Kazakh folk songs”: “Ai dai-ai” (no. 250), “Haridai’ai” (no. 254), “Ariaidai” (no. 432), “Oi-dai” (no. 850), “O-dai” (no. 893), “Ai-dai” (no. 938), “Uaridai” (no. 941), “Ai dai” (no. 944), “Dai-dai” (no. 946), etc.

The content of the vibrant, brave and playful song “Kok Aidai” is also described according to a man’s age. Also, if we look at the musical instrument which accompanies Muhit’s songs and shows their character, unlike the high-level songs, there are no difficult combinations of playing the dombra. According to its nature, like in folk songs, the dombra is played simply and easily.

The next song is “Kishi Aidai”. It was also called “The youth” according to the policy of that period of time. The text was adapted to the requirements of the period from 1930 to 1950. Muhit’s song “The youth” is no longer sung. The changes made to the author’s words have influenced the song’s content and weakened its emotional power.

In the original song “Kishi Aidai” the words “*My younger years will never come back*” mean that a man’s youth has gone and now, a middle-aged man is remembering his happy days in the past. And “Ulken Aidai” is the author’s own song. It is clear from the song which begins with the words “And now Muhit will sing his Aidai”.

“Ulken Aidai” is a composer’s complex piece of music with a wide range (a twelfth) and compositional structure. It is perceived as a sermon about living life to its fullest. Looking at the text, one can view it as a philosophical work of a mature person. In this way, according to the analysis of the content, the composer’s works can be related to different periods of his life. The song “Muhit sal”, which has been found recently, is a self-referential song.

The etymology of the word “Kaiky”

The Manghystau regional professional folk songs developed at the end of 19th century. Muhit’s famous work “Adaidyn zheti kaikysy” plays a big role in the song culture of the region.

The songs of that region were included in ethnographer A. V. Zatayevich's "1000 Kazakh songs" and "500 Kazakh songs and kuys" ethnographical collections. The song culture was closely connected with the regional song culture and developed simultaneously with this tradition. Singers and kyui players such as Oskenbay, Sholtaman, Adil, Tastemir, Zhylkeldi, Dosat and Tursyn were quite famous in this region in the second part of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century.

The Manghystau composers were first mentioned in an article of a famous singer Shyrtanov, "Adaïdyn zheti Kaikysy" (2000). It also contains information about folk musicians gathered from the local community. Based on the article, we are suggesting a different point of view on the terms "kaiky" and "saiky" which mean a highly talented musician, composer and singer.

I. Shyrtanov in his article wrote that in the 19th century in Manghystau the title "Kaiky" was given to musicians. The singers of the region gathered in a place called Tesiktam and chose Isa Tilenbayuly as a judge. Seven singers were chosen at the end of the song contest and were called Adai's seven kaikys (composers). They were Zhanay Oskinbay, Medet Zhylkeldi, Maylan Sholtaman, Kenzhe Adil, Maya Dosat, Karzhau Tursyn and Tynei Testemir or Zhamandai Testemir.³

This history shows that the term "kaiky" was given at the song contest for their talent in singing. Nowadays the word is used only in the Manghystau region and relates to the art and therefore, it needs to be further investigated. Adai's seven kaikys are similar to other Kazakh oral professional musicians like "Ashanyn alty saly", "Arkanyn on bir saly" and "Zhetisudyn zheti saly". For example, looking at the compositions of the "seris" who had devoted their entire life to the art, it is possible to find valuable information for research. One of them was Zhanay Oskinbay's song "Zheti bulbul" which says "we, seven singers, came here". It means that these seven singers were always together.

According to the given facts, these *kaikys* were highly respected by the local community. Scholar Tursynov sal, who had studied the origin of seris, said that in ancient times they consisted of males who had been members of the superstitious secret society. He said: "In 19th century ... along with the new quality "sals" there were artists in the group of "seris" ... and at that time the terms "sal" and "seri" were used as one term and had the same meaning. The "sal" and "seri" traditions were closely related to each other and were a new type of artist in the last century" (Tursynov, 1976).

³ Kaikys were referred to with the names of their tribes. For example, Zhanay Oskinbay kaiky of the Adai tribe (origin) as well as Medet, Mailan, Kenzhe, Maya, Karzhau and Tinei of Adai.

The word “kaiky” also has another meaning in the Kazakh language. It means to walk with a head held high, to speak loudly. The Kazakh language regional dictionary has the following explanation: In Turkmenistan’s Krasnovodsk, Nebid-Dag and Ashhabad cities they use this term to describe a young man walking proudly and thus, the word “kaikylyk” means flaunting (Kaliyev et al., 2005).

Regarding the term “kaiky”, S. Kerimov in his ethnographical research found similarities in other Turkic languages. In V. I. Verbitsky’s “Dictionary of Altai and Aladag dialects of the Turkic language” (1884) the term “kayky” means excellent, wonderful in Altai and Aladag dialects; in the Quman dialect it has the same meaning. And in V. I. Rassadini’s book “Phonetics and Lexicology of the Tofalar language” (1971) the word “kayky” is given as “hai kastyk” meaning *amazing, wonderful* and in the Tofalar language it is given as “kaiha” and means *to wonder, to admire*. He also noted that according to the above examples, the word “kaiky”, which is now rarely used, had the meaning *flaunting, wonderful, amazing* (Kerimov, 1993).

Therefore, it is possible to conclude that the term “kaiky” is common to the Turkic languages and is not widely used in the Kazakh language and is used only as a dialect related to the field of art.

All of the facts about Kaikys describe them as special and highly talented people. As far as the performance of compositions is concerned, there is a difference between the regional song culture and Muhit’s songs. His songs are soft and beautiful, and accompanied by the dombra as pertinent to the Manghystau region.

I. Shyrtnanov in his article mentioned that the word “saiky” is used for women artists. This word is widely used in Turkmenistan’s Tashauyz, Koneurgenish, Ashhabad, Tedzhen and Krasnovodsk regions and means flaunting. In Krasnovodsk the word “saigy” means flaunting, whereas in Atyrau and Manghystau the word “saikylyk” means beauty, grace (Kaliyev et al., 2005).

In Z. Narenbayuly’s research, Kenzhe Adil Oteghululy (1870-1932) was captured by the Commissariat of internal affairs and sent to prison in the town of Oral. Kenzhe said that he had seen Adil in the place called Suat in 1920. He had a strong voice and when he sang even a round yurt trembled. He had a big mouth (Narenbayuly, 2003). Another kaiky Medet Zhylkeldi also mentioned that he listened to the song “Kunan nar” while traveling to a neighboring community.

Manghystau’s famous ruler Beimbet Maya’s youngest son, Maya Dosat, was a well-known kaiky. Unlike other kaikys’ songs, most of Dosat’s songs have been preserved up to the present. He spent the last years of his life in Karauylgeldi and Kandyaghash in the Aktobe

region. Tinei Tastermir learned the art from his relative, the famous poet Nurym Shyrshyuly. He was quite famous in his community.

Folk poet Sattighul Zhanghabylov said that he had seen Mailan Sholtaman with his own eyes. He said that he was nearly 100 years old and had never seen a singer like Zholtaman in his life before. One of the famous kaikys was Zhanai Oskinbay (1860-1925), a famous singer, poet, kyui player, traveler and craftsman. Oskinbay's kyuis and songs have been brought to us by his son, kyui player and composer Murat Oskinbayev.

Another kaiky Karzhau Tursyn was born around the second part of the 19th century. Tursyn was quite poor and that is why he lived together with his wealthy brothers Amandyk and Eraly. It is also known that kyui player and singer Tursyn composed the songs "Kolkainar", "Aiyryk" and "Oimauyt" while traveling to the town of Temir in the Aktobe region in order to sell livestock at the local market.

According to historical fact, the title kaikylyk was mainly given to singers among composers, poets, and kyui players. Kaikys were singers with a great voice and wide range.

Recent research has helped to gather a lot of information about the folk musicians of the region. Their compositions have been preserved to date. They are Kayip, Kenghali, Borash, Kozhantai, Koibas, Narik, Hamit and other singers.

Begei Kayip is another famous composer of the Mangystau region (1857-1918). He was a singer, poet, composer and craftsman. His songs "Zhadaukok" and "Akbobek" were known in different versions. Kayip died in Tadjikistan, and Akbobek Eszhankyzy was buried in the city of Gorgan in Iran.

Songs and their fates are closely connected with a man's life. The famous Manghystau singer Kozhantai Koibas Zhalbyruly's songs were forgotten. His date of birth is unknown. In 1932 he was slandered and jailed. He is said to have died in Zhamankala (present Orsk city). His songs "Manghystaumen koshtasu" and "Dalailym" were quite popular with the local people and singers.

In conclusion, the performance and nature of kaikys' works (their content, rhythm, measures, instrumental accompaniment and beauty) are worthy of being called "kerbez" songs. The regional songs still need to be studied thoroughly. The nature of the Manghystau composers' works can be learned only through complex research and analysis of Muhit's and regional authors' songs.

The regional singers

As far as the last century's literature is concerned, there were a lot of epic poems in the literary tradition as well as poets-singers. Some of them were known as improvisatory poets. One of them was the famous poet Bala Oraz.

Researcher Sydyikov divided the regional storytellers into seven groups and the seventh group consisted of Kulmanbet, Kospak, Bala Oraz, and Kashkynbay, who were poets in the Esenbak tradition (Amirzhanuly, 1999). Bala Oraz Otebaiuly (1837-1882) was born in the present Zhylyoi district of the Atyrau region and was a famous poet, debater, singer and a representative of the ancient folkloric tale tradition. He traveled to Zhem, Zhayik, Oyil, Kobda, Torgai, Syr and Nar regions to perform his art. He debated with such famous poets as Murat, Kulmanbet, Zhibek, Alma kyz, and Tama Doszhan. He sang about heroism and peacefulness, and raised social problems in his songs (Asanov, 2006).

Academician A. Zhubanov mentioned that Muhit first met Bala Oraz at Kokzhar Fair. He also stated that they became close friends and Muhit taught him some of his songs. It is known that Muhit wrote a song "Kishi Aidai" based on the story "Zhylykysy" told by Bala Oraz. As a result of the friendship between these two famous artists, the songs "Kishi Oraz" (or "Bala Oraz") and "Ulken Aidai" (or "Ulken Oraz") were written.

It is said that there were several versions of Bala Oraz's songs, and among them is a famous song called "Guryiev". It was known as a folk song in G. Kurmangaliyev's repertoire. The song "Guryiev" is still known as Bala Oraz's song in his birthplace. One of his students, the singer Kyzyl, was unjustly forgotten.

Kyzyl Turdalyuly (1860–1921/22), was a famous singer who sang about the Kokzhar Fair and treated Muhit as his teacher. Despite the fact that Kyzyl's name had been banned from being published, A. Zhubanov mentioned his name in his works. He evaluated Kyzyl's talent as highly as that of Muhit and Moldabay (Kalauaov, 2018).

The composer was born in the present-day village of Koptoghai in the Oyil district of the Aktobe region. His mother Tokanai played the dombra well, sang songs and wrote some poems too.

Kyzyl was a very vigorous and naughty child. When he grew up, he rode a fast horse and together with his friends performed songs along the river Babatai near his birthplace. He was said to be a handsome, strong and brave man. He was a scrapper, brawler and led a very active life. He was also known to join a gang of cattle rustlers. However, he was a very talented singer and was quite popular with his community.

K. Turdalyuly composed songs such as “Koghazhai”, “Zhanghak”, “Kamshygerdin ani”, “Oi, kok”, “Meshin-tauyk”, “Kense-kyrghan”, “Kys asar”, “Erkem-ai”, and “Saulem” (Nazhimedenov, 2005). Unfortunately, his legacy has not been preserved for future generations.

Folk singer, poet and composer Sary Batakuly (approx. 1863-1895) was born in the village of Taldykum in the Shalkar district of the present-day Aktobe region. He was quite a smart boy, keen on music and was called “a singer boy” in the community. He had a strong voice. Sary’s brothers were brought up in the community of talented improvisatory poets, “bees” (community rulers), and public speakers. There were a lot of famous singers, story-tellers, dombra players and poets from his tribe.

In his song “Kyz Kosan” (or “Sarynyn ani”), Sary raised social problems like injustice and inequality in his community.

In his autobiographical song, one can see that he was not only a “seri” (a very talented musician, singer, composer), but was also persecuted. He was persecuted in the towns of Zharmola (Yrghyz), Orynbor, and Zhamankala (Orsk) and later jailed. However, he escaped from the Zharmola jail and went to the town of Beskala in Karakalpakstan. All these events were described in his songs “Darigha”, “Aridau” and “Duniya”. He was betrayed and captured in the city of Horesm and was sent to prison. The poet was slandered for trying to escape from jail and was shot dead by Tsar Executors in a place called Shielisai near Zhamankala without due process while he was being sent to Siberia.

Sary’s songs “Darigha”, “Aridau”, “Duniya”, “Sarynyn Sibir aidalyp bara zhatkandaghy ani”, and “Tughan el” are full of deep emotions. His compositions such as “Tarlan atka arnaghan an”, “Ustem tapka, aghayindargha narazylyghy”, “Turmedegi an”, and “Elmen koshtasu” were delivered to us by the famous kyui player B. Basykarayev.

Folk composer, poet, singer, and public speaker Sarysholak Boranbayuly (1858-1927) was born in the town of Aktobe. Researcher B. Karten wrote that Sarysholak grew up in the colonial system which suppressed and oppressed his country so that he had strong feelings of anger and revenge. Therefore, his name was banned and most of his songs were devoted to the evil empire (Zhylyoi chronicle, 2008). His song “Tileu-Kabak” was considered to be a folk song.

Sarysholak’s legacy was delivered to us by the famous singer G. Kurmanghaliyev. A lot of information about Sarysholak and the original text of “Tileu-Kabak” were found from his personal archive, proving that Sarysholak was a singer and composer. B. Karten focused on the words in the text of “Tileu-Kabak” which had been forbidden before.

G. Kurmanghaliyev changed the words “tribe” and “God” in the text due to the fact that they had been banned (Zhylyoi chronicle, 2008).

During the Soviet period the text of the song began with the words: “Aikailap an salamyn Tileukabak”. The original text begins with the words “Surasan ruymdi – Tileu, Kabak”. Tileu and Kabak are two tribes that belong to the bigger tribe Alim.

In this region, there is another song tradition apart from Muhit and 7 kaikys (composers). It is in the Zhylyoi district of the present-day Atyrau region near the Caspian Sea. There is a popular saying in this region: “*If you go to Uishik, don’t play a kyui and if you go to Zhylyoi, don’t sing a song*”. Here, Uishik is the present-day city of Atyrau. According to some information, there was a singing school alongside Muhit’s and the kaiky’s tradition.

A lot of information about the singers, poets and storytellers and their songs have been preserved up to the present day. Member of Kazakhstan writers’ union, researcher, poet Z. Nurmahanov wrote that popular singers such as Alaushan, Nadirkul, Kyzdarbai, Mauliken, Otesh, Orynghali, Zheinbai, Otarghos, and Sultan, as well as kyui players and composers Kosbai, Baitak, Iltuma, Suyindik Toksanbai, Atu, Kaldau, Karaghul, Sakyp, and Zhaksykeldi lived in Zhylyoi at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries (Nurmahanov, 1998). Few people who knew those talented artists are left. Some of them are singers Sakyp and Kyzdarbai. The following information about composer Sakyp from the 1940s has been taken from the researcher’s personal archive: “Sakyp had a strong voice and sang songs without being accompanied by the dombra. He sang a song holding a cup in his hand”.

At the expedition in Zhylyoi an informer sang the song “Sakyp’s song” which was recorded on audiotape and in musical notation. Kyzdarbay Doskanuly (approx. 19th century) was a founder of the Zhylyoi singing school. He was a singer and composer from the Sherkesh tribe and a contemporary of Muhit. In history, there were two artists with the name Kyzdarbay. Journalist Salamat Haidarov wrote that he had heard about singer Kyzdarbay’s meeting with Muhit in 1937. Muhit, having listened to the singing of Kyzdarbay, who was 3-4 years younger than him, said that he was a true artist.⁴ In connection with this, we can assume that Kyzdarbay was born in 1844. However, due to the lack of information, there is still little known about his date of birth and creative work.

Zhylyoi songs were first published in A. V. Zatayevich’s works. In the collections about Adai, Bokei, and Oral provinces, the performers are said to be from the Embi district (present-day Zhylyoi). According to the ethnographer, the above-mentioned provinces also included some districts of the Atyrau region (former Guriyev). The following songs were

⁴ The interview was taken in 2002 (personal archive).



gathered during the expedition: “Sakyp’s song”, “Kobennin ani”, “Zhem boilap”, “Bir baiterek”, “Kara su”, etc. Along with Kazakh folklore, Tatar and Noghai songs were also collected during the expedition in Zhylyoi.

The talented storyteller Baktybay Tayshauly, a native of Zhylyoi, was very popular with the community. His poetic legacy has not been studied by our literary scholars yet. Baktybay’s poems have been recorded only in the last 10 years performed by Aizhan Kuanyshkyzy Taishiyeva, a resident of Kulsary town. In 2010 a collection of poems called “Akyn Batkybay Taishaulynyn murasy” was published.

Alongside the traditional, ritual and lyrical songs, Baktybay’s other poems such as “Kos pyshyktyn aitysy”, “Kara koi”, “Kara Musa”, “Dosangha arnau”, and “Narynbay” have been collected to date. Baktybay Taishauly plays an important role in the Western regional music culture.

Nowadays Muhit’s school, the kaikys’ school and the Zhylyoi school are developing well. It is thanks to professional performers.

Muhit’s singing school is the main school in the region. The requirement of a good singer is a strong voice with a wide range (diapason) accompanied by the dombra. Although present singers cannot always reach G. Kurmanghaliyev’s tonality, they perform his songs quite well in terms of repertoire, mimics, and articulation, breathing, and dombra playing. It is important for further development of his style and tradition.

With regard to the Manghystau regional song tradition, compared to Muhit’s followers, it could preserve the syncretic correlation with singers, kyui players and storytellers.

In conclusion, the singers of the syncretic art tradition of the western region were considered poets, composers, singers and storytellers. The influence of the tradition of folk narration in their creative work can be observed in the song forms, recitative melodies and intonation.

As far as performance skills are concerned, Muhit Meralyuly, a founder of the western regional oral professional song tradition and Manghystau kaikys’ (composers) tradition have a lot in common. The main motive of the region is the heroic epos, which describes warriors’ courage and bravery. It had a lot of impact on Muhit’s legacy. The representatives of the Manghystau tradition, who were called “Adai’s seven composers”, are quite different from Muhit’s school. We can see it from the regional singers’ names in the local dialect, to which is added the word “kaiky” (composer).



During the expedition, we found out that there was a specific song tradition and the information about the singers Sakyp and Kyzdarbay in Zhylyoi (Turmagambetova, 2018).

Folk artists have played an important role in the preservation and development of national art. One can understand a song through a singer. They could not only preserve the national tradition, but also connected the past with the present. One-hundred-year-old songs have been delivered to us by talented people's artists, thanks to the passion of their followers for the art.

Conclusions

Summing up the study, we came to the conclusion that there are three traditional singing schools in the western part of Kazakhstan. The founder of the most important long-known school is Mukhit. It has a wide range, very complex instrumental (dombra) accompaniment. The second school, located on the shores of the Caspian Sea, is the Mangystau singing tradition. It differs from the first by tempo, characters and calm instrumental accompaniment.

During the study, a third school called Zhyloyskaya demanded a lot of time and diligence. It originates from the territory between the two mentioned schools. Expeditionary and archival materials helped restore and learn the culture of this school. As well as songs collected over the years have given us to identify the features and determine the influence of two neighboring traditions. Therefore, after the conducted scientific research, the conclusion is drawn that there were three singing schools in the Kazakh musical culture in this region and today, thanks to this study, the third school has been restored.

Note samples of songs, especially of Mangystau and Zhylyoi schools, is of particular value in the domestic musicology and in practice. The republican competitions of traditional songs use new research findings and found songs, thus this school is being restored. New information also entered the educational program in higher specialized educational institutions.

These found songs were performed by famous traditional singers and were published in several CDs and Anthologies.

Notes of the found regional songs can be used in various subjects of the Conservatory, like "Ethnosolfeggio", "History of Kazakh music", "Music of Turkish-speaking peoples", "Folk art".



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