

## UNKNOWN PAGES FROM THE BIOGRAPHY OF THE TATAR ARTIST HADJI-MURAT KAZAKOV

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Based on the analysis of archival documents, the article systematizes new facts from the life of the Tatar artist Hadji-Murat Kazakov, shedding light on his work during World War II and the post-war construction. The epistolary sources, introduced into circulation, reveal such a facet of his creative nature as his talent of a graphic artist and a restorer.

**Key words:** Tatar artists, Kazan, Kazakov family, Hadji-Murat Kazakov, Kyrgyzstan

### Introduction

The artist Hadji-Murat Kazakov (1914–1984) is remembered today, as the artist of the paintings “Little Apush” (1958) and “Shurale” (1958), only during the excursions to the museums of the Tatar poet Gabdulla Tukay in Kazan and Kyrlyay. Sparse biographical information about the talented painter can be found in the “Tatar Encyclopedia” [1, pp. 17–18] and the book “Artists of Soviet Tatarstan” by S. Chervonnaya [2].

The purpose of our research is, by introducing new archival materials into scientific circulation, to systematize information about the life and work of the prominent representative of the Kazakov family, the artist of the famous painting “Little Apush”.

### Materials and methods

Our analysis is based on the sources stored in the funds of the National Museum and the State Archives of the Republic of Tatarstan. The research was conducted using the biographical and historical-cultural methods.

### Discussion

Hadji-Murat Kazakov belonged to the family of the Kazan 2nd guild merchant, the hereditary honorary citizen Mukhametzian Nazirovich Kazakov (Abdulkarimov) who built a stone mosque on the site of an ancient Muslim cemetery (1875) [3]. Unfortunately, it was demolished in 1975 due to the construction of Tatarstan Street [4], [5], [6].

According to M. Akhmetzianov, the founder of the Kazakov family was Ishmuhammet who, after the destruction of the city of Bulgar, moved to the Volga Region and founded the village of Nizhnie Shirdany there (in Russian documents - in

the Sviyazhsky District of the Kazan Province) [7, p. 37]. As historian R. Salikhov notes, Mukhametzian Nazirovich Kazakov (1805–1890) was a native of the village of Nizhnie Shirdany, the Sviyazhsky District in the Kazan Province (now the Zelenodolsk District of the Republic of Tatarstan). The artist’s great-grandfather came from an ancient family of Tatar Murzas of the Mountain Side [6].

The founder of the merchant dynasty was Mukhametzian Nazirovich Kazakov who managed to accumulate initial capital, first engaging in delivery, then trading in tea and fish in Astrakhan [3, p. 204]. “In 1863, M. Kazakov became a Kazan merchant of the first guild, and in 1871 a status of hereditary honorary citizenship was bestowed on him. Mukhametzian-bai enjoyed great respect among the Muslims of Kazan for his tireless social and charitable activities. Shortly before his death, in 1890, he left the trading business, entrusting the capital to his sons Mustafa, Mukhametfaiz and Mukhametshakir” [6]. According to Sh. Mardzhani, the roots of the Russian surname should be sought in the history of the Pugachev rebellion, during which one of Mukhametzian Nazirovich’s grandfathers served in the Cossack division. According to another version, during the Caucasian War, the merchant Mukhametzian was tasked with replenishing the royal army with horses, for which the sovereign himself gave him a Russian surname. According to S. Gubaidullin’s mother, the surname comes from the Tatar word “kachak” (a runaway) [3, p. 206]

The artist’s grandfather Mustafa Kazakov timely withdrew his part from the family capital and for a long time was successfully engaged in trade. In 1875, he was bestowed with honorary cit-

izenship [3, p. 206]. Iskhak Kazakov was his son. In 1897, he graduated from the Kazan Tatar Teacher's School and in 1897–1900 taught in the village of Kadyrbashi, the Sarapul District in the Vyatka Province. In 1900–1911 and 1917–1918, I. Kazakov headed the Russian-Tatar School in the city of Tetyushi, the Kazan Province. In 1911, he was arrested for revolutionary activities and exiled first to the Siberian and then to the Orenburg Provinces. During World War I, he was drafted into the army where he served until 1917. I. Kazakov was a delegate to the First All-Russian Muslim Congress (Moscow, 1917) and the Second All-Russian Muslim Congress (Kazan, 1917). In 1918–1919, he was a member of the main board of the Central Muslim Commissariat, the editor of the newspaper “Tatesh hakyykate” (“The Tetyushskaya Pravda”). In 1919–1921, he headed the publishing department of the Central Muslim Military Collegium. I. Kazakov was the chairman of the Muslim Bureau at the Kazan Provincial Committee of the RCP (b), a member of the Kazan Provincial Executive Committee of Workers and Peasants (1920). In 1921–1923, he became a deputy chairman of the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars of the TASSR; simultaneously, he performed the duties of the deputy chairman of the Volga Region Famine Relief Commission. In 1923–1928, he took the post of the headmaster in the Tatar Pedagogical College and from 1931 headed the department of the People's Commissariat of Social Security of the TASSR. In 1937, he was unreasonably repressed [1, p. 17].

We can learn some details from the life of Iskhak Kazakov's family in Kazan from the memoirs of Salman Gubaidullin, the son of the famous historian, Prof. Gaziz Gubaidullin. His mother Rabiga Kazakova was Iskhaku Kazakov's cousin. “In the 1920s, our families got a shared apartment on the second floor of a wing of a house on Tukaevskaya Street. We occupied two rooms, and Ishak Abiy's family occupied four. Ishak Abiy and his wife Nafisa had four children: Ismail, Maria, Hadji-Murad and Flora. In those years, the eldest son Ismail suffered from pulmonary tuberculosis and spent most of the time in a separate room. Murad and Marisha were my peers and playmates, and Flora was an infant then.

Iskhak Abiy held a high position: he was the deputy chairman of the Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars of the TSSR, dealing with the issues of the urban development. He and my father were friends and often

spent their free time talking about current affairs and the events in the country”, recalled S. Gubaidullin [3, p. 216].

“Iskhak Kazakov's sister Umugulsum was the mother of Mullanur Vakhitov, an outstanding figure in the national liberation movement of the Tatar people, he was shot in 1918 by the White Czechs during the well-known events in Kazan” [3, p. 216]. This family included the wife of Salikh Saidashev, Asiya Kazakova, with whom the great composer spent his last years and found a warm home, as well as Maryam Sainova, the wife of General Yakub Chanyshhev” [1, p. 16].

H.-M. Kazakov was born on the Tifkelevo farm in the Orenburg Province during his father's exile. In Kazan, Hadji Murat studied at the Tatar School named after Ismagil Gasprinsky. The National Museum preserves his drawing in the school album of 1925 [8]. The picture shows miners. It bears the signature of the young artist and an indication of the date: “IV signif” (“Grade 4”). The school was considered to be one of the achievements of the first five-year education plan of the Tatar Autonomous Socialist Republic. In the summer of 1925, the School held courses for rural teachers, for whom an exhibition of students' works was organized. The photographs of individual works from this exhibition were published in the magazine “Məgarif” [9].

In his drawing, bearing the imprint of industrialization, young Hadji Murat tried to convey the full burden of labor in the mine. The focus is the image of a miner, pushing a cart with rock along the railway tracks. Two miners, holding pickaxes, create a themed circle. In the background is a blurry shadow of a worker accepting a net containing rock. The drawing is executed in yellow-brown colors.

H.-M. Kazakov was a student of A. Kokorev who was a painter, teacher and a co-owner of typochromolithography. In 1934, he entered the Leningrad Institute of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture named after I. E. Repin. In 1938, for health reasons, he moved to Kiev to the Art Institute. From the first days of World War II he went to the front and was awarded medals. After the war, in 1947–1948, the artist taught at the Kazan Art School. In 1947, he became a member of the Union of Artists. In 1949, H.-M. Kazakov received a diploma as a graphic artist after graduating from the graphic department of the Academy of Arts in the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic.

H.-M. Kazakov's work was not devoted to the Tukay theme only. In 1947, the artist, the son of an

“enemy of the people,” presented to the public his notable work dedicated to his relative M. Vakhitov. This is how he declared himself to be a professional artist. In 1950, the artist again reminded of himself by creating a portrait of Yakub Chanyshev, a hero of World War II who was awarded the Order of Kutuzov, 1st Degree. Yakub Chanyshev is depicted in a military uniform with an offensive map in his hands. It is known that in 1942 he was awarded the rank of lieutenant general for his contribution to the liberation of the cities of Danzig and Gdynia and for his role in crossing the Vistula and Oder Rivers during the East Pomeranian and Berlin offensive operations. The atmosphere of the offensive is conveyed in the painting through the image of a destroyed German tank and Soviet bombers flying in the sky. The blue sky in the picture is obscured by clouds of smoke from shell explosions and fires. The artist focuses on the strong-willed face of the general and his decisive gaze. Yakub Chanyshev was a hero of three wars at once - two world wars and one civil war. He was one of the two Soviet Tatar generals during World War II.

The archives of the famous harmonica player F. Tuishev (Fund 2170) contain letters written by the artist from the front, which testify to their friendly relations. In particular, it is “An Open Letter of Kazakov Hadji-Murat from the Front”. We present this epistolary document in full. In it, H.-M. Kazakov quotes lines from A. Pushkin’s poem “A Hero”:

Клянусь, что жизнью своей, (I swear I played my life)

Играл перед сумрачным недугом. (Facing a gloomy disease).

Клянусь, тот будет небу дружить (I swear, the heaven is a friend),

Каков бы не был приговор. (Whatever the verdict is).

Земли слепой!!! Пушкин. (Of the Earth that is blind!!!)

Dear Fayzulla Aby! A lot of time has passed since I saw you last... Since then, we have been separated by a wall of uncertainty... Much water has flown under the bridge since then! I have managed to come to the front a second time, a month and a half of hospital treatment after being wounded. Shall I describe those many new strong impressions made on the artist who is not very demanding of himself in his personal life, but who eagerly absorbs everything new, vivid, bright, beautiful and strong, all that will be an endless source for the future creative work on our paintings. Explosions of aerial bombs, a hurricane of artillery fire, a burst of machine-gun fire, a whistle of bullets overhead - all this has be-

come almost commonplace. Even in the damp trenches you dream of a better future, as if you were experiencing in advance the joys of peaceful restoration work that will come after the war [11].

This letter from H.-M. Kazakov, written to his friend, a harmonica player in 1952, reveals dramatic facts from the artist’s biography. In 1950–1952, the artist lived and worked in Kyrgyzstan, in the city of Frunze. We can learn about his mood in this period by the epigraph-quote from “The Prisoner of the Caucasus” by A. Pushkin. Here is the whole letter:

«Я рано скорбь узнал, постигнут был гонением, (‘I learned grief early, faced persecution),

Я жертва клеветы и мстительных невежд, (Was a victim of slander and of vengeful ignoramuses),

Но, сердце укрепив свободой и терпением, (But, having strengthened my heart with freedom and patience),

Я ждал беспечно лучших дней, (I waited carelessly for better days),

И счастье моих друзей (While the happiness of my friends)

Мне было сладким утешением. (Was sweet comfort to me”).

Dear friends, Fayzulla Kabirovich, Masnavi<sup>1</sup> and Comrade Gilyazov<sup>2</sup>!

I have received your kind and friendly letter, written before the New Year, very late, by accident, it was already opened. You are interested in my achievements. Alas! There are none of them! The contagious slander of Almashen and Yakupov’s gang has reached these parts too. The Chairman of the Board of the Kyrgyzstan Union of Artists, Aitiev, looks at me as if I were a political exile; I have never received a membership at the Union of Artists or anywhere else. Here I am among strangers in a strange city, without support, literally dying of hunger. Not a single work of mine has been purchased, I have not received a single order. Some random earnings from publishing houses and editorial offices. For some time, I worked in a printing house and in a zinc printing shop. This is my second specialization – in fact, I’m a graphic designer.

I agreed to take up any job that came along so as not to die of hunger. Later, I agreed to an invitation to come to a collective farm, where I executed several works, then I went to a state farm and a factory to make several other works.

All these made me weak; I had been losing faith in myself and in the future, until I was accidentally invited to restore icons for a local church. Here my painting

<sup>1</sup> Khaertdinov Masnavi Khaertdinovich (1924–1983) – a painter, teacher, Honored Artist of the TASSR (1968), People’s Artist of the TASSR (1977). In 1951–1952, he taught at the Kazan Art School.

<sup>2</sup> Gilyazov Ravil Mingazovich – an artist.

courses, I had taught and once had lectured on in the artists' studio, helped me greatly.

What a paradox! I am a completely unbelieving, convinced atheist and a Tatar, however, I am successfully working for the Russian Christian Church, as I am not given orders of higher status, which I am still capable of fulfilling. For the Feast of the Annunciation, I have recently restored an ancient icon of the Intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, painted on an iron plate, rusted and partially damaged due to the thin layer of primer.

Apparently, I'm lucky to have the surname Kazakov, which coincides with the Russian surname, and as I am fluent in colloquial Russian, no one will know what my nationality is, because the Orthodox Church is very particular about the execution of icons by believers and the place of the Orthodox religion in general.

My work was highly appreciated by the church council and it was decided that I should paint the altar icon of the Resurrection of Christ.

In a republic where the majority of the population believes in the Mohammedan religion and I myself have the ultra-Mohammedan name of Hadji Murat, I am forced to fulfil such orders. This is what the activity of the Yakupov gang has come to with their arrival in the leadership of the Board of the Union of Artists in Kazan.

However, I do not regret the collisions of my life at all. On the contrary, even living among simple, modest, honest people, studying them, working for them, I go through a difficult school. Only by living with the people from the lower classes, can one shake off the accumulated dirt of the previous days, preserving and crystallizing only the best components from the past.

Communicating with naive people who believe in the legend of Christ and accept it as truth, studying them is real fun for me, as an independent thinker. Not all nonsense is nonsense. These people, first of all, cherish spiritual purity and honesty. They won't betray you! For betrayal, forgery and blackmail are so common in our daily lives! I, as once 300 years ago, Rembrandt<sup>3</sup>, rejected by his contemporary society, in the circle of Jewish rabbis and a religion alien to him, found some consolation, in the same way I, among the sons of Christ, talking with them and living among them, I forget the pain of heart wounds inflicted by treasonous slander.

I'm very busy these days. In addition to that first large icon, I have completed several other small works. One of these days we will sign a contract for six other works and one large altar painting.

The southern climate made my painting brighter, cleaner and more transparent. My drawing has become clearer. Technically, I have also made progress. I will bring two or three works that, in my opinion, are better than all my previous ones.

Best regards,  
Hadji Murat" [12]

This letter allows us to reconstruct the artist's work during his years in Kyrgyzstan where he proved himself to be a talented restorer. At the same time, it introduces us to dramatic pages from the biography of the artist who was experiencing financial difficulties due to the lack of government orders equal to his talent. The stigma of "the son of an enemy of the people," despite his merits during World War II, obscured the artist's horizon for many years and prevented him from fully developing his talent.

In 1952, he came to Kazan. At home, his talent was used in the design of Clubs and Houses of Culture in the oil regions of the Republic of Tatarstan. The artist executed graphic portraits of World War II heroes. H.-M. Kazakov was a participant in the 5<sup>th</sup> Zonal Exhibition "The Big Volga" (1980) and an exhibition of works by the artists of Tatarstan in Moscow (1981), etc. [1, p. 18].

H.-M. Kazakov is remembered in Tatar painting as the artist of G. Tukay's portrait "Little Apush" (1958), which depicts a small boy sitting on a sack. The viewers' attention is drawn to the child's eyes. In the gaze of little Apush one can read hidden sadness and amazement. Apparently, in this way the artist wanted to convey the orphanhood that the great poet went through in his early childhood. In front of the child is a plate of potatoes and a bowl of kатык, in his hands is a slice of bread. Developing the theme of Apush's defenselessness in the face of the blows of fate, the artist resorts to the parallel of a child and a flower. Compositionally, the child is placed by the window; the window sill is decorated with a pot plant. In this way, H.-M. Kazakov wanted to show that Apush needs the care and protection of adults. The funds of the State Museum of the Republic of Tatarstan contain two watercolors "Based on Gabdulla Tukay's Stories" [13].

In the 1950s, he executed two watercolors after G. Tukay's works, dedicated to the emancipation of Tatar women. They are stored in the funds of the Fine Arts Museum of the Republic of Tatarstan (paper, watercolor, 27.7x23), the National Museum of the Republic of Tatarstan (paper, watercolor, 27.7x23) [13, pp. 194–195]. The artist works in black watercolor technique. Light contrast becomes his expressive tool. The central image of the watercolors is that of Tatar women who are punished for their desire to get an education. In the first watercolor the girl is being reprimanded for reading books, and in the second one - for taking

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<sup>3</sup> Rembrandt Harmenszoon (1600–1669) is a Dutch artist, master of painting and engraving, one of the most revered artists in the history of fine art.

the liberty of coming to the mekteb for boys. In the first watercolor, the old world is personified by elderly women, in the second one - by the old-fashioned mullah and the crowd. The artist strives to realistically convey the interior of a Tatar house. In the first watercolor, the conflict takes place in the female part of the Tatar house (a sake, a stove, curtains (charshau) and towels). In the second one - in a rural mekteb (a sake, benches, an oven). Here, the artist uses symbolic associations. The girl's desire for education is associated with the sunlight pouring from the uncurtained window and with the white towels, emphasizing the purity of her thoughts. In the second picture, a clean white-washed stove becomes the backdrop for showing the suffering of the oppressed girl.

The artist resorts to the contrast of light and dark colors in order to further contrast the confrontation between the old and the new worlds. The image of the oppressed Tatar girl is compared to a window and white towels.

H.-M. Kazakov turned to the Tukay theme again in the 1970s. Judging by his paintings, the artist began to work closely on the development of the Tukay theme in the 1970s. As the literary critic T. Gilazov notes, the years of 1960–1970 are considered to be the most fruitful period in Tukay Studies in Tatar culture: serious monographs appeared and discussions were held on controversial issues of his work (see also: [14]).

Those who are devoted to Tukay's theme in painting are familiar with H.-M. Kazakov's work "Tukay at the Haymarket" (1975), which immortalizes the opposition of the genius to the inhabitants of the Haymarket who were ready to deceive others and be deceived themselves. H.-M. Kazakov sought to create the image of a poet-educator, so G. Tukay is depicted in a European costume and with a book in his hands. The artist immortalized the poet in motion. The poet's conflict with the old world is indicated by the aggressive gestures of the crowd, showering G. Tukay with curses and threats. H.-M. Kazakov's painting grasps the indifference of the government officials to what is happening - the police who are in no hurry to protect the poet. Apparently, in this work the artist pays tribute to the image of the poet-satirist. After all, in his poem "Sennaya Bazaar, or New Kisekbash", G. Tukay with merciless truthfulness tears off the veil of holiness from the obscurantists and reactionaries of the Haymarket. To clearly show the intensity of passions and to convey the flaring conflict between the old world and the new one, the artist resorts to 'a crowd – a dog – a mongrel' parallel. Standing

out in the crowd is a man with a boy holding a book. The color of the book cover resembles the book that is in the hands of the poet. Under the dog's paws lies a book torn into pieces. That is why concern can be seen on the face of the man in a European suit and a skullcap. Apparently, he wants to explain the rage of the crowd to the child. The chronotope of the picture tells us that this is the place where Kisekbash's head stopped in the famous poem. It allows us to assume that the book that has caused such fierce rejection by the inhabitants of the Sennaya Bazaar is G. Tukay's poem "Sennaya Bazaar, or New Kisekbash".

In the second watercolor, we admire an episode from the poet's fairy tale "Shurale". The artist tries to convey Shurale's emotions when his fingers are caught in the log. The fairy-tale character is depicted like a human, with a long beard. The only difference is the horn on the forehead and the complete absence of clothing. Shurale's amazement is conveyed through his open mouth and his back leaning back. Byltyr is shown as a portly guy in a crimson shirt and a vest with an ax in his hands, reading a moral lesson to the owner of the forest:

"So be it, I'll have a say, brother.

Don't forget this name: I am nicknamed 'The Oneofthepreviousyear'... And now it's time for me to hit the road"spin around.

His calm disposition comes in contrasts to Shurale's howling in pain and the dzhigit's white horse rearing in horror.

The action takes place in the dead of night in the light of the full moon.

The figure of Byltyr corresponds to a flowering tartar bush that grows near the fatal log. This is how Tolstoy's "Hadji Murat" motifs make themselves felt. Apparently, in this way the artist wanted to show a person's place in the forest and to indicate his authorship.

The third painting depicts a bearded Shurale howling in pain who is surrounded by forest spirits. The action takes place in a clearing in the daytime. The artist managed to express his characters' feelings through the contrast of emotions. Shurales make fun of their unlucky brother trying to calm him down:

"Calm down! Shut up, we can't stand your screaming.

Pinched in the past year, why are you crying this year?"

The hair of forest spirits matches the color of the tree trunks. The hooked fingers look like twigs and tree roots. The artist decorated the forest spirits

with oval-shaped beards so that viewers would not confuse them with ancient Greek satyrs.

After the artist's death in 1985, Afelia Kazakova donated his personal belongings, photographs and some of his works to the National Museum.

Among them is the painting "Sick Tukay" (1972–1973) where the great poet is depicted against the backdrop of Lake Kaban. In the background, the artist placed the minaret of the Marjani Mosque. The poet's sickness is conveyed through a gesture (Tukay's hand is pressed to his chest), as well as through the expression of his face exhausted by illness. The natural frame of the painting is gloomy weather, which also creates the impression that the poet is suffering from some illness. There are no childish features in this portrait. The correlation of the tall figure of the poet with the minaret of the mosque, according to the artist's plan, might serve to emphasize the role of Tukay in society.

### Results

Epistolary sources, stored in the archive of the harmonica virtuoso Fayzulla Tuishev, helped us lift the veil of secrecy about the Tatar artist Hadji-Murat Kazakov's work in Kyrgyzstan. We were able to reconstruct not only the facts of the artist's genealogy, but also outline his circle of contacts. The letters are confessional in nature and allow us to characterize the spiritual world of H.-M. Kazakov. His passion for the poetry of A. Pushkin was striking. The artist perceived his stay in Kyrgyzstan as an exile. In his work, H.-M. Kazakov tried to perpetuate the world of the Old Tatar Settlement where he had spent his childhood and youth. In addition to the Tukay theme, a prominent place in his work is occupied by the images of his relatives who turned into the Tatar people's legends during their lifetime.

### Conclusions

H.-M. Kazakov was an undeservedly forgotten Tatar artist whose legacy needs to be studied by the art historians.

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