HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

COMPARATIVE-TYPOLOGICAL STUDY OF EASTERN AND WESTERN LEGENDS AND PROBLEMS OF THEIR TRANSLATION

Zafarbek Abdusamadov
Doctor of Philosophy in Philological science, (PhD)
Uzbekistan State University of World Languages
E-mail: zafarabdusamadov88@gmail.com
ORCID ID: 0009-0004-5214-752X
doi:https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23702452

Abstract. This article examines the legends of Eastern and Western peoples from a comparative-typological perspective and discusses the problems that arise in translating them into other languages. The study clarifies the terminological boundaries of the legend as a genre and analyses the similarities and differences between plots and motifs in the two cultural spheres. Using the motifs of the combat between father and son, the husband's disguised return and trial, the fight with a dragon, and the tragedy of two lovers as examples, the article distinguishes genetic affinity from typological similarity. The second part considers the translation of cultural realia, genre terms, formulaic epithets, verse form and proper names. The conclusion argues that translators of legends must balance domesticating and foreignizing strategies.
Keywords: legend, comparative typology, motif, plot, folklore, translation, realia, domestication, foreignization.

Folklore is one of the oldest layers of humanity's spiritual memory. It preserves a community's way of understanding the world, its values, its historical experience and its aesthetic taste. Legends make up an important part of this creative heritage. A legend draws, on the one hand, on the memory of a historical event or person and, on the other, on imaginative interpretation. History, religion and artistic invention therefore merge in it, which makes it a distinct genre.

The juxtaposition of Eastern and Western legends has been one of the central topics of folklore studies and comparative literary criticism since the nineteenth century. Its relevance today, however, is reinforced by new circumstances. First, globalization has expanded intercultural communication and increased the need to understand another people's texts correctly. Second, the task of presenting samples of Uzbek folklore to the world reader, and of rendering world legends into Uzbek, poses new questions to translation theory. Third, with the spread of digital technologies, automatic translation tools have become widely available, yet they often lose meaning and tone in texts with a rich cultural layer. This situation calls for a reconsideration of the theoretical foundations of legend translation.

The scientific novelty of the study lies in the following. Where the comparison and the translation of legends have usually been studied separately, this article considers them from a single theoretical standpoint, that is, in terms of what opportunities and obstacles typological similarity creates for translation.

The theoretical foundations of comparative folklore studies were laid in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Within historical poetics, Aleksandr Veselovsky advanced the problem of the migration of plots versus their independent origin, and interpreted the motif as the simplest unit of the plot [1]. Vladimir Propp's Morphology of the Folktale described the wondertale as a sequence of

HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

functions and opened the way for a structural approach [2]. His later study linked the roots of the wondertale to ritual and historical thought [3]. Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson created an international type index of folktales, and Thompson separately compiled the Motif-Index of Folk-Literature; the tale-type index was later revised by Hans-Jörg Uther [4, 5, 6]. Although these classifications are oriented primarily toward the folktale, they are also widely used in comparing the motifs of legends.

In the comparison of Eastern and Western literatures, the work of Viktor Zhirmunsky occupies a special place. He divided the similarity of literary phenomena into two types: historical-genetic contact, and typological similarity based on the correspondence of stages of socio-historical development [7]. In his studies of the popular heroic epic he explained the commonality among the epics of different peoples by the same logic [8]. Carl Gustav Jung, through the concept of the archetype, pointed to common foundations in the collective psyche for similar images [9]; Joseph Campbell proposed the "hero's journey" model [10]; and Claude Lévi-Strauss recommended reading myths as systems of binary oppositions [11].

From the standpoint of translation studies, several frameworks serve the analysis of legend translation: Roman Jakobson's classification of the types of translation [12], Eugene Nida's idea of dynamic equivalence [13], Peter Newmark's distinction between semantic and communicative translation [14], and Lawrence Venuti's notions of domestication and foreignization [15]. In Russian translation studies, V. N. Komissarov systematized the linguistic theory of translation [16]. In Uzbek translation studies, G‘ofur Salomov studied questions of the theory and practice of translation in depth and paid particular attention to preserving national distinctiveness in translation [17, 18]. Mona Baker, in In Other Words, examined equivalence at the levels of the word, grammar, text and pragmatics [19], while Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere consolidated the view of translation as a cultural phenomenon [20, 21].

In Uzbek folklore studies, the poetics and generic features of folk epics and legends have been covered in numerous works [22]. Even so, studies that compare Eastern and Western legends typologically and link this comparison to translation problems are relatively few. This gap determines the relevance of the present article.

Translation and comparison both require, first of all, precision in concepts. The term rivoyat derives from the Arabic riwāya, meaning "to narrate, to transmit", and originally denoted a report conveyed orally or in writing. In contemporary Uzbek literary criticism it denotes a narrative tied to a historical person, place or event, which lays claim to credibility but has been enriched with fictional elements. Unlike the folktale, the legend is often received by the listener as something that really happened.

In the Western tradition the closest concepts are expressed by the words legend and saga, in German Sage and Legende, and in Russian predaniye and legenda. The Latin legenda originally meant "things to be read" and in the Middle Ages came to denote the account of a saint's life. The Western legend thus has a more religious and exemplary content, whereas the Uzbek rivoyat embraces religion, history and everyday life alike. The German distinction between Sage and Märchen (the folktale) is seen clearly, for instance, in the collections of the Brothers Grimm, where the Children's and Household Tales and the German Legends were compiled separately.

Here the first danger for the translator arises: terms that look alike on the surface differ in scope. Rendering the Uzbek rivoyat as legend is acceptable in most cases, but the semantic layer associated

HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

with the faithful transmission of a report and with the chain of authorities (who heard it from whom) is lost. Conversely, when the English legend is rendered as rivoyat, the religious tone connected with hagiography may be blurred. It is therefore advisable to clarify the meaning of a genre term through a parenthetical gloss, a short note under the title, or a foreword.

In addition, in Uzbek the boundaries among terms such as afsona, rivoyat, naql, hikoyat and ertak are not rigid, and different authors use them differently. In comparative research, and especially in translation, this requires consistency in the choice of terms.

As Zhirmunsky pointed out, similarity between two literary phenomena can arise in two ways [7]. The first is through borrowing, migration and translation, in which case a plot passes from one culture to another. The second is independent origin owing to a similar social environment and stage of thought. Distinguishing the two is not always easy, because in many plots both processes are intertwined.

One of the best-studied examples of genetic contact is the fate of the Indian Panchatantra. It was translated into Pahlavi, from Pahlavi into Arabic as Kalila and Dimna, and subsequently into several further languages, including Latin and European vernaculars. Likewise, the collection One Thousand and One Nights was introduced to the European reader through Antoine Galland's translation (from 1704); it is widely held among researchers that some tales that later became famous, such as those of Aladdin and Ali Baba, were taken into Galland's edition not from Arabic manuscripts but from an oral source. These examples show that translation itself is a factor that shapes the fate of a legend: in a new cultural environment a text is frequently adapted and rewritten.

Another example well known in comparative studies is the Cinderella plot. Alongside its European versions (Perrault, Grimm), the ninth-century Chinese story of "Ye Xian" is also cited. In such cases the antiquity and ramified character of the plot make it difficult to tie it to a single source.

One of the best examples of typological similarity is the motif of a father and son who fight without recognizing each other. In the Persian-Tajik tradition, the tragic combat of Rustam and Sohrab is described at length in the Shahnameh. In the West Germanic tradition the Hildebrandslied depicts a clash between father and son; in the Irish tradition Cú Chulainn kills his son Connla; and in Russian byliny a similar plot is told in connection with Ilya Muromets. It is hard to explain so wide a geographic spread of this plot by mutual borrowing alone. Rather, the common basis appears to be the conflict, characteristic of societies of the heroic age, between kinship ties and martial honour.

Even within this similarity, however, differences exist. The tragedy of Rustam is a conflict of fate and honour and ends in remorse and a lofty tragic sense; in the Hildebrand song the emphasis falls on honour and duty, and the catastrophe itself is left open. When translating such differences, it is necessary to preserve the tone: turning the mourning spirit of Eastern poetic narrative into the dry chronicle style of Western languages, or the reverse, would be a mistake.

In the Uzbek folk epic Alpomish, the hero returns in disguise after a long captivity, proves his identity by drawing the bow, and rescues his wife Barchin from marriage to another man. This plot is very close to that of Odysseus in Homer's Odyssey: he, too, returns after many years concealed among the local people, wins the bow-drawing contest, and is reunited with the faithful Penelope. Folklorists find this motif in a great many parts of the world. There is no reliable evidence of direct borrowing between Alpomish and the Odyssey, and so it is customary to explain the phenomenon as typological similarity.

HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

In the details, however, the differences are large. In Alpomish the hero's return is saturated with relations between the Qo‘ng‘irot clan and the Kalmyk land, with the tradition of the baxshi singing the epic, with heroic trials, and with a great many realia connected with horses. This bears directly on the problems discussed in the third section.

Rustam's passage through his "seven trials", Beowulf's fight with Grendel and the dragon, and Siegfried's struggle with Fafnir show how widespread the motif of combat with a dragon or monster is in heroic legends. Campbell generalized such trials in the model of the "hero's journey" [10]. In Uzbek epic tradition, too, encounters with devs, dragons and magical obstacles are frequent. Here again there is a difference: in the Western European tradition the monster is often an external force that disturbs the peace of the community, whereas in the Eastern tradition it is in many cases interpreted as a trial, an obstacle on the road, or an instrument of divine will. Rendering the words ajdar or dev mechanically as dragon or demon therefore leads to a shift in meaning: the dev of Uzbek and Persian culture does not coincide with the "devil" of the Christian West, and the dragon differs from the ajdar of East Asia, where it is a symbol of good fortune.

The tragedy of love in Eastern epics such as Layli and Majnun, Farhod and Shirin and Tohir and Zuhra is frequently compared with the stories of Tristan and Isolde and of Romeo and Juliet in the West. What they have in common is that love collides with the barriers of society and family and ends in tragedy. The difference lies in the interpretation of love: in the Eastern Sufi tradition, especially in the poems of Navoi and Nizami, love often acquires symbolic meaning as a path leading to divine truth, whereas in Western chivalric literature it is illuminated more as a conflict between personal feeling and collective norms. This difference between the two interpretations bears directly on translation, because concepts such as ishq, oshiq, hijron and visol are not fully covered by the English words love, lover, separation and union.

The comparative analysis above shows that similarity at the level of plot facilitates translation, whereas differences in the cultural layer create difficulty. The translator often has to choose between two paths: adapting the text to the receiving culture (in Venuti's terms, domestication), or preserving the distinctiveness of the original and bringing the reader into an unfamiliar world (foreignization) [15]. In the translation of legends this choice is especially noticeable in the following areas.

By realia we mean words that belong to the life, customs, clothing, place names and social structure of a particular people and have no exact equivalent in other languages. In Uzbek legends, words such as alp, baxshi, bek, to‘y, dutor, qo‘ng‘irot, sallot and ko‘pkari are closely tied to context. In Western legends, words such as knight, vassal, tourney, skald and thane perform the same function. The following methods are used in translating them:

- transliteration (keeping the word in its original form, e.g. baxshi, skald): preserves the national spirit but demands additional knowledge from the reader;
- calque and descriptive translation (rendering baxshi as "epic singer-performer"): increases comprehensibility but reduces concision;
- analogical substitution (rendering baxshi as minstrel or bard): gives the reader a familiar image, but the risk of semantic shift is great, since the baxshi is a performer of the epic tradition whose art is ritual and, at times, retains traces of shamanism;
- commentary (a glossary, a footnote, or an explanation in the foreword): convenient for scholarly editions, though it may break the flow of the text in literary reading.

HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

The choice among these methods depends on the purpose of the translation: transliteration with commentary suits a scholarly edition, while a descriptive or gently adapted variant is preferable in a literary translation intended for a wide readership. This view agrees with the principle of dynamic equivalence advanced by Nida: a translation should affect its recipient in a way close to that in which the original affected its own readers [13].

Proper names appear simple in translation but are in fact complex. First, the same name is written differently in different languages: Rustam / Rostam, Suhrob / Sohrab, Alpomish / Алпамыш / Alpamysh. Transcription systems (Cyrillic, Latin, English, French traditions) are often applied inconsistently, which causes confusion in searches, indexes and scholarly references. Second, many names are meaningful and connected with the idea of the legend. For example, the names Alpomish, Barchin, Qorajon and Ultontoz evoke additional associations in the Uzbek listener, and in translation these associations are lost. It is therefore advisable to choose a consistent transcription rule and never to alter it within the text, and to give meaningful names with a brief explanatory note at their first occurrence.

Oral epic tradition is characterized by constant epithets, repeated phrases and formulas. The research of Milman Parry and Albert Lord showed that the "formula" in Homeric poetry is a device that facilitates performance [23]; this view also applies to Uzbek and Turkic epic singing. In Uzbek epics, images such as a horse "like a steed", eyes "like fire", or "a seven-year-old boy like a man of a thousand years" recur. If the translator trims such repetition as "superfluous", the rhythm and the spirit of oral performance are lost; if the repetition is retained in full, it may seem tedious to a reader accustomed to written texts. The optimal solution is to preserve formulas, to render them as rhythmically alive as possible, and to translate the same formula in the same way each time. Here consistency becomes the most important indicator of equivalence [19].

Uzbek folk epics feature an alternation of verse and prose, a distinctive rhyming of syllabic (barmoq) metre, and a stanzaic structure. In Western legends, alliterative (in Old Germanic poetry), syllabic or tonic metres were widely used. It is often impossible to transfer the form completely: rendering verse into prose loses musicality, while forcing the metre damages the meaning. Salomov named the unity of content and form as the main requirement of literary translation [17], and Jakobson described the translation of poetry, in a certain sense, as "creative transposition" [12]. This position is appropriate for the translation of legends: the translator should aim not to copy the form entirely but to recreate its aesthetic function by means of the receiving language's own resources.

Legends are often connected with religious or mythological notions: ideas about prophets, saints, pirs, jinn, fairies, devs and tigers. Although the Islamic East and the Christian West have corresponding words, they are not identical theologically. For example, rendering pir as saint and avliyo as holy man leaves the religious meaning imprecise, and translating jin as demon erases the difference in mythological conceptions. In such cases it is preferable for the translator to keep the religious term itself and, where necessary, to explain it.

On the basis of the problems discussed above, the following general principles may be proposed for the translation of legends.

First principle: determine the generic context in advance. Before beginning the translation, it is necessary to establish which genre the text belongs to (legend, afsona, epic, hikoyat) and to identify the intended readership. Terms and style are chosen on this basis.

HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

Second principle: consistency. Rendering the same realia, name or formula in the same way throughout the text is one of the criteria of translation quality. In large texts this rule is secured by compiling a glossary.

Third principle: a mixed strategy. Pure domestication loses the cultural face of the original, while pure foreignization becomes an obstacle for the reader. It is therefore effective to keep the main text fluent in the receiving language, to preserve closeness to the original at culturally decisive points (names, rituals, formulas), and to support the reader with commentary elsewhere. The balance between semantic and communicative translation described by Newmark is consistent with this view [14].

Fourth principle: use of comparative knowledge. If the translator knows a parallel to a motif of the original in another culture, indicating this parallel in a note or foreword can give the reader a familiar point of orientation. For example, in a translation of Alpomish, a reference to the Odysseus plot helps the Western reader to understand the motif, but this reference must not displace the original meaning of the text.

Fifth principle: caution in the use of machine translation. Although neural translation tools give good results at the level of the word and the sentence, they often lose cultural allusions, formulas and tone in legends. Such tools should therefore be used only for an initial draft, and the final text should be edited by a specialist.

The table below summarizes the main types of problems and the recommended solutions.

Type of problem	Example	Risk	Recommended solution
Genre term	rivoyat ↔ legend	Mismatch of semantic scope	Short note, consistent term
Realia	baxshi, alp ↔ bard, knight	False analogy	Transliteration + note
Proper name	Rustam / Rostam	Variation in spelling	Single rule, glossary
Formula	constant epithet	Loss of rhythm and spirit of performance	Consistent preservation
Verse form	syllabic metre ↔ alliteration	Loss of musicality	Functional equivalent
Religious-mythological term	jin, pir ↔ demon, saint	Theological shift	Retain the term, add a note

The study has shown that Eastern and Western legends share broad similarity at the level of plot and motif, but this similarity is often superficial. The motifs of combat between father and son, the returning husband and his trial, the fight with the dragon, and the tragedy of two lovers occur in both cultural spheres, yet their ideological foundations, ritual explanations and artistic interpretations differ. It would therefore be a methodological error either to treat typological similarity as genetic affinity or to ignore the differences.

From the standpoint of translation, two conclusions follow. First, the commonality of motifs makes translation easier: the reader perceives the plot line as a familiar frame. Second, this very familiarity is dangerous: translator and reader may mechanically transfer the concepts of one culture onto another and fail to notice a real difference. For example, interpreting dev as "devil", baxshi as

HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

"minstrel" and ishq as "love" is familiar but imprecise. The comparative approach is thus for the translator not only an auxiliary tool but also a cautionary criterion.

In addition, existing studies are devoted mainly to the epic or the folktale, whereas the legend itself, as a genre with indistinct boundaries, has been studied less. In future work, promising directions include comparing translations of a given collection of legends into several languages, evaluating translators' decisions through quantitative-qualitative analysis, and corpus-based checking of terminological differences in English and Russian editions of Uzbek legends.

In summary, the article has examined the comparative-typological study of Eastern and Western legends and the problems of translating them. The results may be summarized as follows:

1. The legend as a genre is close in terminology in the Uzbek and Western traditions, but differs in scope and tone; consistency and commentary are therefore needed when translating genre terms.
2. Motifs such as combat between father and son, the returning husband and his trial, the fight with the dragon, and the tragedy of love are widespread in Eastern and Western legends; explaining them on the basis of typological similarity in Zhirmunsky's sense is in many cases correct, while genetic affinity requires separate evidence.
3. The main difficulties in translation are connected with cultural realia, proper names, formulaic expressions, verse form and religious-mythological terms.
4. An effective solution is a mixed strategy combining domestication and foreignization, a consistent glossary, commentary where necessary, and attention to the comparative context.
5. Machine translation can be only an auxiliary tool for legends; the final quality depends on the knowledge and taste of the translator and the specialist.

The results of the study may be used in courses on comparative folklore studies, translation studies and the theory of literary relations, as well as in preparing practical manuals for translators.

REFERENCES

1. Веселовский А. Н. Историческая поэтика [Historical Poetics]. — М.: Высшая школа, 1989. (In Russian)
2. Пропп В. Я. Морфология сказки [Morphology of the Folktale]. — Л.: Academia, 1928. (In Russian)
3. Пропп В. Я. Исторические корни волшебной сказки [The Historical Roots of the Wondertale]. — Л.: Изд-во ЛГУ, 1946. (In Russian)
4. Aarne A., Thompson S. The Types of the Folktale: A Classification and Bibliography. — Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1961.
5. Thompson S. Motif-Index of Folk-Literature. 6 vols. — Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1955–1958.
6. Uther H.-J. The Types of International Folktales: A Classification and Bibliography. 3 vols. — Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 2004.
7. Жирмунский В. М. Сравнительное литературоведение: Восток и Запад [Comparative Literary Studies: East and West]. — Л.: Наука, 1979. (In Russian)
8. Жирмунский В. М. Народный героический эпос. Сравнительно-исторические очерки [The Popular Heroic Epic: Comparative-Historical Essays]. — М.–Л.: Гослитиздат, 1962. (In Russian)
9. Jung C. G. The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious. — London: Routledge, 1959.
10. Campbell J. The Hero with a Thousand Faces. — New York: Pantheon Books, 1949.

HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

11. Lévi-Strauss C. Structural Anthropology. — New York: Basic Books, 1963.
12. Jakobson R. On Linguistic Aspects of Translation // On Translation / Ed. R. A. Brower. — Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959. — P. 232–239.
13. Nida E. A. Toward a Science of Translating. — Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1964.
14. Newmark P. A Textbook of Translation. — New York: Prentice Hall, 1988.
15. Venuti L. The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation. — London; New York: Routledge, 1995.
16. Комиссаров В. Н. Теория перевода (лингвистические аспекты) [Theory of Translation: Linguistic Aspects]. — М.: Высшая школа, 1990. (In Russian)
17. Salomov G‘. Tarjima nazariyasiga kirish [Introduction to Translation Theory]. — Toshkent: O‘qituvchi, 1978. (In Uzbek)
18. Salomov G‘. Til va tarjima [Language and Translation]. — Toshkent: Fan, 1966. (In Uzbek)
19. Baker M. In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation. — London; New York: Routledge, 1992.
20. Bassnett S. Translation Studies. — London: Methuen, 1980.
21. Lefevere A. Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame. — London; New York: Routledge, 1992.
22. Imomov K., Mirzayev T., Sarimsoqov B., Safarov O. O‘zbek xalq ijodi [Uzbek Folk Art]. — Toshkent: O‘qituvchi, 1990. (In Uzbek)
23. Lord A. B. The Singer of Tales. — Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960.
24. Firdavsiy A. Shohnoma [Shahnameh]. — Toshkent: [publisher, year — specify the edition used]. (In Uzbek)
25. Alpomish: O‘zbek xalq dostoni [Alpomish: An Uzbek Folk Epic]. — Toshkent: [publisher, year — specify the edition used]. (In Uzbek)