

Alpamys Batyr and Odysseus: Fidelity or Death?

WLL 499: Capstone Project

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Abstract

This capstone project aims to find the main similar themes raised in the stories “Alpamys” and “Odysseus” and will try to find why these topics, particularly the issues of fidelity were discussed and what is the role of it in each story. The reason for the comparison of these two stories is in the similarity of the topics raised in the text. Both, the story of “Alpamys” and the story of Odysseus present the issues of loyalty and homecoming. Before starting comparison, it was crucial to determine the origin of each story and to identify if they influenced each other. The finds showed that the story of “Odysseus” appeared much before the “Alpamys”, in the 8th century in an isolated island, while “Alpamys” takes its origin from the story of “Bamsi Beyrek” that emerged after 10th century on the Altay mountains. Since both stories have different places and dates of origin, the possibility of their contact and impact on each other is excluded. The analysis of the story shows that fidelity that main heroes kept toward their spouses, toward their friends and land assisted them to survive and return to home, despite the struggles and obstacles they faced on their way. Since Penelope stayed loyal to Odysseus until the end, she avoided marriage to one of the suitors, as well as Gulbarshyn that kept her fidelity to Alpamys. And Odysseus and Alpamys could return home because they were Fidel to their land and to their families since otherwise, Odysseus would live in captivation by Calypso, while Alpamys under captivation of Taycha-Khan.

Table on content

| | |
|---|----|
| <i>Introduction</i> | 3 |
| <i>Brief synopsis of “Alpamys”</i> | 4 |
| <i>Brief synopsis of “Odysseus”</i> | 5 |
| <i>What is epos?</i> | 7 |
| <i>Origin of “Alpamys” and “Odysseus”</i> | 7 |
| Odysseus | 8 |
| Alpamys | 9 |
| <i>Fidelity of Women</i> | 15 |
| Penelope’s loyalty | 15 |
| Gulbarshyn’s loyalty | 18 |
| <i>Fidelity of Men</i> | 20 |
| Odysseus | 20 |
| Alpamys | 22 |
| <i>Conclusion</i> | 22 |

Introduction

This capstone project will stop on the analysis of the epic stories, primarily on the analysis of Kazakh epic story “The story of Alpamys” and Greek epic story “The Odyssey” recorded by by Homer. Before making a point of analysis, the project will analyze on the determination of the meaning of Epic story. This capstone project will stop on the comparison and analysis of two epic stories from two different cultures, *Odyssey* and *Alpamys Batyr*. Both the *Odyssey* and the story of *Alpamys Batyr* are two incredible stories written long ago that tell about brave ruler that were captivated by enemies. Both *Alpamys* and *Odysseus* do not lose their hope for returning home, while their wives keep their fidelity years. These two epics share many of the same concepts. Such as the scene of homecoming, the issue of mother-son-father relationship, household, and the importance of family and home. In both epics these themes are illustrated. The main aim of comparison of these stories is to identify what cause both heroes to return and protect their homes. Moreover, each of the stories illustrates the fidelity between spouses, and in particular the fidelity of Penelope to *Odysseus*, *Odyssey* to Penelope, *Gulbarshyn* to *Alpamys*, and *Alpamys* to *Gulbarshyn*. Being loyal to the one who loves and waits for you is much important and can save the one’s life, because fidelity is the basis for the establishment of close relationship with others.

The project will mainly stop on the Kazakh version of *Alpamys batyr* written by famous USSR folklorist and ethnographer Abubakir Divayev and published in 1922 in Tashkent (*Babalar Sozi*, 360). Although, his version is not the first written version of *Alpamys*, his version seems to be the most truthful. According to the *Babalar sozi*, Divayev collected information about epic story from various Kazakh writers and ethnographers. Divayev worked with prominent Kazakh writers, poets and intellectuals such as Akhmet Baitursynov, Yerkinbek Akhynbekov, Zhiyemurat Bekhmuhammedov and etc. (Khosan, 2006). Moreover, Divayev have already worked with Kazakh Epic stories such as “Shora

Batyr”, “Beket Batyr” and etc. before publishment of “Alpamys Batyr”(ibid.). In 1916 in cooperation with Kazakh poet and literary scholar Y. Akhynbekov, A. Divayev translated and published the manuscript of Akhynbekov “Alty Zhasar Alpamys” in “Turkestanskije Vedomosti” newspaper (ibid.). His translation was called “Velikan Alpamys” and became prominent not only on the Kazakh land but on the whole Central Asia. His other works on Alasha Khan, Assan Khaigy and Amir Temir, show that his work on Alpamys Batyr was based on the facts and long term research (ibid.).

Brief synopsis of “Alpamys”

The story about Alpamys starts with childless Baysary and Bayburi, close friends from Kungirat tribe that live in Zhideli Baysyn. They ask from God for child, and later Baysary became father of girl Gulbarshyn and Bayburi became father of boy Alpamys. Close friend decided to make matchmaking between their children, and thus, Gulbarshyn became Alpamys bride already in the cradle. However, after the conflict with Bayburi on horse riding, Baysary decided to leave the tribe and join to Kalmaks under the guidance of Taycha Khan. After several years, Baysary’s daughter Gulbarshyn grew and became beautiful girl. Everyone in Kalmak land wanted to marry her, but she did not want to marry any of the men in this tribe, hence announced competition for her love, and secretly invited her bride Alpamys too. When Alpamys arrived he won competition and married to Gulbarshyn, however, Baysary decided not to return to home and stay with Kipchaks. This is the end of part I.

Part II starts with the news that Baysary, Gulbarshin’s father faced discrimination from Taycha khan and was suffering from his reign. Alpamys made decision to save his father in law and take him back into Zhidely Baysyn. When Alpamys reaches Kalmyk land he got into trap and captivated by Taycha Khans people. Taycha Khans people place

Alpamys in Zindan- prison under land, where he stayed for 7 years. Alpamys frees with the help of Taycha Khans daughter Karakozayim, who falls in love with Alpamys. Although she was beautiful, Alpamys decided to leave her and return to his wife and family in Zhidely Baisyn. When he secretly enters ho his homeland he discovered that his brother Ultan oppressed his family, privatized Bayburi's cattle and announced himself as a ruler of Kungirat tribe. The ruler oppressed Alpamys's son Zhadiger and tortured Alpamys's wife. Ultan also wanted to marry Barchin, without her agreement and on the day when Alpamys arrived made wedding with his brother's wife. He shoots from his anchor and people recognize Alpamys in the stranger who shooted. He fights with his brother and his people, and exempts Kungrat tribe from evil Ultan. The story ends with the victory of Alpamys and with happy Kungrat tribe. (Khosan 2011)

Brief synopsis of "Odysseus"

The story of Odysseus starts in the city Ithaca, where Odysseus wife Penelope is sad about her husband's absence for 20 years. Meanwhile almost 1000 came to Ithaca to marry Penelope, because of Odysseus absence. In order to play for the time Penelope says that she cannot marry any of the suitors until she will not finish weave the shroud for Odysseus father Laertes. At the same time Gods decide to intervene and help Odysseus to get home. At that time Odysseus was in the Island Ogygia captivated by Calypso. Hermes asks Calypso to help Odysseus to get home and she assists Odysseus to build a ship. However, during his journey the storm broke his ship and he wakes up naked in the island Scheria, where he meets Nausicaa that further will help him. Odysseus did not reveal his identity and Nausicaa advises him to ask for help from her parents, Queen and King. The latter decide to help Odysseus and on the day before his arrival make very big fete, where Odysseus accidentally reveals his identity. Queen and King refuse to help Odysseus until he will not tell all his journey during

all these years. It comes out that after Trojan war, which lasted for 10 years, he was trying to get home. However, during his journey he met a lot of troubles, in terms of his crew's thirst for blood, laziness and loss of memory because of opium like lotuses, being captivated by Polyphemus, temptation with Circe, visit to the Land of the Dead, burial of his crew and captivation by Calypso. After King and Queen of Scheria finished listening to the Odysseus story they decided to help him. However, because of Poseidon's anger on Odysseus because he injured his son Polyphemus, he was delivered to Ithaca by Athena. In Ithaca he was transformed to a beggar, where he tested fidelity of his friend and swineherd Eumaeus along with fidelity of his wife Penelope. Odysseus as a beggar tells to the suitors that soon Odysseus will return and most of the suitors left the Ithaca, however, other half still waits for Penelope's answer. At the end Odysseus together with his son fights with the suitors and kill them. The story ends at the Land of Dead where Hermes takes the souls of all killed suitors.

The story of Odysseus differs from the story of Alkamys by the presence of more mythical factors. In Odysseus Gods can interact with people, can talk to them, help them and even have romantic relationships, as it was with Calypso and Odysseus. Moreover, in Odysseus many mythical transformation, such as Athena turns to Telemachus, or to eagle, or Odysseus turns to beggar, then to young Odysseus and so on. In Alkamys, the only mythical issue is that Alkamys grew very fast and had enormous power and strength, that in real life does not exist. Nevertheless, in comparison with Odysseus, there are less scenes with mythical presence in Alkamys.

Although both stories differ with the presence of mysticism and somehow differ in plots, both stories arise the same themes, such as theme of fidelity, homecoming, deception and devotion. This capstone project will mainly stop on the theme of fidelity and how the

theme is arised in each story and what it represents in each story. But before, let's determine what is epic poem and how it should be analysed.

What is epos?

Epic as a genre presents the long story that tells about extraordinary feats of the heroes (Yoshida, 2019). The literary scholar Michael Meyer in his book *The Bedford Introduction to Literature* stated that epic story or epic poem is narrative story that include extraordinary events and people with superhuman power that fight for the establishment of moral values (2016). Epic poems are found to be first distributed orally and then recorded on the paper. The first and most prominent epic stories are Iliad and Odyssey that later were recorded by Homer (Yoshida, 2019). The epic poems appeared in order to transmit moral and national values from one generation to another through oral traditions (ibid.). These poems are usually narration of most heroic deeds that helped to preserve land, nation, family and etc.

Origin of “Alpamys” and “Odysseus”

The tale of Alpamys is very popular among the Turkic nations and cultures, including the Kazakh nation (Yeleukulova, Yeleukulova, 2016). The evidence of the wide distribution of the story of Alpamys could be the shared national values among these cultures, such as the significance of home and family. It also had affected the development of further epic tales in terms of spiritual heritage (Khozhniyazov, 2012). Since the tale of Alpamys had an impact on the development of folklore of the Turkic nations, as well as on the Kazakh nation, I decided to analyze how and in what way it affected (ibid.). This research project will aim to find what is the role of the home, family, and nationalism in the story of Alpamys through the analysis of both primary and secondary sources, and through the comparison with Homer’s Odyssey will focus to find how certain values, such as fidelity are common for both stories. The

reasons why I have chosen these two tales for the comparison are the similarity of the plots of both stories, as well as the similar role of the home and family for the main heroes. However, before making the comparison of the two epic tales, first, we should make an analysis of the story of Alpamys and find the historical exposition of the story, such as when, how and who wrote it. In the case with the Odyssey, we have some profound information and plenty of different research regarding its exposition, although the tale of Alpamys demands further investigation at this point. To make a clear and high-quality comparison between the story of Alpamys and Odyssey I will find when and why was Alpamys written and identify the role of this story in the legacy of the Kazakh culture first, and then contrast both stories to find the correspondence between the position of home and family for the both heroes.

Odysseus

Through the identification of the date of origin of Alpamys, it is possible to learn whether the story of “Odysseus” had impacted on the emergence of “Alpamys” or do the epic stories have common ancestors. Before making comparison between two stories it is significant to determine, whether each of them had impacted on the formulation of other. First step in this would be to find the dates and places of origin of each story. In consonance with Peter Jones, the story of “Odyssey” is a sequel for “Iliad” (2003). “Odysseus”, similarly to its ancestor “Iliad” and to “Alpamys” was oral tradition first (Jones, 2003; Zhirmunsky, 1962). Initially, “Odysseus” appeared in poetic form approximately at the end of 8th BC in the place called Ionia, which is an isolated island near Anatolia (Jones, 2003). Thus, it appeared nearly 2900 years ago in the isolated place, hence its influence on other epic stories is debatable.

Alpamys

In contrast to “Odysseus”, the origin date of the “Alpamys” is controversial issue. Soviet ethnographer and religious scholar Vladimir Basilov dates it to the events after the great flood, which according to Indian “Rigveda” happened 3500 years ago, while Zhirmunsky and Orynbay relate the emergence of the Alpamys to the emergence of the Turkic Khaganate (Basilov, 2008; Zhirmunsky, 1960; Orynbay, 2011). Vladimir Basilov explains his theory about emergence of Alpamys by the anthropological analysis of the names of Alpamys and Gulbarshyn. The Soviet scholar shows that Alpamys comes from the Bamsi Beyrek, and Bamsi Beyrek comes from the story of “Manas and Banu”- first people who lived on the Earth after the flood. According to his research on the Korkyt’s book, the story of Bamsi Beyrek of the “Book of Dede Korkut”. The name of the main hero in Bamsi Beyrek is Ayp-Manas, which sounds like Alpamys. Vladimir Basilov’s analysis could be based on the origin Alpamys as a paronym to Ayp Manas, but later was changed to Alpamys. In addition, Vladimir Basilov makes the analysis of the wife's names Gulbarshun and Banu Sheshek in the story of Alpamys and Bamsi Beyrek, respectively. It seems that he made a linguistic analysis of the names since the prefix “Gul” in Gulbarshyn and “Sheshek” in Banu Sheshek both mean “flower” in the dictionary of many Turkic languages, such as Kazakh and Uzbek. In similar manner, Vladimir Basilov explained that name Ayp-Manas comes from name Manas, while name Banu Sheshek, come from the name Manu, the letter M in Manu was later changed to the letter B. Basilov refers name Alpamys to the name of the first man on the Earth after the great flood Manas. According to Indian book “Rigveda” first people on the earth was Manu and Manas, and the book states that they appeared after great flood (Muir 1863). The people that currently live on the Earth are descendants of Manu and Manas. The book “Rigveda” takes its origin 3500 years ago, which proves that story of Manas and

Manu is 3500 years old. However, there is doubt about the presence of Indo Aryans on the territory of Central Asia, since according to Rigveda first people initially appeared in the territory of modern India. Basilov states that Indo Aryans arrived on the territory of Kazakhstan and other Central Asian countries in 2000 years before Christ (2008). He supports his argument with the old ship that was left on the south of Kazakhstan in Kazygurt region. Vladimir Vasilov proposes that this ship came to the land of Kazakhstan during Noah's great flood, and when Indo Aryans arrived to the Kazakh land they adopted the story of Noah's great flood as their flood in the Rigveda and started to distribute the story of Manas and Manu, that later became the basis for the "Bams Beirek". Moreover, Viktor Zhirmunsky records that in Uzbek, Kazakh and Karakalpak versions of "Alpamys", the main hero came from the place *Zhidely Baisyn*. This place was located near the city Bukhara in the modern territory of Uzbekistan (Kononov, Meletinsky 1974). Bukhara was located near the South Kazakhstan, and the origin of Alpamys in this place may be another evidence for that Indo Aryans distributed the story of Manas and Manu because of the ship in the place "Keme Kalgan" in the Kazygurt region of the south Kazakhstan. Thus, the Soviet ethnographer Vladimir Basilov refers to Gulbarshyn and Alpamys to the heroes of Indo-Iranian story Manas and Manu which appeared 3500 years before. The anthropological age of Alpamys is more than 3000 years, nevertheless, there is cultural age too, which according to many scholars refers to the period of the emergence of the medieval states at the territory of Central Asia.

The typological analysis of the story of Alpamys shows that the story was written during the formation of the Turkic Khaganate at the Altay region then distributed to the other regions of Central Asia. Although Vladimir Basilov explained the emergence of the story of Alpamys with the reference to the Dede Korkut's book "Bams Beirek" and Indo-Iranian's book "Rigveda", his explanation is quite entangled, because of the age of story of Manas and

Manu. Moreover, Vladimir Basilov did not explained in details how indo aryans came to Kazakh Land and did not explained after which flood Manas and Manu appeared. In order to find the emergence of the Alpamys, it would be more logical to look through the theory that was proposed by Kazakh scholars. Kazakhstani scholars P. Bisenbayev and E. Karbozov have made typological analysis on the same story as Basilov and came up with the conclusion that the story of “Bamsi Beyrek” is one of the oldest versions of the story of Alpamys (2016). As explained by scholars, the synopsis of “Alpamys” and “Bams Beirek” is similar and have many motives in common. The latter include the mythical birth of the main heroes, being captivated by the enemies, presence on the marriage of the wife and fighting for their own land. Moreover, in the “Bamsi Beyrek” Bamsi’s bride Banu Sheshek requires from him to participate in her sport competitions before telling him that she is his bride. Banu Sheshek wanted to test the abilities of her future husband, hence Bamsy had to participate in the competition of archery, horse riding, fighting and various sport games competition (Beisenbayev, Karbozov 2016). In the story of *Alpamys*, the main hero also had to participate in his bride’s competitions, which also included archery and fighting. However, if Banu Sheshek asked Bamsi to participate in her competitions just to check the skills of her groom, Gulbarshyn declared her competition, because she did not want to marry to any of Taycha-Khans people and by announcement of competition she played for time.

Through the analysis of motives and names, Beisenbayev and Karbozov refer the story of Alpamys as a slightly modified and the new version of the story described in the “Book of Dede Korkut”. The story of “Bams Beyrek” was distributed by Oghuz tribes in VII-X centuries among the regions of the Syrdarya river (Beisenbayev, Karbozov 2016). Later the names of the heroes were modified, such as Ayp-Manas to Alpamys and Banu Sheshek to Gulbarshyn. The Oghuz tribes lived XVII near the Aral lake report that already in that time they had depicted the story of Barshyn (Gulbarshyn) and Alpamys as a *shezhire*. Viktor

Zhirmunsky also reported that story “Alyp Manas” already existed in VI-VIII centuries on the territory of Altay Mountains (Urmanche 2015). Scholar claims that “Alyp Manas” emerged during the period of Turkic tribes expansion and common unity. Only in IX-X centuries the story was got but Oguz tribes, as was reported by Beisenbayev and Karbozov. From Oghuz tribes the story about Alyp Manas were extended to the Kazakh, Bashkir Lands and Volga through the Kupchak's movements to the west in XII - XII centuries (ibid.). Although, Zhirmunsky was not sure if the stories of “Alpamys” and “Alyp Manas” represent the same concept and “Alpamys” comes from the second one, he indicated that both stories have common motives and common characters, as in both stories the main hero’s enemy was the old ruler from another tribe. This story was prominent in many genetically close and related tribes, including Oghuz, Kypchaks, but with the time each tribe added its specific motives and traditions, such as matchmaking of children (Urmanche 2015). This tells us that the story of Alyp-Manas turned into the story of Alpamys after the Xth century and after 700 years people were familiar only with Alpamys and Gulbarshyn.

Victor Zhirmunsky dates the tale of Alpamys to the genesis of the Turkic tribes near the Altay mountains (1962). He started to explore the oral epic traditions of Central Asia in the midst of 20th century, when he was evacuated to the Central Asia (Kononov, Meletinsky 1974). Along with Kazakh version of “Alpamys”, scholar also worked on its Uzbek, Bashkir and Karakalpak version (Urmanche 2015). As believed by Arromanche (2015), Viktor Zhirmunsky stated that the story “Alyp Manas” already existed in Zhirmunsky states that in Uzbek, Kazakh and Karakalpak versions Alpamys came from the same tribe Kungirat. This place was located near the city Bukhara Kungirat tribe, although each version presents own culture and identity. Thus, Viktor Zhirmunsky points out that tribe Kungirat is common for all three cultures. But how is that possible, that Uzbeks, Kazakhs and Karakalpaks have the common tribe? One of the explanations could be that all three nations take origin from

Kungirat tribe. As determined by Zhirmunsky in the book *Tuyrskiy Geroicheskiy Epos* under edition of Kononov and Meletinsky (1974), first mention about Kungrat tribe appeared on the territory of Central Asia during Mongol expansion in the 13th century. From that period the tribe Kungirat played crucial role in the history of the Central Asian tribes, especially it played significant role in the formation of Golden Horde (Kononov, Meletinsky 1974). Therefore, it can be concluded that partially, Kungirat tribe have played role in the formation of Kazakhs, Uzbeks and Karakalpaks, since these nations did not exist during period of Golden Horde. Nevertheless, based on the Zhirmunskiy's research it is possible to assume that propagation of "Alpamys" among the Central Asia is tightly connected to the migration of Kongirat tribe among the territory of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. The distribution of the story on the territory of Kazakhstan and Central Asia happened with the migration of these Turkic tribes on the territory of Central Asia. It should also consider that the story of Alpamys is present not only in the culture of Kazakh nation, but that nations such as Tatar, Bashkir and Uzbek also have this story in their culture (Bisenbayev; Karbozov 2016 & Paksoy 1989). Zhirmunsky stated that this is another evidence that the story of Alpamys comes from the Turkic tribes of Altay. To support his argument, he gave an example from the plot when Barshin (Gulbarshin) announces that only the winner of her competition for the strength and sharpshooting will marry her (1962). According to Viktor Zhirmunsky, such competitions for women were inherent for Altaic tribes hence we can logically assume that the tale of Alpamys took his origin in the Altai mountains and then with the migration of tribes spreads on the territory of Central Asia. In Uzbek and Karakalpak versions of the same story, marriage competition happens between Alpamys and Barchin (Kononov, Meletinsky 1974). There is also a hypothesis that Alpamys is a representation of Bumyn kagan who unified the Altaic Turkic tribes and formed Turkic Khaganate in the middle of the VIth century (Orynbay 2011). The onomastic analysis of Alpamys (Alyp-Manas) and Bumyn

(Bodzhman) made by Kazakh scholar Otarbay shows that the name Bumyn comes from the Bodzhman, but later, because of linguistic landscape the sound “DZH” was lost and Bodzhman (Боджман) turned to Boman (Боман) which later started to sound as Bumyn (Бумын) (2016). The name Bodzhman could be also pronounced as Manbodzh, and this version Manbodzh comes from Manas, the second part of the name Ayp-Manas. Orynbay also draws the parallel between Baybori, the father of Alpamys and Ashina, who was the ancestor of Bumyn (Bichurin 1998). The word “Ashina” comes from Mongolian “chono” which translates as wolf. In a similar way, the “bori” from the name “Baybori” translates a wolf in Kazakh (Otarbay 2011). Thus, we see the correlation between Manas with Manbodzh and Ashina and Baybori, hence the hypothesis that the story of Alpamys is the story Bumyn kagan could be true. Despite that the story of Alpamys has several ages, the main date of origin comes to the emergence of the Turkic tribes on the territory of Kazakhstan which is dated to VI-X centuries. Within a few centuries, the story of Alpamys became prominent among many cultures.

Though the analysis of the origin of both stories it was identified that “Alpamys” and “Odysseus” were formed at different time and different place hence they might not have impact on each other. There is a doubt that the story of Odysseus could affect on the development of the “Alpamys”, since the latter emerged later. Based on anthropological analysis of Alpamys described above, it seems that the story of Alpamys appeared long after “Odysseus”, almost for a millenium. Although, Vladimir Basilov claims that “Alpamys” took its origin from Manas and Manu, there is still lack of the evidence that could prove the latter. On the other hand, scholars Viktor Zhirmunsky (1962), Beisenbaev (2016), Khozhniyazov (2012), Karbozov (2016), and Paksoy (1989) have proved that emergence of “Alpamys” is closely connected to the emergence of Turkic tribes on the territory of Central Asia. While Zhirmunsky (1962) states that the story first appeared in the region of Altay mountains,

others claim that Alpamys was originated in the region of South Kazakhstan and North Uzbekistan. Nevertheless, the issues of impact of “Odysseus” on formation of “Alpamys” is exceptionable, since conforming to Jones (2003), the story of Odysseus was formulated in isolated island near Anatolia. Both, South parts of Kazakhstan and Altay mountains are far away from Anatolia, hence it is questionable whether “Alpamys” was influenced by “Odysseus”. Moreover, each story present two absolutely different cultures, were emergent on different continent hence the issue of their contact is controversial.

Fidelity of Women

The reason why I have decided to compare the story of Alpamys and Homer’s Odysseus lies in the similarity of plots and characters’ personalities. To understand the latter, this capstone project will make an analysis of the Alpamys and Odysseus’s wives, namely Gulbarshyn and Penelope, respectively. The story of Alpamys and Odysseus both illustrate the importance of women in the life of the main heroes and in both stories fidelity to women symbolize the hero's wish to return. If we compare the plot of both stories, we see that Odysseus wife Penelope and Alpamys’s wife Gulbarchin play a similar role in the life of their husbands and in the construction of their tribes.

Penelope’s loyalty

Talking about Penelope, we see that she was a faithful and loyal wife who waits for her husband for 20 years. When Odysseus goes to the Trojan war he left his wife Penelope and his newborn Telemachus in Ithaca alone. During Odysseus absence in Ithaca, some men started to be interested in marrying Penelope. Homer in his book calls them “suitors”. These suitors hoped to conquer Penelope’s heart since she was very beautiful and wise. Even the Greek Goddess of wisdom Athene confessed that Penelope was wise and clever. Homer in XXI book of the story of Odysseus wrote: “Ray-eyed Athene, put it into the heart of the

daughter of Icarius, wise Penelope, to set the bow". Thus, it is clear that besides the beauty, Penelope was gifted with big wisdom that even the Goddess of wisdom Athene were ready to bow for Penelope's sapience. This made "suitors" interested in marrying Penelope.

Moreover, in order to avoid marriage to the suitors and to postpone the time when she has to choose to whom marry, she decided that she cannot marry anyone until she will not finish sewing death shroud for the Odysseus father Laertes. All days she was weaving and all nights unweaving what she did during the day (Book I). Homer illustrates Penelope as faithful wife, who waits for her husband, and till the end believes that her husband will return. The weaving of shroud was a symbol of hope for Penelope, because when she will finish it, she had to marry to one of the suitors. And that is why every night she was unweaving the web, and thus, she was hoping that her husband will return. Despite that she left alone with the child, she could sustain all the difficulties in her life, anxiety, stress, and chaos, that appeared after the war and Odysseus leave. When Odysseus left her, she lost not only her husband for 20 years, but also protection. The loss was for Ithaca too, since they lost their king and ruler.

Although Penelope left without husband, she continued to do her household duties, to care about Odysseus father, and to look after son Telemachus hoping that one day her husband will return. Odysseus father Laertes, "was too old to help" Penelope and cannot protect her from the suitors that "began to woo Penelope". Despite the fact that Laertes "lives with old women" and "no more comes to the city", Penelope still cares about her father in law, and understands that if she will marry another man, there will be no one to look after him. Hence she decides, that she had to weave a death shroud for Laertes, before marrying anyone. Penelope says that the shroud should be for Laertes for the day "when the deadly fate that lays us out at last will take him down". The weaving for Penelope is also symbol of hope, because "by night, by the light of torches set beside her,

she would unravel all she'd done".

Thus, she delays time when she had to leave Odysseus residence and marry to one of the suitors.

Penelope continued to perform her duties faithfully, because it was a part of a larger goal, to keep good name of her husband and his family. Penelope realized that as wife it is important for her to preserve the best reputation for her husband. When Athene arrives to Ithaca to speak with Telemachus she tells him “raise his grave-mound, build his honors high”, referring to the Odysseus grave mound and honor. It seems that having good reputation and honor for man was essential at that time, since Athene pointed out. Penelope understood it and always tried to keep good name of her, her son and her husband. She always reminded to the suitors that her husband is alive and every time tried to support the authority of Odysseus despite that he was away. “How I long for my husband —alive in memory, always,”- says Penelope, and therefore, it can be concluded that keeping Odysseus fame and reputation was crucial for Penelope. That could be one the reasons why Penelope was trying to keep the good name of herself, since it would disastrous for Odysseus after his return to find his wife with a bad reputation, because at that time honor and fame was important for man.

Penelope’s loyalty for Odysseus was so strong that she cannot believe to Odysseus during their first meeting after 20 years. When Odysseus arrives to Ithaca after his long journey, he came to Penelope as a beggar, and hides his identity. However, when he kills all the suitors he reveals his identity, but Penelope struggles to believe him. It was crucially important for her to ensure that this man was her husband. Because of her aloofness to Odysseus, Telemachus accused her for being cruel. “Cruel mother, you with your hard heart!

Why do you spurn my father so —why don’t you sit beside him, engage him, ask him questions?” - accuses Telemachus. Without regard to her son’s accusations, and his approval that this is the real Odysseus, Penelope

decides to make her own test. She explains to her son that they have “secret signs” and if she will sure that this is real Odysseus she will stay calm and be with him. Penelope says to Odysseus “Take it out now, sturdy bed that it is,
and spread it deep with fleece,”- thus, asking him to move the bed in their bedroom. Odysseus tells that this impossible. “Who could move my bed? Impossible task, even for some skilled craftsman —unless a god came down in person, quick to lend a hand, lifted it out with ease and moved it elsewhere.”- pretends Odysseus proving that he built it. “I know, I built it myself —no one else . . .” proves that Odysseus passed Penelope’s test, since he built that bed. Penelope’s test shows that she was very faithful for Odysseus and in order to be with that Beggar- Odysseus, she had to be sure that this her real husband.

Gulbarshyn’s loyalty

Gulbarshin, Alpamys’s wife, has experienced the same pain and anxiety as Penelope did. Despite the fact that stories were written at a different times and by a different cultures, the struggle of Gulbarshin and Penelope is very similar. Since Gulbarshin and Alpamys were engaged since birth, Gulbarshin was in love with Alpamys since childhood. Even when Baysary leaves his tribes after the conflict with Baybori, Gulbarshin still remain faithful to her groom. When the Kalmyk Khan Taysha wanted to marry Gulbarshin, she ,as Penelope stated that would marry no one until she will not finish shroud, announced competition and secretly invited Alpamys. Despite the years away from each other and despite they were not married, Gulbarshin hoped that she will marry Alpamys. They have been betrothed with Alpamys in the cradle, and by Kazakh traditions they had to marry with each other when they grew up. Marriage with Alpamys would close the circle that was opened by their fathers, Baysary and Bayburi. Nevertheless, it seems that Gulbarshyn was in deep love with

Alpamys, since she neither wanted to be with Khan Taysha, who has authority, power and money, nor with Karazhan, Kalmyk's batyr who was respected and strong. After this incident there is no doubt that Gulbarshin loves Alpamys a lot and will wait for him, even if there was no guarantee that her husband will return. However, unlike the "suitors" that came from other places than Ithaca in the story of Odysseus, the one who pretended for Gulbarshin's was Ultan, Alpamys's step brother.

Ultan was pretending to replace Alpamys, since he wanted not only to marry Gulbarshin, but he also wanted to become ruler of the tribe. When Alpamys left Zhidely Baysyn, it was loss for the tribe too, because they lost their ruler. Bayburi cannot command toward Ultan too, because he was old, and Ultan did not respect him, called him "crazy graybeard" and blamed him for keeping too much cattle and that one day God will punish Bayburi for his gluttony. As believed by Kazakh culture, women cannot leave her husband's house. When her husband dies she had to marry to her husband's elder or little brother (Khosan 2006). Such tradition was also mentioned in the book of Dede Korkut (Beisenbayev, Karbozov 2012). However, Gulbarshyn was not sure if Alpamys died and could not marry Ultan, because she believed that one day her husband will return. Barchyn did lose her hope until the last day, when Alpamys secretly entered to the tribe. The marriage with Ultan could destroy her future plans, since when Alpamys return, he will find out that his wife cheated on him, since married another man before he died.

Scholars claim that such fidelity of the protagonists' wives is distinctive for the heroic epic stories. Zhurminsky, in his article "Epicheskoe skazanie ob Alpamyse i "Odiseiya" Gomera" wrote that in many versions of Alpamys, including Kazakh, Uzbek and Karakalpak, Barchin (Gulbarchin) is faithful, and waits for her husband. He describes versions of Divay and Fazil and gives and states that such behavior of wife should be described in the heroic epic stories. He proposes that Alpamys is the modern version of the story of "Bamsy-Beirek"

described in the book of Dede Korkut (108). Bamsy-Bayrek is ancient story and it had impact on the formation of further epic stories. Manu (Banu) is Bamsi Beyrek's wife, who keeps fidelity to her husband, even is he left home many years ago. Zhirmunsky states that faithful wife is an integral part of the epic stories. And since it was mentioned before that the story of "Alpamys" in the modest version of "Bamsi Beirek", Gulbarshyn in "Alpamys" inherited this motive from Manu. It is interesting to point that authors of Uzbek, Kazakh, and Baskir version of Alpamys written by Fazil, Niyazov, and Divay, respectively, were based on the story of Bamsy-Bayrek. Hence, it can be logically assumed that Barchin presents the figure of Manu, and consequently will have the same features (Paksoy 1989). Since the plot of Alpamys is constructed upon the story of Bamsy-Bayrek, authors could not change the personality of the Gulbarchin, because, otherwise, it will become completely different story and will have different end of the story.

Fidelity of Men

The story of Alpamys and Odyssey both illustrate the importance of women in the life of the main heroes and in both stories symbolize the hero's wish to return. If we compare the plot of both stories, we see that Odyssey's wife Penelope and Alpamys's wife Gulbarchin play a similar role in the life of their husbands and in the construction of their tribes.

Odysseus

Being away from his home and not being loyal to his wife made Odysseus sad and powerless. When Hermes arrived to Ogygia, to the goddess Calypso's island, he found Odysseus crying because of being away from home. It was not typical for Odysseus, for the "man of twists and turns" to cry over something, and at first Hermes could not believe it.

“Hermes could not find him within the cave.

Off he sat on a headland, weeping there as always,

wrenching his heart with sobs and groans and anguish,

gazing out over the barren sea through blinding tears.” - Odysseus, could not deal

with the fact that he had to stay with Calypso and that he cannot be fidel to Penelope.

Odysseys eyes were “never dry”, and he was weeping all the time, and cannot overcome Calypso. This can be connected to that Odysseus had to sleep with Calypso at night, because “he had no choice”. Sleeping with Calypso means that he could not stay faithful to Penelope, and maybe because of it he lost his power. And instead of fighting with Calypso, he lost his hope and “was gazing out over the barren sea through blinding tears”. It proves that being away from his home and his family makes him weak, that he even cannot stop crying.

Calypso told to Odysseus that Penelope “the one you pine for all your days”. And when Goddess told him that he is free, he could not believe at first. He replied to Goddess “Surely you’re plotting something else,”- accusing her, that she makes trap for him. But when he found out that this real he immediately became strong and refused from Calypso's offer to live on her island and refuses from being immortal. Calypso cannot understand how “mortal woman to rival immortal goddess?”. Odysseus stated that “her wise” Penelope “falls far short of Calypso, her beauty, stature”. And despite that he admits that Calypso is better than Penelope, he decides to return home, which proves his loyalty towards her.

Moreover, because Penelope and Odysseus were loyal to each other, Gods of Olympus decided to help Odysseus to get home. Athena and Hermes played a significant role in the story, since they helped a lot for Odysseus to return home. Athena arrived to Ithaca to talk with Telemachus and later transformed to him to find Odysseus. She also warned Telemachus that suitors are hunting for him and want to murder him. Hermes talked with Calypso and told her to release Odysseus from the island. Thus, without intervention of Gods,

Odysseus would probably die and Penelope would marry to one of the suitors. However, they were faithful to each other, and Zeus saw how they suffer being apart from each other and decided to help them. But this may not happen if they were not loyal to each other.

Alpamys

In the story of “Alpamys” main hero was captivated by Kalmyk Khan Taysha. Alpamys spent 7 years in *zindan*- underground prison, with no light and warm. Alpamys would probably die in *zindan*, if Karakoz, daughter of Taysha would not help him. With her help he could release from prison and return to home. Karakoz helped to Alpamys because fell in love with him, but instead of running with Khan’s daughter, Alpamys preferred to return to his home, where he fought with Ultan and protected his wife and family.

Conclusion

Overall, analysing Penelope and Gulbarshyn in each story, it can be concluded that both of them are very powerful women, that could sustain forced marriage, keep the good name and authority of husband and keep their loyalty towards their husbands. The main reason of Penelope’s fidelity was to preserve the fame of Odysseus, because at that time having honor and authority was important for men. If Penelope would marry another man and leave Odysseus father alone, it would be considered as disrespect toward alive Odysseus and would damage his authority. In the case with Gulbarshyn, she kept her fidelity, because believed that one day her husband will return and she also cannot marry her brother in law.

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This project represents my own original work in accordance with Nazarbayev University's Student Code of Conduct.

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