

# Notes: Various Semetey variants by Prior

## The Semetey of Maldibay Borzu Uulu

### Manuscript

- from the archives of the National Academy of Sciences from 2001
- 18 x 11 cm, 117 pages, slight damage
- black ink written with qolam
- bound book, red ball point pen Western page numbers added
- notes added in pen and pencil
- we have generally 51 lines in 3 columns, sometimes 2 or even 4
- in total it's about 6000 lines
- in between there is a page missing according to Persian numbers, the Western numbers are consecutive
- language is Khirghiz; script is post-Chagatay, shows some features of Chagatai as well as of Khirghiz, writing is somewhat inconsistent
- MS (the academy body) is probably compiled from two different resources
- the date of this manuscript is from ca. 1899

### Notices

- Aydarkulov, Mokeev 1988 has uncited information about receiving 1957 from a village in Talas
- Urstanbekov, Coroyev 1990 includes a transcription as well as a translation of p. 1, but the verses are out of order and the date is incorrect

### Tale of Semetey 1

- this tale is older than anyone alive, it was never written down on paper
- this tale is for the well-informed, the brave: half is true and half is lies
- Semetey hears that his lineage is Nogoy
- Kanikey tells him what he will find on his way to Talas
- S is a roughneck, so he would go anyways, regardless of what Kanikey says
- she tells him: after M died, his companions (except Bakay) went over to Kobos; S will be heralded as a prince when he returns to his homeland
- K was married to M, her father is Kara Khan (sometimes Temir Khan, then Kara Khan again; Kara Khan is also the great-grandfather of M), she buried M in a tomb
- Abuke, M's half brother, was getting ready to marry Kanikey, but she'd rather die, so she left for her father's city
- formulas from other Semetey texts are found here, even a phrase from the Valikhanov Bok-morun
- if a dervish appears behind him, S will die; but if he looks straight across the river, he will see M in all his glory and the 40
- he should not be seen by M, but set him and the 40 to flight
- S should cross the treacherous river, the 40 and M will have disappeared by then
- he shall take a dose of powerful medicine, recite the Koran and then go on safely; S will see M's hound
- then he will find Bakay and greet him; then climb a mountain and put his telescope on the Talas valley
- a lyrical description of the scenery and wildlife follows, the homeland of the Nogay
- there is a repetition of the climb and stuff, just with geographical names
- from there he spots M's tomb, there is a lot of description of the tomb's interior and exterior as well as of the building process
- there will be a lifelike picture of Manas there, in the place of honor
- there are pictures of the 40 and K describes them
- then she names 8 heirlooms that S should recover from his uncles and his grandfather: his gun, lance, battle axe, war drum, sword, armor, chain mail, hat and breeches

- K tells of the steeds that are on the walls of the tomb
- if Abuke and Kobos give S the steed he shall take in and come home
- she ends by recommending some brides for him
- K blesses S by the 12 imams and 40 spirits of M, she is weeping and S leaves
- Ciycir forebodingly says that S is a warrior, but not ready and will be back soon
- the trip goes exactly like K said it would
- B tells S that A&K have taken over the land and that all other heroes are dead, S vows to fight them and to take back his land
- they get to Talas, as K described, pray, recite the whole Koran
- M arbak will now protect S
- B goes to J, wants a gift of good news, but J assaults him, then describes S as a Nogoy prince and threatens J
- J backpedals, giving B a gift and telling him to bring S
- J orders his wife to get a cup of honey and a cup of poison
- BD tell J to give S his birthright instead, so J prepares the poison himself
- BD is another name for M's mother, so there are a total of 3 different names here
- B hears this, goes to S and tells him to give it to the dogs
- S does this and learns that J wanted to poison him
- B wants to go and rebuke A&K, so he gets them drunk, tells them S has returned, the gets drunk himself
- S demands his birthright, asking about all items, A is silent, K leaves the tent and returns, giving a speech about how great M was
- S tells him to shut up and tells about his fathers wars and successes
- S takes M's possessions, they don't want to give him the lance or the gun
- S gets angry and beats them up, then leaves
- B tells the story of a horse, A&K argue whether S was justified in taking the heirlooms
- both B and K tell S to go and kill A&K to do M justice
- the horse talks, snitches on S, that he stole his fathers stuff, K rebukes him
- then S waits a year, then takes off
- iron yurt?
- A&K raise an army and surround him, S kills them all, like a falcon chasing geese
- he captures J, A&K, K and BD come to him
- S tells K and BD to get the prisoners to he can shame and kill them
- K and BD go ahead and kill J, A&K in S's stead
- S marries the daughter of a Khan, rules the Nogoy well

## Tale of Semetey 2

- Ay-curok takes M's falcon, S wants to get it back
- S assembles 14 horses for his journey
- the two companions are supposed to prepare for 1 year of travel
- S's smoke causes rain as well as hailstorms, and the animals suffer
- S goes to a mountain and looks beyond:
- shift to Ay-curok, who has 40 maidens and a wild dream, only one maid is able to read it
- one of the maids says that god will grant him a favor, the maid tells A to go out and meet S, who will be angry otherwise
- she goes out and camps on open ground to be seen
- back to S on the pass: he can read the instructions that B gave him for the route
- he does not attack the large army, but chooses to go and meet A