

# Abdulhamid Cholpan's Translation Activities: Sources, Analysis, and Scholarly Significance

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**Abstract.** This article examines the translation activity of the Uzbek Jadid intellectual, poet, prose writer, dramatist, publicist, and translator Abdulhamid Sulaymon o'g'li Cholpan, as well as his translations of works from world literature into the Uzbek language. In particular, the study analyzes Cholpan's translation of the fable "*The Wolf and the Lamb*" by the renowned Russian fabulist I. Krylov, which occupies an important place in the history of Uzbek translation studies. The analysis focuses on the date of the translation, its sources, and key issues related to translation practices.

**Keywords:** Cholpan; Uzbek translation studies of the 1930s; fable; translation text of I. Krylov's fable; translation issues; description of translation sources; differences in graphic forms in the translated text.

## Introduction

In the 1930s, Abdulhamid Sulaymon ogli Cholpan devoted his primary creative activity to translating works of world literature into the Uzbek language. He skillfully translated into Uzbek the works of renowned classical authors of world literature such as W. Shakespeare, Heinrich Heine, Molière, C. Gozzi, Goldoni, Eugène Pottier, Alexander Blok, Ivan Franko, Rabindranath Tagore, Anton Chekhov, Nikolai Gogol, A. Pushkin, I. Krylov, Ivan Turgenev, Leonid Andreyev, M. Gorky, T. Fikrat, and Abulqosim Lohuti.

It should be emphasized that issues such as Cholpan's contribution to translation studies, the sources of his translations and their characterization, as well as the question of authorship of translations produced in the 1930s, have been insufficiently studied in Uzbek literary scholarship and translation studies. In particular, the problem of identifying and describing the sources of Cholpan's translations is of significant scholarly importance and remains highly relevant today.

## Literature Review and Methodology

In the 1930s, Uzbek translation studies were addressed in several scholarly research and academic articles. However, this does not imply that Cholpan's translation activity has been fully covered. Comprehensive scholarly studies on Cholpan's translation work and the characterization of his translated texts have not yet been conducted.

In literary scholarship, Cholpan's poetic and prose translations have been analyzed in the research and articles of O. Sharafiddin [1], G. Salomov [2], J. Sharipov [3], N. Karimov [4], I. Haqqulov [5], B. Dostqoraev [6], N. Vladimirova [7], D. Quronov [8], B. Karimov [9], T. Rahimov [10], R. Ulmasov [11], and D. Abdullaeva [12]. These studies provide important insights into his translation techniques, but they do not offer a comprehensive, monographic treatment of the sources, dates, or classification of Cholpan's translations.

## Discussion and Results

Although a century has passed since the translations executed and published by Cholpan, they have still not been comprehensively studied in a monographic and scholarly manner, and the classification and characterization of the sources of his translated works have not been carried out. Meanwhile, translation materials in archives, libraries, and personal collections are susceptible to loss over time, and archival materials may deteriorate in quality.

Even after Cholpan was posthumously condemned as a "public enemy," many of these translated works continued to be published in numerous editions without indicating the translator's name. Among

Cholpan's translations, there are works that neither required another translator's intervention nor were retranslated. For instance, I. Krylov's fable "*The Wolf and the Lamb*" is one such work. Regarding the sources of this particular translation, three publications can be noted: the 1935 edition in the *Adabiyot Khrestomatiya* co-authored by O. Sharafiddinov and J. Sharifiy [13], the 1936 issue of the *Mushtum* journal, and the 1937 edition of the *Adabiyot Khrestomatiya* [14].

This analysis highlights the need for systematic cataloging of Cholpan's translations and their sources, both to preserve Uzbek literary heritage and to facilitate further scholarly research on the evolution of translation practices in the 1930s.

Until now, the date of I. Krylov's fable translation was generally considered to be 1936, based on its publication in the *Mushtum* journal. In the four-volume collection *Cholpan. Works* [15], in the collection *Abdulhamid Cholpan* from the series *Representatives of Jadid Literature* [16], and in other editions, the translation date of the fable is also indicated as 1936.

According to the results of our latest research, this translation appears in both of the textbooks mentioned above. Notably, in the 1935 edition of the fable, the translation is explicitly labeled at the end as "Translated by Cholpan." In J. Sharipov's article "*I. A. Krylov's Fables in the Uzbek Language*", the date of the translation is indicated as 1933: "After the October Revolution, I. A. Krylov's fables were regularly translated and included in Uzbek school textbooks and anthologies. In 1933, translations of Krylov's fables '*The Cuckoo and the Rooster*', '*The Mouse and the Rat*', and '*The Raven and the Frog*' were published in the literary anthology compiled by J. Sharifiy, and in the same year, translations of Krylov's fables such as '*The Wolf and the Lamb*' and '*The Quartet*' were included in the *Adabiyat* textbook for secondary schools, authored by O. Sharafiddinov and J. Sharifiy, members of the Academy of Sciences of the Uzbek SSR" [3]. Furthermore, Sharipov emphasizes that "the translations of the fables included in this textbook (translated by Cholpan) closely correspond to the original text, accurately conveying the content and spirit of the work," specifically identifying Cholpan as the translator. In the footnote, the publication information is provided as: *A. Sharafiddinov, J. Sharifiy. Adabiyat darsligi, 1933 (A. Sharafiddinov, J. Sharifiy. Adabiyat Textbook, 1933).*

Taking these dates into account, it can be inferred that Cholpan engaged with I. Krylov's translations were already in the 1930s. Accordingly, the composition of the fable "*The Wolf and the Lamb*" should not be dated to 1936, but rather to an earlier period, possibly 1930 or 1933. This information is considered significant for accurately establishing, reconstructing, and retracing the timeline of Cholpan's creative biography.

However, since the 1933 textbook-anthology is not available to us, we can currently examine the text of "*The Wolf and the Lamb*" only as it appears in the textbooks published between 1935 and 1937. Following this fable, the poetic work "*The Quartet*" is also included, and, as with the previous text, it is explicitly labeled at the end as "Translated by Cholpan." This indicates that Cholpan had engaged with the translation of Krylov's fables much earlier, preparing them specifically for textbook use, and that these translations were published in 1933, 1935, and 1937.

The texts in the 1935 and 1937 textbooks are almost identical, with only minor differences. When compared, the texts consist of a total of 58 lines, and variations are observed in the graphic layout of the poetic fable, certain lexical and grammatical word forms, and the use of punctuation marks. In the first textbook, the opening stanza of the fable—the initial four lines, serving as the preface to the work—is visually separated from the main body by a graphic line. In the second textbook, however, this graphic line is omitted, though the opening stanza remains distinct from the main text.

The first line of the fable translation ("*The worm always eats the tree's bark*") is taken from folk proverbs and sayings, and therefore appears in both textbooks enclosed in quotation marks (""). Several other words, such as "*msal*" (example/fable), "*ertaki so'layik*" (let's tell a story / let's narrate a tale), "*ichalmayman*" (I cannot drink), "*yalmayman*" (I cannot eat), "*hechbir*" (none / not any), and "*buhtan*" (slander / false accusation), are spelled according to the Uzbek orthography and graphic conventions of the 1930s. In the 1935 textbook, the personal pronoun "*men*" (men = I) appears, while in the later textbook of 1937, it is rendered as "*man*" (man = I):

"Sen iflosni bilaman **men**!" (1935) – "Sen iflosni bilaman **man**!" (1937)  
(The general meaning of both sentences is: "I know that you are dirty!")

In the 1935 edition of the poetic translation, the dialogue between the wolf and the lamb is presented in reported speech within quotation marks. In the later textbook, however, the dialogue is indicated both by a dash at the beginning of each line and by quotation marks. This reflects certain changes in the language and orthographic conventions of the period and their application.

At the end of the fable:

*“Surishtirib o ‘ltirishga vaqtim bordimi?  
Qorin ochsa, ovqat bo ‘lsa – tanlanardimi?!”*

Here is a poetic, rhythm-preserving translation that reflects both the meaning and the verse tone:

*“Surushtirib o ‘turishga vaqtim bormi,  
Qorin ochsa, ovqat bo ‘lsa – tanlanarmi?”*

In later editions, the following version was considered preferable [16]:

*“Surushtirib o ‘tirishga vaqtim bormidi?  
Qorning ochsa, ovqat bo ‘lsa, tanlanarmidi?”*

The general meaning of the above lines is as follows:

*“Did I really have time to inquire?  
When one is hungry, and food is available, would it be chosen at all (it is eaten without  
hesitation)?”*

In collections, textbooks, and anthologies published during the former Soviet period, the translation of the fable changed:

*Daraxtning mo ‘rtini qurt yeydi doim  
Tarixda misollar juda ko ‘p bunga.  
Tarix to ‘g ‘risida qolaylik-da jim  
Ertaki so ‘zlayik quloq ber shunga. [13]*

*Daraxtning bo ‘shini qurt yeydi doim,  
Tarixda misollar juda ko ‘p bunga.  
Tarix to ‘g ‘risida qolaylik-da jim,  
Bir ertak so ‘ylaylik, quloq ber shunga. [1]*

Meaning:

*The worm always eats the tree’s bark,  
There are many examples of this in history.  
It is better to remain silent about history;  
Let us tell a tale, so listen carefully. [13]*

*The worm always eats the tree’s trunk,  
There are many examples of this in history.  
It is better to stay silent about history;  
Let us tell a story, so pay attention and listen. [1]*

The preface to the fable published in the “Mushtum” journal in 1936 reads as follows: “(The Italy–Abyssinia War) Compared to strength, weapons of war, and other equipment, Italy can be called the ‘elephant’ and Abyssinia the ‘fiber’ (strand of hair). Italian fascism is a gluttonous dragon! Yet it shouts to the whole world: “Alas, from what Abyssinia is doing, alas! It says it will devour me.” Such fascist-like actions were mostly found among predators and suited them perfectly. The name itself is ‘predator,’ after all! The mood of this predator is well depicted by the famous Russian fabulist Krylov. We present his translation here” [15]. This preface or epigraph is presumed to have been written either by Cholpan or by the publishing house. However, we can interpret it as a call drawing attention to the political crises occurring worldwide at the beginning of the 20th century, the hegemonic ambitions of dominant states, and the impending tragedies and dangers of the Second World War. Indeed, “Cholpan, based on the content and essence of the works selected for translation, sought through them to express his attitude toward the socio-political events of his time. In other words, the general situation depicted in the fable is related both to violence—the policy of aggression that Italian fascism was imposing on other countries—and to the repressive Stalinist regime, which suppressed independent-minded intellectuals, destroying them both spiritually and physically” [17].

## Conclusion

Abdulhamid Sulaymon o'g'li Cholpan, in addition to being a Jadid figure, poet, and writer, was also a skilled translator. His translation activities have not yet been comprehensively studied in literary scholarship. In particular, the sources and texts of his translations remain largely unclassified and undescribed to this day. A comparison of Cholpan's translations across different years reveals noticeable differences between editions. Notably, the composition of I. Krylov's fable "*The Wolf and the Lamb*" should be dated not to 1936, but rather to 1930 or 1933. This information is significant for reconstructing Cholpan's creative biography. A systematic study and scholarly examination of the sources and texts of Cholpan's translations are essential for assessing the author's creative worldview, artistic skill, and translational talent.

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