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## Historical significance of Kazakh heroic epics during the period of Jochi Ulys

Today, the heroic epic represents an important part of the spiritual heritage of the Kazakh people. Ethnic history of Kazakhs and historical events are considered in oral folk art of Kazakhs. In this regard, the purpose of the article is to reveal the historical significance of the Kazakh heroic epic, characteristic of the Ulys Jochi period. In the article, the main plots and motifs of the Kazakh heroic epic are considered, the works of Kazakh and foreign researchers are analyzed, and the historical significance of the Kazakh heroic epic is determined.

*Keywords:* Ulys Jochi, Golden Horde, heroic epic, oral tradition, historical source, history of Kazakhstan, spiritual culture, national heritage.

### *Introduction*

The formation of an oral epic tradition on the territory of Kazakhstan, considered an integral part of spiritual culture, dates back to the ancient period. From a historical point of view, the Kazakh heroic epic carried high moral and aesthetic values, cultivated among the people from the period of unification of individual nomadic tribes into a single Kazakh nation to the present day. It described all the main fundamental historical values and events and became a chronicle of the spiritual, social and material life of the Kazakhs. Monuments of material and spiritual culture, including Kazakh heroic epics, are informative data for studying the main stages of the ethno-political history of nomads on the territory of Kazakhstan. The heroic epic of the Kazakhs are plot poems that tell about the various exploits of the batyrs (heroes), who had extraordinary physical and moral strength and defended their people from the attacks of foreigners. The Kazakh epic arose on the basis of real historical events experienced by the Kazakh people at different times. Therefore, it is the most important monument, which testifies to the heroic deeds of batyrs, the resilience of the human spirit, and the morals and customs of the Kazakh people. Works of the heroic epic have entered the structure of Kazakh folklore and occupy a special place in it.

### *Research methodology and resources*

Kazakh heroic epics are a plot poem telling about the bravery of heroes who defended their people from foreign invasions and possessed exceptional physical and moral strength. Kazakh epics are based on real historical events. This is an important source that provides information about the military valor of heroes, traditions and customs of the Kazakh people. For example, in the Middle Ages, Kazakh epic works depicting historical events of the specified period were supplemented in content and plot and continued their development. According to V.M. Gatsak, the poetics of epic historicism is a set of real artistic coordinates that have historical and social symbolic properties [1; 124]. According to historian A.S. Orlov, the heroic epics of the Kazakhs demonstrate the highest level of literary art and a lot of realism can be found in it. Orlov A.S. draws attention to a very interesting scientific fact, the meaning of which boils down to the following: "... the heroic epic of the Kazakhs is not a naive work of steppe simplicity, but testifies to a high level of literary art. Kazakh epics are an artistic narrative, the construction of which uses a variety of perception techniques. These epics are not limited to the mechanical movement of the story, they are picturesque and emotional, the relationships of the characters are psychologically complex. Leaving aside the features of fabulousness, which is mandatory for this type of literature, we find a lot of realism in these epics" [2]. According to Academician V.M. Zhirmunsky, a well-known expert on the heroic epics of the Turkic peoples, the study of the epic will give results only if it is possible to clearly distinguish a historical-typological comparison from a genetic one. At the same time, he emphasizes that "heroic epics, in their local national

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and historical content, have a number of features in terms of their formation, and therefore are not subject to external foreign literary influence and do not change” [3; 194]. According to the domestic researcher A. Konyratbay, the main events of ethnogenesis, turning points in the development of historical destinies occurred in the history of any nation, and this leaves a certain mark in the memory of the nation. From this point of view, heroic epics are a striking phenomenon of oral folk art and spiritual culture, of great interest to ethnologists [4].

According to the Soviet researcher A.K. Borovkov, the transformations taking place in the epic are associated with changes in the historical situation and geographical environment, the interpretation of historical events [5; 88]. Therefore, heroic epics always describe the history (even if sometimes distorted) of one of the nations. For example, Academician V.M. Zhirmunsky notes that “the epic is the past history of the people in the form of heroic idealization, therefore it has high historical value, social, cultural and educational significance” [3; 195]. It can be noted that following the method of historicism, historical and logical analysis of the epic leads to a fairly complete consideration of its genesis.

The theoretical and methodological basis of the article is the principles of dialectics and objectivity. In the process of determining the development of oral creativity of the Kazakh people, its causes and consequences, the principle of dialectics was used as a guide. The principle of objectivity made it possible to determine the role of heroic epics as a historical document.

### *Results and discussion*

Each historical period has its own ideology and culture. One of its important components in every historical period is folk art. Folklore heritage, being a collective thought, reflects socio-political, aesthetic, ethical and religious views and forms the chronicle of each nation. The folklore of the peoples of Jochi Ulys, including their spiritual culture, was not formed by chance. It appeared as a continuation of folklore, mythology, ethnic history and traditions of the previous period, and this can be seen in the folklore of the Golden Horde period. It was formed on the basis of the traditions of the pre-Golden Horde period and was influenced by the folklore of peoples who had economic, political and social ties with the Golden Horde. Thus, the folklore of the Golden Horde period, on the one hand, developed on the basis of the mythology of these peoples, and on the other hand, is considered a reflection of the history, lifestyle and history of each individual people. At the same time, folklore is considered a unique ideology of its era. Folklore contains not only information about the life and culture of the people, but also views on socio-economic, social, political and other phenomena of a certain period.

Historically and culturally, the Turkic peoples are the heirs of the Golden Horde. Modern Kazakhs, Tatars, Kyrgyz and other Turkic peoples began to form as a separate ethnic group back in the period of the Golden Horde. Therefore, the folklore heritage of this period is considered the common heritage of the Turkic peoples. Of course, the period of the Golden Horde played a big role in the state history of the Kazakh people, in their art and literature.

Everyone knows that the names of famous figures of the Golden Horde period were preserved in heroic epics, and the history of the Kazakh people is passed down from generation to generation through the traditions of oral narration, genealogies, historical legends, and stories of poets. The oral creativity of the Kazakh people developed greatly, especially in the XIII–XVIII centuries. Oral poetry flourished among the Kipchaks and other Turkic tribes. The works of Sypyra Zhyrau and Kodan Taishi, Asan Kaigy and Kaztugan Zhyrau (XIV–XVI centuries) were widely recognized. They were true masters of artistic speech, and the heroic epics they wrote, reflecting historical truth, were preserved in the consciousness of the people. These include “Er Targyn”, “Kambar Batyr”, “Alpamys”, “Kobylandy Batyr”, “Edige Batyr” and other epics reflecting the history of the Golden Horde and Deshty-Kipchak periods. These heroic epics allow us to deeply understand the worldview of the Turkic peoples. From this point of view, the epic about Edige Batyr occupies a special place among the Kazakh heroic epics. As is known, since the 40s of the 20th century, all epics associated with Edige Batyr and his descendants have not been published. Due to the fact that, following the results of the work of the Tatar Regional Committee in 1944, in August the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks adopted a resolution “On the state of the mass-political and ideological work of the party organization of Tatarstan and measures to improve it”, where the epic was subjected to harsh criticism. Since it was believed that the epic praised the past and justified interventions. At the same time, since 1947, teachings about Edig have ceased in Kazakhstan. 1947 On January 21, a mournful resolution was issued by the Central Committee of the Kazakh Communist Party of Bolsheviks, criticizing the political weakness of the compilers of the “History of Kazakh Literature”. After the ruling the poem

“Edige” and the poem “Orak-Mamai”, relating to his descendants, were removed from the first volume of the “History of Kazakh Literature”. In 1953, based on a discussion about the Kazakh epics organized by the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences of the Kazakh SSR, these epics were subject to further accusations. Therefore, it is considered relevant to compare unrealized national versions of the epic from an independent point of view.

The fact that the main characters of the epic “Edige Batyr” are world-famous people such as Edige, Tokhtamys Khan, Aksak Temir, Nuraddin requires special attention to the historical foundations of the poem. Because the names of Tokhtamys Khan, who ruled the Golden Horde for eighteen years and united half the world, Edige, who was his support for seventeen years, and the world-famous Aksak Temir are of great historical interest for the epic.

Among them, the epic “Edige Batyr” is included in the literature of the Golden Horde era. In many heroic epics it is impossible to look for images of people who made history. And the epic “Edige Batyr” is not fantasy, which gives great cognitive power, but traces of the great events of the Golden Horde era, indelibly imprinted in the minds of people. One of the main reasons why “Yedige” has many versions and is close to the hearts of people is connected not only with the artistic language and skillful composition, but also with the events that took place in the history of the Turkic people. The events of Edige's poem cover the period from the mid-nineteenth century to the twenty first century. And the places where the events took place are the Deshti Kipchak region and the surrounding territories.

Such scientists and writers as Ch. Ualikhanov, P.M. Melioransky, G.N. Potanin, V.V. Radlov, I.N. Berezin, A. Belyaev, N.I. Veselovsky, A. Divaev, S. Seifullin, M. Auezov, S. Mukanov studied and highly valued traditional versions of the epic. According to Academician V.M. Zhirmunsky, there are 30 versions of the epic “Er Edige” translated into Russian (15 of them have been preserved in handwritten form). And in the Central Scientific Library of Kazakhstan there are 6 versions of the poem.

The problem of studying the epic “Edige” was taken up late. G.I. Spassky (1783–1864), the first corresponding member of the Russian Academy of Sciences in the field of Oriental studies, who worked a lot in the field of research of folklore of the Turkic peoples, published the epic in print for the first time. In 1818–1824, G.I. Spassky published the “Sibirsky Vestnik” magazine in St. Petersburg. The magazine published materials on ethnography and geography, folklore and history not only of Siberia, but also of the peoples of Kazakhstan and Central Asia. The scientist wrote down a fragment of “Edige” in prose form and published it in his journal in 1820 [6].

In general, in the period we are considering, the prosperity of the Golden Horde state during the reign of Uzbek Khan began to ripen the conditions for a future crisis of the state. One of the manifestations of this can be seen in the strengthening of the power and influence of the emirs, who are the heads of local tribes. At this moment, the influence of the large tribes that make up the population of the Golden Horde is growing. Therefore, historical figures from among the representatives of local clans and tribes began to strive for supreme power, relying on the support of the leaders of other tribes. This process manifested itself especially clearly in the period 1360–1380, known as the “time of troubles” in the history of the Golden Horde. If the emirs of the right wing of the Golden Horde Mamai, Khoja Sherkesh and others sought power in the palace, then from the left wing Kyzyr, Orda-Melik-sheikh, Temir-Khoja, Murid, the son of Erzen Kasym Khan, the son of Shymtai Urus Khan and the descendants of Johci sought unite the White Horde and the Golden Horde and establish their power.

And at the end of the 1370s, a struggle for the palace throne began between Urus Khan and Mamai. From that moment on, the political career of Emir Edige, the son of Baltyksha, who was the main emir of Urus Khan, began. Of course, the name Edige was closely connected with the name of the next ruler, Tokhtamys. It is known that Tokhtamys, who became the main enemy of Urus Khan and his heirs, with the help of Emir Temir, defeated the heirs of Urus Khan and took power in the White Horde [7; 114].

Echoes of historical events are clearly visible in the epic “Edige”. That is why some Tatar and Karakalpak scholars consider this work to be an intermediate genre between a historical poem and a heroic poem. Since the epic was created on the basis of historical legend, comparing it with works that describe specific historical, political and social conditions of that era will make it possible to clarify the effect of truth and legend. And the period of life and historical place of the main character of the work, Edige, cannot be separated from the fate of the Golden Horde state [8].

The epics about the batyrs can be viewed in different ways as one of the historical and ethical data. If the study of the poetics of the epic is the task of literary criticism, then the determination of educational significance is considered the competence of pedagogical sciences. If you look at it from this point of view,

then the main problem of epic studies is the connection of heroic epics with the past history of the people and at the same time the presence in its content of certain historical and ethnic details which are sometimes difficult to adapt to scientific processing. If we limit the study of the centuries-old history of any people only to the written data that has reached us, then we will also limit the scientific-cognitive process. Therefore, it is important to determine the historical and ethnic significance of epics as a scientific problem.

Each version of the Kazakh heroic epics is characterized by the glorification of the heroic deeds of a batyr of a certain tribe. For example, Koblandy from the Kipchak tribe, Alpamys from Konurat, Er Targyn from Nogai, Kambar from the Kerey tribe. The ethnic origin of the mentioned characters is indicated without any changes. Therefore, epics about batyrs can become an additional source for studying the ethnic history of the people.

How can we know what historical fact the plot of the epic is based on and what social life and historical reality of that time is depicted in it? The answer to this question should be sought primarily in the content of the epic. Whatever epic we watch, it tells about who the brave warriors fought against and from whom they defended their country. It also gives more or less information about the customs, traditions and worldview of the people of that time. If we compare them with historical data, it will be possible to determine when the epic is historical truth and what is associated with its occurrence.

For example, when studying the content of all versions of the epic “Kobylandy Batyr” and comparing the data contained in it with historical data, it is clear that the events of this work were born on the basis of a description of the long-standing relationship between the Kipchaks and the Persians, the cruelty and brutal actions of the Persians towards the Kipchaks. The main line of epics is created to depict such heroic struggle. In all versions of the epic, Kobylandy’s battle enemies are the Persians (only in one version — the Kalmaks). The epic describes the exploits of the Kipchak heroes against the invasion and hostile attacks of the Persians.

“Kobylandy Batyr” is a popular epic and admired throughout the country. Folk poets composed legends associated with the name of Kobylandy batyr, sometimes in short, sometimes in full form, and passed it on from generation to generation. There are several versions of “Kobylandy”. Among them, the most voluminous and colorful are: the options Marabay, Mergenbey, Aisa, Nurpeis. In addition, there are poems and legends about Kobylandy among the Crimean Tatars and Karakalpaks. However, the most complete examples can be called “heroic epics”. Kazakh versions contain, along with fairy-tale fiction, a real historical background. The main legendary character of the plot was born in the Oguz-Kypchak era. There are 29 different versions of the epic “Kobylandy Batyr”, and the plot in the Marabai version is a source of inspiration for them. It depicts events related to the relationship of Kobylandy batyr with the kyats, the murder of Khan Kyzylbash, Kazan Salar, and then Kebikti, the capture of the beautiful Karlyga and, finally, the battle with Alshagyr, who attacked his people and the liberation of his people. The poem “Kobylandy Batyr” contains many concepts characteristic of the tribal era.

Since the epic was born at a time when Islam had not yet come to the Kazakh steppes, traces of the concept of shamanism are obvious in it. Ybyray Altynsarin included one version of the song “Kobylandy Batyr” in his anthology. He wrote about it according to Marabai’s story and called it “Taiburyldin Shabysy”. In addition, artistic excerpts from the epic were published in the periodicals “Dala Ualayaty”, “Turkestanskije Vedomosti”, “Turgaiskaya Gazeta”, “Trudy Orenburgskoi nauchnoi komissii” in the period before Soviet power [9]. There has long been an opinion about the historical event during which “Kobylandy Batyr” was born. If you study all the versions of the epic “Kobylandy Batyr” according to their content and compare the general content with historical events, it will become clear that the plot of the epic describes the relationship of the Kipchaks with the Persians, hostile actions on the part of the Persians towards the Kipchaks. The main line of events in the song was created to describe the heroic campaigns of a historical era.

### *Conclusion*

Heroic narratives are a literary genre that has been preserved and passed down from conquest to generation not only orally, but also in writing. However, regardless of the form of expression and transmission of plot material, this literary genre was well recognizable by its unique features and characteristics. These features are common and at the same time special for the heroic epic of the peoples of medieval civilization. Isolated from surviving heroic narratives, these features are international and universal, as they unite the medieval heroics of the peoples of the world into a single whole within the artistic space. These features and characteristics common to many literatures are also characteristic of the heroic epic of the Kazakhs. Kazakh batyrs performed the function of artistic genealogy, collecting, within the framework of the epic tradition, the events of periods that left an indelible mark in the consciousness of the people.

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### Жошы Ұлысы кезеңіндегі қазақ батырлар жырының тарихи маңыздылығы

Қазіргі уақытта қазақ батырлар жыры қазақ халқының рухани мұрасының маңызды бөлігін құрайды. Себебі, өзінің тамыры жағынан тереңде жатқан қазақтардың ауызша халық шығармасында қазақтардың этникалық тарихы және тарихи оқиғалар кеңінен қарастырылған. Мақаланың мақсаты — Жошы Ұлысы кезеңіне тән қазақ батырлар жырының тарихи маңыздылығын ашып көрсету. Сонымен қатар қазақ батырлар жырының негізгі сюжеттері мен мотивтері қарастырылған. Авторлар қазақ батырлар жырына қатысты жарық көрген еңбектерге талдау жасап, жырдың тарихи құндылығын анықтаған.

*Кілт сөздер:* Жошы Ұлысы, Алтын Орда, батырлар жыры, ауызша дәстүр, тарихи дерек, Қазақстан тарихы, рухани мәдениет, ұлттық мұра.

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### Историческое значение казахского героического эпоса в период Улуса Джучи

Героический эпос сегодня представляет важную часть духовного наследия казахского народа. В устном народном творчестве казахов рассмотрена этническая история казахов и исторические события. В связи с этим целью статьи является раскрытие исторического значения казахского героического эпоса, характерного для периода Улуса Джучи. Авторы статьи, изучив основные сюжеты и мотивы казахского героического эпоса, проанализировали работы казахстанских и зарубежных исследователей и определили историческую значимость казахского героического эпоса.

*Ключевые слова:* улус Джучи, Золотая орда, героический эпос, устная традиция, исторический источник, история Казахстана, духовная культура, национальное наследие.

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