

Historicism and Typology of the Musical-Epic Tradition of the Peoples of Central Asia (Based on the Heroic Epic)

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Abstract: The aim of the study is to analyse the time sequence between historical events and the creation of epic works such as “Alpamys,” “Korogly,” and “Kitabi dede Korkud” in order to understand their role and significance in the cultural context of Central Asia. The following research methods have been used in this work: generalisation, systematisation, analytical and historical-typological methods. As a result of this study, it was found that the heroic epic of Central Asia reveals not only artistic aspects but also deep layers of history and cultural memory. The analysis of the epics through the prism of historicism and typology allows for understanding of the evolution of society and the formation of values. The study of the musical epic works of the peoples of Central Asia, considering historical events and characters, allowed understanding and evaluating their historical and cultural significance more deeply. The struggle of heroes against tyrants, the defence of their native land, and the reflection of the socio-cultural peculiarities of the people in epics are references to real historical phenomena and key elements of their content. The importance of the characters, their connection to historical figures and their social significance emphasise the role of these works in preserving and transmitting the cultural and historical heritage of the people.

Keywords: cultural heritage, ethnic character, folklore, Kazakh folklore, legends and tales

INTRODUCTION

The musical epic tradition of the peoples of Central Asia is an integral part of the cultural wealth of this region, reflecting its history, values and traditions. The study of this tradition, considering the principle of historicism, will help to understand how historical events influence the formation of musical epics and how they reflect the peculiarities of the ethnic and cultural development of the peoples of Central Asia. However, certain challenges arise in the analysis, such as the ambiguity of the interpretation of historical data and their influence on musical forms. Understanding these challenges is important for a deeper and more objective study of the musical epic tradition and its role in the cultural heritage of Central Asia. Such an approach contributes to the preservation and understanding of the uniqueness of this cultural heritage and promotes the development of musicological science in general. The problematics of this study concern the question of applying the principle of historicism to artistic

works, especially in the context of their treatment as historical sources. One of the key aspects is assessing to what extent epic works can be considered a source of guidance for society or whether they are rather semi-mythical representations of the past.

John Bryan Hainsworth (1991) is convinced that epic is a phenomenon that extends far beyond the literary genre, encompassing broader cultural and social aspects, including the musical sphere. According to the scholar, an epic is not just a form of literary creation but a kind of philosophy and world-understanding that touches the deep roots of human culture. The researcher emphasises the connection of epic with the formation of national identity, mythological concepts, historical processes and cultural evolution. The author argues that the epic serves not just as a mirror of artistic achievements but also as a reflection of the spirit of the times, national consciousness and collective memory. There is a need for a more thorough study of this cultural organism, which permeates many aspects of human life.

Oral epics deserve special attention; they are a unique phenomenon that goes far beyond the boundaries of a simple literary work, according to Karl Reichl (2021). In the study, the scholar emphasises that oral epic is not limited only to verbal presentation but is a living process based on multidimensional interactions between the performer and the audience. This, according to the author's conclusions, creates a special cultural experience that cannot be fully recreated in written form. Examining works of oral epic, the researcher highlights their role in shaping collective memory and community identity. The oral performance of an epic, as the researcher argues, serves not only as a means of preserving cultural values but also as a dynamic process that supports the constant renewal and interpretation of mythological stories, which is worth investigating more thoroughly.

For example, the musical and epic heritage provided by Korqyt has an undeniable influence on the modern era. As a mythical poet, philosopher and spiritual guide, Korqyt is highly regarded in Kazakh culture and is a prominent figure in Turkic folklore and history. Generations throughout Central Asia continue to be inspired and moved by the teachings of Korqyt, who is renowned for his knowledge and contributions to poetry and music. His influence on the cultural and spiritual fabric of the Kazakh people goes beyond simple folklore; he represents tenacity, insight and the enduring spirit of the nomadic way of life (Assembly of People of Kazakhstan 2024).

The view of his heritage presented by Sholpan Smagul and Almagul Bitikova (2023) emphasises its temporal stability and significance over long centuries. The scholars note that Korqyt left behind a unique creation that permeates not only the time frame of its origin but also exists as an important component of cultural heritage. The researchers highlight that the compositional elements of "Kitabi dede Korkud" have an incredible resilience that can survive many generations. In the context of the modern era, where musical currents and

styles are constantly changing, the scholars believe that Korkyt's legacy represents a unique historical component that can enrich the contemporary epic space. It is not just an artefact of the past but a living source of inspiration that can contribute to contemporary musical practices and creative pursuits. It is worthwhile to study more deeply the peculiarities of the musical epic tradition of Kazakhstan and other peoples of Central Asia.

The study of different versions of the epic "Alpamys" by researcher Amagul Turdymuratova (2023) emphasises that the differences in plots allow looking into the depth of cultural, religious and artistic aspects of each version, which contributes to a fuller understanding of the richness and diversity of the ethnic literary tradition. The researcher also emphasises the artistic value of the different versions of the epic, highlighting the power and beauty of certain lines, such as the description of Gulparshina's appearance and Gulparshina's response to his enemies. These moments, highlighted in the "Alpamys" epic, give the narrative a special character and emotional depth. She also highlights the significant increase in the praise of the Muslim religion in the epic, which, for example, contrasts significantly with the religion of the Kalmyks, adding a new level of complexity to the epic tradition by emphasising the religious differences between characters and groups. There is a need for further research on the different variants of the epic to create a general idea of the importance and power of this literary phenomenon in the context of the peoples of Central Asia.

Guzal Egamberdieva (2021) argues that in folklore, each genre has its own unique features, as there are specific internal prerequisites for depicting different images in each genre. The scholar draws attention to the fact that, with the passage of time and changing forms of social consciousness, myths undergo changes, and their classical features turn into a potential area for new forms of artistic creation. The impact of folklore is particularly noticeable in the images of magic passed into the structure of fairy tales, the researcher notes. These images, going back to their roots in folklore, change the structure of fairy tales and then are integrated into dastannas (traditional epic poems or heroic narratives of Turkic and Central Asian peoples), which emphasises the dynamic evolution of images and their ability to adapt to changing social consciousness. It is important to note that the images associated with folklore have a significant impact on magic and fantasy tales. This process not only illustrates the dynamism of cultural heritage but also highlights how mythological images are transferred and adapted within different genres and art forms. The study of these dynamics in the context of Central Asian folklore traditions will provide a better understanding of how these images enrich and shape peoples' artistic heritage.

The aim of this study is to analyse the relationship between historical events and the creation of epic works such as "Alpamys", "Korogly", and "Kitabi dede Korkud", focusing on their role and significance in the context of Central Asian culture.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The analytical method used in this study played a key role in parsing and analysing the collected materials. This method helped to identify the key components of the epics and folklore, as well as to highlight the main themes and motifs present in them. Using the analytical method, the impact of the heroic epics of the peoples of Central Asia on various aspects of the region's culture and history was explored. Analysing the epic allowed immersion in the historical context, ethnic memory and socio-cultural dynamics. This method revealed the key role of the epic in shaping the values and ethical standards of society, reflecting the norms by which social consciousness and interpersonal relations were formed. The analysis of musical epic works such as "Alpamys", "Korogly", and "Kitabi dede Korkud", considering historical events and characters, allowed a deeper understanding and appreciation of their historical and cultural significance.

The method of generalisation allowed this paper to summarise the findings and conclusions of the study. This method helped to highlight the main patterns and trends that were traced in the epics and folklore under consideration and to draw generalised conclusions about the cultural heritage and historical peculiarities of the Central Asian region. The method of generalisation in this paper allowed for studying various aspects of the phenomenon "Epic", considering it from different perspectives. The method of generalisation allowed the identification of common themes, trends and features of epic works, which contributed to a fuller and deeper understanding of the essence of the epic, its role in culture and society, as well as its impact on various aspects of human life. This method made it possible to see Epic as a multifaceted and multidimensional phenomenon reflecting complex aspects of human experience and cultural heritage. Through this method, it was possible to explore the importance of characters and their relationship to historical figures, which emphasised the role of these works in preserving and transmitting the cultural and historical heritage of the people.

The systematisation method was used to organise the information collected in the research to create a structured and logically coherent analysis. The systematisation helped to organise the data into specific categories, which facilitated a more in-depth and comprehensive study of the topic. The study of epic folklore using the method of systematisation allowed the identification of common features and unique characteristics that are important not only for historical and cultural understanding of the region but also for inspiring contemporary creativity. Using the method of systematisation, the role of epic folklore and its musical embodiment in shaping the cultural development of Central Asia has been revealed, providing a valuable source for future research and inspiration.

The application of the historical-typological method in the study of Central Asian epics and folklore allowed for assessing the diversity of their forms and content, as well as identifying the common features and specificities of the cultural context in which they emerged. Using the historical-typological method, the work investigated the epic folklore of Central Asian peoples, such as “Alpamys”, “Kitabi dede Korkud”, and “Korogly”. This method facilitated the study of different aspects of the cultural heritage of these peoples through the prism of historicism and typology.

RESULTS

In the context of the rich epic tradition of the peoples of Central Asia, an unusually diverse repertoire was formed, closely intertwined with the ethnic history of nomadic tribes, which gives it a unique character. The heroic epic, being an integral part of the cultural heritage, represents a unique layer of knowledge about the past, transmitted from generation to generation.

Epic is not just a form of literary creation but a complex cultural phenomenon encompassing various aspects of the human experience. Epic is a way of transmitting values, traditions and moral lessons, influencing the formation of social outlook (Hardie 2020; Tucker 2021). Texts recognised as epics often contain heavily mythologized interpretations of historical events. This phenomenon is common in various cultural traditions, where the epic serves as a means of transmitting and preserving collective memory. Mythological aspects in such texts can have a variety of functions: to inspire people with heroic images, to provide alternative interpretations of historical events, and to reinforce cultural identity (Gay 2011). However, the distinction between historical facts and mythological elements in epic texts can be difficult and controversial. These texts require careful analysis in order to distinguish facts from mythological interpretations and to understand their role in shaping collective memory and cultural identity.

From the perspective of historicism, it is important to understand how the meanings of epic texts, their ideas or artefacts are shaped through their relationship to the historical context in which they occur or are transmitted. For historicism, historical conditions determine all meanings. This means that nothing has a ‘natural’, eternal, or universal meaning; meaning is made up of the language, beliefs, practices, institutions and desires of particular cultures within a particular historical context (Malpas 2013; Beiser 2021). In turn, the study of the music and epic tradition of Central Asian peoples based on heroic epics in the context of typology is concerned with how historical conditions and context influence the formation and interpretation of epic materials. This approach recognises that the meaning and significance of an epic are shaped by its relationship to the historical realities, culture and social context inherent in a particular epoch and people.

Epic folklore acts not only as artistic works but also embodies a kind of chronicle reflecting the events experienced by people in different historical epochs (Kongyratbay & Kongyratbay 2013). This aspect makes the heroic epic an invaluable source for researching and understanding the cultural, social and ethnic aspects of Central Asian society. It is important to realise that the heroic epic carries not only artistic heritage but also multifaceted echoes of historical realities, thus characterising the spirit and collective identity of the people (Table 1). To view the epic solely as a work of fiction is to overlook its function as a narrative history that epitomises a particular stage in the development of society.

Table 1. Features of the heroic epic

No.	Aspect	Description
1	The role of the heroic epic	The heroic epic is seen as a “people’s history” through which a unique perspective on historical events is conveyed, and ethnic identity is formed.
2	The meaning of the epic	Each epic is not just a collection of heroic deeds, but also an important contribution to the preservation of cultural characteristics, traditions and the formation of public memory.
3	Implications for public memory	The epic is preserved in a continuous rhythm of the story, which allows preserving public memory and passing on historical heritage from older generations to younger ones.

Source: compiled by the authors.

Heroic epics play a role in the formation of public memory and the transmission of cultural heritage from generation to generation. Through the epic, a unique perspective on historical events is transmitted, and the cultural peculiarities and traditions of the people are preserved. The process of passing on epic works becomes a kind of ritual, symbolising not only the teaching of history, but also emphasising the role of the epic in shaping collective consciousness. In this context, the heroic epic becomes a bridge between the past and the future, uniting generations in a continuous flow of cultural heritage. It should also be emphasised that heroic epics go beyond the mere narration of heroes and events. They act as moral and socio-cultural regulators, shaping the values and ethical standards of society. Their symbolism contains the norms by which social consciousness was formed and relations between people were built (Eder & Holyan 2010; Allison & Goethals 2016). Thus, the study of the heroic epic of the peoples of Central Asia is not only an analysis of artistic and poetic features but also a dive into the deep layers of history, ethnic memory and socio-cultural dynamics. Epic is a key to understanding the unique features of a society and its relationship with the world around it, making this study relevant

and important in the context of preserving and transmitting the cultural heritage of Central Asia.

Epic plays a significant role in shaping the culture and values of a people (Efremov 2025). It serves not only as a means of transmitting and preserving mythological and historical stories but also influences the self-consciousness and identity of a society. Epic sets the models of heroism, morality and ethics, which influence the behaviour of individuals and the formation of their values (Doszhan 2023b). It also influences aesthetic perceptions and cultural traditions, reflecting the particular tastes and preferences of a people. Finally, epic is an important tool for preserving and transmitting historical memory, which contributes to the preservation of cultural heritage and collective identity. Thus, it is worth concluding that the epic has a profound and multifaceted influence on the culture and values of the people, shaping them and serving as a kind of mirror of society and its historical traditions.

Kazakh “Alpamys” is an epic of the Konyrat tribe. Originating in Mongolia, the Konyrats were a well-known Turkic nomad tribe who gained prominence in the 13th century during Genghis Khan’s Mongol Empire. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, following the disintegration of the Mongol Empire, the Konyrats moved westward into what is now Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. They made their home in the region surrounding the Kyzyl Kum desert and the Syr Darya river valley, which is where the epic “Alpamys” takes place. Among the Kazakh ethnic groups that arose from the ruins of the Golden Horde, the Konyrats preserved their tribal identity and customs. Their ancestral link to Genghis Khan and role in the Mongol imperial system gave the Konyrats a distinguished lineage within the complex tribal hierarchy of mediaeval Central Asia (Zhengis 2022).

The heroic epic presented in the legend of “Alpamys” becomes a common denominator for the Turkic peoples of Altai, whose history goes back to the deep antiquity of Central Asia. Today, the Kazakhs own most of the territory of Deshti-Kipchak, which may give them leadership in the Turkic world. Given that the events of the epic are closely linked to this region, it provides a great opportunity for spiritual revitalization and allows the locals to experience their national history. The complexity of ethnic processes and the sacrifices that the nobles had to make along the way are better understood by looking at the past (Abdir & Nusupova & Aabykhanova 2021). It is in heroic epics that national cultural values and traditions are found. The plethora of animated series, books and tales about Alpamys in the last ten years is a landmark achievement in preserving this cultural heritage. By focusing on the personality of Alpamys, it is possible to merge modern values with the traditions of the past, giving new meaning to this epic in a new era. To limit the history of the Kazakh people only to the period of the foundation of the Kazakh Khanate is wrong. The modern generation can perceive “Alpamys” as a source of inspiration and pride in the national heritage.

The text of the epic “Alpamys” notes the struggle with the Kalmyks, which is a historical memory of the times of the Oirat nomadic state in the steppes of Dzungaria. Such passages contain descriptions of military battles, the defence of the native land from the Kalmyks’ invasion, and other events related to this conflict. The description of the customs, traditions and social organisation of the people, including references to marriage rites, customs of taxation, the system of tribal relations and other aspects of life also contains references to historical events and realities. The epic reflects the historical role of the Konyrat tribe in the Genghis Khan era, when it occupied an important position. The information that Genghis Khan’s mother and eldest wife were from this tribe, as well as the marriage of their daughter to a representative of this people, confirm their connection with the Konyrats. Additionally, the mention of kinship and matchmaking between Konyrats and Kiyat, according to Rashid ad-Din, emphasises their importance in the social structure of that time. It is also known that historical and genealogical sources confirm the migration of the Konyrat tribe from Mongolia to Central Asia in the early 13th century. Thus, the epic not only reflects these real historical events but also serves as an important source for understanding and studying the role of the Konyrats in shaping the cultural and social heritage of that time (Kongyratbay 2021).

At the same time, Korogly is a semi-mystical folk hero, covering the second half of the 16th century in his legend. The 16th century was a turbulent period, marked by political upheaval and power struggles between various empires and dynasties vying for control over territories in Central Asia and the Caucasus region. The once-powerful Timurid Empire was crumbling at this time, and in the early 1500s, the Shaybanid Uzbek dynasty emerged to dominate its eastern lands. The Safavid dynasty in Persia was extending its sphere of influence in the west while frequently at odds with the Ottoman Empire over contested territories.

The image of Korogly permeates the folklore of many Turkic peoples and becomes a common motif in their folklore. According to one legend, Korogly’s mother became pregnant by the light and was buried alive. However, the newborn Korogly survived by sucking his dead mother’s milk. In Azerbaijani Turkic tradition, he is called Korogly (son of the blind man) because his father’s eyes were gouged out. There are different versions of the legends adapted in different countries. The concept of blindness in the stories of Korogly means not only loss of sight but also invisibility. Heroes become invisible in order to protect themselves. This aspect of blindness in the “Korogly” legends represents more than physical loss of sight; it is a symbol of invisibility in society. The image of Korogly and his story are reflected in the “Korogly” epic. In this epic, “Korogly” appears as a brave warrior, a talented poet and ashug, author of poems, which remains in history as a fact (kizi Eminova 2021). In the context of historicism and typology in the study of the musical epic tradition of the peoples of Central Asia, the story of Korogly is not only a folklore character but

also a key element of cultural heritage. His image and the legends surrounding his name serve as an important source for studying the traditions, values and musical heritage of these peoples. The study of different variants of the “Korogly” legend makes it possible to identify common features and differences in the cultural aspects of different groups of Turkic-speaking peoples.

The “Korogly” epic contains elements that can be related to historical events and characters. It describes the struggle of heroes against tyrants and injustice, which reflects the historical context of the times of rebellions and freedom struggles. Characters such as the Korogly may be inspired by real historical figures who participated in rebellions against authority. Some events in the epic, such as fleeing to the mountains, forming their own gang of brigands, and fighting against tyrants reflect real historical processes such as rebellions and struggles for the rights of the people. Thus, the story of Korogly, interwoven into different legends, not only reveals the unique features of folk culture but also enriches the understanding of the musical and epic traditions of Central Asia. Korogly’s leading role in the formation of the national epic testifies to its importance as a key cultural artefact passed down through generations and serving as a source for the study and understanding of these peoples’ past.

In turn, the musical-epic legacy of “Kitabi dede Korkud” is a tale that represents one of the most significant works of Turkic literature. This monument partly describes the life and exploits of the legendary hero Korkyt. “Kitabi dede Korkud” stands out for its unique compositional richness and exquisite language, surviving centuries and enriched with new meanings in a modern context. These elements not only hold their value through the centuries but also acquire new meanings that resonate in contemporary art. It is particularly important to note that in the modern era, when art strives for authenticity and depth, Korkyt’s epic tales take on a special significance and become a source of inspiration. This is due not only to his storytelling skills but also to the deep spiritual essence he puts into his works. Thus, Korkyt’s musical and epic heritage continues to be an integral part of the cultural canon. Its current relevance not only emphasises the artistic heritage of the past but also demonstrates its potential to inspire and influence contemporary creative endeavours. This heritage is a living bridge between the past and present, skilfully adapting to changing times and remaining a valuable source of inspiration for new generations of creators. An important aspect of this epic is that it not only tells of the hero’s exploits but also embodies the values and traditions of the Kazakh people. “Kitabi dede Korkud” serves not only as a source of entertainment but also as a symbol of national identity and pride. This epic is important as a cultural artefact that transmits and preserves the cultural heritage of the Kazakh people and its history.

The epic “Kitabi dede Korkud” is an important literary work that combines elements of folklore, history and the culture of Turkic peoples. It describes the adventures and exploits of heroes overcoming various trials and fighting for

their land and people. The historical events and periods described in the epic reflect the displacement and conquests of the Oghuz, their confrontation with other ethnic groups, as well as the life and culture of these people. The places of action in the epic correspond to the historical and geographical regions inhabited by the Oghuz and other Turkic tribes. The Oghuz tribes left their ancestral country in Central Asia and undertook a huge wave of westward migration between the 9th and 11th centuries CE. They encountered conflict and interacted with other ethnic groups across the Eurasian steppe as a result of their expansion. The Oghuz arrived in the late 9th century and settled in the territories west of the Ural River and north of the Aral Sea, where they interacted with the local Pecheneg, Bulgar, and Khazar tribes. The Khazars and Bulgars were conquered by the Oghuz by the 10th century, and they were assimilated into their tribal society. They then engaged in combat with the Pechenegs and Byzantines as they advanced further westward into the Pontic-Caspian steppe. Under the leadership of tribe chiefs like Seljuk and his successors, the Oghuz reached the height of their dominance during this period in the late 10th and early 11th centuries, dominating extensive areas spanning from the Aral Sea to the Black Sea region (Karamustafa 2023).

The main character of the epic “Kitabi dede Korkud” is a symbol of wisdom and devotion to his people. He helps to solve problems and fights for justice, being a messenger from the future and giving advice. The images of other characters in the epic also reflect heroism, devotion and the struggle for their ideals. Each of the twelve tales that make up the epic contains elements of heroism, devotion and the struggle for freedom and justice. Despite its literary significance, the “Kitabi dede Korkud” is also a source for the study of the history and culture of Turkic peoples, and the correspondences between the epic’s content and historical data emphasise its importance as a cultural and historical source.

Historicism and typology play a key role in the study and understanding of epic folklore, such as the “Alpamys” and “Korogly”, among the Turkic peoples of Central Asia. These stories, although they have fictional elements, are important for the study of historical events, cultural characteristics and traditions of the peoples of the region. In their totality, they represent a valuable source for the study of ethnic memory and socio-cultural dynamics. The legends of “Alpamys” and “Korogly” fit into the vast genre of heroic epics and are key elements of cultural heritage. Their study allows for a better understanding of the evolution and formation of these legends, as well as their role in the preservation and transmission of the cultural values of the peoples of Central Asia. The musical-epic heritage of Korkyt also stands out for its unique compositional richness and exquisite folkloric language, which continues to be an integral part of the cultural canon. Its relevance in today’s world emphasises its potential to inspire and influence contemporary creative aspirations. Thus, these epic tales are not only key elements of the cultural heritage of Central Asia but also a valuable source for learning about the past and inspiring future generations.

DISCUSSION

The study of the problem of historicism and typology in the context of the musical epic tradition of the peoples of Central Asia, especially in connection with the heroic epic, has attracted the attention of many scholars. Their works present a variety of approaches to the classification and interpretation of epic materials, taking into account their historical background, cultural peculiarities and social contexts. Some scholars tend to analyse different versions of the epic in different historical periods, identifying changes in plot, images and motifs. Others focus on identifying the typological features of the epic by comparing it with similar traditions in other cultures or regions. Comparing these perspectives with the results of the present study will reveal commonalities and differences in the methods of analysing and interpreting epic materials. Such comparison contributes to a deeper understanding of the Central Asian musical epic tradition and its diversity in different research contexts.

Frederick Turner (2012) emphasises many important functions of the epic. The researcher notes that the epic not only defines the nature of the human narrator but also recalls the creation of the world and the human race. In addition, the epic describes the paradoxical role of the hero as a philistine and radical exception and establishes the complex quest underlying all human actions. The main thesis of the researcher is that these aspects of epic narrative are universal cultural elements present in different geographical locations, historical eras, ethnic and linguistic groups and at different levels of technological and economic development. The researcher emphasises that the epic, despite criticism and neglect, remains the most fundamental and important of all literary forms. The author argues that the epic is the source and beginning of all other literature, providing the framework within which any story is possible. In the opinion of the author, the epic deserves serious critical attention, and his aim is to fill the gaps in the literary understanding of epic studies and to inspire future epic writers and composers. It should be noted that the epic of the peoples of Central Asia is a significant cultural phenomenon that plays an important role in the formation and preservation of their identity. This epic not only conveys historical and mythological stories but also reflects the values, beliefs and traditions of that culture. It serves as a means of transmitting knowledge and experience from one generation to the next, enriching the cultural heritage of the region. It is also important to note that Central Asian epics have a universal significance, promoting understanding and respect for cultural diversity in a global context. Turner looks at the epic tradition in general, but the current study focuses on how the epics of Central Asia embrace the archetypal qualities and purposes the researcher lists for epics, including defining the human experience, establishing heroic ideals and quests, and passing down cultural memory. The researcher's claims regarding the importance of epics are supported by the analysis, which offers a case study with a regional emphasis.

Hüseyin Alhas (2023) claims that understanding the changes in the images of epic heroes is important for a deeper perception of the evolution of the epic literary genre. The scholar draws attention to the influence of cultural and social changes on the characteristics of epic heroes. The researcher is convinced that epic characters reflect the spirit of the times, emphasising their evolution in accordance with the changing values and expectations of society. By analysing epic characters in the context of Central Asian folklore, it is possible to identify features that distinguish them from Western epic heroes. The influence of historical and ethnic processes on the formation of hero images in epics becomes a key point of comparison with changes in the images of epic heroes. The cultural meanings and unique traits of Central Asian peoples form unique aspects of epic heroes, emphasising the diversity of this region in the context of epic tradition (Issakova et al. 2023). This corresponds to the methodology employed in the current study, which examines the archetypal heroes found in the epics of *Alpamys*, *Korogly*, and *Kitabi Dede Korkut* by connecting them to the historical, cultural, and ethnic settings of Central Asian societies. The unique depictions of characters such as *Alpamys* and *Korogly* exemplify the heroic ideals and ethos influenced by the particular experiences of the Turkic nomads living in that area.

Richard B. Rutherford (2012) suggests that there is an important relationship between epic and historiography. The researcher examines the structure and meaning of epic works in the context of historiography, identifying parallels between the two types of literature. The researcher stresses that epic and historiography, despite their differences, share common features in the organisation of narrative and the provision of meanings. Rutherford is convinced that epic works include the description of historical events, characters and cultural features of a certain epoch, which allows epic to be used as a source of information for studying the past, reconstructing historical events and analysing the socio-cultural environment. Epic can serve as a means of the formation and transmission of historical memory, preserving important events and characters for future generations and helping to preserve the historical heritage and cultural identity of peoples (Doszhan 2023a). Consequently, in the context of the musical epic tradition of the peoples of Central Asia, one can see parallels with the way heroic epic interacts with historical material. This analogy may shed light on the influence of epic tradition on the formation and transmission of historical memory in this region. By analysing how particular Central Asian epics contain elements and depictions that parallel historical accounts, the current study supports the opinions of Rutherford by demonstrating how these epics can be useful resources for comprehending the historical eras, figures and cultural contexts of that region. The analysis points out instances in which these epics record or mythologize important historical occurrences and figures that are pertinent to the ethnic history of communities in Central Asia.

Lascelles Abercrombie (2019) examines the epic in the context of its structure, function and impact on the reader. The author points out that epic is not only a form of art but also plays an essential role in culture and society. The scholar emphasises how epic shapes the world around it, influencing the perception and understanding of history, morality and cultural values in society. By comparing the results of this study with the music-epic tradition of the peoples of Central Asia, one can see parallels in how the epic influences the formation of cultural values and historical memory. In this context, the music-epic tradition serves not only as a means of artistic expression but also as a key element in the preservation and transmission of cultural heritage in this region. The present study's comprehensive examination of how epics such as *Alpamys*, *Korogly*, and *Kitabi Dede Korkut* have influenced Central Asian cultural identities, moral frameworks and historical consciousness throughout millennia validates the opinions of the scholar. The analysis presents empirical data from primary sources that highlights the substantial effects these particular epic works have had in areas where the researcher theorises. Epics have the ability to significantly influence the worldviews of entire communities (Sheikh 2018).

Karl Reichl (2021) emphasises several important aspects concerning the oral epic. The researcher draws attention to the close relationship between the performer of oral poetry and his audience, believing that the process of creating and performing an oral epic is inextricably linked to the context of this interaction. According to Reichl, this process has a significant impact on the interpretation of the text once it has been fixed in written form. One of the key points emphasised by the researcher is the transition from the oral transmission of epic material to its interpretation in written form. The scholar argues that in the process of oral performance, there are specialised mechanisms and strategies that are used by performers of oral poetry to attract the audience's attention and convey the story. These elements, according to the study, influence the perception and interpretation of the text once it becomes an object of written analysis. Comparing the results of this study with the musical epic tradition of Central Asian peoples, it is necessary to emphasise the importance of the transmission of oral epics in different cultural contexts. This phenomenon testifies to its significance and wide dissemination in world cultures. The current work's analysis of famous oral epics from Central Asia benefits greatly from the researcher's attention to the performative dynamics of oral epics. The textual analysis considered how the oral performance environments described by the scholar, in which bards used methods to engage live audiences, might have influenced the written copies. Comprehending this shift from oral to written forms reveals subtle interpretations in the epics examined here, which reflect a rich legacy of storytelling in performing arts throughout the area.

Researchers emphasise the importance of epic as a cultural phenomenon and its evolution in different cultural and historical contexts. According to scholars, the epic plays a fundamental role in literature and culture, remaining the

source and beginning of all other literature. It is worth paying attention to the evolution of images of epic heroes in the context of cultural and social changes, as well as to the unique features and meanings that are formed under the influence of historical and ethnic processes, particularly in the epic of the peoples of Central Asia. The significance of the epic as a cultural heritage and its influence on the formation and preservation of the identities of different cultural communities is great. It is an important tool for transmitting and interpreting historical events, moral lessons and cultural norms in different cultural contexts. The parallel between epic and historiography indicates that epic works are more important than just literary works; they also represent an important source for historical analysis and understanding of the past. The impact of the epic on the formation of cultural identity and the transmission of cultural heritage points to its key role in preserving and disseminating the cultural wealth of different societies. Thus, epic is an integral part of the cultural heritage of humanity, which continues to be relevant and significant in the modern world.

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to examine how historical occurrences influenced the composition of epic poems like “Alpamys”, “Korogly”, and “Kitabi dede Korkud”, with an emphasis on the poems’ meaning and function within Central Asian culture. The study of the heroic epics of the peoples of Central Asia not only contributes to the analysis of their artistic and poetic aspects, but also delves into the deep layers of history, ethnic memory and socio-cultural dynamics. Epic plays a key role in shaping the values and ethical standards of society, reflecting the norms by which social consciousness was formed and relations between people were built. The influence of the epic on the culture and values of the people is also important.

It was discovered that the epics “Alpamys”, “Korogly”, and “Kitabi dede Korkud” included allusions and representations that closely matched documented historical events and periods that the peoples of Central Asia went through. The research showed that these epics encode real historical people, cultural customs and sociopolitical realities in their unique contexts rather than just retelling mythological heroic tales. Key figures such as Alpamys are inextricably linked to the collective historical experiences and ethnic heritage that they represent. The depicted customs, power structures and value systems closely resemble the nomadic societies that the epics are derived from. As a result, this research has shown that the musical epics of Kitabi Dede Korkut, Alpamys, and Korogly are in fact priceless resources for learning about the past, identities and worldviews of Central Asian civilizations. Their importance goes much beyond their artistic or intellectual worth; in essence, they are generation-by-generation anthropological anthologies. Through analysing the historical elements woven into their poetic stories, it is possible obtain

a comprehensive understanding of how the Central Asian peoples interpreted their own historical experiences and worldviews.

Therefore, a richer comprehension and contextualization of the historical and cultural heritage reflected by these storytelling traditions is made possible by analysing these musical-epic works in relation to documented historical events and people. Future research on this subject should focus on contrasting various regional and ethnic renditions of the studied epic folklore, as this can reveal distinctive elements of cultural heritage and recurring themes, as well as information about how these legends have developed and interacted with one another.

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