

## **Historical Reality as an Integral System in the Context of the Development of Kazakh Culture and Islamic Traditions**

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### **Abstract**

This study examines the issues of historical reality as an integral system in the context of the development of the Kazakh culture of epic singing and versification. Songs from a certain era were the recognition of historical moments such as the “national catastrophe” of the XVIII century, reflecting the opposition to the colonisation of the XIX century and the participation of famous historical figures in the 1916 national liberation uprising. The purpose of this study is to investigate the Kazakh folk epic poetry represented by legends, songs and poems, which reflect the various cultural events of the Kazakh historical reality of national evolvment and development. The primary approach used in this study is the combination of a systematic analysis of the materials from Kazakh national song and poetic culture with the logical development of the results and conclusions of this study. The main results of this study are the establishment of the conditional reliability of the events described in historical poetry. Assessing the historical reality of a single state in general and Kazakhstan in particular, one should consider the fact that not all historical events that have taken place were reflected in the works of national poets and became part of the national epic poetry. The various historical events and circumstances that occurred in the country throughout its history should also be considered. The prospects for subsequent study in this area are determined by the importance of studying the origins and traditions of the folklore of the Republic of Kazakhstan as the historical reality of the development of the state, which forms an integral system of the historical existence of the Kazakh people. The practical significance of this study lies in its potential to apply its findings to achieve a comprehensive understanding of specific phases in the evolution of Kazakh song and oral folklore, within the broader context of Kazakh cultural traditions.

**Keywords:** Folklore, song writing, literature, culture, cultural traditions, factual accuracy

### **Introduction**

The origin of historical epic songs and poems has a great influence on the historical development of Kazakhstan since the legend tends to reflect real historical events. The processes of development of Kazakh Horde, historical personalities' deeds that are significant for the history of the development of the state are reflected in numerous legends (a narrative folklore work containing fantastical elements). The kings of the Kazakh Horde, such as Az Zhanibek, Esim Khan, Tauke Khan, Abylaikhan and Kenesary Khans, have become historical heroes. The Kazakh government that managed the processes of national importance during the XV-XVII centuries was reflected in the national epic poetry such as “Az Zhanibek,” “Esim hero,” “Oljash hero,” “Satbek hero,” “Tauke Khan,” which are mentioned in context of their time. The folk legends often present a variety of events that have become relevant topics related to the crucial life situations of characters and generations. Kazakh culture, which has synthesised the cultures of more than a hundred nationalities, is unique. The secret of this uniqueness lies in dialogicity (the interactive and collaborative nature of Kazakh culture), which is not limited to simple communication or exchange of information between representatives of different nationalities.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A. A. Musinova (2015), “Problems of dialogic culture of Kazakhstan in the new information society,” *Eurasian Union of Scientists*, Vol. 12, No. 21, pp. 26-30; A. Tleubergenova et al. (2016), “Typological Features of the Kazakh Ethnic Picture of the World,” *International journal of environmental & science education*, Vol. 11, No. 12, pp. 5250-5260.

For example, some legends and tales (small narrative folklore works passed down orally from generation to generation) that spread across the population are a reflection of certain events of the XVIII century. The most important element of many studies is the “Forest Catastrophe of the XVIII Century in the History,” where many of those who suffered and were associated with the birth of large-scale literary works, have become heroes of historical fairy tales. In the XVIII century the national liberation struggle of the people was described mentioning heroes Abylai Kabanbai, Bogenbai, Zhanibek, Olzhabai, Otegen, Syrym.<sup>2</sup>

“Kozy Korpesh and Bayan Sulu” is a classic example of Kazakh folk, romantic epic poetry. In the past, it constituted an important part of the repertoire of many performers of epic legends, including such talented akyns-improvisers as Zhanak, Shozhe, Kultuma, Orynbai, Tubek, Sybanbai, Beisenbai, Weis, Bekbau, Orynbai, Sakau akin, etc. They have not only preserved carefully and performed what was received from their predecessors but often introduced innovations at the various levels of poetics due to which variations were created, more than thirty of which are known now.<sup>3</sup> Notably, the oral sources hold a prominent place in a wide range of sources dedicated to the history of the Kazakh people. Various monuments of oral creativity of Kazakhs and peoples of the Great Steppe, which contain important data, are irreplaceable for the reconstruction of the historical past.<sup>4</sup>

The spread of Islam among the nomadic Kazakh tribes, occurring approximately between the 15th and 19th centuries, left a deep imprint on their folk culture and oral storytelling traditions. As Sufi mystical orders like the Yasawiya attracted followers across the steppe lands, their philosophical ideas and devotional motif permeated poetic and musical repertoires. Legendary Sufi saints like Ahmad Yasawi, known for advocating tolerance, concord and the purification of one’s inner self, became hugely popular literary-cultural heroes. Storytellers and bakhshi singers incorporated tales of their miraculous deeds alongside older Central Asian narratives of heroic warriors or cunning tricksters.

For example, the wide range of legends focused on Khawaja Ahmad Yasawi, often portrayed with shamanic abilities to manipulate natural forces, derive mainly from hagiographic accounts and show how narratives once reserved for mythic tribal founders became invested in Sufi figures. As Kazakh society gradually Islamized, such creative fusions occurred recursively across oral tradition as tellers brought pre-Islamic nomadic culture face-to-face with the civilization of sedentary Muslim peoples. Their epics hence organically interweaved older steppe motifs like magical horses, eagles and wolves with Islamic ideas of virtue, divine providence or the Creator’s absolute unity. Analysing these intricate amalgams within oral narratives provides insight into how the ancient configuration of beliefs in the Kazakh world transformed under persisting waves of Islamization.

Despite all their rich and vibrant variety, other types of arts did not have such significance as literature and music possessed in the XV-XVIII centuries, even though they were mostly of a utilitarian nature.<sup>5</sup> Thus, in the context of presented historical realities, the culture of Kazakh singing, versification, and the prevailing folk traditions are a reflection of historical events of the past that influenced the subsequent history of the country. When analysing the specifics of the oral poetry of Kazakhs, scholars often resort to comparing it with the oral poetry of Arab nomads Bedouins, who created wonderful pieces of world poetry in the pre-Islamic in economic and cultural environments that were similar to those of Kazakhs. According to scholar S.E. Tolybekov, lyrics along with the epic poetry is the strongest genre of Kazakh oral poetry. It was generated by the socio-economic and natural environments of their social production, which was nomadic cattle breeding. V.G. Belinsky wrote that “The Arabs,

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<sup>2</sup> S. Babič (2020), “Waste and dirt in short folklore forms,” *Traditiones*, Vol. 49, No. 1, pp. 125-139; E. Zengin (2020), “The essence of the concept of folk in herder’s definitions of folklore,” *Milli Folklor*, Vol. 2020, No. 126, pp. 18-26; K. Aktulum (2018), “Folk linguistics,” *Milli Folklor*, Vol. 2018, No. 118, pp. 5-18; Zengin (2020), “The essence of the concept of folk in herder’s definitions of folklore,” pp. 18-26.

<sup>3</sup> B. U. Azibayeva (2017), “To the history of recording, publication and study of the epic “Kozy Korpesh and Bayan Sulu,”” *Historical and Socio-Educational Thought*, Vol. 9, No. 5/1, pp. 195-201.

<sup>4</sup> Z. O. Artykbayev (2017), “Kazakh historical legends about Altai (Eltai, Elata) batyr: ethnogenealogical plots as a source on the ethnogenesis of Kazakhs and Sakha. Arctic XXI Century,” *Humanities*, Vol. 1, No. 11, pp. 38-49; S. Kitilä (2020), “Folklore as an evidential category,” *Folia Linguistica*, Vol. 54, No. 3, pp. 697-721; Ü. S. Demirbilek (2020), “Common elements of steppe culture in the epic of Oguz khagan with Uighur alphabet and Orkhon inscriptions,” *Milli Folklor*, Vol. 2020, No. 125, pp. 60-70.

<sup>5</sup> K. S. Zhanabayev (2016), “On the peculiarities of the development of Kazakh poetry in the XV-XVIII centuries. General characteristics,” *Scientific Notes of the Khujand State University named after Academician B. Gafurov. Humanities*, Vol. 2, pp. 153-161.

who were not a nation but a nomadic tribe scattered across the desert ... there was only lyrical, or lyrical-epic poetry, but there was no dramatic poetry and could not be one.”<sup>6</sup>

The main purpose of this study is to examine the issues of historical reality as an integral system in the context of the development of Kazakh epic singing and poetry culture. The relevance lies in the fact that the songs of a certain era were a recognition of historical moments, such as the “national catastrophe” of the XVIII century, a reflection of resistance to colonisation in the XIX century and participation in the national liberation uprising of 1916. The main objectives of the study are to analyse Kazakh folk epic poetry and its connection with real historical events, to assess the cultural traditions of Kazakhstan and the created historical reality as a system, and to determine the prospects for further study of this issue.

## Literature Review

The literary review of sources covering the development of the culture of Kazakhstan as a historical reality in an integral system of social development demonstrates the diverse nature of scholars’ opinions on the issues raised in this study. For instance, the study of the problems of dialogicity of Kazakh culture by A.A. Musinova<sup>7</sup> notes that Kazakh culture is dialogic on a global scale. More than seventy years ago, it borrowed opera, ballet, symphonic music, and the traditions of the fine arts from European countries. The organic assimilation of these types and genres of artistic creativity became possible due to their enrichment with national originality, the embodiment of the peculiarities of the cultural life of the Kazakhs. In turn, upon considering the history of studying the epic “Kozy Korpesh and Bayan Sulu” B.U. Azibayeva<sup>8</sup> emphasises the fact that ancient customs generated here by the patriarchal-feudal lifestyle, unwritten family and marriage laws, social and everyday realities of Kazakh society that constitute the basis and the general background of the romance epic poem, or rather enter as an element of the plot in the narrative. Throughout the story, ancient customs are not criticised.<sup>9</sup> This is a confirmation of the thesis that the facts described in the works of the Kazakh folk epic poetry are a reflection of real historical events.

In study of Kazakh legends, Zh.O. Artykbayev<sup>10</sup> notes that oral sources hold a prominent place in a wide range of sources on the history of the Kazakh people. The tones of information contained in various monuments of Kazakh and their predecessors’ (steppe peoples of the Great Steppe Belt) oral creativity are irreplaceable in the reconstruction of the historical past. Unfortunately, these national sources have not yet become subject matter for specialists in Kazakh history. The general outlines of oral creativity include whole cycles of historical stories and legends, widely popular epic poems, dedications (tolgau), proverbs and sayings, and sometimes any accurate assessments of certain historical events or their participants.<sup>11</sup> In turn, upon examining the development of Kazakh poetry in the XV-XVIII centuries, K.S. Zhanabayev<sup>12</sup> notes that in ancient times, when ritual-sacred and ritual-everyday magic were part of the folklore and general akynsk practice, they represented the common heritage of all adult members of the tribe who were familiar with the order, details, and subtleties of ancient holidays and general tribal rituals and ceremonies.

The Kazakh people can be proud of their multilayered heritage, which is reflected in music, songs and poetry. A distinctive history, national challenges, the struggle for justice and freedom, and the personal joys and sorrows of the Kazakh people are intertwined in the works of great Kazakh composers and writers, revealing a rich world of Kazakh culture and traditions. However, this is not just a historical reference; traditional musical styles continue to evolve and be heard in a contemporary context, testifying to the deep self-awareness of the Kazakh people and their pride in their cultural heritage. Thus, the literature review demonstrates the diversity of scholars’ approaches to the issues related to the subject matter of this study.

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<sup>6</sup> S. E. Tolybekov (1971), “On some features of the development of the economic and cultural life of a nomadic society and on the erroneous theory of “nomadic feudalism” by academician B.Ya. Vladimirtsov,” in *Nomadic society of Kazakhs in the 17th – early 20th centuries*, Almaty: Nauka, pp. 166-233; V. G. Belinsky (2014), *The division of poetry into genera and types: journalism*, Moscow: Direkt-Media.

<sup>7</sup> Musinova (2015), “Problems of dialogic culture of Kazakhstan in the new information society,” pp. 26-30.

<sup>8</sup> Azibayeva (2017), “To the history of recording, publication and study of the epic “Kozy Korpesh and Bayan Sulu,” pp. 195-201.

<sup>9</sup> Azibayeva (2017), “To the history of recording, publication and study of the epic “Kozy Korpesh and Bayan Sulu,” pp. 195-201.

<sup>10</sup> Artykbayev (2017), “Kazakh historical legends about Altai (Eltai, Elata) batyr,” pp. 38-49.

<sup>11</sup> Artykbayev (2017), “Kazakh historical legends about Altai (Eltai, Elata) batyr,” pp. 38-49.

<sup>12</sup> Zhanabayev (2016), “On the peculiarities of the development of Kazakh poetry in the XV-XVIII centuries,” pp. 153-161.

## **Methodology**

The task of this study is to investigate the historical reality as an integral system in the context of the development of the Kazakh culture of epic singing and versification, as well as the existing folklore traditions of the people. The subject matter of the study is the culture of the Kazakh people as a reflection of real historical events that took place at various stages of the development of Kazakh society. The study examines the relationship between real historical events of the country and their reflection in songs, poems, legends and other cultural monuments of Kazakh people. During the discussion of the facts and events reflected in literary works, the authors make a certain assessment of the cultural traditions of the Republic of Kazakhstan, as well as the created historical reality as an integral system. The presented opinions of the scholars regarding this matter allows for achieving more accurate results. The specificity of this study lies in the analysis of the historical reality of a single state (Kazakhstan). The authors of this study highlight several factors that should be considered in the course of this research, and point out the difficulties that come up during this type of study.

The leading approach of this study is the combination of the system analysis of the literary works of the Kazakh national singing and poetic culture with the logical construction of the results and conclusions of this study. By analysing the scientific literature on this issue, the authors have identified the main approaches and concepts to the reflection of historical reality in the folklore and epic poetry of the Kazakh people. A systematic analysis of the works of Kazakh folk song and poetry culture has revealed the regularities of reflecting real historical events and persons in the works. The method of generalisation was used to formulate the conclusions of the study based on the results of the analysis. Songs, lyrical, and epic poetry, as well as other cultural monuments, portray real historical events and persons that have influenced the development of Kazakh society and its current state, which is a consequence of all the processes of social life that took place in different periods of history. By choosing the works of the Kazakh folk epic poetry as the research material, this study contributes to the highest quality coverage of a wide range of issues defined by the subject matter, and, in combination with systematic analysis of these works, helps develop a holistic perception of the historical reality of Kazakhstan within the framework of the presented literary monuments. At the same time, the methodology chosen for this study is most apt since it allows reflecting the relationship between real history and folk epic poetry in the context of the current historical reality as an integral system for the development of cultural traditions of Kazakhstan.

## **Results**

The study of the issues of historical reality as an integral system in the context of the development of the Kazakh culture of epic singing and versification, as well as the reflection of real historical events in folk legends, has led to the following results. The XVIII century Kazakh poetry creates the basis for the birth of the folk epic heroes and demonstrates their historical feat. Poems from this period play a key role for unity and solidarity.<sup>13</sup> This phenomenon can also be found in the Kyrgyz epic. At the end of the poems, it will be filled with responses to the psalm, which is satisfaction with the spirit of glory and the hero's intention. The Altaians have no similar faith. The scholar of the Mongol-Oirat heroic epic poetry B.Ya Vladimirtsov<sup>14</sup> investigated the concept of "a heroic poem that depicted the glory of dead people who gathered to listen to poetry and copper." The authors of the names of the heroes discussed little known versions. In fact, the released first version of the song about Kokbay does not confirm the validity of this assessment.

The question that has caused controversy between modern scholars about Kabanbai is about the time of birth and death of the hero. The evidence to support these theories can be found in poetic versions. Essentially, there are no specific facts or data about when Kabanbai was born and died. This is a fact that must be recognised. In 1781, when Abulaikhan died, Bukharzhyrau turned one hundred years old. When Kabanbai died, Bukhara was eighty-eight years old. This means that he died in 1769, 12 years earlier than Abulai. Even the Kazakh Soviet Encyclopaedia does not contain any data regarding this

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<sup>13</sup> A. Omarova et al. (2020), "Kazakh musical and poetic art in the context of globalization | Arte musical y poético de Kazakh en el contexto de la globalización," *Opcion*, Vol. 36, pp. 387-406; I. O. Omarov and A. M. Pankratova (1944), *History of the Kazakh SSR. From ancient times to the present day*, Almaty: Zolotoordynskoye obozreniye; G. Sadykova, G. Narbekova, and Z. Smagulova (2015), "Cultural Integration of Kazakhstan: Challenges and Opportunities," *International Journal of Social Science and Humanity*, Vol. 5, No. 9, pp. 779-782.

<sup>14</sup> B. Ya. Vladimirtsov (1923), *Mongol-Oirat heroic epic*, Moscow: Gosudarstvennoye Izdatelstvo.

question. Dowitbek Nurtazin, who studies the life of Kabanbai, is probably right about the fact that the “Kabanbai hero” was born in Yesil-Nur.<sup>15</sup> In the first half of the XVIII century, Durbits and merchants inhabited the Altai and Tarbagatai regions, the Ksoyts lived in the Kara-Irtysh, and the Tarbagatai Khoshavts lived between them. The borders of Kazakhstan and Dzungaria changed as these two countries became weaker or stronger. At the time of Tsevan Rabdan and Kaldan Seren (Semey nowadays), East Kazakhstan, Taltukorgan, all of Almaty, Karaganda, and most of Pavlodar were part of Dzungaria.

Hence, especially after 1745, Abilaykhan and other Kazakh heroes led by Bogenbai and Kabanbai, began to free their ancient ancestors and led the liberation movement. The national hero Naiman Kabanbai in the XVIII century, as well as members of other tribes of the Middle Zhuz, lived in the south and in the centre of Kazakhstan. This is stated in the third part of the five-volume history of the Kazakh SSR.<sup>16</sup> In this book, the Central Zhuz lived in Central Kazakhstan, where winter and summer pastures included the region of the Sarusu River, the beginning of the Irtysh, along the Turgai and Tobol rivers, the Ulytau mountains and the lakes bordering them. Some of the Naiman tribes such as the Sadyrbai and Matai spend their winters around Karatau, the rest of them did it in Sura and Sarusa, and in the summer they settled in Ark to Ishim, Nura, Irgiz and Turgai. It has been noticed that some of them have always settled here both in winter and in summer. Nowadays, two branches of the Naiman tribe Baltalus and Baganalus live in Central Kazakhstan. Apparently, the hero nation of Kabanbai Karakerei inhabited Ishim and Nura at that time. There is an idea that Makanchi, Aksuat, Tarbagatai, Zaisan and others dwelled in their present places. Their ancestors came from the regions of Yesil-Nura, Arka. There was an interesting case (found in many variants), when Kabanbai was ill, and Abylai, Bukhar and others came to visit him. Bukharzhurau expresses concern for Kabanbai, who was the leader the three Zhuz, as follows:<sup>17</sup>

Ainalayin Kabanbai,  
When you need an enemy.  
If there are disputes from afar  
If there is a light next to the enemy,  
Stallion's belt. Watered a thousand horses  
Spring from Tosca  
I heard yesterday afternoon.  
Kabanbai is sick  
I cried like an orphan.

When analysing the condolences spoken on behalf of Bukhara the focus should be on the words “I heard yesterday.” Therefore, this means that the villages of these two nations were close to each other. More precisely, the Bukharzhurau settlement was Saruarka. In the versions of Kydyrmolla Adilbekov, who was the performer and writer that wrote down the poems of the “Kabanbai hero,” there are lines “live in Ashusu, Yesil-Nura, Sarybel in the early years.” These words have nothing to do with a person who does not know the hero but with his descendant. In other versions of “Kabanbai Hero” there are scenes of an enemy attacking a peaceful country. According to one version, the Kyrgyz hero Amanalu attacked the Kazakhs, knowing about the absence of Kabanbai. According to the other version, the Kalmyks attacked the Kazakh land. In poetry, Kyrgyz Ateke is described as a military leader who led the Kalmyks to the land of the Kazakh people. The third version says that the Kalmyks are hitting the country of Kazakhstan but in the fight against Kabanbai they end up with the words: “that was when the Kyrgyz came to gather.”<sup>18</sup>

It is known that the Kalmyks did not make significant attacks on the Kazakhs after 1757-1758. In all versions of the poems about the famous Kazakh hero Kabanbai, the rhetoricians revolve around the leadership of the hero. Poetry includes the names of all great and unique historical figures. Many of them state the Kyrgyz hero who died in the fight mentioned in “Kabanbai Bogatyr” is Ateke-Gurak. There is no consistency in the version of these verses. The words of the groom, whom the Kazakh army

<sup>15</sup> Tolybekov (1971), “On some features of the development of the economic and cultural life of a nomadic society.”

<sup>16</sup> Tolybekov (1971), “On some features of the development of the economic and cultural life of a nomadic society.”

<sup>17</sup> Belinsky (2014), *The division of poetry into genera and types*.

<sup>18</sup> A. Zh. Zhaksylykov and A. B. Naurzbayeva (2015), “Forerunners of the word in the poetic culture of Zhyrau. Scientific Notes of the Khujand State University named after Academician B. Gafurov,” *Humanities*, Vol. 43, pp. 120-126.

met on the way to the enemy, indicate that the hero Ateke is not weak. Ateke-Gurak, who defeated some Kazakh heroes, was killed by Kabanbai:<sup>19</sup>

My boss is Ateke-Gurak, - he said, -  
Nobody can beat him.  
Said came to destroy the Kazakhs.

This is also repeated in "Poetry about Abylai," where Ateke was killed by the Kazakh army. It is said that Ateke was alive in 1784. Shokan's work mentions that Ateke participated in the Kazakh-Kyrgyz conflict in 1770. There is no information about death. Most refer to the data in the poem by Umma Zhyrau. Kayum Mukhamedkhanulu, who conducts research related to Kabanbai, in article "Who can be like Kabanbai?" cites the stories of the talented poet Sultanmakhmut Toraigurov, written by Kabanbai's descendant Kurban-haji.<sup>20</sup> The story included in stories, which begins with "The period of Abylaykhan was the time when the Kazakh-Kyrgyz conflicts ended" (the so-called "Jalanash Baba" from "Kurban-haji") has the same meaning as in Umbey's poem. It also describes the division of the Kyrgyz into two parts after the victory of the Kazakh army during the Great Morning. But even here there is no data on Ateke's death. Thus, evaluating historical reality as an integral system in the works of the folk epic, one can only talk about the presumptive reliability of the events described in the works of Kazakh culture.

## Discussion

Discussion about various aspects of reflection in literary works, which represent a certain cross section of the cultural traditions of the Republic of Kazakhstan, of the developed historical reality as an integral system demonstrates the wealth of value judgments of scholars within the framework of the subject matter. Thus, in their joint study, A.Zh. Zhaksylykov and A.B. Naurzbayeva<sup>21</sup> note that military poetry (heroic epic poetry, songs, dastans, heroic tales, verbal magic of warriors) developed due to the fact that the clans or tribes were in constant conflict with other tribes and nations. The peaceful life of equestrian nomads presupposed military campaigns and battles. The conditions of a nomadic life required mastering military skills early in life.<sup>22</sup> F.M. Valiullina,<sup>23</sup> when describing the images of epic literature in her study, indicates that Zhyrau is a widespread image among the Turkic peoples. This is not a simple storyteller but a sage and ideologist, a singer and a warrior who calls for following the highest ideals. Storytellers always stand out among the masses. Each era had its own storyteller.<sup>24</sup> This emphasises the role of the narrator of folk epic literature in preserving the integrity of historical reality.

G.I. Vlasova,<sup>25</sup> when exploring the poetics of the Kazakh cultural text, draws attention to the fact that in the modern sociocultural situation, the identification of the originality of the Kazakh Eurasian "cultural text" on the basis of regional literature seems relevant and productive. In this case, the Kazakh text means the realisation of the country in images, motives, space-time and axiological assessments. The Kazakh text can also be regarded as a phenomenon of civilisational and cultural borderland.<sup>26</sup> At the same time, some scholars emphasise the problem of the specifics of the literary genre as a way of transmitting historical information. In particular, A.M. Kazieva and A.K. Kadbray<sup>27</sup> in a joint study note that the literary genre is one of the specific literary categories that can give a complete artistic and aesthetic idea of the literary work. Unlike the categories of genus, composition and plot, artistic space/time, form, pathos, which indicate one specific level of organisation of a literary text, the genre category purposefully "collects" listed concepts. Thus, scholars emphasise the specificity of the literary genre as a way of transmitting historical information, which significantly affects its reliability. In

<sup>19</sup> Tolybekov (1971), "On some features of the development of the economic and cultural life of a nomadic society."

<sup>20</sup> Artykbayev (2017), "Kazakh historical legends about Altai (Eltai, Elata) batyr," pp. 38-49; Zhanabayev (2016), "On the peculiarities of the development of Kazakh poetry in the XV-XVIII centuries," pp. 153-161.

<sup>21</sup> Zhaksylykov and A. B. Naurzbayeva (2015), "Forerunners of the word in the poetic culture of Zhyrau," pp. 120-126.

<sup>22</sup> Zhaksylykov and A. B. Naurzbayeva (2015), "Forerunners of the word in the poetic culture of Zhyrau," pp. 120-126.

<sup>23</sup> F. M. Valiullina (2014), "The image of Zhyrau in epic works," *Bulletin of the South Ural State Humanitarian and Pedagogical University*, Vol. 4, pp. 188-195.

<sup>24</sup> Valiullina (2014), "The image of Zhyrau in epic works," pp. 188-195.

<sup>25</sup> G. I. Vlasova (2019), "Eurasian poetics of the Kazakh cultural text (based on modern poetry)," *World of Russian Speaking Countries*, Vol. 7, pp. 84-93.

<sup>26</sup> Vlasova (2019), "Eurasian poetics of the Kazakh cultural text," pp. 84-93.

<sup>27</sup> A. M. Kazieva and A. K. Kadbray (2018), "Actualisation of sonnet thinking in the Russian-language poetry of Kazakhstan. Bulletin of the Dagestan State Pedagogical University," *Social and Human Sciences*, Vol. 12, No. 1, pp. 1-7.

addition, the scholar attention to the fact that a scientific approach to the study of the genre-poetic process requires the creation of a genre concept that is effective at all stages of the genre's development and in various socio-historical circumstances. The necessity to introduce a unified scientific concept is also evidenced by the level of study of existing genres.<sup>28</sup>

Historical poetry demonstrates the heroic deeds for the most part. Poems of the early periods play a key role in the unity and cohesion of the people. The artistic level of such works is usually uneven. Some of them are written in the grammatically correct language, even though the historical background sometimes acquires a symbolic reflection, and it could be said that people have long begun to realise this. Depending on the succession of contemporary songs, poetic legends soften violent events in different ways.<sup>29</sup> Thus, in "Bogenbai," there are three variants of the beginning of a song with a genealogy. A similar phenomenon occurs in epic poems. The phenomenon of beginning a song with a genealogy is prominent for poetic models of the XVIII-XIX centuries in particular. The question that has caused controversy between modern scholars about Kabanbai is where this great hero was born and died. Evidence that can serve as an argument in favour of this question can be found in poetic versions that require critical interpretation of their content to distinguish fiction from true facts. There are no actual facts or data about when Kabanbai was born and died. At the same time, there is no full information about the place of birth of the hero Kabanbai. Even the Kazakh Soviet Encyclopedia does not contain any data about this.<sup>30</sup>

One can name the poetry about the "Surum Hero" as one of the poems of the XVIII century, which is a large-scale literary work based on legends. There is a period of Surum's attack on Nuraly Khan and attempts of the authorities to persuade him. It tells how Surum was blessed with one of the famous binamaz of the country and went to Bukar. It also describes the conversation with Khan Bukar, demonstrating eloquence, the attack of the returning khan, the poisoning of the stirrup and the death of the hero. Looking at this poetry, it could be recognised that the heroism and valour of Surum have turned into a volume of epic literary work. This also shows one aspect of the nature of historical poetry. The structure of the "Surum Hero" poem is not limited to one event. In fact, the hero Surum is a man who led the armed uprising of the Kazakh people against the Orenburg governor and Nuraly Khan during the mass uprising led by Pugachev in 1773-1775. He actively participated in the uprising, attacking the tsar's border fortress and strongholds. Historians calculated that the long struggle of the Kazakhs Kushu Dzhus under the leadership of the hero Surum from 1783 to 1795 is related to the Pugachev uprising. The pertinent question may arise as to why not all of these events are shown in the verses. In this case, it is necessary to take into account the historical circumstances and various events that occurred in the country. This happens due to the effect of all kinds of propaganda struggle against "historical poetry." The same can be said about historical real-life poems that emerged as a result of opposition to the colonisation policy in the XIX century and the national liberation uprising of 1916. It is necessary to take into account the specifics of combining historical poems.<sup>31</sup>

The gradual conversion of Kazakh tribes and clans to Islam over several centuries, especially from the 15th onwards, brought the nomadic steppe culture of the region into intense contact with the literary and religious civilization of sedentary Muslim peoples. This complex encounter left a deep impact on the themes and ideas expressed in Kazakh oral literature as it evolved over time. As Sufi influences permeated Kazakh culture, oral poets and bards absorbed concepts from Islamic philosophy and wove them organically into tales of ancestral heroes, mythical beasts and shamanic adventures. The slow integration of Islamic thought is evident across the corpus of Kazakh folk epics, legends, heroic songs and hagiographic accounts. As one influential case, the narrative poem "Kozy Korpesh and Bayan Sulu" skilfully braids together threads from Kazakh epic tradition, local lyric songs and the hikayat storytelling genre in Muslim cultures, indicative of how Islamization shaped aesthetic sensibilities.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Kazieva and Kadbray (2018), "Actualisation of sonnet thinking in the Russian-language poetry of Kazakhstan," pp. 1-7.

<sup>29</sup> E. Lienert (2019), "Contradictions in heroic epic narration," *Beitrag zur Geschichte der Deutschen Sprache und Literatur*, Vol. 141, No. 2, pp. 225-259; D. F. Reynolds (2018), *Heroic poets, poetic heroes: The ethnography of performance in an Arabic oral epic tradition*, New York: Cornell University Press; A. Amezaga (2019), "Cultural field and literature in minority languages: Basque under Francoism," *Poetics*, Vol. 77, p. 101398.

<sup>30</sup> Kazieva and Kadbray (2018), "Actualisation of sonnet thinking in the Russian-language poetry of Kazakhstan," pp. 1-7; Lienert (2019), "Contradictions in heroic epic narration," pp. 225-259.

<sup>31</sup> Vladimirtsov (1923), *Mongol-Oirat heroic epic*.

<sup>32</sup> B. U. Azibayeva (2017), "To the history of recording, publication and study of the epic "Kozy Korpesh and Bayan Sulu"," *Historical and Socio-Educational Thought*, Vol. 9, No. 5/1, pp. 195-201.

The depicted adventures of the star-crossed lovers clearly exhibit an Islamicate worldview in their definitive sense of divine destiny and emphasis on spiritual purity while retaining many pagan elements. This cultural hybridity resulted directly from the penetration of mystical Sufi Islam into the pre-existing nomadic societies and their rich oral-poetic memory over centuries of coexistence and commingling. Tracking how indigenous folk narratives adapted dominant Islamic tropes and ethical perspectives thus illuminates the contingent, dialogic evolution of steppe cultural traditions under expansive Muslim theopolitical power.

The Kazakh origin of historical epic songs and poems greatly influences the course of events, as the legend plays a crucial role in comprehending the storyline. A variety of events that have become topical issues related to the life of the protagonist and generations have occurred there. Historical songs often reflect a heroic epic unifying character.<sup>33</sup> However, there are vivid differences between these poems from the heroic epic poetry. They keep the secrets of historical events and have an inspiring character.<sup>34</sup> Songs of a certain era were recognition of historical moments such as the “national catastrophe” of the XVIII century, representing resistance to colonisation in the XIX century and participation in the national liberation uprising of 1916. Kazakhs fiercely resisted the colonisation of the Russian Empire in the XIX century. This was manifested in numerous uprisings against the tsarist rule, such as the uprising led by Kenesary Qasymov in the 1830s and 1840s. Kazakhs sought to maintain their independence and resist forced Christianisation and Russian colonial policies that led to the loss of land and deterioration of living conditions for Kazakh nomads. Despite temporary successes, these uprisings were eventually crushed by the tsarist regime due to its military superiority. Nevertheless, resistance to colonialism became an important part of Kazakh national identity and went down in historical memory as a heroic struggle for freedom.<sup>35</sup> In the Kazakh steppe, the epoch of the XVIII century was turbulent. Scholars have gathered a lot of information from the works of poets. Thus, the discussion of the issues raised by the topic demonstrates the diversity of the opinions expressed, which necessitates the subsequent expansion of ideas about these issues.

## Conclusions

The research of the issues of historical reality as an integral system in the context of the development of the Kazakh culture of epic singing and versification has led to the following conclusions. Assessing the historical reality of a single state in general and Kazakhstan in particular, one should consider the fact that not all historical events that have taken place were reflected in the works of folk poets and became part of the national epic poetry. You should also take into account the various historical events and circumstances that took place in the country throughout its history. Thus, there are certain difficulties in perceiving historical reality as an integral system in which various confrontations between “historical poetry” and reality occur. It is necessary to take into account the specifics of creation of particular poetic works in the context of real historical events and the specifics of combining historical poems within a specific topic to create a holistic view of historical events and their reflection in specific works of literature and cultural traditions of the Kazakh people.

Scholars emphasise the specificity of the literary genre as a way of transmitting historical information, which significantly affects its reliability. A scientific approach to the study of the genre-poetic process requires the creation of a genre concept that is effective at all stages of the development of the genre and in various socio-historical circumstances. The necessity to introduce a unified concept is also evidenced by the level of study of existing genres. Thus, when evaluating historical reality as an integral system in the works of the folk epic poetry, one can only talk about the presumptive reliability of the events described in the works of Kazakh culture.

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<sup>33</sup> R. Doszhan (2023), “Multi-vector cultural connection in the conditions of modern globalization,” *Interdisciplinary Cultural and Humanities Review*, Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 27-32.

<sup>34</sup> L. K. Sommers (2019), “Folklore and historic preservation: past, present, and future,” *Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 132, pp. 359-389; R. Adelman and C. Packham (2018), *Political economy, literature & the formation of knowledge, 1720-1850*, London: Taylor and Francis; A. Cura di Monica Pacini and E. Luisa Tasca (2020), “Between history and literature: telling, inventing, composing,” *Passato e Presente*, Vol. 110, pp. 81-105.

<sup>35</sup> Z. B. Akhmetzhanova, K. T. Kabataeva and M. S. Toizhigitova (2015), “Comparative-typological analysis of Kazakh historical songs,” *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol. 6, No. 5, pp. 240-248; Y. Daiyun (2000), “The Development of Plural Cultures and the Future of Comparative Literature,” *Comparative Literature: East & West*, Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 136-141.

The main contribution of this study to science is the establishment of the fact that when assessing historical reality as an integral system of the development of the Kazakh culture of epic singing and poetry, it should be taken into account that not all historical events are reflected in folklore, there are certain difficulties in perceiving the integrity of the historical process, and it is necessary to take into account the specifics of the genre and historical context of individual works. Therefore, the authenticity of the events described in the works can only be conditionally stated.

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