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THE EPIC “EDIGE BATYR”: TYPOLOGY OF THE EXISTING TURKIC VERSIONS

Edige is a major figure who appeared on the stage of history in the second half of the 14th century, when the Golden Horde has weakened and was destroyed due to the strives between the rulers who were competing for the Khanate, and the once powerful state began to disintegrate. He was a famous bi and a brave batyr who ruled the country. Not only the Kazakhs, but also the Turks, the Kyrgyz, the Karakalpak, the Uzbek, the Turkmen, the Tatar, the Nogai, the Bashkir peoples honor him as a “heroic ancestor”. This situation shows that ones these peoples were called “Nogayli” and represented a whole country under one roof.

The main goal of the article is to compare the national variants of the epic “Edige batyr” which takes great place in the literature of not only the Kazakh people, but also the Turkic peoples, and by comparing it with the epics and general historical heritage of other peoples, to prove that it is not a historical epic, but a genre which is between heroic and historical epic, and that the epic is a common heritage of the Turkic peoples. Typological comparisons have been conducted which show that the Kazakh, the Nogai, the Karakalpak and the Tatar versions of the plot have more typological similarities. To clarify that all national versions have mythical and fairy-tale motifs and episodes, and especially in Karakalpak, Bashkir and Tatar versions.

Key words: folklore, epic, typology, variant, manuscript, national version, Golden Horde.

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«Едіге батыр» эпосы: түркі нұсқаларының типологиясы

Едіге – XIV ғасырдың екінші жартысында Алтын орданың әлсіреп, хандыққа таласушы билеушілердің өзара қырқысуынан іргесі босап, бір кездегі күшті мемлекеттің ыдырай бастаған кезінде тарих сахнасына шыққан ірі тұлға. Ол ел тізгінін ұстаған беделді би әрі қол бастаған батыр болған. Едігені қазақтар ғана емес, түрік, қырғыз, қарақалпақ, өзбек, түркмен, татар, ноғай, башқұрт халықтары да “батыр бабамыз” деп ардақтайды. Осы жағдай бұл халықтардың бір кезде “ноғайлы” атанып, бір шаңырақтың астында бір тұтас ел болғанын көрсетеді.

Мақаланың негізгі мақсаты – тек қазақ жұрты ғана емес, сол сияқты түрік халықтарының әдебиетінде үлкен орны бар “Едіге батыр” жырының ұлттық версияларын өзара салыстыру және өзге халықтардың эпосы мен жалпы тарихи мұрасымен салғастыра зерттеу арқылы оларға тән ортақ ерекшеліктерді, сарындарды анықтау. Соның нәтижесінде оның тарихи жыр емес, батырлық жыр мен тарихи жыр арасындағы жанр екендігін және жырдың түркі халықтарының ортақ мұрасы екенін дәлелдеу. Типологиялық салыстырулар жүргізіліп, түркілер ішіндегі қазақ, ноғай, қарақалпақ, татар версияларында сюжеттің типологиялық ұқсастығы молырақ ұшырасатынын көрсету. Ұлттық версиялардың бәрінде де мифтік, ертегілік сарындар мен эпизодтар бар екені, бұларға қарақалпақ, башқұрт, татар версияларында мол орын берілгендігін айқындау.

Түйін сөздер: фольклор, эпос, типология, вариант, қолжазба, ұлттық нұсқа, Алтын Орда.

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Эпос “Едіге батыр”: типология существующих тюркских вариантов

Едіге – великая личность, появившийся на исторической сцене во второй половине XIV века, когда Золотая Орда ослабла и была разрушена из-за распрей правителей, соперничавших за ханство, и некогда сильное государство начало распадаться. Он был знаменитым бием и отважным героем, который держал в руках бразды правления страной. Не только казахи, но

и тюрки, киргизы, каракалпаки, узбеки, туркмены, татары, ногайцы, башкиры чтят его как “героического предка”. Эта ситуация показывает, что когда-то эти народы назывались “ногайлы” и представляли собой целую страну под одной крышей.

Основная цель статьи – сравнить национальные варианты эпоса “Едиге батыр”, который занимает важное место в литературе не только казахского народа, но и тюркских народов, и, сравнивая его с эпосами и общим историческим наследием других народов, определить их общие черты и характеристики доказывают, что это не исторический эпос, а жанр, находящийся на пересечении героического и исторического эпоса, и что эпос является общим наследием тюркских народов. Точно так же говорится, что эпос “Едиге батыр” имеет особенность, непохожую ни на один другой эпос, то есть здесь отражены признаки сказки, легенды героического и исторического эпоса. Проведены типологические сравнения, которые показывают, что казахская, ногайская, каракалпакская и татарская версии сюжета имеют больше типологических сходств. Уточнить, что во всех национальных версиях есть мифические, сказочные мотивы и эпизоды, и особенно в каракалпакской, башкирской и татарской версиях.

Ключевые слова: фольклор, эпос, типология, вариант, рукопись, национальный вариант, Золотая Орда.

Introduction

“Edige Batyr” is one of the legends that have been told in the country for centuries. Since ancient times the epic poems and legends about Edige batyr have been widespread among many peoples of Kazakhstan, Turkey, Central Asia, Siberia, the Volga region, the Caucasus and the Crimea.

The epic poem is a common Turkic heritage. It tells a lot about the history of the Golden Horde, the Nogai Horde, the Emir-Temir dynasty and the Desht Kipchak of the late XIV and early XV centuries. Edige not only gained independence for the Nogay Horde but also became a legendary hero in the territory of the former Golden Horde (Kara, 2010). Although the plot of the poem gives the illusion of various historical events related to the life, historical surroundings and ways of struggle of a historical person who once influenced the entire territory of Eurasia, the poem also contains a lot of fantastic events characteristic of the old epics. In other words, although the epic poem has the name of a famous person, its structure forms a complex framework that has acquired a special character, worthy of the spirit of folklore and traditions of epic poetry.

The basis for many years of irrational accusations about Edige hero was the resolution adopted by the the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union-Bosheviks on 9 August 1944 “On the state of the mass political and ideological work of the Party organisation in Tatarstan and measures for its improvement”. Then the poem “Edige Batyr”, the popular poetry of the Kazakh people since ancient times, became prohibited. No one paid any attention to those who said that the poem was historical, artistic and popular among the people. It was the eminent scholar V.M. Zhir-

munsky who played an important role in making the long-forgotten history of the “Edige Batyr” known and seriously studied. A detailed analysis of “Edige Batyr” and many other poems was made in his monograph on Turkic epic (Zhirmunsky, 1974). In this work, Zhirmunsky not only presents the facts related to Edige, but also describes the historical foundations that gave rise to the Kazakh Nogai epic in general. We know that the essence of V.M. Zhirmunsky’s research is to restore the value of the epic poem, which has been considered unilaterally and presented as hostile, and to draw public attention to it. At the same time, the scholar’s concern for the cultural heritage is emphasized by identification of the genre characteristics of the “Edige” epic poem and the proof that it is important monument created by the people’s imagination. This work by V.M. Zhirmunsky contributed much to the Edige studies.

The epic poem “Edige” is a legacy and like other zhyrs, it has undergone many changes in the course of its creation and development and has survived to the present day. From the first small versions of the poem “Edige”, which became a voluminous poem, it was spread orally all over the country. Today there are about twenty versions of the Kazakh poem, which have spread all over the country. A. Divayev, M.Zh. Kopeev, K. Sattarov and others have collected different versions of the poem. And the zhyrshi Zhumagul, Nurtugan, K. Zhasarbayev and other zhyrshi sang this epic poem and thus contributed much to the spread of this poem among the public. It is worth noting that they tried to sing the epic poem “Edige” in their own way and not to repeat each other. They used to add the most favourable moments of the epic story. It is known that there are about forty versions of the poem. These include the versions of other Turkic peoples.

The fact that this epic poem was widely spread among the people is proved by the large number of singers and versions of the poem.

Material and methods

In their research the authors used the following available materials: the 39th volume of the “Babalar sozy” (Words of Ancestors) 100 volume collection series, which was published on the basis of folklore values in the framework of the “Cultural heritage” State programme, the 1st volume of the “Anthology of the Steppe Folklore” published in 2019, handwritten versions of the epic kept in the rare collections of the Central Scientific Library and of the M.O. Auezov Institute of Literature and Art. The research on the epic “Edige” is based on the research works of the domestic and foreign scholars working in the field of epic studies. The article analysed the epic “Edige” from the point of view of the latest theoretical and methodological conclusions of the folklore and epic studies.

Typological, textological, historical-typological, and comparative-typological methods of research form the methodological basis of the work.

Literature Review

In different periods, Sh. Ualikhanov, P.M. Melioransky, A.M. Samoilovich, P.A. Falev, V. Radlov, G. Potanin, A. Khodzko, K. Satbayev, M. Auezov, V.M. Zhirmunsky, R. Berdibayev, S. Kaskabasov, Anuar Mamut, Sagadat Chagatai, M. Osmonov, H.Zarifov, Sh. Ibraev and others scholars gave their valuable comments on the epic poem “Edige”.

Shokan Ualikhanov was the first person to record the Kazakh version of “Edige Zhyr”. According to Sh. Ualikhanov, he heard the poem for the first time in 1841. It was sung by the Kipchack akyn Zhumagul. The oldest version of the poem was presented to Genghis by Zhumagul. Genghis had three versions of this epic. Combining these three versions, Sh. Ualikhanov asked his father for advice, consulted with him and created a single version of the poem. And the Sultan Ahmet Zhanturin wrote it down on paper.

Sh. Ualikhanov suggests that the poem “Edige” describes the events of the end of the 19th century, but must have been composed at the beginning of the 20th century (Ualikhanov, 2010: 238). Sh. Ualikhanov was the first Kazakh folklorist to note that historical poems were a new type, distinct from ancient heroic epics. He says that the epic Edige is

about a real historical person about whom people made legends.

In 1904 the first volume of the collection was published under the direction of professor N.I. Veselovsky, the Vice-Rector of St. Petersburg University. And the poem “Edige”, translated into Russian by Shokan, was included into this collection. P.M. Melioransky, Russian scientist and professor at St. Petersburg University, wrote a preface to the original poem manuscripted by Shokan. And in 1905 he published a book in St. Petersburg entitled “The Legend of Edige and Tokhtamysh” based on this manuscript.

The importance and value of this publication lies not only in the fact that the most artistic and complete version of the poem is published for the first time, but also in the fact that the poem tells about the degree of imagining the historical reality, about the stages of creating it. The version of Shokan, in terms of its beauty, size and antiquity, is recognised as the most valuable of the surviving poems about Edige. Scholars call this poem the classical version of Shokan Ualikhanov.

The version of Shokan of the epic “Edige”, which is very popular among the Kazakh people, has been the subject of a number of publications during the Soviet period. In particular, it was reprinted in 1927 by K. Satbayev, in 1933 – by S. Seifullin, in 1939 – by S. Mukanov. There was then a ban on the publication of poems about Edige, and only fifty years later the poem was republished.

The epic “Yer Edige” was published twice in 1989. It was published in the magazine “Zhuldyz” (No. 7) and in the 5th volume of “Batyrlar Zhyry” (The Epic of Heroes) published by the Writers’ Publishing House (Kazakh Folk Literature, 1989).

Later, in 1993, E. Magauin published this version while his research on it (Edige, 1993). The epic “Yer Edige”, which was published in Moscow in 1927 with a preface by K.I. Satbayev, was republished in 1995, 1996, 1999 and 2019.

In the early eighties, academician of the National Academy of Sciences R. Berdibayev began to draw public attention to the issue of the epic’s historical features and worked on improving the methodology of scientific work. With positive views on “Edige Batyr”, individual versions and fragments of this poem started appearing on the pages of newspapers, magazines and collections.

After the country gained sovereignty, literary heritage and valuable researches about a person like Edige, who played a special role in national history, began to be published. Over the next two decades,

research was carried out from a new perspective to complete the work on Edige. The gaps left by the Soviet era were filled in. The following researches can serve as evidence of the above: research works done by R. Berdibayev (Berdibayev, 2013), E. Magauin (Edige, 1993), Zh. Asanov (Asanov, 2020) and “Babalar Sozi” (Words of Ancestors) a one-hundred volume publication (Babalar Sozi, 2006), “Anthology of Steppe Folklore” (Anthology of Steppe Folklore, 2019) as well as “Kazakh folklore and literature in the collections of Russian orientologists-Turkologists before the beginning of the XX century. Narrative sources” published by M.O.Auezov Institute of Literature and Art (Auyesbayeva et al., 2022). In 2011, Jensen wrote about the Kazakh version of the epic: “The tradition is known in a variety of more or less closely related Turkic languages, Noghay, Kazakh, Tatar, Bashkir, and Karakalpak, and versions were recorded in writing already in the 19th century. Especially, manuscripts of Kazakh versions, written between 1820 and 1950, are preserved in the archives. The last Kazakh singer to know the epic was Murin-jiraw Senirbek-uli, who died in 1954. In his repertoire the epic of Edige formed part of a cycle about the forty Noghay heroes” (Jensen, 2011).

Results and Discussion

Issues of collecting and publishing original versions of the poem “Edige Batyr” from different countries began in early periods. The poem about “Edige” was first published in 1820 in “Siberian Vestnik”. This publication is summary of the Kazakh poem about Edige in Russian. It was written by the writer G.I. Spassky, who was born and grew up in Siberia. G.I. Spassky (1783-1864) was the first corresponding member of the Russian Academy of Sciences in the field of Oriental studies. He made a significant contribution to the study of ethnography and folklore of the Kazakh people.

A. Khodzko (1857-1883), Polish poet and Orientalist, is another person who published the poem “Edige”. He recorded a number of poems about Edige from the Nogai people who lived near Astrakhan. The book “Persian folk poetry”, published in London in 1842, contains the translation of the manuscript into English.

In his book, published in 1895, N. Semenov quotes a translation of the epic “Edige”, which he recorded in 1880 - 1881 among the Nogai, who lived near Astrakhan. Osmanov’s anthology “Nogai and Kumyk texts”, published in St. Petersburg in 1883, includes this and other existing versions of

Nogai. Commenting on the version he prepared, M. Osmonov said “The stories and poems of Edige are performed in different ways by storytellers and epic reciters. At the time of writing this book I also had several different stories about Edige in my hands, I chose from these versions and wrote here what I liked best” (Yarlykapov, 2016: 322-330). This text is similar to Shokan’s version. However, some scenes described at the end of M. Osmonov’s version do not exist in Shokan’s version. These include Kadirberdi’s torture, Nuraddin’s cunning capture, the great battle between Kadirberdi and Edige, and both dying.

It was G.N. Potanin (1835-1920) who collected tales, poems, legends of Siberian Tatars, Altai, Mongolians and also travelled much in Kazakh steppes to collect and study folklore samples of tales, stories, epics and other works. The works connected with Edige are the ones that G. N. Potanin has studied with a great deal of diligence. He analysed the legends about Edige and proved that the plot of the works is the plot about the judgement that comes from the old Bible. For example, Potanin found that Edige Bi’s judgement over Bota and Ingen is the same as the biblical example of Solomon’s settlement of the dispute between two women over a child. He argues that the legends about Edige existed among the Turks long before the Islam, independently of the Bible, and many years before the historical figure of Edige appeared in history (Kazakh folklore in the collection of G.N. Potanin, 1972).

G.N. Potanin published in 1897 in the magazine “Living antiquity” the fairytale “Turkic Fairy tale about Edige”, which he had collected and studied (Potanin, 2006).

Special attention to the theme of Edige was also paid by the academic V.V. Radlov, who diligently collected samples of the oral literature of Turkic-speaking peoples and published them in many volumes. He recorded one Barabian, three Omsk Tatar and one Teleut version between 1866 and 1872. Also in 1896, Radlov found four other versions from Nogai tribes, who lived in the Crimean steppe. In his book “Folk Literature Patterns from the North Turkic Tribes” he published the Barabian inscription and the Crimean version. And the version recorded from the barabi Tatars was published in 2004 in the book “Tatar epic. Dastans” (Tatar epic, 2004).

The scholar O. Nurmaganbetova, who has contributed much to the study and publication of a number of selected Kazakh epics, such as “Kobylandy” and “Edige”, gives the following argument in support of I.N. Berezin’s assumption that the work must be a Turkmen work: “I.N. Berezin is of the opinion

that this work is a creation of the Turkmen people. But if you pay attention to the content, there is no doubt that it is not Turkmen, but an original Kazakh work. Other versions of Edige have the same meaning. The reader who reads it for the first time would find it incomprehensible and difficult to understand” (Kazakh Folk Literature, 1989: 126).

A.N. Beloslyudov (1887-1939) – teacher, collector of Kazakh folklore, ethnographer. He was also acquainted with Kanysh Satbayev. He travelled around the country with Zatayevich. They collected stories and poems. Speaking of the versions and editions of the epic, we should mention the version “Edige bi and Tokhtamysh”, the prose version of the epic, published in 1915 by Alexei Beloslyudov in the book “Kyrgyz Stories and Tales” (Kazakh Folklore and Literature in the Collections of Russian Orientalists and Turkologists, 2022: 20-22).

Although the content of this work is similar to the epic poems about Edige, it differs in how the work is presented and resolved.

The epic poem “Edige Tore” was recorded by I.A. Belayev in Karakalpakstan in 1903. Both this version and its Russian translation were published in Ashgabat in 1917 (The Legend of Edige and Tokhtamysh, 2012).

The Karakalpak folklorist and scholar Kali Aimbetov recorded a Karakalpak version of Edige’s poem from Erpolat zhyrshy. This version was published in Moscow in 1937. Kali Aimbetov wrote a small introduction to the book called “From the Collector”, in which he says that “Edige” was first recorded on paper by Erpolat zhyrau in 1929 and was lost for some reason. In October 1934 the manuscript was redone from Erpolat, who lived in Shymkent City.

Kiyas Kairaddinovich was the most famous poet of Karakalpak, and his son Kalbay manuscripted a version of the epic poem “Edige” recited by him (Edige, 1990).

The legend of Edige was also well known among the nomadic Uzbeks. One of them was published in 1939 under the title Tulymbi in the Uzbek collection by H. Zarifov. According to professor Mamatkul Zhurayev: “The work was recorded from the son of Shomurod Samandar in the Hijra year 1414”.

According to V.M. Zhirmunsky, this epic is known among the Bashkir people as “Idukai I Muradym”. Some parts of the poem were published in Kazan and Ufa publishing houses even before the Soviet period (Bashkir folklore, 2000: 109). The version which was recorded from the recitation of the Bashkir speaker M. Borongulov during the So-

viet years was published in the magazine Oktyabr in 1940.

The Turkish scholar Sagadat Chagatai succeeded in recording an extensive version of “Edige”. It was recited by an epic reciter of the Nogai tribe, who came to Turkey from the Crimean steppes as a young man. In 1953, the scholar published this poem with German translation.

As far as the poem itself is concerned, the epic poem “Edige” is based on the events that were characteristic of the Nogai period. The poem tells how the main hero, Edige, was in the service of Tokhtamysh Khan and won the khan’s trust. Stories about how Edige skillfully and subtly resolved all sorts of lawsuits begin in the epic from the days when he matured somewhat and became a herdsman (Kabulovna, 2023). Later there was a conflict between them, and the young hero left for the distant Satemir Khan in order to take his revenge on Tokhtamysh Khan. Edige’s return with a large army was a victory over the Khan.

Edige has enough features of ancient heroic epics to be not a purely historical poem. In Shokan’s version, for example, the hero is the son of a saint and a fairy’s daughter, which means that there are special circumstances surrounding his birth. It is well-known that this is a fantasy that was caused by the thoughts of the people who wanted to see Edige as a unique hero of the native people. This is one of the main features of the heroic epics. The birth of such a figure as a miraculous child can be found in the epics of many Turkic nations. In the Nogai version, for example, Barkaya (Baba Tukles) was fishing in the Sugar Lake one day. Nine swans flew to the shore of the lake, flapped their wings and turned into beautiful girls. The man married one of them. After a while, the woman becomes pregnant. One day, when Barkaya came back from hunting, he saw a child crying in his hut. He found out that his wife had turned into a swan and left them. The child was given the name Kuttykia. Kuttykia grows up and becomes a hunter. He looked after Tokhtamysh Khan’s hawks. Kuttykia later had a son named Edige. There is an idea in the poem that a tribe is born from a certain animal, plant or something miraculous and the wonderful qualities of the ancestor are passed on to the descendants. These are totem concepts that are often the subject of discussion in the ancient epics of the Turkic peoples. Such explanations can also be found in the book “Korkyt Ata”, the heroic epic of the Oghuz.

The wisdom of Edige as a Bi is recognised by the fact that he is a fair judge in various disputes.

“The leader is also humane and can’t treat everyone equally, he’s not perfect, so it’s a great ancestral tradition to advise and guide him properly. We can see the noble basis of this unbroken tradition in the lives of the advisers, biys and orators who surrounded the Khans of the recent age” (Doszhan, 2023: 24). These examples are taken from traditional Kazakh folklore. However, a motif of this kind can be found in the folklore of peoples from all over the world. For example, one of the four judgements of Edige described in the epic (dividing the child) is found in the Bible, where Salomon resolves the dispute (Auyesbayeva, 2002: 83-84). Epics also have a motif where a friend assists to save the hero. When Edige is assassinated, it’s his friend Angisin who saves him. When Edige was on the run from the Horde, Angisin cut off the stirrups of the horses of the people who were at the feast. A similar motif can be found in the folklore of other peoples as well. For example, according to Zhirmunsky, the Scottish historical poem tells of Robert Bruce’s escape from his enemies in the similar way (Zhirmunsky, 1974: 353). The religious and mythological motifs seen in this poem “Edige” are well analysed in the article by G. Şehriyar (Şehriyar, 2020: 158-169).

Another common motif in all the Heroic poems is “the Hero’s search for bride”. In the epic poem, this scene corresponds with Edige’s quest to find Satemir Khan. The poem “Nogayly Kara Kypchak Koblandy” describes the fight with the Black Giant when the hero was on his way home with his bride Akkur. Koblandy killed the giant and reached his land safely. In Nurtugan’s version, Edige arrives looking for a bride and finds the land ravaged by a giant called Kabantin. The similar scene can also be found in Karakalpak version.

The scene where the hero meets his bride is one of the most common plots in epics. For example, Edige sneaks into the tent, disguised as a bald boy, and learns that Kabantin is going to forcibly taking the Khan’s daughter. Forty men came to Satemir Khan with the news that Edige had been saviour of his daughter Kagaz and was on his way with her. The Khan was very happy. He sent three thousand people to meet them. Satemir arranged a great wedding feast for his daughter’s marriage to Edige and gave him the throne. This is similar to the episode where Alpamys, disguised as a dervish, sneaks into his village and sees Gulbarshyn being forcibly taken away by the slave Ultan.

Edige became the Khan in the land of Satemir. He ruled the country and his subordinates justly. The country’s prestige and glory increase. Satemir’s daughter Kagaz gave birth to a son by the name of

Nuraddin. The poem describes at the same time the happy life of Edige and the tradition and the way of life of the Kazakh people.

In the Tatar version, when Shah Temir hears of Edige’s arrival, he sends three ambassadors to make sure that Edige and his daughter arrive in the country safe and sound. On their arrival in their homeland, there is a great feast and marriage. Edige is elected to be the Biy (Tatar epic, 2004: 114).

According to the Qiyas’ alternative, the Karakalpak version, the Khan married his daughter Akbilek to Edige with the words: “You have saved my only daughter and my honour”. The Khan gave the throne to Edige. Edige became a righteous Khan for the country. “One of the most common themes in the folklore works of the peoples of the world is that of a child who learns of his father’s revenge (or some other secret) from a stranger. The Epic also reflects this motif. The story has two parts in which many episodes repeat themselves: the biography of a father and his son. These two, as well as their main enemy (Tokhtamysh) and their main helper (Satemir, or Timur Lenk/Tamerlane) are historical figures, as is the struggle for power and authority between them (chapter 2). Yet, the Epic of Edige is a story, and not a historical chronicle, never mind historical truth. It is a work of oral literature and built accordingly on all literary levels” (Jason, 2009).

One day, when Nuraddin was 12 years old, he was playing with his asyks. While playing, he accidentally broke the net of an old man who was hunting small birds for a living. Having heard from the old man that his father had old revenge on Tokhtamysh Khan, Nuraddin took the troop from Satemir and went against the enemy. So he killed Tokhtamysh Khan for the revenge of his father. However, the authorities who were under the rule of Tokhtamysh had a direct attempt to belittle Nuraddin on the grounds that he was not a descendant of Genghis Khan. Nuraddin’s answer, which he gave them, is best described in the article by folklorist S. Saken: “Standing there, Nuraddin answered them: “I have been a believer and a worshipper of one God since my birth, and I have read many holy books. I belong to the family of the glorious Turkic hero Kozhaakhmet Baba Tukty, and the fact that I do not come from the Genghis dynasty does not harm me in any way” (Saken, 2019: 202).

Abubakir Divayev’s version of the epic “Edige” begins with the following story: In ancient times, a rich, brilliant, holy, wonderfully rich man had no children. And the Karakalpak version of the epic has a similar opening story. This version often contains elements of a heroic fairy tale. Similar motifs such

as childlessness, the miraculous birth of the future hero, his rapid growth, the attempt on his life, the hero’s heroic victory over his enemy and his heroic marriage, etc. are found in “Alpamys Batyr”, “Yer Sayin” and other tales and epics. The epic has both the above differences and motifs similar to those of versions of the epic “Edige”. For example, episodes such as the birth of Edige from the hairy Aziz and the daughter of the fairy; the leaving of the newborn Edige to hang from a tree because Aziz broke the three conditions.

If we compare the different versions of the poems related to “Edige”, we find a number of differences in their events and structure. The article on epic motifs and types discusses this view (Dogan, 2016: 307-310). Obviously, none of the people’s heroic epics appeared in one day. In the beginning, the heroic deeds and images of men who defended their country and fought against the enemies were the basis of legends, short historical poetry. These poems are passed down orally and spread throughout the country. And later, the storytellers would skilfully put them all together and turn them into works of epic poetry. The epic poetry that spread in this way was full of episodes and exaggerations that were shaped by the imagination of the epic reciter. The historical illusion of the events described in the Epic, however, remains. Although the new version of the epic “Edige” found among the Crimean people has its own peculiarities, some situations where Edige’s intelligence and courage are challenged, as well as the conflict between Edige and Tokhtamysh, the war between Kadirberdi and Edige described in the epic, are similar to those that happened to the historical real person Edige. The names of the heroes of the epic and of the historical figures are also the same (Gulayhan, 2022: 439-462). The historical facts in the poem “Edige” were not fully reconstructed in comparison with the classical heroic epics. The “Edige” is not a historical poem, but its general form had enough of the characteristics of the ancient heroic epics. The epic “Edige” does not reflect the real history, but such sayings as “Edige the Trustworthy Leader of the Nation”, “Edige the Ruler”, reflecting the path of Edige, remained in the minds of the people.

These features are the evidence that this epic can be considered as intermediate genre between historical epic and heroic epic. But you can easily see that the poem was first distanced from its historical foundation. This, too, is a multilevel characteristic of epic: “We cannot say that the work is neither

an exact picture, nor a copy, nor a chronological sequence of historical events” (Alpysbaeva, 2013: 59).

The authors of the article “the Edige epic poem in Kazakhstan” say that the epic poem “Edige” will allow the citizens of this country to learn about the history of the spiritual heritage of the Turkic people, revive this heritage in the memory of the people, strengthen the national consciousness, raise the patriotic spirit (Zhanpeissova, 2019: 35).

Conclusion

In conclusion, we can say that, in general, all versions of the epic “Edige Batyr” have common plots. However, there are also some differences. Typological comparisons reveal many interesting similarities between the Kazakh, the Nogai, the Karakalpak and the Tatar traditions. One of the things that makes them so similar is the unbreakable historical and cultural ties between these peoples. And no matter which of the versions of the poem we take, what we have in common are the heroic deeds of Edige, his high spirit and his love for his country. In all the works about Edige Batyr, no matter to which people these works belong, the hero himself and his son Nuraddin have always been described and sung in a positive way only.

The fact that Edige is honoured as a “Heroic Ancestor” not only by the Kazakhs but also by other Turkic peoples is an indication that they were once “Nogayli” and were a single country under one roof. Later on, when the Nogai Horde was divided into different khanates and the unity of the Turkic peoples broke up, each country cherished the “Edige Batyr” and claimed that the “Edige” was unique to them. When reciting the epic “Edige Batyr”, each people created their own original work, including their nation’s folklore traditions, poetic skills, circumstances that influenced their lives and marked their history. All this contributes to the revival of the ancient unity, mutual harmony, spiritual memory of the Turkic peoples, the definition of national codes of their representatives, the strengthening of patriotic feelings, internal unity.

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