

The Introductory Part of the Karakalpak Heroic Epic *Alpamys*, the Meaning and Importance of the Beginning of the Epic

TURDIMURATOVA A. B.

Institute of Uzbek Language, Tashkent, Uzbekistan

ABSTRACT

*The article discusses the introductory part of the Karakalpak heroic epic *Alpamys*, the meaning of the beginning of the epic, the place, time and place mentioned in the epic, in terms of *Zhiideli-baisyn*.*

*This article explores scholars' perspectives on the origin of the name *Konyrat* (*Kungirat*) and the location of *Zhydel-Baysin*. The prevailing scholarly opinion suggests that the term *Konyrat* (*Kungirat*) derives from the name of the tribe *Konyrat* (*Kungirat*), which was part of the Turkic communities in the Aral Sea region before the Mongol period. The article also addresses issues related to the geographical position of *Zhydel-Baysin*. A significant focus of the study is the examination of the prologue and introduction of all versions of the Karakalpak heroic epic *Alpamysh*. Particular attention is given to the terms *Konyrat* (*Kungirat*) and *Zhydel-Baysin*. An analysis of the original text of the epic reveals that its prologue and introduction are crucial for the overall structure and thematic content, establishing the groundwork for the plot's development. The terms *Konyrat* (*Kungirat*) and *Zhydel-Baysin* possess substantial cultural, historical, and symbolic meanings, which enrich the epic's content and impact its interpretation. Within the framework of the ethnogenesis of the Karakalpak people, these terms serve as important markers, aiding in the deeper understanding of the cultural and historical origins of the Karakalpaks.*

Keywords: Era, place, Konyrat, Zhideli-baisyn, epic, introduction, variant, horse cult, terms.

INTRODUCTION

The folk storytellers of all Turkic heroic epics in the beginnings and introductions of heroic tales describe the lands in which the hero was born and grew up, and tell about the origin of the hero.

According to Professor Sh. Turdimov indicative signs on major roads will help travelers not to get lost. The beginning of the epic is also an indicator. "They introduce the listener to the events of the epic", he admitted, stressing that the brief and clear beginning of the epic serves as the basis of the plot and is the key to unlocking the meaning of the epic.

This is what Professor Kabil Maksetov said about the expositional part of the epic: all Karakalpak heroic epics begin "long ago, in the early past." Such words were characteristic of Uzbek, Kazakh and Turkmen heroic epics, despite some peculiarities of the variants.

At the beginning of the epic, the narrators give information about the origin of the hero, the country, the place of birth, where the hero lived. Let's compare the beginnings of the Karakalpak heroic epic in all versions of Alpamysh.

In the epic, in the variation of Ogiz Jirav, the introduction begins as follows:

a long time ago, in ancient times,
in the people of Jidel Baysin,
there was folk known as Konirat,
belonging to the tribe of Irgagli.

In the variation of Yesemurat Jirov, the following is described:

a long time ago, in ancient times,
in the people of Jideli Baysin,
in the locality of the people,
in the city of Konyrat,

on the expanses of the Sarsebiz steppe. And in the version of Kurbanbay Jirav, the introduction is formulated as follows:

a long time ago, in ancient times,
in the country of Jidel Baisin.

In the variation of Kiyas Jirav, the introductory part reads: "Once upon a time, in ancient times, in the people of Jidel Baysin, in the country of Konirat, in the tribe of Irghagli, and in the variation of Karam Jirav," the introduction reads as follows: a long time ago, in ancient times,

in the people of Jideli Baysin,
in the tribe of Kungrat,

and in the variation of Arzimbet Jirav, the introduction reads as follows:

A long time ago, in ancient times,
in the city of Kungrad,
among the people of Jideli Baisin.

In the variation of Tanirbergen Jirav, the introductory part reads:

Once upon a time, in ancient times,
in the people of Jidel Baysin,
in the people of Kungrad,

and in the variation of Jiyemurat Jirav, the introduction reads as follows:

A long time ago, in ancient times,
in the lands of the Jideli Baysin.

When analyzing the Karakalpak versions of the epic, taking into account the context of the place and time of the events, it is possible to note that practically in all versions the story unfolds in antiquity, in the inhabitants of the people of Kungrad and

Zhiydeli-Baisyn, with the exception of the variant Yesemurat Jiraw, where the action takes place in the desert of Sarsebiz.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Analysis of the term *Kungrad* in the context of the beginning of events based on expert opinions. In the Karakalpak language, the word *el* (country) is used depending on the designation of the people, locality, homeland, village, region, and place of birth.

The first mention of the name *Konirat* is found in the *Secret History of the Mongols*. In the work *Shajarayye Turk*, Abelgazi indicates that the Kungirats are descended from Kayyan, the son of Shorlik. Historian Rashid al-Din in his annals notes that the kungirats were spread by "two men who went to Ergenekon, known as Kiyan and Nekuz." The researcher believes that the Mongols have greatly multiplied under the influence of various clans and tribes.

In accordance with the Mongolian chronicle *Golden Genealogy* by Lubsana Danzana, it is mentioned that her mother Chingishana was an Oulan-ujin from the Olkhonut branch of the Kungrat tribe, and her first wife was Borte-fujin, daughter of Dai-chechenni, who was the leader of the Kungrat tribe. At a meeting with Yesugyem, who was looking for a bride for his son, Dai-Chechen stated: "We, the people of Kungrad, do not enter into conflict with other nations..." He also noted: "The women of our tribe is known for her beauty", proposing Burte-Fujin as a bride for Temujina.

Most experts are of the opinion that the emergence of congrads in Turkic tribes is associated with the conquest of Deshti-Kipshak by the Mongols, however, there is an opinion, supported by the majority, that congrads in the composition of Turkic tribes arose before the Mongol conquest.

X. Zarifov in his work argues: "Alpomish (Alpamis), presented in Uzbek, Kazakh and Karakalpak languages, is the oldest epic of the Turkic-speaking Kungrad tribe." This epic, as one can conclude, originated among the Kungrad tribe along the Syr Darya River and in the vicinity of the Aral Sea during the period of the collapse of patriarchal-tribal relations.

He also noted that the term *Kungrad* is not associated with the Mongol tribes and originated in the local language.. Etymologically, the term *Kungrad* consists of the words кўн-ғир-от, where кун means the name of an ancient tribe, ғир - fast and ат - horse. Taking into account the content of the epic, the scholar argues that Alpomish came from the branches of the Kangzigali tribe of Kungrad. Professor Sarygul Bakhadrova is one of the leading researchers engaged in the scientific analysis of the name Kungrad. In her works, she associates this name with the horse cult. Professor Bakhadrova asserts that historians such as B. D. Grekov and A. Yu. Yakubovsky associate the Kungrad tribe with the Mongol invasion. However, she believes that the horse cult in Karakalpak genealogies emerged before the Mongol invasion. The Kungrad tribe is found among most Turkic peoples, including Uzbeks, Kazakhs, and Bashkirs. The name Kungrad is associated with the horse cult. The horse was one of the central objects of worship among the ancient Sak people. The ancient Massagetae sacrificed horses before battle, drank their blood in the hope of becoming as strong as horses, and smeared their bodies with the blood. From the ancient Kungrad tribe, who existed in the territory of modern Karakalpakstan, the city of Kungrad has come down to us.

The name *Kungrad* in the genealogies of Berdaq is given as follows:

Хәр урыўға хабар салды,
Торы ат минип Майқы келди.
Қырқ кишигә басшы болды,
Майқы сәрдар болған екен.
Қырқ адам болып жәм болды,
Қоңыр атлы жигит ким болды.
Шул торы атны Қоңырат деди,
Шундын Қоңырат болған екен.

(Translated from the Karakalpak language.

The translation was done verbatim.)

He announced to all the tribes that Maiky had arrived on a bay horse.

With him were forty people, and he was their leader.

Forty people gathered to find out who this young man was,
riding on a brown horse.
And he named the bay horse Kungrad,
from that moment he became known as Kungrad.

In the genealogies of Berdak Maika-Bi, it is noted that he played the role of the main and pulled one thill of the cart, and was the father of Jayilgan, who was a symbolic figure in the Konyrat clan. S. Bakhadyrova points out that there is a certain mystery in this information from Berdak's genealogies. The cult of the horse was chosen as the symbol of the Kungrad tribe, surpassing the earlier cult of the wolf.

In connection with the fact that the name *Kungrad* is associated with the cult of the horse, Tolstov's research notes the existence of a horse cult in Central Asia. Tolstov wrote that the name *Khazarasp* means "a thousand horses." This assertion is confirmed by legends from his field notes, which mention that the prophet Solomon added a magical potion to a water source. When the winged horses lost consciousness, he cut off their wings so that they could serve humanity.

In his scientific analysis, the folklorist J. Khoshniyazov, in the work *The Karakalpak Heroic Epic Alpamys*, discusses the origin of the name *Kungurat*. The researcher noted that this name refers to a tribe that formed among the Turkic communities that emerged on the shores of the Aral Sea even before the Mongol era. Khoshniyazov also pointed out that legends about the origin of the name *Kungurat* are known not only among the Karakalpaks but also among the Kungurats of Surkhandarya. The scholar emphasizes the importance of the words of B. Kh. Karmyshova: "The versions of the legend recorded by me many times (more than 40 years later) reproduce the content of the legend recorded by Kh. Zarifov with varying degrees of completeness."

We will analyze the legend presented by B. Karmysheva with the aim of learning how to compare different legends. According to the legend, Genghis Khan (or the khan of the country where the Kungraads lived) once launched an attack against a neighboring state. After suffering defeat, he was forced

to flee. During his wanderings in the desert, his horse became exhausted. On his path, Genghis Khan encountered an old man on a brown horse, whom some sources refer to as Konyr Bi. The old man offered Genghis Khan his horse, saying, "When I die, only one old man will die; when you die, the state will collapse." Genghis Khan took the horse and was saved.

Genghis Khan ordered the old man to come to the palace, but the old man noted that the guards would not let him in. Then Genghis Khan instructed the old man to throw his headgear into the air upon arriving at the palace. When the old man entered the palace, Genghis Khan invited him to a feast, showed him the dances of the girls, and asked about his wishes. The old man requested sheep, pastures for his livestock, and one of the dancing girls. Genghis Khan fulfilled all three wishes. The old man's descendants became the Kungrad clan, and the field given by Genghis Khan was called Guzar-Baisun.

He legends about the origin of the name *Koňyrat* (*Kungrad*) among the Karakalpaks are similar in content to the aforementioned legend. In the narrative by Alimov, recorded in Muynak and among the residents of the Konyrat(Kungrad) district, there is also mention of a young man with a brown horse who gave his horse when Khan Eraly was at war. Thanks to this, the khan was saved and subsequently issued a decree stating that the village of this young man, consisting of thirty families, was named Koňyrat in honor of the boy with the brown horse. There are numerous legends about the origin of the name "Koňyrat" among the Karakalpak people, some of which are provided as examples.

According to the legend, Qonyr Biy placed a family mark known as *tamga* (a familial sign used for marking clan property, including livestock) on the upper part of the front leg of a horse for one of his sons, and on the side part of the back leg (sandauly) for another son. Since then, the descendants with the mark on the front leg of the horse belong to the "Koldauly" of tribe, while the descendants with the mark on the back leg of the horse belong to the "Sandauly" tribe.

We are examining another legend about the name *Kungrad*. In the past, there was a severe famine in the Kungrad region.

That year, a nationwide crop failure led to widespread hunger. During this time, a man appeared on a brown horse, bringing grain. He distributed a small amount of grain to each of the inhabitants. The other starving people asked those who received the grain, "Where did you get it?" They replied, "We got it from the man on the brown horse." Thus, people survived the famine thanks to the grain provided by this man. In honor of this savior, the town was named *Kungrad*.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Karakalpak tribal associations are divided into two main groups: the Kungrad group and fourteen other tribes. The symbol of the Konyrat (Kungrad) tribe is a threshold in the shape of the letter "P", and their motto is "Zhayylgan".

The Kungurat part is divided into two sections: Shullik and Zhawngyr, and the second part, includes aris fourteen clans: Qitay, Kypshak, Keneges, and Mangit.

According to T. A. Zhdanko, in legends the name *Zhauyngyr* comes from the root of the word *Zhau-*, which means "enemy," and denotes a warlike people. In Berdakh's genealogies, the legend of Shyngyskhan is connected with Karakalpak clans, and the division of Karakalpak clans into two parts is connected with two cart ogles.

Хан нәзеринде дәрғаны,
Қурып отаўда бәрғаны.
Мәслахат қылды арбаны,
Арба керек болған екен.

Қоңырат тапты бир арысын,
Маңғыт тапты бир арысын,
Өзге ағаштың бәрисин,
Өзгелерге салған екен.

(Translated from the Karakalpak language.
The translation was done verbatim.)
They sat in the khan's council,
Assembled in the otau.

They advised them on the wagon,
For they needed a wagon.

Kurgrad found one part,
Mangit found the other.
All the remaining trees,
They ordered others to find.

The word *arys* (meaning a shaft) in this context symbolically represents a part of the clan. A. Zhdanko notes that among the Mongols, there was also a symbolic transfer of the chariot's shaft as the state's foundation. According to *The Secret History*, Genghis Khan commands to convey to Wang Khan of the Keraites: "you and I are like the two shafts of a yurt cart; if one breaks, the ox cannot pull the cart; you and I are like the two wheels of a yurt cart; if one breaks, the cart cannot move."

In *The Secret History of the Mongols*, the word *arys* in its symbolic meaning implies that Genghis Khan suggested to Jamukha to be the second shaft of the yurt cart. This requires further in-depth study.

The word *arys* (meaning a shaft) in this context symbolically represents a part of the clan. A. Zhdanko notes that among the Mongols, there was also a symbolic transfer of the chariot's shaft as the state's foundation. According to *The Secret History*, Genghis Khan commands to convey to Wang Khan of the Keraites: "you and I are like the two shafts of a yurt cart; if one breaks, the ox cannot pull the cart; you and I are like the two wheels of a yurt cart; if one breaks, the cart cannot move." In *The Secret History of the Mongols*, the word *arys* in its symbolic meaning implies that Genghis Khan suggested to Jamukha to be the second shaft of the yurt cart. This requires further in-depth study.

Regarding the term *Jideli-Baysyn* in the epic, T. A. Zhdanko's field notes indicate that the ancestors of the Karakalpak Kungrats spread from Jideli-Baysyn, located in the lower reaches of the Syr Darya, on the border with Turkestan.

I. Sagitov supports Zhirmunsky's view on the time and place of the origin of the saga of Alpamys: based on the geographical

conditions of the saga and other data, it is confirmed that the saga originated on the banks of the Amu Darya, in the south of Uzbekistan. The “Konyrat-Baysyn” version was created in Jideli-Baysyn, 16th-century Uzbekistan.

The word *arys* (meaning a shaft) in this context symbolically represents a part of the clan. A. Zhdanko notes that among the Mongols, there was also a symbolic transfer of the chariot's shaft as the state's foundation. According to *The Secret History*, Genghis Khan commands to convey to Wang Khan of the Keraites: "you and I are like the two shafts of a yurt cart; if one breaks, the ox cannot pull the cart; you and I are like the two wheels of a yurt cart; if one breaks, the cart cannot move." In *The Secret History of the Mongols*, the word *arys* in its symbolic meaning implies that Genghis Khan suggested to Jamukha to be the second shaft of the yurt cart. This requires further in-depth study.

Regarding the term *Jiydeli-Baysyn* in the epic, T. A. Zhdanko's field notes indicate that the ancestors of the Karakalpak Kungrats spread from Jideli-Baysyn, located in the lower reaches of the Syr Darya, on the border with Turkestan.

I. Sagitov supports Zhirmunsky's view on the time and place of the origin of the saga of Alpamys: based on the geographical conditions of the saga and other data, it is confirmed that the saga originated on the banks of the Amu Darya, in the south of Uzbekistan. The Konyrat-Baysyn version was created in Jideli-Baysyn, 16th-century Uzbekistan.

According to the research by Kh. Zarifov, the place with the known historical and geographical name is located in the south of Samarkand and southwest of Bukhara. The areas called Baysintau are situated in the modern Surkhandarya region. In his study, Kh. Zarifov suggested that the current Baysyn in Surkhandarya might have been named after the Konirats who migrated here in the 16th century, while the true Baysyn is associated with Ayaz-khan in Khorezm. A legend described by A. Nesterov in 1900 had the following content:

In ancient times, before the existence of the Aral Sea, the rivers Amu Darya and Syr Darya merged and flowed into the Caspian

Sea. In the area that would become the future Aral Sea, there lived a people called Adak. The ruler of this region was a cruel khan named Fasil-khan. At the same time, on both banks of the Uzboy River, the people of Baysun resided, and their ruler was Khan Ayaz-khan. Despite his slave status, Ayaz-khan, through intelligence, common sense, and fairness, won the favor of the king's daughter. She created a mound called "Forty Maidens," housing forty concubines, and Ayaz-khan became the ruler of the Baysun country.

However, foolish Fasil-khan could not control his lust and violated the daughter of a saint. In response, he was cursed. His land was submerged, and its people perished underwater. In its place arose the Aral Sea, into which the rivers Amu Darya and Syr Darya began to flow. The ancient valley in Ustirt, where these two rivers converged, dried up. Afterward, Ayaz-khan, along with the people of Baysun, migrated to the land of Khorezm.

In his scholarly works, folklorist Zh. Khoshniyazov provides a detailed analysis of the term *Zhiydeli-Baysyn* and notes that Zhiydeli was a place where people engaged in fishing and animal husbandry in the Priaralye region, near the sea. He cites numerous examples of legendary events associated with this region, which are confirmed by the oral traditions of the people. Additionally, Khoshniyazov presents examples of folk oral creativity, emphasizing that in the popular consciousness, Zhiydeli-Baysyn symbolizes abundance, plenty, and prosperity.

An example from Karakalpak oral folklore illustrates the importance of one's homeland:

You were the source of sustenance for my children
and the support for my livestock.
My dear Zhiydeli, I have lost you.

CONCLUSION

Based on our scientists' research regarding the name *Konyrat* (Kungrad) and the location of Zhideli-Baysyn, it can be concluded that the term *Konyrat* originates from the name of the tribe *Kungrad*, which existed among the Turkic communities in the

Pre-Aral region before the Mongol period. Additionally, Zhidel-Baysin was likely situated along the coast of the Aral Sea. The scientific article examines the beginning part and introduction of the Karakalpak heroic epic *Alpamys* with a special focus on the terms *Konyrat* and *Zhideli-baysyn*. Analysis of the original text reveals that the epic's beginning and introduction play a crucial role in its structure and thematic content, serving as a foundation for plot development. The terms *Konyrat* (*Kungrad*) and *Zhideli-baysyn* possess profound cultural, historical, and symbolic meanings that enrich the epic's content and influence its interpretation within the ethnogenesis of the Karakalpak people.

REFERENCES

1. Baxadirova.S. Qaraqalpaq qanday xalıq. –Tashkent:Navruz, 2014. –B. 60.
2. Berdaq. Shejire."Qaraqalpaqstan", Nókis-1993. –B. 13
3. Jdanko T. A.. Ocherki istoricheskoy etnografii karakalpakov. M., L., 1950.
4. Zarifov H. Osnovnie motivy eposa «Alpomish» // Ob epose «Alpomish». Materialy po obsujdeniyu eposa «Alpomish» / Izd. Podgot. V. I. Chicherov, H. T. Zarifov. Tashkent, 1959. . –B. 28.
5. Maqsetov Q. Qaraqalpaq xalıq dástanlarınıń poetikası, –Tashkent: Fan, 1965, 136.b
6. Qaraqalpaq folklorı.Kóp tomliq. I-VII tom.– Nókis: «Qaraqalpaqstan», 2007, 5-b
7. Qaraqalpaq folklorı.Kóp tomliq. 77 tom.– Nókis: «Ilim», 2014, 202-b. 2007, 5-b.
8. Tolstov S. P. . Drevniy Xorezm. M., 1948. –B.303
9. Xoshniyazov J. Qaraqalpaq qaharmanlıq dástanı «Alpamis». - Nókis: Bilim, 1992. –B. 140.
10. Karmisheva B.X. Ocherki etnicheskoy istorii yujnix rayonov Tadjikistana i Uzbekistana (po etnograficheskim dannım). -M.: Nauka, 1976. B.220-221.
11. Qaraqalpaq folklorı. Kóp tomliq, 77-tom, Nókis, «Qaraqalpaqstan», 2014, bet
12. Saitov I. Qaraqalpaq xalıqınıń qaharmanlıq eposı, -Nókis: Qaraqalpaqstan, 1986. . –B. 253
13. Sokrovennoe skazanie. «Trudi chlenov Rossiyskoy duxovnoy missii v Pekine», t. IV, SPb., 1866, str 91.

14. Rashid-Ad-Din, Sbornik letopisey, t.1, M.-L., Izd. AN SSSR, 1952, str.77
15. Lubsan Danzan. Altan tobchi (Zolotoe skazanie). «Nauka», Moskva, 1973, str.68
16. Epos va Etnos. Sh. Turdimov; ma'sul muharrir J. Eshonqul; OzRFA, A. Navoiy nomidagi til va adabiyot instituti. – T.: O'zbekiston, 2012. – B. 6

TURDIMURATOVA A. B.

PHD SCHOLAR,
INSTITUTE OF UZBEK LANGUAGE,
LITERATURE AND FOLKLORE OF ACADEMY
OF SCIENCES OF UZBEKISTAN,
TASHKENT, UZBEKISTAN.
E-MAIL: <AQSUNGUL88@GMAIL.COM>