

Linguocultural Interpretation of National Symbols and Symbolically Charged Images in the Epic Alpomish

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ABSTRACT

This study examines national symbols and symbolically charged images in the Uzbek heroic epic Alpomish from a linguocultural perspective. Its aim is to classify symbolic units according to textual scope, stability, narrative function, and cultural-evaluative load, and to determine their role in encoding plot development, the value system, and the national-cultural code. The study draws primarily on the Fozil Yo'ldosho'g'li version, with comparative evidence from the Bekmurod Jo'raboyo'g'li version, and applies contextual-semantic, linguocultural, and comparative interpretation. The analysis identifies three interrelated groups: central national-cultural symbols; symbolically charged images and signs; and axiological conflict units comprising conflict nodes and negative figures. Shohimardon Pir, the alp ideal, Boychibor, Barchin, and the homeland constitute the stable symbolic core, whereas the five-finger mark, the goose, the petition letter, Yodgor, Qaldirg'och, and Murodtepa gain symbolic force in specific narrative contexts. The findings show that the epic's symbolic system organizes historical memory, social experience, moral values, and aesthetic ideals into a multilayered linguocultural structure.

Keywords: Alpomish, national-cultural symbol, symbolic image, linguocultural analysis, national-cultural code, Boychibor, Barchin, Shohimardon Pir, Murodtepa.

INTRODUCTION

In *Alpomish*, core values such as heroism, loyalty, fidelity, homeland, divine patronage, continuity of lineage, and social justice are symbolically encoded through characters, signs, objects, places, ritual actions, and lexical units. Khudoyberganova defines a symbol as a reflection of the external world in the inner world, consciousness, thought, and spiritual experience of representatives of different cultures [1: 18]. This understanding is especially relevant to epic discourse, where a concrete image may preserve its immediate narrative function while simultaneously activating culturally established associations.

Previous studies of *Alpomish* have shown that symbolic meaning is realized through multiple textual forms. Ashurov argues that objects, colors, customs, and other cultural signs in the epic carry distinctive culturally conditioned meanings [2: 38-39]. Turdimova, examining the prologue, notes that genealogy, childlessness, the journey to a pir, the birth of children, Hakimbek's elevation to alp status, and the events following the demand for zakat are condensed into a compact symbolic sequence. She further emphasizes that the mythological, religious, and esoteric history of a people is represented in epic tradition through artistic symbols [3: 26-28]. These observations justify examining the symbolic layer of *Alpomish* through the cultural meanings conveyed by objects, colors, customs, word-symbols, motif-symbols, ritual actions, anthroponyms, numbers, and narrative signs.

Tursunov's observations on the "word-symbol" are also important for identifying the forms through which symbolism is verbalized. He stresses that the decisive feature is not nomination alone, but the stylistic markedness and cultural-associative load traditionally attached to a particular word [4: 17]. This approach makes it possible to treat units such as *nor*, *shunqor*, and *g'ilmon* as culturally marked word-symbols used in the symbolic characterization of the hero.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The primary textual material is the FozilYo‘ldosho‘g‘li version of *Alpomish*, cited from the 2023 edition [11]. One extended passage concerning Shohimardon Piri is cited from the 2015 edition of the 100-volume *Monuments of Uzbek Folk Literature* series [12]. Comparative evidence is drawn from the Bekmurod Jo‘raboyo‘g‘li version published in 2016 [13]. The study focuses on symbolic units represented by characters, objects, places, ritual actions, lexical items, and narrative motifs.

The analysis combines contextual-semantic interpretation with a linguocultural approach and, where variant material is compared, a comparative-textual perspective. Symbolic units are evaluated according to four criteria: textual scope, stability, narrative function, and cultural-evaluative load. On this basis, the material is organized into three analytical groups: (1) central national-cultural symbols, which retain stable cultural and spiritual significance across major parts of the epic; (2) symbolically charged images and signs, which acquire intensified cultural-associative meaning within particular episodes or motifs; and (3) axiological conflict units, including conflict nodes and negative figures that concentrate value opposition, social disorder, or negative evaluation. The categories are interpretive rather than purely formal and are distinguished by the scale, recurrence, and stability of their symbolic function within the narrative.

To preserve the linguistic evidence, excerpts from the epic are reproduced first in the original Uzbek and then in English translation. Unless otherwise indicated, the translations are by the author. Culturally marked lexical items and ethnonyms, including *alp*, *pir*, *chiltan*, *qalmoq*, *parliyoy*, and *zindon*, are retained in transliteration when their original form is analytically relevant and are glossed at first occurrence where necessary.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A central symbol is understood here as a character, object, person, or place that carries a stable cultural and spiritual

meaning throughout the composition of the epic or across its principal narrative segments. In *Alpomish*, Shohimardon Pir, the alp ideal, Boychibor, Barchin, and Boysun as a representation of homeland and community form this central symbolic layer. Each articulates a major value within the epic world: divine patronage, heroic honor, loyalty, dignity, homeland, and collective memory.

A symbolically charged image or sign acquires a strong cultural-associative meaning within a particular episode, motif, narrative situation, or relationship, but does not structure the value system of the entire epic to the same extent as a central symbol. The five-finger mark, the goose, the petition letter, Yodgor, Qaldirg'och, and Murodtepa belong to this group. By contrast, axiological conflict units include conflict-generating nodes such as zakat and negative figures such as Ultontoz and Surxayil Kampir. These units primarily concentrate conflict, negative evaluation, and clashes of values rather than functioning as stable positive symbols. Ultontoz embodies illegitimate rule and the disruption of social order, whereas Surxayil Kampir personifies deceit, intrigue, and destructive agency.

This distinction is consistent with Alefirenko's view that a symbol includes not only the visible aspect of an object but also deeper layers of meaning, value, and association formed within cultural consciousness [5: 238]. Accordingly, symbolic status in *Alpomish* depends not merely on the presence of an image, but on the cultural depth, recurrence, evaluative force, and narrative reach of the meanings attached to it.

Shohimardon Pir occupies a distinctive place in the epic's religious-symbolic layer. The childlessness of Boysari and Boybo'ri, the appearance of Shohimardon Pir in the guise of a *qalandar* (wandering dervish), his naming of the children, the five-finger mark he leaves on Hakimbek's right shoulder, and his linking of the destinies of Hakimbek and Barchin collectively establish him as a patronal force that connects heroic destiny with divine sanction. Yunusova notes that the lexeme *pir* is associated with the meanings of patron, founder, and legendary helper, and interprets Shohimardon Pir as the hero's protector and extraordinary helper [6: 108]. Within the epic, he therefore

symbolizes divine assistance and patronage, the determination of destiny, and the sacred grounding of heroic status.

The five-finger mark associated with Shohimardon Pir functions as a bodily sign of chosenness. Its imprint on Hakimbek's right shoulder indicates that the hero has received the pir's favor and is destined to fulfill the role of an alp. The mark is thus a corporeal trace of spiritual patronage. A later passage explicitly connects Alpomish's extraordinary invulnerability with Shohimardon Pir's protection:

*Alpomishenadantug'ilganvaqtdaShohimardonpiriborganedi,
Shohimardonpirietagigasolganedi, otiniHakimbekqo'yib,
o'ngeynigabeshpanjaurganedi. Shohimardonpirningtar
biyatqilganidano'tgasolsa, kuyasedi, qilichsolsa, o'tmasedi,
multiqotganbilano'qibotmasedi. [12: 219]*

When Alpomish was born, Shohimardon Pir came to him. The Pir placed him in the hem of his robe, named him Hakimbek, and pressed the mark of five fingers onto his right shoulder. Because Shohimardon Pir had nurtured and protected him, fire could not burn him, a sword could not cut him, and a bullet could not penetrate his body.

This passage supports the interpretation of the five-finger mark as a sign of divine protection transferred to the hero's body through the patronage of the pir and as a marker of the alp's exceptional invulnerability.

In discussing the diverse forms through which symbols appear in *Alpomish*, Ashurov also identifies the *parliyoy*, a culturally marked bow, as a symbol associated with power and rule [2: 39]. In the epic, however, the motif is not limited to physical strength or a trial of heroic prowess; it also carries meanings of spiritual elevation and divine support. Yo'ldoshev interprets the raising of the bow not simply as a demonstration of extraordinary strength, but as an act associated with the righteous person's drawing nearer to the Creator and with one of the paths to knowing God [7: 126]. From this perspective, the *parliyoy* can be understood as a symbolic object connected with purification, trial, and the attainment of alp status. Together, the alp ideal and the bow motif encode strength, ordeal, heroic virtue, continuity

of generations, communal unity, historical succession, and spiritual refinement.

Mahmudov, citing M.Qo'shmoqov, links Alpomish's enduring place in collective memory to his status as a figure embodying the nation's spiritual values [8: 26-27]. In the symbolic system of the epic, the alp therefore represents not only martial strength but also the moral support of the community, social unity, and an ethical ideal.

Boychibor is one of the epic's most important symbols of heroic loyalty. Closely bound to Alpomish's destiny, the horse appears as a faithful companion, a sustaining force that enables the hero's movement and struggle, and an emblem of devotion to his master. This symbolic role is prepared from Boychibor's earliest appearances. Yo'ldoshev interprets the restlessness of the foal born to the mare Tarlon after the messengers have departed as an intuitive awareness of its future historical mission. In this reading, Boychibor senses even before Alpomish that the time has come to undertake an exceptional task [7: 36-37]. The image thus concentrates the meanings of duty, loyalty, and participation in the hero's destiny.

Boychibor's symbolic function becomes clearer in the horse-selection episode. Yo'ldoshev describes the scene as Alpomish's encounter with his own destiny and Boychibor as a creature whose fate is bound to his [7: 44]. The fact that the same piebald horse enters the selection three times symbolically joins the destinies of hero and steed. Qaldirg'och's assessment – *Buniminsang, aka, sengadushmany'o'q* ('If you ride this one, brother, you will have no enemy') and *Buniminsang, aka, yo'llibo'lasan* ('If you ride this one, brother, your path will be fortunate') [11: 78] – presents Boychibor as a path-opening figure whose presence enables the successful completion of the hero's journey.

The racing episode connected with Barchin further intensifies this symbolism. Barchin calls to Boychibor – *Qurru-yoqur, hayta, to'ramningoti!* ('Qurru-yoqur, hayta! O my lord's horse!') – and addresses him with the hyperbolic promise *Oqto'shim – yayloving, sochim – shipirtki* ('My white breast shall be your pasture, my hair your switch') [11: 147]. The scene links the

horse with Barchin's anguish, Alpomish's fate, and the honor of the Qo'ng'iro't community. The narrative then presents the horse as responding almost spiritually to Barchin's voice:

*Qurhayt, deganBarchinoyningdovushiBoychiborningqulog
'igaboradi. Suvluqtishlabo'zinotdiBoychibor, Kaltaqantaribtash
lagandiqalmoqlar, Tizginiuzilibketdimuqarrar, Ustidagi alp
Qorajonbexabar, Ko'kdo'nondanendio'tdijonivor.* [11: 147]
Barchinoy's cry of 'Qur, hayt!' reached Boychibor's ears.
Boychibor bit the bit and hurled himself forward. The Qalmoqs had
tethered him with a short rein; the reins snapped at once. The alp
Qorajon on his back knew nothing of it; the creature now overtook
Ko'kdo'non.

In this context, Boychibor functions as a symbolic companion who shares the household's suffering and embodies loyalty to his master.

His sensitivity in the dungeon episode, his ability to respond to his master's condition, and his active role in liberation deepen this function. Scholarship has emphasized the special status of the horse in Turkic culture, the elevation of zoonymic figures in folk epics to the level of artistic symbols, and Boychibor's role as both loyal friend and active participant in Alpomish's fate [6: 125]. When Tovka describes the horse's condition, she states that iron rivets have been driven into his legs, a cast-iron collar has been placed around his neck, and he has suffered for seven years, standing *xafabo'libboshinyergasolib* ("with his head lowered in sorrow") [11: 278]. Boychibor's captivity parallels Alpomish's imprisonment: as the hero is confined in the zindon, his horse too is subjected to oppression. The horse therefore becomes a symbol of freedom held captive together with the hero's destiny.

Alpomish's words *Jonivorborbo'lsameningqanotim* ("If my steed is still alive, he is my wings") [11: 277] provide an important poetic basis for this symbolic status. Although the expression is metaphorical in form, within the symbolic structure of the episode Boychibor represents the possibility of movement, escape, and restored freedom.

In the scene of escape from the zindon, Boychibor's symbolism also intersects with the epic's religious-belief layer. After Alpomish appeals to the saints and the chiltan (the Forty Saints) for help, Boychibor pulls him from the dungeon:

*Qo 'lochibchiltanlar duo qilibdi, Otquyrug 'ibozqirqqulocho 'libdi.
Otquyrug 'in u zindongasolibdi, Hakimbekbeligaboylabolibdi.
Jonivorzo 'ruribshuzamontortdi, Boychiborgapirlarberdiquvvatdi,
Hakimbek u zamonzindondanchiqdi. [11: 281]*

The chiltan opened their hands and prayed; the horse's tail again grew to forty fathoms. They lowered the tail into the dungeon, and Hakimbek tied it around his waist. The creature strained and pulled with all its might; the pirs gave Boychibor strength, and Hakimbek came out of the dungeon.

The episode establishes Boychibor as a liberating symbolic figure whose agency is reinforced by divine assistance.

Barchin is one of the central symbols through which the epic articulates fidelity, honor, and worthiness. She is represented not only as the beloved woman but also as a figure capable of determining her own destiny, defending female dignity, demonstrating moral steadfastness, and meeting the ethical and heroic standards expected of Alpomish's partner. The semantic field surrounding Barchin includes rivalry among the alps, the setting of conditions, waiting, trial, and loyalty. Previous scholarship likewise characterizes her as a faithful and devoted woman who combines beauty, honor, wisdom, and courage [6: 53-54].

This symbolic layer becomes more complex in passages depicting Barchin's thoughts and aspirations concerning Yodgor. In the Uzbek cultural imagination reflected by the epic, the child is not merely a biological continuation of the lineage but also a bearer of family honor, communal recognition, and future aspiration. Loyalty and maternal affection therefore converge in Barchin's image: even in Alpomish's absence, she preserves responsibility for the household name, the child's destiny, and the family's standing before the community.

The epic explicitly links Barchin with the pir's spiritual favor and with alp status:

*Shul vaqtlarda Barchin ham barkamol, bo'iyetgan,
haryag'rinio'n beshqarichkeladi. Pirning nazar bilan paydobo'lgan,
bu ham alp. [11, p. 36]*

By that time Barchin had fully matured. Her shoulders measured fifteen qarich (handspans). She had come into being through the pir's blessed regard; she too was an alp.

This description links Barchin not only with an aesthetic ideal but also with the pir's favor, alp status, and the heroic criterion itself. In her encounters with the Qalmoqalps, she does not act as a helpless woman but as an equal agent. Her declaration activates the meanings of resistance and equality:

*Menmanlikman baring bundakelasan,
Kelgan bilan meninimaqilasani?! So'zaytguchi senga menday mushtipar,
Bilsang, men ham, qalmoq, sengabarobar. [11: 61]*

In your arrogance, all of you come here – what can you do to me merely by coming? The one who speaks to you may seem a frail woman; know this, Qalmoq: I am your equal.

The episode in which the alp Ko'kaman attempts to dominate Barchin further strengthens her symbolic status as a woman capable of defending her own honor. The narrative describes her physically defeating him:

*Barchino'zinio'ngg'arib, qo'lini uzatdi,
bir qo'li Ko'kamanning yoqasiga yetdi, bir qo'libil belbog'idantutdi.
"Yo, Shohimardon pirim", – deb ko'tarib,
chalqarmonqilib yerga qo'ydi. Chap tizzasiniko'kragiga qo'yib turdi.
Og'ziburnidandirak-dirakqon keta berdi. [11: 61]*

Barchin steadied herself and reached out. With one hand she seized Ko'kaman by the collar and with the other by his belt. Crying, 'O my Shohimardon Pir!' she lifted him and threw him flat on the ground. She placed her left knee on his chest, while blood streamed from his mouth and nose.

Barchin's invocation of the pir at the moment of action also links her heroic power with the patronage of Shohimardon Pir. Her symbolic status is further deepened in the speech connected with the fate of her father, Boysari. She declares *Ayolman, deb*

qandayqarabturayin (“How can I stand by merely because I am a woman?”), *Bel boyladim, endio ‘zimborayin* (“I have girded myself; now I shall go”), *Erkakliboskiyib, anjomolayin* (“I shall put on men’s clothing and take my equipment”), and *Qalmoqningyurtigayolg ‘izborayin* (“I shall go alone to the land of the Qalmoqs”) [11: 204]. The line *Otamningyo ‘lidaqurbondirjonim* (“My life is a sacrifice on my father’s path”) [11: 204] unites filial loyalty, family duty, courage, and self-sacrifice within Barchin’s image.

Yodgor belongs to the symbolic layer of lineage and succession. During Alpomish’s absence, he signifies the continuity of the household, the survival of the father’s name, and hope for the future. He does not determine the value system of the entire epic to the same extent as a central symbol, but he is crucial in demonstrating that the lineage has not been broken, that the hero’s name continues within the family, and that the possibility of return remains alive.

The zindon, or pit-dungeon, belongs to the epic’s symbolic complex of trial and endurance. Alpomish’s confinement marks a space in which his external heroic power is restricted while inner endurance, faith, and the testing of destiny are intensified. The dungeon temporarily separates him from his community, beloved, and freedom, yet it does not erase his heroic identity. Instead, it becomes a symbolic space that prepares him for restoration and deliverance. In this sense, the zindon symbolizes captivity, patience, spiritual ordeal, and renewal.

The goose and the petition letter acquire symbolic communicative force in the dungeon episode. When Alpomish sees the goose, he does not perceive it as an ordinary bird but as a sign of possible contact with the world beyond the zindon:

E, jonivor, Qo ‘ng ‘iroteldankeldingmi, Humoyundaymenga soya soldingmi, Tor zindondamendanxabaroldingmi, Qarindoshdanelchibo ‘libkeldingmi? [11: 227]

O creature, have you come from the land of Qo ‘ng ‘irot? Have you cast your shadow over me like the Humoy bird? Have you come to learn of me in this narrow dungeon? Have you come as a messenger from my kin?

Through this address, the goose becomes a figure that may restore the broken connection between the imprisoned hero, his homeland, his relatives, and the external world. By tying an *arzaxati* (petition letter) to the goose's wing and entrusting it with messages for his father, mother, Barchin, Qaldirg'och, Yodgor, Qorajon, Ultontoz, and the people of Qo'ng'iro't, Alpomish transforms the letter from a private message into a symbolic carrier of his spiritual ties with family, beloved, child, friend, and community. The line *Bekningarzaxatizoyebo'lmasin* ("Let the bek's petition letter not go in vain") [11: 229] presents the message as a trust that must reach its destination.

Yo'ldoshev strengthens this interpretation by drawing attention to Alpomish's perception of the goose as a "bird from the unseen realm." In Uzbek artistic thought, he argues, the bird may signal unexpected aid, divine protection, and salvation when all ordinary human avenues of assistance have been closed [7: 83]. Mirzayev likewise explains the messenger-bird motif in Alpomish through two interconnected sources: ancient beliefs associated with the cult of birds and the real-life practice of using birds to carry messages [9: 119-120]. The goose and the petition letter thus connect the motifs of dungeon, homeland, kinship, communication, and deliverance.

The goose's symbolic role becomes still clearer in the Shakaman Mountain episode. An old woman warns: *Bu yolg'izg'ozAlpomisharzachisi* ("This lone goose carries Alpomish's plea"), *Qo'ygin, bolam, arzachigao'limyo'q* ("Leave it, my child; a messenger bearing a plea must not be killed"), and *Xatko'targang'ozni, bolam, urmagin* ("Do not shoot the goose carrying a letter, my child") [11: 231]. Its survival of the hunter's arrow and subsequent flight toward Qo'ng'iro't turn its movement from dungeon to homeland into a symbolic trajectory of hope and salvation.

Comparison with another version of the epic further clarifies this interpretation. In the version recorded from Bekmurod Jo'raboyo'g'li, the goose is explicitly described as an angel appearing to Alpomish in avian form, with the purpose of helping him escape from the dungeon:

Alpomishgatilab, birg'ozo'zinizindongatashladi.

Alpomishningko'zigag'ozbo'libko'ringanmaloikaedi.

UlariningmaqsadiAlpomishnichiqaribketmoqedi. [13: 93]

A goose fixed its gaze on Alpomish and threw itself into the dungeon. It was an angel that appeared to Alpomish in the form of a goose. Its purpose was to take Alpomish out of the dungeon.

This variant demonstrates that, in some branches of the tradition, the goose may function not only as a messenger but also as an explicit sign of divine aid and deliverance.

Murodtepa should be understood as a symbolically charged toponymic space. The semantic component *murod* ("cherished wish," "desired attainment") in its name associates the place with a turning point in destiny, trial, and the possibility of achieving one's goal. Ashurov includes both ShohimardonPir's five-finger mark and Murodtepa among units connected with signs through which the future consequences of action may be anticipated [2: 39].

The epic describes Murodtepa through the expressions *haddilibaland tepa* ("an exceptionally high hill"), *qanotliqushuchibo'tolmas* ("no winged bird can fly over it"), and *harqandayodamchiqib, oyoqostiqilibketolmas* ("not every person can climb it and tread upon it") [11: 96]. When Alpomish sees it, he tests his fate through the landscape itself: *Shu tepagaotimnisolayin, irkilmaytepaotimchiqibketsa, borgandanyorimniolaman...* ("I shall urge my horse up this hill. If my horse climbs without hesitation, then when I arrive, I shall win my beloved...") [11: 96]. Murodtepa thus functions as a space in which the hero's intention, confidence in reunion with his beloved, and prospect of attaining his goal are tested.

After reaching the summit, Alpomish feels *ko'nglidayoriniolmasa ham olganchabo'lib* ("in his heart as though he had already won his beloved") [11: 96], connecting the hill with psychological confidence and a prefiguration of victory. Qorajon's statement *Bu tepaningustigachiqadigankamolgayetishganimyo'q* ("I have not yet reached the maturity required to climb to the top of this hill") [11: 96] further associates ascent with maturity and proximity to heroic status.

The symbolic structure becomes more pronounced when the zindon is considered in relation to the same spatial zone. A vertical opposition emerges between the height of Murodtepa and the depth of the dungeon:

Surxayilmastonturibaytdi: – Sen podshosan, nimaqilsang, hukmingyetadi. MunaMurodtepaningqavatidanchuqur – zindonqazdirsang, olibboribzindongataashlasang, zahyerdabeshkun, o'n kun, bir oy, biryilyotar, chiribo'libketar. [11: 219]

Surxayil Mastonsaid: 'You are the ruler; whatever you order will be carried out. Have a deep dungeon dug beside Murodtepa, throw him into it, and in the damp earth he will lie for five days, ten days, a month, a year, until he rots and dies.'

Tuproqdaechkinizingizinko'ribdi, Murodtepaday tepa bo'libturibdi, Izquvibboshigachiqibboribdi, Naryoqbetichuqurzindonko'ribdi. [11: 371]

He saw a goat's track in the earth; it rose like a hill as high as Murodtepa. Following the track, he climbed to its top and saw a deep dungeon on the far side.

This interpretation is also supported by the spatial code of culture. Sabitova distinguishes a spatial cultural code in which the opposition high/low is associated in cultural consciousness with evaluative contrasts such as elevated/base, positive/negative, and divine/earthly [10: 29]. From this perspective, the opposition between Murodtepa and the zindon models the alternation of ascent and descent, aspiration and captivity, confidence and trial in Alpomish's destiny.

Murodtepa marks the point of aspiration, confidence, and ascent; the zindon represents hardship, ordeal, and spiritual restriction. The contrast therefore extends beyond the simple fact that one place is high and the other deep. Murodtepa is the height at which the hero's intention is tested; the zindon is the depth of ordeal endured on the path toward that intention. Together they form a symbolic model of ascent, descent, and restoration in the hero's fate.

At the negative pole of the epic, units such as Ultontoz, Surxayil Kampir, zakat, and the land of the Qalmoqs function

primarily as negative figures or axiological-semantic nodes. Ultontoz represents illegitimate authority and the breakdown of social order during Alpomish's absence. Ashurov notes that symbolism in the epic may also be expressed through anthroponyms and relates the name Ultontoz to the meaning 'the sole of a boot' [2: 39]. This etymological association reinforces the semantic features of baseness and unworthiness. Ultontoz consequently becomes a negative figure of false rule, social disorder, and distorted values.

Surxayil Kampir likewise functions as a negative figure. Her image is associated with deceit, provocation, destructiveness, and the incitement of social hostility. Her actions repeatedly intensify conflict, undermine trust among characters, and create a field of negative evaluation. She can therefore be understood as the personified embodiment of intrigue and destructive manipulation.

Zakat occupies a somewhat different position: rather than personifying evil, it acts as an axiological conflict node. The demand for zakat activates a clash involving authority, kinship, social obligation, dignity, and communal cohesion, and becomes one of the narrative mechanisms through which the epic's value tensions are exposed. This distinction confirms the need to separate conflict-generating axiological units from stable positive symbols and from personified negative figures.

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis establishes that the symbolic system of Alpomish is organized around several core values: the heroic ideal, divine patronage, homeland and communal unity, fidelity, honor, continuity of lineage, trial, freedom, and justice. The proposed three-group classification distinguishes central national-cultural symbols from context-dependent symbolically charged images and from axiological conflict units. Shohimardon Pir, the alp ideal, Boychibor, Barchin, and the homeland occupy the most stable symbolic layer because their meanings recur across major narrative segments and help structure the epic's value system. The five-finger mark, the goose, the petition letter, Yodgor, Qaldirg'och, and Murodtepa acquire symbolic force through

particular motifs and episodes, whereas Ultontoz, Surxayil Kampir, and zakat concentrate negative evaluation or value conflict. The findings also show that spatial, bodily, religious, zoonymic, anthroponymic, and communicative signs interact within a single symbolic network. Thus, the symbolic structure of Alpomish constitutes a multilayered linguocultural field through which historical memory, social experience, moral norms, and the aesthetic ideal of the community are encoded and transmitted.

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