

## TO THE PROBLEM OF A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY OF THE INSTITUTION OF *ZHYRAU*: THEIR STATUS, FUNCTIONS, CULTURE AND WORLDVIEW

Kayrat Zhanabayev<sup>\*</sup>, Almira Beketovna Naurzbayeva<sup>\*\*</sup>, Aslan Zhamelevich  
Zhaksylykov<sup>\*\*\*</sup>, Yerbol A. Kurmanbayev<sup>\*\*\*\*</sup>, Aizhan Shokhanovna  
Turgenbayeva<sup>\*\*\*</sup>, Ulpan Islyiamova<sup>\*\*\*\*\*</sup>, Bauyrzhan Bozhbanbayev<sup>\*\*\*\*\*</sup>

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**Abstract:** This article raises the problem of studying one of the most complex phenomena of the political, historical and cultural life of Kazakh nomads – the multifaceted activity of *zhyrau*, outstanding poets, speakers-legislators, state and public figures of the heyday and historical life of Kazakh khanates in the 15th-18th centuries. These unique carriers of ancient steppe oral knowledge were called in the vernacular *zhyrau*, i.e. singers, because they performed a *zhyr* (a heroic song as well as a laudatory dedication to a high-ranking official).

Being obligatory members and leaders of the khan (state) councils, these heroic singers possessed the highest social status in the medieval nomadic tribe and its entire spiritual sphere, performing important social and state functions that are not characteristic of other nomadic singers. Therefore, their worldview, because of this polyfunctionality and specific development of nomadic societies, harmoniously combined ancient knowledge, syncretic art and the system of military-administrative and spiritual management of the nomadic state, modern for that time. Such a worldview requires a special scientific methodology and needs to be studied not only in the context of folkloristics, literary criticism, political science, aesthetics, ethnopsychology, cultural studies and ethnography. There is a wide range of activities of the steppe heroic *aoidos*, although all of his functions are realized exclusively in the oral form, which is not quite common for European classical or eastern classical systems.

In addition, the high status of the singer in the nomadic medieval society formed his unique cultural type as a spiritual teacher of the tribe, a wise khans' instructor, a figure of great state and social importance. And his worldview should also be studied in a comprehensive way: by different methods and in the context of different disciplines. The main of these methods is complex-concentric: a comprehensive and systemic analysis of the object that pulls together all the elements of the whole as a structurally substantial kernel.

It is not only relevant for nomadic (syncretic) cultures, but also extremely useful for understanding the general laws of origin and development of art, law and statehood.

The worldview of Kazakh (Turkic) singers of the 15th-18th centuries as the dominant phenomenon permeates the entire spiritual basis of the broad cultural-historical and state-political system of nomadic development of the Turkic peoples.

**Keywords:** *zhyrau*, functions, status, oral form, complex-concentric method, history, epic, syncretism, worldview.

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\* Corresponding author, Al-Farabi Kazakh National University. Email: [Ovlur1963@mail.ru](mailto:Ovlur1963@mail.ru)

\*\* Kurmangazy Kazakh National Conservatory

\*\*\* Al-Farabi Kazakh National University

\*\*\*\* Kazakh Humanitarian Juridical Innovative University

\*\*\*\*\* Association of Higher Educational Institutions of the Republic of Kazakhstan

\*\*\*\*\* Almaty Academy of Economics and Statistics

## INTRODUCTION

A comprehensive study of the institution of *zhyrau*, their status, social functions and worldview is the main object of this paper because of the special significance of multifaceted creativity of this oral phenomenon for a number of humanitarian sciences: folklore, ethnography, epistemology, cultural studies, philosophy, aesthetics, literary criticism, history of society, state and law, religious studies, etc.

One of the reasons to address this fundamental problem was the lack of a crucial scientific, methodological and theoretical basis in studying specific, unique, relict phenomena of nomadic Kazakh culture.

These phenomena in the medieval Kazakh nomadic period represented the syncretism of arts of a particular poet or “ideological syncretism” (E.M. Meletinskiy), i.e. the performance of a versatile (multi-genre) and multifunctional activity in the practice of one oral singer. But, according to modern researchers, because of “the lack of representative and authentic historical sources, the real and reliable history of the Kazakhs in the 14th century and the early 18th century is practically unknown and can hardly be fully reconstructed” (Masanov, 2015: 12). These nomadic singers are not only a part of real history, but in the specified period – its leading (dominant) force.

The study of such a bright and complex phenomenon as the *zhyrau* should, on the one hand, take into account his oral musical, oratorical and prophetic function in a single complex (the syncretism of arts), and on the other hand, see in the same complex his commanding, state, legislative, spiritual and sacral (as the polyfunctionality of the spiritual leader of the tribe) activity.

This issue is particularly relevant, since there is an insufficient amount of quality textbooks, scientific and methodological developments, research methodologies and teaching methods for studying this cultural and historical phenomenon.

The epoch of globalization also sets new challenges to the modern Kazakh humanities, conditioned by the inclusion of the East and the Turkic states in a single world cultural, scientific, educational space.

Such conditionality is natural, but it leads to an objective and profound understanding of the destinies of traditional cultures of the East, all Turkic-speaking peoples, especially the medieval nomads of the North Caucasus, Central Asia and Southern Siberia, when they enter the sphere of world scientific research. After all, even earlier, Kazakh researchers wrote that the process of “accustoming to the values of other cultures was not without significant losses...” One should take it into account when talking about the preservation of unique national principles in the world globalization system (Auezov, 1993: 32).

The subject of the present research is a fundamental part of the large research project “A comprehensive study of the institution of *zhyrau*: status, functions, culture, and worldview”. To date, this research question has become one of the main

priorities in highlighting the role and activities of *zhyrau* in the history and culture of the Kazakh people at the time of the establishment of nomadic state formations of the 15th-18th centuries.

The authors of this scientific project are A.Zh. Zhaksylykov – Dr.Sci. (Philology), A.B. Naurzbayeva – Dr.Sci. (Philosophy), E.D. Tursunov – Dr.Sci. (Philology), K. Zhanabayev – Cand.Sci, E. Kurmanbayev – Cand.Sci., and U. Akberdy, M.Sci. (Tattimbetova et al., 2016; Naurzbayeva and Zhaksylykov, 2015; Tursunov, 2004; Zhanabayev, 2016; Akberdy, 2016; Kurmanbayev et al., 2015).

The research is devoted to *zhyrau*, the key original phenomenon of nomadic oral tradition, which originated in ancient times (Masanov, 2015; Zhanabayev, 2016) and reached the 20th century in its pure original form, namely, to heroic singers and major public figures of the Kazakh people.

In addition, the main scientific and theoretical basis of this study was formed by the works of such historians as N. Aristov (1896), E. Bekmakhanov (1947), Ch. Valikhanov (1993), I.Ya. Zlatkin (1964), B. Irmukhanov (2004), A. Kushkumbayev (2012), A. Levshin (1966), A. Margulan (1986), N. Masanov (1995), V. Moiseev (2001), J. Sabitov (2016), R. Temirgaliyev (2013), M. Tynyshpayev (1927), K. Khafizova (1998).

**On the status and function of *zhyrau* for understanding the worldview of nomads:** According to the classification of E.D. Tursunov, the *zhyrau* is one of the main types of carriers of Kazakh nomadic oral and poetic culture (Tursunov, 2004), among which we should also mention *akyns*, *sals* and *serys*.

Like no other type of carries of the oral musical or state legal culture of nomadic tribes listed above, he has an original, deep and distinctive in its structure poetics, unique by the history of his origin, formation and development, which is associated with the tradition of ritual mediation, etc. He most fully answers the research task: to comprehend the essence, specifics, forms and significance of his worldview as the leading (dominant) in the overall picture of the spiritual universe of the Kazakh medieval nomad tribe.

It should be noted that currently all the *akyns* who perform the *zhyr*, a heroic epic, are respectfully called in the vernacular *zhyrau*. This is the strength and will of oral folk memory. But the difference between the two cultural phenomena is significant. And it was emphasized by E.D. Tursunov in the above-mentioned monograph.

The main distinctive features here are the social status and functions, which completely form the poetics and genre-style identity of each individual carrier and guardian of oral-poetic tradition. These social signs inevitably affect the worldview, reflecting the moral appearance of the singer, the khan's adviser and the leader of the khan's council.

Thus, the above-mentioned monograph by E.D. Tursunov is the very first and significant result in studying the initial and fundamental foundations of the worldview of *zhyrau* both since the epoch of origin and formation of this phenomenon, and in the “epoch of finding borders” (Tompson and Uali, 2015: 4).

Of particular importance is the fact that this cultural-historical phenomenon of Turkic nomadic oral-poetic and state-political culture could not have been given any attention before, especially in the Soviet era. However, even now their state and legal role, their historical importance and cultural and aesthetic significance have not yet been sufficiently understood.

Moreover, such great researchers as S. Kondybai (2013) and E. Tursunov (2004) are also ambivalent about the problems of the history of *zhyrau*, the stages and factors of their historical formation and development.

According to the first, the priestly knowledge of the steppe *oidos* goes back to the Hyperborean tradition, according to the second - follows from the traditional nature of ritual mediation. Both methods, despite being completely different, deserve close attention of cultural researchers, primarily in folklore and epic, since the localization of ancient nomadic cultures in the works of both authors takes place in the Ural-Altai cultural and linguistic basin.

The forerunners of *zhyrau* are *zhauyrynshy* (predictors) (Tattimbetova et al., 2016; Naurzbayeva and Zhaksylykov, 2015) and more ancient – ritual mediators. Being guardians and carriers of steppe oral knowledge, with all their oratory-poetic creativity, they demonstrate the unique forms of ancient sacred thinking: sound and graphic codes, suggestive formulas, structure and semantics of ancient matrices and shamanic thinking. These are the most important vestigial elements acting at the level of phonosemantics and morpho-phonosemantics, entering the structure of formal content components and contributing to the reconstruction of the archaic Turkic solar and genealogical myth, rite and ritual. It is these singers who, due to historically slowly developing nomadism and the stability of an oral-style technique, preserved unique *initial grounds* in their oral creativity (Zhanabayev and Asembaeva, 2014).

This circumstance opens up the prospects for folklorists and epistemologists to further study the genesis and evolution of epic forms, poetic language and features of performance, as repeatedly pointed out by A.Zh. Zhaksylykov (Tattimbetova et al., 2016).

The following interesting problem can serve as an example: the connection of throat and jawbone singing with the Turkic alliterated verse.

Of course, it is obvious that the Turkic alliterated verse is the forerunner of not only the rhyme, but also of the whole sound complex, including anaphora and all kinds of sound repetition, down to the intonation-syntactic stereotypy, i.e. large epic formulas, sometimes making up the whole tirades, which in the rules of an oral-style technique is quite understandable and even natural.

“The instant birth of a poetic work”, according to the researcher K. Zhanabayev, “depends both on the mastery of the techniques and means of an oral-style technique of performance and on the poetic talent of the singer”.

A special body of an oral-style technique of the singer of the 15th-18th centuries was formed by formal style elements that organize the outer framework of the poetic text, its architectonics (composition): anaphora, epiphora with its varieties: monorhythm, redif, verbal rhyme, etc., and play the role of sound repetition. At different levels of the text they form sound artistic images, expressiveness of the motive, idea, theme (which in the written text appears as an iconic syntax).

From ancient times, these sound repetitions improved the auditory perception and visual imagination of the nomad, whose main arts were only the word and music, the performance technique of which completely replaced painting, architecture, sculpture and other plastic arts.

Let us take anaphora as an example and reveal its role in the organization of the artistic world and the artistic poetic text of *zhynrau*.

The anaphoric system is of great importance when it comes to the semantics and structure of the Turkic epic verse. Being its most ancient and original sound element, it originates from the ancient Turkic alliterated verse to the more ancient sound ritual repetitions, and, ultimately, to the solar myth, rite and ritual. In the architectonics of the Turkic text, it graphically, with its vertical, and, by virtue of its original orientation, reproduces the model of the solar myth and ritual, outlining the ways for their quite possible reconstruction.

In addition to the known signs of anaphora - *ornamentality* and *orientation*, we distinguish its ability to organize the artistic world and the text of the heroic singer. The anaphoric system also “builds” thematic blocks and intonation-syntactic series that promote greater representativeness, expressiveness and architectonics (composition) of the artistic form.

Consider the anaphoric structure in the text (Tables 1, 2).

**TABLE 1: A FRAGMENT OF THE GENRE *KOSHTASU* (FAREWELL) OF KAZTUGAN, A SINGER OF THE 15TH CENTURY**

	<i>Original text</i>	<i>Word-based translation</i>
1.	Алаң да алаң, алаң жұрт,	The nomadic, nomadic, nomadic camps of the tribe, the homeland,
2.	Ақала ордам қонған жұрт,	The tribe which once settled here as my White Horde,
3.	Атамыз біздің бұ Сүйініш	The tribe into which our ancestor Suyunish
4.	Күйеу болып барған жұрт,	Stepped as the bridegroom,
5.	Анамыз біздің Бозтуған	The tribe into which our mother Boztugan
6.	Келіншек болып түскен жұрт,	Stepped as the daughter-in-law,

<i>Original text</i>	<i>Word-based translation</i>
7. Қарғадай мынау Қазтуған батыр туған жұрт,	The tribe which gave birth to this, crow, Batyr Kaztugan,
8. Кіндігімді кескен жұрт,	The tribe which cut off my umbilical cord,
9. Кір-қонымды жуған жұрт,	The tribe which washed all of my clothes,
10. Қарағайдан садақ бұдырып,	Which curved for me a bow of pine,
11. Қылшанымды сары жүн оққа толтырып,	Which stuffed for me a quiver with a yellow-tail arrow,
12. Жанға сақтау болған жұрт.	The tribe which guarded me.

**TABLE 2: ANALYSIS OF THE ANAPHORIC SYSTEM OF KOSHTASU-FAREWELL OF THE KAZTUGAN, THE 15TH CENTURY**

1. <b>Алаң</b> да <b>алаң</b> , <b>алаң</b> жұрт,	1. We singled out the theme No. 1 with a sound brace-opening
2. Ақала ордам қонған жұрт,	<b>A - homeland theme</b>
3. Атамыз біздің бұ Сүйініш	2. <i>K</i> - indicates the transition to the theme No. 2, family
4. Күйеу болып барған жұрт,	2. We singled out the theme No. 2 with a sound brace-opening
5. Анамыз біздің Бозтуған	<b>K – family theme</b>
6. Келіншек болып түскен жұрт,	3. Қ – indicates the transition to the theme No 3, personal
7. Қарғадай мынау Қазтуған батыр туған жұрт,	3. We singled out the theme No. 3 with a sound brace-opening
8. Кіндігімді кескен жұрт,	<b>Қ – personal theme</b>
9. Кір-қонымды жуған жұрт,	4. The main concluding thought stands out precisely for the absence of anaphoric bracing
10. Қарағайдан садақ бұдырып,	
11. Қылшанымды сары жүн оққа толтырып,	
12. Жанға сақтау болған жұрт.	

The song “*Алаң да алаң, алаң жұрт...*” (“A Farewell to Edil”) was created by the singer, commander and ruler of the Kaztugan family in connection with the migration of his tribes from the native shores of Edil (Volga) and their entry into the Kazakh khanate.

The main theme of this lyrical fragment is a farewell to the native land, memories of the history of the tribe, his family (parents) and heroic youth. What functional role does the Turkic anaphor play here?

In the opening of this lyrical song, the nomad-listener cannot help noticing the sound repetitions based on the principle of assonance – *a-a-a-a*, both horizontally and vertically. This is the first, phono-semantic, level of the text. The listener perceives it organically, holistically, as a melody and along with the melody, and the modern reader can easily see this sound system both vertically and horizontally:

*Алаң да алаң, алаң жұрт,  
Ақала ордам қонған жұрт,  
Атамыз біздің бұ Сүйініш  
Күйеу болып барған жұрт...*

The thematic anaphoric bracing, or the sound block with the selection of **A**, at the very beginning of the song, covers the first three verses, focusing the listener on the first theme: the theme of the homeland. Here the concept of the “homeland” includes the native nomadic tribes (*Алаң да алаң, алаң жұрт...*), the history of the native land (*Ақала ордам қонған жұрт...*), and the image of the ruler, the tribal leader, the ancestor of Suyunish (*Атамыз біздің бұ Сүйініш*). Here is the general picture of the homeland:

*Алаң да алаң, алаң жұрт...* – the nomadic, nomadic, nomadic camps of the tribe (the homeland)

*Ақала ордам қонған жұрт...* – the tribe which once settled here as the White Horde (camp)

*Атамыз біздің бұ Сүйініш...* – the tribe into which our ancestor Suyunish

*Күйеу болып барған жұрт...* – stepped as the bridegroom...

As we have seen, vertically, this sound anaphoric series reveals one theme, the theme of the unity of the native tribe with its founder.

The very word **алаң** means the steppe space, a wide and unlimited place. In combination with the lexeme **жұрт** (nomadic camp, homeland, people), the text fully reflects the integral image of the native nomadic country.

On the other hand, the repeated repetition of the lexeme **алаң** by ear reproduces the rhythm of a moving nomadic camp: *алаң да алаң, алаң жұрт...* - nomadic, nomadic, nomadic people ...: U- U- U- -

Here, anaphora contributes to the creation of the sound and auditory image of a moving nomadic camp on the one hand, and its visual, graphic image in the text (visual imagination) on the other hand. Anaphora here replaces the colors and the frame, and therefore it is necessary to “hear” the text and “see” the hidden images, which we will be discussed below. And there is nothing strange and special here, because we have an oral text oriented to the “listener”. Here there is no external description and image of the nomadic world, familiar to the European eye, but the whole picture of the moving nomadic camp is based only on the sound rhythmic repetition of the word “алаң”: *алаң да алаң, алаң жұрт...*

We will call this technique of artistic representativeness as the “hidden” technique. This is not the only case. An analysis of the poetic system showed that all the *zhynau* of the 15th-18th centuries possess this technique. And the main role in this artistic depiction is played by anaphora and, of course, by a syntactic repetition, or an artistic rhythm:

*Доспамбет жырау, the 16th century:*

*Тоғай, тоғай, тоғай су...*

In the reality of the text, the listener “sees” the forest. He “sees” this forest in its threefold repetition: literally - *тоғай, тоғай, тоғай су...* (forests, forests, forests and water). Both these images – forest and water – give the listener a holistic view of the forest water, but thanks to a graphic syntactic repetition – he also sees a large spring flood in the forest.

Thus, before the listener, the forest is depicted in all its completeness at the time of high spring flood. Only two words are involved in organizing the time of the year (spring) and the place of the event (forest). In their combination before the listener appears a holistic image of the spring forest at the time of high flood. The image of high flood is also created by the graphic syntactic rhythmic repetition of *тоғай, тоғай, тоғай су...*, thanks to which the listener first of all must “see” the forest spaces stretching one after the other, completely filled up with spring flood.

A great role here is played by rhythmic, a regular rocking: *тоғай, тоғай, тоғай су*: U- U- U- -.

It is this rhythmic image of the forests stretching out and protruding after each other in their length, creating the illusion of movement. Here, the listener will also catch the measured rhythm of the moving nomadic camp. This is the same “hidden” picture, the frame, as in the first example, in Kaztugan *zhyrau*. Below are a number of examples of the “hidden technique” in which the unity of the artistic rhythm (visual syntax) with an artistic image gives us a holistic picture of nature, event or state:

*Асан Кайгы:*

*Елбең-елбең жүгірген...*

The listener catches this rhythm of the rapidly galloping horsemen, sees them swaying (*елбең-елбең...*). At the same time, his visual imagination recreates the image of a long, difficult path.

*Шалкииз:*

*Ор, ор коян, ор коян...*

Literally: a hare, a brown hare, a brown hare.

Of course, the image of a brown hare implies that image of a person. It characterizes a fussy, inexperienced and inattentive person who endangers himself.

But here the singer presented both a lively and vigorous rhythm that recreates the image of a hare leaping in different directions: *ор, ор қоян, ор қоян* (visual syntax). Of great importance is the fact that the picturesque image of a hare leaping in different directions correlates with the character of a restless, fussy person.

*Жиембет:*

*Жел, жел есер, жел есер...*

Literally: the wind, the wind blows, the wind blows.

The traditional image of time and inevitable changes is widespread in the poetic practice of *zhyrau*. Here visual syntax is based on assonance. *Жел, жел есер, жел есер* (sound repetition: *e-e-e-e*).

The peculiarity of this example is that the singer shows here not only the movement of the wind (a triple repetition of the lexeme *жел*), but also its strength, the powerful wind mass, air flow. The image of this mighty wind mass correlates with the passage of time.

There are many such pictures and such visual “hidden” techniques. They are found in the oral practice of all *zhyrau*. This indicates the regularity of the “hidden” visual technique for poetry and convincingly attests to the multi-layering, symbolism and deep antiquity of their poetic forms (Zhanabayev, 2016: 88).

This form goes back, as mentioned above, to throat and jawbone singing, creating special vibrations, “suggestive fields” of impact on the world, nature and listener.

At the same time, this is a peculiar and original shamanistic form of *mimesis* (imitation), whose history of formation is widely described by ethnographers and ritualistic scientists. Here, not only fundamental problems of the origin of poetry, poetic language and art are revealed, but in particular – the nature of the Turkic languages, Kazakh, as carriers of the original harmony, codes and assimilations.

In short, the Turkic alliterated verse underlies all, at first magical, then archaic and epic, and then classical epic structure (*zhyra*), the main method of artistic and philosophical vision of *zhyrau*.

This is just one of many interesting observations and directions of Kazakh epic history and historical ethnography and, in fact, the worldview of *zhyrau*.

The unique process of Turkic epicogenesis goes in parallel with the development of the type of the singer, starting from his *akyn*, general folklore essence, including the stage of primary mythology, shamanism, ritual mediation, his formation as a *zhauyrshi*, predictor, and to the classical form of the *statist-zhyrau*, appearing in the 15th-18th centuries.

These two processes, as shown by E. Tursunov, go in the same parallels with the formation of the cult of patron ancestors, *aruahs* and the addition of odes, laudatory *zhyrs* in honor of the hero-ancestor, who replaced the totemic cult in the course of historical evolution.

Thus, the importance of the worldview, poetics and symbolism of *zhyrau* in statements are of infinite interest for specialists studying the specificity of nomadic worldview and functions.

An analysis of poetics confirms its evolution both factually and visually. The main thing when studying the *initial foundations* of the poetic system of *zhyrau*

is the possibility of reconstructing the ancient solar and later related genealogical tribal myth of the immortality of the *batyr*, the solar hero, the *arauh*. All the features mentioned above, which formed the integral and multilayered worldview of *zhyrau*, their unique national, cultural and socio-historical originality, have become the subject of our study.

**Classical *zhyrau* as a phenomenon of history and culture:** The next important aspect of the worldview is the *classical zhyrau*, namely, medieval historical ones, i.e. the singers and public figures of the 15th-18th centuries. We call them classical due to their highest poetic skill, exemplary for all subsequent generations of singers-*akyns*. In the “heroic age” they created a huge body of legends (*zhyr*).

During the formation of the Kazakh khanate their historical isolation and cultural domination takes place, i.e. their creativity falls on the reign of Kazakh khans of the 15th-18th centuries, the time when they, singers and speakers, solved state issues, managing khan councils and being personal advisers of nomadic Kazakh rulers (Magauin, 1978: 5-7; Zhanabayev, 2016: 86-94).

Many, even the most famous folklorists, are wondering about the authorship of nomads, the authenticity of one or another *zhyrau*, the oral artist’s comprehension of his aesthetic poetic essence, his creative individual self-expression as well as the diverse problems of the oral and style tradition itself, in particular – the degree and nature of memorization, the creation of a phenomenal epic and lyric-epic material. In due time, the attention of such major researchers of the epic as M. Parry and A.B. Lord was drawn to this topic (Lord, 1994).

The first classical *zhyrau* were the singers of the time of Kazakh-Nogai unity and the spiritual leaders of the tribes. At the sunset of the Golden Horde, they embodied in *zhyrs* the richest oral history, an endless nomadic heroic epic and ancient steppe law. They stood at the origins of Kazakh statehood in 1465. The question of the role of *zhyrau* in the military nomadic system of state administration and construction also seems relevant, like many other issues of this era. “The era of the Kazakh-Kalmyk-Dzungarian wars had a huge impact on the development of the Kazakh nation, the formation of its territory and deep cultural-historical and material traces. Looking at it from a height, we see not only victories and losses in battles and wars, or examples of military valor, but also the strengthening of statehood, an increase in the population, the resettlement of Kazakh tribes in Eurasia, exceeding the territory of modern Kazakhstan... Until now, the impact of this heroic era has not yet been fully explored and realized even by historical science” (TOMPIYEV and UALI, 2015: 4).

When we are dealing with the *classical* phenomenon, i.e. exemplary for the nomadic Kazakh and world civilization, we invariably come to a comparison of modern singers with ancient and medieval singers who created their own national epic in the best of their time.

Typologically, historically, and chronologically, they coincide.

The nomadic period, having a huge length of epic life, covers both the antiquity and epic of medieval Europe and Asia. There can be no discrepancy: we proceed from the amazing circumstance that the poetry of the ancient Greek Ionian, the mythical *aoidos* Homer, rising, presumably, to the 8th century BC, and the poetry of Spanish hughars, jugglers, spiers, Korean Hwarangs, etc., which goes back to the Middle Ages, and the entire European epic – up until the High Middle Ages – all of them are contemporaries of a powerful and continuous epic process that has been going on since ancient times.

Their basic completion and formation occurred during the period of tribal consolidation, due to the need for the centralization of power and the development of, albeit fragile, but state entities. The epic is always the “dawn of national history” (Meletinskiy, 1982: 664-666), its “heroic age”. Its formation and flowering always occurs at the time of the consolidation of tribal unions and state formations.

In the Kazakh nomadic period, this process (of the consolidation of tribal unions and the formation of a sustainable management of the “state” center) was very specific, but quite frequent. Due to their mobility, nomads could face an external threat any time – an enormous cavalry army, subordinate to the “center”, which in peacetime could not have its strong and durable grounds because of the specific nature of nomadic management and the nature of military nomadic democracy, dictating its will to the khan.

Many researchers wrote about the precariousness and instability of the khan’s power in the conditions of steppe military nomadic democracy, but this does not change the essence of the phenomenon: “The conflicts of the Kazakh khans with the clan aristocracy were the driving force of the Kazakh society. When a strong and charismatic Khan came to power, the strengthening of the central government made the khanate strong and powerful. With weak khans, the “parade of sovereignties” began ... (Tompson and Uali, 2015: 572). Therefore, in the historical tradition, there is the notion of the time of “archaic” empires (Klyashtorniy, 2002).

We do not consider it to be a negative side for the nomadic Turkic empires. For the subsequent Turkic formations, they will all be classical. This is the same powerful and continuous history, taking place in almost the same socio-historical forms and natural and climatic circumstances.

Both the epic and the traditions of Kazakh statehood have a deep and uninterrupted tradition dating back to the time of the Scythians, Massagets, Huns and Kok Turks. This continuity of culture and, at the same time, its regular renewal processes can be attested by the chronological dynamics of the sources themselves (Akatayev, 1993: 7).

The Turkic tribes always had both epic and statehood in one form or another. Epic is a living ideal and a reminder to nomads about their unity and heroic deeds, their legendary history and unfading generic memory.

The second classical *zhyrau* heroically fought for the independence and freedom of the Kazakh people, created the Kazakh national culture itself: poetry, history, philosophy. They were the first witnesses to the beginning of the colonization of the Kazakh territory. Being the singers of the khanate era and the leaders of the khan councils, statesmen, they left the pages of history together with the liquidation of the institution of the khanate.

Certainly, the worldview of *zhyrau* was multilayered due to centuries-long development and contacts with various peoples, cultures, religions. This is the mobile property of nomadic culture to absorb all the best achievements of world culture, to preserve them, to transform and, giving them a new form, to enrich other peoples with them.

At the same time, the artistic and imaginative worldview of the *zhyrau*, the singer of the 15th-18th centuries, could not but reflect both his social role and his high social status of the leader of the khan council. Here we also observe such features of his epic style as monumentality, meritocracy, brevity and imagery of utterance (laconism), giving a clear and vivid form to his utterance.

The worldview of the heroic singer of the 15th-18th centuries was a natural, complete and unique embodiment of poetic and legal culture in Kazakh medieval nomadic society until the time of colonization as well as an expression of the spiritual life of Kazakh nomadic society of that time.

Due to the special historical and socio-economic development caused by the specific nature of the nomadic mode of production, these singers were the “correctors” of the negligent and unreasonable khans. Such were the ancient Turkic *yurchas*: Yollig-tegin and counselor Tonyukuk. They were also spiritual teachers of the people themselves. A striking and concentrated phenomenon is Asan Kaigy, whose personality was colorfully expressed in scientific myths and legends.

## METHODS

The methods of studying the worldview of *zhyrau* as well as any nomadic phenomena in general can be different, but they are all included in one complex, subject to the same task – the inseparability and organic nature of the initially unified structures that organize the phenomenon. The main method used by the authors is complex-concentric.

The founder of this method was a remarkable teacher, linguist and methodologist D. Tursunov.

The essence of this method lies in the fact that any complex, syncretic phenomenon of nomadism should be studied from different angles, i.e. in complex, and the object itself, for example, *zhyrau*, becomes the center of the whole study, drawing together not only its many-sided activities, but also different disciplines in the system of research, i.e. appearing as an integral and multidimensional cultural

and historical phenomenon of Kazakh nomads. Of course, in the process of synthesis or analysis as well as in the structural method, some important facets are lost. The complex method allows the phenomenon to be considered in a more holistic manner.

That is why, in our opinion, the truly scientific coverage of the worldview of *zhynrau* in Kazakh history and culture required, of course, the efforts of specialists in many areas: philologists, philosophers, religious scholars, cultural critics, historians, ethnographers, folklorists, linguists, etc., whether or not the study included an individual poetic text, style, genre, or the functions or type of *zhynrau* itself.

Many modern researchers hold a discussion about it now. For example, when studying history, as M.K. Tompiyev writes, “the successes of geology, paleontology, cosmology, biology and even some of the humanities, such as comparative linguistics, studying, as history, the development of the subject of research from past to present, are based on the analysis of the consequences as a complex of indirect evidence ... There is a number of different scientific principles that allow us to make inferences by the laws of logic on the basis of empirical data rather than any sacred-mythological texts or immediate political preferences” (Tompiyev and Uali, 2015: 14).

*Zhynrau* and their worldview are only a part, a structural element and a unique matrix of the holistic spiritual giant universe of oral nomadic culture.

Of great interest to the general semiotics of nomadism (*zhynrau* and their worldview) are externally independent cultural phenomena-texts: ornament, yurt, military-nomadic and administrative management (structure and function), the combat structure of clans, tribes and *zhuzes*, the specifics of the *biysk* courts and the khan councils, etc. Each of these elements is the same structural component of a single and integral nomadic culture, a continuously moving, never stopping civilization, from antiquity to our days.

This is the second feature called *internal integrity*.

The internal integrity of nomadic culture was noted by Ch.Ch. Valikhanov based on the example of the poetic creativity of the Kazakh people. He believed that the entire spiritual sphere of the Kazakhs' life in total is a whole, despite the asynchrony of its forms of external manifestations, and has been preserved without exceptions (Valikhanov, 1993: 23-25). This confirms the opinion on the ancient sources of nomadic civilization.

The third important feature is the *stability* of various forms.

This stability conceals the specificity of nomadic culture, which requires the correct method. Beyond an objective assessment of the origin, properties and attributes of ancestral culture, it makes no sense to talk about the worldview either. At one time, incorrect methodological principles that did not take into account the specificity of nomadic culture led to judgments about the *underdevelopment* or *backwardness* of nomadism.

Therefore, the approaches to studying both *zhyrau* and any cultural phenomenon of Kazakh nomadism as well as the assessments of these phenomena should be different than a few decades ago in relation to nomads, their culture and their worldview.

Epic Kazakh singers are a socio-historical, concrete, national and social phenomenon. It reached the 18th century (before its decline), like the archaic and classical epic created by it, with all the mysteries full of secrets, relict forms, special concepts and symbols, mysterious turns, a clear and powerful logic, a unique religious and mythological structure. This sheds light on many of the fundamental problems of world science about the origin of culture as a whole.

In connection with the problem of the epic worldview of *zhyrau*, of primary importance remain the issues of the origin and development of the process of epogenesis, the conditions and features of its functioning and the unique nature of the oral-style technique. This uniqueness was once emphasized by Ch. Valikhanov, M. Parry and A. Lord.

In his ethnographic notes, Ch.Ch. Valikhanov writes that it is amazing how fresh the Kirghizes preserved their ancient traditions and beliefs, and even more amazing that in all remote ends of the steppe, they are transmitted equally and, when compared, are identical like the lists of one manuscript. "Strange as it may seem, such an incredible accuracy of the sources of the nomadic, illiterate horde, however, is a real fact, not subject to doubt" (Valikhanov, 1993: 23).

Another important point of the worldview of *zhyrau* can and should be identified as their legal (juridical) aspect, i.e. how legal culture functions in the context of steppe democracy.

It is quite clear that any power in nomadism is regulated not only by the khan, the carrier and spokesman of the state power, not only by *zhyrau* personifying the spiritual and executive power, not only by *biys* performing legislative functions, but also by the direct spokesmen of the people, the so-called military nomad democracy, whose interests could not be ignored by the military nomadic leadership.

The main representatives of military nomadic democracy are the *batyrs*, heroes, who earned this title through exploits, heroic deeds.

The flourishing of the Kazakh *batyrdom* is most vividly manifested in the period of the heroic history of the people, called in epistemological science the "heroic age".

M. Tompiyev believes that the flourishing of the *batyrdom* is accompanied by the flourishing of the phenomenon of Kazakh *zhyrau*. He wrote that, possessing a phenomenal memory and the gift of improvisation, *zhyrau* were the creators and keepers of the historical memory of the people: "This was the time when the horse was the wings of the *batyr*, the *shokpar* (a club) – the best friend, and the word – the banner of the fight against the enemy. The feats of *batyrs* were overgrown with

legends and passed from mouth to mouth by *zhyrau*. Poetic lines, spreading across the steppe, inspired the feats of young *dzhigits*, raised the spirit of the people and unified disparate tribes” (Tompiyev and Uali, 2015: 66-68).

The era of *zhyrau* of the 15th-18th centuries is the time of the formation of the Kazakh Khanate and the people’s hard struggle for independence. These centuries are called the “heroic age” in the scientific tradition, i.e. the time of the struggle of the Kazakhs for freedom, survival and independence.

In the general social hierarchy *zhyrau* were, of course, higher not only because of their proximity to the supreme power (the khan and the khan’s council), but also because of the high authority of the teaching, i.e. the systemic possession of millennia-old nomadic knowledge, before whom even *batyrs* bowed. Therefore, all events in the nomadic period were regulated by the word of the singer-*zhyrau*.

*Zhyrau* were carriers and keepers of the sacred history of the people and here it is necessary to look for a new approach, method. The researchers write: “Perhaps, it will not be an exaggeration to say that the epoch of the 17th-18th centuries became one of the main landmarks of Kazakh historical memory. The Kazakhs preserved many legends, myths and poetic works about khans, *batyrs* and battles with the Kalmaks. This oral historiology also needs to be used in historical studies... In addition, there are long-published and well-known collections of the author’s songs of Kazakh *zhyrau* “*Алдаспан*” (1970: 57-179) and “*Жеті ғасыр жырлайды*” (2004: 76)... The lines of *zhyrau* can give important details, since they were the contemporaries of events. Thus, all these written editions of oral steppe historiology can serve as a kind of history of Kazakhstan in Kazakh sources” (Tompiyev and Uali, 2015: 28). Why does one also talk about the complex-concentric system of research as a method here?

The historical life of Kazakh tribes of the Middle Ages relates to the time of struggle and the peak of survival of the Kazakhs, i.e., as historians write, only to the 15th-18th centuries. However, if one looks deeper, the whole life of Kazakh nomads will appear as the experience of a millennia-old struggle of nomads for survival. This determined such important features of the heroic epic style of *zhyrau* as monumentalism, heroic aesthetics, sublimity and romanticism.

The military, political, organizational and creative activity of *zhyrau* was opposed to an external threat. The poetry of *zhyrau* brought together the scattered nomadic Kazakh clans and tribes, which in fact, since the Saka times, were one people. This feature is revealed only against the background of comparisons of the Kazakh (Turkic) horse-nomadic shepherd civilization with other European or Asian civilizations.

## OBJECTIVES

The worldview and textual principles of the poetry of *zhyrau* as statist, members of the khan’s council, commanders, and major public figures are connected with

the social status and functions. Therefore, our first task is to comprehensively study this complex social phenomenon in Turkic and world poetic culture, to reveal the features of the worldview, their multilayeredness and symbolism through the system analysis of its texts, to show the role of the worldview of *zhyrau* in the organization of the oral poetic text and the nature of the text itself as the world and as the representation as well as to reveal its ritual-mythological foundations, structure and semantics.

Another task is to place objective accents in assessing the worldview and understanding of the *zhyrau* as a unique and distinctive carrier of steppe nomadic knowledge.

Young Kazakhstani science, due to its growth and “excessive forces”, has two distinctive tendencies: on the one hand, it tends to idealize, overestimate the role of *batyrs* in Kazakh history, creating a large number of myths, sometimes not directly related to the true facts of the harsh heroic history and aesthetics of the Kazakh people. On the other hand, it is distinguished by a certain underestimation, inattention or misunderstanding of the true values of the cultural and historical order for various reasons. Basically, this is not due to ignorance, but due to the lack of analysis of typologically similar or close phenomena in world oral-poetic and political (legal) culture, for example, in European or Eastern classical traditions. This means that only comparison and correlation can give a clear understanding of the essence of the phenomenon, revealing its most striking features. At the same time, the specificity of the Kazakh nomadic life is extremely different from all classical western and eastern countries. This is the objective reason why we do not have the right to avoid the problem of comparison and correlation in order to identify the unique and distinctive features of ancestral culture, not idealizing, but clearly realizing that Kazakh nomadic culture not only preserved the ancient millennia-old traditions of epic and statehood, language and worldview, rituals and customs, the deity with a head (Nietzsche, 1990: 73-74), but also, as the oldest participant in world history, had the most significant influence on the historical events of antiquity and the early Middle Ages.

Hence our next task – to systematize and classify all the main traces of nomadism, which were inevitably reflected in the art of *zhyrau*: *universal transitivity* (procedurality, incompleteness, stability), *integrity* and *continuity*, *traditionality* and *syncretism* (preservation of initial grounds), *mobility* and *vitality*, *systematicity* and *continuity*.

It is such a detailed systematization that contributes to the effectiveness of a comprehensive study of the institution of *zhyrau*, their status, functions, culture, and worldview.

## CONCLUSIONS

1. *Zhyrau* is a complex syncretic, spiritual-social phenomenon: they are not only singers, but also legislators, statesmen, members and leaders of the khan councils, performing important public functions;
2. The worldview of the ancient singer, due to the specific centuries-old and continuous development of the nomadic life, harmoniously combining ancient knowledge, syncretic art and the system of management of the nomadic state, modern for that time, requires a different scientific methodology, namely, a complex concentric method of research, i.e. a comprehensive and systematic study of the object;
3. *Zhyrau*, having predictors as forefathers, and more ancient – ritual mediators, and being ancient carriers of steppe oral knowledge, with all their creativity demonstrate unique initial worldview foundations;
4. The worldview of *zhyrau* was multilayered due to centuries-long development and contacts with various peoples, cultures, religions. However, the artistically imaginative worldview of *zhyrau* could not but reflect his social role with its characteristic features: monumentality, meritocracy, laconism, etc. The main method of research here is also complex-concentric: any syncretic phenomenon of nomadism should be studied in a complex manner, and the object itself, for example, *zhyrau*, becomes the concentric center of the whole study, drawing together not only its multifaceted activities, but also various disciplines;
5. *Zhyrau* represents only a part of the entire spiritual giant universe of oral nomadic culture. Therefore, our main task was to systematize, classify and describe all the main features of nomadism, revealing them through the analysis of the creativity of *zhyrau*: *universal transitivity* (procedurality, incompleteness, and stability), *integrity* and *continuity*, *traditionality* and *syncretism* (preservation of initial grounds), *mobility* and *vitality*, *systematicity* and *continuity*. Such systematization will contribute to the effectiveness of a comprehensive study of the institution of *zhyrau*, their status, functions, culture, and worldview.

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