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The Epic “Edige” in Kazakhstan

ABSTRACT

The article studies the fate of Kazakhstan versions of the well-known Turkic epic “Edige”. Written recordings of the epic made in the 19th century by Ch. Valikhanov were promulgated by P.M. Melioranskij. Its Kazakh language later versions based on the Kazakh storytellers’ pieces were all forgotten for decades because of the notorious ideological struggle against the “feudal heritage”. And only since the 80’s and 90’s of the 20th century Kazakhstani researchers have had the opportunity to study the epic thoroughly and introduce it into scientific discourse. Among the works published in the post-Soviet period are the retransliterated variant of the Valikhanov-Melioranskij, record performed by E. Magauin and the works of Kazakh researchers such as R. Berdibay and Zh. Asanov which deserve today special attention.

Purpose. The researchers of those countries whose cultural heritage includes the folk Turkic epic legend “Edige” (“Idige”), created in the Middle Ages, found in written versions or recorded based on words of folk narrators, should unite efforts to create the archetypal basis of this masterpiece.

Methods. General scientific methods of analysis and generalization of theoretical material, the comparative method and elements of textual analysis have been used in our work.

In particular, we have analyzed theoretical works of Kazakh researchers, and also referred to comparative analysis of the “Edige” epic represented in its various Kazakhstani versions. In the process of comparative textual analysis, phrases selected from a fragment of the epic legend have been divided into speech cycles. In the Ch. Valikhanov’s legend version manuscript, the archaic usage of words (word forms and phrases) and their lexical substitutions (synonymous) by the elements of later Kazakh language have been revealed. The semantics of lexical and phraseological means have been refined according to the dictionaries of modern Kazakh language. At the following stage, the grammatical (morphemic, morphological and syntactic) structure of the manuscript and the latest version of the epic piece have been compared. As a result, outdated and oral-spoken grammatical forms and their modern equivalents standardized from the point of view of written-literary language have been identified.

Results. The article based on the Kazakh sources describes the history and circumstances of producing the Kazakh medieval epic “Edige” versions, which is the folk spiritual heritage of a number of Turkic nations (Nogai, Kazakh, Tatar, Bashkir, Karakalpak).

Comparative analysis of a fragment of the original manuscript by Ch. Valikhanov retransliterated at the end of the 20th century by E. Magauin and the Kazakh transcriptions made by K. Satpayev as well as by other scholars in the early 20th century, have revealed some late changes that violate the archaic structure of the epic. It has been stated that these changes were applied to the text of the epic “Edige” in order to facilitate its perception by the modern Kazakh reader.

The prospects for this research can be defined as further systematization of all written epic “Edige” versions stored in libraries and manuscript collections of Kazakhstan, Karakalpakstan, Karachay-Cherkessia, Tatarstan and Bashkortostan; creating a single text of the epic close to the archetypal one. In addition, it is necessary to prepare the publication of the epic “Edige”, supplied with detailed philological, historical and cultural comments, based on the analysis of all written versions, including those that were recorded later based on folk narrators stories.

Keywords: *folk Turkic heritage; epic “Edige”; manuscript; Kazakh versions; transliteration; archetypal basis.*

Introduction

A lot has been written about the history of the epic “Edige” (“Idige”) – a common heritage of several Turkic-speaking nations. This article will consider the findings of Kazakh researchers.

As follows from V.M. Zhirmunskij, “the first record of the legend of Idige was published <...> in 1820 in the “Sibirskij Vestnik” as a prosaic translation of one of the Kazakh variants, provided by G.I. Spasskij, a famous writer of his time” (Zhirmunskij, 1973, p. 143). The researcher notes that this record contains a late and poorly preserved version of the legend.

“The Legend of Edige and the Toktamys” published by P.M. Melioranskij in 1905 (P.M. Melioranskij, St. Petersburg, 1905) was based on the Kazakh version of the manuscript belonging to Chokan Valikhanov. As is known, the legend was written by Chokan Valikhanov and his father sultan Chingis in 1841-1842 in the Aman-Karagai district from the words of akyns – khyrchak Zhamankul and argyn Arystanbay. “Russian translation of this text was made by Valikhanov and published by N.I. Veselovskij in the collection of his works” (Zhirmunskij, 1973, p. 142). Ch. Valikhanov wrote later, on the fact that the text was written by the father sultan Chingis and that three lists were made in total, the following: “Finally, from the three lists together with Chingiz we compiled a vault in 1842, rewritten by Ahmed, from which the present rhabdotion has already been translated” (Valikhanov, 1985, p. 224-225).

As V.M. Zhirmunskij writes, “the original manuscript of Valikhanov, published by Melioranskij, and the translation into Russian by Valikhanov remain the most reliable source for the study of the legend as to the philological thoroughness of the text and the contents proximity of the variant to the alleged archetype” (Zhirmunskij, 1993).

It is this list that turkologists unanimously refer to as the “classic” version, since all versions of the legend, recorded at different times in different places (Caucasus, Crimea, Siberia, Uzbekistan, Tatarstan, Kazakhstan) have differences both in volume and content, especially in the prose part of the epic. The researchers discover later impregnations inspired by religious mythology. So, V.M. Zhirmunskij writes that prose translations of “Idige” written by G.N. Potanin with the participation of relatives of Ch. Valikhanov (Sultangazina)

‘differ markedly from each other in the plot details and deviate from history to the fairy tale’ (Zhirmunskij, 1973, p. 144).

The Kazakh version published by A. Divayev on the manuscript in “Ethnographic Materials” (Compilation, 1896) with a translation into Russian also significantly deviates from the archetype of the epic legend (Zhirmunskij, 1973, p. 144). The version of A. Divayev was reissued by the collector in 1922.

Research aims. The main purpose of the article is to describe the history and circumstances of the fixation of the Kazakh versions of the medieval epic “Edige”, which is the common cultural heritage of several Turkic nations (Nogai, Kazakh, Tatar, Bashkir, Karakalpak), as well as to familiarize the scientific community with the works of the Kazakh researchers dedicated to the study of the epic legend “Edige”.

Research methodology. In our work we used general scientific methods of analysis and generalization of theoretical material, the comparative method and elements of the textual analysis. In particular, we analyzed the theoretical works of Kazakh researchers, and also subjected to a comparative analysis of the fragments of the epic “Edige” from its various Kazakhstani versions. In the process of comparative textual analysis, phrases selected from a fragment of the epic were divided into speech cycles. Then, in the manuscript of Ch. Valikhanov, archaic usage of words (word forms and phrases) and their lexical (synonymous) substitutions in the later Kazakh version of the epic were revealed. The semantics of lexical and phraseological means was refined according to the dictionaries of the modern Kazakh language. At the next stage, the grammatical (morphemic, morphological and syntactic) structure of the manuscript and the late version of the epic were compared, as a result of which outdated and oral-spoken grammatical forms and their modern equivalents normalized from the point of view of the written-literary language were identified.

The Fate of the Kazakh versions of the epic “Edige”

It is known that “the factor determining the unity of the ethnos and its viability is a traditional culture, which, despite decades of civilization influence, has not lost its originality and organizes the daily life of the modern Kazakhs” (Zhanpeissova, 2016, p. 25). The common Turkic heroic epic legend

"Edige" belonging to the disintegration of the Golden Horde also belongs to the artifacts of the traditional culture.

In Kazakhstan, the classic text of the epic legend 'Edige', which is called the text of Valikhanov-Melioranskij, was reissued several times with minor editorial corrections and corresponding scientific commentaries.

In 1927 Kanysh Satpayev published the text "Er Edige" in the Kazakh language written by Valikhanov in Moscow, providing his foreword. In 1951 the researcher translated the epic legend and the foreword into Russian and accompanied this edition with references (Batyrbekov, 1995).

Later the epic legend about Edige was published several times in Kazakhstan. In 1932 it was published by Saken Seifullin and in 1939 by Sabit Mukanov in the compilation "Batyrlar Zhyry" (Magauin, 2017, p. 35).

According to E. Magauin, both versions, made on the basis of Ch. Valikhanov's list, were accompanied by revision marks aimed at the perception of the text by the modern Kazakh language speakers and, in the opinion of the researcher, contain significant deviations from the language of the source (Magauin, 2017, p. 36).

A separate chapter is devoted for the story of Edige by the academician A.S. Orlov in his popular book "The Kazakh Heroic Epic" (1945), written during the years of evacuation in Alma-Ata. Orlov gives a detailed rendering of one of the Kazakh versions with remarks concerning the historical roots of the epic legend and the peculiarities of its poetic form (Zhirmunskij, 1973, p. 146).

During the Soviet times it was noted that five more texts 'Edige' (one of them was written down from the words of the famous Kazakh narrator Muryn-Zhyrau in 1942) in the epic cycle 'Forty Bogatyr's' were stored in the Alma-Ata Folklore Archive of the Kazakh Academy of Sciences.

The problem of the epic legend of Edige was somehow affected in the literary works of the representatives of the Kazakh creative class (intelligentsia) of the first half of the 20th century (A. Bukeyhanov (1915), M. Auezov (1927), B. Kenzhebayev (1940), M. Tynyshbayev, K. Zhumaliyev, A. Margulan (1941) and others (Asanov, 2017, p. 43-52; Nurmagambetova, 1999, p. 3).

Thus, the epic legend of Edige has been actively investigated since the 1820s until the 1940s.

In the 1940s the study of the aforementioned epic in Kazakhstan was stopped for political reasons. In August 1944 by the Decree of the Central Committee of the of the All-Union Communist Party of the Bolsheviks (b) the epic “Edige” among the number of other works of national literature received the label of “feudal-khan”. This in the Soviet time meant taboo to study and popularize a work chanting the so-called “class enemy”. It is known that the academicians K.I. Satpayev, A.H. Margulan at one time received ‘serious censure of the authorities for giving the publicity of this poem’ (Sagandykova, 2013, p. 85).

Thus, in Kazakhstan Edige was forgotten for many decades and only in the 1980s the Kazakh researchers-folklorists (in particular, professor R. Berdybayev) raised the question of the necessity to introduce into the scientific circulation and popularization of previously forbidden epic legends, including the epic “Edige”.

Finally, in 1989 the text of the legend in the Kazakh language was published in a number of issues of the journal “Zhuldyz”. The second edition was carried out by the same journal (3rd issue of 1992).

From this time on a new stage in the study of the Kazakh versions of the epic legend “Edige” is counted.

In 1999 a compilation under the editorship of O.A. Nurmagambetova was published. It included the full texts of the versions of the legend, written in modern Kazakh graphics based on Cyrillic by Ch. Valikhanov (“Edige”), K. Satpayev (“Er Edige”), A. Divayev (“Myrza Edige”), M.Zh. Kopeyev (“Er Edigeden Estigenimdi Soilein”), Muryn-Zhyrau (“Edige”), Nurturgan Kenzhegululy (“Maulimniyaz Edige”), and the Karakalpak version (Nurmagambetova, 1999).

The compiler writes that work on recording and collecting the legend versions continues. Thus, the handwritten fund of the Central Scientific Library of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Kazakhstan has the manuscript of Izim Kibetov “Toktamyskhkan ilyan Edige myrzanyng hikayati” (1307 verses) transferred to the fund by A.V. Vasilyev, the list of Ayakesh Umirzakov “Edige Batyrdyn Angimesi” (1307 verses) and the version of the epic “Er Edige” (1307 verses) transferred to the Kazakh scientific society in 1941 by Gabit Akhmetov. The version of “Edige Batyr” (105 verses) which

came from Kaiyrgali Imanov is kept in the handwritten fund of the Institute of Literature and Arts named after M. Auezov.

It is known that the zhyr “Edige” was performed by Kazakh zhyraus (storytellers) Nurpeis Baiganin, Aisa Baitabynov, Shapai Kalmagambetov as mentioned by V.M. Zhirmunskij in his “Turkic heroic epic”. In this respect, it should be noted that the main requirement for assigning the status of akyn-narrator to the applicant in Western Kazakhstan is the compulsory knowledge (reciting from memory) of the texts of epic legends “*Kobyland Batyr*”, “*Edige*”, “*Orak-Mamai*” and “*Karasai-Kazi*”.

Altogether 11 lists of the epic “Edige” are presumably stored in Kazakhstan.

In 1990 the work of Professor R. Berdibay “*Edige Batyr Zhyry*” (“The Legend of Edige Batyr”) was published in the almanac “Alem” (World). The scientist expressed valuable remarks on the genealogy, historiography, genre specificity of the epic. He emphasized that the mythological consciousness of the common people naturally links the emergence of a charismatic personality capable of governing along with four khans not coming from Chingisids and confronting one of the khans of the Golden Horde with its noble descent. This is the root of the fabulous circumstances of the birth of Edige and his incredible abilities, manifested from the earliest childhood (Berdibay, 1990, p. 279).

Kazakh folklorist S. Kaskabasov put forward the hypothesis that the plot of Edige appeared on the basis of weeping (zhoktau) on the dead batyr, in which his feats are celebrated. Zhoktau cannot contain the complete biography of the hero. The batyr’s outstanding feat forms the plot, which is being born in the process of creating an epic biography. It is largely based on real historical events and forms the canvas of the entire work. In the story of Edige the main event is the confrontation between the hero and Toktamyskh khan. This is a historical fact, which in the course of time turns into a lot of additional plots and motives. It is in this way that the hero’s biography acquires the features of an epic (Kaskabasov, 2002, p. 447).

K. Satpayev wrote that, being “one of the most ancient and widespread legends among Turkic peoples of all Central Asia” (Batyrbekov, 1995, p. 82), it probably occurred in the 15th century when the Kazakhs were not yet isolated into an independent nation. At that time different Turkic nations lived in the

vast space between Altai and Tien Shan from one side and the eastern slopes of the Balkans from the other side and they were united into three nomadic states (hordes): Ak (white) Horde, Kok (blue) Horde and Altyn (golden) Horde.

According to V.M. Zhirmunskij, “the wide geographical distribution of the legend and song – from the Crimea and the Black Sea steppes to Siberia and Kazakhstan – corresponds to the historical boundaries within which the Nogai-nomads moved, especially after the collapse of the Nogai ulus in the 16th and 17th centuries. Significant numbers of Nogai tribes were apparently included in the Kazakh population of the Small Horde, among which the cycle of legends about Edige and his descendants was preserved most fully”. The scientist emphasized that in several districts of the Atyrau region Kazakhs, who consider themselves Nogai, live, and among them are those who raise their pedigree to Edige. Some Kazakhs, who inhabit auls near Karatau, also call themselves descendants of Edige Batyr” (Zhirmunsky, 1973, p. 175).

K. Satpayev rightly observed that in any folk material the hidden thoughts and aspirations of the people, the ideals and criteria for the evaluation of outstanding personalities or events are reflected as in the mirror. As for the images of outstanding historical personalities, selected and stored by the people’s memory, they are usually subjected to metamorphoses and unrecognizably change (Batyrbekov, 1995, p. 82-83). “Positive heroes in them are always sublime... up to hypertrophic sizes. They are usually endowed with *wisdom* – necessarily deep as ocean, *force* – necessarily inflexible like steel, *heart* – necessarily high as a mountain peak” (Batyrbekov, 1995, p. 83). Therefore, the folk Edige, which is derived from the legend, is certainly not a mirror image of the historical prototype. In the legend, Edige is depicted as a hero, who combines the best qualities of batyr and bi. The folk memory preserved the saying “Қазақ елінің әуелгісі де Едіге, ақыры да Едіге” (“Among the Kazakh heroes of the past the first and last is “Edige”) (Batyrbekov, 1995, pp. 27, 89).

According to V.M. Zhirmunskij, “historical Edige was undoubtedly the largest state figure in the Golden Horde during the period of its political decline. With Edige for the last time the Golden Horde acts as a major factor in international relations in Eastern Europe and the Kipchak steppes in history” (Zhirmunskij, 1973, p. 174-175). The scholar continues: “Arab and Persian

historians praise the political success achieved by Edige. The anonym of Iskender speaks of the “order” in the state established by him, “thin customs” (tura) and “great laws” (yasak), which caused dissatisfaction of the feudal leaders”.

Ibn-Arabshah particularly sympathetically characterizes his personality and abilities as a ruler: “He had very swarthy complexion, middle height, heavily-built, brave, creepy, high-minded, generous, with a pleasant smile, marked by perceptiveness and agility, lover of scholars and worthy people, came close to the pious and the fakirs, talked (jokingly) with them in the most affectionate expressions and humorous hints, fasted and prayed at night), followed the rules of shariat, making the Quran and Sunnah and the words of the sages a mediator between them and Allah Supreme”. “The days of his reign were a bright spot on the bosom of the ages, and the night of his dominion was a bright band on the face of times”. Undoubtedly, even during the life of Edige a legend began to develop around his name. His personal courage, military success, the authority of a ruler who supported unity and order in the country gained him wide popularity and preserved his name in the memory of his offspring” (Zhirmunskij, 1973, p. 175-176).

Language features of Kazakhstani versions of the epic “Edige”

The language of the versions of the epic recorded from the Kazakhs has some peculiarities. As already mentioned above, the text of Ch. Valikhanov was recorded from the words of the Kazakh storytellers. K. Satpayev believed that the Tatar-“literary” words and expressions not typical for the Kazakh language crept in the version published by Melioranskiy, “and in the verses of the legend there were obvious violations in the style and harmony of the composition”, which complicate the perception of the text by the Kazakh reader. Satpayev thought that the reason is that the Tatar Mullah Akhmet was a scribe (for Melioranskiy) of the legend, noting that in the late 19th century the “order of the day” for the “Tatar-literary language” was “cultivated among the nobility and other upper strata of the Kazakh people” (Batyrbekov, 1995, p. 75-76). Considering it expedient to rewrite the version of Valikhanov on

the basis of contemporary Kazakh spelling and correct the shortcomings in verses Satpaev attracts to the work of the Kazakh narrator named *Kopabay* from Bayan-Aul district (Batyrbekov, 1995, p. 77).

At the same time, modern Kazakhstani researchers believe that the abundance of “dark spots” (incomprehensible words, unusual designs) in the list recorded by Valikhanov is due not so much to the work of the scribe or the influence of the Tatar language as *the antiquity of the text, its belonging to one of the archetypal versions*. Thus, E. Magauin and Zh. Asanov believe that the Kazakh narrators Zhumagul and Arystanbay from the words of which the legend was written by Valikhanov, do not consider these elements to be “darkened” because, if desired, nothing prevented them from “correcting” them (Asanov, 2017, p. 30).

Among the works of the Kazakh scholars of the post-Soviet period particular attention should be paid to the works of folklorists Edige Magauin (Maguin, 1994; 1995) and Zhubanazar Asanov, see, for example, (Asanov, 2010), as well as (Asanov, 2017).

E. Magauin in the mid 1990’s transliterated the list of Ch. Valikhanov taking into account the graphic specificity of the Kazakh language of the beginning of the 19th century based on the Arabian dialect. In the course of his work the scientist discovered the flaws of previous scribes that had appeared in the process of the previous transliteration. Magauin accompanied his analysis with scientific commentaries.

So, with respect to Melioranskij’s remark about the absence of a title in the Kyrgyz (i.e. Kazakh) language, E. Magauin cited the words written by Valikhanov himself on the first (front) page of the manuscript separately from the main text: “*Edige. Zhyr. 1841 zhyldyn dekabri*”. Ch. Valikhanov titled the translation into Russian in the same way. Consequently, the epic originally had the title “Edige”, not “Edige bi” or “Er Edige”, as was pointed out in some sources.

The scientist listed the changes that were made by later scribes in the Kazakh text and which, in his opinion, only worsened it. For, Chokan Valikhanov apparently introduced the elements that he selected from 3 available lists into the manuscript he prepared based on a careful selection.

In general terms, the changes concerned firstly the structure of the sentences, which were edited in accordance with the syntactic structure of the modern Kazakh sentence. Thus, the ancient syllable of the epic narrative was violated. A lot of changes affected the structure of the dialogue.

Let’s compare one of the samples in the manuscript of Ch. Valikhanov and the later Kazakh lists:

<i>Valikhanov’s manuscript:</i>	<i>Later versions:</i>	<i>Translation</i>
<p>“Үш жасына кіргенде (1), қолынан тұтып (2), молдаға берді. Шәшті Әзіз ғайып болды, ұшып кетті, баласының бар парызынан құтылған соң (3)”.</p> <p>Екеуі Тоқтамыс ханға бардылар (4). Көкжалды айтты сөзін. Кең Жанбай айтты: “Бір төре болып еді”, - деп (5). Тоқтамыс хан сұрайды: “Қандай төре болып еді?” - деп (6). Баланың берген төресін Кең Жанбай айтты (7).</p>	<p>“Үш жасқа келгенде (1), қолынан ұстап (2) молдаға берді. Баласының бар парызынан құтылған соң, Шәшті Әзіз ғайып болды, ұшып кетті (3)”.</p> <p>Екеуі Тоқтамыс ханға барысты (4). Хан алдында Кең Жанбай: “Бір төре болып еді,” - деді (5). Тоқтамыс хан: “Қандай төре?” - деп сұрады(6). Кең Жанбай баланың берген төресін айтты(7). (Asanov, 2017, p. 38-39)</p>	<p>«When he was three years old, taking his hand, he took him (for training) to a mullah. After fulfilling his duty to son Aziz disappeared, flew away».</p> <p>They went to Toktamys khan together. Kokzhaldy said his word. Ken Zhanbai told khan: «There was one (arbitrary) decision». Toktamys khan asked: «What was the decision?» Ken Zhanbai told him about the boy’s decision. (translated by us. – N. Zh.)</p>

1. More archaic words in the list of Valikhanov were replaced in the late translations by those commonly used, comprehensible to the speakers of modern Kazakh language: ...*жасқа кел*- instead of ...*жасқа кір*-, *ұста*- instead of *тұт*- (1), (2).
2. The archaic form of the third-person plural verb (*бардылар*) was replaced by a modern form without the suffix *-лар* (*барды*) (4).

3. The word order in the sentence was changed. In the manuscript of Valikhanov inversion was used, giving the phrase an archaic narrative character. In later editions through the rearrangement of parts of the sentence according to the sequence of actions of the hero and the literary norms of modern Kazakh the phrase acquires a neutral narrative intonation (3), (7).
4. The archaic structure of direct speech is changed according to the norms of constructing direct speech in modern Kazakh (5), (6).

E. Maguain rightly believed that firstly all such replacements violated the style of narration inherent in the Kazakh folk prose and the inner harmony of the narrative syllable.

Secondly the replacement of outdated vocabulary was carried out.

Thirdly the poetic dimension of the epic narrative was violated. All the poetic fragments of the epic were squeezed into a heptasyllabic and octosyllabic verses. The scientist regrets that as a result of a change in the measure of the verses that were refined in accordance with the usual poetic dimension of the Kazakh verse, the original epic form of the narrative was lost, for example,

Valikhanov's manuscript:	Later versions:
<p><i>Бұт сауырлы күреңше ат, Бұтқа тартып мінер-ді боғай құбаши ұғыл; Екі түгей торыша ат, Блауға жайдақ алар-ды боғай құбаши ұғыл; Алаганиық күндей боп, Сенің алды-артыңнан шығар-ды боғай құбаши ұғыл...</i></p>	<p><i>Бұт сауырлы күреңше ат, Бұтқа тартып мінер-ді; Екі түгей торыша ат, Блауға жайдақ алар-ды; Алаганиық күндей боп, Сенің алды-артыңнан шығар-ды... (Asanov, 2017, p. 42)</i></p>

It is seen from the table, the repetitions “*боғай құбаши ұғыл*” which refrain at the end of each even line and are incomprehensible to the modern reader are removed.

Fourth, in the opinion of the researchers, some parts of the manuscript during transliteration were read incorrectly. This often leads to obscurity of

meaning, incorrect construction of phrases and even whole sentences. As for prosaic fragments, as a result of the erroneous division of obsolete forms into the structure of dialogues there are distortions in the storytelling plot (Asanov, 2017, p. 41).

Thus, E. Magauin published the manuscript of Ch. Valikhanov without change, only transliterating the Arabic letters of the old Kazakh alphabet. Scientist retained the obscure words in their original form, which being archaisms were not changed during repeated viewing by Valikhanov. Moreover he preserved the ancient poetic system of the legend. The scientist believes that thorough linguistic analysis of the text of the legend “Edige” is a matter for future researchers.

Of course, one can not diminish the significance of those retellings of the legend that were published in Kazakhstan during the Soviet period, for they played a huge role in aggregating the Kazakh people to the historical heritage.

The text of the epic legend prepared by E. Magauin merely proclaims a new level of scientific understanding of this heritage. In our opinion it is precisely this variant that should be the basis for a comparative study of all national lists of the epic.

We should specially focus on the works of the modern Kazakh folklorist Professor G. Asanov which were devoted to the comparative study of the national versions of the legend “Edige”, revealing the specifics of the epic traditions of the Turkic-speaking peoples, the study of the artistic system of the epic in the context of the development of ancient Turkic literature. The scientist attempted to establish the validity of a number of historical facts; the ratio of artistic fiction to the historical reality, namely, with the centuries-old events that embraced the territory of the western region of modern Kazakhstan, which unites the Aktobe, Atyrau and West Kazakhstan regions.

Results

The article based on the Kazakh sources describes the history and circumstances of the fixation of the Kazakh versions of the medieval epic “Edige”, which is the common spiritual heritage of a number of Turkic nations (Nogai, Kazakh, Tatar, Bashkir, Karakalpak).

The material of a comparative analysis of a fragment of the original manuscript by Ch. Valikhanov retransliterated at the end of the 20th century by E. Magauin, as well as the Kazakh transcriptions made by K. Satpayev and other scholars in the early 20th century, revealed some late changes that violate the archaic structure of the epic. These changes were made to the text of the epic “Edige” in order to facilitate the perception of the text of the epic by the modern Kazakh reader.

Conclusions

As early as the beginning of the last century the Russian researcher P.M. Melioranskij set the grand task of preserving the greatest common Turkic heritage, the legend of Edige Batyr before the turkologists: “to assemble, publish and translate all the known versions... to establish precisely the area of the spread of the legend, to compare all... versions” (Zhirmunskij, 1973, p. 142).

Prospects for research in this direction are seen in the further systematization of all the lists of the epic “Edige” stored in libraries and manuscript collections of Kazakhstan, Karakalpakstan, Karachay-Cherkessia, Tatarstan and Bashkortostan; and on their basis drawing up a single text of the legend close to the archetypical. In addition, it is necessary to prepare the publication of the epic “Edige”, supplied with detailed philological, historical and culturological commentaries, based on the analysis of all the lists, including those that were later recorded from the words of folk narrators.

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