

THE PATH OF PUBLISHING FOLKLORE HERITAGE: A CASE STUDY OF THE
KARAKALPAK EPIC “GORUGLY”

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Аннотация. В статье рассматриваются вопросы сбора и публикации каракалпакской версии эпоса «Горуглы». Освещается история записи эпоса, процесс подготовки его к печати и научного изучения. Особое внимание уделяется месту каракалпакского варианта в общей тюркской эпической традиции и его историко-культурному значению.

Ключевые слова: Горуглы, каракалпакский эпос, сбор, публикация, тюркский фольклор, культурное наследие

Abstract . This article examines the collection and publication of the Karakalpak version of the epic Gorugly. It highlights the history of recording the epic, the processes of preparing it for print, and its subsequent scholarly study. The paper emphasizes the significance of the Karakalpak variant within the broader Turkic epic tradition and its role as a cultural and historical heritage.

Keywords: Gorugly, Karakalpak epic, collection, publication, Turkic folklore, cultural heritage

The epic “Gorugly,” which is one of the examples of the folkloric heritage of the Turkic peoples, has been performed among them for centuries and has become an invaluable spiritual treasure of each nation. The main ideological core of the epic lies in the fact that, through the image of Gorugly, the people’s struggle against injustice, the defense of the native land, and the glorification of valor are expressed. The image of Gorugly represents a collective symbol of popular heroism, honor, and courage.

The performers of the epic “Gorugly” also reflected the national characteristics of each people: ashugs, shayirs, baksy, akyns, and kyssakhans performed it using national musical instruments. Epic narratives about “Gorugly” have been preserved in various versions in the folklore of the peoples of Central Asia (Turkmens, Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Karakalpaks, Tajiks, Arabs), Siberia (Tobol Tatars), the Caucasus (Azerbaijanis, Kumyks, Armenians, Georgians, Abkhazians), as well as the peoples of the Far East and the Balkans.

The wide geographical distribution of the epic clearly testifies to its historical and cultural significance. The versions existing among these peoples, despite the similarity and commonality of plot lines and motifs, possess distinctions and originality corresponding to the historical, cultural, and social characteristics of each nation.

According to scholarly data, the first information about the epic “Gorugly” is found in written sources of the 17th century, specifically in the work “History” (1662) by the Armenian historian Arakel Tabriziy.¹

¹ **В. Карриев.** Эпические сказания о Кер-оглы и тюркоязычных народов. – Москва, 1958.



The cycles of the epic “Gorugly” among the Karakalpak people represent one of the major examples of the national epic tradition. Although the collection, recording, and initial study of Karakalpak epics began as early as the 1930s, work on recording the epic “Gorugly” was carried out only from the 1950s–1960s of the 20th century; therefore, many variants of the epic were not documented. Despite the existence of numerous versions among the people, at that time it was not possible to fully and extensively record them during the lifetimes of most of the outstanding baksy-zhyrau who performed the epic. Nevertheless, the preserved variants, which reflect the historical, cultural, and national characteristics of the people, are valuable and clearly demonstrate its significance.

In 1950, Kamal Abibullaev recorded the cycle “**Bazirgen**” from the epic “Gorugly” from the baksy Yeszhan Kospolatov. In 1960, Zh. Abdikarimov recorded the cycles “**Arep Raihan**” and “**The Marriage of Auez**” from Narbay Koshekenov, a native of Kungrad. In 1961, O.Erpolatov recorded the cycle “**Kyrmandali**” from the epic “Gorugly” from the Khojeli baksy Bekmurat Zhumaniyazov.

In 1963, K. Maksetov, K. Mambetnazarov, and O. Erpolatov published as a separate booklet the **shakp** “Kyrmandali” from the epic “Gorugly,” recorded from the Khojeli baksy Bekmurat Zhumaniyazov, as well as the cycle “**Bazirgen**,” recorded from Narbay Koshekenov.

After that, in 1986, in Volume XV of the multi-volume edition “**Karakalpak Folklore**,” prepared by M. Nizamatdinov, the following versions of the epic “Gorugly” were published: the cycle “**Kyrmandali**” (variant of the baksy Madireyim Matjanov), the cycle “**Bazirgen**” (variant of the baksy Yeszhan Kospolatov), the cycle “**Auezhan**” (variant of the kysy Khan Saparniaz Khabipnazarov), the cycle “**The Marriage of Auez**” (variant of the baksy Narbay Koshekenov), and the cycle “**Arep Raihan**” (variant of the baksy Narbay Koshekenov).

In 2010, in Volumes XIV–XXVI of the multi-volume edition “**Karakalpak Folklore**,” a previously unpublished cycle “**Bazirgen**” of the epic “Gorugly,” recorded in 1950 by Kamal Abibullaev from the baksy Yeszhan Kospolatov (P-282, No. 84307), was published.

In 2011, in Volumes XXVII–XLII of the same multi-volume edition, a previously unpublished cycle “**Auezhan**” of the epic “Gorugly,” recorded in 1966 by Kenesbai Satullaev from the Khojeli performer Allayar Sadimov (P-206, No. 61051), was published. In the same volume, the following were also published: the cycles “**Arep Raihan**” (P-114, No. 36805) and “**The Marriage of Auez**” (P-114, No. 36805), recorded in 1960 by Zh. Abdikarimov from Narbay Koshekenov; the cycle “**Kyrmandali**” (P-93, No. 40721), recorded in 1961 by Ö. Erpolatov from the Khojeli baksy Bekmurat Zhumaniyazov; as well as the cycle “**Bazirgen**” (P-114, No. 36805), recorded by Zh. Abdikarimov from Narbay Koshekenov.

In addition, the preface to Volumes XIV–XXVI of “**Karakalpak Folklore**” (2010) reports that the manuscript collection of the Fundamental Library of the Karakalpak Branch of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan preserves cycles of the epic “Gorugly” — “**Bazirgen**,” recorded from the baksy Karazhan Kabulov, the baksy Narbay Koshekenov, and the baksy Tileumurat.

Thus, the publication history of the Karakalpak versions of the epic “**Gorugly**” spans several decades—from the first book publications of 1963 to their inclusion in the multi-volume academic collection “**Karakalpak Folklore**” in the 1980s–2010s, which testifies to systematic work on the preservation and scholarly study of this epic heritage.



“The study and research of the epic have great scholarly and practical significance. The study of the epic provides exceptionally valuable material for developing the history of our people, the history of its culture, and the history of literature and art,”² says Professor I. Sagitov.

In conclusion, it can be said that the dastan “**Gorugly**” is a shared epic heritage of the Turkic peoples and, at the same time, a valuable treasure of the Karakalpak people, transmitting from generation to generation their historical memory, the idea of justice, honor, and valor. We set ourselves the goal of examining this in detail in our further research.

References:

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² **I. Sađitov.** Qaraqalpaq xalqynyn qaharmanlıq eposy. – Nókis, «Qaraqalpaqstan», 1986.

