

The Importance Of Folklore In The Study Of History

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Abstract: The article analyses the issues of folklore historicism, the use of folklore works by scientists in the study of ethnogenesis and history of Karakalpak people, the coincidence of epic works with historical facts.

Keywords: folklore, historicism, ethnogenesis, epic works, historical facts.

When studying ancient and medieval history, scientists retain a number of sources. Among them, Eastern manuscripts, results of archeological, anthropological, ethnographic researches take a great place. And one of the most essential additional sources is rich folklore, especially folk epics. It is already remarkable that when studying the history of the peoples of Siberia and Central Asia, the starting point for significant scientists of historians, ethnographers and folklorists is the use of folk epics.

The best examples of effective use of Karakalpak epos materials for creation of Karakalpak history were shown by famous historians S.P.Tolstov, T.A.Jdanko, S.K.Kamalov and others. In the monographic researches of S.P.Tolstov "Ancient Khorezm", "In the footsteps of the ancient Khorezmian civilization" the folklore was fully used in the development of the questions of the political and social history of Central Asia, the solution of its historical and ethnographic problems. The mentioned books include Uzbek, Kazakh, Karakalpak and Turkmen legends and tales. The scientist has always focused on folklore when studying the ethnogenesis of Turkic peoples, their movements and problems of their tribal structure. Those folklore creations that S.P.Tolstov used when studying the origin of toponyms "Khorezm", "Amudarya" ("Ceyhun") testify to the importance he attached to folklore. Appreciating the Karakalpak heroic epos "Kyrkkyz" ("Forty girls") in connection with the history of Khorezm, S.P.Tolstov emphasizes it as the most important historical source. "The ancient layer of the Karakalpak epos "Kyrkkyz, in which the plot of the Amazons acts most vividly, preserving even the details associated with the system of age classes that gave birth to the Amazon, and in which you can see an echo of the Massagetan epos about Tumaris... It is characteristic that it was in the Aral region, to the north of Khorezm, that the Byzantine ambassadors in the VI century caught the Türkmenate of tribes controlled by a woman"[5,13].

In Karakalpak folklore, there is an idea that the basins of the Yedila (Volga) and Jaiyka (Yaika) rivers were once inhabited by Karakalpaks. All this is directly connected with the historical past of the people. S.P. Tolstov does not ignore these circumstances and points out that

they are associated with the movement of some part of the Karakalpaks, that the origin of motifs of Asia Minor and Crimea in Karakalpak folklore coincides with this era. [6,198]

Since 1945, for several decades, the ethnographic team of the Khorezm Archaeological and Ethnographic Expedition conducted research work in Karakalpakstan. The detachment covered all districts of Karakalpakstan with its research work. The members of the detachment collected from various informants rich materials on the ethnogenesis of Karakalpaks, their tribal structure, areas of their settlement and movement. Historian and ethnographer T.A.Jdanko led this detachment. As a result of their generalization results of these long-term research works, T.A.Jdanko has written large scientific monographies under the names "Essays of historical ethnography of Karakalpaks", "Karakalpaks of Khorezm oasis", "Karakalpaks (the basic problems of ethnic history and ethnography)" and several articles. The materials collected by T.A.Jdanko and her group constitute mainly the medieval era of Karakalpak history. The collected folklore materials coincide with the epoch in which Karakalpaks inhabited the northwestern steppe spaces, i.e. the banks of the Yedil (Volga) and the Aral Sea. The historical legends of the Karakalpaks, which were analyzed in the works of T.A. Jdanko, testify that their ancestors once lived on the banks of the Yedila (Volga) and Jayyka (Yaika). In her works, she gives historical legends about how Karakalpak people lived next to the Bulgars near Kazan, how they settled to live in the Crimea, how they inhabited the Golden Horde in the early epoch of its formation, how Karakalpak people were part of the Nogai union. As an example of the Karakalpak ancestors' ties with the Golden Horde and Nogai epochs the scientist cites "Ediga", "Koblan", "Ershora". It is necessary to note especially that deep analysis to which T.A.Jdanko subjects the ethnonym "ZhiideliBaisyn" in the epos "Alpamys" and her mentioning of how often this ethnonym is found among the peoples of Central Asia. [1,131-132] Through painstaking research of ethnographic materials, T.A.Jdanko consistently shows how to separate generations of Karakalpaks, Kazakhs, Turkmens and Uzbeks-Aralians were formed as peoples in the Aral region. Traditional customs of Karakalpaks, forms of their management inherited from ancient times and Middle Ages, ancient motives and similarities in material culture, family traditions, rites, religious beliefs, ornaments, the folklore of these brotherly Turkic peoples, all this serves for the scientist as a convincing confirmation of her conclusions and positions. Thus, the epos "Kyrkkyz ("Forty girls") may serve as a vivid example. The image of Karakalpak Amazons in it reminds characteristic features of that tradition, as was the matriarchy of the ancient Sakic, Massageta and Sarmatian tribes. [2,12] Stating on the attitude of Karakalpak epos to the history, T.A.Jdanko expresses in the following way about the last layers of the epos "Forty girls": "For all the fairytale and legendary descriptions of the military exploits of Gulaim and Aryslan, they clearly show the real events of the 18th century, the amazing destinies of Karakalpaks and peoples of Khorezm. This is the invasion of the Chess-Darya region Jungars in 1723 and the conquest of Khorezm by Nadir Shah in 1740. [3,113]

In his work called "Karakalpaks" T.A.Jdanko notes that the members of Karakalpak ethnographic group of Khorezm archeological and ethnographic expedition collected many

materials from the mouth of informants about Karakalpak clans and tribes, about their tribal classification and structure, about their settlement in the lower reaches of the Amudarya. A large place among them is occupied by historical legends concerning the life of Karakalpaks in the Nogai association. The collected materials also tell how the Karakalpaks once moved to the banks of the Yedil (Volga), Zhaiyk (Yaika), to the foothills of the Urals, to the Crimea and inhabited these areas. In the Nogai layer of Karakalpak folklore, there are often historical legends about sultans from the Dzhuchiev family, Zhanibek khan, Nogai princes Orysbeye, Ormambetbie, about events of the Middle Ages, XV-XVI centuries. The ethnic affinity of Karakalpaks and Nogays in folklore is manifested both in the similarity of names of their clans and tribes and in the similarity of their material culture. [2,14]

Famous historian S.K.Kamalov emphasizes the importance of folklore in writing the history of the people, notes that historical events passed from mouth to mouth, from generation to generation, embellished by fantastic events, and sometimes merged with the creations of epic folklore. In his opinion, the historical approach to folklore is of great interest. The folklore creations reflect the spiritual world of the people with special accuracy. According to S.K. Kamalov, the content of the epos "Kyrkkyz" ("Forty girls") coincides mainly with the historical events that took place in the 18th century in the life of Karakalpaks and Khorezm. The preparatory work carried out in the epic for protection against external invaders reminds of the Karakalpaks' actions against the Dzhungar invasion of the 20s of the XVIII century. One of the main events described in the epic is Nadirshah's raid on Khorezm. This historical event took place in 1740-1741. [4,62]

The study of the cultural heritage of the people should be conducted with a close and organic connection to its history. It is extremely difficult to study the epic without knowing people's history. Through a thorough study of folk history, socio-economic and socio-political conditions, it is possible to understand better the events described in the epics. The importance of folklore, especially the epos, in studying the history of Karakalpaks, about whose past few written monuments have survived, is truly great.

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