



A Historical-Typological Study of Images About Alyps in The Turkic Folklore

Gulnaz Sagynadin^a, Zhanat Aimukhambet^{b*}, Karlygash Baytanassova^c,
Saulesh Aituganova^d, Almaz Mirzakhmetov^e

^a PhD, L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University. Astana, Kazakhstan.

Email: gulnaz86.08@mail.ru

^b Professor, L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University. Astana, Kazakhstan.

Email: zhanataias@gmail.com

^c Professor, L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University. Astana, Kazakhstan.

Email: k.baitanasova@mail.ru

^d Professor, L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University. Astana, Kazakhstan.

Email: s-aituganova@mail.ru

^e PhD, L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University. Astana, Kazakhstan.

Email: mirza_achmet@mail.ru

Received: 21 August 2023 | Received: in revised form 11 September 2023 | Accepted 07 November 2023

APA Citation:

Sagynadin, G., Aimukhambet, Z., Baytanassova, K., Aituganova, S., & Mirzakhmetov, A. (2023). A Historical-Typological Study Of Images About Alyps In The Turkic Folklore. *Eurasian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 9(3), 207-215.

Doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.32601/ejal.903018>

Abstract

The alyps, which literally means ‘giants’ or ‘heroes’ were the mythical heroes of Turkic origin. This study examines the historical legends of alyps in folklore texts, and investigated their ideological and thematic connection, compositional structure and Turkic character. The aim of this study was to reveal how the images of alyps harmonized with the contemporary life style and integrated with the growth of modern Turkology. This research adopted a qualitative research design to expand the scientific framework of folklore studies. It used a comparative text analysis, using the methods of systematization, as well as historical-typological, and historical-genetic methods. The data was collected through desk-research methods and documentation study. The data resources comprised folklore and epics/ legends found in historical texts. After the folklore texts were collected and compared, they were analyzed in the light of their ideological and thematic connections, compositional structure and Turkic nature in the character system. The study found out that it was possible to determine the level of historical and genetic continuity and the Turkic character of mythological plots dedicated to the image of an alyp. It was revealed that syncretism, genre integration, and historical principal characteristic of folklore are a few determining factors that help to reveal the unity of motives and contents in the plots created on the basis of the image of an alyp. The study also confirmed that the Turkic folklore developed as part of a process of mutual integration with the historical legends and myths. This study contributes to building a scientific framework of folklore studies and holds a theoretical significance among comparative studies in Turkology.

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Keywords: Folklore, Legend Prose, Subject, Myth, Mythology, Mythical Reincarnation, Legend (Apsana), Totem, Giant, Alyps.

* Corresponding Author

Email: zhanataias@gmail.com

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.32601/ejal.903018>

Introduction

Turkic knowledge about alyps (also spelt as *alps* or *alyps*) has served the basis of the genre system of the Turkic folklore texts. The alyps, which literally means ‘giants’ or ‘heroes’ were the mythical heroes or brave, valiant, warriors of Turkic origin. There exist different genres of plots about the image of alyps since similarity is often revealed in the structure and poetical-pictorial style of the toponymic names applied on these alyps (Kefeli, 2023). Besides, the Turks also recognized alyps as their tribe ancestors (totem), which demonstrates ancient people’s beliefs about the world, nature and man (Gulnoza, 2024). There is no dearth of studies about alyps or giants in the Turkic folklore texts that have examined the literary and cultural perspectives of these texts. The subjects about giants are considered myths in Kazakh and Altai folklores and have also attracted a great attention as toponymic legends. Researchers like Pangereev (2014) showed Kazakh subjects in toponymic legends (apsana); Toyshanuly (2009) compared the subjects about giants in the Kazakh and Mongolian folklore; and Gennadijevna (2006) studied genre specificities of the stories about alyps (giants) in the Chuvash non-fairy prose.

In Chuvash folklore, too, the image of a giant is known as alyp. Katash (1978) has analyzed the image of the giants in the Altai mythology and other works. The Chuvash scientists have used different terms to determine the toponymy of the genres associated with these texts about alyps. Tuktash (1941) names them as “eposla yumakhsem” – “epic tales;” Danilov (Zemtsovsky, 2005) uses the term “legendalla yumakhsem” – “legend tales;” P.V. Denisov calls them “eposla khalap” – “epic stories (legends) about alyps” (Berzina-Cerenkova, 2022); Kakhovsky calls them “verbal legends” (Hellman, 2013), and so on. Odyukov (1973) used the terms “ulapsem sinchen hyvna eposla khalapsem” or “ulap khalapsem” – “stories (legends) about alyps” in Chuvash folklore.

However, Gennadijevna (2006) objected to the diverse “toponymy” addressed to Turkic folklore texts and categorized them as historical legends. Gennadijevna (2006) argues about their historicity: “The presence of some “historicity” in the content of legends and at the same time of mythological motives, their thematic isolation from other genres of the folk epic gives Chuvash scholars the grounds to distinguish as a special genre of epic tales. The analysis of existing materials allows us to speak of them as early historical legends.” Rightly so, in the Turkic folklore, tribes like Tatar, Bashkir and Chuvash have also been viewed within the framework of legends.

There are also other researchers who disliked calling these folklore texts with different names. The Tatar scientist Gilyazutdinov (2000), for instance, considers it in the framework of legends based on the Tatars’ ancient beliefs about Bulgarian city and Bulgarian Khanate, but he notes the peripheral nature of the distance between the myth (associated with a particular place) and legend (apsana) (the fantastic image and peculiarity of the giant) by a genre character. Bashkirian scientist, Nadrshina (1987), also refers these prose texts as legends (apsana). To give more examples, researchers like Sokolova (1970) and Krinichnaya (1987) have classified these folklore texts and stories about giants as historical legends. The premise stated by these researchers is that since an alyp is the protagonist in these folklore texts, so these stories belong to the early historical legends.

Despite the availability of good research studies on the Turkic folklore, there still exists a research gap, which the current study aims to fill. No study has taken into account the genre of the subjects devoted to the image of an alyp (giant) in the studies, because these folklore texts are classified as belonging to different genres in each of the Turkic-speaking countries, as has been revealed in ‘toponymy’ mentioned earlier. The current study aims at examining plots based on the image of an alyp (hero) of the Turkic peoples. The aim of this scientific research is to reveal how the plots and motives of the works harmonize with the images of alyps. The integration indicators of globalization and the development of scientific concepts of modern Turkology have further confirmed the obviousness of the relevance and public interest in the topic under consideration. The folklore texts, their ideological and thematic connection, compositional structure and Turkic character in the system of characters, have also been investigated in this study.

Literature Review

- *Historical Evolution of Alyps*

The use of the term alyp to mean a “hero” or a “warrior” was first found in the poem “Kiissai Yusuf” by Kul Ali, a Bulgarian poet in the early 12th century, who described Yusuf in a popular phrase, “his heart is like an alyp’s heart”. The name alyp is also found in the Bulgarian epitaphs, for example, the inscription “Ouraz’s Son, Urum Alpa, grave sign” on the tombstones dating back to 1309 AD in Bulgarian town (Khakimzyanov, 1978). In the historical and literary monument of the 17th century, “Dapthari Chingiz nama”, the name Alyp is of great importance, stated as “Alyplar zamany ide” (there were times of Alyps), which refers to the Bulgarian era of the Tatar history. This echoes what Gilyazutdinov (2000) found out: “both the presentations of epic heroes-giants, and legends and traditional stories . were well known in ancient Bulgaria”

The first versions of the myths about the Bulgarian heroes are found in two authentic texts: First, the records of the Arab traveler Ibn Fadlan, who came to Bulgaria in 921-922 as part of Baghdad ambassadors; Second, in the writings of Al-Garnati, an Arab from Andalusia (Spain), who also was in Bulgaria in 1135. Al-Garnati writes that these heroes were in real life as he even saw one of them with his own eyes. His name was Dafgy. Arab travelers have also mentioned specific figures and growth of giants in their travelogues. In subsequent legends, alyps were described as tall men: "They (alyps) were as tall as a pine", "they (big people) walked through spruce forests as on grass, and through rivers as a well" [Gilyazutdinov \(2000\)](#).

Until the 19th century, prose legends were included in travel notes, essays, geographical, historical and other works, and were used as data and information about the Turkic regions. The nineteenth century is considered the beginning of fruitful work on collecting Turkic folklore. Active work was carried out to collect and publish samples of folk art. Travelers and researchers perceived myths and legends as a mirror of the ethnic history, life and living conditions of the Turkic peoples and paid great attention to them. Fundamental work was carried out in the second half of the 20th century. It was at this time that interest in the genres of non-fairy tale prose arose at the level of world folklore. For example, aspects of individualization of the genres of Chuvash folklore prose were considered in the works of several folklorists and historians like N. Nikolsky, G.I. Komissarov, I. Tuktash, M.Y. Sirotkin, I.I. Odyukov, E.S. Sidorova, V.Y. Kanyukov, V.G. Rodionov, A.K. Salman, N.I. Egorov and others ([Kirillova & Myshkina, 2022](#); [Salmin, 1995](#)). A. Reguli, D. Meszaros, A. Ahlquist, H. Paasonen paid attention to Chuvash folk art ([Abasheva & Sharyafetdinov, 2019](#)).

In the 1920s, historians like K. Ell and F. Timofeev carried out important work on collecting historical and toponymic legends ([Abasheva & Sharyafetdinov, 2019](#)). Turkic folklore material was collected in 1896-1903 by Simbirsk school and was published in the form of an encyclopedia of the Chuvash language ([Chekushkina et al., 2021](#)). It contains examples of oral stories, historical, mythological and toponymic legends. In the post-war years, collections compiled by [Danilov et al. \(2019\)](#) "Chuvash folk tales", "Chuvash tales and legends" were also published. The first collection included 67 tales, and the "legend tales" had descriptions of burial mounds and legends about alyps.

Intensive collection and scientific formulation of oral prose began in the 1960s. It was during these years that much attention was paid to the genres of non-fairy tale prose on the world stage. [Odyukov \(1973\)](#) published the first collection of folktales about the Chuvash giant hero "Alyp". A multi-volume book on Chuvash folklore "Chuvash oral folk art": 1973-1987", was also published. The second part of the sixth volume was devoted to myths and legends. The book included 349 texts of myths, 102 texts about alyps and 218 texts of historical legends. Since the last decade of the 20th century, consideration of individual topics and genres has prevailed in Chuvash folklore. For example, G. Yumart ([Kirillova & Myshkina, 2022](#)) identified some ways of developing stories about alyps from a genre perspective. His collection "Alyp" included 227 texts. The widespread use of text versions has further enhanced the value of this work. The book contains detailed information about the texts. Textual analysis and systematic conclusions related to the image of Alyp are found in the works of [Gennadievna \(2006\)](#).

- *Mythological Significance of Alyps*

The mythological giants represented by alyps belong to the category that is completely different from giants in fairy tales and epics. In Chuvash legends alyp-giants are characterized as the representative of tall people. Their growth is shown in comparison, e.g., comparison with natural objects: "as if reaches against the sky"; like "deep rivers, high forests up to his waist"; or comparison with a person: "a five-meter-tall boy was lying next to him"; "If he sees a man on the field, he brings him home in his pocket with his horse and plow" [Gennadievna \(2006\)](#). The alyp-giant is also described in the Bashkir epics and alyp legends (apsana) as "he was very tall and walked from one top of a mountain to another" [Nadrshina \(1987\)](#). [Toyshanuly \(2009\)](#) studied the connection of giants with the creation of geographical objects through the typology of Kazakh and Mongolian myths.

One of the most distinctive features of alyps is their incredible strength, even the birth of these heroes occurs in amazing circumstances, as mentioned in the myth ([Kefeli, 2023](#)). In. For example, in Chuvash folklore "it is said that the son of Aslati (God of Lightning), whose name is Alyp, lived on the shore of great Edil (river)". In other sources he was created by God himself: "At first God did not think and made people too big". "The Supreme God was unemployed at home when Alyp was born, and his wife did everything for him. The Supreme God prepared strength for the child and gave all his strength to Alyp". [Valieva \(2014\)](#), who explored giants in the Bashkir non-fairy prose, explains this myth: "Usually he [alyp] is described as a big man, with stately and gigantic body, physically very strong as an oak, as well as accurate in archery" [Afanasyev \(2008\)](#) also believed in the myth that the special physique and strength of alyps are connected with their relations to higher power: "The hero is a divine being and therefore endowed with extraordinary powers, giant sizes and threatening elements of nature." Consequently, the genetic connection of alyps with nature, particularly mountains, in world mythology is a common motive. This is also typical of Turkic folklore.

In general, the concept of a mountain in mythology is associated with the beginning of kindness and miracle. The mountain is like the point of contact between God and this bright world. Even God himself is in

the form of a mountain. In the Chuvash legends, the connection of alyps with a mountain is often mentioned. Steblin-Kamensky (1976) offers the important detail: “After his death, he was buried on the top of the mountain”; “That night, Alyp went to the mountains to talk with Gods” and “They live in the mountains and deserts; they are demigods, half-mountains.” From this mythical version, Krinichnaya (1987) expresses the following opinion: “Such are the giants of Russian legends, who at the end of their lives go underground, to the mountains, turn into various kinds of petrification, leaving very characteristic attributes or traces of their activities behind them. The essence of the characters is revealed through these attributes. The fact that such manifestations and transformations occur with giants at the time of their death can be regarded as their return to their original essence, as a kind of reincarnation, and the ability, given first and foremost to totem ancestors. If we remember that mountains, rocks, and stones are connected with the concepts of totemic centers, and even totem ancestors, to which the origin of clan community, it is entirely permissible to assume the presence in the image of the giants as ancient-totemic sub-ground, in consequence of which the successive connection of this character with the image of a mythical ancestor is realized” Krinichnaya (1987).

- *Alyps as Literary Subjects*

The alyps as literary subjects in the Turkic folklore preserved the archaic motif of human appearance on earth. According to the Chuvash legend, alyps lived when there were no living people on earth. This is confirmed by the subjects of the Chuvash non-fairy stories: “All the Chuvash people originate from Alyp”; “Alyp and his mother lived before the existence of mankind”. “Alyps lived before us”; “In ancient times there lived Alyps before the flood,” and so on (Rahmatdildaevna Kurmanbekova et al., 2023). Once, not knowing where to spend his energy, one of alyps ripped all the trees and plants around him. Upon learning of this, his mother said: “There is a demon in your body. Cut off your hand!” Alyp ripped all his fingers and put them on the ground. After a while small animals grew from the fingers. Alyp did not touch them. Subsequently, these animals were called humans” Rahmatdildaevna Kurmanbekova et al. (2023).

In another example, Alyp’s mother said: “They will come out of the earth and begin to multiply” Rahmatdildaevna Kurmanbekova et al. (2023). Here are the archaic signs of matriarchal era. Kanyukov (1971) and Odyukov (1973) also connect the stories about alyps with the matriarchal era as alyps always listened to their mothers. The content of subjects proves that alyps appeared in that era, because an alyp’s mother is described as the head of the family.

Methodology

- *Research Design*

This research adopted a qualitative research design to expand the scientific framework of folklore studies, and examine the theoretical significance among comparative studies in Turkology. In general, the study used a comparative text analysis, using the methods of systematization, as well as historical-typological, and historical-genetic methods.

- *Data Collection*

The data was collected through desk-research methods and documentation study. The data resources comprised folklore and epics/ legends found in historical texts. The data, which was extracted mainly from secondary sources, was confined to the Turkic folklore and its interpretation.

- *Data Analysis*

After the folklore texts were collected and compared, they were analyzed in the light of their ideological and thematic connections, compositional structure and Turkic nature in the character system. A comprehensive analysis of the non-fairy tale prose of the Turkic peoples confirmed that the folklore of these countries had developed individually as part of mutual integration process.

Results and Findings

The study made several revelations about the alyps and the beliefs and folklore of the Turkic peoples. The study also found out that alyps are also associated as a totem and is currently seen as the image as the totem or the ancestor. However, the study emphasized on the stories or legends about alyps, their legacy and emergence, development and formation of human on earth, and the way of developing their views about the world and consciousness.

First, and foremost, the appearance of fire is connected with alyps: “At that moment a part of the star in the sky (Alyp’s arrow hits it) was falling from heaven. Alyp tore out the oak and turned it upside down, held

it under the falling star and the tree began to burn". Fire is a key element of Zoroastrianism. The legends about Alyp tell us about ancient Zoroastrianism and about Ahura-Mazda, the most important God of that era. For example, one story is about a giant hero lived at the foot of Aramazi Mount and that God tied Alyp's father to the top of Aramazi Mount, because he offended the little people. In these texts the word Aramazi can come from the name of the God of kindness, like Ahura Mazda.

Second, Alyp's appearance as a demiurge is manifested in his raising clouds, creating rivers and lakes, changing the riverbed and directions of rivers and lakes. He also takes part in the appearance of the rainbow, places day and night, and divides the sky from the earth. Rivers and lakes appear from his tears, little people from his fingers, and mountains from the body. Considering the beliefs and folklore materials of the Turkic peoples, we see the poly-stage and polysemantic image of Alyp, because Alyp has a connection with the mythical concept, as the first person, demiurge and "cultural hero". However, in some texts giants and people lived at the same time. Such stories may have appeared as a result of desacralization and demythologization. For example, they taught the Chuvash people to cultivate land, to work, and also protected them from the enemy.

Third, Alyp is described as the son of a human: "His mother was the daughter of mountain people, father was the leader". The Tatar version talks about the meeting of the hero with a peasant, and how he brings the peasant home in his pockets with his horses and plow. Alyp, previously seen as a totem, is now seen as the image that follows the totem. For example, in one of the subjects Alyp, who lives in the mountains, decides to move to the steppe. After talking to the tribal chiefs about it, he goes to the mountains to consult the Gods that night. After that a wolf appears before him and speaks in a human voice: "Oh, Alyp, by God's command I will lead you the east, to the steppe. Do not be afraid, follow me. I will always be with you and protect your country and cattle".

In general, these stories or legends about giants are the history of the emergence, development and formation of the humans on earth, and the way of developing their views about the world and consciousness. Discussing the public importance of these subjects. Kanyukov Baan (1984) asserts "Their main motive is the human development of nature, the ability of people to engage in agriculture and their association in collective" Tuktash (1941) connects the contents of the stories about alyps with the prehistoric life-period of the present Chuvash people's ancestors, and says that under the image of alyps we see "the life of cattle breeding Chuvash people before farming." Sarekenova et al. (2023) write: "This is not a historical, but a prehistoric legend. They talk about the ancient concepts of world and human development. But, as we see, they can be clarified and related to a particular place and proved by facts. They can also have historical grounds."

In the 19th -20th centuries the name Alyp-Batyr was associated with the appearance of peaks and hills in the understanding of people. In his records of the 19th century Nasyiri (1974) records: "In any village of our Bulgarian country you will hear a story about Alyp. If there is a visible hill around, people say that it appeared from the soil that piled to Alyp's feet" Nasyiri (1974). Similarly, in the Bashkir legends, the origin of mountains (hills, rock-stones) is often associated with mythological subjects about wonderful giants – Alps. One of such legends (apsana) narrates: On his way to homeland, Alpa-Batyr reached the place where the river Akedil and Sulman merge and stopped to free his shoes made of skin from the sand. Two hills appeared from that sand. Among the population these hills are called "Alpa komo aiyyrytau", which means "Alp's two sandy mountains" Sokolova (1970). In another legend, there is a place called Alpai in the area of Sharan, where Bashkir tribes lived. In the Bashkir legends the appearance of mountains is often associated with mythological subjects about giants ("Alp's two sandy mountains", "Alp-batyr", "Alpamysh"). The giants fought with the enemy, throwing large stones in this place (Valieva, 2014).

In Chuvash folklore, Alyp is also the motive for the appearance of mountains, mounds, slopes and hills, coming from his actions. For example, high walls (Ulap tapri) appeared from the sand, poured from his shoes. It is said that Chaparly Mountain appeared from the sand that Alyp threw at the enemy. In the examples above, the origin of mounds is also connected with Alyp's burial. These stories have toponymic character. Such legends are very popular among the Tatar people. This story of appearance of hills from the sands, poured from the giants' shoes, is widespread. They are often found in the West and Far East countries. The places where Alp-batyr walked became pasture (zhailau) for the Bashkir people in the legends (apsana) and epics of Bashkir folklore. As Khisamitdinova (2006) defines, there are such variants of Alp's name as Alyp Batyr, Alap, Alpan, Alpar, Alpamysh, Alpamysha in the Bashkir folklore. The words such as alpanlau, alpan-tolpan, and alpy-salpy are often used in the Bashkir language. Bashkir proverbs also include the word Alp: Alparyna kura tolpar; Alp ananan tyuar, argamak beyanan tyuar; Aty-tuny bar keshela Alpamysha koso bar; Bai bulhang, alpan bul, yarly bulhang, kaltang bul; Mally keshe tuplanda, malhyz keshe Alpanda.

Discussion

Chuvash folklore texts about alyps are divided by themes and systematized according to the chronological principle. Some of the main subjects include "Origin of alyps"; "Alyp's childhood"; "Growth, clothing, character of Alyp"; "Alyp's participation in the creation of world"; "The location of alyps on Edil"; ". "Battles and actions of alyps"; "Alyp's friends"; "Disappearance of alyps";. "Mounds, hills, lakes appearing from tears of alyps and their habitats"; and "Convictions and prejudices associated with alyps" (Kirillova & Myshkina, 2022).

Likewise, the Kazakh subjects, published in the journal *Ethnographic Review* in 1890, Yanchuk (1890) comprised: mountains standing apart from others and closer to Mount Kalba called “Kalmak Tolagai”, which means the head of the Kalmyks. Near the mountain, there are two hills, called Aktas (white stone) and Kyzyltas (red stone). Around this mountain there is always a snowstorm (because of crossroads of mountains and steppes). The Kazakh people explain the reason of snowstorm in the following way: At the time when the Kazakh heroes drove the Kalmyks from the north, there lived two giants, father and son in Tarbagatay area. To stop the enemies these two heroes were going to make a barrier to the Irtysh River, in order to direct its water to the steppe. To do this, they made a sacrifice and promised “not to get close to a woman”, and went on their way, laying one of the highlands of Tarbagatay Mountains in their shoulders. When they stopped to rest the son asked his father for permission to go to his bride. Father gave permission and warned him not to violate his oath, but the boy did not fulfill his promise, and in the morning the giants could no longer raise the mountain. The angry father killed his son, and so Kyzyltas appeared (a mountain from the body and blood of the boy). The cruel father went to the cave in Daur gorge. There were storms and hurricanes when the old man Alyp recollected the past and his anger.

In the second variant of this legend, after the son returned from a date with his bride, father and son remained under the ridge, being unable to raise mountains, met their death. Hearing this news, the bride and her mother came to the place where the two giants had died. A heartbroken mother cried in the place where Aktas hill is now, and her tears turned into a lake, her breast milk flowed like a spring, and thus Aktas and a spring at the foot of the mountain appeared. Unable to withstand such grief, the sad mother could not stand up, the blood flew from her eyes and chest instead of tears and milk, so Kyzyltas appeared. The terrible spirit of the giant’s father passed into the serpent that lived in the cave of Daur-gorge. The storm appeared from his angry breathing (Yanchuk, 1890). These legends are consistent with the findings of Toyshanuly (2009), which confirm the legend that: the two giants lifted up a mountain; they blocked the rivers; the younger giant violated the prohibition; The power of a man decreases when getting close to a woman; the wind appears from the breath of the alyps; white stone appeared from the white milk; and the red stone appeared from red blood.

These Kazakh myths are combined with mythical stories about Sartakpai Batyr in the Altai peoples. In the Kazakh myth the giant father and his son also blocked the river for the benefit of people, and Sartakpai Alyp together with his son changed the direction of river for his country. When necessary, Sartakpai managed to move mountains, stones and built a bridge across the river. These stories about Sartakpai are narrated in the following way: “Sartakpai and his son laid the channels of Katun, Bii, Bashkaus, Chelushman and created the Golden Lake. Sartakpai parted Sogon-Tuu Mountain and made Beshpek Mountain. Sartakpai and his son built a bridge across the stormy Katun. Sartakpai persuaded the Sun and the Moon to drag a seven-headed monster Delbegen to the sky.” In addition, there are myths about Sartakpai’s traces, left on earth; myths about Sartakpai’s visit to Mongolia, and myths about Sartakpai’s death. These myths have become popular among all the Altai tribal groups. All these myths describe his heroic actions.

In another version, Sartakpai also called Sartaktai, makes life easier for people through his actions. He served humanity and became the symbol of kindness. He was a builder, a creator who never felt fatigue. Working at night, he grabbed the lightning with his hand and fixed it in the cleft of the tree to illuminate the earth. The myth described Sartakpai as a giant hero. Wherever he passed, he left his traces on the ground and on rocks. He was very mighty and great titan. Old people believed that the places, associated with Sartakpai’s name, are almost in all the corners of Altai Mountains: “He was resting here, these are marks from his feet, here he was sitting and there he was hunting .” (Katash, 1978).

The legend of Sartakpai is similar to the legend of the Kazakh alyps, Alangasar and Arsalang. “Arsalang Alyp went to the hill and made five rivers, putting his five fingers into the earth. One of the bones became a bridge over the Zarafshan river” Divaev (1992). This legend is found in the story about Tuimekent (Alangasar Alif) recorded by Pangereev (2014): “In ancient times, there was a man named Alangasar Alyp. He had a son Arsalang Alyp. Both father and son helped people of districts of Almaly, Karash, Donbut and Moinak in Auliata. There was a man whose name was Kuren and who lived along the river Talas. Kuren had a daughter, Tuime, who told Arsalang Alyp that if he built a city at the foot of Tuie-Moinak Mountain, she would marry him. Arsalang accepted this and began to build the city. His father too joined him to build the city without knowing his promise to Tuime. Arsalang would throwing stones at his father from a distance of ten miles, and the father would catch them as they built the city. Once Arsalang was distracted during the work by Tuime and the stone he threw did not reach his father. The angry father wanted to kill his son. Being afraid of his anger, Arsalang ran away, throwing heavy sand back, which resulted in the creation of the Kumtobe (Kultobe) hill, which people also called Tuimekent (Pangereev, 2014).

The version given by Toyshanuly (2009) to this legend is much similar. In his version, two alyps (father and son) were engaged in the task of blocking the Talas River with the promise not to be distracted by any woman until the work is complete. Arsalang Alyp, who violated the prohibition and stared at a beautiful girl, was punished by his father. He ran away from his father, put sand in a heap with his shoe, sat on this sandy hill, and wept bitterly, looking at the beauty. There is a hill along the Arys River. Kumtobe and Zhetitobe near Aulie-Ata, which are said to be the formed by Arsalang’s heavy shoe.

All these Kazakh and Mongolian myths about Alangasar and Arsalang are related to the story of Kalmaktolagai. Typologically and historically, alyps were involved in the creation of geographical objects: “Alyps functioned in putting the mythological world in order” [Toyshanuly \(2009\)](#). The main content of archaeological myths was creativity. They were responsible for the appearance of nature, mountains and rocks, lakes and plants. For this reason, many of these myths are told in an explanatory way and have etiological (cause-and-effect) character ([Polyakova & Gekman, 2022](#)). These myths are common in three different ways, causing three different actions: (a) things that appeared from reincarnation; (b) things that appeared during travels; c) things that appeared as a result of abduction. [Kaskabasov \(2009\)](#) refers these geographical objects as a result of fatigue or long campaigns of soldiers to demonstrations of these methods.

In the Kazakh folklore it is said that even the birth of Tolagay batyr makes sense. For example, people living on a fertile land and pasture for livestock had a single dream: “We have everything; but we do not have a hero who will protect us”. By their wish the child was born and grew daily before their eyes. This boy cared about his people. When they were in difficulty and suffering, he went to Alatau following the advice of the elders, and carried the mountain on his back. At first, he moved vigorously, but then got tired. When he approached his country, his knees were bent and he fell asleep near his country. In this text about Tolagay, there are several folklore motives that need to pay attention. It is the need for Tolagay to defend the country, caring for his people, carrying the mountain on his back, and staying under the mountain, tired and asleep, and giving his name to the geographical object ([Abzhet, Boranbayev, & Zhumashova, 2019](#)).

The Bashkir myth also depicts Alpamysh, the giant hero, sitting on a stone for rest, turning the place where he was sitting into stone. This stone is located near Irendek Mountain. In all these legends, reincarnation of heroes occurs as a result of fatigue and rest. [Kaskabasov \(2002\)](#) emphasizes the nature of myths concerning the cause and effect: “Transformation in myths is explained by a simple reason that when a very tired person falls asleep, he becomes a stone or a beast and a bird during his sleep.” In the ancient Greek myths as well, there are giants making up an anthropomorphic group, one of which is Anteus, the son of Poseidon and Gaia. He summoned foreigners to battle and this shows his role of the defender [Divaeu \(1992\)](#). In fact, all ancient myths of metamorphic nature show the system of syncretic thinking of mankind. In myths about the unanimity with environment all natural phenomena are considered in the form of a human and humanlike image. They act, think and feel like human beings. From this point of view, people can turn into mountains, trees, animals and plants, the star and the moon in these myths.

The content of myths about heroes, turned into mountains, rivers and lakes are very interesting. In considering such subjects, [Verbitskiy \(1893\)](#) collected stories having a wide range of toponymic myths. For example, the origin of Chaptygans and Adagan mountains in Altai is associated with the giant heroes. These two offended heroes were in enmity with each other. As a weapon, Chaptigan used a willow arrow, Adagan used a stone one. In the end, two heroes turned into mountains. The content of the myth ends with an explanation of the external signs of the mountains: Chaptigan Mountain became full of willow trees, while there were stones at the foot of Adagan Mountain ([Kaskabasov, 2002](#)). There is also a myth about the tops of mountains, such as Adalyk and Ulug-tag or Solok. The legend tells of their dispute about who is the taller of the two. To measure it, they dived deep into the river. The depth of the river was up to Adalyk’s throat and to Ulug-tag’s belt. Thus, Adalyk lost this competition.

In Altaic mythology, along with Sartakpai, there is a legend of Turun-Muzykai, about whom [Verbitskiy \(1893\)](#) wrote about in the 19th century: “Erlik created a terrible being called Andalma-Muus on earth. This monster poked his tongue out of the sea and swallowed people. This monster was overcome by a hero of Ulgen, called Turun-Muzykai, who had descended from heaven and born as a human. Once in his childhood Turun was running along the sea shore, when Andalma-Muus put out its tongue to swallow the boy. Turun grabbed the monster’s tongue and pulled so hard that the whole land was almost flooded with water, which Turun started to drink. He drank so much water that the legs of Andalma-Muus came out of the water. Turun caught it by its feet and pulled it to the ground and stroke against the stone. The body of the monster was scattered around, the stone was covered with blood, and so colored stones appeared. Eventually, Turun cut Andalma-Muus into pieces with a knife, which resulted in the creation of different insects like spiders, mosquitoes, worms, and locusts. Turun-Muzykai thus helped people by doing good deeds in their favor, and won the evil monster Andalma-Muus ([Verbitskiy, 1893](#)).

Hence, it is evident that several myths originated from ancient legends. The etiological motives in the content of each myth (the appearance of colored stones, insects, etc.) proves it, but the main idea is based on the interpretation of whom heroic deeds were directed.

Conclusion

This study revealed that there are many stories about alyp batyrs in the prose legends of the Turkic people. Some of these are ancient and historical stories, others are myths or legends (apsana), because these stories include mythological motives, and they also have “historicity”. Each description of an alyp’s image and life corresponds to mythical content, and toponymic names corresponds to a legend (apsana) or mythological description. In this case,

the most important thing is that the genre is a historical category. It is true that the public view of giants varies on the basis of social development and the dynamics of the worldview. Episodes of such views are common for the Turkic peoples. Thus, the general nature of folklore works is a legitimate phenomenon.

In the context of terminology, this study also concluded that subjects of these legends have different genre names in each nation. Having studied their biographies, deeds, victories and defeats, it was known that the Chuvash people, for instance, recognized alyps as ancestors and first people, and then they were considered the heroes who defended them. For example, in one of them it is claimed that Yuman pattar or Tu pattar (mountain hero), Sil Pattar (wind hero), and Shyv pattar (water hero) submitted to Alyp, and in the next that he defeated a one-eyed mythical hero like Altar kusa. He also defended the Chuvash people from three-eyed tribes. The connection of giants with humanity indicates the weakening of the ancient mythological worldview. This suggests that the human consciousness is moving forward, and the worldview is expanding.

Another conclusion drawn in this study was that these legends contained historical events dominated by the images of giants, who are brave, courageous and strong. For instance, the legend of Alankasar in the Karaite myth is based on a real historical event. The story tells about the reckless courage of the young hero Alankasar, Zarah's son, who fought with robbers to save the pride of his tribe. Similarly, the Arystan-Alyp legend, the legends of Sartakpai Batyr, Alangasar and Arsalang in the Kazakh and Mongolian myths and the legend of Alpamysh in the Bashkir myth depicts strength and courage, and are evidence of heroism. The strength and courage of these heroes is undoubtedly the main objective of the legends. There is no hyperbolization and elements of metamorphosis inherent in mythical perception. These heroic figures reflected in all the legends are symbols of heroism and courage, keeping traces of the ancient image of a giant, being a characteristic of other creatures in fairy tales.

If we draw conclusions of these analysis, the Turkic folklore subjects, formed on Alyps' images, are reflected in different non-fairy genres of prose. This is due to the multifaceted nature of the subjects about alyps, demonstrating the theoretical nature of different genre forms. Probably such a multidimensional character appeared from the multi-layered and multifaceted image of the alyps. If we turn the direction of typological and poetic research in folkloreology to the Turkic world in the future, and apply to contextual-reconstructive methods and semiotic approaches, then surely there will be progress in science. It is also proved that syncretism, genre integration and historical principle, characteristic to folklore, are influential factors. Best of all, the unity of motive and content of the stories, based on the images of giants in the Turkic peoples, the common features of heroic idea and the functions of heroes have been determined. Turkic knowledge of alyps also forms the Turkic system of folklore materials.

As a result of the analysis, it was possible to determine the level of historical and genetic continuity and the Turkic character of mythological plots dedicated to the image of alyps. Syncretism, genre integration, as historical principal characteristics of folklore. They are also the determining factors that help to reveal the unity of motives and contents, common features of the heroic idea and character's actions in the plots created on the basis of the image of alyps. Last, but not the least, Turkic knowledge about Alyp formed the genre system of Turkic folklore. As a result, even with the existence of differences in the genre terminology of the plots about the image of alyps, a similarity was revealed in the structure and poetical-pictorial style, which led to the appearance of toponymic names.

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