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**History of the Homeland**

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**Abstract.** *Introduction.* The article outlines a range of issues related to the study of written sources on the medieval history of Kazakhstan. Narrative sources are described, the addressees of which are the steppe rulers, as well as representatives of the Kazakh nobility. The main advantage of this group of autochthonous and authentic sources is that they record direct facts, evidence and impressions of the participants and eyewitnesses of the events described. *Purpose and objectives.* The article outlines a range of issues related to the study of written sources on the medieval history of Kazakhstan. Narrative sources are described, the addressees of which are the steppe rulers, as well as representatives of the Kazakh nobility. The main advantage of this group of autochthonous and authentic sources is that they record direct facts, evidence and impressions of the participants and eyewitnesses of the events described. *Results.* The article provides a source study analysis of new sources identified as a result of searches in archives and manuscript repositories of neighboring and foreign countries. This is a separate type of historical and literary sources - letters, laudatory odes, epic epics, and theological works. The novelty of the article is the introduction into scientific circulation of a written source stored in the collection of the historian and archaeographer Said Vahidi in the Center for Written and Musical Heritage of the G. Ibragimov Institute of Language and Art of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tatarstan - Miraskhane. *Materials and methods.* At the same time, the scientific article raises the question of the need to develop new methodological approaches to the source study of this type of sources. The solution to this problem can only be achieved through interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary strategies and scientific methods. *Conclusions.* For the source science of Kazakhstan, it is important to classify these sources, develop methods for studying and using them in the reconstruction and



interpretation of historical events of the period of the XV-XVIII centuries, as a significant stage in the formation of Kazakh statehood.

**Keywords:** Narrative sources, steppe rulers, laudatory ode, epistolary heritage, oral history, historical traditions, Kazakh Khanate, source study, interdisciplinary research

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## ҚАЗАҚСТАН ТАРИХЫН ЗЕРТТЕУ КОНТЕКСТІНДЕ ЖАҢА НАРРАТИВТІ ДЕРЕКТЕР

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**Андатпа. Кіріспе.** Мақалада Қазақстанның ортағасырлық тарихы бойынша жазба дереккөздерді зерттеуге қатысты бірқатар мәселелер қарастырылған. Адресанттары дала билеушілері, сондай-ақ қазақ элитасының өкілдері болып табылатын нарративті дереккөздер сипатталған. Автохтонды және аутентикалық деректердің бұл түрінің басты артықшылығы - мәнінде сипатталған оқиғаларға қатысушылар мен куәгерлердің тікелей фактілері, дәлелдері мен әсерлері баяндалады. *Мақсат-міндеттері.* Мақалада көрші және шет елдерінің мұрағаттары мен қолжазбалар қорында жүргізілген іздестіру нәтижесінде анықталған жаңа дереккөздерге деректанулық талдау жасалған. Бұлар тарихи - әдеби деректердің жеке түрі - хаттар, мадақтау жырлары, эпикалық жырлар, теологиялық шығармалар. *Нәтижелер.* Мақаланың басты жаңашылдығы Ғ. Ибрагимов атындағы Тіл және өнер институтының жазба және музыкалық мұра орталығында (Мирасханә), тарихшы-археограф Саид Вахидидің қорында сақталған жазба дереккөздердің ғылыми айналымға енгізілуі. Ғылыми мақалада дереккөздердің аталған түрін зерттеуде жаңа әдістемелік тәсілдерді әзірлеу қажеттілігі туралы мәселе көтеріледі. *Материалдар мен әдістер.* Нарративті деректерді зерттеу саласы тарих пен филология, лингвистика, әдебиеттану және деректану ғылымдарының аралығында орналасқан. Бұл мәселені шешілуі пәнаралық және трансдисциплинарлық стратегиялармен мен ғылыми әдістер арқылы қол жеткізуге болады. *Қорытынды.* Қазақстан деректану ғылымы үшін қазақ мемлекеттілігінің қалыптасуының маңызды кезені ретінде осы дереккөздерді жіктеу, оларды зерттеу және XV-XVIII ғасырлар



кезеңіндегі тарихи оқиғаларды қайта жаңғырту мен түсіндіруді пайдалануды әдістемесін жасаудың маңызы зор.

**Түйін сөздер:** Нарративті (баяндау) деректер, дала билеушілері, мақтау жырлары, эпистолярлық мұра, ауызша тарих, тарихи дәстүр, Қазақ хандығы, деректану, пәнаралық зерттеу

**Алғыс айту.** Мақала Қазақстан Республикасы Ғылым және жоғары білім министрлігінің Ғылым комитетінің қаржыландыру аясында дайындалды. Ғылыми жоба тақырыбы: «XV–XVIII ғғ. Қазақ хандығы билеушілерінің нарративті құжаттарын текстологиялық зерттеу және деректанулық талдау» ЖТН АР19676930.

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## НОВЫЕ НАРРАТИВНЫЕ ИСТОЧНИКИ В КОНТЕКСТЕ ИЗУЧЕНИЯ ИСТОРИИ КАЗАХСТАНА

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**Аннотация.** *Введение.* В статье обозначен круг вопросов, связанных с изучением письменных источников по средневековой истории Казахстана. Описываются нарративные источники, адресантами которых являются степные правители, а также представители казахской знати. Основное преимущество данной группы автохтонных и аутентичных источников в том, что в них зафиксированы непосредственные факты, свидетельства и впечатления самих участников и очевидцев описываемых событий. *Цель и задачи.* В статье дается источниковедческий анализ новых источников, выявленных в результате поисков в архивах и рукописохранилищах сопредельных и зарубежных стран. Это отдельный вид историко-литературных источников - письма, хвалебные оды, эпические былины, теологические сочинения. *Результаты.* Новизной статьи является введение в научный оборот письменного источника, хранящегося в фонде историка и археографа Саида Вахиди в Центре письменного и музыкального наследия Института языка и искусства им. Г. Ибрагимова Академии Наук Республики Татарстан - Мирасханэ. *Материалы и методы.* В научной статье поднимается вопрос о необходимости выработать новые методологические подходы к источниковедческому изучению данного вида источников. Область изучения нарративных источников находится на стыке между историей и филологией, лингвистикой, литературоведением и источниковедением. Решение этой проблемы может быть достигнуто только с помощью междисциплинарных и трансдисциплинарных стратегий и научных методов. *Заключение.* Для источниковедческой науки Казахстана важно классифицировать



данные источники, выработать методы изучения и использования их в реконструкции и интерпретации исторических событий периода XV-XVIII веков, как значимого этапа формирования казахской государственности.

**Ключевые слова:** Нарративные источники, степные правители, хвалебная ода, эпистолярное наследие, устная историология, исторические традиции, Казахское ханство, источниковедение, междисциплинарные исследования

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**Introduction.** The development of general methodological positions, scientific approaches, and conceptual re-evaluations is necessary at the current stage of development of several humanities disciplines, including Turkology, Oriental Studies, and Philology. One of the many reasons for scientific collaboration in the field of interdisciplinary research is the need to study the written and oral heritage that was formed and created in the chancery of Ulug Ulus, and later in the post-Orda states.

In the studies of the history of the Kazakh Khanate in the XV-XIX centuries, the primary sources for a long time were documents in Persian and Turkic languages from Central Asian countries. A significant portion of historical materials from this period consists of journalistic sources and scholarly works authored by Russian officials, Russian travelers, and researchers. In domestic historiography, there has been a limited number of written monuments of «steppe origin» - indigenous and authentic sources that record direct facts, testimonies, and impressions from the participants and eyewitnesses of events. The importance of such sources is difficult to overestimate, as they allow for an internal perspective on historical events of the studied era and provide a more accurate reflection of various events. Source studies practice shows that additional information is often found in stylistic nuances and terminological features of the texts. The interest in written and oral sources belonging to the khans, sultans, and representatives of the Kazakh nobility is explained by their uniqueness and the rare study of these sources as a separate category.

They are also unique sources for the period of the establishment and formation of Kazakh statehood. In the Kazakh Khanate, as in all post-Horde states, all «communicative functions were traditionally carried out by those vested with authority from the hereditary nomadic aristocracy, aq süyek (white bone), who periodically addressed the lower-ranking representatives of the nomadic nobility, qara süyek (black bone), and the ruling monarchs of other states in writing, in order to meet the pressing public needs and requirements of their subjugated population, or in the interest of external security» (Erofeeva, 2014). In Kazakh historiography, one of the few high-quality studies on this issue is the monograph by I.V. Erofeeva, which introduces into scholarly circulation the letters of Kazakh khans and sultans from the last quarter of the XVII century to the mid - XIX century. This collection of sources includes official and personal documents that served to establish legal, political, economic, and social relations in Kazakh society. I.V. Erofeeva divides them into private letters (sources of personal origin and content) and official letters (administrative documentation) and classifies them as an independent type of written sources - epistolary heritage. The senders of these written sources are khans and sultans, and in some cases, their sons, wives, and close relatives.





Research in archives and manuscript repositories, along with new heuristic and archeographic studies, confirms the existence of various types of state documents of the steppe rulers. Among the early written sources are the decrees of the first khans of the Kazakh state, as well as documents concerning internal relations and external relations with other countries. There is sufficient evidence of the functioning of chancery and record-keeping in the Kazakh Khanate during the medieval period. Because «each khan had a vizier who served as the secretary of the chancery, managing business papers, decisions, decrees, and issuing them» (Omiraev, 2015).

Overall, the state of record-keeping under the khans was simpler compared to that of the sultans after Kazakhstan's annexation to Russia. In 1848, State Councillor N. Lyubimov wrote to the Asian Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: «The entire chancery of the ruling sultans consists of a single secretary, who is some kind of clerk or hired interpreter» (Suleimenov, 1981). Under the Kazakh khans, a single person could simultaneously serve as a scribe, interpreter, and tutor for the khan's children. If a suitable individual was found, they would temporarily take on all these responsibilities based on the current needs. Under Khan Kenesary, the scribe, who was also a mullah, served as the teacher for the khan's children. He was also responsible for managing tasks, including accounting for the number of soldiers, livestock, weapons, and other property of the khan (Khafizova, 2019).

Khans primarily relied on their envoys, who carried out diplomatic missions and were authorized to verbally convey their orders or other secret proposals. Scribes often served as emissaries of Central Asian khans, as well as the Russian and Qing administrations. The khan's official correspondence was stored in a special chest, which was transported during migrations. Scribes oversaw the record-keeping and made copies of letters. As a result, some documents or their contents became known in neighbouring countries and have survived to this day. Y.V. Pochekaev, who studied the khan's decrees in the Turkic-Mongol states of the XV-XIX centuries, notes that researchers have so far only managed to find information about the subordinate legal acts of Kazakh khans (orders and communications) from the period in question. Most of these documents have not survived and are known mainly through reports from translators of the Orenburg and Omsk frontier offices (Pochekaev, 2010).

However, with the development of statehood, the need for written documentation increased. The record-keeping system and the traditions for drafting legislative acts at the court of the Kazakh khans in the XVI-XVII centuries were very similar to those of the Central Asian khans. U.A. Sulonov asserts that «due to the scarcity of facts, there is no information about the state court chancery of the early Kazakh khans, such as Khan Kerei, Khan Burunduk, and others, from any written sources. However, speaking about the end of the XVI and XVII centuries, it can be said that, most likely, there were very similar and even almost identical traditions in the drafting of legislative acts between the Shaybanids (specifically the court of the Tashkent domain) and the Kazakh Khanate» (Sulonov, 2016: 92]. In the XV-XVI centuries, there was a pressing need for written documents, and within Kazakh society, a Central Asian Turkic language emerged, known as «Chagatai». The term «Chagatai language» is used in linguistics as a synonym for the Old Uzbek language, and in written monuments, the orthographic signs and morphological forms characteristic of the Central Asian Turkic language have been preserved. This language was used for communication among Turkic peoples, including Kazakhs, Uighurs, Uzbeks, Tatars, Azerbaijanis, and others (Omiraev, 2015: 27).

It is important to consider that one of the features of the Turkic nomadic tribes of the XV-XVIII centuries, also residing in Crimea, Central, and Middle Asia, was the presence of oral historiography. This was driven by the historical conditions of the time: the formation of the Kazakh Khanate, the development of Kazakh ethnicity, and the role of the akyn, singer, and zhyrau in fulfilling public and state functions as an advisor to the khan and a legislator. Therefore, to study the historical sources related to the period of state formation among the



Kazakh people, it is necessary to examine the entire written narrative - legends, and literary works - which have a distinct stylistic system and artistic-expressive means, and also convey reliable information about their historical era. The history of the socio-economic and political life of traditional Kazakh society could have been studied more objectively if oral data were comprehensively used alongside written narrative documents.

**Research Methods.** The source base of the study comprises discovered documents stored in archives and manuscript collections of various countries. The largest number of narrative documents belonging to Kazakh rulers and aristocracy is preserved in the Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Empire (AFPPE), the Russian State Archive of Ancient Acts (RSAAA), and the Russian State Historical Archive (RSHA). Some sources are kept in the Central State Archive and the National Center of Manuscripts and Rare Books (NCMRB) of the Committee of Archives, Documentation, and Book Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Khan's letters and documents have been found in the archives of countries such as China, Turkey, and Uzbekistan. Valuable literary sources, authored by the ruling elite of the steppe, are stored in the archival collections of the Oriental Studies Department of the Scientific Library of St. Petersburg University of the Russian Federation and the Center for Written and Musical Heritage of the G. Ibragimov Institute of Language and Art of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tatarstan (CWMH ILI AS RT) - Miraskhane.

Narrative sources on the history of the Kazakh Khanate should be studied using a broad range of interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary strategies. This involves analyzing the linguistic signs contained in the sources, concretizing and clarifying general concepts, applying interdisciplinary methods, and conducting an inductive analysis of the information provided by the sources. For example, written documents discovered in archives and manuscript repositories represent new types of sources known as «historical-literary». These sources are extensively analyzed using linguistic methods. Narrative analysis, as a method of hermeneutics and qualitative material analysis, is employed to uncover both explicit and implicit subjective representations of the given issue. The explicit content of the narrative is analyzed to examine the factual information about events presented by the narrator. Finding more precise characterizations of the past is a primary objective of contemporary scholarly-historical narrative research.

The study of discovered indigenous and authentic written sources should be conducted using new theoretical and methodological approaches, based on deep systemic-structural analysis and principles of the ethnocultural method for examining the historical past. The systemic-structural method is widely applied in studying the written documents of Kazakh rulers as a unified set of sources. This method enables a new interpretation of the historical material contained in the sources. Among the specialized historical methods, historical-comparative, historical-typological, and systemic-structural methods are extensively used, which involve examining events and phenomena in their interconnections and interdependencies, constant variability, and development. One of the main research approaches in writing the article has been a comprehensive, multi-faceted approach to studying written sources that have preserved historical information in literary works.

**Discussion.** A vast array of documents from steppe rulers, which have been introduced into scientific circulation and are found in the archives of neighbouring countries, is categorized using several terms: «epistolary heritage» – from the Greek *epistole* meaning letter or message (I.V. Yerofeyeva), and «act sources» – from the Latin *actum est* meaning «it is done», referring to documents of a legal or contractual nature (Usmanov, 1979). I.V. Yerofeyeva includes in the epistolary heritage «a collection of documents that are similar in external form and conventional format, both official and personal, which served the purpose of establishing the specific legal, political, business, or other relationships between particular official or private individuals» (Yerofeyeva, 2014).



At the same time, the presented corpus of sources should be conditionally unified under the concept of «narrative sources», from the Latin *narrare* – to tell, to narrate. The term «narrative sources» derives from *narrare* and implies a self-contained account of a series of interconnected events, presented to the reader or listener in the form of a sequence of words or images. These sources, which vary widely in type, illuminate history from different perspectives and to varying degrees. Some reveal obvious interdependencies, while others reflect aspects of societal life that may not have been within the historians' focus. Despite the incompleteness and lacunae of each type of these sources, together they create a distinct informational field that helps illuminate key questions in historical science (Tittse, 1985).

Various approaches are necessary for studying narrative sources to reveal their content. A narrative source serves as a tangible object for understanding historical processes and unique creative personalities as phenomena of national culture. Since the study of narrative sources is interdisciplinary and lies at the intersection of history and philology, literary studies, and linguistics, there is no definitive single definition for this category of sources. For instance, V.O. Klyuchevsky referred to narrative-type sources as literary monuments and included chronicles, legends, and lives of saints. Later, he distinguished between two groups of sources: monuments as «remnants of the life and activities of people from a known time» and memoirs, i.e., observations of contemporaries. He categorized works of thought, literature, feeling, and imagination into the first group, while chronicles, notes, and specific tales about events or individuals were considered memoirs (Prokopeva, 2011).

In the mid-XX century, M.N. Tikhomirov classified chronicles, histories, chronographs, lives of saints, legends, memoirs, and pamphlets as literary monuments. Later, he defined works such as sermons, pilgrimages, and lives of saints as literary productions. He categorized tales and annals under legends. Letters, along with acts, were considered legislative monuments and legal documents. Tikhomirov included chronicles, histories, historical works, and memoirs as narrative historical sources. He defined these sources as reflecting historical facts resulting from the impressions that particular events made on contemporaries or later generations (Prokopeva, 2011).

L.N. Pushkarev referred to narrative sources as «narrative sources». According to his classification, narrative (or narrative) sources are divided into historical, personal, scientific, and artistic categories. Historical narrative sources include chronicles, chronographs, and historical tales. Chronicles are also considered historical narrative sources because they contain a sequential record of events, like chronicles. Pushkarev categorized personal narrative sources into memoirs, diaries, and letters, grouping them together as they reflect reality through the subjective perceptions of their authors. Scientific narrative sources include historical, philosophical-sociological works, and geographical descriptions. Artistic sources consist of works of literature such as short stories, novels, novellas, plays, essays, and correspondence (Prokopeva, 2011).

The study of narrative documents related to the history of individual countries has a long-standing tradition, but there is still no unified systemic approach to the source-critical analysis of such documents. Traditionally, written sources are divided into two broad categories: historical remains and historical traditions (Kashtanov, 1969). The first category includes documents that record state decrees in the form of legal norms: treaties between states, between states and private individuals, administrative materials, and other documentation necessary for the functioning of the state mechanism. Most of the diplomatic correspondence and administrative documents currently stored in various archives have been actively incorporated into scholarly use and studied.

Historical traditions include historical works, chronicles, legends, travel descriptions, memoirs, letters, literary works, and narrative sources where historical facts are directly reflected. Unlike the composition of a letter or the maintenance of protocol records, creating a



book always involves substantial effort (Dolgov, 2023). Therefore, it is virtually impossible to separate historiography from literature or to draw a clear line between historiography and fiction, or between scientific and artistic literature. There are many epic chronicles, poetic chronicles, and historical works in prose often written in a style that reflects the artistic vision of the authors. Although the division of sources into historical remains and historical traditions is somewhat conventional, it is essential to acknowledge the significant differences between them. This distinction affects the methodology and methods of scholarly critique, processing, and analysis of sources. Historical remains are predominantly studied by historians, while historical traditions are more commonly explored by philologists and linguists.

A.E. Alektorov, in his work «Bibliographic Index of Books, Journal and Newspaper Articles, and Notes on the Kyrgyz» which includes bibliographic indexes and annotations to newspaper and journal articles, highlights the need to study Kazakh manuscripts (Oteпова, 2018). In his valuable contribution to the source study and historiography of Kazakhstan, he cites a publication from the 1832 edition of «Zavolzhsy Muravey», which includes a Russian translation of a letter from Janibek Khan to Professor K.F. Fuks of Kazan University (Alektorov, 1900). Additionally, an interesting publication by M. Szyzdykov in the «News of the Society of Archaeology, History, and Ethnography at Kazan University» features a Kyrgyz manuscript containing two songs about the death of a young sultan at the hands of his brothers, who had drawn the attention of the Russian government with his personal achievements. The widow of the deceased sultan, who composed these songs, thanks the governor for the just judgment of assigning a blood compensation of 2,000 rubles (Alektorov, 1900). Alektorov's bibliographic index contains much information on Kazakh legends, tales, epic poems, and more.

**Results.** An indigenous and authentic narrative source directly related to the medieval history of Kazakhstan is preserved in the personal collection of historian and archaeographer Said Vakhidi at the Center for Written and Musical Heritage of the G. Ibrahimov Institute of Language and Art of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tatarstan - Miraskhane. Said Gabdullaminovich Vakhidov (Vakhidi) is known as a historian-archaeographer and source scholar. He was one of the first researchers to conduct archaeological expeditions in the regions of the Tatar ASSR for 24 years. From 1911 to 1919, he collected materials on the history of the Kazan Khanate in the Tsarevokokshaisk uyezd and in the Spassk canton of the Mamadysh uyezd of Kazan Province. Between 1919 and 1924, he conducted an archaeological expedition in the Laishchev canton. In 1925, S.G. Vakhidov (Vakhidi) published 210 Eastern manuscripts in Turkic-Tatar, Persian, and other Eastern languages. Notably among them is the famous 14th-century manuscript «Nadjhel-faradis» which, alongside its theological content, includes «rich material on the life and customs of Eastern feudal lords, kings, spiritual and military officials» (Gumerov, 2017).

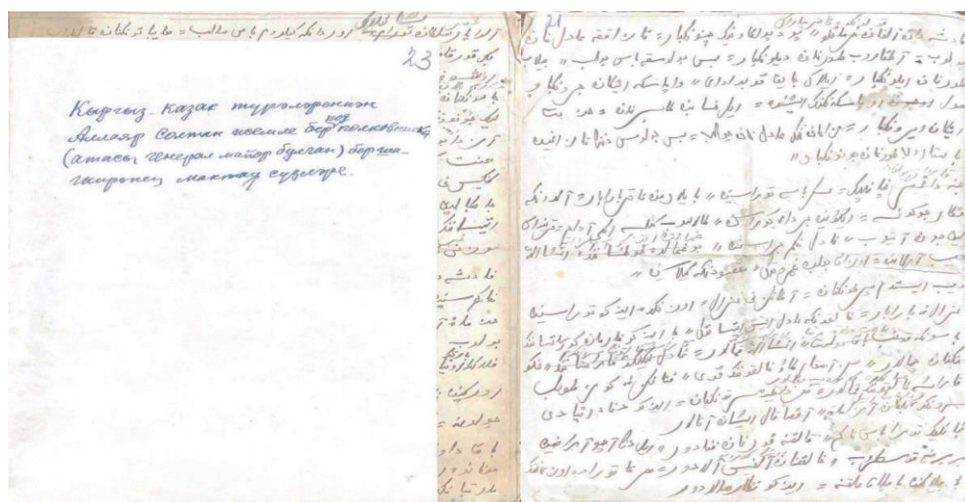
Among the collected documents was a yarlık (decree) from Khan Sahib-Giray, dated 1523. The discovery and initial study of this yarlık by the scholar and source specialist Said Vakhidi represents one of the most significant heuristic findings, providing a wealth of unique information on the socio-political development and history of agrarian relations in the Kazan Khanate. The document belonged to and was stored by a resident of the village of Mamalay in the Mamadysh uyezd, Rakhmatulla Akhmarov. Over a period of nine years, Vakhidi conducted negotiations with the document's owner regarding its transfer for storage in the library (Gumerov, 2017).

In November 1929, Vakhidi was commissioned by the Society of Archaeology, History, and Ethnography at Kazan State University to study and collect historical oral and written monuments in Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan. In 1930, to mark the 10th anniversary of the Tatar Republic and the opening of the first research institute in Tatarstan, 1500 titles of manuscripts and documents in Tatar, Persian, Arabic, Russian, and



other languages, with exceptional scientific value, were transferred to the Scientific Library of the TSSR by the historian Vakhidi (Gumerov, 2017: 19).

In Vakhidi's personal collection, Fund 53, Inventory 2, Case 2, are preserved «Excerpts from ancient manuscripts on separate sheets in Arabic,» dated from 1783 to 1927. The authorship of most of these documents is unidentified. During a research trip in November 2023, we discovered an interesting document written in Chagatai - a manuscript titled «Kyrgyz Cossack turælörinin Allayar Soltan zhemle ber lieutenant colonel (atasy, major general bulgan) bergin gyyryryn maktaular suzlere» (Arkhiv IYALI imeni G. Ibragimova). The manuscript consists of six pages, with the first page attached to the last. The page dimensions vary, but their main width is 17.6 cm, and the length is 21.8 cm. There are slight differences in length among some pages (for example, the longest being 21.8 cm), and several pages have damages. The number of lines per page varies, with the longest pages (pages 3-4) having 26 and 27 lines respectively, while the shortest page (page 6) consists of 19 lines, with the number 20 indicated in the corner.



A fragment from the document «Excerpts from ancient handwritten books on scattered sheets in Arabic», dated 1783-1927, «Kyrgyz kazak tyralarinin Allayar Soltan zhemle ber podpolkovnika (atasy, general-major bulgan) bergin gyjryryn maktaular suzlere».  
Personal Fund of S. G. Vakhidov, F. 53, OP.2, d. 2

The document is preserved in satisfactory condition, though some pages are damaged. For instance, pages 3 and 4 have torn left edges and central damage. Page 4 is damaged on the right side, while pages 2 and 6 have numbers (21 and 20 respectively) in the corner, possibly indicating page numbers or other markings. Page 4 is darker, which might be due to the production or storage conditions. The historical source is written in Chagatai script with Arabic calligraphy. Blue ink was used for the numbers on page 6, while black ink was used on the other pages (Arkhiv IYALI imeni G. Ibragimova).

The document is a praise ode – *maqtao* – and uses the term *madaq* for a certain Allayar Sultan. It is noteworthy because it belongs to a Kyrgyz Qayzak Sultan who governed five districts, including Eki, Zhayyk, and Kobda, in Western Kazakhstan. The praise ode was written on special commission, a common practice in nomadic states. For instance, during a khan's enthronement (inauguration), it was customary for supporters to deliver a praise speech, highlighting both virtues and shortcomings.

The text mentions the author, Baytursynov Kali (Kalizhan), twice and indicates that this is the second praise letter written by him in honor of Allayar Sultan. The source features many epithets and metaphors extolling and glorifying Allayar Sultan, who is repeatedly described as just and respected. The document notes that he was awarded the military rank of lieutenant colonel for his state achievements. The main character of the ode is depicted as a representative



of imperial authority with extensive powers – «Ak patshanyyn kozisin» – «representative of the White Tsar (Emperor)». The document confirms that the sultan's close relatives also served the tsar and were promoted to the rank of major-general. It seems that Allayar Sultan managed the region for an extended period and was renowned among the people for his justice and honesty, as noted in the document: «Qazaqqa ğadil khan bolyp» (Arkhiv IYALI imeni G. Ibragimova). The praise ode (maqtao, madaq) is rich in epithets, metaphors, and comparisons, celebrating and magnifying the sultan.

Similar written sources about Russian emperors are preserved among the Buryats, belonging to the genre of maghtal – «praise word». These are songs of praise and odes performed during holidays and celebrations, characterized by lofty Buddhist terms, vivid epithets, comparisons, and hyperboles. For example, in maghtals dedicated to Emperor Nicholas II, he is often compared to deities of the Buddhist pantheon and is described as akin to a god, embodying the virtues of Dara-ehe (the goddess of mercy) and the holy ruler Burkhan (Frolova, 2014).

Since a maghtal directed at someone always has a specific addressee, it contains a number of concrete historical facts. Some maghtals are dedicated to particular historical events. For instance, in the Mongolian collection of the Institute of Mongolian, Buddhist, and Tibetan Studies of the Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences, within the collection of Dash Bubaev, a folklorist and expert in Buryat oral historiography, there is a written source. The work, which is untitled and written in Old Mongolian script, is a hymn of praise addressed to the Aginsky Datsan (a Buddhist monastery). This hymn was performed during the meeting of Nicholas II in the first half of 1890 with the residents of eight districts of Agi, led by the head of the Aginsky Datsan, Zhigjit Danzhinov, and the chief taishi of the Agin Steppe Duma, Zhano Bodiev. During the meeting, the monk and singer of the Aginsky Datsan, Zarbaev Baga-Danjin, performed this praise hymn (Frolova, 2014).

Another recently discovered narrative document is a manuscript on Islamic theology, with the original held at the National Library of Paris. The manuscript (treatise) is dated to the early XVIth century (1501-1515), written in Turkic (Kipchak dialect) with Nastaliq script. It consists of seven sections, divided into seventy-one chapters and a conclusion, each dedicated to the explanation of passages from the Holy Quran and illustrated with one or more stories related to sacred Islamic figures. The manuscript comprises 193 pages, with pages measuring 21×14 centimetres. The first and last pages of the document are missing (Naidena semeinaia rukopis, 2023).

On the front page of the second leaf, it is indicated that the treatise is dedicated to Aisha Sultan Khanim-Begim, daughter of the Timurid ruler Sultan Husayn Mirza (Husayn Baykara), who married the Uzbek-Kazakh Sultan Kasym Jahangir (Kasym Khan) in the late XV century. The manuscript was kept in the personal library of Aisha Sultan Khanim-Begim. The book made its way to India through Timurids who fled Central Asia after the arrival of the Shaybanids in Mawarannahr, and it was acquired by the National Library of France in the XIX th century. Information on the diplomatic relations between Kasym Khan and Husayn Baykara, as well as the presumed date of the marriage between Kasym Khan and Aisha Begim, can be found in the Persian author Khondemir's «Habib al-Siyar» a source on the history of Iran and its neighbouring countries from the late XV to early XVI century (Naidena semeinaia rukopis, 2023).

In the Department of Oriental Studies of the Scientific Library of St. Petersburg University in the Russian Federation, a collection of poets and storytellers – masters of aytys – titled «Adil Sultan» is listed under №493. This epic poem can be placed alongside historical works such as «The Chronicle Collection» by Qadirgali Jalayri and «Chingisname» by Utemish-Hadji in terms of genre (Isin, 2001).



The manuscript book consists of 65 sheets or 130 pages, written without a title. The first leaf of the second page immediately opens with an epic poem—a narrative song in verse. The text is written in red ink, with individual texts united by a common internal theme. The first 8 leaves contain poems, while leaves 8 through 13 are dedicated to the epic tale of Adil Sultan. The work begins with an interpretation of a dream seen by the Sultan's wife and concludes with a farewell song about the temptations of life faced by the Sultan, who is imprisoned behind bars. A substantial example of a blessing is provided in the section titled «Fatiha», written in red ink on leaves 14-18. Leaf 19 is left blank and is labelled on the reverse side as «Kyrgyz-Kazakh Poetry», containing poems based on everyday themes, aytys (poetic duels), poetic competitions, humorous refrains, and songs. The final two parts end with the phrase «tamam tamam» (finished, finished). During this period, similar manuscripts in Persian, such as «shigr digger» «shigr penjum» «shigr siyum» and «shigr chaharum» were common (Omirbaev, 2015).

Since the narratives contain precise dating, it can be asserted that they date back to the XVI century. It is reasonable to assume that stories, epic poems, and dastans that were orally transmitted in the XVI and XVII centuries were also disseminated in written form. The texts of all these narrative documents accurately reflect the thoughts and reflections of their time, preserving unique evidence of the era, and are of significant interest not only as literary works but also as valuable historical sources.

**Conclusions.** The study of historical documents and written artefacts from the rulers and representatives of the steppe nobility of medieval Kazakhstan and Central Asian states remains in its early stages in domestic historiography. Therefore, new sources discovered through searches in archives and manuscript repositories in neighbouring CIS countries and foreign archives and libraries are of great importance. These sources should be integrated into a unified corpus known as narrative documents.

In studying these documents, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary methods should be applied at the intersection of history and philology, Turkology and Oriental studies, and prosopography. These sources (historical poems, odes, dastans, etc.), viewed through the lens of historicism, can shed light on the spiritual life of society, public sentiment, and attitudes towards socio-political processes occurring within the state. Increasing the number of processed, analyzed, and systematized narrative sources will create a new historical context for the entire period of Kazakh state history. The most vivid evidence is the written narratives of the «Zar zaman» period, which, while being literary works, gave their name to a distinct historical period.

The concept of narrative documents should be understood in a multifaceted way: on the one hand, it refers to documents that grant rights and serve as evidence of such rights, business and administrative records, etc. On the other hand, it should also include all sources of the epistolary genre, such as historical-literary sources-letters, laudatory odes, epic tales, theological writings, chronicles, sagas, memoirs, pamphlets that provide information about specific events or processes. (Khvostova, 2018: 58). When selecting documents, it is important to consider their association with Kazakh rulers, their families, and members of the nomadic aristocracy. This aligns with the fact that medieval sources were addressed to representatives of the steppe nobility, who traditionally performed all communicative social functions.

Initially, the term «narrative sources» can be applied to this corpus of documents, with the aim of identifying the full range of documents from steppe rulers and subsequently systematizing them into types and subtypes. The identification of a new collection of source documents can both reveal the characteristics and nature of administrative practices during the medieval period and complement the historical picture of the relationships between cities and rulers of the medieval period. As the scope of written artefacts introduced into scholarship expands, the specificity of individual source categories necessitates special methodologies and



the application of interdisciplinary methods. Studying these written sources from the perspective of new historical thinking will illuminate previously known facts in a new light, reveal new aspects, and uncover new phenomena and events. Identifying the interaction of written and cultural traditions can significantly expand our understanding of historical events in medieval Kazakhstan and neighbouring Central Asian countries.

#### Источники

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 РГАДА — Российский государственный архив древних актов  
 РГИА — Российский государственный исторический архив

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 CWMH ILI AS RT — Archive of the Center for Written and Musical Heritage of the G. Ibragimov Institute of Language and Art of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tatarstan - Miraskhane  
 NC — National Center of Manuscripts and Rare Books of the Committee of Archives, Documentation and Book Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan  
 RSAAA — Russian State Archive of Ancient Acts  
 RSHA — Russian State Historical Archive

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