

Formulaic Diction in Kazakh Epic Poetry

Karl Reichl

A recent annotated bibliography on oral-formulaic theory and research by J. M. Foley lists “more than 1800 books and articles from more than ninety language areas” (1985:4). Most of these are studies conducted within the framework of the theory developed by Milman Parry and Albert B. Lord. The numerous applications of Parry and Lord’s theory to the Homeric poems and to medieval poetry testify to the importance of the study of oral poetry for a better understanding of some of the greatest epics of world literature. On the basis of South Slavic epic poetry as studied by Parry and Lord, formulaic diction has been taken as the most salient characteristic of the oral epic, as the very sign of a poem’s oral nature. It has therefore been argued, when applying the oral-formulaic theory to medieval texts, that a certain amount of “formulaic density” in a particular text implies its origins as an oral poem. Typical examples of this line of argumentation are the studies on *Beowulf* by F. P. Magoun, Jr. (1953), on the *Chanson de Roland* by J. J. Duggan (1973) and on the *Nibelungenlied* by F. H. Bäuml and D. J. Ward (1967; cp. Bäuml 1986). In these studies the Serbo-Croatian epic tradition has been taken as the paradigm of oral epic poetry. Rigorous analyses of the formulaic nature of other oral traditions are rare, a fact which explains, at least in part, why medievalists and classicists are in general little aware of epic traditions other than that of the South Slavs.

This paper is an attempt to extend formulaic analysis to the Turkic epics of Central Asia.¹ Owing to social and cultural conservatism, the traditional art of oral poetry is still cultivated by a number of Turkic peoples in the present time, in particular by those Turkic tribes who have preserved their nomadic or semi-nomadic way of life until now or at least until recently. Turkic oral narrative poetry is as manifold and diverse as the peoples composing the Turkic world, ranging from the Yakuts of Northern Siberia, via the shamanistic Turks of the Altay and the Lamaistic Tuvinians of the Tannu mountain ridge the nomadic or originally nomadic

¹ This paper was originally presented at the Second European Seminar on Central Asian Studies, held at the University of London (SOAS), 7-10 April 1987.

Turks who live in the vast area from the Tianshan and Pamir mountains to the Caspian Sea (Kirghiz, Kazakh, Karakalpak, Turcoman), the sedentary Turks of Transoxania and the Tarim Basin (Uzbeks, Uyghurs), the Turks of the South-Russian steppes and the Caucasus (Tatar, Bashkir, Nogay, Karatchay, and Balkar), to the Turks of Transcaucasia, Anatolia, and the Balkans (Azerbaijanians, Turks of Turkey). Despite some basic similarities among these traditions, resulting from their common linguistic background and cultural heritage, each people has developed its own mode of epic poetry. In the present paper the emphasis is on Kazakh narrative poetry, an oral tradition which recommends itself both by its wealth and its vigor.

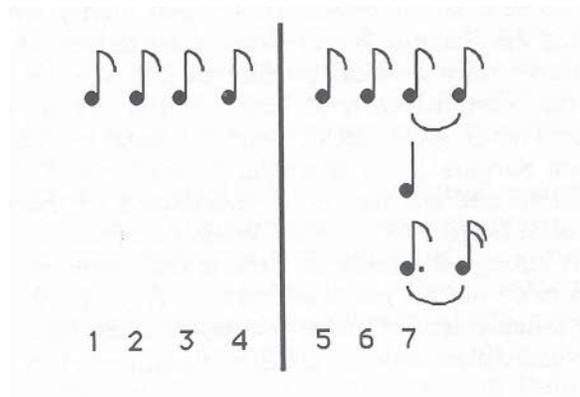
The richness and variety of Turkic oral poetry was first revealed to the European reader by Wilhelm Radloff's monumental *Proben der Volkslitteratur der türkischen Stämme Süd-Sibiriens*, of which the first volume appeared in 1866. In his introduction to the volume on Kirghiz epic poetry, the great Russian Turcologist stressed the importance of Turkic epic poetry for comparative purposes, in particular for a solution of the "Homeric problem" (Radloff 1866-1904:V, xx-xxii). Although Radloff's material was used in H. M. and N. K. Chadwick's *Growth of Literature* (1932-40; cf. Chadwick and Zhirmunsky 1969) as well as in M. Bowra's study of the heroic epic (1952) and although there are occasional references to his texts in Western scholarship—as when Andreas Heusler emphatically denies the possibility of equating the art of the Old Germanic singer with that of the Kirghiz bard (Heusler 1943:174), firsthand knowledge of Turkic epic poetry has until fairly recently been limited among comparatists to those working in the Soviet Union.

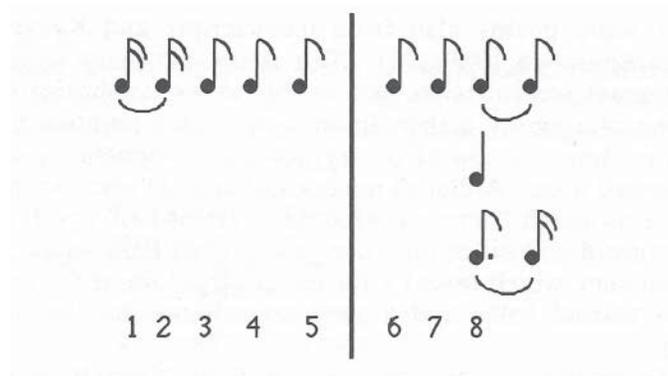
The towering figure among the latter is V. M. Zhirmunsky, a Germanist who became familiar with Turkic oral poetry while living in Uzbekistan during the Second World War. Zhirmunsky was a prolific writer; unfortunately only a small portion of his work is available in translation.² In the West, the study of Turkic oral poetry has on the whole been restricted to Turcological circles, with the notable exception of the important work on Kirghiz and Yakut epic poetry by A. T. Hatto (see in particular his edition and translation of one branch of the *Manas*-cycle, 1977, and, *inter alia*, Hatto 1980; 1985). When Parry decided to tackle the Homeric problem through the study of a living oral tradition, fieldwork in Central Asia was ruled out for political reasons. A. B. Lord, who has like Parry always been interested in Turkic oral poetry, has, however, recently compared the Central Asian to the South Slavic tradition (1987).

² See in particular Zhirmunsky 1961, 1985, and his survey of epic songs and singers in the re-issue of the part devoted to the Turkic epic in Chadwick and Zhirmunsky 1969:271-348. Zhirmunsky's writings on Turkic epic poetry are collected in Zhirmunsky 1974. Together with H. Zarifov (1947) he has written the authoritative account of Uzbek oral epic poetry.

Oral poetry in general is still flourishing among the Kazakhs, both of the Soviet Union and of the Xinjiang Autonomous Region in China. The Kazakhs are particularly fond of the *aytis*, poetical contests somewhat in the manner of the medieval *tenzone* (see Smirnova 1968:324ff.). As to the cultivation of epic poetry, it is still singularly powerful in China, where the collection and publication of epic texts has only recently begun. The Kazakh oral singer is called either *aqin*, the general term in Kazakh for a poet (derived from Persian *āxūn*, “preacher; orator; tutor”) or *žirši* or *žiraw*, words derived from *žir* (Old Turkic *yir*, “song, epic song”). The term *žir* is also used for the seven-syllable line typical of the Kazakh heroic epic. This verse-line goes back to the eleventh century at least; it is found in the specimens of oral epic poetry recorded by Mahmud of Kashgar (see Brockelmann 1923-24) and is part of the common Turkic heritage of Kazakh oral poetry. The singer performs the epic by singing the verses, usually to the accompaniment of the *dombira*, a two-stringed lute-type instrument, sometimes also to the accompaniment of the *qobiz*, a horsehair-stringed fiddle related to the Mongolian *xūr* and, distantly, to the South Slavic *gusle*.

The verse-lines are linked by rhyme or assonance, forming mono-rhyme groups of irregular length in the manner of the Old French *laisse*. Instead of seven syllables, there might be eight syllables to a line. In either case the line divides musically into two halves of equal length (time), irrespective of the number of syllables in each half. Thus the beginning of *Qiz Žibek*, for instance, as performed by Raxmet Mazxodžaev shows the following metric-rhythmic patterns for seven-syllable and eight-syllable verse-lines (Auezov and Smirnova 1963:331-32):





Apart from the *žir*, an 11-syllable line also occurs, often grouped into four-line stanzas with the predominant rhyme-scheme *a-a-b-a* (*öleñ*). The musical style of these two verse-forms differs: the melody of the shorter verse is simpler, every line built basically on the same melodic formula, while the melody of the longer verse is more elaborate, with a tendency to form larger melodic patterns.³ The verse is sometimes interrupted by prose-portions, which are then declaimed in a recitative style. This *chante-fable*-like form of narrative is widespread among the Turkic peoples and certainly goes back to medieval times; the chronological relationship between pure verse epics and “prosimetric” epics is a moot point (Reichl 1985b:32-37).

Seven-syllable verse-lines and *laisse*-type stanzas are characteristic of the heroic epic (*batırlıq žiri*), while 11-syllable lines and four-line stanzas are typical of the love epic, lyrical narratives such as *Qız Žibek* or *Qozi Körpeš and Bayan Suluw*. Although the division into heroic and love epics can be defended on grounds of style and content, there is no hard and fast dividing line between these two types. Eleven-syllable lines, for instance, are quite common in the heroic epic, and the seven-syllable line is also found in the love epic, as is shown by the illustration from *Qız Žibek* above. In Xinjiang the term for epic poems with an Oriental setting is *qissa*, from Arabic *qiṣṣa*, “story, tale.” This word is also used for the chapbook-like editions of Kazakh epic poems which came out in Kazan at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. These popular editions, usually based on oral performances, sometimes also on manuscripts, exerted an enormous influence on the transmission and cultivation of epic poetry. For many singers performing in this century the situation was and is similar to that of Raxmet Mazxodžaeu (born in 1881), who learned some of the epics of his repertoire orally from other

³ On the musical aspect of Kazakh epic poetry see Beliaev 1975:78-83; see also the transcriptions in Erzakovič et al. 1982:123-52. On the performance of epic poetry among the closely related Karakalpaks see Reichl 1985a.

singers, but some poems also from manuscripts and Kazan editions (Auezov and Smirnova 1959:393). This is not the place to go into the details of textual transmission, but it should be emphasized that this contamination of a purely oral tradition by a written tradition has neither stifled the oral transmission of poetry nor has it necessarily resulted in fixed, memorized texts. Although memorization is involved in this kind of tradition and although there are recorded versions of epics which are clearly memorized and differ only marginally from their source, there are also other versions which reveal a far greater freedom of the singer from his ultimate textual basis and a stronger reliance on the art of oral composition.

The following analysis focuses on three Kazakh heroic epics, *Qambar Batır* ("The Hero Qambar"), *Qoblandı Batır* ("The Hero Qoblandı") and *Alpamıs Batır* ("The Hero Alpamıs").⁴ The basic story-pattern of these epics consists of the winning of a bride and the heroic fight against the enemy, combined, in the case of *Qoblandı* and *Alpamıs*, with a return story. In *Qambar* it is narrated that the Nogay bay Äzimbay has a beautiful daughter, called Nazım. She falls in love with Qambar, who, because of his poverty, has not been invited to woo her. When, however, the khan of the Kalmucks, Qaraman, forces Äzimbay to give him his daughter, Qambar is persuaded to come to Nazım's rescue. He fights against the Kalmucks, kills their khan and marries Nazım. These are in outline the contents of the version of *Qambar* edited by A. A. Divaev in 1922, a version he took down from an unnamed singer, possibly Mayköt Sandıbaev (see Auezov and Smirnova 1959:256), probably around 1920. His text has been edited several times; the authoritative edition, comprising 1851 lines (mostly of seven syllables), is that by M. O. Auezov and N. S. Smirnova (1959).

Based on this version, three further texts (one fragmentary) have been recorded from Kazakh singers; they are preserved in the Kazakh Academy of Sciences in Alma-Ata (see Auezov and Smirnova 1959:370). Very similar in content, but clearly a version on its own, is a *qıssa* edited in Kazan. There are various differences between Divaev's version and the *qıssa* version, concerning the name-form of the protagonists (Qaraman is called Maxtımıxan, for instance), the order of events (Kelmembet, the Kalmuck envoy, is sent twice instead of once to ask for Nazım's hand), and the elaboration of individual scenes. The Kazan *qıssa* is extant in various redactions, an edition of 1888 and one of 1903, as well as in manuscript form (see Auezov and Smirnova 1959:345-46). Two further texts are ultimately based on the 1903 edition, one recorded in the twenties from the singer Barmaq Muqambaev and the other recorded in 1958 from the singer

⁴ On Kazakh epic poetry see Orlov 1945; Winner 1958:54-85; Smirnova 1968:236-96; Ğabdullin and Sıdıqov 1972. On Turkic epic poetry in general see also Boratav 1965; Başgöz 1978.

Raxmet Mazxodžaev.

In order to illustrate the types of variation encountered in these poems, I shall quote Nazim's invitation to Qambar to rest in her *yurt* ("felt-tent") when they meet for the first time. These are her words in the 1903 *qissa* (Auezov and Smirnova 1959:15):

250 "Qara qasqa attı Qambar-ay,
qara atında žal bar-ay,
Bizdiñ üyge tüse ket,
šay-samawır iše ket.
Qanša meyman rüsse de,
kütkendey bizdiñ äl bar-ay."

250 "Qambar on the black horse with the white mark,
your black horse has a [mighty] mane.
Come and sit down in our yurt,
come and drink tea from the samovar!
However many guests sit down,
we have the means to serve them."

Mazxodžaev's text is identical with the text quoted above, apart from one minor change: instead of *šay-samawır* ("tea from the samovar") in line 251 he has *šay-šekerdi* ("tea with sugar"; Auezov and Smirnova 1959:408). His text is not always as close to the 1903 *qissa* as in the extract given here, but it follows the *qissa* fairly faithfully, as is also shown by the length of his text, 1085 lines, corresponding relatively closely to the length of the *qissa* (1030 lines, with some additional short prose passages).

Muqambaev's text, which comprises 2000 lines (with some additional short prose passages), is much freer. Here are Nazim's words in his poem (Auezov and Smirnova 1959:88):

410 "Qara qasqa attı Qambar-ay,
qara atında žal bar-ay,
bizdiñ üyge tüse ket,
köbikti sawmal iše ket,
qaynap turğan šay bar-ay!
Batır sağan saқтаған
žarılмаған may bar-ay!
Qambar batır kele ket,
kelip meni köre ket,
415 aq tösimniñ üstinde
bir kisilik žay bar-ay!
Zamandas Qambar batısın,
qay žaqqa bara žatiriñ?
Köñlim qoši, šatimsin!"

"Qambar on the black horse with the white mark,
your black horse has a [mighty] mane.
Come and sit down in our yurt,
come and drink foamv fresh *kumiss* (fermented mare's milk).

- 410 there is [also] boiling tea!
 Hero, for you we have kept in store
 butter which has not yet been cut!
 Qambar-batır, come,
 come and see me,
 415 there is on my white breast
 place for [only] one man!
 We are of the same age, Qambar-batır.
 Where are you riding?
 My heart's delight, you are my joy!"

Apart from the first three lines, this passage is a free elaboration of the *qissa*-version. It is to be noted, however, that one line of Muqambaev's text is also found in Divaev's text (415), a fact which suggests that Muqambaev's elaboration is not completely free, but at least in part traditional.

Here is Divaev's text (Auezov and Smirnova 1959:48):

- “Qayrılmay qayda barasın,
 xan süyekti Qambar-aw!?”
 Qabağı qatıp şarşaptı,
 535 qara atıñniñ moynında
 ökpe-bawır žal bar-aw.
 Arizima meniñ qulaq sal,
 aqılñ bolsa, añğar-aw.
 Aq tösimniñ üstinde
 540 qol tiymegen mal bar-aw.
 Söldeseñ suwsın işseyşi,
 bizdiñ üyge tússeyşi,
 žatıp, turıp ketuwge,
 kütkendey bizde žay bar-aw!
 545 Moynıñdı beri bursayşı
 quşaqtasıp ekewmiz
 köriselik tursayşı
 artıñda üñgir žar bar-aw!”
- “Where are you riding without turning aside,
 Qambar of noble birth?
 With heavy eyelids he has become tired;
 535 your black horse has courage,
 a [mighty] mane on his neck. Listen to my wish,
 if you are wise, understand me!
 There is on my white breast
 540 a [precious] good, touched by no hand.
 If you are thirsty, drink water,
 come and sit down in our yurt!
 We have the means to serve him
 who comes to lie down and sit down!
 545 Turn your head this way,
 let us embrace
 and greet one another!
 Behind you there is a deep gorge!”

There are no major variants of this version. A text recorded from the singer Abulxayir Danekerov in 1954 leaves out lines 534 and 537 to 544; line 542 is, however, added to line 545, which has a slightly altered form (*Moyniñdi beri bura ket, / bizdiñ üyge tüse ket*; see Auezov and Smirnova 1959:377). On a recently issued record of *Qambar Batır* (Melodija S3013449-52) by the singer Žumabay Medetbaev this passage is identical to Divaev's text. This singer has apparently memorized the printed edition, from which he hardly ever deviates. When comparing Divaev's text with the *qıssa* version, it is clear that despite obvious differences (the scene itself is constructed differently), there are also close verbal resemblances, such as in lines 535-36 (*Qara atıñıñ . . . žal bar-aw*), 542 (*bizdiñ üyge tüssejši*), and 544 (*kütkendey bizde žay bar-aw*). From this it follows—and a more careful analysis of the recorded texts would, I believe, bear this out—that both Divaev's version and the *qıssa* version derive ultimately from a common source, which has, however, in the course of oral transmission undergone considerable changes.

The date of this “Ur-*Qambar*” is uncertain. It must have been composed before the middle of the nineteenth century, because at that time *Qambar* was already a well-known figure. The fundamental antagonism in *Qambar*, as in the Kazakh heroic epics in general, is that between the Kazakhs and the Kalmucks. This enmity has its historical basis in the wars between the Kazakhs and various West Mongolian tribes (Kalmuck, Oirat) in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (see Hambly 1966:155-59). A date before the eighteenth or even seventeenth century seems unlikely, although N. S. Smirnova suggests that the characterization of the Nogay as the Uzbek of the twelve tribes in *Qambar* points back to the time of the Nogay horde and the Uzbek khanate of the fifteenth century (Auezov and Smirnova 1959:257). More research is needed before the problem of dates can be solved.⁵

By comparison the epic *Qoblandi Batır* is plot-wise more involved and textually more diverse. According to N. V. Kidajš-Pokrovskaja and O. A. Nurmagambetova, 26 transcriptions of the epic have been preserved, of which they discuss 18 *in extenso* under the heading of two basic versions (1975:9-16, 385-416). It emerges from their discussion that the transmission of *Qoblandi* has in most cases been predominantly, if not purely, oral. The fullest recorded text of *Qoblandi* comes from Šapay Kalmaganbetov (born in 1890), who wrote the poem down himself and presented his transcription to the Kazakh Academy of Sciences in 1939. His text comprises 6490 lines (of seven syllables), with some short prose

⁵ For a detailed analysis of historical sources in relationship to Kazakh epic poetry on the “Nogay heroes,” see Zhirmunsky's “Epičeskie skazanija o nogajskix bogatirjax v svete istoričeskix istočnikov” (1974:387-516).

passages (edited and translated in Kidajš-Pokrovskaja and Nurmagambetova 1975).

The first part of the epic (in Kalmaganbetov's version) tells of the Qipšaq (Qaraqipšaq) hero Qoblandi (or Qoblan) and his winning of a bride, the beautiful Qurtqa, daughter of the Qizilbas khan Köktim-Aymaq. The main part of the epic is taken up by Qoblandi's fights against the Qizilbas and the Kalmucks. After having defeated the Qizilbas under Qazan, Qoblandi and his friend Qaraman decide to march against Khan Köbikti and to steal his horses. The khan, however, is warned by his favorite horse and succeeds in overcoming the Qipšaq during the time Qoblandi is asleep. Qoblandi and Qaraman are put into prison, but Köbikti's daughter Qarliga falls in love with Qoblandi and frees the prisoners. On their way back Qoblandi has a dream-vision, informing him that the Kalmuck Alšağir has in his absence subjugated his people and that his parents and his sister consequently live in great distress. When Qoblandi and Qaraman arrive at the captured city, Qurtqa hears Qoblandi's horse neigh and comes out to meet her husband. In the ensuing battle the Qipšaq defeat the Kalmucks and Alšağir is killed by Qoblandi in a fierce single combat. The valiant Qarliga, who had followed Qoblandi, kills her own brother Biršimbay because he had been in league with Alšağir. Qoblandi is happily reunited with his family, while Qarliga lives in seclusion, longing for Qoblandi, who even refuses her hospitality when he passes by her yurt on the way to Qaraman's wedding with Alšağir's two sisters. The last part of the epic brings the *dénouement* of Qarliga's love story. After a new attack on the Qipšaq, this time by Šošay, Köbikti's nephew, the old heroes with Qoblandi at their head are once again united in war, their number now increased by Qoblandi's six-year-old son Bökenbay. Qarliga joins the fighting and wounds Qoblandi severely, thus taking revenge for his slighting her. Bökenbay forces Qarliga to come to his father's sickbed, where a reconciliation is brought about, not least through the mediation of Qoblandi's wife Qurtqa. The epic ends with Qoblandi's marriage to Qarliga.

In order to carry out the following formulaic analyses, Kalmaganbetov's text has been concorded, together with the text of *Qambar* in Divaev's version. For comparative purposes a short passage from a third major Kazakh heroic epic, *Alpamiš*, has been included. The various versions of the Alpamiš/Alpamiš story have been extensively studied by Zhirmunsky (1974: 117-348). The Kazakh poems belong together with the Uzbek and Karakalpak *dāstāns* (epic poems) to the so-called Qonğirat version of the Alpamiš story. As in the Uzbek *Alpamiš*, there are two brothers, Bayböri and Sarıbay, who have a quarrel, leading to Sarıbay's migration to the land of the Kalmucks. Here his daughter Gülbaršin is sought after by the khan. Alpamiš, Bayböri's son, comes to

her rescue, fights against the Kalmucks, and wins her hand. In the second part of the epic, Alpamīs becomes, through the machinations of a witch, a captive of the Kalmuck khan Tayšiq. With the help of Qaraköz, the khan's daughter, Alpamīs regains his freedom and defeats the Kalmucks. He returns home, just in time before Gülbaršin is married to Ultan. As in the Uzbek versions, Alpamīs takes part in the wedding festivities in disguise, but is recognized by his mother and his wife and reveals his identity at the bow-shooting contest. Zhirmunsky mentions ten Kazakh poems; the passage analyzed below is taken from Mayköt Sandıbaev's and Sultanqul Aqqožaev's *Alpamīs*, which comprises 4310 lines (Auezov and Smirnova 1961:7-105).

Kazakh epic poems are interspersed with short passages from one to several lines which contain a nature image or express in proverb-like fashion some general truth. An instance of this feature is found in the following extract from *Qoblandi*, which describes the approach of the Qizilbas khan with his warriors to fight with Qoblandi and his men (Kidajš-Pokrovskaja, Nurmagambetova 1975:115):

2085 Köp äskerdi körgecin,
 žaw ekenin bilgesin,
 šähär žurti žiynalıp,
 Qazan xani bas bolıp,
 urısuwğa sayalrıp,
 žatır eken žiynalıp,
 Arqada bar bōriköz,
 žaqşıda ğoy täwir söz,
 nege umıtsın körgecin köz?
 2090 Arıstan tuwğan Qoblandi
 köp äskerge keldi kez.
 Arıstan tuwğan Qoblandi
 köp äskerge kelgende
 2095 qırıq mıñ attı qızılbas
 qolına žasıl tuw alıp,
 arıstan tuwğan Qoblandi
 aq bilegin sıbanıp,
 köñili tasıp keledi
 žawdı körıp quwanıp.

2085 Seeing the great host
 and knowing that they were enemies,
 the town-people gathered,
 with Qazan-khan at their head
 they got ready for the fighting,
 they gathered together.
 In the steppe the *bōriköz* ("wolfs eye," a medicinal herb) grows,
 in a good man speech is found;
 why should the eye which has seen forget?
 2090 Qoblandi, born as a lion,
 went to meet the great host.
 When Qoblandi, born as a lion,

went to meet the great host,
 the forty thousand Qizilbas on their horses
 2095 had the green flag in their hands,
 Qoblandi, born as a lion,
 bared his white forearms,
 his heart overflowed,
 he was overjoyed when he saw the enemy.

The lines in question are 2087-89 (*Arqada . . . köz?*); the three lines are found again as 5697-99, the first and the second line as 2154-55, and the first and the third line as 5317-18. Furthermore, a four-line passage ending with “the *böriköz* of the steppe” (*arqanıñ böriközine*) is found seven times in *Qoblandi*. There are similar gnomic or “imagistic” lines in the epic punctuating the text at irregular intervals (see Kidajš-Pokrovskaja and Nurmagambetova 1975:52ff.).

Another characteristic of the poetic diction of Kazakh epic poetry, and indeed of Turkic epic poetry in general, is the comparison of the hero to a wild animal, most typically the lion, the tiger, the wolf, or the falcon. Lines 2090, 2092, and 2096 (“Qoblandi, born as a lion”) are a case in point. These lines are also formulaic. A formula has been defined by Parry as “a group of words which is regularly employed under the same metrical conditions to express a given essential idea” (1971:272). As the verse-lines of Kazakh epic poetry (and Turkic epic poetry in general) form comparatively tightly knit syntactical units, it seems reasonable to stipulate that, at least in the case of the shorter verse-line, a formula should be metrically defined as a whole verse-line. If parts of a formula vary beyond the limits of inflectional change or other forms of minor variation, it is customary to group these formulas together into a formulaic system. According to Parry a formulaic system is “a group of phrases which have the same metrical value and which are enough alike in thought and words to leave no doubt that the poet who used them knew them not only as single formulas, but also as formulas of a certain type” (275).

In our example the line *Arıstan tuwǵan Qoblandi* is a formula, in which Qoblandi can be substituted by other names or expressions referring to the hero, thus forming the following formulaic system:

Arıstan tuwǵan	{	<table style="border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 5px;">{</td> <td style="padding: 0 5px;">Qoblandi</td> <td style="padding: 0 5px;">}</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 5px;">{</td> <td style="padding: 0 5px;">Qoblan</td> <td style="padding: 0 5px;">}</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 5px;">{</td> <td style="padding: 0 5px;">Bökenbay</td> <td style="padding: 0 5px;">}</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 5px;">{</td> <td style="padding: 0 5px;">Qambar bek</td> <td style="padding: 0 5px;">}</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 5px;">{</td> <td style="padding: 0 5px;">batirdi</td> <td style="padding: 0 5px;">}</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 5px;">{</td> <td style="padding: 0 5px;">batiriñ</td> <td style="padding: 0 5px;">}</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 5px;">{</td> <td style="padding: 0 5px;">qurdas žan</td> <td style="padding: 0 5px;">}</td> </tr> </table>	{	Qoblandi	}	{	Qoblan	}	{	Bökenbay	}	{	Qambar bek	}	{	batirdi	}	{	batiriñ	}	{	qurdas žan	}	}	2090, 2092, 2096, 2311, 3403, 4782, 5603, 47 5772 <i>Qamb.</i> 1744 4178 (“hero”) 5556 836 (“dear companion”)
{	Qoblandi	}																							
{	Qoblan	}																							
{	Bökenbay	}																							
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Outside the system, but related to the concept of the hero as a lion and its formulaic expression, are the lines:

Aristan tuwǵan eken dep	5411 (“the one born as a lion said”)
Aristan Qoblan batırǵa	5370 (“to the hero, the lion Qoblan”)

A similar formula, comparing the hero to the wolf, is:

Qoblandıday	{ böriniñ börüñiz	} 907, 942 (“the wolf Qoblandı”) 1182
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Compare also:

Qoblandıday žolbarısın	6266 (“the tiger Qoblandı”)
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Another formula in the extract given above is line 2094, *qiriq miñ atti qızılbas* (lit. “the forty-thousand horse-having Qızılbas”), occurring six times in *Qoblandı* (2094, 2291, 2296, 2313, 2409, 2443). As a formulaic system its structure is: qualifying expression + *atti* (“horse-having”) + name of the rider(s). Compare:

Tarlan	atti Köbikti	2640 (“Köbikti on his horse Tarlan”)
Taybuwrıl	atti Qoblandı	3729 (“Qoblandı on his horse Taybuwrıl”)
Qara qasqa	atti Qambar bek	<i>Qamb.</i> 146 (“Qambar on his black horse with the mark”)
žalǵız	atti { kedeyge keydeydiñ	} <i>Qamb.</i> 624, 705, 1523 (“a poor man, having only one horse”)

The following line, *qolına žasil tuw alıp* (2095), is also formulaic. Here the pattern is: *qolına* (“in the hand”) + “battle object” + *alıp* (or another form of the verb *al-*, “take”). Compare:

qolına	{ žasil tuw { bir-bir oqtı bir-bir oq nayza ötkir kezdis	} al- 2095 (“green flag”) 2305 (“arrow”) 5601 5478 (“spear”) <i>Qamb.</i> 813 (“sharp knife”)
qılışın	alıp qolına	<i>Qamb.</i> 516 (“his sword”)

In 2098 we have an idiomatic phrase which generates formulaic lines (*köñili tas-*):

köñili tasıp	keledi	2098 (“his heart overflowed with joy”)
köñili tasıp	šat bolıp	4496, 5122
köñili bir tasıp	ösipti	6190

Compare in *Qambar* (in passages with verse-lines of 11/12 syllables):

Qaraman qayrattandı	köñili tasıp	1252 (“Qaraman gathered strength, his heart overflowing”)
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overlapping lexical material) cannot always be drawn easily.

Similar arguments apply to other lines of the quoted passage. *Keldi kez* (“he/ they encountered/came to”) in 2091 (and similarly *kelgende* in 2093) is constructed with the dative, giving the pattern x x x -ge *keldi kez* (*kelgende*), a pattern to which other lines conform as well:

[Qoblandi-ğa šanšisuw-ğa]	keldi kez	2158 (“he came to Qoblandi”) 5702 (“they came to the fighting”)
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Compare also:

šatırım-a	keldi kez	6369 (“you came to my tent”)
Qoblandi, Qurtqa	keldi kez	5322 (“Qoblandi and Qurtqa came”) (nominative!)

The dative is also required by *saylan-* (“to prepare oneself for something”) in 2085. Compare:

[arttırıwğa]	saylandi	257 (“he prepared for the loading”)
[oyatpaqqa]		2698 (“ . . . to wake up”)

Compare also the slightly different constructions:

urısqa šiğip	saylandi	<i>Qamb.</i> 1674 (“he prepared to go to battle”)
urısqa šiqtı	žağdaylap	4935 (“awaiting the right moment to go to battle”)
Saymandarın	saylanip	<i>Alpamis</i> 725 (“preparing his gear”)

The phrase *bas bolip* in 2084 is also dependent on syntax, at least to a certain degree, as it implies a subject and an object (“someone being [at] the head of somebody”):

Qazan xanı	bas bolip	2084, 2152 (“Qazan khan being at the head”)
Toqtar	bas bop köp qıpšaq	5146 (“Toqtar being at the head of the many Qipsaq”)
qiriq žigitke	bas bolip	<i>Qamb.</i> 1040 (“being at the head of forty warriors”)

The remaining lines of the illustrative passage are not formulaic, although similar lines can be found in the texts and a larger reference corpus might reveal closer parallels. For lines 2083 and 2086 compare:

birte-birte	žynaldi	2309 (“they gathered one by one”)
adamniñ bärin	žynadi	<i>Qamb.</i> 676 (“he gathered all the men”)

For line 2099 compare:

quldar körip	quwandı	493 (“seeing the slaves he rejoiced”)
žurtın žiyip	quwanıp	586 (“gathering his people he rejoiced”)
žawdı körip	qızdı arqam	2355 (“seeing the enemy, I became angry”)

Marking the passage along the lines of oral-formulaic analysis (with double lines for cliches, single lines for clearly established formulas, and dotted lines for syntactically or metrically conditioned formulas), we get the following picture:

	<u>Köp äskerdi körgesin,</u>
	<u>žaw ekenin bilgesin,</u>
	šähär žurtı žiynalıp,
2085	<u>Qazan xanı bas bolıp,</u>
	<u>urısuwğa saylanıp,</u>
	žatır eken žiynalıp,
	<u>Arqada bar bōriköz,</u>
	<u>zagsıda goy täwır söz,</u>
	<u>nege umıtsın körgen köz?</u>
2090	<u>Arıstan tuwğan Qoblandı,</u>
	<u>köp äskerge keldi kez.</u>
	<u>Arıstan tuwğan Qoblandı,</u>
	<u>köp äskerge kelgende</u>
	<u>qırıq miñ attı qızılbas</u>
2095	<u>qolına žasıl tuw alıp,</u>
	<u>arıstan tuwğan Qoblandı</u>
	<u>aq bilegin sıbanıp,</u>
	<u>könili tasıp keledi</u>
	žawdı körip quwanıp.

This means that out of 19 lines 16, or 84%, are formulaic.

Although the chosen passage is typical of the heroic epic in that it describes the beginning of a battle, it is not a type-scene in the narrow sense of the term, that is, a scene with a definite succession of motifs and formulaic expressions (see Lord 1960:68-98). In Kazakh, as well as in other Turkic traditions, such scenes or themes are for instance the description of the hero and his horse (*ta'rif*), the hero's (or a messenger's) journey on horseback through the desert, or the hero's ride to meet the enemy. For the latter I will give an example from *Qambar*, describing the approach of the hero on his horse to fight with the Kalmuck khan (from Divaev's text, Auezov and Smirnova 1959:71):

1565	Bastırıp qattı qadamın
	qara qasqa tulpardı
	qaharlanıp uradı;
	qustay uşıp ašuwmen
	tezde žetip baradı.
1570	Äzimbayğa qayrılmay,
	šatırına patšanıñ
	atınıñ moynın buradı.

- 1575 Üzengisin širenip,
 aq nayzasin süyenip,
 tumsigın tügip tulpardıñ
 esiginde turadı.
- 1565 Making his horse step out,
 he beat the black *tulpar* (winged horse) with the mark,
 filled with wrath;
 flying in his wrath like a bird,
 he quickly reached his goal.
- 1570 Without turning to Äzimbay,
 he directed his horse
 to the padishah's tent.
 Standing on his stirrups,
 leaning on his white spear,
- 1575 pressing his *tulpar*'s head forward,
 he came to a halt at his entrance.

In this passage we find three types of formulaic lines. Lines 1566 and 1572 are formulas belonging to formulaic systems independent of particular typescenes. The evidence for these lines from *Qambar* and *Qoblandi* is the following:

Qara qasqa	{	tulpar	-di -i -dıñ -ğa -da	}	<i>Qamb.</i> 380, 420, 503, 527, 1394, 1566, 1609, <i>Qobl.</i> 2217, 4822 ("the black <i>tulpar</i> with the mark")
Qara qasqa	{	at	-ti -qa	} ^{xxx}	<i>Qamb.</i> 146, 196, 238 ("the black horse with the mark")
atiniñ moynın	{	bur	-adı -istı	}	<i>Qamb.</i> 913, 1572 ("he turned the neck of his horse")
atiniñ basin burmadıñ					<i>Qobl.</i> 5059 ("you didn't turn the head of your horse")

Line 1569 can be classified as a metrically/syntactically conditioned formula, conforming to the pattern:

x x (x) žetip	{	baradı keledi	}	("he/they went/came reaching. . .")
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Compare:

tezde	žetip baradı	<i>Qamb.</i> 1569 ("got there quickly")
šähärge	žetip baradı	<i>Qobl.</i> 3773, 5069, 5669 ("reached the town etc.")
Bayğa	žetip keledi	<i>Qobl.</i> 374, 2018, 3770, 5797, 5807 ("reached the race etc.")

There are finally four lines which are both formulaic and characteristic of the particular theme of the hero's ride (1567-68, 1573-74). For lines 1567-68 compare (*Qamb.* 230-31):

Ašuwmen ayamay
tulparğa qamšī uradī

Angrily, without pity,
he beat the tulpar with the whip.

Swinging the whip is a common motif of the hero's ride in Uzbek epic poetry as well; thus we find for instance in Fāzil Yoldaš-oġlī's version of *Alpāmiš* the following lines (Ālimdžān et al. 1971:63, 83):

bedāw ātga	gamčī čatdī	("he gave the courser the whip")
čuw-ha, dedi,	qamčī tārtđī	("he said: 'Hoy!' and swung the whip")
ču-ha, dedi,	qamčī čātdī	("he said: 'Hoy!' and swung the whip")

or in Ergaš Džumanbulbul-oġlī's version of *Rawšan* (Zarif 1971:77, 78; Reichl 1985b:71):

šip-šip qamčī tārtđī	("he swung the whip whistling")
qamčī berip ču dedi	("he gave the whip and said: 'Hoy!'")

For lines 1573-74 compare:

at ūstinen	širenip	<i>Qobl.</i> 174 ("on his horse with stretched-out legs")
Nayzasīna	sūyenip	<i>Qobl.</i> 6239 ("leaning on his spear")

In this connection the variant *Aq nayzasī sartildap* (*Qamb.* 1007, "his white spear clattering") is interesting, since the clanging of the hero's weapons and armor and of his horse's headgear, stirrups, and trappings is again a common motif of Uzbek epic poetry. This motif is, however, also found in *Qambar* (205-8), with wording practically identical to that of the Uzbek *dāstāns* (e.g. in *Alpāmiš*; Ālimdžān et al. 1971 :82-83):

Quyınday šaņī burqīrap,
atqan oqtay zīrqīrap,
qīladī žaqīn alīstī.

Like a storm raising the dust,
racing along like a flying arrow,
he shortened the long distance.

As a last example I would like to quote a short passage from one of the Kazakh epics on Alpamiš/Alpāmiš (Auezov and Smirnova 1961:23):

725 Saymandarīn saylanip,

- altinnan kemer baylanip,
 abžilanday tolğanip,
 qızıl nayza qolğa alıp
 Šubarğa qarğıp minedi,
 730 Qudaydan medet tiledi
 qarğıp minip žas bala
 ašuwı kernep žönedi.
 Läšker tartıp keledi,
 awızdıqpen alısıp,
 735 ušqan quspen žarısıp,
 key žerde bala šoqıtıp,
 key žerde basin tögedi,
 Bir kün šapsa Šubar at
 ayliq žer alip beredi.
- 725 He prepared his gear,
 bound his belt round his waist,
 turned about like a water-snake,
 took his red spear into his hand,
 jumped onto Šubar,
 730 asked God for his help,
 the young man jumped up,
 rode along, filled with wrath.
 He went to war,
 pulling his reins tight,
 735 racing with the flying birds,
 where the young man was galloping,
 where he was heading for.
 When the horse Šubar had galloped for one day,
 he had covered the distance of a monthly journey.

There is no space here to go into a detailed discussion of every line of this passage. Briefly, we can note various motifs and their formulaic expression which have already been touched upon: the preparation of the hero (*saylanip*-formula, 725), his taking a spear (728—here a red one rather than a white one), his riding along filled with wrath (732), and the comparison of his ride to the flight of a bird (735). With reference to *Qambar* and *Qoblandi*, lines 725, 728, 730, 733, and 735 can be shown to be formulaic. Furthermore, there is in *Qoblandi* a formula with the two variants *Endi atına minedi* and *Endi minip atına* (“now he gets on his horse”), with which lines 729 and 731 might be compared. Lines lexically and semantically similar or identical to lines 732, 736, and 737 can also be found in *Qambar* and *Qoblandi*, and the putting on of a golden belt (726) or the swift progress of the horse (738-39) are common enough motifs also in Uzbek epic poetry (see Zhirmunsky and Zarifov 1947:366ff.). Finally, as the editors of *Alpamiš* point out (Auezov and Smirnova 1961:491), the last four lines of the passage quoted are a *cliché* in Kazakh epic poetry.

Summarizing the results of the foregoing analysis, it can be stated

that Kazakh epic poetry is indeed highly formulaic. This formulaic character of the Kazakh epic is, however, by no means uniform. Various types of formulaic lines can be distinguished: *cliché*-like “imagistic” or gnomic lines, epithet-centered formulas or formulaic systems (“the hero, born as a lion”), formulaic lines which are part of a type-scene (e.g. the clanging of weapons), or formulas that are generated by the syntactic structure of the Turkic languages. By the same token, the diction of Kazakh epic poetry, in all its traditionality, is by no means stereotyped or merely repetitive. The singer, in particular the good singer, is no manipulator of *clichés* and formulas, but a creative artist, a master and not a slave of his technique.

Universität Bonn

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