





# Titulature in the Text of the Epic “Manas” and “Babur’s Notes” as a Source of Information About the Social Institutions of the Central Asian Region

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## Abstract

The paper studies the titulature in the text of the epic “Manas” and “Babur-name,” written by Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur, an outstanding statesman and a remarkable poet. According to the totality of information and their reliability, “Manas” and “Baburnama” are considered the most important and most valuable historical works, which have no equal among similar works written in the Middle Ages in Central Asia, Iran, Afghanistan, and India. The interest in this work is confirmed by the fact that it has been translated into many languages of the world. This served as the basis for choosing the topic, object, and subject of this research. The research aims to establish semantic, stylistic, and functional features and the process of forming the considered terms-names in the works “Baburnama” and “Manas.” The scientific novelty of this research lies in the study and comparison of titles, epithets, and honorary titles in these texts, which was done for the first time. The work uses a comprehensive methodology, including descriptive, functional-semantic, and comparative-historical methods. The research identifies and describes the linguistic picture of the world of the regions of Central Asia. The following specific tasks were solved: a collection of titles by texts and classification by lexico-semantic groups preserved in one version or another in the languages of the peoples of the Central Asian region. The results of this work can be used in the study of the general fund of Turkic languages and the ethnographic past of the Turks.

## Keywords

Components · Name · Title · Turkic · Region · Language · Text · Ruler · Power

## JEL codes

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## 1 Introduction

When researchers speak about the title, they proceed from the opinion about the continuity of the traditions of the “ancient Turkic statehood” from the nomadic political formations of previous eras and advocate the existence in the Turkic Khaganate of a “strict hierarchy, according to which the place in the system of public relations and the political weight of a member of society was determined by his title. Each ethnic group at a certain time had its own titles; that is, there was a certain register of titles. The Turks, who had their own developed system of governance and titles, were no exception. G. B. Babayarov and A. Kubatin, in the study “Ancient Turkic titles and epithets on Sogdian coins of Central Asia of the early Middle Ages,” note: “The titles inherent in the ancient Turks were distributed not only in the center of the khaganate, but also in neighboring territories, such as Semirechye, East Turkestan, Central Asian Mesopotamia, but also on its outskirts—Kabulistan, Khorasan, North Caucasus, etc.” (Babayarov & Kubatin, 2016).

The time of the appearance of ancient Turkic titles and terms in the historical arena and their consolidation in written sources are among the urgent problems of the history of the Turkic Khaganate (552–744) and all Turkic peoples. Many scholars have studied titles in Turkic languages. V. V. Radlov devoted his work “Titles and names of the Uighur khans” to the study of the features of the titles and names of the Uighur khans (Radlov, 1891, pp. 265–270). The interpretation of the meanings of names is contained in the work “History of the study of Turkic languages in Russia” by A. K. Kononov (1982). Many meanings can be found in the article “About the Turkic elements of the Russian dictionary” by D. K. Dmitriev (1958). A. K. Borovkov’s study “Vocabulary of Central Asian tefsir of the XII–XIII centuries” also played an

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important role in studying Turkic titles (Borovkov, 1963). In our opinion, the Kyrgyz-Russian dictionary of K. K. Yudakhin is a significant result of more than 40 years of painstaking work and the author's activity in collecting and researching, compiled considering the achievements of contemporary Turkic lexicography (Yudakhin, 1985).

Of great importance for the study of titles in the Turkic languages is the work "Ozshturulgon sozdor" (Borrowed words) by another well-known lexicologist K. Karasaev (1986), published in 1986. The meanings of many names and words close to them in meaning have been clarified and restored in the following works:

- "Collection of information about the peoples who lived in Central Asia in antiquity" by N. Ya. Bichurin (1950);
- "Ancient Turks" by L. N. Gumilev (1967);
- "Ceremonial at the court of the Uzbek khans in the 17th century" by V. V. Bartold (1964);
- "Tajiks: The most ancient, ancient, and medieval history" by B. G. Gafurov (1989);
- "The Rulers of Asia" by E. I. Kychanova (2004).

In the work "Titulature in the language of the Kyrgyz epic Manas," A. Zh. Sheriev studied the features of the use of titles and the correlation between epithets and state-administrative terms (Sheriev, 1991). It is also appropriate to pay attention to the following works:

- Dictionary "Divan lugat at-turk (A set of Turkic words)" by M. Kashgari (2010), where medieval term names are recorded;
- "Ancient Turkic Dictionary" edited by D. M. Nasilov et al. (1969);
- "The origin of the Turkish "runic" alphabet" by G. Clauson (1970);
- "Materials on the historical phonetics of the Turkic languages" by A. Ryasyanen (1955);
- "Introduction to Altai linguistics. Morphology" by G. I. Ramstedt (1957);
- "Languages of the Huns, Danube and Volga Bulgarians" by Benzing I. (1986).

Thus, from a theoretical analysis of the literature, we see that this problem has been considered quite widely.

## 2 Materials and Methods

The epic "Manas" and the historical work "Baburnama" occupy a special place in the history of the Turkic-speaking peoples as priceless literary monuments of cultures. A number of issues related to the study of names remain practically undeveloped in the text of Babur's Notes; studies of the

Baburnama text in linguistic terms are practically absent. This determines the relevance of our work. As a material for research, we took the titles presented in the Baburnama and the epic Manas. The main purpose of the work is to compare titles, epithets, and honorary titles in the epic of the language "Manas" and "Baburnama." Functional-semantic, descriptive, and cultural-pragmatic research methods were used in the work.

## 3 Results

The prototype of the name in the East consisted of several elements. In the work "Terminology of kinship in the work of Mahmud Bulgari "Nahj al-Faradis," F. Sh. Nurieva and I. R. Galiulina say that "the first name was given in infancy (at birth or circumcision), his father's name was added to it; then he could receive a title corresponding to his social status, or nicknames, reflecting his personal qualities or describing his appearance" (Nurieva & Galiulina, 2012). Titles, names, and nicknames were never used when addressing one person at the same time. A significant part of their changing variants reproduces only those names by which people were known to their contemporaries and which have survived to the present day.

Further, to clarify the general direction of our research, it is necessary to explain the concept of "title" used in the work. The term "title" (from Lat. *titulus*—inscription, honorary title) implies not only the names of the highest state, sovereign, hereditary, and ancestral honorary titles of the elite of society (that is, a title in a narrow, proper sense) but also the names of someone by occupation, social status, or any distinctive features. That is, the title in the broad sense of the term includes the following:

- An honorary title of a sovereign or a family, requiring an appropriate title (imperial title, princely title);
- The name of someone, something (usually high, honorable) by occupation, social status, or some distinctive features;
- The name of any position and rank (Evgenyeva, 1999, p. 239).

In addition to many other factors, the political significance of a particular country was largely determined by the title, namely the honorary title of the person who stood at the top of this country. Titles were hereditary, passed from father to son, etc. They were also acquired during power struggles with other persons of equal rank. As we see, the term title implies an honorary, possessive, generic title or the name of some kind of position. The epic "Manas" and "Babur's Notes" are just the same, very rich in lexemes used as titles, ranks, honorary epithets, and titles of a large circle of actors

in the epic tale. Many of them are still in use in the language of the peoples of the Central Asian region.

### 3.1 The Title in the Text of the Epic “Manas”

The epic “Manas” is a real masterpiece of oral folk art of the Kyrgyz people. It is known all over the world, first of all, for the fact that this is the most voluminous work among all known epics. The narrative of the epic includes all aspects of the life of the Kyrgyz people, their worldview, and ideas about the world around them. The epic provides us with a rich idea of the economy, everyday life, customs, and relations with the environment. From it, we get an idea of the ancient Kyrgyz, geography, religion, medicine, philosophy, ethics, and aesthetics. Terms that have lost their titular meaning and passed into other categories of vocabulary are also attributed here; that is, in the distant past, they were ranks and positions of senior servants in the state administrative hierarchy (Sheriev, 1991). In the epic “Manas,” honorary epithets, nicknames and titles of characters, names of mythical patrons, magicians, and animal husbandry associated with the religious beliefs of the Kyrgyz are included in the body of the title.

For example, the word “*er*” in the epic means a man who had the official status of a feudal lord. In the ancient Yenisei script, this word is the most common. This term can be translated not only as “husband” or “hero” but also, highlighting its social content, as “knight.” According to the epic “Manas” in Altai, only the elder of the Kyrgyz, Eshtek, has the title “*er*: “*Nogoydon kary er Eshtek*” (*er Eshtek* is older than the *nogoy*). Manas’s title “*er*” was first noticed during the first campaign of the Kyrgyz troops from Altai to their native Turkestan. Apparently, he was awarded such an honorary title after the first major victory over Tekes Khan, the head of the Kalmyks (Oirats) (Eshiev, 2019). Parallels and analogies in historical sources to the title of “*er*” can be seen in the Old German and Old Norse title “*earl*.” In early medieval England, *earl* were the ancestral nobility; since the ninth century, *earl* corresponded to the concept of “count.” The Latin *heros*, the Old Norse *erl*, and the Herodotus “*eor*” and the epic *er* could have an identical etymological nature.

### 3.2 The Title in the Text of “Baburnama”

Next, let us pay attention to the body of the title in the text of the work “Baburnama.” According to the totality of information and their reliability, “Baburnama” is considered the most important and most valuable historical work, which has no equal among similar works written in the Middle Ages in Central Asia, Iran, Afghanistan, and Persia. The author of

Baburnameh, Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur, went down in history in his short life not only as a commander and founder of the Great Baburid state in India but also as a scientist and poet who left a rich creative legacy. Babur was well versed in the socio-historical situation in the Central Asian region, where he was formed as a ruler, poet, writer, and historian. A special place in Babur’s work is occupied by an invaluable literary monument of prose in the Old Uzbek language—the historical work “Baburnama.” This book is mainly autobiographical and reflects the history of the peoples of Central Asia, Afghanistan, and India of the late fifteenth–early sixteenth centuries. The interest in this work is confirmed by the fact that it has been translated into many languages of the world.

Babur’s narrative uses many titles, which are repeated very often. The most frequent titles are *mirza*, *khan*, *bikim*, *khanum*, *sultan*, *khan*, and *bek*. The titles *padishah*, *emir*, *tarkhan*, etc. are less frequent. One of the most frequent in the text is the title *mirza*.

*Mirza/murza/myrza* is a title that in the Golden Horde and in the Crimean Khanate was given to representatives of noble families. If this title was in a preposition in relation to the proper name, it meant the same as in the Russian language the word *lord*; if the title is in a postposition to the proper name, it has the meaning “*duke*,” “*prince*” (comp. From two words *amir* < arab. “*duke*” and *zada* < persian, “*son*”; *amir zada*—letters, “the duke’s son” (Baskakov, 2010). The title *mirza* is used in Babur’s text with several meanings: as the title of the ruler, as the title of high-ranking officials, and as the general name of the nobility. If the author writes the word *mirza* with a capital letter without adding a name, we are talking about the ruler of a country invested with real power.

When Omar Sheikh Mirza called Yunus Khan for the last time, he gave him the Tashkent region, which at that time was in the power of Omar Sheikh mirza (Babur, 1993).

In this case, the prefix *mirza* indicates the noble origin of Omar Sheikh and that he is the ruler of the lot. Usually, Babur’s title *mirza* refers to the Turkic rulers, in contrast to the title *Khan*, which is mostly referred to as Mughal lords.

... We learned that the Mirzas were facing each other, and sent forward Tulun Khoja Mughal with two or three hundred dashing Yigits (Babur, 1993).

Here, it is meant that the *mirzas* are representatives of the noble estate, the retinue of the ruler.

Khub Nigar khanum’s son was Haidar mirza (Babur, 1993)—meaning Babur’s cousin. In this case, *mirza* means prince, the son of the ruler.

It is also noteworthy that Babur never names rulers and their descendants without a respectful title: *Sultan Ahmed Mirza*, *Khanzade bikim*, *Khurram Shah*, *Sheibani Khan*, *Janibek Sultan*, *Timur bey*, etc.

In the case when *Mirza* is written without a proper name and with a capital letter, this means that we are talking about a ruler endowed with real power and a throne:

When Mirza (Sultan Hussein) celebrated the circumcision of my son Muhammad Mumin mirza, he gave him (Astrabad) (Babur, 1993).

Here we are talking about Sultan Hussein, who was the ruler of Samarkand and Babur's uncle.

Some Yigits, showing haste, asked for permission to fight, but Mirza said: "It's already night" and did not allow it (Babur, 1993).

Here we are also talking about Sultan Hussein.

Nevertheless, the title *mirza* never denoted the supreme ruler invested with royal power. Most of the Timurids in Babur's time were rulers of relatively small estates, which is not surprising since there were a large number of them. This gave rise to internecine wars: everyone wanted to grab a bigger and richer territory. Babur also called himself *Mirza* before he subdued Hindustan:

Until then, the descendants of Timur, although I had the royal power, called me "mirza." Now (in Hindustan) I ordered to call myself Padishah (Babur, 1993).

In its original meaning, this word goes into the category of historicisms. It is well known that this title has many equivalent meanings, such as commander, leader, or ruler. Initially, the *khans* headed only relatively insignificant tribal possessions. The title *Khan* is on a par with the Arabic title *akim*—"ruler" and the Turkic *uluk*—"lord, ruler." Synonymous with the title "khan," other titles are also used: *sultan*, *myrza*. As the highest title of the lord, *Khan* is part of the proverbial phraseology of the Kyrgyz:

- *Kalk tutkasy kan bolot*,
- *Kazat uluu zhol bolot* (Karalaev, 1981).
- *The support of the people will become a khan, and the War will be a great campaign.*

In the modern Kyrgyz language, the title *Khan* is widely used, including in various national games, proverbs and sayings, fiction and folklore, etc. However, it should be noted that in the modern Kyrgyz language, there is a development of new meanings with simultaneous adjectivation of the term. In the southern dialects of the Kyrgyz language, there are combinations: *Khan atlas*—"the best atlas," *Khan bazaar*—"the best bazaar" (with some shade of sanctity "sacred bazaar"), for comparison—in the Mongolian language *khan*—*khas*—"the best jasper." In the epic "Manas," two phonetic variants are used: *khan* and *kan*. In the same forms, it is recorded in the ancient Turkic dictionary of D. M. Nasilov et al. (1969).

If compared with European cultures, *mirza* "prince, heir to the throne," or "head of the beks" corresponds to the European title—"duke, prince" (second rank of the *bek*): *khan* corresponds to the European title count (third rank of the *bek*). As can be seen from the above lists, with the long existence and gradual complication of the rank hierarchy, the once highest Turkic title passes into the category of lower ones. This situation may also have a historical background and is associated with the loss of the influence of the Turkic rulers in the new ethnopolitical associations.

Thus, we see that the title *khan*—*kan* in the epic "Manas" is used as follows:

1. The title of the supreme ruler of tribes and peoples;
2. The title of the leader of a small tribe or tribal association;
3. Anthropoformant—an honorary prefix to their own wives;
4. An epithet, the honorary name of the characters who really do not have this title.

Along with frequent titles, rare titles and epithets are also used in the epic. Among the frequent titles can be noted *Sultan*, *akim* in the meaning of ruler, lord. This also includes honorary nicknames and feudal titles *bek*, *biy*, *er*, *baatyr*, *kankor*, etc.

One of the rare epithet titles in the epic is *zayyppurush*, which means "famous (an epithet attached to the most famous epic heroes, e.g., Manas, Rustem, etc.). In K. K. Yudakhin, we see this word as *zyyppurush*—famous, according to the researcher, going back to a complex word from the Arabic *sahib*—owner, possessor and Persian, / *farasat/insight/shrewdness* (Yudakhin, 1985). However, the last component is not quite suitable from a phonetic and semantic point of view. Thus, we assume that the second part of the word *purush* goes back to the Persian *pur*: (1) son; (2) the second component of compound words (usually with proper names and titles) with the meaning of son, for example, *aahpur* (a) the son of the shah, prince; (b) the masculine proper name Mahpur (Persian). If we assume that *pur* is a truncated form of *purush* and raise this part to the Sanskrit *puriza-puruka* (1) man, man; (2) hero; (3) servant; (4) the human race (Skt.), then we can conclude from all of the above that the title-epithet *zayyppurush*—*Sayyip-purush* in the epic consists of two components: Arabic and Persian, which, in turn, goes back to Sanskrit. Hence, the literal meaning of *zayyppurush* in Persian and Arabic is "son of the Lord"; in Sanskrit—"lord of heroes" or "lord of men."

Just as in the epic "Manas," in Babur's text, the title *Khan* can act in the meaning of "ruler" or "prince."

Sheibani Khan, although he was not his (Abd al-Ali Tarkhan) nuker, however, he was with him several times, and many sultans are Sheibanids, small and the great ones were his nukers (Babur, 1993).

In this case, the term *khan* means a “ruler.”

Dreaming of going to Andijan, I went to Tashkent to the Khan to ask him for help (Babur, 1993).

*Khan* with a capital letter without a proper name also denotes a ruler with real power and a throne. Sometimes, Babur also uses derivatives of this term:

The Khan appointed his son, Sultan Mahmud Khanike, to march on Samarkand, as well as Ahmad bey with four or five thousand troops . . . (Babur, 1993).

In this case, *Khanike* is the prince, the khan’s son.

The same applies to women’s titles. The titles *bikim* and *khanum* indicated the high origin of the woman.

- “The other five daughters (Sultan Mahmud Mirza) were from Khanzade bikim, the granddaughter of Mir Buzurg” (Babur, 1993).
- “The oldest was Mihr Nigar khanum, which Sultan Abu Said Mirza left for his eldest son, Sultan Ahmed Mirza” (Babur, 1993).

If the titles *Khanum* or *Bekim* are written without a proper name and with a capital letter, then they indicate the khan’s mother, his aunt, etc.

The fortieth anniversary of Khanum (my parent) was approaching when the mother of the khans Shah bikim arrived from Khorasan . . . (Babur, 1993).

Sultans, shahs, emirs, and beks Babur calls noble nobles, owners of small estates consisting of rulers.

The sultans of Samarkand always declare it (the plain) a nature reserve, every year they go to this clearing and live there for a month or two (Babur, 1993).

In the countries of the Muslim East, *emir* means the title of a military commander, ruler, and a person bearing this title [Arabic. “*amir*”]. The *emirs* of Babur are notable people, notable people. Mentioning any ruler, he always talks about the emirates that were under his hand. Thus, the titles *Sultan*, *emir*, *bek*, *mirza*, and *Shah* in Babur’s time were not titles of supreme rulers. As is known, *emir/amir* was the title of Tamerlane, who went down in the history of Central Asia as Amir Timur Guragan. It was Timur’s personality that gave importance to this title, which later, like the titles of *shah*, *Sultan*, could act as titles of supreme rulers (*emirs of Bukhara, Ottoman sultans, Iranian shahs*). The title *mirza*, on the contrary, will become a name denoting a noble origin. As we have already noted above, *mirza/myrza/murza* is a polite address to a man in modern Kyrgyz, Kazakh, Turkish, and Tatar languages.

## 4 Conclusion

In our work, we have done only a small part of the work on the study of names in the epics “Manas” and “Baburnama.” Nevertheless, the results of our analysis allow us to draw some conclusions of interest to our research: these techniques of the author broaden the reader’s horizons, informing about many customs of the past. The titles in the work “Manas” and “Baburnama” imply not only the highest state, sovereign, hereditary, and ancestral honorary titles of the elite of society, that is, a title in a narrow, literal sense, but also the name of someone from the profession, social status, according to some distinctive features.

The corpus of titles “Baburnama” and “Manas” includes honorary epithets, nicknames, and titles of characters associated with the traditions of the Turks and Mongols, associated with the Persian language, and even Sanskrit. This also includes terms that have lost their titular meaning and have passed into other categories of vocabulary; that is, in the distant past, these were ranks, titles, and positions of senior officials in the state administrative hierarchy during Babur’s time.

The names in the text of the works studied by us indicate that the peoples of Central Asia have a common past, a similar mentality and worldview, which is reflected in a certain way in the language. We hope that the proposed study will provide theoretical and practical assistance in studying the language of written monuments of Turkic culture, as well as the linguistic picture of the world of the Central Asian region. The research results can be used in theoretical courses on lexicology, intercultural communication, cognitive linguistics, and comparative linguistics.

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