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ANT – AN INSTITUTION REGULATING RELATIONS IN NOMADIC SOCIETY (BASED ON THE EXAMPLE OF TURKIC-MONGOL PEOPLES)

Abstract

Just as every nation has its unique and defining features that characterize its culture and traditions, nomadic societies also adhered to distinctive principles. In the vast steppes, specific methods evolved to maintain peace, vigilance, and friendship, to ensure the fulfilment of responsibilities, and to uphold the spoken word. One such institution that helped organise the social structure was the oath. This article examines the manifestation of oaths, their historical and practical significance, and their role not only in the lives of individuals but also in the governance of the community, based on examples from the Turkic-Mongol peoples, supported by historical data and research.

The study aims to explore the features of the social structure of medieval Turkic and Mongol peoples through the lens of the oath institution. The objectives derived from this aim include: revealing the place and significance of the oath as an institution regulating interpersonal relations within the nomadic society, using folklore and written sources as the basis; and investigating the specific characteristics and mutual influences within these societies. Innovative perspectives on the civilizational characteristics of the organizational practices in nomadic societies are taken as the guiding framework for the analysis.

The concept of the oath discussed in the article encapsulates principles that were fundamental to resolving societal issues. It demonstrates how individuals, as integral parts of their community rather than as isolated entities, worked collectively and interdependently to achieve the shared goals of nomadic communities. This was achieved through mutual support and unwavering adherence to their oaths and actions. These principles, as illustrated by the Turkic-Mongol peoples, contributed to defining the destiny of the land, the nation, and the individual.

Keywords: oath, nomadic society, Turkic-Mongol peoples, life sacrifice, social category.

Introduction

It is crucial to explore the significance and characteristics of institutional categories and social concepts that ensure the organization of individuals and social groups within society. Equally important is understanding their role and similarities in the history of nomadic peoples. The oath is one of the ancient institutions that regulated relations between individuals and groups in society. Beyond interpersonal relations, the oath played a vital role as a legal institution in addressing situations with legal implications. Exploring the unique features of the oath among the Turkic and Mongol peoples is particularly relevant, as it directly relates to the ritualistic and social functions of oaths in nomadic societies.

The study highlights the consequences of violating mutual oaths between individuals, emphasizing the severe burden and repercussions that follow. The content of the oath, often intertwined with curses, implicitly includes wishing harm upon oneself, which underscores its value in ensuring that parties uphold their commitments with a deep respect for their given word.

The widespread practice of oath-taking in nomadic society can be categorized into the following aspects: legal, magical, religious, purely ethical, and interpersonal.

One of the distinguishing features of a nomadic society is that every citizen, as a member of the community, was interdependent and adhered to shared societal rules and legal codes. Each individual acted as an inseparable part of the community. Within their clan, every person could exercise their rights and freedoms while receiving guaranteed legal support. This was ensured through a system of mutual clan assistance and responsibility.

Considering these circumstances, individuals who failed to honor their oaths and complete their commitments faced severe consequences, including being shunned by the community and subjected to harsh punishments. One of the gravest penalties in nomadic society was exile from one's homeland and community, branded as a traitor or oath-breaker. Such individuals were referred to as “ant urġan” (literally “cursed by the oath”).

Additionally, a person who failed to keep their promise was labelled as “uagdasız,” meaning unreliable, or “suait”, a liar [1]. This paper will examine the functional, ethical, and moral dimensions of the oath using examples from Turkic and Mongol peoples.

The Mongol-Oirat Code (*Ikh Tsaaz*) and the customary laws of the Kazakhs are distinguished by their origins in the principles of clan-based social traditions. The collective responsibility of clans (e.g., compensation for a crime, or *qun*, was paid not on behalf of an individual but by the entire clan), the principle of “an eye for an eye, a life for a life,” loyalty to oaths, and numerous other family and social institutions, as well as court decisions, represent traditions common to many nomadic peoples.

Materials and methods of research

The study draws on a comprehensive set of data from written and oral sources related to Turkic and Mongol peoples, spanning from the 11th century onward.

The first category includes written legal codes and collections such as M. Kashgari's «*Compendium of the Turkic Dialects*» and customary law collections like «*Zheti Zhargy*» (The Seven Charters) from the era of the Kazakh Khanate. The second category consists of folklore materials preserved in the oral literature of the people. These sources embody insights into traditional customs and practices, offering valuable cultural and legal context. The third category encompasses legal texts like «*Yasa*» (The Great Law) adopted during the formation of the Mongol Empire, as well as historical works such as «*The Secret History of the Mongols*». These sources provide details on Genghis Khan's governance, internal and external policies, and historical events up to the final stages of his life. The fourth category includes materials collected during various expeditions conducted in the 19th and 20th centuries across Kazakh territories. A significant portion of this data was derived from interviews and reports from the Kazakh aristocracy.

To examine the concept and perception of the term «*oath*» (*ant*)—which played a crucial role in resolving pivotal issues concerning the fate of the land and people in nomadic society – a contextual approach was adopted as the primary methodological foundation. This approach emphasizes the understanding of the *oath* within its specific historical and cultural context, focusing on its application and implementation.

Additionally, since the study parallels events from the histories of the two peoples (Turkic and Mongol), it incorporates historical research methods alongside concepts of social relations.

The origins and developmental pathways of various social concepts in the life of nomadic societies are fascinating topics that continue to spark the interest and dedication of scholars. Although some of these concepts have not been designated as specific objects of study, they have been partially addressed during broader research. Among such concepts is the *oath* (*ant*), an institution that significantly contributed to maintaining both internal and external peace within society.

One of the most notable works addressing social categories and concepts is N. Alimbai's five-volume encyclopedic study, «*The Traditional System of Kazakh Ethnographic Categories, Concepts, and Terms*» [2], [3]. However, despite its significance, there are few comprehensive studies fully exploring the concept of the oath, its historical roots, and its functional characteristics.

Existing studies often touch on social concepts as part of broader investigations. For example, Zh. Artykbai's work [4] examines the social stratification of Kazakh society, albeit without specific focus on individual social concepts like the oath.

Given that the concept of the oath is closely tied to legal studies, significant attention must also be paid to research in this domain. A key work in this regard is the 10-volume compilation, «Ancient World of Kazakh Law» (*Qazaqtyń Ata Zańdary*) [5], which includes materials, documents, and research on Kazakh customary law. This monumental scholarly-political work also serves as a modern-day tribute to the founders of the Kazakh legal system and statehood. Volumes 2 and 6 of this collection provide invaluable insights into the issues relevant to the current study.

Since the object of this study pertains to the features and connections of the *oath* in Turkic-Mongol societies, it is important to address the contributions of previous research on this topic. One notable work is A. Yurchenko's article «*The Oath on Gold: The Turkic Contribution to Mongol Diplomacy*» [6], which explores the unique aspects of oaths in Turkic nomadic society and their influence on Mongol diplomacy. The article discusses the practice of taking oaths that were sealed with gold, and how the failure to uphold the oath was symbolized by the tarnishing of gold, representing betrayal.

Another significant work is the article by G.M. Davletshin, a Doctor of Historical Sciences and Professor at Kazan Federal University, titled «*Oath, Treaty, and Sacrifice in Inter-state Relations among the Turkic-Tatar Peoples*» [7]. This article examines the role of oaths in the history of the Turkic-Tatar peoples, specifically in the context of inter-state agreements. The study analyzes various historical sources depicting oaths, verbal agreements, and magical rituals in diplomatic processes. Davletshin highlights that this social concept, which originated in the Hun period, persisted unchanged through the era of the Golden Horde and continued into later states. The author emphasizes that oaths were essential for establishing long-term peace and maintaining the effectiveness of agreements between parties.

The uniqueness of the research presented here lies in its focus on revealing the content of the oaths between the two peoples and exploring the mutual influence and closeness through their shared customs and practices.

Results and its discussion

When we examine the history of inter-state relations, both internal and external, it becomes evident that the practice of establishing relationships through oaths and verbal agreements has been a fundamental aspect of Turkic history since the time of the Huns. For example, in the agreement between the Huns (Xiongnu) and the Han Dynasty, there is a statement that reads, «*The heavens will punish the side that breaks the agreement for several generations*» [8].

The most sacred and significant form of an oath is the one sworn upon one's homeland and people. Historical and oral sources, as well as literary works, show that various methods existed for taking oaths, including the use of weapons such as swords. This practice was common in earlier periods and is well-documented. Among the various methods of taking oaths, it is important to note that the use of weapons, particularly swords, was a widely practiced and significant ritual in earlier periods.

In Mahmud Kashgari's «*Compendium of the Turkic Languages*», a famous saying is cited: «*Let it enter blue, and let it exit red (in color)*». He explains it as follows: «*When a Kyrgyz, Yabaku, Kipchak, or any person is given a sacred oath drink, the oath sword is placed facing them, and it is said: 'Let it enter blue, and let it exit red, meaning it will be stained with blood. If the promise is broken, let the sword's metal take revenge, kill, or punish you'*» [9].

The origins of the Turkic peoples, which were shaped by specific historical periods in certain regions, likely explain why their social structures, ethnic, and cultural connections often intertwine. One such example is the traditional nomadic culture of the Turkic and Mongol peoples, where various concepts and categories that define their social relationships and cultural worlds help to further align and connect their societies.

The similarity of social concepts and categories in the customary and socio-legal works of Mongol and Turkic peoples, particularly regarding the ritual of oath-taking and its fulfillment, reflects one of the highest categories of integrity – keeping one's word and aligning words with

actions. For a nomadic society, one of the most crucial and sacred concepts is the safety of the land, the homeland, and the freedom of its people. It is a natural act for every citizen to swear to protect their country and land for their entire life.

Moreover, the act of protecting from dangers, preventing threats, and reinforcing trust and loyalty, as well as traditions that strengthen the bonds of friendship, also play significant roles in such oaths. Given that these actions have deep historical roots, the concept of the oath encompasses not only its profound meanings but also its broad significance.

If someone fails to uphold their word, especially in difficult times when they might seek to escape responsibility or prioritize their well-being, history offers numerous examples that show such actions rarely lead to positive outcomes.

In the life of the Kazakh people, one of the key indicators of an individual's independence and freedom is their membership in a specific clan. This means that the rights of each citizen and their social security are ensured through the unity of the clan. Each individual determines their relationship with others based on a system that links them through their seven generations (ancestry), tribe, and further to their hundred (a larger social division) and the state. Within this system, the institution that regulates various rights, actions, and social issues is the oath. Oaths, often critical in resolving interpersonal matters and relationships, hold significant value and are described in moral and ethical terms.

According to ethnographic data, the oath and the ritual of swearing played a significant role in the life of a nomadic society. The act of taking an oath and swearing had its own procedures specific to the ethnocultural environment of the nomads. Moreover, the procedure of swearing had different forms depending on the circumstances and the nature of each social sphere. In this regard, the most commonly used types of oaths in the nomadic environment were legal, magical, religious, «pure» ethical, and interpersonal oaths. It is worth noting that, in most cases, these types of oaths complemented each other in a syncretic manner. The most widespread form of oath-taking in the nomadic environment was the ritual form. For example, during significant and critical events in the life of the community, two people would perform a special ritual for each other or for an individual (sometimes in alliance with a group of interested parties) for the benefit of the community. In this case, the principle of «a word is like a shot» was adhered to. Furthermore, the symbolic meaning or potential negative consequences of the objects used during the ritual were also taken into account. Therefore, as mentioned earlier, various customs were performed during the oath-taking process.

Starting from the 13th century, the Turkic peoples, including the Kazakh tribes, and the Mongol tribes coexisted in the vast territories of the Great Steppe, which later became the foundation for the establishment of major states such as the Mongol Empire, the Golden Horde, the White Horde, and, ultimately, the Kazakh Khanate. Thus, there are instances where the historical synthesis of traditions, customary laws, social principles, and certain concepts and categories is evident. One of the long-standing principles of the Kazakh people is the sacred duty of keeping an oath, which has always been a fundamental law of the Great Steppe. Therefore, the study of such concepts and the history of relationships between these two peoples gains greater importance and relevance. For example, in the Mongol Empire, which absorbed the territory of the Desht-i Kipchak and neighboring countries, the Turkic oath on gold not only retained its original meaning but also acquired a special status in diplomatic relations between the Mongol khans and foreign kings or princes who recognized Mongol power. The oath on gold was most likely introduced into Mongol diplomatic practice by the Cumans, as it was a familiar custom for the inhabitants of Desht-i Kipchak and surrounding areas. [6.- 415]

One of the ancient institutions regulating relationships in the nomadic society is the institution of giving an oath. The practice of giving an oath is considered a ritual that is carried out based on an obligatory mutual pledge. As mentioned earlier, in the Kazakh tradition, an oath is not only a legal matter but also carries a moral and ethical significance. The next step after the

oath is often the sealing of the agreement with a formal commitment, such as swearing an oath by drinking water and exchanging promises. In everyday life, simpler forms of oaths are also used to ensure belief in one's words and actions, such as expressions like «If I am lying, let my eyes be gouged out, and if I hear wrongly, let me be deaf!». These types of oaths are somewhat linked to curses, as every word or oath might carry a hidden curse that could cause harm to the person making the promise. When words and actions do not align, it serves as a reminder that it will not lead to good outcomes, which is why those who fail to keep their word were referred to as «oathbreakers», and a common curse directed at them was «May the oath strike them!». Therefore, in folklore studies, the text of the oath is often compared with the genre of curses. By swearing an oath, a person indirectly accepts that they might bring a curse upon themselves, thus, the person pledging, to a certain extent, is cursing themselves according to a set of conditions.

The second aspect of swearing an oath and the institution of becoming an «anda» (sworn brother) can be seen in the following excerpt from *The Secret History of the Mongols*:

«Fragment: '...§96 When Sengir Bulak moved and settled near the headwaters of the Kerlen River on the shore of the Burge, Sotan, in gratitude, brought a fur coat made of sable. This coat was brought by Temüjin, Qasar, and Belgütei, and they said: «In the past, our father Yesükhei had been an 'anda' with the right Khan of the Kerayit people. Your father was our 'anda,' so you are like a father to us now.' After visiting the Right Khan, Temüjin said: 'Since you have taken the place of my father as a father, I offer this sable fur coat as a special gift in honor of your bond.'» [10]

In *The Secret History of the Mongols*, the oath-taking ceremony between Temüjin and Jamukha is described. At that time, Temüjin was eleven years old. In §117, when they swore their oath for the third time, Temüjin placed a golden belt, which he had taken from Tokto'a, the leader of the Merkits, on Jamukha and made him ride Tokto'a's two-year-old colt. Jamukha, in turn, placed a golden belt, which he had taken from Da'ir Usun of the Waz Merkit, on Temüjin and made him ride Da'ir Usun's grey stallion [11].

A. Toyshanuly writes that the oaths depicted in «*The Secret History of the Mongols*» between the Kerait Wang Khan and Yesüké Batyr, or Temüjin and Jamukha, reached a significant political level and became a tool for dividing power and wealth. He further notes that such oaths became a major political mechanism that would determine the future fate of the state. However, A. Toyshanuly also points out that oaths were not always for political purposes but were also made between individuals or between an individual and the community [12].

In earlier times, the tradition of drinking water and making an oath to «become friends» also existed in Kazakh culture. Later, in the traditional legal culture of the Kazakh people, it was used in the court of the elders when cases were being heard. In the court of elders, a witness would drink water before answering and swear an oath not to lie or give false testimony. In modern Kazakh lexicon, the phrase «to swear an oath» is used in different contexts, such as when joining the army, accepting the presidency, or making promises or pledges to one another.

The most sacred and significant oath, of course, was the one taken by individuals in front of the people, the tribe, and the leaders and elders. This type of oath was not only based on ethical principles and norms but also took on a ritualistic character. This oath-ritual ensured the social content of the oath. For example, in ancient times, before going to battle, warriors would bleed from their thumb, drink the blood, recite the Quran, slaughter a black sheep, dip the tips of their spears and thumbs into its blood, and mark their foreheads with it. They would then swear, saying, «If we break this oath, may the blood of the black sheep punish us».

In the late 12th century, Petahiah, who came to the land of the Kipchaks, described two oath customs that solidified the relationships between a Cumans and a foreigner, a guide and a traveler: «In this land, one does not travel without a guide. Here's how each son of Kedar binds himself with an oath to his companion. He pricks his finger with a needle and allows the one who is to accompany him to suck the blood that has come out, and from that moment on, the

person becomes as if part of his flesh and blood. They also have another type of oath: they fill a copper or iron vessel in the shape of a human face, and both the traveler and the guide drink from it; after which, the guide will never betray his companion» [13].

In this oath-taking custom, the thumb of the person fulfilling the important role holds significant meaning. According to the beliefs of most Turkic-Mongol peoples, it is understood that the soul resides in the thumb, while the Altai people believed that the heart was located at the center of the circular line on the thumb's contour. Among the ancient Austrian tribes, there was a widespread belief that cutting off the thumb of a defeated enemy's right hand would ensure that the enemy would not act with wrath or malice in the next life [14]. Thus, if we delve into the underlying meanings of ancient concepts, we can observe that the belief exists that the thumb can fully represent the entire body. Moreover, in ancient times, the thumb played a significant role in archery, a weapon form with a long history.

Let's take a look at the following legend, which leads to the belief mentioned above, that is widespread among the Kazakh people. About five kilometers from the village of Aqtubek, on the eastern slope, there is a mountain called «Bayesh». Looking at its history, the name Bayesh is associated with a descendant of the Altai people who fought to the last drop of his blood to protect his land and people during the «Akhtaban Shuburindy» years. According to the legend, Bayesh, finding himself surrounded by the enemy unexpectedly, realizing that he could not escape, ordered his younger brother to mount his steed and leave, saying: «Brother, you see that we are surrounded by the enemy. Their forces are five times stronger than ours. Therefore, you should return to the village and lead the elders, women, and children. Then, continue to move the people. I will hold off the enemy. If I survive, I will return safely to the village, but if I do not, let this be my legacy». He then took his sword from its scabbard, cut off his thumb from his left hand, and gave it to his brother. However, he warned his brother: «Do not cause panic or alarm among the people. Once you reach the outskirts of the village, give them my thumb. If I do not return, they will name the thumb 'Bayesh'». The spear-wielding hero, Bayesh, was killed in battle. Afterwards, his legacy was fulfilled, and his thumb was buried at the high mountain on the eastern slope of the village of Aqtubek. Later, his body was brought and laid to rest there [15].

In the custom of oath-taking among men, there might be a belief associated with actions such as drawing blood from their thumbs, pouring it into a vessel, and drinking it together, or cutting each other's fingers to draw blood and sucking the blood from each other's fingers. One may interpret these customs with the same understanding. To illustrate this, consider the following source. In his work *Toxaris and Friendship*, Lucian writes, quoting the Scythian Toxaris: «When choosing someone to be a friend, they make a lofty vow to live as allies and, if necessary, sacrifice their lives for each other. They do this in the following way: they cut their fingers, let the blood flow into a cup, then dip the tips of their swords into it, and afterwards, embrace each other and drink the blood. After this, nothing can separate them, for these people are bound by blood» [16].

This type of oath-taking is often depicted in folklore sources. As mentioned above, the custom of drawing blood, sharing it, and affirming their oath is also present in Mongolian epics. For example, in the heroic poem *Tenteq Qara Er Kekil* (The Foolish Black Horse's Mane), we can find the following verses:

«...They press their shoulders together,
Praying to Heaven for help,
Saying, 'We are bound by oath,'
Pricking their thumbs,
Licking the blood from their fingers,
Becoming blood brothers.
They unite their two horses,

Tying their tails and manes together.
They pass under and over each other,
Two heroes in combat» [17].

The oath-taking ritual gradually adapted to the needs of society as time passed. Instead of the previous practices, such as drawing blood from a thumb or stabbing a spear into the blood of a sacrificed black sheep, warriors began swearing oaths by kissing their swords or bowstrings. There are even accounts of people lifting gravestones above their heads, walking around the tomb, and saying, «If we break our oath, may a black stone crush us!» This form of oath-taking signified a pledge that if the oath were broken, they would become as hard and unyielding as a stone.

«Special rituals are observed when the Kyrgyz make an agreement about common enmity or when reconciling with an enemy. In the first case, all the respected Kyrgyz of the given party gather in one yurt, agree on the enmity, promise mutual assistance, commit to not making peace individually, and then they slaughter either a gray horse with a bald spot - 'kök qaska' or a white ram with a yellow head - 'aq sarbas.' The one performing the slaughter says: «Let the blood of the one who betrays flow, like the blood of this horse (or this ram)», and all those present respond «Amin». When making peace, representatives of both parties meet twice, first in the village of one of the respected Kyrgyz of one party, and then in the village of the other party. Each time, they slaughter a ram, reading three blessings, namely: at the moment of slaughter, when the meat is cooked, and after the meat is eaten». [18]

It is also worth noting that, as mentioned earlier, the form and nature of oath-taking have changed over time, and the format has undergone transformations. As we can see at different stages of history, in addition to oath-taking with blood, there are also instances of oaths being sworn with weapons, such as with a sword. The use of sacred objects as living entities is reflected here as well. In other words, in epic tales, warriors, when defending their land and country, swear oaths with their horses and even with their weapons, which is a mystical characterization often found in Turkic-Mongol folklore. For example, although weapons are considered to be inanimate, they are still recognized as deadly tools. Therefore, we can understand that the use of weapons such as swords, sabers, and bows during oath-taking has a profound underlying meaning.

Oath-taking played a decisive role in the process of governance. Perhaps for this reason, Russian scholars before the October Revolution considered the «giving of the soul» tradition as the primary driving force in governance. Since the essence of oath-taking was associated with the soul, it is likely that traditional governance terminology referred to oath-taking as «giving the soul», and those who took the oath were called «those who hold the soul» [19], [20], [21], [22].

In the «giving the soul» ritual, the witnesses of those involved in disputes performed the oath. According to Russian researchers before the October Revolution, «giving the soul» was classified into two categories: confirming or supporting oaths and purifying oaths [19. - 9]. Even so, it must be noted that according to traditional governance practices, some considerations specific to the social classes, particularly the aristocracy, were taken into account.

For example,

- «The testimonies of social categories such as sultans and religious leaders (qozhas) were accepted as genuine evidence without the «giving of the soul» ritual.

- The testimonies of prominent and highly respected figures, such as judges, elders, and notable individuals within the community, were considered credible without requiring further evidence.

- Among the common people, only one person could act as a witness. However, to convince the judges and the gathered public of the truthfulness of the testimony, the witness's close relative was required to perform the «giving of the soul» ritual». [23].

To strengthen the validity of a promise, oath, or word, it was required that the number of witnesses involved in any matter to be resolved should be at least two. In the «Seven Articles»

(Zheti Zhargy) of Tauke Khan, it is stated that there should be 2-3 witnesses to determine a crime. If no witnesses were available, rituals such as «giving of the soul» or «taking an oath» were performed. Section 97 of the «Seven Articles» (Zheti Zhargy) indicates that the «giving of the soul» ritual was conducted with the presence of a mullah or a judge at a gravesite or a sacred place [23.-30]. However, in certain complex matters that were considered serious crimes in Kazakh society, according to the decision of the council of judges, the number of witnesses was required to be no less than four [24].

Crimes such as rape, adultery, and murder were among those considered serious offenses. In the process of uncovering the facts of these crimes, it was common for the criminal or the victim to struggle to provide answers during questioning and sometimes reach an impasse. In such situations, individuals would request to use a relative to prove the correctness of their actions or to defend their innocence. This can be understood as a form of «soul-giving» for proof or approval [3.- 411]. One of the key conditions of this practice was that the witness must be a close relative. It is important to note that the relative's reputation and purity in the community, especially their perceived moral integrity, played a significant role in these rituals. This is also emphasized in Tauke's «Seven Articles» (Zheti Zhargy), which states that «just and noble» individuals could «give their soul». There were several types of «soul-giving» rituals performed by those known as «soul-binders». These include: a) swearing an oath in the name of the ancestors' spirits; b) kissing the edge of a sword; c) silently walking around an ancestor's grave three times; d) wearing burial clothes in a special area in the house separated by a curtain; e) swearing an oath by placing a stone on one's head, and others [25].

The different forms of «soul-giving» highlight how morally and psychologically burdensome this practice was. In the understanding of nomadic peoples, a false witness did not only brought misfortune upon themselves but also nearly all members of their family. This understanding led them to avoid giving false testimony at all costs, as they recognized that they would face the wrath of ancestors and God, potentially resulting in dire consequences. Therefore, the practice of falsely «giving one's soul» was something one could not undertake lightly, as it was believed to attract divine retribution and punishment.

This form of oath-taking calls for staying true to one's word, being steadfast (not being deceived by material circumstances), and shows that breaking an oath leads to unfavourable consequences. On the other hand, oaths are also made concerning friendship, brotherhood, not lying, and remaining pure.

Breaking an oath and not fulfilling it leads to the loss of a man's reputation, freedom, and status in society. In addition to the examples mentioned above, we can also refer to an oath where gold is placed in a vessel, and the participants drink water from it. Here, due to the yellow color of gold, it is likely associated with the understanding among nomads that yellow represents illness or a sign of disease. This is because, among Turkic peoples, yellow is a symbol of negative connotations. For instance, in the annual divination ritual of the Khazar khagan, the color of the flames predicted diseases like jaundice and plague. Thus, gold is seen not as a symbol of prestige, but rather with a negative meaning. It also served the function of carrying the punishment that awaited those who broke the oath, as described in the text. Among nomadic peoples, whether Kipchaks or Mongols, gold held a certain function. As seen in the examples above, among the Turks, it was a material that accumulated the curse power within the oath ritual.

However, it is important to note that after the Mongols conquered the territory of the Deshti Kypchak and established their empire, the practice of placing gold in water for an oath lost its original meaning. Instead, it gained special prestige in diplomatic relations between Mongol khans and foreign rulers or princes. This suggests that the practice of swearing an oath with gold in water, which was familiar to the inhabitants of Deshti Kypchak and the surrounding regions, was introduced into Mongol diplomatic practice by the Polovtsians. As we know from

history, the Mongols employed others (such as the Kipchaks, etc.) as translators and diplomatic agents [26].

The anonymous Georgian author of the 14th century, who was well-acquainted with the practices at the Mongol court, describes a tragic past in a favorable retrospective [27]. Georgian ishkans, like Russian princes, were obliged to attend the annual Mongol kurultais. Georgian princes were concerned about safety, so they would send trusted individuals in advance to obtain guarantees. Such a guarantee was an oath sworn on gold. The anonymous author believes that the custom of drinking water in which gold had been dipped three times was established by Genghis Khan. In reality, this was an ancient Turkic custom. The oath on gold became firmly embedded in imperial practice, but since it was a foreign element, its legalization required the authority of Genghis Khan, a figure who by that time had become completely mythologized.

Conclusion

We say that the power of words is strong. We say, «Do not make promises; if you do, keep your word». There is great meaning in the act of absorbing a promise or oath by mixing it with water or a drink like milk, or by dripping it from a finger. When an oath or promise is absorbed by blood along with water, it becomes impossible to take it back. Moreover, the word spoken in the oath stays in one's mind and body. This is because «swearing an oath» is understood as a written and «dissolved» punishment in the form of water. Furthermore, as mentioned in the research, every individual, not as an individual, but as part of a specific group, takes on the responsibility to solve issues and participate in all rights associated with that group. If this is not fulfilled, the individual is subjected to severe punishment in nomadic society, which could include being exiled or forced to leave the community. Thus, being part of a specific tribe guarantees a person's life, independence, freedom, and social security. At the same time, we see that the tribe itself maintains its integrity by protecting the rights of its members and ensuring their social welfare. Throughout the history of human development, we observe that there are multiple types of oaths, each with its own meaning, peculiarities, and similarities. Additionally, we see that nomadic states, through the exchange of experiences and the incorporation of the traditions of conquered peoples, used these practices to resolve their diplomatic and legal issues.

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АНТ – КӨШПЕЛІ ҚОҒАМДАҒЫ ҚАРЫМ-ҚАТЫНАСТЫ РЕТТЕСТІРУШІ ИНСТИТУТ (ТҮРКІ-МОҢҒОЛ ХАЛЫҚТАРЫ МЫСАЛЫНДА)

Аңдатпа

Әр халықтың мәдениеті мен дәстүрін сипаттайтын, қайталанбайтын, тек өзіне тән айқын белгісі болатыны тәрізді, көшпелі қоғамның да ерекше ұстанатын ұстанымдары болды. Ұланғайыр далада тыныштық пен сақтықты, достықты сақтаудың да, әр істі орындаудың да, айтқан сөзге тұрақты болудың да өзіндік жолдары қалыптасқан. Сондай әлеуметтік құрылымды үйлестіруші институттардың бірі – ант. Мақалада түркі-моңғол халықтары мысалындағы анттың көрінісі, тарихи әрі өмірлік маңызы және оның жеке адамның ғана емес, ел өміріндегі атқаратын қызметі жайында деректер мен зерттеулерге негізделе отырып қарастырылады. Зерттеудің мақсаты ортағасырлық түркі және моңғол халықтарының әлеуметтік құрылымындағы ерекшеліктерді ант институты негізінде ашып көрсету болып табылады. Ал осы мақсаттан туындайтын міндеттер келесі тізбені құрайды: ортағасырлық түркі және моңғол халықтарының әлеуметтік құрылымын, қарым-қатынас мәселелерін реттестіруші институт анттың көшпелі қоғамдағы орны мен маңызын фольклорлық деректер мен жазба дерек беттеріндегі мәліметтер негізінде ашып көрсету; ерекшеліктері мен өзара ықпалдастықтарын зерттеу. Көшпелілер қоғамының өзара ұйымдасуының өркениеттік ерешеліктері туралы жаңашыл тұжырымдар басшылыққа алынып қарастырылады. Мақалада қарастырылған ант ұғымы ел мен жер тағдырын, ер тағдырын анықтауда тұлғалардың жеке емес, қоғамның ажырамас бөлшегі ретінде көпшілікпен санаса әрі бір-біріне тәуелді бола отырып, көшпелі қауымның ортақ игілігін іске асыруда өзара бір-бірін қолдаудың және анты мен әрекетіне берік болу арқылы оның кепілі ретінде көрсетілетін әрекетімен елдегі мәселелерді шешуге ықпал жасаудың принциптері түркі-моңғол халықтарының мысалында тұжырымдалады.

Негізгі сөздер: ант, көшпелі қоғам, түркі-моңғол халықтары, жан беру, әлеуметтік категория.

АНТ – ИНСТИТУТ РЕГУЛИРОВАНИЯ ОТНОШЕНИЙ В КОЧЕВОМ ОБЩЕСТВЕ (НА ПРИМЕРЕ ТЮРКО-МОНГОЛЬСКИХ НАРОДОВ)

Аннотация

У каждого народа, как и у кочевого общества, есть уникальные, характерные только для него черты, которые отражают его культуру и традиции. В истории Великой степи сформировались свои способы сохранения мира и осторожности, дружбы, выполнения различных дел и верности своему слову. Одним из социальных институтов, объединяющих общество, было клятвенное. В статье рассматриваются проявления клятвы на примере тюрко-монгольских народов, ее историческое и жизненное значение, а также роль,

которую она играет не только в жизни отдельной личности, но и в судьбе целого народа. Цель исследования – выявить особенности социальной структуры средневековых тюркских и монгольских народов на основе института клятвы. Из данной цели вытекают следующие задачи: раскрыть место и значение института клятвы в кочевом обществе средневековых тюркских и монгольских народов как регулятора социальных отношений на основе данных фольклорных и письменных источников; исследовать его особенности и взаимные влияния. Рассматриваются новые концепции, связанные с цивилизационными особенностями самоорганизации кочевого общества. Понятие клятвы, обсуждаемое в статье, обосновывается как принцип, с помощью которого решались общественные вопросы, влияющие на судьбу страны, земли и отдельных личностей. При этом подчеркивается, что личности выступали не только как индивидуумы, но и как неотъемлемая часть общества, принимая во внимание интересы коллектива, действуя сообща, поддерживая друг друга и оставаясь верными своей клятве и действиям. На примере тюрко-монгольских народов показывается, как эта практика способствовала реализации общих интересов кочевого общества.

Ключевые слова: клятва, кочевое общество, тюрко-монгольские народы, жизнь отдалённых, социальная категория.

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