Dissertation of Oralova Aknur Amangeldyevna on the topic
«Life and Military-Diplomatic Activities of the Batyr Kozhabergen Zhanibekuly (1689–1785)»,
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Abstract

Relevance of the Study. The dissertation examines the selfless heroic deeds and military-diplomatic activities of Batyr Kozhabergen Zhanibekuly, who lived at the turn of the 17th and 18th centuries, aimed at ensuring a free and peaceful life for the Kazakh people. In the absence of centralized state structures, the study analyzes the question of which personal qualities enabled Batyr Kozhabergen to effectively organize the defense of vast and fragmented territories. Based on archival materials and a comprehensive body of fundamental historical research, the work investigates the place and role of Batyr Kozhabergen in the history of Kazakhstan and identifies his authentic personal and professional characteristics.

The **main aim** of the research is to determine the role of Kazakh batyrs in defending border pastures and controlling disputed frontier territories against territorial claims and military pressure from the Qing Empire, as well as in protecting the Tarbagatai border region from territorial expansion and garrison establishment by the Qing Empire in the post-Dzungar period, exemplified through the military-diplomatic activities of Batyr Kozhabergen Zhanibekuly.

The dissertation also seeks to reconstruct an accurate picture of the complex and dramatic historical stages experienced by the Kazakh people during this period. To achieve this goal, the following key research tasks were set:

- systematization of scholarly works on the topic through historiographical analysis of studies dedicated to Batyr Kozhabergen;
- examination of Batyr Kozhabergen's genealogy and identification of the stages of his development as a military leader and public figure;
- identification of similarities and differences in the roles of multiple historical figures named Kozhabergen in the struggle for the territorial integrity and unity of the Kazakh state, and substantiation of the heroic path of Kozhabergen Zhanibekuly through comprehensive analysis of sources and research;
- demonstration that Kozhabergen Zhanibekuly in the second half of the 18th century was one of the key figures in Kazakh history as a border military leader, diplomat, and courageous sardar, defending the territorial integrity of the country at the intersection of major empires;
- determination of the strategic significance of the Tarbagatai region as a frontier zone within the Kazakh-Qing relations;
- analysis of the influence of Kazakh-Qing economic interests on border strategies, the role of trade in relations between batyrs and the Qing Empire, and the study of economic interdependence between Kazakhstan and the Qing state;
- evaluation of the role of Batyr Kozhabergen in Kazakh-Dzungar relations;
- analysis of his interactions with Ablai Khan and Prince Amursana;
- examination of the eastern reintegration and migration of Kazakh clans following the elimination of the Dzungar Khanate and assessment of Kozhabergen Zhanibekuly's contribution to these historical processes;
- presentation of Kozhabergen's diplomatic activities in war and negotiation contexts within Kazakh-Chinese relations;

- elucidation of the historical role of Kozhabergen in the establishment and development of the international “horses-for-silk” trade between the Kazakh Khanate and the Qing Empire in the second half of the 18th century, including the opening of trade fairs, based on concrete historical sources;

- characterization of Kozhabergen Sardar’s state and socio-political activities in the context of historical events between the Kazakh Khanate and the Russian Empire;

- evaluation of the place of Kozhabergen Zhanibekuly and his descendants in the history of the Kazakh people.

In the course of writing the dissertation, targeted efforts were undertaken to achieve the stated goals and tasks. At the same time, the research does not claim to provide a final and exhaustive solution to all the issues addressed, which require further in-depth and comprehensive study.

Object and Methodological Basis of the Study. The object of the research is the life path, personal character, and military-diplomatic activities of Batyr Kozhabergen Zhanibekuly, considered within a historical context. The introduction of objective and reliable historical sources on his life and socio-political activities into scholarly circulation allows for a deeper understanding of the authentic nature of historical events during his lifetime.

The methodological foundation of the study is based on contemporary approaches and concepts in modern historical science. The analysis of sources and scholarly works covering the life and state service of Batyr Kozhabergen is conducted from the standpoint of objectivity and chronological periodization.

Geopolitical processes in border regions are realized not only at the level of imperial strategies but also through the actions of local actors. In the second half of the 18th century, amid territorial disputes and trade relations between the Kazakhs and the Qing Empire, batyrs acted as key figures of microgeopolitics in the Tarbagatai region. Kazakh batyrs ensured border military security, contributed to social cohesion, and performed flexible political maneuvering in relations with representatives of imperial authorities. At the same time, the ways in which batyrs implemented border geopolitical functions and influenced the balance of power remain insufficiently studied.

The application of a microhistorical approach based on the analysis of Kozhabergen’s life allows for the identification of strategies developed by Kazakh batyrs in border regions, the mechanisms for maintaining balance between imperial powers, and their role in the formation of autonomous socio-political spaces.

Analysis of the collected source material using the case-study method contributed to the conclusion that the batyr institution in 18th-century Kazakh society, especially in the Tarbagatai region, played an active state-political role in the frontier zones of the Kazakh Khanate and the Qing Empire. In addition to written historical sources, the research incorporates oral history materials, including genealogies (shezhire), epic poetry, toponymy, and memoirs.

The use of the case-study method enabled a scholarly reconstruction of Kozhabergen Zhanibekuly as a historical figure who actively performed military and diplomatic roles in border areas, engaged in both armed resistance and negotiation with the Qing Empire, combined economic and military oversight, and ensured inter-clan unity and defense organization in vulnerable frontier areas of the Kazakh steppe.

Modern historiography has significantly expanded methods for studying historical personalities, including 18th-century batyrs. The image of a batyr is now considered not only in military and political history but also in the contexts of culture, historical memory, and social networks. Interdisciplinary approaches allow for a deeper understanding of the essence of historical figures. In this study, the microhistorical method was applied for this purpose.

The growing scholarly interest in individual historical personalities has led to methodological consequences: within the microhistorical framework, historical-biographical research has acquired new substantive depth. Current trends indicate the emergence of a distinct scientific direction-historical personal studies (historical personology). The main object of this field is personal texts, while the subject is a comprehensive and unique study of an individual life. Despite methodological eclecticism, the key principle of historical personology is the reconstruction of an individual's life, inner world, and traces of their activity as a means of understanding the historical society.

The essence of the microhistorical method is the reconstruction of the individual and unique fate of a specific historical personality. Through microanalysis, it became possible to study not only Kozhabergen Zhanibekuly himself but also the socio-cultural panorama and historical reality in which he developed. In particular, attempts were made to analyze his origin, upbringing, stages of formation as a batyr, and participation in major military campaigns.

The dissertation systematically and comprehensively examines military, trade-economic, and diplomatic relations with neighboring peoples and states through the lens of the individual characteristics of the historical figure. The research includes analysis of scholarly literature and archival sources. Both traditional and modern historical methods were employed. Principles of historicism and social analysis were applied in the interpretation and critical evaluation of sources. The study of Kozhabergen's personal character was conducted using phenomenological and interdisciplinary approaches (diplomatics, historical geography).

The research is approached from the perspective of national interests and interdisciplinary methodology. The work aims to foster historical consciousness, strengthen national spirit, and revive the great names of the Great Steppe.

To achieve the research objectives, a combination of comparative-historical analysis, synthesis, and systematization methods was applied. In considering the historical sequence of events in relation to historical personalities and their social environment, the above-mentioned scientific and methodological foundations were utilized.

Scientific Novelty of the Research. For the first time in Kazakh historiography, the dissertation provides a comprehensive study of the life and military-diplomatic activities of Batyr Kozhabergen Zhanibekuly. The research has produced the following original scientific results:

- For the first time in the historiographical section of the dissertation, a systematic analysis of both domestic and foreign scholarly works on Batyr Kozhabergen was carried out, including a detailed historiographical review of the issue.

- Based on oral sources and genealogical records (shezhire), a number of scholarly conclusions were formulated regarding the origin and descendants of Kozhabergen Zhanibekuly; it was established that, as a batyr and military leader, he commanded the armed forces of the Shubaraigir clan of the Kerei tribe of the Middle Zhuz in the struggle against external adversaries.

- Through analysis of specific historical sources, the individual military and diplomatic activities of Kozhabergen Zhanibekuly were differentiated; historical inaccuracies and confusion with other figures named Kozhabergen were clarified, and the features of his personal character and state service were scientifically substantiated.

- It was demonstrated that in the Kazakh-Chinese relations system, Kozhabergen Zhanibekuly performed the functions of a frontier military commander in border areas adjoining China, occupying a key position after Ablai Khan.

- It was established that Kozhabergen was an influential political actor, actively involved in the internal and external political affairs of the Dzungar Khanate.

- The forms and nature of interactions between Ablai Khan, Amursana, Kozhabergen, other Kazakh batyr-leaders, and Oirat rulers were analyzed and clarified, showing their adaptation to the complex and changing military-political circumstances.

- It was scientifically confirmed that after the fall of the Dzungar Khanate, Kozhabergen led armed detachments aiming to restore the ancestral territories and was one of the most respected batyrs in Kazakh society.

- For the first time, Kozhabergen's function as a diplomatic mediator was revealed and substantiated: he negotiated with border officials of the Qing Empire, managed conflicts, combined tactics of restraint, compromise, and military opposition, and facilitated the development of bilateral trade and diplomatic relations.

- It was established that the strategically important Tarbagatai region was rich in summer and winter pastures, had sufficient water resources, served as a key passage between the Kazakh steppe and the Ili Valley, was a hub of trade routes, and functioned as a buffer zone between the Kazakh Khanate and the Qing Empire.

- It was demonstrated that in the post-Ablai period, Kozhabergen acted as an international diplomat, striving to resolve political-military disputes in Kazakh-Chinese relations and to counter the strategic territorial expansion plans of the Qing Empire.

- The role of Kozhabergen in the "horse-for-silk" international trade system was revealed, and it was shown that the Qing Empire used trade relations with the Kazakh Khanate as an instrument for political objectives.

- Kozhabergen's functions as one of the leading Kazakh batyrs coordinating economic policy were identified, including regulation of border trade, protection of Kazakh caravans, oversight of border markets, and control over livestock movements across borders; it was shown that economic factors significantly influenced Kazakh border strategy, and trade benefits helped balance military objectives.

- Kozhabergen acted as an organizer of border coalitions, coordinating intra-clan actions, mobilizing military units during conflicts, and ensuring internal unity of Kazakh society under external pressure.

- A historical-logical analysis of Kozhabergen's activities as a sardar in the context of events between the Kazakh Khanate and the Russian Empire was conducted.

- Based on archival documents and genealogical sources, the heroic activities of Kozhabergen and his descendants aimed at ensuring the territorial integrity of Kazakh lands were substantiated.

- A scientifically grounded and objective assessment of Kozhabergen's personality was formed, firmly establishing his place in the national history of Kazakhstan.

- For the first time, using a combination of concrete historical sources and archival materials, the personal character and state activities of Kozhabergen were comprehensively reconstructed, resolving a number of previously debated issues in the scholarly community due to limited source material and the predominance of legendary narratives.

Theoretical and Practical Significance of the Research. The dissertation possesses significant scientific and applied value. The conclusions and generalizations obtained in the course of the study are aimed at addressing the current needs of the scholarly community and researchers. This work complements the existing body of scientific studies dedicated to Kazakh batyrs.

The presented research, based on archival documents and materials of oral history, reveals the life path and military-diplomatic activities of Batyr Kozhabergen Zhanibekuly – one of the outstanding defenders of Kazakh lands, who selflessly fought for the peaceful life of the people and the preservation of the territorial integrity of the Kazakh state.

The scientific conclusions and results of the study can be applied in the preparation of encyclopedic reference works on Kazakh batyrs and military leaders, in research aimed at defining the place and role of historical personalities in national history, and in educational materials, including the inclusion of the topic «Batyr Kozhabergen Zhanibekuly and his Political-Diplomatic Activities» in the 8th-grade school textbook History of Kazakhstan. They can also be used in compiling materials for the fifth volume of the multi-volume edition History of Kazakhstan, as well as in scientific studies and grant projects devoted to Kazakh batyrs and military leaders of the 18th century. The findings of the dissertation may be utilized by scholars, university instructors, and students for research and educational purposes.

Subject of the Study

The subject of the study is the role and place of an active historical personality in the history of Kazakhstan, the reciprocal relationship between the destiny of the individual and that of the people, the activities of Kozhabergen batyr and his descendants, and their contribution to the struggle of the Kazakh people for freedom and territorial integrity.

Chronological Scope

The chronological scope of the study primarily covers the 18th century. This period was chosen because the institution of batyrs played a key role in the socio-political life of Kazakh society. During this era, Kazakh-Dzungar and Kazakh-Qing military confrontations took place, representing one of the most challenging stages in Kazakh history. It was during this period that the central historical figure of the study, Batyr Kozhabergen Zhanibekuly, lived and carried out his military-diplomatic activities. Due to his merits, he enjoyed special trust from Ablai Khan and became one of his most reliable batyrs. Therefore, the chronological framework of the study is determined by these historical circumstances.

Geographical Scope. The geographical coverage of the study includes primarily the eastern borderlands of the Kazakh steppe, where Kozhabergen batyr resided and conducted state activities, as well as certain territories of Central Kazakhstan, the Tarbagatai region, and Zhetysu.

Dissertation Approval and Presentation. The dissertation research was carried out at the Sh. Sh. Ualikhanov Institute of History and Ethnology. The first manuscript version of the dissertation was reviewed and discussed at a meeting of the Academic Council of the Sh. Sh. Ualikhanov Institute of History and Ethnology. The main provisions and results of the research were presented and discussed at international and national scientific conferences on historical studies, as well as published in scientific journals and collections.

The key conclusions and results of the dissertation have been published in 13 scholarly articles:

1. One article was published in a peer-reviewed scientific journal indexed in the Scopus and Web of Science databases.

a) The Internal and Foreign Policy of Khan Tauke // Oriental Studies. 2025. T. 18. №6. DOI: 10.22162/2619-0990-2025-82-6

2. Seven articles were published in scientific journals recommended by the Committee for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (CQAH) of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan.:

a) «Қожаберген батыр Жәнібекұлының халықаралық қатынастар тоғысындағы тұлғалық келбеті (XVIII ғ. 2-ші жарт.)». «Отан тарихы» ғылыми журнал. 2023 г., №1, Т. 26. 43-57 бб. DOI: 10.51943/2710-3994_2023_26_1_43-57

b) Қожаберген батыр және қазақ даласының шығыс шекарасы // Отан тарихы. 2024. Т. 27. No 2. 413-431 бб. https://doi.org/10.51943/2788-9718_2024_27_2_413-431

c) Қожаберген сардардың шығу тегі мен күрескерлік келбеті туралы кейбір деректер // «Edu.e-history.kz» электрондық ғылыми журналы. 2024. Т. 11. No 2. 435–446 бб. (Қаз.). DOI: 10.51943/2710-3994_2024_11_2_435-446

d) Абылай хан, ноян Әмірсана және Қожаберген батыр (1750–1757 жж.) // Отан тарихы. 2024. Т. 27. No 2. 432-449 бб. DOI: https://doi.org/10.51943/2788-9718_2024_27_2_432-4

e) Қазақ–орыс байланыстарындағы Қожаберген батыр // Отан тарихы. 2025. Т. 28. No 1. 200-211-бб. (қаз.). DOI: https://doi.org/10.51943/2788-9718_2025_28_1_200-211

f) Қазақ батырларының әскери-дипломатиялық қызметі: Қожаберген батыр Жәнібекұлы // Абай атындағы ҚазҰПУ-нің Хабаршысы, «Тарих және саяси-әлеуметтік ғылымдар» сериясы, №2(85), 2025. DOI: 10.51889/2959-6017.2025.85.2.026

g) The Historical Role of Kozhabergen batyr in the eastern frontier policy of the Kazakh Khanate // Asian Journal «Steppe Panorama». ISSN 2710-3994. Vol. 12. Is. 6, pp. 1707-1719, 2025 https://doi.org/10.51943/2710-3994_2025_12_6_1707-1719

3. *Three publications were presented in the proceedings of international and national scientific conferences.*

a) «The Role of the Batyr Kozhabergen Zhanibekuly in Kazakh-Chinese relations». «Еуразия даласындағы ортағасырлар заманындағы этносаяси, әлеуметтік экономикалық және мәдени үрдістер» тақырыбындағы III Халықаралық ғылыми конференция материалдары. Бішкек – Барнаул, 9–11 маусым 2025 ж.

b) «Қожаберген батыр Жәнібекұлы – хан Абылайдан кейін іс атқарған мәртебелі тұлға». «Абылай ханның 310 жылдығына орай «Абылай хан және қазақ мемлекеттілігі: тарихи үдерістер мен сабақтастық» атты халықаралық ғылыми-практикалық конференция материалдарының жинағы. – Алматы: Ш.Ш. Уәлиханов атындағы Тарих және этнология институты, 2023. Қазақстан, Алматы, 18-мам-23-18-мам-23. 173-179 бб. УДК 94 (574) ББК 63.3 (5Каз.) Б41. ISBN 978-601-261-567-8

c) Қазақтардың Шығыстағы атамекеніне қайта оралу үдерісіндегі махачиндер және Қожаберген батыр // «Абылай, Уәли және Бөкей хандардың мемлекеттік қызметі: тың тарихи деректер және ғылыми интерпретациялар мәселесі» атты халықаралық ғылыми-практикалық конференциясы материалдары. 200-210-бб. Алматы, 16 қыркүйек 2025 ж.

4. *The number of articles published in collective monographs is 2.*

a) «Абылай хан және іргелес мемлекеттер мен халықтар» (Жалпы ред. басқ. Ж. Ошан. – Алматы: ИП «Радуга», – 2023. – 344 бет) атты ұжымдық монографияда &2.5 Абылайдың сенімді сардары – Қожаберген [130-137 бб.] атты бір тарауы (1б.т.) ретінде баспадан жарық көрді.

b) Қожаберген Жәнібекұлы. XVIII ғ. – XX ғ. басындағы қазақ батырлары (ғылыми мақалалар мен энциклопедиялық материалдар). Алматы: «Рамис», 2025. – 432 б. 167-170-бб. ISBN 978-601-82356-1-0

c) Арнайы ҚР ЖБҒМ аясында жүзеге асырылған ғылыми жобада («Абылай, Уәли және Бөкей хандардың мемлекеттік қызметінің зерттелмеген кезеңдері (сирек кездесетін мұрағаттық және фольклорлық деректер негізінде)» гранттық қаржыландыру жобасы) орындаушы ретінде тәжірибе жинақталды.

Keywords: batyr, army, diplomacy, trade, border, international relations, Kazakh–Qing relations, Dzungars, personality.