

## Painting education of Kazakh mythology

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### Suggested Citation:

Karim, B., Seksembaevich, M, M., Suyuberdieva, A., Maulenberdieva, G., Kudaibergenova, M., Baybolat, L., & Ibrayeva, K., (2021). Painting education of Kazakh mythology. *Cypriot Journal of Educational Science*. 16(4), 1956-1975. <https://doi.org/10.18844/cjes.v16i4.6064>

Received from June 25, 2021; revised from July 15, 2021; accepted from August 23, 2021.

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### Abstract

Various scientific studies, interpretations, analyses, and comparisons have revealed a strong link in the origin of Kazakh mythology in contemporary Kazakh society. The main problem in this lies in the fact that existing research on mythology has always centered in fields of literature, philosophy, religion and culture, and history. Previous scholars have always overlooked the study of mythology in the field of art. It's for this reason, that this research article centered on the mythology in the art of painting education and especially pictorial analysis of Kazakh mythology. In the article, the definition and history of Kazakh mythology are given and the studies of the researchers on mythology are mentioned. The painting educations made within the scope of the research article are inspired by the myth of "Er Tostik". The research conducted within the scope of a creative and scientific analysis shows that the works related to the formation of Kazakh mythology have an important place in the history of Kazakh painting education. Besides, important subjects of Kazakh mythology in Kazakh art history were determined and how they affected the works of the painters were examined and interpreted comparatively.

Keywords: Kazakh mythology, Kazakh painters, Er Tostik, art, painting, woodcut technique;

## 1. Introduction

Myth is the first step of the spiritual culture of human beings (Losev,1990). Therefore, knowing Kazakh mythology well will help to deal with some still inexplicable issues in Kazakh psychology, world view, traditions, culture and literature, history, and art with a new perspective (Lusdoc & Namoco, 2019). The development process of Kazakh mythology starts with the formation of primitive cultures in the Kazakh steppe and then continues with the emergence of the Saka, Hun, Uysin, and Kanglı tribes in the Turkish world (Toyshanuli, 2009).

Nowadays, the deeper roots of Kazakh mythology are related to the increasing interest of scientists who research the concepts of myth and mythology in various fields. The relationship of Kazakh mythology with fields such as literature, history, ethnography, and culture has been studied by various scientists. However, it would not be wrong if we say that there are no scientists who examine and analyze mythology's relationship with art and painting education in detail. Of course, there are art researchers who study and study the works of Kazakh painters, but among them, there are no researchers who collect significant material or publish articles or books on the subject of "Kazakh Mythology". There were only those who gave opinions or made small analyzes on some of the works of painters on mythology. However, it has been determined that among Kazakh painters, there are not many painters who only work on Kazakh mythology or the mythological subjects of another nation. It has been observed that Kazakh painters mostly did not make their works on a single subject, they worked in various fields and used different techniques. This indicates that Kazakh painters underwent rapid transformation.

One of the reasons why the relationship between Kazakh mythology and painting education art and its development process has not been adequately studied until today is the scarcity of scientists and painters who research mythology in the field of art (Theodorou & Meliones, 2019; Gabdrakhmanova, Turetayeva & Doszhanova, 2020). On the other hand, Kazakh painting education has a history of only ninety years from its inception until today and important scientific studies in the field of mythology have gained momentum with the contributions of the researcher and scientist Seyit Kaskabasov since 1980, and important results have been obtained. This shows that there are some obstacles and problems in between to reveal the relationship between Kazakh mythology and painting education art in a short time.

In Serikbol Qondybai, geographer, ethnographer, and myth researcher, "Introduction to Kazakh Mythology" it is said that "Scientific research schools of Kazakh mythology must pass through three stages" (Qondybai, 2008:9). The most important of these stages is to ensure that Kazakh mythology becomes widespread and widely used in the field of art.

### 1.2 Purpose of the research

The purpose of this research article is to reveal the relationship between Kazakh mythology and the art of painting education, by examining the historical development of this article, by drawing attention to the thoughts and mythological consciousness of today's people on mythology, to the creativity and transformation of mythology, not only to reveal that mythology is not only national heritage, but also its own to create models. It is aimed to study and investigate the cultural values of Kazakh mythology. Analyzing Kazakh mythology with the language of painting education is one of the first aims. Although the analysis of Kazakh mythology in painting education and art is revealed, its similarities with the mythologies of different cultures will be shown as an example.

## 2. Method

Kazakh people are the last representative of the nomadic world. Its transition to settled life took place just as recently as yesterday. XX. They settled down in the 20-30s of the century. This shows that the Kazakh culture consists of the legacy of nomadic life, customs, beliefs, ceremonies, and oral literature. Kazakh culture is the result of centuries-long nomadic culture. For Kazakhs, this is not an unfamiliar situation, but life itself. It would be more correct to look at the mythology of the nomads in this way.

Ethnography researcher Serikbol Qondybai evaluated Kazakh mythology in his book "Introduction to Kazakh Mythology" as follows: Kazakh mythology is a system of the views and old understandings of the nomadic tribes and tribes of several millennia that constitute today's Kazakh people about the world and life. There is no clear and complete mythology in Kazakhs. He preserved himself based on oral literature products, epics, various genealogy legends, fairy tales, riddles and proverbs, idioms, and religious narratives, as well as the vocabulary of the Kazakh language (Qondybai, 2008:9; Alanazi & Thompson, 2019).

The peculiarity of Kazakh mythology is that its examples are cosmological, anthropomorphic, and genealogical. It is not possible to classify it as a ready-made mold. Kazakh myths are close to the old classical myths mentioned above in their characteristics. Although they are not in an archaic way, they bear the traces of myth-specific consciousness, time, and mythological concepts in ancient times. From the Kazakh myth, we can also find narratives describing both stages of the development of mythical consciousness, the cosmos model, the myth of origin, the struggle between man and nature, the behavior of wild animals and birds. So, all of these can come together in a text. For example, this is the case in the Orhun Yenisey inscriptions and the Dede Korkut stories. We consider this as the universality of Turkish mythology, a feature of thought.

It is not correct to examine the mythology of the Turkic world according to the mythology of other peoples and their patterns. In other words, mythology should have its form specific to the Turks, within it, specific to the Kazakh nation. Therefore, to form the "Kazakh Scientific Mythological Studies" school, it was necessary to pass through three stages:

The first stage is to compile words and concepts, legends, and other folkloric materials that are likely to contain mythical meaning and determine the aspects and examples of the first mythological understanding according to these. It is possible to call it a geographical "preliminary exploration". The second stage is the systematization of the historical development, change, and formation of Kazakh mythology as a science lesson, its basic research areas, methods, and features. The third stage is to raise the first mythology lesson to the level of an advanced mythological research school (e.g., European school/school) with the help of specialists of spiritual fields (etna psychologist, religious experts, philosopher, art scientist, cultural scientist, sociologist, historian, ethnographer, folklorist, etc.). It is to search for ways to use Kazakh mythology widely in art and culture (Qondybai, 2008:9).

It is possible to divide the history of the study of Kazakh mythology into three periods. The first period is the time until the October Revolution. In this period, mythology was generally studied within the framework of ethnography and most of them had a European-centered perspective; the second period covers the time after the October Revolution. However, the period in which research studies were actively carried out is the 50-80s of the last century. In the studies conducted in this period, mythology was examined linguistically. The third term is XX. In the 90s of the centuries, Kazakh scientists started to focus on the national philosophical foundations of Kazakh mythology. He attached

importance to its definition. Research was not only dealt with in the national culture environment, but generally theoretical, philosophical, and universal issues were brought up (Berdibayev, 1982; Kovacicova & Luprichova, 2018).

Recent research has proven that mythology is not just an ancient phenomenon, its elements can always be encountered in various cultures, especially in the fields of literature and art of every people, among them, in the works of people who attach great importance to myths and do not break their ties from it, and this is something natural. However, it cannot be said that these also helped solve important issues of mythology. Maybe, mythological works and creations will continue if human beings live, and the facts will continue to live by mixing with myth, myths with reality. It is possible that we finally understand the structure of the myth and what it really is. While the myths are being conveyed, the elements in a myth may be passed on to the other myth, mixed and changed. In such cases, we will be forced to search again for the key to understanding it. In other words, mythological creations and efforts and studies to solve its mystery will continue with the transfer of myths (Kulgildinova et al., 2019).

The above shows how versatile mythology issues are studied at a universal science level. The importance of knowing them is this: The rules in the life of the Kazakh people and the works created by them did not actually break the genetic link with mythology. His mythological heritage is very rich and is present in almost all varieties of literary genres.

In the past centuries, for certain reasons, a unique school or school of studying mythological issues could not be formed in Kazakhstan. Today, mythology research is developing in a versatile way. One of the reasons for the absence of Kazakh mythology research in previous centuries is that the study of myth theories in Soviet science based on Marxist and Leninist methodology has been mainly in two directions: ethnography has treated myth in terms of religion and philology in terms of genre. This has greatly limited the field of research. The philologist and philosopher Alexey Fedorovich Losev, who was an expert on ancient mythology, said:

“Myth is not intended to provide any definition or explanation. Myth is seen as the effort of primitive people to explain and understand nature and society. This is not true, because each of the mythical narratives of nature and society is a result of comprehension with reason” (Losev, 1990). By further developing the above-mentioned thoughts, they claimed that religious consciousness is mythology. Of course, this view was not an approach that would serve scientifically to examine the problems of mythology in the period when Soviet ideology was dominant.

Despite this, the formation of its own school with the study of Kazakh mythology started as follows: XIX. In the century, there arose an eagerness to study the ethnographic heritage of the peoples of the East, in which the peoples living in remote regions of Russia under their rule. In 1889, the Eastern Siberian department of the Russian Geographical Society organized a scientific trip to Mongolia under the administration of Nikolay Mikhailovich Yadrintsev (Yadrintsev, 1889:13).

The scientific trips of Vasily Vasiliyevich Radlov and Grigori Nikolaiyevich Potanin on this route after a little while are proof of this. These trips have undoubtedly compiled and revealed a wealth of ethnographic material. However, it is a fact that the culture, thought system, history of the Eastern peoples, and their unique world views are not taken into consideration in analyzing these materials. Thus, although the text of the Orhun Yenisey inscriptions was found and analyzed, it was the XIX. No connection has been established between their lives in the century. The lifestyles of the Kazakhs are considered ethnographically separately, and they are not associated with the mythological tradition of thinking of the people. That is, Kazakh myths have been studied separately from Turkish mythology.

Therefore, if the beliefs and beliefs of the Kazakhs from the earliest times, their understanding and practices inherited from the ancient Turks regarding their religion are examined separately and evaluated individually, it will not only be wrong but also divert the work of future generations to the wrong path (Gumilev, 1993).

Naturally, it was not possible to do these studies in any other way. Because all these researchers were representatives of the European school. For this reason, examples of Eastern culture were tried to be molded into a European-centered pattern during the Soviet period. Therefore, from the works that give a lot of information about the ancient legacies, we read the illogical views that describe the epics of the ancient Turks as if they were the product of a certain class (Koniratbayev, 1987:56). Lev Nikolayevich Gumilev, an ethnologist and historian, said: "According to the abundance of various books and private sources, the history of Central Asia in ancient times was not written" (Gumilev, 1993:86).

It is necessary to understand the above-mentioned words correctly. This does not show that the study of mythology issues in Kazakh science is too weak. Chokan Valihanov's work in the field of mythology, who left his mark in the study of Kazakh mythology for the first time within the framework of the dominant scientific opinion in his life, has not lost its importance even today and directs the studies in this field to a certain extent (Utemissova, Danna & Nikolaevna, 2021).

Although Chokan Valihanov carried out very successful works in 1862-1863, Kazakh mythology was not studied comparatively in the following years. The works of Chokan Valihanov named "The Five-Volume Collection of the Kazakh Encyclopedia" is a very valuable work, which is a historical and ethnographic source, which is the beginning of the in-depth study of the theoretical issues of mythology. The peculiarity of this period is that the issues are dealt with in general and in terms of Turkishness. After reading the book "Black Religion or Shamanism in the Mongols" by Dorci Banzarov, the famous scholar of the Mongols, "Remains of Shamanism in the Kazakh" written by Chokan Valihanov is literally the beginning of the comparative study of Kazakh and Mongolian mythology (Toyshanuly, 2009:4-5).

Many scientists worked hard for the formation of the scientific research school of Kazakh mythology. One of them, the ethnographer, historian, and art scientist Alkey Margulan has several works on mythology. He argued that the history of the Kazakh epics, tales, and legends should have begun in the times before Christ and that they were transmitted by preserving their main ideas and changing with the evolution in the consciousness of human beings and reached our time.

Although the word myth did not come across in the works of the founders of Kazakh folklore science, the spiritual features in the consciousness of primitive people were expressed in words close to the concept of myth. Ahmet Baytursinuly, a literary scientist, Turcologist, educator, and translator, said the following: "In his primitive period, the man did not distinguish between living and non-living things like children. It seemed that both living and non-living things lived in the same way...Since human beings did not move away from nature, they lived together with nature. It perceived inanimate objects as alive" (Baytursynuly, 2003: 278-279).

Poet and writer Saken Seyfullin say that the mythical definition in the consciousness of the first people encountered in fairy tales: "When people talked about various animals, various objects and events of creation in those times, they really believed what they told and told them that way. They believed that they could do various "miracles" and "spells". While describing one of them, the spoke of his dreams as if they were real. Thus, the narratives that the ancients call true have remained fairy tales for the next ones" (Seyfullin, 1964:130).

While classifying Kazakh folk literature in the work of scientist Haleb Dosmuhamed called "Alaman", he classified the myth as cosmological stories, that is, as a separate genre. It was Seyit Qaskabasov who first studied the myth as a term of folklore in 1980. His view was detailed in his famous work "Nesri of the Kazakh People" published in 1984 (Qaskabasov, 1984). Various aspects of mythology were also examined in the various works of the author in question, and especially because of many years of studies and efforts, the history and universal features of Kazakh mythology were revealed in detail, and the history of the Turkish world was revealed.

It is possible to mention Serikbol Qondybai as one of the people who are experts in researching Kazakh mythology. Because he wrote a ten-volume book series on Kazakh mythology. In each of them, the author tried to show that Kazakh mythology is deep and rich. However, the researcher, scholar Kenzhehan Matyzhanov also argued that it is correct to seek the basis of mythic thinking from folkloric works: "Although the research on the relationship of the traditional world view with the thinking system of myth in it is less in Kazakh folklore science, the place of mythical consciousness in the spiritual world of human beings has not escaped the attention of the peoples of the world. One of the most important sources in this context is always folklore" (Matyzhanov, 2006:65).

When the historical and mythical stories of the Kazakhs are handled in terms of their content, structure, and aesthetics, they seem to have emerged among the examples of oral literature. Therefore, author Malik Gabdullin mentioned the literary meanings of myths, fairy tales, and legends: "The fairy tales and beautiful legends and myths that emerged when the people did not have the art of writing have a special and important place in the history of literature" (Gabdullin, 1971).

For many years, our scientists have been skeptical of the view that there is a genre of myth in Kazakh folklore. Often it is not emphasized by saying mythological understanding and characters in a general way. The most important reason for this is that, in our opinion, they understand the myth genre as Europeans do. In general, when it comes to myth, the first things that come to mind are ancient Greece and Rome.

Kazakh scientists today revealed that mythologies are not systematized like their mythologies and that myths do not complete their development due to the characteristics of social life.

### **3. Findings and analysis**

Kazakh mythology has been preserved in the memory of the people since the minus times and has been passed down orally from generation to generation. In Kazakh myths, the creation of the world, the earth, and the sky, the occurrence of human beings, the causes of various events in nature, the origins of the flying bird and the running animal and living things, the reasons for their behavior and characteristics are explained and told.

Within the scope of the research on our topic, the views of many scientists on the universality of Kazakh mythology and the examples they put forward are mentioned in the article. In other words, various extraordinary characters related to any mythological event, their behavior, and the relations of mythological worlds with each other are discussed. Kazakh mythology may have differences and privileges from the mythologies of other nations, but when we look at the information obtained from Kazakh mythology books, movies about mythology, and old people, it is possible to say that all myths are one type. However, it has been revealed that almost all events in Kazakh mythology are closely linked to natural events.

Kazakh mythology is versatile and full of extraordinary events, adventures. When the mythological characters are considered separately, it is seen that each character has its own specific task and purpose, whether that character is positive or negative. But in the mythological world, they are all linked. As a result of our thesis, it is revealed that all Kazakh mythology has a common point and that the events are similar and uniform. For example, in Kazakh mythology, "Alpamis World", "Er Tostik", "Kozi Korpesh and Bayan Sulu", "Mother Umay", "God", "Golden Man", "Balbal Stones", "Korkut Ata", "Evil Spirits" The plots of the mythological cases related to the "Sky Realm" and the like are almost the same, uniform and seem to be fed from the same source. For example, if we take any Cossack myth, the protagonist in that myth comes to the world, grows up, leaves his homeland to fulfill a difficult task he must do, goes on a journey, encounters good friends and enemies during his journey, overcomes adverse events and finally struggles with the oppressors The plot is almost the same in other myths, such as, defeating them and returning to his homeland. If the beginning of the events is a point, reaching the goal of the hero leads him to the second point, the endpoint. (Gabdullin, 1971). The hero's arrival to his homeland, his home, and his return to his first point, by overcoming all difficulties and reaching his goal, can be symbolized in a circle. Mangoes through various events from his head to complete this circle, to reach from one point to the second. The plot of the myth teaches people how to achieve their goals, respectively. If we consider every myth of the Kazakhs as the life of a person, the destinies, behaviors, and lifestyles of millions of people around the world are different, yet it is possible to say that they have common aspects, similarities, and the same issues. In other words, there is a common, uniform life for all people, such as being a conscious and well-behaved person and achieving his goal.

The oldest of the Kazakh myths mentioned above is the "Er Tostik" myth. The difference between this myth from other Kazakh myths is that the text is longer, the characters are more numerous, there are different worlds, and the events are both interesting and difficult. In a word, the myth of " Er Tostik" is multifaceted, the ancestor of Kazakh myths. Other myths of the Kazakhs are more limited than their formation and development characteristics.

The myth of "Er Tostik" is a text that every Kazakh Turk has heard a lot since childhood, is the subject of research by many scientists even today and continues to emerge and contains abundant materials not only in terms of mythology but also for different fields. However, it is one of the myths that has undergone many changes until today and is being studied in comparison with world myths. Archaeologist and art scientist Alkey Margulan's comparison of the epic "Er Tostik" with the epics of "Iliad", "Odyssea" from ancient Greek literature and saying that myths such as "Er Tostik" were much in Ancient Sumerians and Greeks. The fact that he claims to be strong and evaluates it as the myth of the ancient age is proof of this (Margulan, 1965:89).

Although the myth of the "Er Tostik" is not known in detail by today's people, this myth also has aspects like some periods of the lives of people of our age. For example, the traditions, customs, expressions that people use when talking to each other in daily life, proverbs, people's view of animals, and their relationship with nature are still the same today.

In the previous sections of our article, Kazakh mythology was discussed in terms of painting art, and the works of the painters were emphasized by giving examples. While each of the painters presented work on Kazakh mythology to the audience, he produced works on a mythological subject that is especially close to him and appeals to his own soul. In other words, works on mythology in Kazakh painting education are generally different from each other. Most of the studies on the subject of "Kazakh Mythology" during the period of Kazakh painting art from the beginning until today were brought into being within the framework of realism and the mythological events and characters

depicted in the work were tried to be portrayed as depicted in the myth. We can see this from the works of the painters we mentioned in previous chapters. Of course, not all the work done is realist, there are some who deal with mythology in an abstract way among mythology-themed paintings.

The works made within the scope of our article study aimed to introduce Kazakh mythology with a different perspective and a new aspect. In this context, the events in the "Er Tostik" myth, which has the longest and most comprehensive text in the Cossack mythology mentioned above, are pictured. While conducting these studies, various events in the lives of today's people were also taken into consideration and various analyzes and comments were made by comparing it with the myth text.

The painting education analysis of Kazakh mythology was carried out with the wood printing technique. If we come to the question of the woodcut technique, in the previous section, we gave a few examples from the works of painters who used the engraving technique and focused on this technique. In general, among the engraving techniques, the woodcut technique is the most suitable for processing the subject of mythology, and the construction phase is full of surprises as in mythical events. It is certain that various adventures and surprises will be encountered in the woodblock technique, starting from the sketching process, during the wood carving stage, during the tree mold carving according to the number of colors in the sketch, and until the end of the work, including the moment of coloring them.

### 3.1 Sample analysis of art studies



**Figure 1.** Karim Baigutov, "Snake World", Wood Print, 100x70 cm, 2019

In the national culture, horse gaining value and transforming it into a national value is due to the important contributions and aids that the nation provided to people's lives. Thanks to the horse, people have traveled the world and learned that there is no limit to the environment in which they live. The philologist Bolatbek Tileuberdiyev, trying to prove that the horse is considered a mythological animal in the perception of the Kazakhs, gave the following valuable opinion of the cultural scientist and fine arts enthusiast Georgiy Gachev in his doctoral thesis: "The horse is in the first place in the



animal hierarchy. The horse is at the top of the space. The horse looks forward and up, and the human is with it. The man on the horse is the sky, part of the world above, and is independent of the ground and its gravity". Tileuberdiyev says about Shalkuyryk, which we claim to have a mythical perception based on this statement of Gachev: "Tayburyl, Akmonshak, Sandalkok, Baka Aygyr, Tarlan, Kerkula, etc. horses have national characteristics. The ethnic and cultural connotations of the animal names or nicknames in question are abundant, and their educational information is abundant" (Tileuberdiyev, 2006: 125).

As the researcher and scientist Bolatbek Tileuberdiyev mentioned, the name of the hero's horse in the myth text, Shalkuyryk, gained mythological meaning within the scope of the mythical world view of the Kazakhs and had a national title. To support this idea, let's give another example from the "Er Tostik" myth:

"At that time Shalkuyryk spoke: - We are now underground, from now on we encounter the inhabitants of the underworld. After a little while, we arrive at the palace of the serpent Bapi Khan. When we arrive at the palace of Snake Bapi Han, you leave me in a distant place and enter the palace yourself. Keep in mind when you enter the palace: when you enter, you see two green snakes hissing in front of the two doors. Do not be afraid of them, they are slaves waiting at the door of the serpent Bapi Khan. When he reaches the main corner, two gray-colored snakes come and the two of them come in from the two sleeves of their clothes, come out of their bosoms, enter, and exit their trousers. These are the sons and daughters of the serpent Bapi Khan. Just sitting in the central corner, two huge yellow snakes come out, hissing, do not be afraid of them either. These are the snake Bapi Han and his wife. If you are afraid of these, they will not call you Er Tostik, we have no value in the underworld and we cannot find a way and climb above the ground" (Qaskabasov, 2011:21).

He makes his way to the "Snake Bapi" palace to do all that the Tostik Shalkuyryk says. He believes that the golden animate bone Kenjekey gave him will help him overcome fear and be resilient. In fact, in the mythology and world view of the Kazakhs, an amulet protecting the anklebone is an object that gives people strength. Researcher and ethnographer Mayrambek Orozobayev expressed this in his book titled "The Love Bone in Kyrgyz Culture and the Word Existence of the Lovers' Games in Kyrgyz".

While I was preparing the "Snake Bap" study, I came across information about the existence of a large felt tent in the underworld from Kazakh mythology by asking myself the question of how should the "snake palace" be and doing various research. In the light of this information, while preparing the sketch of our study, where and how the snakes should be in the picture were decided and depicted according to the words of Shalkuyryk in the "Er Tostik" myth. If we talk about the interior view of the felt tent in the underworld, the inner part of the wooden tent wall is depicted, and the floor is painted cold and gray. This gray color on the floor was envisioned as cement, or stones laid flat on the floor. The inside and outside of the tents on the ground are covered with felt and thick rugs and carpets are laid on the ground on the green grass. The tent that is arranged in this way gives warmth to people both literally and figuratively.

When entering through the door of the tent, two snakes of variegated color hanging from two poles holding the honor are depicted. The eyes of the snakes are on the anklebone in the middle, and they look at it and whistle. There are two gray snakes around the great anklebone and they are trying to wrap the anklebone. There are two yellow-colored snakes on the love bone.

According to Kazakh mythology and worldview, black and brown snakes are guardians of treasure and gold. Its black and brown colors are also the symbol of the ground, the soil. Gray and

bluish color is the symbol of freedom. However, it also represents patience and callousness. The color of the most important snakes, the ruler of the snakes, in the "Er Tostik" myth is yellow. The yellow color symbolizes the world, the vast steppe, and the expanse. At the same time, yellow represents richness in color. As an example, we can say the following lines in the poem "Masqut" of the philosopher Abay Kunanbay: "If you eat white, your mind will be superior to everyone else, if you take yellow, your property will overflow like water". Here, white is used as a symbol of wisdom and yellow as a symbol of wealth. The yellow color is the color of gold. The symbolization of wealth with yellow color is due to the color of this gold. Art scientist and researcher Kaldikul Orazkulova, in his book titled "Arhetyptik Obraz ben Ujymdyk Beysana: Madeni-Philosophyalyq Taldau" (Archetypes in the Works of Kazakh Painters and the Collective Subconscious: Cultural and Philosophical Analysis) he talked about their meanings. That is, yellow represents consciousness, black represents a place, and gray represents freedom. The work that we call "Snake Bapi" is made with the woodcut technique. The colors used in the study and their meanings also describe the characteristics and characters of the snakes in the painting education.

The snake has an important place in the belief of the Kazakhs. The Cossacks attributed mysterious meanings and talismanic adjectives to the snake, but also thought it had the ability to help. In other words, the snake cult is one of the important branches of Kazakh mythology. What we call the serpent cult here is the perspective of the mythological culture of an ethnic and cultural environment towards the snake, and it has an important role in the traditions and ceremonies in the society in question. The important thing here is whether the snake is shown in a positive sense or as a symbol of evil, and that is the point.



**Figure 2.** Michelangelo Buonarroti. "Don't be expelled from heaven". 280x570 cm.

Fresco. Vatican Museum. 1508-1512.

Source: <https://bit.ly/2PPChTH>

If we compare the myth of "Er Tostik" with the incident of "Adam and Eve" in the Bible, the plot here is completely different and opposite to each other. In other words, in the myth of "Er Tostik", the hero comes to the palace of the "Snake Bapi" and asks the sultan of the snakes to help

find the way to the world above, while in the religious narrative about "Adam and Eve", the devil disguised as a snake deceives Adam and Eve and makes them taste the forbidden fruit. When God learns about this situation, he throws them both from the sky world. The painter Michelangelo Buonarroti, a prominent figure of the Renaissance, made a fresco called "Expulsion from Heaven" for the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican. This fresco work consists of two parts. In the section to the left, the moment when the first two people fell into sin is depicted. In the section on the right, the angel driving Adam and Eve from Paradise is depicted. The Heaven Tree in the middle separates the pictures depicting the two events and divides them into two.

In the sinning scene, Adam and Eve are both trying to get their fruit by pulling the branch of the tree that brings good and evil towards them and bends them towards them. This fruit is offered to them by a creature in the form of a half-human and half-snake. The painter has successfully colored these movements in accordance with the law of grace and harmony. In this fresco work, the painter tried to show Adam as the most important character, the protagonist. Eve plays the leading role in the incident described in the Bible. If we look at the snake in the form of a half-human being wrapped around the tree in the middle of the fresco work, we see that it is yellowish, yellow in color. The color of the snake on the anklebone in the "Snake Bap" painting is also yellowish.

In general, things related to yellow in the Kazakh and Kazakh mythology have a positive meaning, while in the world view of other nations, the yellow color can have a completely different meaning, as opposed to that of the Kazakhs. For example, in the yellow Germans hatred, jealousy, lying, and treason; Cowardice and danger in Americans; It represents treason in the French (Ergali, 2013). However, in the "Er Tostik" myth, he tells the hero that he has a condition before showing the way the serpent inn will rise above the ground, and if he fulfills it, he will describe the way. His condition is as follows: "There was an inn named Demir Han where the Serpent Bapi Han was at odds. No matter how many times Bapi Han wanted his daughter, Demir Han did not accept it and gave his daughter. The snake Bapi Han sends Tostik to him and promises to give Tostik his own daughter if he brings Demir Khan's daughter".



**Figure 3.** Karim Baigutov, "Bayterek", Wood Print, 100x70 cm, 2019

There is no detailed information about the tree of life called "Bayterek" or what kind of tree the tree of the universe is, and the work of Kazakh painters on this subject has not been studied and analyzed much. However, by examining the information about Bayterek in mythological events and tales, it is possible to get an idea about how it should be, how it should be placed, and the living and non-living elements related to it, and to describe this tree.

"Bayterek" is an example of the universe model and the center of the three worlds is a tree connecting them. This tree is at the top of the hill or the mountain. The hill here is a universal mountain. There are springs or wells at the bottom of Bayterek. Its water is sacred and has a magical property (Sattarov, 1988).

In Kazakh folklore, there are two creatures mentioned in relation to Bayterek. A large blackbird Samruk and his cubs live on the top of the tree, and at the bottom, there is a snake or dragon. In the painting education "Bayterek", the Samruk is depicted in the form of an eagle and the snake in the form of a dragon. As the Samruk floats through the sky towards its home, which is its treasure, he sees a huge dragon climbing towards the top of the "Bayterek" tree. Looking at the picture, it is understood that there will be a tough struggle between the two. The snake (dragon) and the great blackbird are opposed to each other, the two are dualist rivals. The snake (dragon) always tries or eats the offspring of the big blackbird. Among them comes a human (a heroic hero in fairy tales). He kills the snake (dragon) and saves the bird's young. Because of this goodness, the bird takes the bahadur above the ground. Looking at this, Bayterek himself or his root must be in the underground, underground. In general, the motif of "bayterek, snake, big blackbird and bahadur" in Kazakh mythology and Kazakh tales is continuous, it is a frequently repeated subject. A similar subject is repeated twelve times in his five-volume tale. For example, in the fourth volume of the fairy tale book, "Deldash", "Jartı Tostik", "Ayu Giant", "Ayu Alpan", "Kulan Batyr", "Akbilek Kyz", "Turgin Bala" and in the second volume "Hanshentay", "Winged Flowered Black It is possible to come across these motifs in fairy tales such as "Horse", "Kulatay Batyr" and "The Bird with a Rose from Its Mouth". Therefore, we can see this motif as a constant subject of Kazakh mythology and say that "universe tree cult" is common in Kazakh world view.



**Figure 4.** Aibek Begalin. "Bayterek". Oil on canvas. 100x120 cm, 2012. Source: <https://bit.ly/2LnLlwl>

In the work "Bayterek" made with wood printing technique, the struggle between Samruk and the dragon is described as mentioned above. Most Kazakh painters did not describe the struggle between these two mythological characters. Often, thanks to the mythological hero's prowess, the scene of defeating the dragon or killing the dragon with his spear or bow are depicted (Baytursinuli, 2003).

The painter depicted the moment after the hero killed the dragon in an oil painting education technique in a realistic way. In the middle of the work, there is a hero resting at the bottom of the "Bayterek" tree and a lifeless dragon lying around the tree. In the background behind the Bayterek tree, a white horse with its head turned is depicted. If we look at this, the horse feels that the Samruk bird is flying. What needs to be noted here is the golden egg-shaped object on the top of the Bayterek tree. There is a common point between the artistic work of artist Aybek Begalin called "Bayterek" and our "Bayterek" work made with wood printing technique. It is the treasure at the top of the Bayterek tree. According to the myth, if this treasure is destroyed, the road to the ground will be closed.

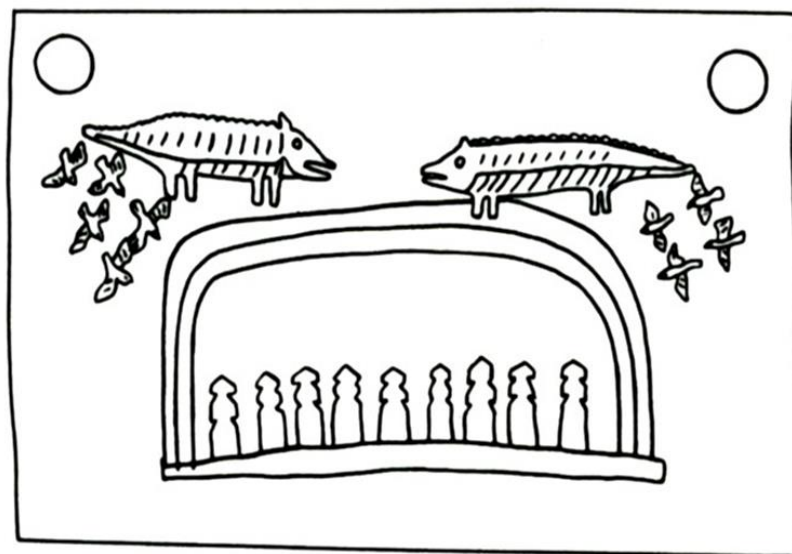


**Figure 5:** Karim Baigutov, "Soul", Wood Print, 125x166 cm, 2019

This work of art is the result of a long study. First, detailed research has been done on the concept of "soul" in Kazakh mythology and especially in the "Er Tostik" myth, as well as other myths and tales. Accordingly, a detailed sketch study has been made. The shapes and symbols used in the sketch are placed in a harmonious green in terms of composition. After the sketch work is completed, the copying process of it on the wooden board has begun. The sketch consists of two parts, but it is a work on a single subject. In accordance with our research subject, this painting education made with the wood printing technique is larger in size, and more colors are used compared to other works made with the same technique. This is the difference between the works from other works.

If we take the picture called "Soul" as a whole, then a large and wide Kazakh steppe comes to life before our eyes. There is a deer with horns lying on the ground in front of the right part of the picture. The deer looks worried and is looking at the chest in front of his eyes. Inside the chest is a red anklebone. Around the deer, the sparrow cubs are flying around. A black horse is depicted on the left of the picture. The horse, on the other hand, rests on animal bones, which are frequently encountered in the vast steppe. The little sparrows fly around the horse. Wild deer grazing on the lakeshore is depicted in the background of the two parts of the painting education "soul". The study shows that a specific event has occurred. The dynamic mobility in the picture shows that an event that aroused the fear of the animals depicted. This work may arouse the curiosity of the viewer and lead to various questions. However, the aim here and the main point to be highlighted is the "soul" of living things.

Man is the small model of the universe. That is, the human body describes a whole universe. Therefore, just as the universe, the sky, and the underground are divided into nine, the human soul is divided into nine, nine, and the human body into nine. The list stated in the research called "nine lives" by the researcher and ethnographer Serikbol Qondybai supports our view. Qondybai, the place where the universe-soul-soul-human-first ancestor-totem (animals and birds) - generation (boy, girl, tribe), etc. Each of those in this list, which he lists as, can be associated with the number nine: 9 universes - 9 lives - where 9 lives are found - 9 people - 9 first ancestors - 9 totems - 9 generations, etc. (Qondybai, 2008:413).



**Figure 6.** The Universe Tree of the Beer Universes

Anthropology and Ethnography Museum. Sankt-Petersburg. **Source:** <https://bit.ly/31gBpxK>

If we look at the legacies of the peoples in the remote regions of Asia, we see that the number nine has an important place in their myths. For example, in the universal tree of the Birar Evenkes, pictures of the Sun and Moon, dragons and birds, as well as "nine mothers" symbolizing the souls are depicted. On the other side of the painting education made on the piece of cloth, the tree and the spirit of the hunter sitting at its base are depicted.

The important point here is that the number of souls and spirit mothers is nine. Just as there is nine times the sky, the human soul must have nine layers. So, apart from the deepest soul, there is again a layer of eight souls. For a person to die, one must first pass the eight-layer soul and die the ninth and main soul, which is at the deepest, center.

As a result of the comparison of mythological texts with the extraordinary tales of other peoples, it is seen that "the soul is in a different place and protected" in the narratives of other nations. For example, in the "Er Tostik" myth that we are examining, the text where the life of Shoyinkulak, the enemy of Tostik, is hidden elsewhere is described as follows:

"My soul is away; I'm not holding it with myself. Forty gazelles roam over the reed spring. Among them is a black deer, inside the deer, there are nine black chests. There are nine birds in the smallest of those boxes, and those nine birds are my dear. You know this. If your life does not fit in your body, take it, and put it with them. However, nobody but yourself should know about it. If someone else learns, neither will you stay alive" (Qaskabasov, 2011:34).

Folk Koroglu says that this motif is also in the tales of many Turkish tribes: "In the heroic epic of Kyrgyz "Er-Toshtok", elements of Central Asian and Iranian folklore are many. The hero descends under the ground and asks his wife to find out where the giant's soul is. It turns out that the yellow fish (Turkish motif) living in the golden lake in the place called Al-Tayki, the soul of the giant, has a golden chest (Iranian and Azerbaijani motif). There are forty birds in that chest (there is only one bird in Iran and Azerbaijan with a similar motif, and that bird is a dove). The life of the giant was these forty birds. When Er Tostik finds the chest and cuts off the heads of the birds, the giant dies too" (Koroglu, 1983:22). The same motif is found in the Russian fairy tale "Immortal Kasshei". The hero of the fairy tale approaches the Immortal Kasshei, asks a few questions in a nice and polite voice, and then a conversation follows between them:

"Where is your soul Immortal Kasshei thing? - My soul is at the foot of the oak tree. There is a black box at the bottom of the tree. There is a rabbit inside the box, a duck inside the rabbit, and an egg inside the duck. "That egg is my life." When the subjects about the soul in the mythic tales mentioned above were compared, it was seen that the plot was similar in all of them, but some details were different according to the traditions, customs, and world views of each people.

The nine chests described in the "Er Tostik" myth can also be interpreted as a nine-fold universe or a soul covered with nine-fold bodies. According to Kazakh mythology, the number 40 is mostly any measure, time, place, behavior, etc. limit is the last point. Accordingly, 40 gazelles in the "Er Tostik" myth represent 40 rooms and 41 black deer represent 41 rooms. If the 40 rooms here, that is, 40 layers, are the concrete objects and time reached by human feet, eyes, ears, and mind, 41 rooms are other objects in the universe. There are 9 black chests in this deer, indicating that the 41 rooms have nine floors, or 9 compartments in each, and those 9 compartments are alive.

#### **4. Discussion**

The structural features, formation process, and subjects of Kazakh mythology have been handled in different ways in every field. As for how Kazakh mythology is viewed in the art of painting

education, it is like not searching for the place where the wonderful world called "art and myth" is located. After finding this extraordinary, fantastic world, it is important to have special keys to open each magical door within it. There are mysterious things in the rooms inside the door opened with these keys. These mysterious and enchanted things are to answer the unanswered questions of Kazakh mythology in painting education and to solve their problems. If the magic gates of the mysterious world here are Kazakh mythology, the magic keys are Kazakh painting art. One of the most important things that come out of the doors opened with these keys is the "Er Tostik" myth in Kazakh mythology. The plot of the myth has been tried to be analyzed with the wood printing technique (Abdykhalykova & Shalgynbaeva, 2018; Kaldiyarov et al., 2018).

In this article, the theoretical, historical, and scientific studies about Kazakh mythology from the very beginning and the analysis of the works of Kazakh painters on this subject show that the proficiency thesis in this art has been successfully carried out. All the sections that make up the thesis are closely interconnected and form integrity. One of the important issues emphasized in the application is the "one-mold" and similarity issue between myths as follows. The first person to write down the myth of "Er Tostik", which is generally regarded as one of the oldest myths by scientists and considered as "the most distinctive examples of mythical consciousness" (Qondybai, 2002: 23), was the famous scientist of the Russians Grigoriy Nikolayevich Potanin. He recorded this myth in 1896 when Chokan's father went to the village of Chengiz. Avelbek Koniratbayev is one of those who first studied the "Er Tostik" myth from a scientific point of view. He considers the myth of "Er Tostik" as a text with many characters, a wide plot, and a rich content in Kazakh mythology and says about this myth, "It is a portrait of the centuries-long life of Kazakhs and worldview" (Koniratbayev, 1991; Salami, 2018).

When many episodes, events, and various frames in the "Er Tostik" myth are compared with the mythological texts of the West, it has been determined that there are several similarities between them. For example, the protagonist of the "Er Tostik" myth, taking an ax and a spear in the hands of Tostik, did not fight the enemy, but struggled with nature like Antey and Heracles in the ancient Greek myths, and opposed the storm, which shows that the myth in question is the product of the primitive period in which human beings have common mythological consciousness (Qasqabasov, 1984). In the opinion of scientists, the most developed and successful examples of mythical texts belong to ancient Greek literature. Similar mythology characters in Greek mythology also appear in the myth of "Er Tostik", which is common to most of the Turkish peoples. This similarity is proof that the myth in question was formed at the same time as Greek mythology (Qasqabasov, 2011).

For example, Odysseia ravages the city of Troy and returns to her homeland, a great storm occurs, and waves take her ship. He struggles with the one-eyed giant Polypheme alone. In the "Er Tostik" myth, the place is divided into two while the Tostik takes the "jalmavyz kempir" (from the witch) and gallops with the Shallot, and the place falls into the hands of the ruler of the serpents under the ground. As can be seen, the plot in both narratives is very similar. The difference between the two is that while Odysseia is swimming in the sea by ship, the hero of the Kazakh fairy tale travels on the Tostik steppe with her own horse. When the one-eyed giant Polyphemus blows a storm and interferes with Odysseia's ship, Odysseia takes a little wind in Aeolus, the god of the wind, and calms the sea. Er Tostik, too, tells him that if the great blackbird, who blows the wind while fighting against the giant on the ground, gives a feather and burns that feather when he is in a difficult situation, he will come to his aid. It is possible to say that the assistants of Er Tostik, who could hit the mountain next to the mountain, change their location, and finish the water of a lake in one swallow, resemble



the mythological characters of the Greeks such as Tezey, Zeus, and Uran (Seifullin, 1964; Berdibayev, 1982 ; Matyjanov, 2006).

Uran, the character of the Greek myth, struggles with the giant of the sea, Kronos, while the giant who can finish the water of a lake in the myth of "Er Tostik" in a single swallow conflict with Dolman lying at the bottom of the sea. Zeus summoned the nation to Mount Olympus to fight the enemies of the giants to destroy the giants who have disturbed the people, climb to the top of the Olympos mountain and defeat all the giants and burn their corpses. A similar event exists in the myth of "Er Tostik". Tostik kills Shouynkulak, the child of "Jalmavyz Kempir", and throws his baby in the cradle into the sea. Based on similarities like these, we can say that the myth of "Er Tostik" originated in ancient times like the mythological narratives of the Greeks.

In other words, it is seen that the "Er Tostik" myth is one of the most beautiful texts of Kazakh mythology. However, if we consider that any work is the product of the perception and perception of the society and the people in that society at the time it was created, it is possible to see that the lives of the Greeks and Saka, Huns, Uysin, and Kang people in that period were like their thoughts and perceptions (Kubieva et al., 2021).

There are bridges that reconcile each other between the works from the first to the last of the pictorial analysis studies made according to the plot of the myth of "Er Tostik". It is stated in the above section that the anklebone used in the pictures has an important place in the world view of the Kazakhs. However, the anklebone has various metaphorical meanings as well. It is evident from history that the anklebone has an important place in human life both in the past and today.

To learn the details of the woodblock technique used in practice and to apply it professionally and produce successful works, time should be well evaluated and worked regularly. It has been determined by experience that the water-based technique and oil-based technique of wood printing technique are different from each other. The water-based technique is easier to make than the oil-based technique. The colors used in the water-based technique are in the form of flour, powder, while the colors used in the oil-based technique are liquid. The papers used in the water-based technique are specially made by hand. The papers used in the oil-based technique are produced in the factory. Another difference between these two techniques is that after the paper is colored with a wooden mold, the colors appear completely different.

## 5. Conclusion

Painting educations based on the myth of "Er Tostik" are not only a work that tells the myth, but they also describe the situation starting from the life of people in general up to the cultural tradition. In addition, it was shown in the language of painting education how the myth of "Er Tostik" affected my own life. Within the scope of the article, many concepts have been researched and examined and formal forms have been prepared according to how they can be reflected in the art of painting.

The variety of colors in my paintings made with wood-print technique is also a portrait of Kazakh mythology and its richness as mythological characters. The harmony of colors with each other has been achieved with a professional eye, considering the printing technique. An image of the vitality and dynamism of Kazakh mythology was tried to be explained with warm colors, which are widely used in the works. If we consider my work named "Soul", the variety of formal forms and colors there is made according to the nature of Kazakh mythology. When other world myths and Kazakh mythology

are compared, the forms and colors that have been used come to the fore by decomposing and transforming into another expression.

This article study is thought to have a special place in the history of Kazakh painting education. Because within the framework of the concept of "Kazakh mythology", large-sized wooden molds were used and various colors were used. In addition, it is the first painting education series in the history of Kazakh painting made with the wood-print technique. Among the previous Kazakh painters, there were not many people who studied the woodblock technique in detail, learned and applied its subtleties. It is believed that the technique used during the study with the subject of the article will contribute to the art of Kazakh painting.

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