THE EPIC OF MANAS AS A GENEALOGICAL TREE OF CULTURAL TRADITION

Manas Epic — Our Cultural Code. Cornerstone of Forty Tribes and Nomadic Traditions

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Introduction

In traditional societies, genealogy functions as an integrated system for preserving ancestral memory, social stability, and collective identity, extending beyond the mere documentation of lines of descent. In cultures characterized by the predominance of oral transmission, genealogical narratives played a key role in reproducing lineage structures and coordinating collective identity.

The Kyrgyz epic *Manas* represents one of the most extensive and resilient forms of such transmission. It preserves representations of origin, kinship, and the unity of forty tribes, forming a coherent system of genealogical knowledge embedded within an oral tradition.

This paper presents a conceptual and structural-analytical approach to interpreting the epic *Manas*, in which it is examined as a multi-level genealogical tree reflecting principles of lineage organization, continuity, and supra-lineage cohesion.

Methodologically, the study draws on structural analysis, comparative epic studies, and genealogical modeling, allowing the identification of a stable architectural framework underlying the epic beyond its narrative variability.

The Epic of Manas as a Genealogical System

In classical terms, genealogy is organized according to a linear principle of descent. In traditional societies, however, genealogical knowledge emerges as a multilayered system that incorporates social, cultural, and symbolic forms of kinship.

The epic *Manas* structures genealogical knowledge around the figure of a central ancestor—Manas—through whom various clans and tribes relate their origins to a shared source. Within this system, Manas functions as a symbolic ancestor who ensures supra-lineage cohesion and continuity among genealogical lines.

Thus, the epic operates as a form of genealogical knowledge in which the defining factor is the structural coordination of lineages within a unified system of origin rather than chronological sequencing.

Forty Tribes as a Structural Level of Genealogy

The image of the forty tribes occupies a central place in the epic *Manas* and, within the proposed approach, is interpreted as a key structural level of the genealogical model.

The forty tribes constitute a union of lineages in which each lineage preserves its distinct identity while simultaneously integrating into a shared space of origin. This configuration reflects a mechanism for coordinating genealogical lines within a unified genealogical system.

The epic thus establishes a principle of coordinated coexistence among lineages, forming a stable model of genealogical union that ensures the integrity and reproduction of collective identity.

Oral Tradition and the Reproduction of Genealogical Structure

Oral tradition serves as the primary mechanism for preserving and reproducing the genealogical model of the epic. Within this system, the *manaschi* functions as a carrier of collective memory and structural knowledge, ensuring continuity of the epic's genealogical architecture.

Despite variability in performance and adaptation of narrative elements to historical contexts, core structural components remain stable: the figure of the central ancestor, the union of forty tribes, and the principle of lineage continuity. This stability indicates the transmission of a deep genealogical structure underlying the epic.

Oral tradition thereby sustains the reproduction of the genealogical tree as a living, adaptive, and functional system.

The MetaManas Tree as an Analytical Model

The present study adopts an analytical perspective aimed at the structural interpretation of the epic *Manas* as a system of genealogical knowledge. This approach enables the translation of oral tradition into the language of scholarly analysis while preserving its structural integrity.

Within this framework, the study introduces an author-developed conceptual model—the MetaManas Tree—used to reveal the internal architecture of the epic. The model

functions as an analytical tool for identifying the structural logic of genealogical knowledge embedded in the epic.

The MetaManas Tree represents a vertical organization of the genealogical system, in which the lower levels relate to the formation of lineage affiliation, the middle levels correspond to the coordination of clans and tribal unions, and the upper levels reflect supra-lineage memory and cultural continuity.

MetaManas establishes an interpretative vector that enables the epic *Manas* to be understood as a source of systematic knowledge concerning principles of kinship, responsibility, and the reproduction of value foundations underlying genealogical identity.

Genealogy and Identity

Within the epic *Manas*, genealogy functions as the primary mechanism for shaping collective identity. Affiliation with a clan and tribe determines an individual's integration into a system of origin and collective responsibility.

The epic constructs a supra-personal model of identity in which genealogical lines converge into a unified genealogical architecture, ensuring the stability and reproduction of collective memory.

Conclusion

Interpreting the epic *Manas* as a multi-level genealogical tree makes it possible to view the epic as a structural system for organizing and transmitting ancestral memory. From this perspective, the epic functions as a mechanism for coordinating genealogical lines and reproducing collective identity within an oral tradition.

The scientific novelty of the proposed approach lies in the shift from analyzing narrative forms of the epic to identifying its internal genealogical architecture, in which kinship, continuity, and supra-lineage cohesion appear as structural elements of the system.

This approach expands the potential for comparative research on epic traditions as forms of genealogical knowledge and opens new perspectives for analyzing mechanisms of ancestral memory preservation in cultures with oral modes of transmission.