

Research Literature Review on Mongolian Heroic Epic *Jangar* (1978-2023)

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There is abundant research on the epic *Jangar*, which involves many fields such as literature, culture, document, etc. The cross-study between *Jangar* and different disciplines boosts its continued vitality in the contemporary era. The research achievements are as follows. The comparative research is remarkable and the linkage development trend with domestic and foreign literature is optimistic. Besides, multi-channel cultural research is concurrent with steadily advanced source exploration, and the research field has expanded under multidisciplinary guidance. Outstanding achievements have been made in *Jangar* and Jangarology, and the research on epic development and literature collation has attracted much attention. Meanwhile, the expansion of theoretical construction and the innovation of communication methods flourish the research on *Jangar*. However, as for the current research situation, there are still some challenges, such as divides in basic problems, insufficient in-depth and comprehensive research fields, and hardships in implementing the inheritance and protection of intangible cultural heritage.

Keywords: *Jangar*, heroic epic, literature review

Introduction

Since the study on *Jangar* entered the new era, it has expanded its research team and its research field, becoming indispensable to the research on national epic. However, due to its huge volume and the complicated intersection with other disciplines in the long term, there are related holistic papers produced consistently, but the overall research overview of *Jangar* since the new period is rare. Therefore, based on the papers, monographs, and publications pertinent to the study of *Jangar* in the new period, this paper tries to achieve a more comprehensive and intuitive understanding of *Jangar* through a full-fledged review, so as to provide certain references for its future study.

Overview of the Comparative Study of *Jangar*

Since the 1990s, the study of the national epic has flourished and developed, with related comparative study rapidly growing into a major focus. The comparative study of the epic *Jangar* has become important content. Its academic output is mainly divided into domestic comparative research and foreign comparative research, which is explained in detail as follows.

Domestic Comparative Study of *Jangar*

The domestic comparative study of *Jangar* focuses on four aspects, including the comparative study with

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Chinese minority epics, the comparative study with *Water Margin*, the comparative study of epic singing procedures, and the modern and contemporary transformation of *Jangar*.

The comparative study with Chinese minority epics is attractive, especially the comparison between the three Chinese epics *Jangar*, *Manas*, and *Gesar* is the most remarkable. In terms of structure research, Xiong Liming (2005) summarized the basic plot structure and types of heroic epics by means of epic motif series. Yao Baoxuan and Xie Dianyuan (1989) observed the epics of ethnic minorities and their comparison with the world's epics from vertical and horizontal perspectives, thus summarizing their artistic laws. In addition, the comparison of characters, commonness, and individuality of the three epics is also an imperative perspective for the study of *Jangar*. The former focuses on female images, such as Si Qinhu (2001) and Lang Ying (1997) who highlighted the root of aesthetic images in *Jangar* and its original relationship with shaman images by comparing female images. Taking Su Jingbo's (2012) in-depth exposition of the commonness and individuality comparison among the three epics based on different cultural backgrounds and artistic characteristics as an example, the latter is beneficial to the overall understanding of the cultural characteristics and artistic value of the three epics, which lays a foundation for their subsequent comparison. It is similar to the *Study of Chinese Epics* which systematically exposes the general features of the three epics, playing a crucial role in the development of related epic research in academia (Renqin & Lang, 1999). Starting from the tradition of Altaic national heroic epics, Renqin Daoerji (1995) who summarized the similar formation of *Manas* and *Jangar* guided the academia to progressively value the comparison between Mongolian heroic epics and Turkic heroic epics, which is enlightening to some degree.

Other comparisons with ethnic epics also make a difference. Shamanism customs, Dong legends, Yi epics, etc. have become models for comparison with *Jangar* (Si, 2007; Liu, 2014; Ji, 2014). Many sparks are ignited in the comparative study of culture, literature, and aesthetics among different nationalities, which provides more possibilities for the study of the *Jangar* epic and broadens the horizontal comparison among ethnic epics.

The internal comparative study of the *Jangar* is also prosperous. For example, Mei Rong (2019) used the oral program and performance theory to explore the internal language program and different languages in *Jangar* through text analysis. Besides, many papers are created by A Jingsi (2021a; 2021b) from various perspectives such as character modeling and nomadic patterns. The comparative study of characters in *Jangar* has also been developed to some extent, which is worth mentioning that Fu Yao's (2014) discussion on the significant role image of Ming Yan has aroused academic attention to the non-main characters in *Jangar*, enriching the epic study of *Jangar*.

At the same time, there are also some comparative studies on *Jangar* and *Water Margin* in academia, which focus on their similarities and differences in heroic images and the theme of righteousness (Wang, 2016; Ta, 2011). In addition, few comparative studies value the epic singing program and its combination with modern and contemporary spirits. However, the relative comparative study is still in the initial stage and only a few scholars (Qiu & Li, 2013; Lin, 2021) have explored this field, which fails to be popular.

Foreign Comparative Study of *Jangar*

The foreign comparative study of *Jangar* is mainly divided into three parts, including the comparison with foreign epics, the comparison with foreign myth, and the comparative study from the perspective of Western literary theory. However, there is limited research from the perspective of literary theory. Only the research on *Jangar* itself can be found in Hu Jicheng's (2016) paper. Therefore, according to the first two modules, this paper introduces the foreign comparative study of the *Jangar* epic.

As for the foreign comparative study of *Jangar*, the comparison with foreign epics accounts for the heaviest proportion, where the comparison with Homer's epic and ancient Indian epic is the richest. The comparison with Homer's epic mainly focuses on the comparison with the *Iliad*, accounting for up to two-thirds. Wang Chunfei (1997) and Guo Yanying (2009) compared and investigated different cultural details and artistic styles between the two epics from the perspective of narrative motivation. The comparison of heroic images between the two epics is also the highlight of the foreign comparative study of *Jangar*. For example, Wang Yanfeng (2011) broke the traditional stereotype of male hero image research and analyzed female hero images. Gong Lichun (2010), Huo Hongtao (2017), and other scholars made comparative studies from the perspective of traditional male heroes. It is worth mentioning that the research on the motif of war between the two epics should not be underestimated. Many scholars such as Wu Zhixu (2007) and Tong Yao (2018) focus on expounding the two epics in an all-round way from the aspect of war motif, so as to emphasize the similarity of social development stages and primitive ancestors' thinking within different nationalities and regions. Other scholars (Gao, 2010; Wang, 1997) take the aesthetic comparison and structural comparison between the two epics as the lead-in. Although there is research, the perspective is more three-dimensional, which is referential for the subsequent related comparative study.

The comparison with ancient Indian epics mainly focuses on *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*. In the comparative study with *Mahabharata*, Qu Han and Wang Yanfeng (2016) have made great achievements in comparing the two epics from the perspective of primitive religious concepts, which explored the deep cultural connotation through the overall investigation in vertical and horizontal directions. The comparative study with *Ramayana* is carried out from two opposite perspectives. Ling Li (2011) studies the two epics from the perspective of a violent war. Yang Rong (2011) wrote on the comparative study of the two epics from the unique perspective of love and beauty, which showed the unique perspective of comparative study and played a good foundation for the future study of the relationship between the two epics.

In addition, Meng Ke (2003; 2007) focused on the comparison with *Thirty-three Warriors* and published many articles, which are also highly innovative for the comparison between *Jangar* and other foreign literary works. The comparative study of the relationship between *Jangar* and other foreign minority literature or minority history is scattered. Although Meng Kai (2012) and Teri (2017) have made some achievements, more in-depth research needs to be carried out urgently. At present, the comparison between *Jangar* and foreign myths is relatively weak, which indicates that this research may be a new academic growth (Zhang & Lu, 2020; Feng, 2018; Liu & Wang, 2015).

Overview of Cultural Study of *Jangar*

The cultural research on the *Jangar* is mainly divided into national culture and cultural communication. The national culture presented by epic singing content reflects each other with real life, beliefs, and customs. Their consistency not only consolidates the sacred status of *Jangar*, but also promotes its cultural dissemination and inheritance.

Ethnic Culture Research

Jangar contains the pluralistic and integrated content of national culture, involving many aspects such as thought, religion, art, folk customs, diet, and costumes.

Ideology and culture are the most concerned and rich in content. Led by the investigation of spiritual culture, the ideological culture shows the integration of the spiritual sustenance of Weilat people and the real material

life, which manifests the complete historical change of the nation by singing and speaking (Ma, 2011). Meanwhile, it combines the internal structure of grassland culture with the internal spiritual support of the nation, focusing on exploring national psychology and thinking (Wang, 2009). In addition, Baoji Rimutu (2016) and Muji Badenqiqige (2015) focus on spiritual and cultural thinking. Zhu Heli and Xu Mingrong (1992) made a reasonable and in-depth analysis of the important characters in *Jangar* to highlight the lofty ideals of Mongolians and emphasize the nationality of *Jangar*. Personifying and deifying horse culture, Wang Yingchao (2005) extended it to the aesthetic study of national culture, which laid a foundation for the in-depth study of *Jangar*.

Thinking of social governance and philosophy in ideology and culture are two new research branches. Tie Huan (1998) and Gegen Hasi (2015) respectively discussed the differences in social system, ideological basis, family unit, and ownership in the old and new periods, so as to explore the correct way of social governance by the spiritual culture in *Jangar*. Tao Ketao and Su He (1997) discussed the development of philosophical and social thought history based on Mongolian tribal culture, which inspired the further exploration of *Jangar* in the new stage.

With ethnic culture closely related to religious culture, *Jangar* contains factors related to Buddhism, Shamanism, and so on. Taking Buddhism as an example, Baoyin Hexige (1992) explained the origin of some motifs in *Jangar* and Buddhist culture. Li Jian and Zhu Ling (2004) analyzed the influence, status, and dissemination of Buddhist culture in *Jangar*. Compared with Buddhism, Shamanism is the most mentioned in the study of religious culture in *Jangar*. Siqin Batu (1999a; 1999b) explained the far-reaching influence of shamanism on *Jangar* from two aspects, that is, blood sacrifice and architecture. On this basis, Wuyun Qimuge (2008) further carried out religious worship research on the Shamanism witchcraft concept in architecture. In addition, He Baoyinbatu (2000) investigated the deep influence of shamanism on *Jangar* through Animism and Three Definitions. In other religious beliefs, many scholars have made all-round expositions. Lang Ying (1998) combined the mystery of religion in epic and the secular characteristics derived from its development, focusing on singing activities to analyze the divine power worship. Chen Lina (2014) discussed the divinity of epic in different degrees from the aspect of Mongolian religion as a whole, while A Jingsi (2012; 2013) explored it from the perspective of literary disaster, which enriches the study of religious culture in *Jangar*.

The development trend of art and culture research is relatively balanced, which has been promoted in art theory, sports, dance, and music. Discussing the origin of symbolic art and thinking mode in epics, Zhang Yue (2013) made pioneering research on understanding the thought and behavior track of ancestors with the help of primitive thinking from the perspective of art theory. Most of the studies on sports culture focus on national traditions. Yang Haipeng (2014; 2021) observed the sports in epic from the perspective of original ecological sports-like culture in many articles and made extended research on Mongolian Shalibor wrestling, which constituted a model of sports culture discussion. Liu Xiangyou and Guo Zhiyu (2018) analyzed the general situation of martial art culture in epic and the possible inheritance problems from the martial art motif. Dance culture focuses on the program of epic dance art, which makes Sawuerdeng, the Weilat Mongolian dance, integrate into modern aesthetics with an innovative inheritance effect (Li, 2020). Music culture is the top priority in art and culture. *Epic Singer of Jangar—Jangar Qi* written by Renqin Daoerji (2004) systematically combed its types and inheritance, which is a must-read to understand the basic situation of *Jangar Qi*. Erdun (2010), Bu Mengke (2011), etc. also introduced the above-mentioned singing program and other singers and speakers in detail. Si Qinbatu (2014) has shown the process and method of artists' memory, creation, and interpretation of

epics, highlighting the stylized characteristics of epics. On the basis of comparing the similarities and differences between singing and speaking by different artists, Jia Mucuo and Wang Zhongying (1991) creatively proposed to sort out the version of *Jangar* with Chinese characteristics, which set the tone for its study in China. In addition, Wu Lijicang (2016), Zhang Yue (2001a), and other scholars have made great efforts in the field of *Jangar* art in singing and speaking. Hasi Bateer (2022) and Wu Lijicang (2022) discussed the systematic characteristics of the epic music program. Wuli Jibayaer and Bao Yushan (2001) analyzed the aesthetic view in music theory from the overall framework of ancient Mongolian music theory.

The study of folk culture focuses on marriage customs. Baoyin Xige (1985) and Jiu Yue (2002) all show the marriage forms and characteristics in epics, spying out the deep roots from the perspective of human sociology. The research on food and clothing culture still needs to be further developed. On the whole, only a few articles introduce Mongolian eating habits, dress etiquette, and cultural changes related to *Jangar* (Saren, 2021; Yi, 2021), which provides a good reference and takes the lead in the development and inheritance of ethnic costumes.

Research on Cultural Communication

The cultural communication of epic *Jangar* mainly depends on the series of three stages, namely, cultural root, cultural industry, and cultural inheritance. Most of the academic investigations on cultural communication are divided into different stages according to this context.

As a Mongolian heroic epic, the exploration of heroic culture in *Jangar* is primary to solve the problem of cultural roots. Bao Yinda (2007) and Si Qin (2017) both analyzed the development of heroic culture under nomadic culture. At the same time, the root of the formation of epic literary programs has also become the research focus. For example, Hang Ai (2006) did related research on the cultural roots of sentence patterns. Saren Gele (1996) who is quite innovative in exploring the cultural roots broadened the depth and breadth of the research on epic cultural roots, taking women and light culture as the breakthrough to explore the cultural system of epic and the regularity of its development and evolution.

The research on the cultural industry of epic *Jangar* is in the ascendant. Nankuai Modege (2016) put forward the development and constructive problems of the current cultural industry with the cultural creativity as the core. Tegusi BaYaer (1988) provided a desirable path for the development of cultural industry from the aspect of the motif.

Cultural inheritance is the core research field in the stage of cultural communication of *Jangar*. Chen Ganglong (2011a) systematically expounded the process of its transition from epic fragment to epic tradition, which provided a reasonable reference for the protection of *Jangar* in China. Yang Haipeng (2018) based on the national Belt and Road Initiative related the modernization protection to the construction transformation of *Jangar*. Gegen Gaowa and Wuyun Ba (1995; 1996) discussed the cultural value and significance of *Jangar* from the perspective of national cultural tradition, calling on all members of society to join in the protection of cultural inheritance. Jing Shujun (2017) and Zhang Chunmei and Zhang Yuan (2017) brought the epic tradition close to the masses from aspects of daily life and heroic image respectively, thus promoting the inheritance of *Jangar*.

Overview of Multidisciplinary Research

With its rich connotation, the epic *Jangar* has the possibility of interdisciplinary research, forming a grand pattern of mutual influence and promotion among different disciplines. The subjects related to its study are generally divided into nine categories, including literature, history, folklore, pedagogy, linguistics, communication,

anthropology, aesthetics, drama, and film and television. The pioneering systematic research intersecting with many disciplines perfectly presents the aesthetic interest, religious belief, national characteristics, literary paradigm, and other contents contained in *Jangar*, promoting its study to a new height.

Literary Research

Research on *Jangar* from the perspective of literature is the most widely content in multidisciplinary research. The priority is the study of characters. This kind of research is divided into four types, including character image overview, female image, hero image, and villain image. Many scholars, led by Renqin Daoerji (1983) and Hasi (1983), have summarized the overall characters of *Jangar*. It is worth mentioning that he pointed out its main characters are shaped by the “half-man and half-god” hero image, which enlightened the internal contradictions put forward by the academia based on the characterization of *Jangar*. The research output on female images, which has attracted much attention, is considerable. A group of scholars headed by Wang Weihua (2007; 2008) analyzed and expounded on the inferior position of women in the relationship between the sexes and the repressive characteristics in epics according to gender theory (Wang, 2016). As a Mongolian heroic epic, *Jangar* is sung by people and the study of the heroic image is naturally the highlight. Suleng Gaowa (2015) discussed the overall characters in *Jangar*, narrated the differences between generational heroes headed by *Jangar*, and subdivided the types of heroes. *Jangar* and *Hong Guer* are prominent works in the analysis of heroes. Scholars such as Renqin Daoerji (1978), Wang Sumin (1999), and Zhou Hailiang (2011) explained the growth and image-building roots of the two heroes on this basis, which echoed Renqin Daoerji’s analysis of overall characters and re-emphasized the divine characteristics of the epic characters. It is worth mentioning that Fu Yao (2014) inspected *Hong Guer*, a hero, from a relatively novel perspective, telling the father-son friendship between *Hong Guer* and *Xike Lixi* with their tenderness. The investigation of villain image is relatively insufficient. Only Xue Gang (2014) has carried out preliminary research from this perspective with the breakthrough to some extent, which inspires future research in academia.

Motif research is another key to the literary research on *Jangar*. Based on Haixixi’s motif classification, Renqin Daoerji (2011) put forward a new concept of “heroic epic motif series” and summarized two basic motif series to promote more detailed research on characters and story plots. This has played a fundamental leading role in the investigation of the motif of *Jangar*. Horse, as a critical combat partner of heroes in epics, has been attractive, and the research on horse motifs has been deepened guided by scholars such as Siqin Batu. The motif of robbing horses and the tradition of praising horses under nomadic culture have been carried forward and expanded in academia, which become a star with unique highlights in Mongolian epics (Siqin, 1996; Wang, 2020). Other motif studies are carried out from the perspectives of ecological ethics, character variants, digital symbols, etc. (Wang, 2012; Gegen, 2016; Husler, 2000; Te, 1984; Ba, 2007), which pioneered many roads for the research on *Jangar* and injected new energy into its development.

The artistic techniques used in the *Jangar* are rich and varied, with many scholars exploring them. Starting with the metaphorical technique in *Jangar*, Hasen (1994) analyzed the artistic value of the text by grasping its national and rich characteristics. Further exploring the romantic epic, Ding Ziren (1996) blended the theme, background, and characters of the text into the romantic theory to play its living significance. Shan Xuemei and Dong Wei (2008) and other scholars paid attention to the mythological thinking of epic and achieved the cultural exchange between the East and the West by using Western critical theory, which closely integrated social reality with aesthetic philosophy to achieve an innovative interpretation of *Jangar* (Man, 1997). Cao Yanan (2022) had

insightful thinking in the analysis of epic texts under the meta-modernism theory, which is enlightening to the arrangement and compilation of modern epic *Jangar*.

In addition, the literary research related to *Jangar* has been deeply cultivated in more detail. From the perspective of literary intention research, many scholars (Zha, 1997; Li, 2011) take the aspect of color intention, elf intention, and original intention, so as to reflect their national aesthetic advocacy and psychological character, thus tracing back to the source of the formation and development of epic. At the same time, scholars represented by Ba Suhe (1990; 2008) analyzed the trend of epic literature including *Jangar* from the perspective of literary academic history and put forward the future development of liveliness. Analyzing the language and national characteristics of *Jangar*, Zhi Yong (2005) and Zhuge Deerma and Zhao Zhengxin (1986) promoted the continuation of national culture and externalized national thinking with transcendental language. Ya Zhibin (2009) and Zhang Qiang (2009) launched aesthetic criticism on the narrative and structural mode of *Jangar* from the perspective of narratology, thus summarizing its characteristics and internal inheritance laws. The above research constitutes the rich content of epic literature research, which lays a solid foundation for the development of *Jangar* research in the literary field.

Historical Research

Compared with the previous part, the historical study of the epic *Jangar* is more concentrated, involving the national system, war politics, historical traceability, and historical value discussion. First, scholars (Hexige, 1997; Yu, 2012; Bach, 1989; Gegen, 2015) have analyzed the types of political power forms in the period concerned by the text from the aspect of the state system. However, no conclusion has been formed and this issue is still unresolved¹, which is only relatively consistent with the function of state power. Second, as the main content of *Jangar*, the research on the theme of war has also attracted more attention from academia. Su Rina (2015) and Ruo Songkuan (1996) both narrated from weapons and summarized the stable and changeable relationship between heroes and weapons. Based on the comparison between the war composition of *Jangar* and the heroic stories of Weilat in Xinjiang, La Yue (2010) combed the inheritance context and program differences of war description, which promoted the dynamic inheritance of epic. Thirdly, the historical origin of *Jangar* mainly starts from the historical period, region, and cultural roots, especially the discussion of *Jangar*'s historical period and region. Most scholars (Baoyin, 1984; Renqin, 1982; 1991; Liu, 1982; Liu, 1988; Aldin, 1986) believe that *Jangar* came into being after the 13th century, but there are still differences on this basis². However, the research

¹ Hexige's (1997) "Early Mongolian state form described by *Jangar*" and Yu's (2012) "Social system research of *Jangar*", these two prefer the definition of "Transitional Stage from Tribal Alliance to State Power" to explain the type of political power; Bach's (1989) "On *Jangar* and Mongolian slavery" and Gegen's (2015) "Research on the state view in *Jangar*" think that the historical period depicted in *Jangar* is in the stage of Mongolian slavery.

² Among the early scholars, Baoyin Hexige first put forward the saying that *Jangar* came into being after the 13th century, which is involved in his "General Situation of Domestic Research on *Jangar*" (Literature Research Trends, (10), 1984). According to Ren Qing's "Overview of the Study of *Jangar*" (Literature Research Trends, (24), 1982), *Jangar* came into being after the 13th century, that is, it basically formed in the 17th century. It is worth mentioning that Renqin Daoerji also put forward a similar view in the "Re-discussing the Age of *Jangar*'s Emergence" (National Literature Research, (2), 1991). Previous view that *Jangar* came into being at the end of primitive society and in the first century being from the migration of Weilat people to Altai to the 15th-17th century before Erxite moved westward to Volga River Basin has been changed. In other words, from 15th to 17th century, this view is also worthy of attention. Liu Lanshan's "On *Jangar*" (National Literature, (11), 1982), Liu Hu's "Discussion on the Age of Epics such as *Jangar*" (National Literature Research, (2), 1988) and Aldin Fu's "A Preliminary Study on the Emergence and Basic Formation of *Jangar*" (Journal of Inner Mongolia Normal University, 1986) think that *Jangar* came into being around 1206 BC, basically no later than the beginning of the 13th century. Taking Aldin Fu's viewpoint as an example, it does not contain the shadow of important historical events in Mongolia after the 13th century and does not reflect the common national consciousness of

on the region where *Jangar* came into being is relatively consistent and the academia thinks that *Jangar* came into being in Kalmyk, which can be tested (Meng, 2001; Te, 1983). The key to the discussion of the cultural origin, that is, the demonstration of the authenticity of *Jangar*, lies in the verification of whether the historical records of the epic are realistic or not (Geri, 1990; Naren, 2013). Scholars' research on this issue is also beneficial to confirming the historical origin of the epic. Fourthly, the historical value of *Jangar* has been carried forward by scholars such as Cui Dongwei (2008) and Chichikov and Alateng (1991), who explained the cultural value of historical materials from the perspectives of music and oral history, which promoted the transformation, utilization, and value realization of historical materials.

Folklore Research

The folklore study of *Jangar* focuses on epic content, which can be subdivided into *Jangar* study, epic study, and oral epic. The wide spread of *Jangar* in Europe, English, and Chinese folklore has caused extensive research by scholars at home and abroad. The collation, collection, and publication of related works led to the emergence of an international specialized discipline *Jangarology* in the 1950s and 1960s (Hao, 1992). The first symposium on *Jangar* held in Urumqi, Xinjiang in August 1982 officially opened the prelude of group research on *Jangar* in China. Since then, scholars have made in-depth explorations from the perspectives of the origin, structure, stereotype, and cultural view of *Jangar*. Jia Mucha (2004) linked *Jangar*'s name with Genghis Khan by investigating its origin and took it as the life prototype of the epic hero. Scholars such as Siqin Batu (2017), Renqin (2004), and Gegen (2017) have analyzed the general situation of the study of *Jangar* and its plot structure as a whole, which is quite helpful to *Jangarology*. Renqin Daoerji (1988), Geri Lezhabu (1996), et al. started with the epic tradition of *Jangar*, showing the development and inheritance relationship between *Jangar* and other Mongolian epics, which broadened a horizon for the horizontal comparative study of *Jangarology*. Baoyin Hexige (1999) put forward three theoretical problems for *Jangarology*, among which his expression of stereotype theory deserves the most attention. His negation of the stereotype theory in academia is quite forward-looking, which combines it with Engels' theory and the fundamental characteristics of folk literature, then synthesizing the existing achievements of a comparative study of motif to shake the stereotype theory. The research on *Jangar* Qi is also one of the important branches related to the in-depth development of *Jangarology*. Chao Gejin (2001) and Jia (1984) interviewed *Jangar* Qi represented by Zhong Gaoluofu and Pu Ribai, which sorted out the singing program and inheritance of epic through field investigation. Ren Qin (1984) and Hasi (1984) who elucidated the research value of *Jangar* also provide a steady stream of power for the advancement of *Jangarology*.

The research of epics in *Jangar* is also fruitful. Scholars represented by Chao Gejin (2010; 2011b) discussed the study of epic and introduced the key issues such as the development of the Chinese epic, the formation of research patterns, and the research turn. The transmission of various viewpoints has reference significance for the further development and inheritance of contemporary Chinese epic. According to Aodong Bailige (2019), "Chao Gejin's epic study and its contribution ushered in the preliminary exploration of ordinary epic theory." (p. 1). Besides, there are a large number of scholars (Yin, 2009; Ji, 1987; Tao, 1983) who have investigated the development of epic research from a macro perspective and answered the problems of the emergence, evolution, and classification of Chinese epics. Chao Gejin (2000a) also expounded on the field investigation method used by the epic studies and introduced the interview with Jiang Gejin in fieldwork. In addition, Renqin Daoerji (1985)

Mongolia. It is considered that *Jangar* came into being before the 13th century. His viewpoint provides reference for the follow-up research on this issue, with many scholars elaborating on this basis.

sorted out the classification methods and results of Mongolian epics, explaining the shortcomings of the current domestic classification work about epics. Siqi Batu (2022) and Meng (1998) studied its structural features based on the integrity of *Jangar* and deeply explained its ideological content, artistry, and appeal. The far-reaching influence of *Jangar* lies in the value consciousness of human harmony and freedom, patriotism, and the magnificent artistic form displayed in its epic study (Renqin, 2001; Siqin, 2010; Lang, 1995). The history and culture carried by epics exert great spiritual strength in the research and inheritance of *Jangar*, which plays an indispensable role in the current national identity.

Besides, given that *Jangar* developed from oral epic, the study of *Jangar* in the field of folklore cannot be separated from that of counterpart epic. Guided by Chao Gejin (2000b; 2000c; 2014), the academia summarized the poetic characteristics and creative rules of Mongolian heroic epics. On this basis, many scholars (Li, 2016; Feng & Liao, 2012; Wang, 2016; Shi, 2007) not only further explored the inter-generational inheritance relationship of epic oral formula theory, but also deduced the singing nature of epic to establish a falsifiable epic theoretical system, which made contributions to the close combination of epic oral research and epic folk performance. With the development of localization of oral poetics, the study of Chinese epic has moved from text to field (Chao, 2008), pushing the oral epic and oral paradigm to a new research height.

Communication Research

The communication study of *Jangar* starts with communication itself and inheritance protection, with an emphasis on inheritance protection. Taking cross-media communication as the main means, communication studies explore the significance and value of *Jangar* from diachronic and synchronic perspectives (Guo, 2021; Zhu & Guo, 2021). For example, Zhao Na (2014) and Tong Meirong (2009) explored its communication function by studying and comparing the versions of *Jangar*. A group of scholars led by Renqin Daoerji have given comprehensive guidance on the protection and inheritance of *Jangar*. They believed that the protection of *Jangar* should start from the epic itself and Jangar Qi. Besides, we need to promote the modern preservation and transformation of *Jangar* through audio recording, edition proofreading, cultural industry, and other fields (Renqin, 2012). Meanwhile, *Jangar*, as an intangible cultural heritage, has received a lot of attention in terms of regeneration and protection (Jie, 2014; Sun, 2021). The evaluation of its value and innovative transformation research never stops, which links it with digital protection technology and Silk Road to practice epic protection. It has become the main means of inheriting *Jangar*. With the protection of folk literature and art related to the epic *Jangar* integral to epic inheritance and protection, the most important thing is the protection of *Jangar*. Many scholars, such as Renqin Daoerji, have mentioned such significance of Jangar Qi to its inheritance³ (Renqin, 1987; Pei, 2012; Xiao, 2011). Only by maximizing the continuation of Jangar Qi and preserving its existing singing materials can the epic singing continue. The protection of folk culture is another important content of the inheritance and protection of epic *Jangar*. Hou Yingjun (2011) and Wang Hairong (2011) chose to analyze the successful ways of the inheritance and protection of *Jangar* from the perspectives of the development and protection status as well as inheritance methods of epic folk literature and art, so as to draw favorable experiences for the future inheritance of epic and contribute to speeding up the implementation of protection measures. It cannot be ignored that the protection and inheritance of *Jangar* also need to rely on the development and

³ Renqin (1987) makes a relatively detailed exposition of the known inheritance and singing of Jangar Qi, showing that Jangar Qi is difficult to inherit and protect; Pei (2012) and Xiao (2011) all explain in more detail the important historical role of folk artist Jangar Qi in the inheritance record of *Jangar*.

construction of tourism, which is the best transformation measure for the inheritance and protection of *Jangar* at present. Scholars such as Te Jiamucha (1986) and a large number of journalists who have made related detailed reports systematically planned the protection of the existing *Jangar* scenic spot and the construction of new tourist spots, which pointed out the forward direction for the development and inheritance prospect of *Jangar*.

Research on Other Disciplines

The epic investigation in the aesthetic field of *Jangar* Qi is mainly carried out from human aesthetics and natural aesthetics. Because the output of natural aesthetics is less, it focuses on human aesthetics⁴ (Eerdun, 2012; Man, 1988). Human aesthetics is divided into four aspects, including sublime beauty research, life aesthetics research, character image aesthetics research, and aesthetic research, among which aesthetic research results are the most fruitful. Feng Haixia (2018), Wu (1984), and Nuo (2010) used Western aesthetic theory to explore the essential power of human beings in epic, which is unique and different from other literary forms of folk literature. Life aesthetics and figure aesthetics artistically reproduce the aesthetic pursuit of epic from the perspective of the unity of man and nature as well as the aesthetic connotation of national tradition (Huge, 2013). Aesthetic research is composed of internal and external aesthetic research of *Jangar*. External aesthetic research is the analysis of national external aesthetic characteristics, which is a reason why *Jangar* presents a romantic and heroic style (Ma, 2004). The internal aesthetic research starts from the intention of the text and artistic characteristics, thus showing the deep aesthetic mechanism behind Mongolian (Yang & Ge, 2009; E, 2017; Li, 2017).

The study of *Jangar* in linguistics focuses on vocabulary and sentence patterns. Wang Zhijie (2013) and Hai (2021) selected epic locality words, parallel sentence patterns, programmed sentence patterns, etc. to capture the sentence features of Mongolian epic while completing the investigation of words. Although *Jangar* has dabbled in anthropology, its related fields are limited to human culture studies and educational function research (Zhang, 2012; Wuri, 2002). The research on the drama, film, and television of *Jangar* is mainly from the perspective of animation creation. The design of animated characters and the creation of related picture books enrich its inheritance path and promote the epic to integrate people of different ages more quickly. As a newly explored field in recent years, it deserves more attention from academia in the future (Duan, 2020; A, 2020).

Literature Research

Jangar has long been highly concerned by scholars at home and abroad. In the early 19th century, some countries began to sort out and edit epics. However, the related work in China started late, which was not until the mid-20th century that formal publications were published. The epic *Jangar* has also set off a research trend in philology because of its richness and diversity of collection and editing. Besides, its research content is mainly carried out through text translation. Generally speaking, it can be divided into four aspects, including translation comparison, translation standardization, translation review, and application of conceptual metaphor analysis.

Due to the widespread *Jangar*, its translations emerge one after another, so the comparison of translations has become major in its literature research. The first is the comparison of Chinese versions. Based on the theory of eco-translatology, Wuren Gaowa (2021) compared the two Russian versions in three dimensions, that is, language, culture, and communication, which laid the foundation for the adaptive choice of epic *Jangar* in the

⁴ Only Eerdun (2012), Man (1988), and a few others take this as the starting point and foothold to explore. However, it is worthy of recognition that Mandufu has developed the study of ancient Mongolian aesthetic thought and summarized the four objects and contents of ancient Mongolian romantic art in aesthetic thought.

future translation. Comparing three common Chinese versions, Zhang Yue (2001b) commented and summarized them in different dimensions of artistic expression. Bayin Bulu (2016), Mingyang (2019), and Hong Geer (2018) respectively selected a part of *Jangar* to make a comparative study of Chinese versions. At the same time, the study of English versions has also attracted much attention. Shan Xuemei (2011) vigorously promoted the English translation of epic against the background of applying for world intangible cultural heritage, thus enhancing its influence in a wider field. Based on Vesuere's Adaptation Theory, this paper systematically studies Pan Zhongming's version of *Jangar* (Wen, 2022). Compared with the former, Liu Xueting (2019) has concentrated on the research on Wu Yangcai and Liu Lan's translations. Hu Kai (2021), Zhang Yuhong (2021), and others have made practical reports on the Chinese-English translation of epics, which also promote the study of the English translation of epics.

The literature study of *Jangar* has emerged and the norms of translation, as the foundation of literature study, have also been discussed emphatically in academia. On the basis of Nida's functional equivalence theory, Bao Jianhua (2014) proposed to study translation utilizing natural and appropriate equivalence. Wei Lantian (2021) put forward standardized spelling suggestions and methods to solve the problem that the proper nouns of the epic are not effectively unified at present, which provides a reference for the long-term development of epic translation. Wu Wenxia (2021) explored the Chinese translation of programmatic language to promote information transmission between translators and readers innovatively. Danbu Erjiafu's (2018) achievements in collecting and sorting out the Russian version of *Jangar* also play an important role in improving the combing of epic documents.

Hao Sumin (1988) commented on *Jangar* translated by Hu Ercha and pointed out that its value in the edition should not be underestimated, which opened up a way for more epic researchers to appreciate the original text. Wang Zhongming (2006) believed that the translation edited by Jia Mucha has reached a new height for the historical and holistic study of *Jangar*. The development and dissemination of the translation will continuously enhance the scientific value and world influence of *Jangar*. Compared with the previous two scholars' comprehensive research, Bao Xiulan (2018) choosing poetic geography as the focus analyzed the gains and losses, and values of four Chinese versions, which promoted the birth of new Chinese versions with higher academic value. Besides, Wang Bao's (2007) comments and suggestions on other linguistic interpretations of the translated version also deserve our attention. Perfecting the evaluation of translated versions is not only an effective means to study the development of epic philology, but also contributes to the birth and popularization of new versions.

Conceptual metaphor analysis is one of the common methods to standardize the literature language with wide popularity. Yang Yuting (2020) deeply analyzed the restoration between the source language and the target language as well as readers' acceptance, thus summing up effective translation rules and contributing to the study of epic communication. Based on analyzing the diversity of conceptual metaphors, it is imperative to focus on the translation of folk customs in epics, so as to promote the development of Mongolian literary works.

Conclusion

Since the study of the *Jangar* rose in China in the 1960s and 1970s, thanks to the joint effort of many scholars, a large number of census, collection, collation, publication, translation, and other works have been completed by relevant researchers with unprecedented results. First, more than 200 kinds of different texts have been collected and sorted out. Besides, a large-scale research team has been formed based on the establishment of several professional academic groups, with papers, monographs, teaching materials, and other research results

mushrooming. Second, the research level and research perspective have been optimized, and a relatively comprehensive academic system has been established under the framework of multi-disciplines and multi-fields. Meanwhile, the research on *Jangar Qi* has achieved fruitful results. Thirdly, the theoretical exploration of oral poetics and artistic image typology of *Jangar* is becoming more perfect, and the research system construction of Jangarology is moving forward. Fourthly, the comparison at home and abroad, the traceability of modern and ancient thoughts has been continuously promoted. In addition, the internationalization study of *Jangar* has been accelerated. Innovative inheritance achievements have been achieved in the interweaving with national culture and national spirit, with its value generation and transformation gradually put on the agenda.

At the same time, the problems and defects of Jangarology are obvious. First, the divides concerning the basic problems of *Jangar* still exist⁵, the theoretical construction of Jangarology is slow, and the related research is not too in-depth. Second, the research field and level of *Jangar* are not profound enough. There are a lot of blind gaps in the research of many topics⁶. The domestic research team still fails to base itself on human cultural history in terms of research methods and academic vision, falling behind the international epic research. Third, the generation and transformation of the modernization value of the epic *Jangar* need to be further developed. At present, most of the research is aimed at text analysis with insufficient popularization practice. The audience of epic research is narrow and the inheritance work is only effective in tourism.

In the future, the research of *Jangar* will be based on the existing main research results, which should be expanded horizontally and vertically. First, the research team should be developed and perfected. The growing research team of *Jangar* is bound to accommodate scholars from more disciplines and solve related problems with comprehensive disciplines, such as literature and art, culture studies, history, philosophy, aesthetics, and religion. For example, we can strengthen the connection with foreign myths and epics, placing them in a broader academic perspective and constructing an epic research system that adapts to modern development. Second, we should steadily push forward the internationalization of *Jangar* research. More attention needs to be paid to the two-way interaction between *Jangar* research and Jangarology. The learning and reference between domestic and foreign scholars should be promoted through the international communication mechanism of *Jangar*, so as to fully grasp the process of its occurrence, development, inheritance, and communication to support the protection of the outstanding cultural heritage of ethnic minorities. Third, the modern application and inheritance of *Jangar*, an oral living epic, should be comprehensively developed. In addition to connecting with the current mainstream culture and values of society, the interactive development of various industries and disciplines should be advanced. Therefore, we will promote the new strength of Chinese cultural emotions in the combination and transformation with contemporary spirit, encouraging research in the fields of Jangarology and epic studies in China to create greater glories.

In a word, this paper attempts to connect all the contents of the current academic research on *Jangar* from several dimensions. Although it is inevitable to omit something important, related studies are mentioned or presented in this paper. It is hoped that through the overall literature review pertinent to this theme, some new research directions and ideas for the future study of *Jangar* can be provided, making a little contribution to the

⁵ For example, the source of the name *Jangar*, the historical period reflected by *Jangar*, and the time and space boundaries of its emergence, etc.

⁶ For example, the comparative study perspective at home and abroad is not comprehensive, the analysis of epic structure and motif is not deep enough, and the artistic style of singers is not discussed. The most remarkable problem is that the comparative study with foreign literature and *Jangar*'s different texts is not sufficient, which is not conducive to the internationalization of *Jangar*.

inheritance and development of Jangarology. In the future, the study of the contemporary value of *Jangar* will move forward guided by the thought of “Chinese modernization” (Xi, 2022).

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