

**ARCHETYPES IN KAZAKH LEGENDS:
TO THE PROBLEM OF TYPOLOGY**

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Abstract: *This article, subjecting to theoretical comprehension the works available in European, Russian and Kazakh science devoted to the problems of researching archetypal constants, aims at a holistic analysis of two legends related to Turkic, in particular, Kazakh, mythology: about the first creator of a musical instrument – kobyꝛ Korkeyt and the singer Asan Kaigy. The archetypes of birth, death, art, an old wise man, roads and others that embody national ideas about human and world order, on the one hand, and reflect the long experience of mankind, on the other, are subjected to scrupulous analysis. Typological analysis of these legends made it possible to see the common in their content core: both heroes, in search of the “promised land”, find something more – spiritual rebirth through serving their people with the art of words and music and immortality through this.*

Keywords: culture, literature, mythology, spirituality, plot, motive.

In modern literary criticism, there is an increased interest not only in archetypal plots in the works of world literature, but also, in fact, in the very concept of “archetype”, which was considered by many researchers to be “unreal, only conditionally existing mythologeme”¹. Today, this interest, in the authors’ opinion, is dictated by the desire of scientists to see in archetypes a universal and general cultural origin. Recall that the word “archetype” is derived from two Greek roots: “arche” – “beginning” and “typos” – “pattern”, that is, its meaning can be defined as “prototype”, “preform”, “primary type”. As a rule, the archetype is understood as the initial, fundamental images and motives underlying the universal symbolism of myths, fairy tales and other products of artistic imagination. Archetypes are symbolic; they are broad, often ambiguous metaphors.

The concept of archetype was introduced by the Swiss scientist C.G. Jung in 1919 in the article “Instinct and the Unconscious”. He distinguished two main layers in the unconscious: the personal unconscious, which draws its content from the experience of a particular person's life, and the collective unconscious, the content of which is inherited and is universal

¹ S.S. Averintsev, “Archetypes”, in *Myths of the peoples of the world: Encyclopedia*, Sovetskaya entsiklopediya, Moscow, 1980.

among representatives of a particular biological species². The collective unconscious consists of archetypes, as the researchers believe, described them as “primary images that have existed since time immemorial, but devoid of clear content”³.

While reviewing Kazakh literary studies, it should be noted that the very first sources of the mythological school include works on folklore by Sh. Valikhanov, A. Baitursynov, M.O. Auezov, A. Margulan. Outstanding Kazakh scientist Ch.Ch. Valikhanov noted that in the past of the Kazakh people “... there is not a single memorable event, not a single remarkable person since the time of his original life ..., the memory of which would not remain in the people's memory ...”, since, according to his remarks, “... One is sung by an improviser, the name of another was immortalised in the memory of the ancestors by some famous musician – sybyzgyshy or kobyzshi ...”⁴.

So, it can be seen that a review of the works of both foreign and domestic scientists devoted to the problems of studying the genesis and features of the archetype in world mythology, allows concluding that there is a continuing interest in this topic on the one hand, and the inexhaustibility of interpretations of plots of world literature and culture, on the other. Almost everywhere there are the same symbols denoting life and death, masculine and feminine principles, heaven and earth, sadness and joy, illness and health, strength and weakness, order and chaos.

The theoretical and methodological basis is the work of K.G. Jung⁵, E.M. Meletinsky⁶, M. Eliade⁷, A.Yu. Bol'shakova⁸, S.A. Kaskabasov⁹, E. D. Tursynov¹⁰, S. Kondybai¹¹. Methodological priorities in the study of this issue were focused on the unity of comparative – historical, typological and hermeneutic methods that allow considering and comprehending the

² C.G. Jung, *Psychology of the Unconscious*, Kogito-Tsentr, Moscow, 2010.

³ R. Corsini, A. Auerbach, *Psychological Encyclopedia*, Piter, St. Petersburg, 2003.

⁴ Ch.Ch. Valikhanov, *Collected works in five volumes*, Glavnaya redaktsiya kazakhskoy sovetskoy entsiklopedii, Alma-Ata, 1984.

⁵ *Ibidem* 2010; C.G. Jung, *Analytical psychology*, Iskusstvo, Moscow, 1995; C.G. Jung, *Soul problems of our time*, Nauka, Moscow, 1994.

⁶ E.M. Meletinsky, *The poetics of myth*, Moscow, Glavnaya redaktsiya vostochnoy literatury, 1976; E.M. Meletinsky, *About literary archetypes*, Publishing House of the Russian State Humanitarian University, Moscow, 1994.

⁷ M. Eliade, *Aspects of myth*, Invest-PPP, Moscow, 1995.

⁸ A.Yu. Bolshakova, “Archetype – concept – culture”, in *Questions of Philosophy*, 2010, vol. 7, p. 87-93.

⁹ S.A. Kaskabasov, *Kazakh fairy tale*, Alma-Ata, Nauka, 1972; S.A. Kaskabasov, *Kazakh fairy-tale prose*, Nauka, Alma-Ata, 1990.

¹⁰ E.D. Tursunov, *The Origin of the Ancient Types of Bearers of the Kazakh Poetical Tradition*, Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University, Alma-Ata, 1976; E.D. Tursunov, *Ancient Turkic folklore: sources and formation*, Dayk-Press, Almaty, 2001.

¹¹ S. Kondybai, “Mifke yelling”, in *Rukh Miras*, 2005, vol. 2, p. 64-72.

phenomena of archaic mythological worldview, which, in the authors' opinion, is important for understanding the essence of the spiritual history of Kazakh people.

The purpose of this work is to study archetypes that have found their embodiment in legends widespread in Turkic mythology and in Kazakh medieval literature, in particular, the legend about the first composer Korkyt and the poet, adviser to the khans Asan Kaigy, whose life and creative path was to serve to their people.

Development of the concept of “archetype” in Russian and Soviet philosophical science

It should be noted that the idea of the archetypal basis of culture is so relevant that many scientists, even before the introduction of the term archetype, came close to describing it. For example, in his work “The Problem of Symbol and Realistic Art” (1976), the famous Russian philosopher A.F. Losev, developing a symbol in many ways, rarely refers to the term “archetype”, but sometimes he brings into this concept completely archetypal features¹².

In the 1970s, a new mythological school appeared in Soviet literary criticism, represented by the works of Yu.M. Lotman and E.M. Meletinsky, which a priori indicated the relationship between literature and myth. Yu.M. Lotman believed that “The constant interaction of literature and myth proceeds directly, in the form of “transfusion” of myth into literature, and indirectly: through the visual arts, rituals, folk festivals, religious mysteries, and in recent centuries through the scientific concepts of mythology, aesthetic and philosophical teachings and folklore. This interaction is especially active in the intermediate sphere of folklore. Folk poetry by the type of consciousness gravitates towards the world of mythology, however, as a phenomenon of art, it adjoins literature”¹³.

The revival of the historical experience of the past, national traditions, customs, etc. became the basis for the creation of a national picture of the world, thereby confirming the words of the world famous Romanian researcher of mythology Mircea Eliade, who noted that: “in modern society, there is an interest in returning to the origins”¹⁴.

The anticipation of the mythological school proper originated in the second half of the 20th century in the works of the famous folklorists

¹² A.F. Losev, *Symbol problem and realistic art*, Iskusstvo, Moscow, 1976; A.F. Losev, *The history of ancient aesthetics. Early Hellenism*, Iskusstvo, Moscow, 1979.

¹³ Yu.M. Lotman, Z.G. Mints, E.M. Meletinsky, *Myths of the World: The mythological encyclopedia*, Sovetskaya entsiklopediya, Moscow, 1982.

¹⁴M. Eliade, *Aspects of myth*, Invest-PPP, Moscow, 1995.

S.A. Kaskabasov and E.D. Tursunov. It should be noted that in one of the works of S.A. Kaskabasov, there was the experience of differentiating the mythological and mythological-ethnological constructions of Kazakh folklore¹⁵. In another work of S.A. Kaskabasov – “Kazakh non-fairy-tale prose” the scientist used the terms – myth, mythical time and mythical consciousness, mythical concept and mythological thinking, and when classifying the genres of Kazakh folklore prose, the scientist put at the forefront “the attitude of people to the content of the work. According to this criterion, non-fairy-tale prose can be divided into “myth, oral story, bylichka ...”¹⁶.

Continuing his research of folklore in the context of common human culture, the scientist paid special attention to the concept of mythological time: “In the mythological assimilation of reality, the present was perceived in an indissoluble unity with the past. Rather, the past lived in the minds of people as the present. This is especially evident in the idea of a totem. The latter was perceived as an ancestor and contemporary. A man belonging to the Wolf phratry considered this beast his ancestor and at the same time was convinced that he himself was a wolf”¹⁷.

In modern Kazakh literary criticism, folklore studies, musicology, cultural studies, ethnography, research on individual problems and aspects of mythology has increasingly begun to appear. Such concepts as mythopoeics, archetypes, symbols, mythologemes and their place in Kazakh literature and culture have been scrupulously studied. In this sense, the work of the Kazakh researcher S. Kondybai “Mifke Oralu” (“Return to the myth”) deserved attention, in which he called the myth “the focus of the cultural memory of mankind”, defines mythology as “the brain of any independent nation”, which can help in solving pressing issues of politics, art, culture and ideology¹⁸. A.F. Losev argued that at the foundation of each culture lies a fundamental myth for it that characterises this culture¹⁹. In the light of this statement, it is interesting to analyse the archetypes in the works of ancient Kazakh literature – the legends about Korkyt and Asan Kaigy.

Analysis of archetypes in the legends of Korkyt and Asan Kaigy

From time immemorial, the legend of Korkyt, a mythical shaman, musician, inventor of kobyzy, has been living in the minds of all Turkic peoples. “In the centuries of dependence, everything that was past fell out of the

¹⁵ S.A. Kaskabasov, *Kazakh fairy tale*, Nauka, Alma-Ata, 1972.

¹⁶ S.A. Kaskabasov, *Kazakh fairy-tale prose*, Nauka, Alma-Ata, 1990.

¹⁷ E.D. Tursunov, *Ancient Turkic folklore: sources and formation*, Dayk-Press, Almaty, 2001.

¹⁸ S. Kondybay, “Mifke yelling”, in *Rukh Miras*, 2005, vol. 2, p. 64-72.

¹⁹ A.F. Losev, *Symbol problem and realistic art*, Iskusstvo, Moscow, 1976; A.F. Losev, *The history of ancient aesthetics. Early Hellenism*, Iskusstvo, Moscow, 1979.

memory of the Turks: glory, the pantheon of ancient deities, stone-written annals, the names of wise leaders and invincible commanders. Only the name of Korkyt has stood the test of time ... If Korkyt was a symbol of Turkic unity in the past, in the present he is their hope for the future. In the teachings of Korkyt, the Turkic spirit is inexhaustible and immortal. This can explain the ineradicable craving of the Turkic peoples for the heritage of Korkyt, without which a full-blooded revival of Turkic culture and spirituality is hardly possible in the 21st century. The name of Korkyt is consecrated in the people's memory. "All good, unattainable spiritual, morally pure Kazakhs associate with the name of Korkyt," – researcher S. Akataev writes about the meaning of the image of Korkyt²⁰.

The myth of Korkyt and his search for the "promised land" is familiar from the well-known written epic monument of the Turkic peoples "Qorqit ata kitabi" ("The book of grandfather Korkyt") – the main character of which Korkyt-ata is a sage, a tribal leader, a fortune teller²¹ ... It is assumed that Korkyt was a native of the Syr Darya steppes and lived in the 15-19th centuries. On the Syr Darya, in the Karmakshy district of the Kyzylorda region of the Republic of Kazakhstan, there is a probable burial place for this unique person.

Already the very birth of Korkyt is associated with miracles and myths. According to legend, Korkyt's mother carried him in her womb for three years. Once a year she experienced labour pains, but was able to give birth to a child only three years later. Just before his birth, an eclipse of the sun occurs, it becomes dark, a storm with rain rages, thunder rumbles, lightning flashes. People are very scared. And when Korkyt was finally born, the storm suddenly ended, everything calmed down, the sun shone brightly. "He came into this world at a time when everyone was scared, he scared all of us, so let's call him Korkyt, which means "fear"," people decided. In this episode of the legend, the features of the archetype of the mother-son relationship in the hero's birth scene are clearly visible. Psychologist, writer and one of the most gifted students of K. Jung, E. Neumann in his work "The Origin and Development of Consciousness", defining the relationship of the archetypes of mother and child as a myth of creation, indicated that the process of birth is always accompanied by light: "The beginning of this development [development of individuality] is mythologically represented as the beginning of the world, the emergence of light..."²².

Returning to the picture of the hero's birth, it should be noted that both the difficult process of childbirth and the riot of the elements at this moment

²⁰ S. Akatay, "Korkyt-ata", in *Cultural contexts of Kazakhstan: history and modernity*, Nurly Alem, Almaty, 1998.

²¹ S.A. Kaskabasov, *Kazakh fairy tale*, Nauka, Alma-Ata, 1972.

²² E. Neumann, *The origin and history of consciousness*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1949.

serve as a presentiment of Korkyt's difficult path, full of suffering, on the one hand, and his close inextricable connection with the elements of nature. The archetype of death is associated with the archetype of birth, and therefore life itself, which literally permeates the legend. According to legend, Korkyt sets out on a journey to find a place where people would be immortal and live happily. But wherever Korkyt comes, he meets people digging graves. Asking them questions: “Who are you digging the grave for? Whose grave is this?”, He invariably heard the same answer: “This is the grave of Korkyt.” Reflecting on eternal life, Korkyt comes to the conclusion that only art is eternal. Once, as the legend says, in a dream the angels tell him: “Wrap a wooden instrument in camel skin, make strings from horsehair.” Having done all this, Korkyt extracted a wonderful melody from this instrument. So, he invents kobyz – a musical instrument.

According to legend, Korkyt spreads a carpet in the middle of the Syr Darya River and starts playing the kobyz. Only Korkyt was able to do this. Then, accidentally dozing off, Korkyt did not notice a small poisonous snake crawling out of the water and biting him. Korkyt understands that death does not warn of its arrival. She is always cunning. In this episode, the archetype of death is a chthonic monster. As a rule, chthonic creatures in many religions and mythologies include creatures that originally personified the wild natural power of the earth, the underworld, etc. The dragon, the serpent is one of the most common archetypal images, belongs to the group of universal biopsychological, according to A.Yu. Bol'shakova archetypes, which have found active embodiment in various cultures of the world²³. It should be noted that the psychological prerequisites for the appearance of the dragon archetype were substantiated by K.G. Jung. The scientist designated the image of a dragon (snake) as a manifestation of a whole spectrum of primitive horrors inherent in the human psyche and expressing its archaic idea of the chaos of the surrounding world²⁴.

But back to the legend. Despite Korkyt's death, life triumphs. And music becomes the embodiment of life. It must be said here that the steppe has long treated people of art with special trepidation, considering them the chosen spirits, especially kobyzshi, i.e. people who played the kobyz – a sacred instrument. The authors of the book “The Cosmos of Kazakh Culture” also wrote about the philosophical and deep semantic content, about the symbolism of kobyz: “The Kazakh national instrument “kyl-kobyz” (hair kobyz) is hollowed out from a single piece of wood. The kobyz string consists of thirty hairs; the bow resembles an arc. It could be invented only where there is a lot of horsehair: nomadic peoples. It is a solo instrument, but an

²³ A.Yu. Bolshakova, “Archetype – concept – culture”, in *Questions of Philosophy*, 2010, vol. 7, p. 87-93.

²⁴ C.G. Jung, *Psychology of the Unconscious*, Kogito-Tsentr, Moscow, 2010.

instrument-orchestra. The upper world in kobyz is represented by a deck on which there are two tuners that regulate two strings. One of them is at the top, the other is at the bottom, the middle world is represented by the hollowed out part of the kobyz, resembling two halves of an apple. And the lower world is the lower part of the instrument, strings are two types of energy that permeate the entire cosmos: solar and lunar. The neck of the kobyz is water, chaos, rhythmised with a bow and creating harmony of life, its symphony²⁵.

Consider other archetypes presented in this legend. Thus, the archetype of the hero in his hard way and different kinds of deeds closely accompanies the archetype of a wonderful friend – an assistant. In the world of mythological space and in the culture of different peoples there is a multitude of the brightest images that recreate the archetype of a friend. What touches on mythological images, these are the Greek gods, and the graceful beasts bestowed on the magical power, which meet on the path of the hero, and miraculous old men. Korkyt's camel Zhelmaya will become such a wonderful assistant to him, Zhelmaya means "fast, like a wind". Riding his camel Korkyt covered the whole earth, and created kobyz was turned with her skin, on which she poured out her thoughts and feelings. According to the views of Korkyt, people should preserve human qualities. The most dangerous thing for a person is to lose morality. Widely scattered according to the text of the monument to Korkyt, "Let the house fall apart, if there are no guests, let the grass not grow better, if it does not pinch the horse; water, not suitable for drinking, – let it not be better to run on lodges; let it not be better to give birth to a son, who marks the name of the father" and so on.

The mythologisation of the image of Korkyt is the basis for the culture of nomads, in particular, the Kazakh people. Such is the quintessence of the spirit of the nation, and another "seeker of the earth" poet, philosopher Asan-kaygy (Asan the Sad), born at the end of the 15th century and died in 1460). It is well known that Asan Sabituly was an influential dancer of Ulug-Muhammed, in Sarai and Kazan, after his death he was invited by the nomadic Uzbek khan Abulhair. Then he became an adviser and mentor to the first Kazakh khans Kereya and Zhanibek. Presumably, it was he who inspired them to create a "new just state"²⁶.

Asan was called "Sad" due to his constant thoughts and reflections. Asan dreamed of a happy future for the people, eager to transform the native steppe in the land of abundance and achievement, in the abode of virtues and harmony, where there will be a happy peaceful and free people, who will serve wisely. He received the nickname Sad because he saw how many realities of life are far from his ideals and dreams of a just society. Asan Kaigy was an adviser to one of the leaders of this movement of sultans – Zhanibek, so he entered

²⁵ Zh.K. Karakuzova, M.Sh. Khasanov, *Cosmos of Kazakh culture*, Yevraziya, Almaty, 1993.

²⁶ Biography of Asan Kaigi. Available at <https://e-history.kz/en/biography/view/109>.

the people's consciousness as an indefatigable seeker of happy land, an expression of hope for ordinary people in a new life. Riding Zhelmai, Asan Kaigy went to search the land under the name “Zheruyik”, where there were “abundance of virgin forests and lush pastures, flowing clean rivers, and on the backs of sheep lay a nest of birds.”

The poet died a deep old man on the land of Sary-Arki in the mountains of Ulytau, without realising his dream – to give happiness and well-being to the multi-suffering nomadic people. The poet's dream – a song about the promised land – is the dream of the Kazakh people about these, the best conditions of existence. The name Asan Kaigy was popular not only among Kazakhs, but also among Kyrgyz, Karakalpaks, Nogaits and others. Tales about Asan Kaigy's search include winged words and expressions, labels and figurative characteristics of different places of the Kazakh steppe, their natural conditions, people, their inhabitants, as well as numerous toponyms. Asan Kaigy in his songs urges his relatives to live in peace and harmony, to be kind, modest, honest and humane. The suffering of the people, the lack of justice and equality is the most terrible evil.

As in the legend of Korkyt, in the legend of Asan Kaigy there is such an archetype as the archetype of the artist who creates the work of art. Asan Kaigy – a poet, a man who, with the power of his artistic talent and eloquence, was able to act on the minds of his contemporaries, contributing to the solution of many political tasks. As Korkyt in music, so and Asan Kaigy in poetry reflected their thoughts on peace and gave instructions to subsequent generations. Collecting his works were carried out at different times by scholars-orientalists Ch.Ch. Valikhanov²⁷, G.N. Potanin²⁸, poet M.Zh. Kopeev²⁹. The beginning of the publication of the poetic legacy of Asana Kaigy was made in the 19th century, a significant contribution to his study was made by Kazakh writers S. Seifullin³⁰, M.O. Auezov³¹ and others.

Returning to the conversation about two Kazakh legends, it is necessary to note the significance of such an archetype as a wise old man, which is an important step in the development of the plot. E.M. Meletinsky defined the archetype of the wise old man as “the highest spiritual synthesis, harmonising in old age the conscious and unconscious sphere of the soul”³². This archetype also received the title of “self” – the archetype of the highest harmony, the highest embodiment of the archetype of the prophet, the saint, in whom as

²⁷ C.Ch. Valikhanov, *Collected works in five volumes*, Glavnaya redaktsiya kazakhskoy sovetskoy entsiklopedii, Alma-Ata, 1984.

²⁸ G.N. Potanin, *The cult of the son of heaven in North Asia. Materials for Turkish-Mongolian mythology*, Typographic lithography of the Siberian Printing Partnership, Tomsk, 1916.

²⁹ M.Zh. Kopeev, *Two volumes*, Nauka, Almaty, 1992.

³⁰ S. Seifullin, *Kazakh literature*, Nauka, Almaty, 1932.

³¹ M. Auezov, *Folk literature*, Zhazushy, Almaty, 1991.

³² E.M. Meletinsky, *Mythological dictionary*, Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya, Moscow, 1991.

E.M. Meletinsky writes “suffering endurance, sometimes readiness for martyrdom, self-sacrifice” is inherent³³. Both the archetypes – the wise old man and the saint – are closely connected between themselves, as they are similar valuable values: rationality, humanism. And their wise old age is the ultimate goal of the evolution of each individual consciousness.

And, finally, there is a motive of strangeness penetrating both legends, which turns out the meaning-and-plot-forming rod in these legends, as, by the way, and in the works of European and Russian mythologist. Sufficiently recall the 40-year-old Moses in the desert, the lands of Odysseus Homer, etc. The motive of the country, characteristic as for the western, so and for the eastern culture, meant looking for the best place and striving to achieve certain goals. In the culture of different peoples, this motive is associated with the determined actions of the heroes: for the peoples of South America, the “journey” of the hero is included in the search for precious treasures, hidden in Eldorado, for the Greeks, the hero's “journey” is associated with Eden, but in the mythology of nomads these were dreams of the time when “*Koi ustine boztorgai zhumyrtqalagan zaman*” (literally: “the time when a lark made a nest on the back of a ram”), etc.

The archetype of the path, observed in two legends, turns out to be especially relevant for nomadic culture. The chronotope of the life of the heroes serves as the compositional basis of the legends. The leitmotif of the road, and the life of both heroes of the legend is closely connected with the road, becomes a symbol of spiritual search. Both are looking for eternal truths, are not afraid of dangers, want to comprehend the meaning of life and the place of man in the Universe. However, as is known, not everything they see pleases them. Not seeing justice, both Korkyt and Asan Kaigy experience disappointment, which gives rise to a desire to create in their hearts, and only with the help of high art they manage to reach the hearts of their contemporaries. Both heroes go through a rather difficult path from the “external” in themselves to the “innermost” and are reconciled in their moral and philosophical quests. The wanderings of heroes are a way of understanding the world and their place in the world, a way to understand the historical path of the people, a part of which they feel themselves to be. The journey itself acts as the hero's test. But Korkyt and Asan Kaigy put love for their homeland, their people, the desire for prosperity for them above everything, above their personal happy existence. And this is what helps them achieve spiritual perfection. The wanderings of the heroes around the world follow the following trajectory: the path of real, specific life, then the path of life is transformed into a spiritual space, the space of the soul, the space of one's own “I”. But there is also another way – “the way up”, the vertical way, the way to the Light. The archetype of wandering and searching for treasures, widespread

³³ *Ibidem*.

in world mythology, means, ultimately, in the culture of different peoples “spiritual treasures”. The tireless search for a “blessed place” becomes a symbol of the constant inner growth of a person. Like all wandering heroes of world mythology, both Korkyt and Asan Kaigy come to the conclusion that paradise is in the soul of a person himself, in his constant search for happiness for others.

Conclusions

Thus, the similarity of plots, motives, images of world mythology allows considering it, first of all, as a common human cultural phenomenon. The mythopoetic model of the world is made up of widespread constants formed from basic archetypes: if there were no general prototypes, there would not be an innumerable set of cross-cutting mythological images and plots that form the structural backbone of world mythology in general.

So, these two Turkic legends, deeply rooted in the minds of the Kazakh people, allow not only “reviving” the archetypes rooted in the psyche and vast cultural heritage of each person, but also to build them into the general archetypal panorama of centuries-old human ideas. Analysis of the archetypes presented in the plots of two Kazakh legends allows seeing not only a wide panorama of the medieval world order of the Turks, but also makes these images the property of world culture.

Acknowledgements: This article is based on my PhD thesis. I would like to express my gratitude to Seyit Kaskabasov for sharing his knowledge and experience with me. The opinions expressed are mine.