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Variations in the dastans about Atymtai Zhomart

Abstract. The article examines, from a textual-critical perspective, the Kazakh dastans about Atymtai Zhomart, whose image has become an artistic symbol of generosity and charity in the folklore and literature of Eastern peoples. The purpose of the study is to compare the manuscripts preserved in manuscript collections with the variants of the dastans published in the earliest printed editions and subsequent scholarly collections, and to identify their textual features, the nature of their changes, and the textual differences between the variants. The research focuses on comparing individual words and phrases, lines of verse, and stanzas found in different variants, as well as identifying passages that were abridged, expanded, rearranged, or altered through editorial intervention. The scholarly significance of the study lies in clarifying the textual history of the Kazakh dastans about Atymtai Zhomart and systematizing the evidence required to establish the original text transmitted among the Turkic peoples. Its practical significance is determined by the possibility of applying the research findings to the publication of folklore heritage, the preparation of scholarly editions, and further studies in textual criticism. The study employs comparative-textual, historical-comparative, and plot-typological methods. The comparative analysis reveals the common textual basis of the dastan variants, their distinctive features, additions, omissions, and editorial changes. It is concluded that the textual differences between the variants are related to the specific ways in which the work was transmitted through manuscript and print traditions. The value of the study lies in its textual analysis of the variant composition of the Kazakh dastans about Atymtai Zhomart and its contribution to scholarship in Kazakh folklore studies and textual criticism. The findings may be used in preparing a scholarly edition of the dastan, conducting systematic research on folklore works, and providing supplementary material for educational purposes.

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Keywords: Atymtai Zhomart, Kazakh folklore, dastan, text, manuscript heritage.

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Атымтай Жомарт туралы дастандардың нұсқалық ерекшеліктері

Аңдатпа. Мақалада шығыс халықтарының фольклоры мен әдебиетінде жомарттық пен қайырымдылықтың көркем символына айналған Атымтай Жомарт жөніндегі қазақ дастандары мәтінтанулық тұрғыдан қарастырылады. Зерттеудің мақсаты – қолжазба қорларында сақталған қолжазбаларды және түпбасылымдар мен кейінгі ғылыми жинақтарда жарияланған дастан нұсқаларын өзара салыстырып, олардың мәтіндік ерекшеліктерін, өзгеру сипатын және нұсқалар арасындағы мәтіндік

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айырымдарды анықтау. Зерттеудің негізгі бағыты әртүрлі нұсқада кездесетін жекелеген сөздер мен сөз тіркестерін, өлең тармақтары мен шумақтарды салыстыруға, мәтіннің қысқарған, толықтырылған, орны ауыстырылған және редакциялық өзгеріске түскен тұстарын айқындауға негізделеді. Жұмыстың ғылыми маңыздылығы Атымтай Жомарт туралы қазақ дастандарының мәтіндік тарихын нақтылауымен және түркі халықтарындағы түпмәтінді анықтауға қажетті деректерді жүйелеуімен сипатталады. Практикалық маңызы зерттеу нәтижелерін фольклорлық мұраларды жариялауда, ғылыми басылымдар әзірлеуде және мәтінтану бағытындағы зерттеулерде пайдалану мүмкіндігімен белгіленеді. Зерттеу барысында салыстырмалы-текстологиялық, тарихи-салыстырмалы және сюжеттік-типологиялық әдістер қолданылды. Салыстырмалы талдау нәтижесінде дастан нұсқаларының ортақ мәтіндік негізі, өзіндік айырмашылықтары, толықтырулары мен қысқартулары, сондай-ақ редакциялық өзгерістері анықталды. Нұсқалардағы мәтіндік айырымдардың шығарманың қолжазба және баспа дәстүрінде таралу ерекшеліктерімен байланысты екені тұжырымдалды. Зерттеудің құндылығы Атымтай Жомарт туралы қазақ дастандарының нұсқалық құрамын мәтінтанулық тұрғыдан саралап, қазақ фольклортануы мен мәтінтану саласындағы ғылыми пайымдарды толықтыруынан көрінеді. Жүргізілген зерттеудің нәтижесі дастанның ғылыми негізделген мәтінін дайындауда, фольклорлық шығармаларды жүйелеп зерттеуде және оқу үдерісінде қосымша материал ретінде қолдануға мүмкіндік береді.

Алғыс: Зерттеу Қазақстан Республикасы Ғылым және жоғары білім министрлігі Ғылым комитетінің BR27101897 «Қазақстан әдебиеттануы, фольклортануы және өнертануы экожүйесінің цифрлық трансформациясы: пәнаралық зерттеулер» жобасын іске асыру аясында орындалды.

Кілт сөздер: Атымтай Жомарт, қазақ фольклоры, дастан, текст, қолжазба мұра.

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Вариантные особенности дастанов об Атымтай Жомарте

Аннотация. В статье рассматриваются текстологические особенности казахских дастанов об Атымтай Жомарте, образ которого стал художественным символом щедрости и благотворительности в фольклоре и литературе народов Востока. Цель исследования – сопоставить рукописи, хранящиеся в рукописных фондах, с вариантами дастанов, опубликованными в первопечатных изданиях и последующих научных сборниках, определить их текстовые особенности, характер изменений и текстовые различия между вариантами. Основное направление исследования связано с сопоставлением отдельных слов и словосочетаний, стихотворных строк и строф, встречающихся в различных вариантах, а также с выявлением сокращённых, дополненных, переставленных и подвергшихся редакционным изменениям фрагментов текста. Научная значимость работы заключается в уточнении текстовой истории казахских дастанов об Атымтай Жомарте и систематизации данных, необходимых для определения исходного текста, распространённого среди тюркских народов. Практическая значимость исследования определяется возможностью использования его результатов при публикации фольклорного наследия, подготовке научных изданий и проведении текстологических исследований. В работе применены сравнительно-текстологический, историко-сравнительный и сюжетно-типологический методы. В результате сравнительного анализа выявлены общая текстовая основа вариантов дастана, их отличительные особенности, дополнения, сокращения и редакционные изменения. Установлено, что текстовые различия между вариантами обусловлены особенностями распространения произведения в рукописной и печатной традициях. Ценность исследования состоит в текстологическом анализе вариантного состава казахских дастанов об Атымтай Жомарте и дополнении научных представлений в области казахской фольклористики и текстологии. Результаты проведённого исследования могут быть использованы при подготовке научно обоснованного текста дастана, системном изучении фольклорных произведений и в качестве дополнительного материала в учебном процессе.

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экосистемы литературоведения, фольклористики и искусствоведения Казахстана: междисциплинарные исследования».

Ключевые слова: Атымтай Жомарт, казахский фольклор, дастан, текст, рукописное наследие.

1. Introduction

Atymtai Zhomart is a character that served to personify the concepts of benevolence, humanity, and charity that prevailed in the folklore and literature of Eastern nations. The source of plots related to Atymtai Zhomart is the image of Hatim al-Ta'i in Arabic folklore, while these stories gradually became widespread in the literary and folklore traditions of the peoples of Near, Middle East, and Central Asia. In Kazakh folklore, fairy tales, and dastans, the character of Atymtai Zhomart also evolved.

Literary works describing Atymtai Zhomart were studied by Kazakh researchers taking into account their artistic and compositional peculiarities. The diffusion of Atymtai Zhomart plots in the folklore of Eastern nations, along with their typological peculiarities, was another object of study.

Relevance of the current research is mainly determined by the importance of the dastans about Atymtai Zhomart within the framework of Kazakh folkloric heritage, and their popularity throughout the variety of manuscript, published, and subsequently scholarly texts in different variations. Differences that concern individual words, phrases, verses, and even stanzas in different recensions of the same text present a problem in regard to establishing a text of the main version. Thus, the analysis of versions included in manuscript sources together with the first published versions and subsequent scholarly editions represents a key point of the textual criticism of Kazakh folklore.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Description of the Material

The material of the research is made up of dastan texts telling about Atymtai Zhomart, kept in the Manuscript Collection of the M.O. Auezov Institute of Literature and Art, in the National Library of the Republic of Kazakhstan, in the Central Scientific Library in manuscript and printed versions. Major sources are manuscripts and folklore texts: «Qasym Zhomart» (folders 118, 348, 885), «Atymtai Zhomart» (folders 365, 481, 820, 828), «Hikayat Khan Atymtai» (folder 301), «The Tale of Atymtai» (folder 917/14), «The Tale of Atymtai Zhomart» (folder 1092), «The Origin of the Name Atymtai Zhomart» (folder 920/31); editions: «Qissa Qasym Zhomart», «Qissa Hatymtai Zhomart», «Hikayat Dastan Hatymtai» (published in Kazan in 1896, 1897, and 1913; the 1914 edition «The Tale of Hatymtai»); the text «Qasym Zhomart» published in issues №3-4 of the journal *Altai Ayasy* in 1981; and scholarly editions of 1990 and 2004.

The authors who have studied the dastans about Atymtai Zhomart in the field of Kazakh folkloric research include such researchers as S. Qasqabasov, B. Azibayeva, Sh. Satpayeva, U. Subkhanberdina, A. Qyraubayeva and others. Thus, S. Qasqabasov has analyzed the emergence of the eastern plots in Kazakh folklore, their transformation in the national folklore and artistic processing (Qasqabasov, 2002) and B. Azibayeva has drawn essential conclusions for the scientific study of the plot structure of Kazakh dastans and their typological traits (Azibayeva, 2009; 2014). The concept of typological differentiation of plots that has been used in the works of this scientist serves as a theoretical foundation for the establishment of relationships between dastans

Theoretical foundations of folklore textual criticism are especially significant in analyzing the textuality of the dastans about Atymtai Zhomart. In the collective work «Folklore Textual Criticism: Past and Present» oral and written versions of folklore texts, their laws of transformation, as well as textological problems related to the collecting and editing of such folklore are examined (Folklore Textual, 2009). The collective monograph «Kazakh Textual Criticism: Problems of Establishing the Principal Text and Determining Authorship (Attribution)» is dedicated to the systematic analysis of theoretical and methodological problems of determining the principal text, comparing the texts, as well as preparing an academic edition (Kazakh Textuality, 2022). The works by Zh. Raysh are devoted to the publication problems of dastans and their texts (Rakysh, 2013). These works form the methodological foundation for the comparison of manuscript and printed versions undertaken in the present study.

The spread of the plot of Atymtai Zhomart in the folklore of Turkic peoples has also been an object of investigation by scholars. M. Sakali found the association between the figure of Hatymtai in Turkmen fairy tale epic and the notions of generosity and spiritual goodness (Sakali, 1956), whereas A. Suleimanov studied the plot features of novellas about Hatymtai in Bashkir folklore and found their connection with the notions of justice, generosity, and humaneness (Suleimanov, 2005: 119-126). The mentioned researches show that the plot of Atymtai Zhomart is not a part of any separate national tradition but originated in the common folkloric space of Turkic and Eastern peoples.

S. Toleubayeva researched the impact of plots of «One Thousand and One Nights» on the Kazakh folklore tradition and traced the ways of Arabic-Persian literary and folkloric heritage to enter into the Kazakh oral literature (Toleubaeva, 2009). This research is important to understand the relation of tales about Atymtai Zhomart and the Eastern literary tradition. Furthermore, the research conducted by K. Reichl about the tradition, form, and poetry of the Turkic epic can be used for studying the theoretical issues related to oral epic works (Reichl, 2008).

2.2 Research Methods

Comparative-textual method was the main research technique used in this work. The method ensured the possibility of making comparative analysis of words, phrases, lines of verse, and stanzas of several versions of the same literary work and revealed abridgements, additions, restructurations and editorial interventions in the text. Historical-comparative technique made it possible to establish the process of origin and circulation of versions of the works in the course of history. The plot-typological method was applied to establish common plot lines and peculiarities of dastan versions.

3. Discussion

Atymtai Zhomart is a figure who became a symbol of open-handedness and generosity. His image appears in the legends and narratives of many Eastern peoples. Researchers associate this character with a historical person, Hatim al-Ta'i. He belonged to the Arab tribe of Tayy, lived in the sixth century, was a celebrated poet, and was the father of Adi ibn Hatim, one of the Companions of the Prophet Muhammad. Stories about Hatim al-Ta'i (Hatim-Tai) have been known since the pre-Islamic period, and all of them celebrate his generosity and hospitality (Gerhardt, 1984: 309-310). Plots about Hatymtai that originated in Arabic legends spread widely among the peoples of the Near and Middle

East and Central Asia. Studies note that tales about Hatymtai passed from Arabic literature into Persian, Indian, and Urdu literary traditions and that he became an artistic symbol of generosity (Omidasalar, 2003: 57-58). Pasha M. Khan examines the transformation of Hatymtai's image in Arabic, Persian, and Punjabi literatures of South Asia and the ways in which the concept of generosity is represented in different cultures (Khan, Pasha M., 2026: 172-188). In the study by Kappassova et al., the name «Atymtai Zhomart» is considered a precedent name in Kazakh media discourse. According to the authors, the image of Atymtai Zhomart, traditionally recognized in folklore as a model of generosity and charity, retains this meaning in contemporary mass media and is used to characterize benevolent, generous individuals whose actions benefit society (Kappassova et al., 2025: 42-51).

Researchers divide works about Atymtai into three groups according to their content and genre. In works belonging to the first group, Hatymtai is an immensely generous man of inexhaustible wealth who helps those in need. In the second group, although he is poor, he is portrayed as large-hearted and compassionate, willing to share whatever he possesses. In the legends and dastans of the third group, his generosity is presented as arising not from material wealth but from spiritual richness, breadth of heart, and moral goodness (Azibaeva, 2009: 183-185).

The story entitled «The Tale of Atymtai Zhomart» is narrated on Nights 270–271 of «One Thousand and One Nights» (One thousand and one nights, 2009: 5-7). It relates that Atymtai was an exceptionally generous and open-hearted man and that, after his death, his body was buried on the summit of a high mountain. One day, a king named Zilqara passes by and spends the night nearby. Mockingly, he says, «We are Atymtai's guests; let us see whether he will show us his generosity». After he dozes off, Atymtai Zhomart appears in his dream and says, «I have no livestock to slaughter for a feast, so I have slaughtered your camel for you». Startled awake, Zilqara has his own camel slaughtered, and a meal for the guests is prepared from the meat of the camel that has unexpectedly gone under the knife. The following day, Zilqara continues his journey riding together with one of his companions on the companion's camel. On the road they meet a traveler leading a camel. He introduces himself as Adi, the son of Atymtai Zhomart, and gives the camel he is leading to Zilqara. His father, he explains, had appeared to him in a dream and instructed him to compensate Zilqara for the camel slaughtered for the feast. Hearing this, Zilqara shakes his head in astonishment and says, «Even in death, he has not abandoned his generosity». Thus the story presents Atymtai's generosity and humane qualities as continuing beyond his lifetime.

In Kazakh society, hospitality, respect for the unexpected guest sent by God, and generosity became features of national custom; for this reason, the image of Hatymtai was readily embraced, and many tale-like narratives about him were preserved. In the national versions, the image of Atymtai (Hatymtai) Zhomart serves to praise not so much his wealth as his moral qualities such as kindness, generosity, and nobility. Some of these works circulated orally and were preserved in popular memory, while other versions survived in manuscript form or were published as books before the October Revolution. Poet-storytellers such as Shadi Tore Zhangiruly, Zhusipbek Shaikhyslamuly, Qarasaq al Erimbet, Ertai Qulsariev, and others expanded the prose narratives about Atymtai and rendered them as lengthy dastans with complex, intricate, and engaging plots.

The rare-manuscript collections of Kazakhstan preserve Kazan editions as well as manuscript texts of dastans and tales collected by M. Qusniev, T. Baimukhametuly, M. Baizhanov, D. Tolebayev, and others: the M.O. Auezov Institute of Literature and Art (ILA), folders 118, 301, 348, 365, 675, 820, 828, 885, 917/14, 920/31, 1092, 1094; and the Central Scientific Library of the RSE «Gylym Ordasy» (CSL), folders 28, 80, 88, 219, 60, 282, 306, 338, among others.

The earliest version of the dastan «Hatymtai Zhomart» was published in Kazan in 1848, although the identity of its poet is unknown. Later, in 1891, another version, «Dastan Hatymtai», whose poet and collector are likewise unknown, was printed in the same city. In 1897 and 1898, the poet Kashafudin Shahmardanuly published the work in Kazan under the title «Qissa Hatymtai Zhomart» at the M.A. Chirkova printing house.

In the dastan «Qissa Hatymtai Zhomar» the kings of three countries, jealous of Hatymtai's wisdom and the affection in which the people hold him, ask for his swift black stallion in order to test him. Hatymtai slaughters that very horse and serves it to his guests. The king of Yemen, having heard of Hatymtai's fame and becoming jealous, sends a man named Balazhoi to kill him. Balazhoi is so impressed by Hatymtai's humanity and generosity that he returns to the king and tells him what happened. Pleased with Hatymtai, the king sends him a sealed letter. In the time of the Prophet, Hatymtai's daughter likewise displays justice and generosity and secures freedom for herself and her companions.

The dastan «Qissa Qasym Zhomart» versified by the poet Zhusipbek Shaikhyslamuly, was reprinted many times in Kazan (1896, 1901, 1903, 1906, 1910, 1912, 1913) and circulated widely among the people. The work is based on stories about a large-hearted man who never abandons generosity, whether in prosperous times or when the reversals of fate force him to make a living by selling firewood. It was published in Beijing by the Ulttar publishing house in Volume 3 of «Kazakh Qissas» (1986), in Volume 2 of the dastan collection within the multivolume «Folk Oral Literature» series (1990), and in Volume 4 of the one-hundred-volume «Babalar Sozi» series (2004).

In Baghdad, a ruler named Harun al-Rashid considers himself the most generous man alive. One day he hears the statement, «There is no one in the whole world more generous than Qasym», and sets out to test him. After Harun al-Rashid becomes convinced not only of Qasym's generosity but of all his noble qualities, he gives him his daughter in marriage and places him on the throne. Although the protagonist bears a different name here, the work is close to the dastan «Hatymtai Zhomart» in theme, content, and central idea.

A manuscript version of the dastan copied in 1896 by a nineteen-year-old named Tashmukhamet Baimukhametuly Kozhenov, written neatly in Arabic script on heavy paper, is preserved in the Institute's Manuscript Collection (folder 127). The content of the dastan is slightly abridged, and the positions of certain words and lines have been rearranged.

A version close to it in content was written down by Eszhan Sarymbaiuly in July 1909 and sent for publication. Under the title «Hikayat Dastan Hatymtai» it appeared in Kazan in 1913 at the B.L. Dombrovsky printing house with financial support from the descendants of Shamsadin Khusainov. The edition comprises 47 pages and 5,016 lines. It was later published in Volume 4 of the one-hundred-volume «Babalar Sozi» series (2004).

In Basra, King Hatymtai considers himself the most generous person in the world. One day he hears that an extraordinarily generous young woman lives in the city of Ray and undertakes a distant ninety-day journey in order to see the celebrated woman with his own eyes. Hatymtai joins a caravan, reaches Ray, and asks a young woman named Banu for gold coins forty times in order to test her generosity. Once he is convinced of her generosity, Hatymtai reveals his identity and expresses his wish to learn the secret of her inexhaustible wealth. The distances along the route Basra-Ray-Qandalusia-Tabaristan-Babylon-Badakhshan-Dagestan-Khorasan are each described as a ninety-day, or three-month, journey. By the time Hatymtai has traveled in search of the stories of the man in Qandalusia who grinds jewels into powder and scatters them, the blind Arab in Tabaristan who pays people to strike him in the chest, the muezzin in Babylon, the man in Badakhshan who alternately laughs and weeps, and the wild, deer-like young man wandering the steppe of Dagestan, three years have passed since he left his homeland. The jewel merchant at first failed to appreciate the treasure inherited from his father; later, in order to punish his former companions, he ground the jewels into powder and scattered them before their eyes. King Hatymtai eventually returns to Banu, and the two are united. When Banu's father ruled as king, a sheikh had secretly stolen from the treasury for many years. Once his crime was exposed, the sheikh was punished; this explains why Princess Banu of Ray distributes the wealth accumulated through the sheikh's theft.

Hatymtai is also associated with the name of Hazrat Ali. The king of Yemen sends a young man with the promise that he will give him his daughter if he brings back Hazrat Ali's head. The young man meets Ali, and Ali agrees to let his head be cut off. The young man embraces Islam, and Ali resolves to help him marry the king's daughter. During the journey, they encounter or hear a series of instructive stories: the tale of a thief and a lion; the hostility shown to her husband by a woman restored to life through the prayer of the Prophet Jesus (from a fourth-century BCE Jataka text); a quarrel among Black men; a battle with a seven-headed monster; the story of three fish inhabiting a lake (from the Indian collection «Hitopadesha» ninth-tenth centuries); encounters with peri maidens; the covert schemes of a sorceress; and the story of a woman who, ashamed before a rooster, nevertheless committed adultery.

In the Bashkir tale called «Hatamtai» a king famed for his generosity hears that there is a queen even more generous than he is and sets out on a long journey to discover the secret of her generosity. Along the way he encounters a shoemaker who sometimes laughs and sometimes cries; a muezzin who soaks his shirt in water before calling the adhan; a man crushing an egg-sized diamond into powder and scattering it to the wind; and a young man running naked through the desert. The king asks each of them to tell his story. The naked young man had opened a forbidden door, seen an enchanted maiden, disobeyed her instructions, and found himself cast into the wilderness. The man grinding the diamond and scattering it to the wind does so deliberately to spite treacherous friends. The muezzin waits for a giant bird because he wants to return to the woman he loves. The shoemaker is the husband of a woman who appears devout to others but is in fact sinful. The tale states that the places where the shoemaker and the muezzin live are each two months' journey apart.

Eventually the king meets the queen he has been seeking. She reveals the truth: she is a king's daughter who has been returning to the people property stolen by an ishan who once led a band of robbers that plundered the people's wealth. Her generosity thus proves to be an act performed in the service of justice and charity (Suleimanov, 2005: 121-126).

The tale «Qasym Zhomart» (ILA: folder 118) is written in pen and contains corrections made directly over the text: some words were crossed out and other words were inserted by the collector or the person preparing the text for publication. As a result, the text was shifted from a colloquial register toward a literary style. In the manuscript, the crossed-out words are marked in italics. The content also contains concepts and expressions that do not accord with the conventions of oral narration. For example, a young man raises his hand to ask the assembled people for permission to speak, and the crowd noisily grants him permission; this scene recalls a Soviet-era meeting of members of an agricultural collective.

Long ago there lived an exceptionally charitable man named Qasym Zhomart. He helped the poor and people with disabilities and freely gave those in need whatever they asked of him. One day he asks the people of his country whether anyone is more generous than he is. A young man then tells him about a queen who gives one hundred gold coins to a person on every visit, even if that person enters her presence a hundred times.

Qasym Zhomart sets out to discover the secret of the inexhaustible supply of gold. The young woman asks him to determine why a butcher suddenly collapses while conducting his trade; why the butcher gives gold to anyone who goes to an old man sitting at a crossroads of nine roads and has that person strike him with a club; and why a muezzin in the city of Egypt repeatedly and restlessly climbs to the roof of the mosque to call the adhan. Built as a chain of several interconnected stories, the tale is close in content to the plot of the narrative dastan.

The dastan «Atymtai Zhomart» versified by Qarasaq al Erimbet Koldeibekuly, is preserved in the Manuscript Collection of the M.O. Auezov Institute of Literature and Art (folder 481). It was collected from oral tradition by Turmakhan Baizhanov.

The king of Sham tests Atymtai's generosity by asking for one hundred black camels. Atymtai receives the envoy with honor and gathers one hundred camels within a week. When the sultan of Rum asks for his swift stallion, Atymtai slaughters it to provide a feast for his guest. The king of Yemen, meanwhile, sends a man to kill him, but Atymtai once again proves his generosity by showing that he is even prepared to surrender his own head. His generosity becomes widely known among the people, and his name is preserved in lines of verse.

In the year one thousand eight hundred and ninety-nine of Jesus,
It was completed in Qauys, when ice lay in rows.
By the Hijri reckoning it was one thousand three hundred and seventeen,
The month was Sha'ban, and the year was that of the Boar.
We are from the Syr-Darya region, from Qazaly,
Kazakhs of Qalyngbas, the eighth village!

The work was published in Volume 2 of the dastan collection in the multivolume «Folk Oral Literature» series (1990), in Volume 4 of the multivolume «Babalar Sozi» series (2002), and in Qarasaq al Erimbet's collection of poems, aitys texts, and dastans entitled «My Edifying Word to Posterity» (2009).

A comparison of the multivolume «Babalar Sozi» with the collection «My Edifying Word to Posterity» reveals a number of changes. For example, the line «Atymtai lived in a city called Emin» in the multivolume edition is clarified in the collection as «Atymtai lived in a city called Yemen». Likewise, the phrase «O people, may you yourself come to my aid» is rendered as «O my God, may You yourself come to my aid».

The text also displays phonetic substitutions in certain words, for example: ikayat - hikayat, kar - qahar, basi - bagasy, alemge - galamga, keuli - konili, ol erler - bar erler, adeti - gadeti, ar tuninde - ar kuninde, olgensin - olgen son, zhigan malyn - zhigandaryn, sozi edi - suyi edi, and others. Religious terms such as «God» and «Allah» were replaced by words meaning «the public», «the people», and «the community».

In Volume 4 of the multivolume «Babalar Sozi» the poem comprises 606 lines; eleven stanzas, or sixty-six lines, found in Qarasaq al Erimbet's collection «My Edifying Word to Posterity» are absent from it. In Qarasaq al Erimbet's collection, by contrast, the dastan contains 648 lines, while four stanzas, or twenty-four lines, from Volume 4 of «Babalar Sozi» are absent. Comparison of the texts in the two collections shows that words underwent lexical, morphological, and semantic changes. Although some lines were condensed and individual words were supplied in alternative forms, the principal content and idea of the work were preserved.

Shadi Tore Zhangiruly's dastan «The Tale of Hatymtai» was printed for the second time in Tashkent in 1914 at the G.Kh. Garifzhanov printing house.

During the 2013 expedition to China organized to collect the folkloric heritage of Kazakhs living abroad, researchers of the Institute, Aqedil Toishanuly and Nasikhat Nabiolla, collected photocopies of several books and journals and deposited them in the Manuscript Collection of the M.O. Auezov Institute of Literature and Art, where they are preserved in folder 1254. The «Qasym Zhomart» dastan published in issues №3 (pp. 12-26) and №4 (pp. 7-34) of the journal *Altai Ayasy* in 1981 is identified as having been collected by Abdighani Batyrbaiuly and O. Alpysbaiuly.

In terms of content, the text published in *Altai Ayasy* (1981, №3-4) resembles the Kazan edition (1896) of the dastan «Qasym Zhomart» that is, the version of Zh. Shaikhyslamuly. In the journal, the title is given as «Qasym Zhomart» and its genre is identified as a «qissa». A textual-critical comparison of these two texts revealed a number of textual differences in the journal version. More than twenty lines in Zh. Shaikhyslamuly's version containing praise of Allah and blessings upon the Prophet were substantially abridged, as were the lines at the end of the poem in which the poet provides information about himself.

In 1986, the dastan «Qasym Zhomart» was published in Volume 3 of «Kazakh Qissas» by the Ul'ttar publishing house in Beijing. Its content is close to Zh. Shaikhyslamuly's version, although it underwent editorial processing. In 1990 it appeared in Volume 2 of the dastan collection in the multivolume «Folk Oral Literature» series. In that edition, five stanzas at the beginning and six stanzas at the end of the dastan were omitted; moreover, the meanings of certain words and phrases were misread, leading to editorial correction. In 2004, however, the text in the one-hundred-volume «Babalar Sozi» series was prepared directly from the first printed edition without alteration.

A manifestation of the munajat genre, widespread in medieval literature, occurs at the beginning of the dastan «Qissa Qasym Zhomart». It contains praise of Allah and blessings upon the Prophet, appeals for support from the four Rightly Guided Caliphs and all the

Companions, and a statement that the purpose of taking up paper and pen is to compose the dastan.

There are several textual differences in the opening of the poem across the versions: semantic changes occur in individual words and phrases, chiefly through synonymous substitution, while no differences are observed in the poem's meter or rhyme.

The dastan «Qissa Qasym Zhomart»	The dastan «Qasym Zhomart» (Altai Ayasy journal, 1981, № 3-4)
Now let me begin at the beginning of the tale, Abilqasym was the generous one in all the world. No story as wondrous as this exists on earth, Let the assembled people here listen. Let me tell the story of that Qasym, Let the many people lend an ear to my words. This qissa will satisfy your longing to listen; Why would you hear any other tale?	Let me begin the tale by saying bismillah, Abilqasym grew renowned for generosity in all the world. Let me tell of the generosity of such a man, O people, lend an ear for a while to my words. Let the assembly hear the words of worthy people, Let old and young alike take an example. Listener, your longing to hear will be satisfied; What other story could you need beyond this?

In the dastan «Qasym Zhomart» the information about Harun al-Rashid described as a great, formidable, and generous ruler of Baghdad who governed eight cities and had no equal among the kings of his time is abridged. The text of the dastan is condensed, and some episodes are shortened. In particular, the ten-stanza account of the work's composition at the end of the text is reduced to a single stanza.

In the text published in Altai Ayasy, the names Baghdad and Basra are not given as the characters' places of residence. There is a noticeable tendency to replace words borrowed from Arabic and Persian with native equivalents, and differences also occur in titles: for example, «caliph» is replaced by «king». In addition, the following two stanzas, marked in italics in the compared text, were not included in the version published in Altai Ayasy:

The needy would come to Qasym,
He would give them all food and clothing.
Whether a padishah, a rich man, or a pauper,
He would serve every one of them equally.

He gave each visitor whatever was requested,
He saw the tears shed by the destitute.
In this world he spared neither wealth nor life,
Let me tell you now of his generosity.

In the dastan, the name of Harun al-Rashid's wife is «Zubayda» (the same form is used in the tales of «One Thousand and One Nights»); in Arabic, the name carries the meanings «chosen», «select», «the best», and «truly choice». In the text published in Altai Ayasy (1981, № 3-4), it appears as «Zabida». Likewise, the name of another character was changed from Durdana to Ardana. The name Durdana is explained through Turkic dur, «precious stone» and Persian durdan, «moonlight». A broader tendency to alter character names is therefore observable.

We shall now consider several manuscript versions associated with the name Atymtai Zhomart.

«Qasym Zhomart» (ILA: folder 348). Long ago, Qasym, the only son of a wealthy man who possessed seven palaces of gold beneath the earth, distributed all his wealth after the death of his parents until nothing remained. He gives an old man who comes seeking help both the horse beneath him and the gold-embroidered clothes he is wearing, and then leaves for another place. Traveling from land to land, Qasym reaches a city and becomes like a son to an old man he meets in the marketplace. The old man shows him all the palaces but warns him not to enter one of them. Qasym becomes the old man's heir and gains fame for his generosity. He opens the forbidden door and falls in love with peri maidens in the form of swans; although he steals the golden slipper of one of them, the maidens fly away. Qasym waits for them so long, grieving and yearning, that he falls ill.

«Atymtai Zhomart» (ILA: folder 820, notebook 3, in Arabic script). The manuscript entered the collection in 1972 and was collected by Zhagyp ar Irmukham betov. The work contains the stories of a khan, a jewel-scattering figure, a qari, and a muezzin. At the end of page 58 there is a note: «Taken from the book *Kazakh Fairy Tales*. Turned into verse by Omirzaq, son of Beisenali. 8 April 1969».

«Atymtai Zhomart» (ILA: folder 828, notebook 3). During wartime, Atymtai is taken captive, but his horse refuses to abandon its master to the enemy and rescues him. Hearing of this event, a khan becomes fascinated by the stallion and wants to buy it or otherwise obtain it, but Atymtai refuses. The khan announces that he will grant whatever is desired to anyone who brings him either the horse or Atymtai's head. Tempted by worldly reward, a young man sets out to carry out the khan's decree.

«The Story of Khan Atymtai» (ILA: folder 301). Although the work bears Atymtai's name, it has little connection with him and belongs to the genre of oratorical sayings. Atymtai Khan has died, and it is said that Atymtai's junior wife treats the people of all three zhuzes with great hospitality; Shorman falls in love with her because of this conduct. Sitting behind a curtain, the khan's widow listens to the conversation of the biys and, with a single remark, makes it clear that she will not remarry.

«Qasym Zhomart» (ILA: folder 885, notebook 2) was written by Tashmukhamet Baimukhamet uly Koshenov between 1889 and 1905 and was deposited in the collection by S. Sauytbekov in 1981. «The Tale of Atymtai» (ILA: folder 917/14) ends with the following note: «This version of the tale «Atymtai Zhomart» was completed by Qarasaq al Erimbet Koldeibekuly in November 1899. This version was copied successively from a text written by Toqtabolat Ormanuly of Qazaly, of the Asp an clan of the Shomekei (specifically, the Niyaz branch); this is considered the fullest and most complete version. Alqu at» «The Tale of Atymtai Zhomart» (ILA: folder 1092) is likewise one version of the story about the famous generous man. In the version written down and deposited by Academician A. Margulan in 1939 (CSL: folder 28), the events take place in the city of Baghdad.

The fairy tale «Atymtai Zhomart» long transmitted orally among the people, was published in 1900 by the local historian, historian, and lawyer I.I. Kraft under the title «A Good Man» in the second part of his work «From Kirghiz Antiquity». The unofficial section of the «Turgai Regional Gazette» the *Turgaiskaya Gazeta*, № 14 for 1898, states:

«Recorded in a free translation from the words of Mambetzhon Ibragimov, an honored aksakal of village № 2 of the Burtinskaya volost».

4. Results

In the story «The Generous Man» by the prominent educator, writer, and ethnographer Ybyrai Altynsarin, Atymtai Zhomart, although extremely wealthy, makes it his daily habit to wear old clothes, chop firewood, carry hay, and perform physical labor. One day his acquaintances ask why he does this, and he explains that there are four reasons: he fears becoming intoxicated by wealth and turning into a hard-hearted man who feels no compassion for the poor; he wishes to set an example of labor for later generations; bread earned through one's own work tastes especially sweet and is more nourishing; and he fears falling into sin by squandering the wealth granted by God. These words show Atymtai Zhomart as a modest, hardworking, and devout man. Through his conduct, Atymtai demonstrates that a person is made worthy not by wealth but by labor and moral qualities.

Concerning the image of Hatymtai, the Turkmen scholar M.A. Sakali wrote that «not only in Eastern epic, but in world folklore as well, there is no one equal to him in benevolence and spiritual generosity» (Sakali, 1956: 69). In Kyrgyz literature and folklore, generous people are likewise known by the names «Atantai» and «Atantai Zhomart» (Myrzakmetov, 2024: 41-50). Bashkir and Turkmen folkloric works contain various forms of the name G'atamatag'i (Musaeva, 2025: 298-311).

In Karakalpak folklore, the narrative dastan «Hatam-Tai» although similar in title, develops in a different direction in both content and plot. In this fairy-tale and fantastic work, a shepherd named Ergulan lives along the Aqdarya River. He has three beautiful and intelligent daughters named Tai, Ai, and Qumyry. The girls are educated at the palace of Shamun Khan, king of the peris, where they master the art of magic. At that time, a mullah named Alauatdin, who lives along the Arshaly and possesses magical powers, seeks Tai's hand, pays the bride-price, and marries her. Tai, however, does not love him and uses magic to free herself from the mullah.

On the opposite bank of the Aqdarya lives Hatam, the son of a shepherd named Artyu. After quarreling with the sons of a rich man, he leaves his homeland, comes to Tai's palace, and falls in love with her. Tai imposes a condition: they may be united only if he finds the solution to the riddle, «Its beginning is April, its ending is ruin». Hatam undertakes a long journey in search of the answer. On the road he meets various people: two younger brothers refuse to lodge him in their homes and send him to their elder brother who lives far away. Although the elder brother is seventy years old, he looks young and is distinguished by extraordinary hospitality. During this journey, Hatam comes to understand that a man's dignity and the prosperity of a household depend on a woman's patience and endurance. Hatam encounters many dangers along the way. He fights the warrior Baqylkhan in single combat, then battles all six of Baqylkhan's younger brothers and defeats them. One day, while resting beneath a great tree, he sees a dragon threatening the chicks of the Sumyryq bird and shoots it dead. Grateful for the hero's courage and compassion, the Sumyryq helps him and carries him to the distant land of the peris.

Batyrkhan, the khan of a certain kingdom, and his vizier Taimasbek marry Tai's younger sisters Ai and Qumyry. Ai, however, uses magic to turn the khan into a dog, and

he barely manages to escape. Sensing that his own life is in danger, Hatam burns a feather that the Sumyryq bird had earlier given him and summons it for help. The Sumyryq arrives and saves him from death. In the end, Hatam successfully passes all the tests set by the beautiful Tai; the two are united and attain their desired happiness (Qaraqalpaq Folklore, 18-folder, 1988: 199-290).

A work with related content entitled «The Origin of the Name Atymtai Zhomart» (ILA: folder 920, notebook 31) tells the story of a young man named Zhomart and a young woman famed under the name Atymtai. The girl sets a condition: «If you can discover how it came to be said, 'Gul is in love with Sanauir, Sanauir is in love with Gul, and in the end both stink worse than dung,' I will tell you where the treasure lies». The figure of a mastan old woman appears here as a supernatural helper. With the old woman's assistance, the secret of Sanauir is discovered; by asking to perform ablution and pray before the gallows, the hero again survives with the old woman's help. The narrative also tells of the secret of a water that turns things into gold by means of knowledge found in a book.

An Azerbaijani tale tells of a wealthy and generous man named Hatam who builds a great palace at the junction of seven roads and gives forty gold coins to every person who comes there. One day a dervish arrives at the palace and becomes his guest. At the table, Hatam asks whether the dervish knows anyone as generous as he is. The dervish replies that there is someone even more generous: every visitor to that person's palace is served food on a golden plate and, when departing, receives the very plate as a gift. Astonished, Hatam resolves to see the palace for himself. After a long journey, he reaches the place described by the dervish and asks to see its owner; eventually he is permitted only to speak with the owner from behind a curtain. The unknown owner does not immediately reveal the secret, but instead instructs Hatam to discover the cause of a famous physician's sorrow. Hatam accepts the condition and sets out in search of the physician. Reaching the city where the physician lives, Hatam meets him. The physician tells him the fate of a blind padishah and his son Ibrahim. Soothsayers had said that the medicine capable of curing the ruler could be found in a land never touched by a horse's hoof. The two elder sons go in search of the remedy but return without finding the healing herb. The father is reluctant to send his youngest son, Ibrahim. With the help of divs, however, Ibrahim reaches Gulistan-i Irem, falls in love with the padishah's daughter Melike-Khatun, and marries her. Later Ibrahim finds the medicinal herb, returns to his homeland, and cures his father. His brothers, seeing their father's affection for Ibrahim, become jealous, invite him to go hunting, and throw him into a well. They deceive their father by saying that a tiger devoured Ibrahim; the padishah dies of grief, and the eldest brother takes the throne. Melike-Khatun comes searching for Ibrahim, rescues him with the aid of the divs, and punishes his brothers. Ibrahim and Melike-Khatun are reunited and live happily. Hatam, meanwhile, obtains a secret medicine from the physician, saves the owner of the palace a beautiful young woman who has been turned half into gold and marries her; the two live happily for the rest of their lives (The tale of Hatam. An Azerbaijani folk tale).

The Bashkir folk novella «The Just Naushiruan and Hatamtai Zhomart» has the following plot. Persia is ruled by King Naushiruan, renowned for his justice. He becomes friends with a generous man named Hatamtai. For some reason, however, relations between

them cool and they become enemies. The king attempts to force Hatamtai to come before him and ask forgiveness, but Hatamtai refuses to bow. The king then issues a proclamation that whoever brings him Hatamtai's head or his stallion Aqtamaq will receive the king's daughter in marriage. Hearing the announcement, a poor young man decides to take the risk and sets out. He arrives at Hatamtai's home and becomes his guest. Hatamtai receives him with honor and, treating him as a distinguished guest, slaughters his stallion to provide a feast. During the night the young man begins to weep; Hatamtai asks the reason and learns the entire truth. When he discovers that his guest has come to carry out the king's command, Hatamtai gives him permission to take his head. His wife stops him, however, saying that Hatamtai must be taken to the king alive. Hatamtai agrees, puts a bridle on himself, and hands the reins to the young man. They come before the king. Witnessing such extraordinary generosity, Naushiruan is deeply moved and brought to tears (Suleimanov, 2005: 119-121).

The tale «Atymtai Zhomart» (ILA: folder 365) was collected from oral tradition by Murat Qusniev. Long ago there lived a just king named Naushiruanbek. Hatymtai, renowned throughout the land for his generosity, becomes the king's friend. Certain people sow discord between them and turn them against one another. One day the king holds a great feast and invites Hatymtai, but Hatymtai does not come. The king announces a reward for whoever brings him Hatymtai's head and swift horse. A poor young man then sets out, but after witnessing Hatymtai's hospitality, he regrets having come on the king's assignment.

«Atymtai and Nasherban» (ILA: folder 1094) is a version of the preceding text. Atymtai and Nasherban are friends, but Satan comes between them in order to destroy their friendship. While they are estranged, they meet in the open steppe. When Nausharuan says, «If you are generous, give me your sword», Atymtai replies, «You were a man famed for justice; do not forget that». After this exchange, both abandon their hostility and become friends again.

In the different versions, the force that separates Atymtai and Nausharuan is described variously as certain people or as Satan, while in another version it is left unspecified and expressed simply as «for some reason». The Bashkir novella states that the events take place in Persia. The reconciliation of the two friends is also interpreted differently from version to version.

5. Conclusion

In the course of the study, the manuscript and printed versions of the narrative dastans about Atymtai Zhomart in Kazakh folklore were compared from a textual-critical perspective, allowing their textual history and version-specific features to be established. In conclusion, three narrative dastans based on legends and stories about Atymtai «Qissa Qasym Zhomart», «Qissa Hatymtai Zhomart», and «Hikayat Dastan Hatymtai» were compared textually in their Kazan editions of 1896, 1897, and 1913 and in the versions preserved in the manuscript collections of the M.O. Auezov Institute of Literature and Art, the National Library of the Republic of Kazakhstan, and the Central Scientific Library of the RSE «Gylym Ordasy». The texts of the dastan published in scholarly collections in 1990 and 2004 were subjected to editorial-textological analysis, and it was established

that certain textual changes arose from the incorrect reading or interpretation of altered words and sentences. The dastan texts «Atymtai Zhomart» (ILA: folder 820), «The Tale of Atymtai» (ILA: folder 917/14), and «The Tale of Atymtai Zhomart» (ILA: folder 1092) were examined in terms of plot-typological distinctions. In addition, the texts of the fairy-tale versions «Qasym Zhomart» (ILA: folder 118), «The Story of Khan Atymtai» (ILA: folders 118, 348), «Atymtai Zhomart» (ILA: folder 828/3), and «Atymtai and Nasherban» (ILA: folder 1094) were analyzed from the perspective of the plot invariant. The comparison showed that although the texts of the dastans about Atymtai Zhomart are interconnected at the level of plot, substantial textual differences exist among them. These include substitutions of individual words and phrases, abridgement of lines of verse, omission of certain episodes, and changes in character names and geographical names. The evidence indicates that these changes are connected with the oral transmission of the works and with later editorial intervention. The present study makes it possible to clarify the textual history of the dastans about Atymtai Zhomart and to systematize their multiple versions. Its findings contribute to the identification of problems involved in establishing an original or principal text, comparing variants, and distinguishing editorial changes within the textual criticism of Kazakh folklore.

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