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AIMAN -SHOLPAN: THE INTERSECTION OF FOLKLORE TRADITION AND MODERN APPROACHES

Abstract. The article provides an extensive analysis of the scholarly perspectives on the poem «Aiman-Sholpan» that have developed from the 19th to the 21st century. It identifies how researchers' genre classifications have changed over time, interpreting the work as a lyrical epic, a love narrative, a ballad-type story, a historical epic poem, or a dastan. The study also notes that only one version of the poem has survived and that it was published multiple times in Kazan editions. The main scholarly viewpoints of S.A. Kaskabasov, M. Gabdullin, K. Zhumaliev, M.O. Auezov, and M. Akynzhanov are compared, highlighting their distinct approaches to genre, historical context, and poetic analysis. Particular attention is given to systematizing scholarly views on conflicting notions about the poem's characters (the image of Kotibar, Aiman as a new model of the female character, and the confrontation between tradition and modernity). The article focuses on the poem's historical foundation, its compositional structure, the socio-ideological implications of its characters, and its assessment as a text at the intersection of folklore tradition and modernity. The study demonstrates the complexity of the genre nature of Aiman-Sholpan and confirms that scholars of different periods have consistently viewed it as a multilayered epic work. In addition, Aiman-Sholpan serves not only as a work of art, but also as a guardian of the spiritual and cultural memory of the people, a carrier of aesthetic taste and moral values. The results of the study allow a deeper understanding of the relationship between Kazakh folklore and written literature, as well as literary and theoretical systematization.

Keywords: poem, text, plot, motive, image, folklore, hero.

Introduction

Opinions on the poem «Aiman-Sholpan» span the period from the 19th to the 21st centuries. However, none of them are identical. Regarding the poem's genre, scholars have at various times called it a love poem, a lyrical epic, a ballad, a historical epic, or a dastan, examining the work from various genre perspectives. Each scholar has their own conclusions. This demonstrates that the

poem has been the subject of scholarly attention throughout various eras. As a result of systematic research, all these opinions have been collected and comprehensively analyzed. In accordance with modern scientific advances, it has been scientifically established and confirmed that the historical nature of folklore differs from its literary counterpart.

Methods and Materials

The text of the poem «Aiman-Sholpan» and related scholarly works were used as research materials. The study used comparative-historical, genre-structural, intertextual, functional-narratological, and motif-typological methods of analysis. The poem's oral dissemination and its incorporation into written texts were examined within the framework of M. Parry and A. Lord's theory of oral-formulaic composition. A historical-comparative method was employed to analyze changes in scholarly understanding between the 19th and 21st centuries, while genre-structural analysis focused on the poem's plot, composition, and character system. Intertextual analysis was used to compare the presentation of individual narrative approaches and motifs in the poem with other folklore texts. The narrative function of the characters was determined using a functional-narratological approach, and the manifestations of stable epic motifs in Kazakh and world folklore were compared using a motif-typological analysis.

Results and Discussion

The poem «Aiman-Sholpan» is a lyrical-epic and epical work reflecting the social life of 19th-century Kazakh society and the confrontation between the tradition and modernity. The epic harmoniously depicts both historical figures (Kotibar, Arystan) and representatives of the new era (Aiman, Sholpan, Alibek). The character of Aiman differs from the female heroines of previous epics: thanks to her intelligence and resourcefulness, she peacefully resolves conflicts. The characters of Kotibar and Maman demonstrate the role and limitations of old customs and traditions in society. The composition and plot of the poem combine traditional elements of Kazakh folklore with real events, uniting archaic motifs and the social innovations of the new era.

Currently, only one version of the poem «Aiman-Sholpan» is known to us. However, the name of the poet who performed it remains unknown. The work itself was published in Kazan five times before the revolution in 1896, 1898, 1901, 1906, 1910 and 1913. It was recorded and published by Zhusipbek kozha Shaikhulislamuly. A summary of the poem was published in 1901 in the Torgay newspaper (No. 17). And in 1902, the Torgay regional news (No. 62) published the poem in Kazakh. All these publications repeat the 1896 version. Subsequently, this same version was republished several times after the Kazan Revolution, already in the Soviet years (1939, 1957) [1].

S.A. Kaskabassov classifies this work as a «lyric-epic (ballad) poem» and, using this poem as an example, demonstrates that folklore, changing in response to the demands of life, is enriched by new genres. At the same time, he warns about the conventionality of such an analysis [2].

The scholar emphasizes that the events described in this poem are not historical and explains the inclusion of historical figures such as Kotibar and Arystan by the fact that in the 19th century, the hero Kotibar was widely known among the Younger Zhuzes, but prior to this, there was no separate heroic poem dedicated to him. Therefore, the poets included his image in the narrative for the purpose of glorifying him. In addition, the researcher notes that Kotibar retains the traditional attributes of the hero such as his proud disposition and simplicity, his weapons, his war horse and other characteristic features. Thus, the researcher refutes the prevailing opinions of his time, which interpreted Kotibar as «an immoral batyr, incapable of understanding the spirit of the new and yearning for the old», and, instead, characterizes him as «a hero striving to preserve his dignity as a batyr and a man and demanding due respect». The poem's central theme is not the struggle between old and new, but rather the depiction of individual fate and family problems. To explore these themes, the poets drew on the traditions of ancient fairy tales and epic poetry, which are analyzed from several perspectives.

First of all, it should be noted that the work begins with a prologue, traditional for epic poetry: Maman, from the Tama clan, the richest man, has no children. Thus, the text reveals the motif of childlessness, a common theme in epic folklore. However, in the poem «Aiman-Sholpan», this motif is further developed: despite the absence of a son, Maman enjoys the highest respect, while

Kotibar, who has both sons and daughters, challenges this respect, which leads to conflict.

S. Kaskabassov views this episode differently than scholars, who explain it as a typical conflict between two people. According to the scholar, this represents a violation of an ancient social norm. According to traditional beliefs, a man without a son had a lower social status and was not particularly respected. In traditional culture, a son was perceived as the successor and heir to the family line, so his absence was considered a serious flaw. In epic works, this motif is usually accompanied by the experiences of a childless couple and their social discomfort. For example, in the epic «Alpamys Batyr», Baibori and Taldyk remain childless for a long time, experience deep suffering, and turn to holy places with prayers for a child, this emphasizes the importance of procreation in the public consciousness [3].

Against this backdrop, the situation in the poem «Aiman-Sholpan» becomes particularly clear: the childless Maman occupies a place of honor in the golden yurt, while Kotibar, who possesses both wealth and children, finds himself in a less honorable position. This insults his dignity and diminishes his honor. Thus, the conflict in the work is explained not by a personal rivalry between the two people, but by a violation of the traditional epic norm associated with childlessness and social status.

However, Maman, boasting of his wealth, insults Kotibar, calling him poor. This behavior by Maman further inflames Kotibar's anger. Declaring that the golden yurt belongs to him, Kotibar, believing that Maman has violated the customs of his ancestors and humiliated him, raids his village and takes his two daughters captive [2]. Thus, the scholar, examining the poem from a different analytical perspective, demonstrates a renewal of the ancient plot: in the poem «Aiman-Sholpan», traditional plots such as an enemy attack on a village in the absence of a young man (batyr), the capture of his wife, an attempted forced marriage, and the hero's pursuit of his wife (bride) and her liberation are presented in accordance with later realities of Kazakh life. Moreover, Kotibar's confrontation is not national in nature, but is directed against one rich man, which is reminiscent of the «baranta» (hostage taking) common in the Kazakh steppes, and his raid on the village of Maman is depicted as an attempt to punish the violator of tradition, make him repent, and also to protect his dishonor and take revenge.

Considering the insult inflicted on him the greatest humiliation of his time, he retaliates by placing Maman-bai's two daughters on a camel backwards, thereby returning the insult in its most severe form of humiliation for a girl, as it was perceived in that era. The value of S. Kaskabassov's opinion lies in his substantiation that Aiman's character combines both certain traits of women from ancient fairy tales and epics, as well as new traits emerging among 19th-century Kazakh women, and in demonstrating this by comparing her image with other female characters. Furthermore, he advanced new conclusions regarding the historical connection between Arystan and Alibek, as well as their depictions in poems.

According to M. Gabdullin, the events in the poem «Aiman-Sholpan» are taken from real life. The main characters of the poem, Kotibar and Arystan, are historical figures. According to historical data, Kotibar was the son of Bersen, and Arystan was the son of Tinali. Bersen and Tinali are the children of the same person. They came from the Shekty clan and the Tileukabak subclan; they lived in what is now the Shalkar district of the Aktobe region. Kotibar and Arystan lived until the middle of the last century [4]. T. Shoigarin writes: «Kotibar was born in the eleventh aul of the Shalkar district of the Aktobe region, and his descendants exist to this day». In turn, Tynym Birmanov notes: «Kotibar's grave is located in the Klyuchevoy district of the Aktobe region. Kotibar was killed by order of the sultans-bays and descendants of the khans, who paid a man named Zhankaska. Arystan and Yeset found his body with difficulty and announced his burial. At the same time, there is no historical information about the heroes of the poem – Aiman, Sholpan and Alibek [5].

According to historian M. Akynzhanov, this poem originated in the early second half of the last century, that is, during the completion of Kazakhstan's accession to Russia. However, none of the literary scholars who have commented on this issue provide an exact date for the poem's origin, but they all agree that its plot is based on real events [6].

M. Gabdullin notes: «The poem «Aiman-Sholpan» arose from the idea of depicting social relations in a Kazakh village after the era of reforms, as well as the changes and innovations that had entered public and everyday life. It reveals its main idea through the depiction of the characters and actions of the poem's main characters. In this regard, the characters in the poem are divided into two groups. The first are supporters of the old way of life, former customs and traditions. These are representatives of the feudal system, which is disappearing from the social scene – Kotibar and Maman. The second are youth who support the emerging capitalist relations and the innovations in public life based on them. These are Aiman, Arystan, Alibek, and Sholpan. They are presented in the poem as representatives of a new era beginning to penetrate Kazakh society and are distinguished by innovative actions and character traits not encountered before. Therefore, they are new heroes, previously unknown in Kazakh literature, born of a new era. Thus, the poem depicts the struggle between the old and the new, and the plot of the work is built on the disclosure of this confrontation» [6]. He further explains the conflict between Maman and Kotibar over family as a power struggle. At the same time, Kotibar's negative character traits are emphasized, such as rudeness, bluntness, harshness, irritability, arrogance, and boastfulness. However, despite this, his heroic qualities remain in the background, and he is presented as a one-sided, comical, outdated character. Let's take a closer look at this:

«In the poem, Kotibar and Maman are depicted as witnesses to the passing of the feudal system. Just as their era had become obsolete, so too had they themselves become obsolete, they had become unnecessary, worn-out people. However, they do not acknowledge their backwardness, they yearn for the old days, strive for them, continue to fight and compete, taking appropriate actions. In the folk poem this is assessed as «vanity, a useless thing» and ridiculed. This is not simply a mockery of Kotibar and Maman. At the same time, their passing era, their old customs, as well as their character and actions, incompatible with the conditions of the new time, are ridiculed. The poem presents them as an obstacle to the progress of the Kazakh people, people unnecessary in the new historical conditions. From the perspective of new aspirations and new conditions, the poem criticizes Kotibar and Maman, and through them, the old way of life and traditions alien to the people» [6].

«Arystan, like Aiman, understands that Kotibar's stubbornness will lead to a major quarrel and conflict. Therefore, he seeks to prevent further unrest among the people. He seeks a sign that the issue can be resolved. To this end, he agrees with Aiman's wishes and decides to bring Sholpan home, and he manages to convince Kotibar, who was opposed to this, to change his mind. From this moment on, Arystan and Aiman become people who care about the well-being of the country. He supports Aiman's every reasonable action. He fulfills the wish of Yeset, which he called a «baigazy (gift)», without submitting to Kotibar's whims. His goal was not to deprive Aiman of her people and her beloved husband, but to thwart Kotibar's intention: «I will take Aiman as a concubine». If Kotibar had again provoked unrest and made Aiman his concubine, relations between the peoples would not have improved and would have escalated into a bloody war. Understanding this, Arystan sought to prevent a stalemate. Sholpan's return home and the fulfillment of Yeset's wish were the result of Arystan and Aiman's concern for the well-being of the people» [6].

Like Aiman, Arystan becomes the reason for the two peoples to reach agreement and reconciliation. As a sign of this reconciliation, he marries Sholpan. Accepting Sholpan as his equal wife and life partner, Arystan unites with her sincerely, wholeheartedly, and with all his love.

«Although the poem does not describe Alibek and Sholpan in detail, it seems they, too, are generations of a new era. In this regard, they complement Aiman and Arystan. Nevertheless, Alibek's character is revealed, albeit slightly, in the poem. He participates in trade and seems to support the new capitalist elements penetrating Kazakh society. One notable manifestation of Alibek's character is his attack on Kotibar, in which he brought 1,400 men. This attack is not only revenge on Kotibar, but also a manifestation of the strength of the people who have risen up against old customs, robbery and seizure of property, as well as against their supporters» [6].

Scholar M. Gabdullin notes that the main feature of «Aiman-Sholpan», in terms of its compositional structure and narrative, is its plot built on a tense conflict and the nature of this

conflict distinguishes it from other folklore genres: it depicts the disputes and contradictions unfolding in the life of Kazakh society, where the old gives way to the new. Socially, the poem contrasts representatives of a bygone era and supporters of the old order with the new people, the youth, praising and exemplifying the latter.

M. Auezov, who has thoroughly studied the poem «Aiman-Sholpan» and used its dramatic basis, offers the following characterization of the poem in his extensive work «Kazakh Epic and Folklore» [7]:

- first, the name of this epic's author is unknown; the work was transmitted and disseminated orally for a long time. Consequently, this means that its original version was subject to selection and revision over time;

- second, since some of the characters in «Aiman-Sholpan» (Kotibar, Yeset) are historically well-known figures, it can be assumed that the poem was written in the middle of the last century.

- thirdly, the poem's artistic structure contains relatively few of the exagerations characteristic of classical epic poetry; instead, realistic depictions of Kazakh everyday life predominate. The poem reflects several contradictions in Kazakh society. One of these is rivalry and envy among the nobility. The mutual enmity between Maman-bai and the warrior Kotibar arises from an arrogant desire to prove «who is stronger». During this confrontation, the «victorious» warrior Kotibar subsequently fails to conquer Aiman, whom he wanted to marry, and finds himself in an awkward position, demonstrating that the era of brute, ostentatious force has passed.

Meanwhile, the scholar K. Zhumaliyev, considering «Aiman-Sholpan» [8] as a lyrical epic, comes to the conclusion that the work arose after the popular uprising led by Isatay and Makhambet. He reveals the features of its plot structure, line of conflict and composition, defining it as a poem and evaluating it as a new type, located at the intersection of lyrical epic and historical poem, combining elements of both genres. As evidence of the historical basis of the characters in the poem, he refers to significant events in the history of the Western region and cites a number of facts. According to the scholar's conclusion: «The first fact: on December 13, 1837, when Isatay and Makhambet were defeated by Zhangir and crossed to this bank of the Zhayıq, their main goal was to unite the local clans, gather an army and again move with armed force against the Khan's Horde. However, it became clear that these plans would not be so easy to implement. This was due to the fact that among some influential clans, the Alimuli and Bayuli, who lived on this bank of the Zhayıq, there was a strong inter-clan feud, arising from rivalries. Among the leaders speaking on behalf of the Alim clans were Kotibar Bersenuly, Arystan Tinaliuly, and Zhusipbi Kulenuly. Isatay and Makhambet, convinced that it was impossible to unite the people to strive for higher goals without ending the baseless and petty feuds and conflicts that fueled the enmity between these clans, began negotiations with the clan elders. They explained that such disputes and feuds were not improving, but rather worsening, the lives of most people and hindering their unification against the khan and the sultans. Ultimately, they demanded that the elders themselves act as arbitrators in their disputes, reach a mutual agreement, and reconcile among themselves». Further, referring to the historical poem by Igylman Shorekov «Isatay-Makhambet», the author quotes his words that the feud between Kotibar, Arystan and Zhusipbi, the son of Kulep, with the Adai clan ended after the edifying words of Isatay, and and under the leadership of Kotibar the parties came to an agreement.

Thus, the researcher, attempting to determine the years of life of the main characters of the poem «Aiman-Sholpan» based on historical facts, suggests that the events underlying the work took place in the first half of the 19th century. Noting that Kotibar apparently engaged in numerous conflicts with the Adai, Tama, and other clans, he believes that the theme and plot of the work focus not on love and affection, but on the rivalry and confrontation between the two founders. Consequently, the genre of the work is defined as a historical epic poem.

As already noted, K. Zhumaliyev was the scholar who first noticed that the poem «Aiman-Sholpan» exists in only one version and expressed his opinion on all of its editions. He confirms his point of view as follows: «These editions, with the exception of individual words, are practically indistinguishable from each other. The 1957 edition was taken from the 1939 edition of «Folk Poems» and published without any changes. The editors of this edition were supposed to provide a

brief overview and commentary on the previously published versions. This was not done. This should be taken into account when preparing the next edition» [8].

The researcher portrays Maman as a man obsessed with his wealth and narrow-minded, and describes Kotibar rather unfavorably. «Kotibar enters the battle like Maman. In this, he at least partially achieves his goal. He drives Maman away and places Aiman and Sholpan on a free camel. But this is where his achievements end, he is unable to carry out any of his plans. In the poem, he is depicted as a man proud of his fame as a hero, thinking neither about the past nor the future, insolent, empty, and reckless. His words are empty, and his deeds are insignificant; he lacks the qualities and traits of heroes capable of becoming an authority among the people; he sows discord among people, destroys society, is rude, impudent and dishonest. He considers himself better than everyone and places himself above others. But in fact, he turns out to be significantly inferior to those around him» [8].

The fact that Kotibar, in the vain hope of taking Aiman as a concubine, turns out to be a fool, loses in arguments, tries to court Aiman, falls into deception without noticing it, and takes Aiman's cunning for the truth – all these are comical situations, and they describe him as a stupid, limited person who does not notice the end of his prime and does not understand that the younger generation is much smarter and more cunning than him [8]. However, the scholar K. Zhumaliyev, unlike M. Gabdullin, also describes the heroic qualities of Kotibar. «Kotibar's heroism is inextricably linked with his recklessness. Heroism lies in the constant protection of his people from the attacks of foreigners, in taking into account the interests of not only one clan, but the entire nation. In the ancient epics, Kobylandy, Alpamys, and Targyn, though one descends from the Kipchaks, another from the Konyrats, and the third from the Nogaily, fight not against any other clan of their people, but against the common enemy of the Kazakhs. Reflecting on the thought: «Historians will say what was the role of the historical Kotibar», they draw attention to the peculiarities of the portrayal of the historical figure in literature and note that in the epic, Kotibar is also depicted as «a tribal leader who knew the Bayuls as strangers and the Alimuls as close; a hero with a narrow outlook, an unpleasant image, an oppressor, a representative of the ruling class» [8].

K. Zhumaliyev, examining the character of Aiman, notes: «Aiman is a new character, previously unseen in epic poems», emphasizing that her uniqueness lies not in beauty, tenderness, love, or heroism, but in her intellect. The fact that Aiman differs from other women precisely in her intellect is explained by a different goal set in the creation of her character. If we take, for example, Kurtka, Akzhunis, Gulbarshin, Nazim, and others, their participation in public life is manifested in their being worthy spouses of batyrs, the defenders of the people. If we exclude certain overly prophetic and mythological elements, their contribution to public life is realized only through these batyrs. One gives advice, contributing to the batyr's victory over the enemy, another supports him in difficult times, giving him strength, and so on. He argues that, «however, none of them directly intervenes in public affairs or assumes leadership», and emphasizes that, in response to new challenges in literature, a different, renewed type of female image has emerged [8]. Aiman's goal is to prevent hostility between the two peoples, reconcile them, and save themselves from Kotibar. She directs all her intelligence and cunning toward achieving this goal. In any endeavor, whatever she conceives, Aiman thinks far-sightedly and reasons broadly.

In turn, the researcher B. Azibayeva in her study «Aiman-Sholpan: A new look at the ancient epic» [9], notes that in popular literary criticism the poem «Aiman-Sholpan» has long been considered and published as part of love (romantic) epic works, and among the scholars who commented on it, she highly appreciated the sections of the monograph by K. Zhumaliyev «Problems of the Kazakh Epic and the History of Literature» [9], dedicated to «Aiman-Sholpan», in which the differences between the image of Aiman and female characters in other epics are analyzed. However, as a shortcoming, she notes that the work does not reveal the essence and nature of Aiman's character, as well as her inner world. Although she considers K. Zhumaliyev's conclusions, who classified the work's genre as historical, and Y. Duisenbayev's opinion that the poem lacks a love theme, to be unfounded, she nevertheless notes that in her monograph «The Kazakh Lyrical Epic» (1973), she places this work in the same category as «Kozy Korpesh – Bayan

Sulu» and «Kyz Zhibek». All researchers agree that the poem is based on events from the first half of the 19th century; it is emphasized that the work depicts real events without unnecessary hyperbole and that many characters actually existed at the time. It is noteworthy that, prior to the research of Kaskabassov and Azibayeva, all works devoted to «Aiman-Sholpan» examined the work exclusively from a literary perspective.

In her study of «Aiman-Sholpan», B. Azibayeva focuses on the plot. Most strikingly, the work, like many other epics, begins and ends with a feast (toi). It is well known that a traditional element of many epics and dastans is the exposition of the work, often accompanied by celebrations in honor of the long-awaited birth of a child, the wedding of newlyweds, or a funeral feast in honor of a respected person. For peoples who led a nomadic lifestyle, such large-scale celebrations naturally had significant social significance and played a significant role in public life.

The feast (toi) is usually described in detail. Sometimes the events that comprise the main plot of the work begin with just such a feast, which leads to a more complex plot. A similar situation occurs in «Aiman-Sholpan»: Kotibar and Maman-bai, invited to a feast, enter into an argument over a ceremonial yurt decorated with gold, each considering it worthy only of themselves. All studies devoted to the dastan «Aiman-Sholpan» indicate that the feud between Kotibar and Maman begins precisely because of the dispute over the yurt. However, Azibayeva believes that «a dispute between reasonable and authoritative tribal leaders, even over a yurt decorated with gold, appears unconvincing», and in this matter she relies on the following opinion of B. N. Putilov, set out in his work «Heroic Epic and Reality»: «The cause of the conflict should be sought in the epic subtext, which leads us to the general formulas of epic relationships; it reveals the epic logic, the norm in the behavior of the heroes, which seems illogical, reveals the regularity of what seemed random and strange...» [10].

Thus, the cause of the conflict in the work arises not from an external event, but from the internal structure of the epic motif. According to B. Azibayeva, in the story about Kotibar, he repeatedly criticizes Maman, calling him a «cunning man»: «You’re not going to squander and ruin everything, are you? Do you have a son to put in the saddle?» [10], which allows us to determine the true basis of the conflict in the work. In this case, the dispute over the yurt is merely a plot device, and the real cause of the confrontation is connected to the epic motif of childlessness, namely, Maman’s lack of a son.

It is well known that other dramatic situations related to the motif of childlessness are a constant element of the exposition of many epics. In some epics, childless couples are persecuted («Alpamys Batyr» [3]). That is, along with the grief of the lack of offspring, they experience insults and ridicule from those around them. As an example, we can cite the words from the poem «Kobylandy Batyr»: «At this feast there is no place for those who have no sons, and no joy for those who have no daughters» («Kobyland Batyr» [11]).

In the first story of the Book of Korkyt, childlessness is seen as a curse of Tengri, and it is said that others should also curse such people, that is, in an attempt to explain the reasons for the oppression of the childless [12]. However, this is likely a later explanation for an archaic custom. As Sh. Ibyrayev notes, this motif is associated with ancient beliefs and superstitions. In any case, the motif of oppressing the childless in early times was reflected in subsequent epic works. B. Azibayeva, in «Aiman-Sholpan», notes that here the motif is complicated by additional ideas and goals: Kotibar, believing Maman-bai to be childless and therefore weak and defenseless, not only intimidates him with the words «I will take away from you...» but also carries out his intentions. In other words, he exploits Maman’s lack of a son and his helplessness for his own personal gain.

In her opinion, «a quarrel at a feast ends with Kotibar raiding Maman’s village, stealing his cattle and daughters, deciding to take Aiman by force as a concubine. Thus, a tense personal relationship escalates into a family feud. The question naturally arises: «How to resolve this problem». Consequently, the fact that a minor domestic conflict escalates into a clash between two clans, as well as the methods and techniques for resolving this conflict, constitute the content of the dastan. The novelty of the researcher’s perspective lies in its approach to the issue from a different perspective than that of the aforementioned Kaskabassov.

This is confirmed by the following thought: «The captive Aiman, with the help of Kotibar's only son, Yeset, extends the wedding day by 60 days. This technique of «extending the time limit», used in cases where something contradicts the protagonist's interests and provokes his resistance, is well known in both Eastern literature and Kazakh folklore. A striking example of this technique can be found in the Arabic cycle of tales «One Thousand and One Nights» [13], where the method of «extending the time limit» underlies the creation of many tales».

This technique can also be seen in the tale «Shukasaptati» (Parrot's Tales) [13], where a wise parrot, by telling 70 stories, distracts its owner from from carrying out his plan to visit his mistress. In other words, the goal in both the first and last tales is the same: to delay an unfavorable event. In «A Thousand and One Nights», this is to delay Scheherazade's execution, and in «Shukasaptati», it is to prevent her from betraying her husband.

A similar incident occurs in both «Kyz Zhibek» and «Kambar Batyr». In «Kyz Zhibek», Zhibek, realizing that she will be forcibly married to Koren Khan, asks her father to arrange games for thirty days and a feast for forty days, in other words, she is granted a 70-day period [15]. The girl has no specific plan, but during this time, she feels she can avoid marrying a man she does not love. Indeed, Tolegen's younger brother, Sansyzbay, arrives and saves her from the forced marriage. From a motif-typological perspective, time serves as a means to an end in «A Thousand and One Nights», «Shukasaptati», and «Kyz Zhibek», but each of these works utilizes this device differently. In the poem «Aiman-Sholpan», Aiman uses the opportunity given to her to carry out her plan, thereby independently influencing the subsequent development of the plot. Along with her epic worldview, Aiman also possesses cunning and resourcefulness, qualities that are widespread in the dastan tradition. B. Azibayeva fully supports K. Zhumaliyev's opinion that «Aiman is a special character for the epic», and emphasizes: «Her uniqueness lies not in her beauty, faithfulness to love, or courage, but in her intellect». She confirms K. Zhumaliyev's characterization of Aiman as «beautiful, intelligent, quick-witted, cunning, eloquent» with examples from the text: «Aiman has a broad heart and a wise mind», «Aiman has mastered various arts since her youth», «Aiman has various tricks», «Aiman pleases her elders and deceives everyone, and at the same time, she has many tricks» [9].

The researcher deeply analyzes Aiman's character and examines her unique ability to contact with people, her knowledge of the people's customs, and her ability to use them to her advantage. These qualities include Aiman's ability to instantly recognize Arystan, who disapproves of Kotibar's actions, as a naturally fair and reasonable person, to befriend him, and to win his favor; her ability to deeply win the heart of Kotibar's only son, Yeset, through her cunning; and her ability to identify the weakness of Kotibar's wife, Tenge, and employ highly appropriate tactics. The scholar also formulates an interesting and consistent opinion regarding Tenge: «Tenge is Kotibar's youngest wife, and not only his favorite but also the mother of his only son. In Kazakh tradition, it is known that a woman who gives birth to a son exerts influence over her husband and enjoys a higher status than other women». Aiman understands this perfectly well: she quickly makes Tenge jealous and at the first opportunity tries to hurt her at the right moment. She even uses her name jokingly and recites poetry, angering her future rival. As a result, Tenge openly attempts to prevent the marriage of Kotibar and Aiman. Thus, the cunning and clever Aiman, figuratively speaking, undermines Kotibar's impenetrable fortress from within, providing a certain level of security and saving herself from the rapist's clutches. Her next goal is a peaceful resolution of the conflict». This study, which aims to re-analyze the dastan, examines how the dastan's folkloric features manifest themselves in how Aiman, realizing that her fiancé Alibek is away on a lengthy journey when Kotibar attacks the village, and upon his return, seeks revenge and reclaim his bride, devises a plan to resolve the conflict without bloodshed. Following this cunning plan, Aiman, like other characters in the epic tale, reconciles the distraught people and establishes peace, and the dastan concludes with a grand celebration.

From a functional-narratological perspective, Aiman is recognized as the main figure resolving the conflict in the poem. While in traditional epics this function is usually realized through the hero's strength and heroic deeds, in the poem «Aiman-Sholpan» the conflict is resolved

through reason, words, and agreement. This shift in the character's functions testifies to the revival of the ancient epic tradition in keeping with the social conditions of a later era.

As a result of the analysis, B. Azibayeva identifies a number of features that are not characteristic exclusively of the epic, and formulates them as follows:

1) The conflict was not resolved by armed struggle, a decision by elders, or bilateral peace negotiations; 2) the disagreements were settled not by a man, but by a woman; 3) the hero's main «weapons» are intellect, cunning, and reason. In addition, the researcher offers her own opinion about one of the main characters of the work, Kotibar. She notes three of his actions that seem illogical: «The first is saving Sholpan; the second is postponing the wedding with Aiman for 60 days at the request of Yeset; the third is succumbing to Aiman's deception by giving her the horse Baige-Kuren and weapons» [9].

Analyzing Kotibar's actions, the researcher notes that his magnanimity and nobility at the moment he decides Sholpan's fate contrast sharply with his portrayal as a cruel and tyrannical character at the beginning of the dastan. Furthermore, Kotibar's naivety is evident in his failure to notice Aiman's cunning when Yeset first asks him for «baigazy» (gift). Furthermore, B.N. Putilov confirms the connection between Kotibar's actions and folk customs (giving baigazy (gift)) as follows: «Behind the random, causeless, and analogous actions and decisions of heroes, there usually lies something deeply justified, logical, and rational. Behind them lies a certain knowledge of essential circumstances that must at some point manifest themselves and justify previous actions. But this knowledge does not belong to the heroes themselves; it simply constitutes an element of the structure of the epic plot; it exists and manifests itself outside the real, logical consciousness of the heroes, but as a kind of artistic matter, possessing its own power and obeying its own laws. Guided by this power, epic heroes perform strange, unexpected, and random actions. This dialectic of predestination and chance, their constant interaction, essentially creates the epic plot» [10].

Kotibar, believing Aiman's deception and displaying naivety, gives up his horse, which possesses the gift of sensing enemies, and his weapon. Consequently, ignoring the horse's warnings, he is ambushed and forced to agree to the terms.

The plots and motifs of the Kazakh heroic epic are also specifically studied in global folklore studies. Research focuses on the historical foundations of the Kazakh epic tradition, the ideals of heroism, and the poetic structure of the works [15-16].

B. Azibayeva's new perspective on the dastan can be summarized as follows: 1) the dastan «Aiman-Sholpan» is largely based on the plot of the «hero's struggle for his wife». It should be noted that it contains both archaic elements (the forced abduction of Aiman and Sholpan) and elements of a later era (robbery, looting).

While heroic epics traditionally revolve around a man's struggle against his wife's kidnappers and her recovery from the enemy [3], the dastan «Aiman-Sholpan» features an archaic plot: the heroine, thanks to her personal qualities, is freed from captivity. These plot models are characteristic not only of the Kazakh epic tradition, but also constitute one of the general patterns of the heroic epics of the Turkic peoples. Thus, N.K. Chadwick, studying the epic traditions of the peoples of Central Asia, noted that the motives of protecting the family, returning a spouse, and restoring disturbed social order occupy an important place in the structure of the heroic epic [17]. In turn, E.K. Legend considers the epic tradition as a reflection of the historical experience and cultural memory of the people, emphasizing that stable plot models and the system of heroic images are formed as a result of the long-term development of epic narrative [18].

2) The plot and content of the dastan are based on the archaic layer of epic narratives. However, as a rule, it appears in combination with other motifs and plots. Overall, compared to the plots and themes developed and sung in the heroic epics of our people, the «Aiman-Sholpan» dastan stands out for its uniqueness. The themes and conflicts of the dastan, as well as the methods for resolving them, are of a different nature.

3) The very fact that the dastan's main heroine is a woman is unusual.

4) The content of the dastan is primarily determined by such qualities as wisdom, resourcefulness, and sharpness of mind. Heroic and romantic components are relegated to the

background. Thus, in all her analytical conclusions, B. Azibayeva examines the poem «Aiman-Sholpan» within the framework of a narrative dastan.

A significant contribution to the modern understanding of the poetics and genesis of the poem «Aiman-Sholpan» was made by P. Auyesbayeva's collective monograph, dedicated to the problems of textual criticism and the study of epic works. The researcher examines this dastan in the context of issues of chronological attribution and the formation of the epic text, paying particular attention to its compositional integrity, motivic structure, and historical and cultural determinacy [19]. The work emphasizes that «Aiman-Sholpan» is the result of the long-term development of the epic tradition, combining archaic plot elements and later layers formed in connection with changes in the social environment and public relations.

P. Auyesbayeva notes that the epic text reflects the complex interaction between oral tradition and historical reality, leading to the coexistence of various temporal layers. This is evident both in the characters' personalities and in the system of motifs, reflecting the transition from archaic forms of epic thought to later, socially specific narrative models. The researcher pays particular attention to the stability of the work's compositional core, thanks to which «Aiman-Sholpan» maintains its genre integrity despite the volatility of life and editorial interventions.

Thus, P. Auyesbayeva's conclusions complement and refine existing scholarly approaches to interpreting the dastan, allowing it to be viewed not only as a love-epic work or a monument to narrative tradition, but also as a complex text formed through a long process of historical and poetic evolution. This approach creates a theoretical basis for comparing «Aiman-Sholpan» with other epic works and prepares the ground for a broader folkloristic analysis based on the work of foreign researchers [20].

When studying the poem «Aiman-Sholpan», it is important to draw on theoretical approaches developed in global folklore and epic scholarship. In particular, V.Ya. Propp's concept of fairy tale morphology and the functional system of characters allows us to consider the plot of the work as an ordered structure of stable actions and motives, in which the characters' behavior is subject to a specific internal narrative logic [21]. In this context, the images of Aiman, Kotibar, and other characters can be analyzed not only as historical and social types but also as bearers of specific functional roles in the epic plot.

It is important to draw on theoretical approaches developed within the framework of global folklore and epic studies in analyzing the poem «Aiman-Sholpan». The structure of Turkic and Central Asian epics, their poetic forms, and performance traditions have been extensively studied in global epic studies [17, 22].

In the oral epic tradition, the absence of a single, stable version of the text is a natural phenomenon: it changes and is updated with each performance. This phenomenon is also reflected in studies devoted to the epic traditions of the Turkic peoples [22-23].

The theory of oral poetic tradition developed by M. Parry and A. Lord significantly expands the possibilities for interpreting «Aiman-Sholpan» as a monument of oral origin. Their work demonstrates that the epic is formed and transmitted in the context of live performance, relying on formulaic, repetitive motifs and textual variability [24, 25]. This is particularly important for understanding that only one written version of the epic has survived, whereas in reality it could have existed in several versions, varying depending on the conditions of performance and the personality of the narrator. This approach allows us to consider stable images and plot actions not as random elements, but as the result of the long-term functioning of oral tradition.

J. Foley made a significant contribution to the understanding of the poetics of epic, viewing oral literature as a unique sign system, revealed through performance tradition and collective cultural memory [26]. In this context, «Aiman-Sholpan» can be interpreted as a text whose meaning is formed not only through plot but also through consistent patterns of behavior, typical situations of conflict, reconciliation, and social harmonization. This approach allows for a deeper understanding of Aiman's role as a bearer of a special type of epic wisdom and a mediator between conflicting parties.

Finally, S. Thompson's classification of motifs provides a methodological basis for a comparative analysis of the epic's plot elements with similar motifs found in the global folklore tradition [27]. It helps to identify universal motifs widely represented in the epics of various peoples such as captivity, delayed marriage, cunning as a means of salvation, feminine wisdom, and the reconciliation of warring parties. This allows us to consider «Aiman-Sholpan» not only as a unique monument of Kazakh literature but also as part of the broad typological space of global epic culture.

The works of V.Ya. Propp, M. Parry, A. Lord, J. Foley, and S. Thompson expand the methodological framework of the study and contribute to a deeper understanding of the genre nature, plot organization, and artistic specificity of the poem «Aiman-Sholpan», considered in the context of universal models of the development of the folklore tradition.

In our view, the development of Aiman's image clearly reveals connections to ancient layers of folkloric consciousness. It is well known that in the mythological representations of early eras, the image of woman was associated with nature, the continuity of life, and ideas of harmony. These archetypal attitudes were transformed over time in subsequent folklore genres, acquiring new historical and social significance. In this context, the image of Aiman appears as the artistic embodiment of a social type that arose from an archaic worldview but developed in a specific historical environment. Her actions combine traditional symbolic meaning and a rational system of thought, emphasizing the complex and multifaceted nature of the character.

Conclusion

The study established that the poem «Aiman-Sholpan» is a complex and multilayered work of the Kazakh epic tradition, harmoniously combining elements of archaic folklore with subsequent socio-historical layers. The analysis showed that the plot of Aiman-Sholpan was formed at the intersection of archaic epic motifs and later narrative models. On the one hand, the dastan retains elements of the ancient epic tradition, i.e. the motif of captivity, conflicts between clans, the hero's trial, as well as ritual and symbolic components. On the other hand, it clearly demonstrates features of a novelistic narrative, focusing on the psychological motives of actions, the development of conflict through dialogue, the behavioral strategies of the characters, and social problems. These studies allow us to consider the poetics, plot structure, and historical foundations of the Kazakh epic in the context of international folklore studies [16, 22].

A comparative analysis based on works on folklore theory, epic poetry, and motifs reveals that «Aiman-Sholpan» fits harmoniously into the broader context of the global epic tradition. Universal motifs such as the postponement of marriage, rescue, and cunning as a means of mediation and reconciliation connect the dastan with similar narratives in other cultures and confirm its typological significance.

A functional-narratological analysis revealed the interconnectedness of the poem's events, from the onset of the conflict to its resolution through reconciliation. According to M. Parry and A. Lord's theory of oral-formulaic composition, the surviving text does not encompass all variants of the poem. It represents only one version, recorded at a particular stage of its existence. A motif-typological comparison showed that the motives of postponing marriage, salvation through cunning and reconciliation have parallels in world folklore, and they perform a special function in the poem «Aiman-Sholpan».

«Aiman-Sholpan» should be viewed not only as an epic love story or a reflection of a specific historical reality, but also as a complex folklore work demonstrating the evolution of genre forms, the transformation of images, and the changing value orientations of traditional society. The results of the study expand our understanding of the poetics of the Kazakh epic and serve as a basis for further comparative typological and textual studies.

The poem «Aiman-Sholpan» is a remarkable work of Kazakh literary art, possessing high cognitive, instructive, artistic, and aesthetic value. Thus, its new interpretation, based on the achievements of modern science, is an important contribution to the process of spiritual revival. Therefore, a comprehensive study of the content and artistic features of this work is especially relevant for the younger generation, to whom the future of the country belongs.

In conclusion, it should be noted that the study of the poem «Aiman-Sholpan», which occupies a special place in Kazakh folklore, is not limited to its historiography. Based on the work of folklorists of each period, we identified differences in the stages of development of the poem, the evolution of the depiction of historical events and characters in the poem, the uniqueness of the linguistic and ethnographic content of the love epic, reflecting the characteristics of different historical eras and their significance. In other words, the poem's content narrates the complex world of motifs and themes of antiquity, as well as the artistic interpretation of 19th-century historical events. At the same time, its educational and moral value remains enduring for younger and future generations.

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«АЙМАН-ШОЛПАН»: ФОЛЬКЛОРЛЫҚ ДӘСТҮР МЕН ЖАҢА КӨЗҚАРАСТАРДЫҢ ТОҒЫСЫ

Аңдатпа. Мақалада «Айман-Шолпан» жырының XIX–XXI ғасырлар аралығында қалыптасқан ғылыми көзқарастар жүйесі жан-жақты талданады. Зерттеушілердің жыр жанрына берген анықтамалары әр кезеңде өзгеріп, оны лиро-эпос, ғашықтық жыр, балладалық жыр, тарихи эпикалық поэма, дастан ретінде түрлі қырынан түсіндіргендігі айқындалады. Жырдың бір ғана нұсқасының сақталғаны, оның Қазан баспаларында бірнеше рет жарияланғаны атап көрсетіледі. С.А. Қасқабасов, М. Ғабдуллин, Қ. Жұмалиев, М.О. Әуезов, М.Ақынжанов сынды ғалымдардың жыр туралы негізгі тұжырымдары салыстыра қарастырылып, олардың жырды жанрлық, тарихи, поэтикалық тұрғыдан талдаудағы ерекшеліктері ашылады. Әсіресе жырдағы кейіпкерлер табиғатын түсіндірудегі қайшылықты көзқарастар (Көтібар бейнесі, Айманның жаңа типтегі әйел кейпі, ескі мен жаңаның тартысы) ғылыми тұрғыдан жүйеленеді. Мақалада жырдың тарихи негізі, композициялық құрылымы, кейіпкерлердің әлеуметтік-идеялық жүктемесі, сондай-ақ жырдың фольклорлық дәстүр мен жаңа замандық сипаттың тоғысында тұрған шығарма ретінде бағалануы негізгі назарда болады. Зерттеу нәтижесінде «Айман-Шолпан» жырының жанрлық табиғатының күрделілігі, оның әр кезең ғалымдарының пікірінше көпқабатты эпикалық туынды ретінде танылғаны дәлелденеді. Сонымен қатар, «Айман-Шолпан» жыры тек көркем туынды ғана емес, халықтың рухани-мәдени жадын сақтаушы, эстетикалық талғамы мен моральдық құндылықтарын жеткізуші қызмет атқаратыны көрсетіледі. Зерттеу нәтижелері қазақ фольклоры мен жазба әдебиетінің өзара сабақтастығын тереңірек түсінуге, сондай-ақ, әдеби-теориялық тұрғыдан жүйелеуге мүмкіндік береді.

Тірек сөздер: жыр, мәтін, сюжет, мотив, образ, фольклор, батыр.

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«АЙМАН-ШОЛПАН»: ПЕРЕСЕЧЕНИЕ ФОЛЬКЛОРНОЙ ТРАДИЦИИ И АКТУАЛЬНЫХ НАУЧНЫХ ВЗГЛЯДОВ

Аннотация. В статье представлен всесторонний анализ системы научных взглядов на поэму «Айман-Шолпан», сформировавшейся в XIX-XXI веках. Выявлено, что жанровые классификации исследователей изменялись с течением времени: произведение рассматривалось как лиро-эпос, любовно-лирический жыр, балладный сюжет, историческая эпическая поэма и дастан. Отмечается, что до настоящего времени сохранился только один вариант текста, который неоднократно издавался в Казанских публикациях. Сопоставляются основные выводы С.А. Каскабасова, М. Габдуллина, К. Жумалиева, М.О. Ауэзова и М. Акинжанова, раскрываются особенности их жанрового, исторического и поэтического анализа. Особое внимание уделяется противоречивым интерпретациям образов (образ Котибара, новый тип женского характера в лице Айман, противостояние старого и нового), которые систематизируются с научной точки зрения. В центре внимания статьи – историческая основа поэмы, ее композиционная структура, социально-идеологическая нагрузка персонажей, а также оценка произведения как искусства, находящегося на стыке фольклорной традиции и новых художественных тенденций. Результаты исследования показывают сложность жанровой природы «Айман-Шолпан» и подтверждают, что в трудах учёных разных периодов оно рассматривается как многослойное эпическое произведение. Кроме того, «Айман-Шолпан» служит не только художественным произведением, но и хранителем духовно-культурной памяти народа, носителем эстетического вкуса и моральных ценностей. Результаты исследования позволяют глубже понять преемственность казахского фольклора и письменной литературы, а также систематизировать их в литературно-теоретическом аспекте.

Ключевые слова: поэма, текст, сюжет, мотив, образ, фольклор, герой.

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