

## ON THE ISSUE OF TRANSCRIPTION IN HISTORICAL TURKIC TEXT STUDIES IN CENTRAL ASIA\*

### ORTA ASYA TARİHİ TÜRKÇE METİN ARAŞTIRMALARINDA TRANSKRİPSİYON MESELESİ ÜZERİNE

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#### Abstract

After the acceptance of Islam by Turkic people, the Arabic script was introduced and became prevalent in the region of Turkestan. From the time of the Karakhanid dynasty, the first Turkic-Islamic state, numerous works were composed and transcribed using the Arabic script. These works now serve as valuable historical texts for scholars and researchers. Arabic script remained in use in Kazakhstan until the 1920s. Despite sporadic research efforts to uncover and analyze Turkic texts transcribed in the Arabic script, these works received limited attention during the Soviet era. However, since Kazakhstan gained independence, there has been a surge in studies aimed at exploring these historical texts. In such studies, the transcription of the texts is typically conducted using Cyrillic or Latin script, and in some cases, both are employed. Following the initiation of Kazakhstan's transition to the Latin alphabet in 2017, there has been renewed interest in transcribing Turkic texts written in the Arabic script. This study aims to re-evaluate the transcription alphabet employed in previous research on historical texts in Kazakhstan and propose a new transcription system that is suitable for the new Latin script. The proposed alphabet will be applied to the Chagatai manuscripts of *Divān-i Hikmet*, *Qıssa-i Sulṭān Ḥubbī*, *Destūr'ül-'ilāj* and *Durru'l-'acāyib*, located in Kazakhstan. The last two works, which have significant historical and linguistic value, have not yet been extensively studied by scholars. *Destūr'ül-'ilāj* is a medical book on Central Asian herbalism and medicine, written in Chagatai, a language with Classical Period features. *Durru'l-'acāyib* is a collection of 66 chapters that narrates hadiths and belongs to Chagatai's Post-Classical Period.

**Key words:** Manuscripts, Transcription, Turkology, *Durru'l-'acāyib*, *Destūr'ül-'ilāj*.

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## Öz

Türklerin İslamiyet'i kabul etmesinden sonra Arap yazısı Türkistan bölgesinde kullanılmaya başlanmış ve yaygınlaşmıştır. İlk Türk-İslam devleti olan Karahanlılar döneminden itibaren Arap harfleriyle çok sayıda eser kaleme alınmış ve Türkistan coğrafyasında 20. yüzyılın ilk yarısına kadar devam etmiştir. Bu eserler Türk Dünyasının manevi mirası değerindedir ve akademisyenler, araştırmacılar tarafından araştırılmaya önemi haizdir.

20. yüzyılın ilk yarısına kadar kullanılan Arap harfli metinlerin araştırılması Sovyetler Döneminde 'geniş çapta olmasa' da zaman zaman araştırma konusu olmuştur. Kazakistan'ın bağımsızlığından sonra bu tür çalışmaların sayısı artmış ve metin transkripsiyonu meselesi ortaya çıkmıştır. Yapılan çalışmalarda Kiril, Latin ve bazen ikisinin de bir arada bulunduğu harmanlanmış transkripsiyon alfabesiyle çalışmalar yayımlandı. Bu ise transkripsiyon alfabe sisteminin henüz yerleşmediğini göstermektedir. 2017 yılında Kazakistan Cumhuriyeti'nin Latin alfabesine geçişinin başlamasından ardından, Arap harfleriyle yazılmış Türkçe metinlerin yeni alfabeyle aktarılmasına olan ilgi daha da arttı. Bu sebeple tarihî metinleri okuma sadece alanında yetişmiş uzmanlar tarafından değil bununla birlikte amatör ve diletantlarca da yapılmaktadır. Bu bakımdan ortak bir çeviri yazı alfabesi sağlanamamıştır. Bu çalışmanın amacı, Kazakistan'daki tarihî metinler üzerine daha önce yapılan araştırmalarda kullanılan transkripsiyon alfabesini yeniden değerlendirmek; yeni Latin alfabesine uygun ve R.R. Arat'ın da önerdiği transkripsiyon alfabesini dikkate alarak yeni çeviri yazı alfabesini önermek; Arap harfli metinleri okumada karşılaşılan sorunları göstermektir. Önerilmekte olan alfabe Kazakistan'da bulunan *Divân-i Hikmet*, *Qıssa-i Sulţân Hub- bî*, *Destûr'ül- ilâj* ve *Durru'l- 'acâyib*'in Çağatayca el yazmalarında uygulanacaktır. Önemli tarihsel ve dilsel değere sahip olan son iki eser henüz bilim adamları tarafın-dan kapsamlı bir şekilde incelenmemiştir. *Destûr'ül- ilâj*, Klasik Dönem Çağataycası ile yazılan Orta Asya şifalı bitkiler ve tıbbi üzerine yazılmış bir tıp metnidir. *Dur- ru'l- 'acâyib*, Çağatay Türkçesinin Klasik Dönem Sonrası'nda kaleme alınmış, hadis- leri rivayet eden 66 bölümden oluşan bir hadis kitabıdır.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** El yazmalar, Transkripsiyon, Türkoloji, *Durru'l- 'acâyib*, *Destûr'ül- ilâj*.

## Introduction

After the acceptance of Islam, Turkic people started to use the Arabic alphabet. This alphabet, which started to be used in the Karakhanid period, was used in Kazakh area until the first half of the 20th century. Based on the script used during the Karakhanid, Khwarazm, and Chagatai periods, Ahmet Baytursynov created a new version of the Arabic script, known as *Töte jazıw*, with his own amendments. Numerous works were composed using Ahmet Baytursynov's version of the Arabic alphabet.

Following the adoption of Islam, the Turks, along with other nations, embraced the Arabic alphabet, leading to the creation of numerous manuscripts in Anatolia and Central Asia. These texts hold significant value in terms of analyzing, safeguarding, and transmitting cultural values to present-day Turkic languages. Historical records indicate that a wide range of medical, historical, religious, and literary texts were composed during various periods. It is imperative that these texts must be translated and incorporated into the Kazakh language as soon as possible.

Serious studies on the Ottoman period texts were carried out in Türkiye. Manuscripts found in archives, museums, institutions, etc. were transferred to the digital environment. Unfortunately the same cannot be said about the Central Asian Turkic Republics. Due to the political reasons applied during the Soviet Union period, historical text research has always been in the background, experts have not been trained,

so the new generation has moved away from their cultural values. For this reason, the lack of experts and the antipathy to texts written by Arabic letters have affected both the expertise and the training of experts in this field.

Other independent Turkic Republics excluding Türkiye are slightly behind in this regard. Because in the Soviet Era, reading, storing works written in Arabic letters was forbidden. Thus, these artifacts have been preserved secretly in various places and today people bring to light them in their possession. A catalog of these works has also begun to be created. It has been determined that there are not only Chagatai texts but also Ottoman texts in the geography of Turkestan. Researchers have also published catalog studies on this subject (Kabadayı –Shadkam, 2021).

Studies devoted to reading Arabic scripts in Kazakhstan started during the USSR period. Nevertheless, there is a dearth of research concerning transliteration into contemporary alphabets. Arabic scripts have been translated using Latin, Cyrillic, and Latin-Cyrillic alphabets. A comprehensive article has been published on the transcription alphabets utilized in historical text studies in Kazakhstan since their inception up to the present day (Sultanbek–Shadkam, 2021).

In addition to research on Arabic script, numerous studies have been conducted in Kazakhstan focusing on the written remnants of the Gokturk and Karakhanid periods, as well as other historical epochs. It is possible to reach bibliographic studies that are done separately from time to time on this subject (Sultanbek, 2020).

*Divān-i Hikmet*, *Qıssa-i Sulṭān Ḥubbī*, *Destūr'ül-'ilāj*, and *Durru'l-'acāyib* texts will serve as examples for text transcription when dealing with the issue of transcription of Turkic Texts with Arabic Letters in Central Asia. Scholars have not yet conducted comprehensive research on the latest two works, despite their substantial historical and linguistic significance.

*Destūr'ül-'ilāc* manuscript, consisting of 76 sheets, is a work explaining disease, causes of disease, and therapeutic methods. This copy is registered in the Private Collection of the Almaty “Ampire” antique hall as № 7.10 (152), 1a-88b. The text is written in *Ta'lik* font, without *harakat* (Vowel marks). The author of this work, which was written in Hijri 933 (1526-1527 Gregorian), is Sultan Ali al-Khorasani, known as Tabib el-Horāsāni (Doctor from Khorasan) (Shadkam et al., 2021).

*Durru'l-'acāyib* manuscript is registered under the number 1306 at the Manuscript fund of the Mukhtar Avezov Institute of Literature and Art (Almaty, Kazakhstan). Text, 15 x 24.5 cm. size, consists of 135 sheets (270 pages) and each page has 14 lines. The line in which information was given about the author or translator or the copyist of the work in our hands was later deleted by someone and became unreadable (Sultanbek, 2021).

Even if the purpose of this research is to demonstrate the lack of a method for reading Turkic texts with the Arabic Alphabet, we also say that there is not consistency and suggest a proposal for the acceptance of phonetic transcription letters like the acceptance of Latin Alphabet in our country.

In this study, the method of qualitative research was used and data were obtained by using the document analysis technique. Analysis of documents involves the analysis of written materials containing information about events or cases that are planned to be examined. It refers to a systematic review of existing records or documents as a data source. Thus, we have shown the diversity of transcription letters used in translating Turkic Texts with Arabic Letters into today's alphabet in Kazakhstan. In our article, after evaluating the previous studies, we suggested Latin transliteration letters and also applied this suggested Latin transcription letters on the texts of *Di-*

## 1. The Issue of Transcription and Transliteration

Although there are many manuscripts in the geography of Kazakhstan, there is no study devoted to discussing how to transcribe these works. Although the periods of the manuscripts are known, a complete catalog of them has not been made. Even the scientific world is not aware of the existence of many works in the manuscript collections of libraries. The catalog of these works should be prepared and transferred to digital media immediately.

“Transcription, which expresses the conversion of the sounds / letters of an alphabet into the letters of another alphabet using some special signs, manifests itself in practice as the translation of other alphabets into the Latin alphabet due to its prevalence. In theory, there are two methods called “transcription” and “transliteration” denoting transferring the manuscript’s translation. In the transcription method, one letter is used for each letter. Since there are no vowels in the Arabic alphabet, vowels are not used in the transcribed text within the framework of this method” (Durmuş, 1991, 306).

Reshid Rahmeti Arat made the following explanations for the terms of transcription and transliteration:

“To capture the pronunciation of various nations in our time, partially or completely, as they are, or to transfer the names of books and authors written in foreign letters different from those of the national alphabets, or, for any reason, of texts whose publication seems beneficial, to their national writings, apart from the general national alphabets, they also use a number of signed alphabets, which are called transcription alphabets, with an established expression in the scientific world.

Of these alphabets, 1) the type that is used to translate various sounds directly encountered in the pronunciation of individual persons or local dialects into writing is called phonetic transcription alphabet, and 2) the type that is used to transfer the signs of a foreign script to those in national alphabets is called the text transcription alphabet” (Arat, 1987, 1-2).

In Kazakhstan Turkology, the terms *fonematikalıq* and *fonetikalıq* transcription are used in contrast to the terms of transcription and transliteration. *Fonetikalıq* (phonetic) transcription takes into account the way words are pronounced, while *fonematikalıq* (phonemic) transcription considers phonemes (Amanbajeva, 2006, 487).

In 2017, a decision to switch to the Latin alphabet was taken by the Presidency of Kazakhstan. Various alphabets have been presented since then, but a clear alphabet example could not be accepted. Finally, some parts of the alphabet need to be corrected. The following words of Ahmet Baytursynov should also be taken into account in the adoption of the Latin alphabet and the determination of the translation:

“A good alphabet should be compatible with the language. It should be easy to write a good alphabet. A good alphabet should also be suitable for printing. The fact that it is easy when arranging the letters and does not take up much space when writing will also make printing cheaper and will be economical. Learning the good alphabet should also be easy. The letter should be written as a single letter, and it will be easy to learn if the way it is printed and written is similar. If these features are not taken into account while accepting a good alphabet, all accepted alphabets will be incomplete” (*Kazak Bilimpazarınıñ Tuñğış Siyezi*, 2006, 74).

The first thing to do in reading historical texts is the transcription of the Arabic script. After the transcription of the text, we encounter reading and transferring/translation problems. 1. Which method should we use in translating Arabic and Persian phrases? For example, “Adam Safi zamanınan Dävitke deyin 1500 jıl, İbrahimnen Musağa deyin 900 jıl, Musa zamanınan Dävitke deyin 500 jıl, Dävitten İsağa deyin 1200 jıl, *Ruh Alladan* (İsa ğ.s.) *Habib Allağa* (Muhammed s.a.w.) deyin 600 jıl...” (Balhi, 2017, 19). In the given example, *Ruh Alladan* is a Arabic phrase and should have been translated into Kazakh as the *soul of Allah*. Likewise, *Habib Allağa* is a noun phrase. This can be given as *Habib-i Allağa* and transferred to Kazakh as *Allanñ Habibi*. When transcribed, it should be done in the form of *rūh-ı Allāh / rūhullāh* (روح هلا). Otherwise, it can cause ambiguity.

2. Another issue is the transfer of borrowed words. There are different opinions on this matter. A group of researchers interprets the written word يورك as we should read it as a *jürek* because it is the text found in Kazakhstan. Another group adopts the view that the *yürek* should be read by sticking to its writing. We think that the article should be taken into consideration here. We know that there are signs *y* (ي), *c / j* (ج) in the Arabic alphabet. Only sounds like /c/ and /ç/, /b/ and /p/ are not given any distinctive symbols. It is possible to see these distinctive features in some of the texts. In short, reading the text by emphasizing it will facilitate the language characteristics of the text and its comparison with other periods. Also, the entire Turkestan (Central Asia) area used the Chagatai language as a written language. This is an indication that it should be read /y-/ not /j-/ at the beginning of the word. Likewise, there are mutual opinions in reading words such as Persian *her* (هر), Arabic *‘ālim* (عاليم). Since there is no /h/ sound in General Turkic as the word *her* in Kazakh language was pronounced *är*, as well as there is no *ayn* sound, *‘ālim* was pronounced as *ğalim*. Moreover, we do not know how Kazakhs, Uzbeks, and other Turkic people pronounced at that time. If sound recorders had been available at that time, it would have been very easy to distinguish these sounds.

We used *s*, *ş*, *ş* signs for *sin* (س), *sad* (ص), lipping *se* (ث) written by Arabic letters, respectively. The three-pointed letter *sin* (س) is also used in the texts written in the Chagatai period. It is not possible to explain why this sign was used. It is also used with thin vowels and thick vowels. In addition, it is stated that the three-pointed letter *sin*, which Mahmud al-Kashgari gave in the introduction of the *Dîvân* by explaining that «*sad*» is written and punctuated as «*sin*» and used in Turkic words, is quite common in *Kutadgu Bilig* copies, not only in Chagatai texts (Durukoğlu, 2020, 20).

It is known that no special sign is used in many non-scientific publications on the issue of transcription of texts with Arabic letters, while scientific publications often use optional but confused and inconsistent markings. Tulum says the following about how to transcribe text:

“In text publications that are intended to reach a wide audience (such as Yunus Emre’s poems, Mevlid, etc.), it is best not to use special signs and to voice the language of the text according to today’s language. As for scientific publications; especially in studies on works important in terms of language history, to determine the sound values of the signs of the source text, to make a broad phonological evaluation according to the data of the text by taking into account the information about the language structure of the period in which the work was written, in short, to perform a transcription application in a narrow sense based on a broad evaluation should be regarded as a requirement of science” (Tulum, 2000, 148-149).

When we look at the explanation about transcription, it is emphasized who will address the studies to be done and transcription should be done accordingly.

## 2. Status of Historical Texts in the Era of the Soviet Union

The vast Central Asian steppes are for both Tsarist Russia and the Soviet Union: - A strategic gateway to the East; - have large and fertile lands; - It was an important region that provided a cheap labor force for production. Tsarist Russia 19th century began colonial attempts. For this purpose, they first undertook activities to understand and learn about the history, cultural values, social structure, beliefs, and language, as well as the underground and aboveground resources of the region through research scientists, travelers, and missionaries. After getting to know the region and its people enough, the first thing to do, like every colonial state, was to alienate the people of the region from their national identity and consciousness by detaching them from their material, moral and national values. Russian historians, linguists, and orientalists made great efforts to understand and implement these ideas (Hayit, 2014).

In the 19th century, this policy was continued by the Soviet regime. As a result, Central Asia's (now fragmented) fake new history, new language, new alphabet ... was prepared by the Russians. At the same time, the policies of destroying, banning, censoring, and falsifying manuscripts were implemented more harshly (since Arabic scripts evoke the Quran and Islam, works and texts written in Arabic letters were banned and even punished). In other words, both the Tsarist Russia and the Soviet Union pursued the same policy in order to detach the people living in Central Asia from their national consciousness, identity, and essence, or rather from their past and history.

Central Asian Turkic tribes started the renaissance of Turkic-Islamic civilization with their achievements and findings in science, culture, and art; in the centuries after they accepted Islam in the 9th century. At the same time, they started to use Arabic letters in written language. Therefore, Turkestan (Central Asia) is a geography rich in historical texts written in Arabic letters. After the adoption of Islam in the 9th century), the Arabic Alphabet was used as a written language for more than a thousand years in this geography, until the 20th century. Thus, the works and cultural accumulation that occurred in various fields and subjects were written in Arabic letters.

However, within the framework of the above-mentioned colonial policies, the protection, reading, knowledge, research, and publication of these works were prohibited and prevented by the Soviet Union and even Tsarist Russia for various reasons and methods. As a result, most of the Arabic Letter manuscripts were either lost or destroyed.

Most of the artifacts found in Turkestan during the Tsarist Russia Period, the Soviet Union were sent to Russia. The research was carried out according to the documents given in lists by the senior management, and as a result, the written heritage and spiritual values of the Turkestan geography were collected in Russian libraries and archives. As we mentioned above, this was one of the methods done to detach a nation from its own values. Therefore, it is natural for Russian scientists to introduce manuscripts and historical texts from the Turkestan (Central Asia) field to the scientific world. However, it is also known that these scientists served in line with the policies of both Tsarist Russia and the Soviet Union: They collected manuscripts, original documents, archaeological finds, old coins, and other valuables from the colonized regions, among the people, and made their lists and sent them to S. Petersburg. If the Russian military commanders caused material damage by killing the people and plundering their property during the war for the invasion of Turkestan, scientists and orientalists were on their side and inflicted moral damage in this way. For example, in 1834, Kristiyan Fren compiled a list of the 100 most valuable works, and in the report he prepared for the Russian Tsardom after Pyotr Lerh's trip to Turkestan, he gave a list of the works that must be found and obtained in Turkestan. In this list, there are many important works such as the original copies of all the works of Ali Shir Nava'i,



Ebulgazi Bahadır Khan's *Secere-i Türk*, Mirhond's *Ravzatu's Sefa*. In his report, Lerh emphasized that since Biruni's works are not available in Russia, it is essential to obtain all of his works (Otakhonov, 2020, 116-117).

On the one hand, while existing manuscripts were stolen from the region in this way, on the other hand, our folk literature and cultural heritage (legends, tales, stories, genealogy, epics, etc.) were not properly protected and studied by our writers and researchers due to censors and prohibitions; Soviet Era mosques were closed and destroyed; It is the period when books and writings about the religion and history of Islam were destroyed. Islamic-religious narratives and stories in Kazakhstan during the period of Tsarist Russia and the USSR could not be written down and were kept alive in the public memory and oral culture products (Shadkam - Kairanbayeva, 2022, 173). The most important reason for this is that these traditions, which are the unifying and integrating element of Central Asia as a requirement of Russian policy, are prevented by censorship and then destroyed. During these periods, Christianity and then atheism were imposed on the people in a planned manner; The ethnic origin, language, religious values and beliefs of the people were not taken seriously, most of the intellectuals and writers were arrested, and works that would unite the people and awaken the national and religious unity were collected (Kuş, 2019).

In the 21st century, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, we witness from time to time that some of these works came to light thanks to the personal efforts and efforts of the people of the region. For example, Bakıtjan Duysenbekov family donated 246 books and manuscripts written in Arabic Letters to the Al-Farabi Library of Al-Farabi Kazakh National University in 2021. After the classification and cataloging of these works, which were written in Arabic, Persian and Chagatai on many different subjects such as literary, philosophical, language, religious stories and hadiths, fiqh, ..., their introduction to the academic environment, their analysis and research are not only for the studies of Kazakhstan, but also for the Turkic world, more precisely the Middle East. It is also of great importance for Asian studies.<sup>5</sup>

This is the reason why the people of Central Asia, whose written language was changed from Arabic letters to Latin letters, and finally to Cyrillic letters, in about a century, have great difficulty in researching, examining and reading Historical Texts in Arabic letters. However, we should not forget that manuscripts are an important factor in preserving the integrity, common history, language and literature of the people of Central Asia.

### 3. Studies on Transcription in Kazakhstan

It has been observed that the number of studies on the transcription of Turkic texts by Arabic Letters is not high in Kazakhstan. However, we would like to mention a few studies that should be mentioned, although they are not closely related to the subject. These studies, in chronological order, are as follows:

a. Valiyev, N., Aldasheva, A., *Qazaq Orfografiyasındaǵı Qiyındıqtar*, Qazaq SSR Ğılım Akademiyası Til Bilimi İnstitutı, 1988.

In this study, the important issues of the correct spelling of words in today's Kazakh, the sound characteristics of the letters, the shape of phonemes and the sounds that have changed from historical periods to the present, some types of words to be written adjacent and separately, the writing of words borrowed from Russian, Arabic and Persian and other topics have been addressed.

b. Mamyrbekova, G., 18-19 ǵasırlardaǵı arab jazıwlı qazaq jazbalarınñ grafikalıq-orfografiyalıq yerekшелikleri: filologiya ǵılımdarınıñ kandidatıq avtoreferatı,

5 (<https://www.kaznu.kz/en/3/news/one/26334/>)

2006.

A study on the problems of reading Arabic scripts was also presented as a paper by Kydyrbayev Kaldybay and published in the proceedings book. Full description:

In the aforementioned study, Mamyrbekova gave information about the writing features of Kazakh works written in the Arabic alphabet in the 18-19th centuries, and the use of signs used in old (*kadim*) and new (*cedid*) writing styles. It was stated that 35 signs are used in the old (*kadim*) writing type, based on the 28 Arabic alphabets, and 4 letters *je* (ج), *ge* (گ), *çe* (چ), *pe* (پ) were taken from the Persian alphabet, 2 *nasal* (ن) and (س) from Turkic stated that they were taken from the (س) from Afghan alphabet.

c. Kydyrbayev, Kaldybay. Arab Grafikasındağı Tarihîy Qoljzbalardı Transkriptsiyalaw jäne Transliteratsiyalaw мәseleleri, *Uluslararası Türkçe Tarihî Metin Araştırmaları Sempozyumu (Metin Yayımı, Kataloglama, Dijitalleştirme) Bildirileri*, ed. Vakur Sümer, Osman Kabadayı, Ömirbek Hanayi, 347-356 p., 2019.

The subject mentioned in the study is the issue of the diversity of historical texts written in Arabic letters. Here, it is discussed that the unity of the Arabic names in Kazakh transcription is not ensured and thus it creates a difficulty when we scan the studies. For example, the name of *Divânü Lugâti 't-Türk* in Cyrillic Letters is *Дувану-лугат-ит-турк*, *Дувану лугат-ит-турк*, *Дувану лугат ат-турк*, *ал Дуван лугат ат-турк*. There are several ways of writing and it is understood from these names that there is no unity. In addition, he discussed the mistakes made in the transcription of some Turkic words. After stating these, it would be better to explain with examples from the latest studies conducted in Kazakhstan:

“Bu xədis mä`nisi ol bolur kim päyyambärümüz `älähis-sälam aıdy: `Täpři Täbäräka uä Tä`ala Isma`il päyyambär `älähis-sälam oylanlarydyn Kınanä atlyy kabiläsindin Kuräiř kabiläsini ödürdi. İänä Hařim atlyy kiřinię oylanlarydyn meni ödürdi, çykardy. Bu mä`nidin ötrü päyyambär `älähis-sälamka Mustafa at berildi. Mustafa `älähis-sälamäb tilinčä ödrülmis temek bolur” (Matyžhanov et.al., 2020, 194).

When we look at the transcription of the *Nehcü'l-Feradis* text belonging to the Khwarezm Period, we first notice that the Latin and Cyrillic letters and the transcription signs are mixed. At the same time, it is not easy to find and type keys, even in a computer environment. This does not comply with the conditions stated by A. Baytursynov about the alphabet about alphabet 110 years ago.

“28. bab beklıkke seza bolıy neteg er kerekini ayur  
1921 İlig aydy emdi ayytı sözüm  
bu erdi munu emdi aytur özüm  
1922 Törütti apa oylanyn bir bayat  
ulıy bar kiçig bar isiz edgü at  
1923 Biliglik biligsiz çyğay bar ya bay  
ukuşlıy ukuşsuz otun bar ked ay” (Matyžhanov et.al. (1), 2020, 161).

The transcription of *Kutadgu Bilig*, one of the works of the Karakhanid period, was made by Bekaris Nuriman. Even Turkology researchers have difficulty in reading this transcription alphabet. Another thing to note is that when you look at the words *aydy*, *ayyty*, the sounds /y/ and /ı/ are shown with the same sign. This is evidence that a phonetic alphabet is not used.

### 3.1. Existing Problems in the Examination of Chagatai Texts with Arabic

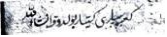




## Letters in Kazakhstan

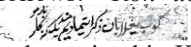
There is a well-established system and rule in the studies on Turkic texts written by Arabic letters in Turkey: The original copy of the historical text; transcription, transfer to contemporary Turkish; directory-dictionary. Despite such an arrangement, it can be said that there are still some problems or mistakes in reading Arabic letter texts (Ercilasun, Öztekten, Ünver, Ünver).

In Kazakhstan, on the other hand, transliteration into modern Kazakh language rather than transcription is up to date. This method creates difficulties in terms of seeing the original of text and causes problems in determining the period of the text. Transcribed texts are also available in addition to the transferred texts. For example, works in the first stages after accepting Islam, etc.

It is also worth mentioning some points that were overlooked during the publication of the book.

There are examples from *Divân-ı Hikmet* (Kokshetav Copy) on the 13th page of the book entitled “Linguistic features of manuscripts of the early 20th century”. In the book it is transcribed as follows: “*Ka’be saparı kiter bolduq inşāallāh*” /  30a-653 (Petek, 2020, 13). It is known that there is  $f > p$  change in Kazakh language. For example, *kāfir* > *kāpir*, *sefer* > *sapar*, *fakir* > *paqır* etc. It has been tried to show a similarity due to the  $f > p$  change, which is one of the general features of Kazakh language. However, this conclusion was reached because the word chosen as an example was misread. However, the correct pronunciation of the word transcribed in bold is *sarı* / *sāri*. It also means – A is true. (See *Nevayî Asarlari Tiliniñ İzahlı Luğati*, the 3rd volume, 49th page; *Özbek Tiliniñ İzahlı Luğati*, S article, 449th page) In the book, it is read as *saparı*. Chagatay texts have the feature of writing  by placing three dots under the letter *sin* (س). It can be said that it is a sign used especially in the *ta’lik* script, where we think that the researcher must have read the three-pointed letter *sin* (س) as *pe* (پ).

The word *hemrası* given in article 3 of the same page must have been overlooked. When looked carefully, the *he* (ه) sign written at the beginning of the word and the letter *he* (ه) written at the end are the same. Reading the sign written at the end of the word as *sin* (س) has led to a mistake. The word should be read as *hemrahi*, not *hemrası*. The transcription of the original text in the book is as follows: “*Рухы менха иман ислам хемрасы йоқ*”  (Petek, 2020, 13).

Again on the same page, the last example sentence of the 3rd article is as follows: “*Көп йыңлабан зикр етмедим мендек гүнақар бар му (35a-754)*”  (Petek, 2020, 13). It is given as an example for the sign of *he* (ه) to be omitted in Kazakh language. In this example, it seems that the *he* (ه) sound has dropped, but *гүнақар* (*gūnakār*) should have been read, not as *гүнақар* (*gūnaқār*). Another word in this sentence, *йыңлабан* (*yūñlaban*) should also be read as *йығлабан* (*yığlaban*). This shows that when transcribing historical texts, attention should be paid to language features and evaluated by focusing on meaning.

We can say that there are few reviews in Kazakhstan on reading Arabic scripts. It is possible to state that such writings are a method of development for Turkology and even for other fields. Another article that deals with some inconsistencies in other historical manuscripts and the diversity of naming works of historical period is the issue of misreading and interpreting Persian words (Shadkam, 2020).

### 3.2. Problems Encountered in Transcription

The oldest Turkic texts written in Arabic letters belong to the 11th century.

Until the 20th century, many Turkic works were written with this alphabet. After the alphabet change, problems in reading these texts arose. One of the first problems that comes to mind is the alphabet. The Arabic alphabet does not adequately reflect the sound structure of the Turkic language. For example, three signs are used to meet the eight vowel sounds of Turkic language: /a/, elif for the /e/ sound, or superior elif (اٲ), /o/, /ö/, /u/, /ü/ at the beginning of the word. elif vav (او), only vav (و) in the middle and end of the word, elif ye (اي) at the beginning of the word for the vowels /ı/ and /i/, and only ye (ي) signs in the middle and end of the word. However, the Turkic language has the closed *e* (è) sound, which is shown as a separate sign that started to appear from the Yenisei Inscriptions. According to some researchers, the ninth vowel of language is the closed *e* (è). Today, this sound is shown as (ə) in Kazakh and (ä) in Azerbaijani languages. We see that this letter, which is seen as a special sign in some periods of Turkic, is used in *Nehcü'l-Feradis*, one of the texts of the Khwarezm period. *Nehcü'l-Feradis* is a work that shows that it is important in various aspects. When we look at the orthographic features, it is seen that there are examples where it is written as *fatha* + *letter of ye* + *jazm*, *fatha* + *letter of ye* + *fatha*. For example,

ēki اٲكي , ēliḡe اٲليڭا , ēndim اٲنديم , ēwüḡde اٲفوكندا , ēwlerdin اٲف اٲزدن , ēy اٲي , tēdi تٲدي , yeḡyürler يٲيوزلار , yeḡtip يٲتٲب , yeḡti يٲتي , yeḡmiṣ miḡ يٲتيṣ مينك .

(Yücel, 2007, 2013).

In the texts of the Chagatai period, a separate sign was not used for the closed *e* (è) sound. Since this sound is usually at the beginning of the word and in the first syllable, it is written with /i/. There is no consensus among experts on reading such words written with *i* in the Chagatai period with a closed *e* (è) or *i*. Since the Central Asian Turkic dialects, which are the continuation of the Chagatai language, are used in a wide geography, we see that they have dialect differences from time to time.

It is frequently encountered that a word pronounced with a closed *e* (è) in one dialect is pronounced as *i* in another. In the Kazakh language (ə) the closed *e* corresponding to the long vowel *i* in the Main Turkic, in Yakut *ii*, *ie* in which the original long vowels are systematically preserved, in Turkmen *ī*, *iy* diphthongs; It is represented by *e* in Turkic language (Başdaş, 2006).

We also encounter problems such as reading, understanding, and translating Turkic texts written in Arabic letters. We can list these problems as follows:

1. Absence of punctuation marks in Arabic script, especially in manuscripts;
2. The researcher's lack of knowledge of Arabic and Persian language features and vocabulary;
3. Not knowing the basic features of historical Turkic dialects in detail;
4. There are mistakes made by the author or copyist in the copyrighted and copied historical texts;
5. Writing proper names and place names in different ways;
6. The lack of ketaba in many manuscripts;

Examples of incorrect spelling of the word in *Durru'l-'acāyib*: There is a sentence such as “*mescidniñ ḡurmet ḡılmaḡnı beyā turur*”. Here, the letter nun (ن) should be dropped in the word *beyā*, and the word verbal should be verbal in the sentence “*feriṣteler ol ṣoḡbetdin ḡaçarlar sālik alar birle sözseler ḡılḡan yaḡṣı 'amellerdin ayrılır*”.

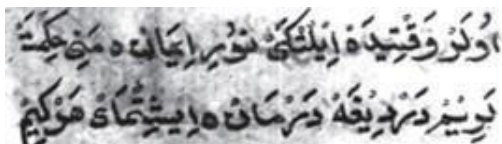
Sometimes, as in *Durru'l-'acāyib*, incomplete writing of words or expressions in many texts creates a disconnection and deficiency in the meaning of the text. For example, in the sentence “*ferzendi bolsa kılmas didi sen sabr kılğıl*” at 13a/1 of *Durru'l-'acāyib*, the *saña ve maña du'ā* parts are missing after the phrase *ferzendi bolsa*. We detected this from other copies. However, one thing to be noted is the misreading of Arabic and Persian words or the mistakes made by the copyist. In the second line of page 66b of the text of *Durru'l-'acāyib*, where the word *ba'd-ez-ān men aña her-çend imān 'arz kıldım ol haste hergiz aytmadı* should have been written as نازادعب, the word *ba'd-ez-ān* was written as نازادعب.

In addition, R. Syzdykova in her book «Language of Yassawi's «Wisdoms» had mentioned: “The consonant letters ظ ط ض ص ذ ث, which are used in Arabic words (the copyists wrote them in Turkic words as well), like A. Najip and N. S. Ivanov, we did not show them with special signs (such as writing with dots and dashes under the letters), then the letters ز and ظ and ذ, س and ث, ت and ط were marked the same (those who want to know exactly how the Arabic and Persian words in the text are written in the manuscript can see the facsimile presented in this book)” (Syzdykova, 2014, 61).

On page 184, R. Syzdykova marked the word «دوجو» with the symbol «ú» instead of the letters «و» in the fourth clause of the 8<sup>th</sup> wisdom of Yassawi (Syzdykova, 2014, 184).

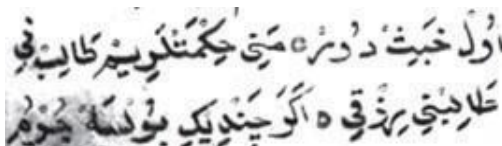
Йол үстидә 'азиз башым тофрағ қылсам,  
Жан-у дилім Хақ зикріға муштақ қылсам.  
Зикр айтыб бар жисмимні афақ қылсам,  
Ўужудымдын бу 'ақбалар көчәр мукин.

In addition, she transcribed lines 3-4 of page 6a of the Samarkand (Zaleman) manuscript of «Diwani Wisdoms» as follows:



өләр уақтыда елткәй нур-и иман/ мәні хикмәт-  
-ләрим дәрдіға дәрман/ ешитмәй һәр ким.

On lines 12-13 of this page:



ол хабис дур/ мәні хикмәтләрим талибны

талибны ризқы/ әгәр чәндикі болса журм-у (Syzdykova, 2014: 199).

In these examples, you can see that instead of «و», the letter «ý», «ت», «ط» is represented by «r».

And these examples are as follows according to our proposed transcript:

*o ger vaqtide iletgey nūr-ı imānnı meni hikmet-  
-lerim derdiğa dermān işitmey her kim*

.....

*ol ħ a b i ş dūr meni hikmetlerim t̄alibni  
t̄alibni rızķı eger çendī ki bolsa cürm.*

#### 4. New Transcription Alphabet Proposed for Writing Translations

Today, everyone agrees that Turkic texts written in the Arabic alphabet are mostly translated into Kazakh. In the last few years, it is possible to observe a trend in texts written in the Chagatai language, which Kazakh used as a written language in the 15th-20th centuries. Along with a group of researchers who consider that it is necessary to make the transcription of the texts of this period, there is another group of researchers who doubt in necessity of the transcription. Sir Gerard Clauson's citation gives a response to the second group of researchers *the editor's job is to find solutions to various problems and not to put the responsibility on the reader* (Clauson, 1962, 58).

The transcription, as seen in the form of translating the sounds of Gokturk, Uyghur, Greek, Arabic and other alphabets into characters in the Latin alphabet, will be made by converting Persian, Urdu and Turkic texts written in the Arabic alphabet into Latin or Cyrillic letters in parallel with oriental studies.

The transcription alphabet is very important in transferring historical texts to today's alphabet and publishing such works. Reading and publishing the Chagatai texts, which are used in large geography including Turkestan, Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, and India in the south, will be very helpful in introducing our common spiritual heritage to the Turkic World and understanding each other. It is important that not only Kazakhstan but also other Central Asian (Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, etc.) countries adopt their own transcription alphabets, with some changes, and improve their reading of texts. In this respect, the issue of the transcription alphabet claims to be very important and we think that it should be accepted as soon as possible.

Transcription signs are prepared on the basis of the new Latin alphabet adopted in Kazakhstan and the transcription guide of R. R. Arat.

**Table 1:** Translation text signs

ء		ش	ş
ا	a, e, ä	ص	ş
آ	a, ā	ض	ž
ب	b, p	ط	!
پ	p	ظ	z

ت	t	ع	ʿ
ث	ṯ	غ	ğ
ج	c, ç	ف	f
چ	ç	ق	q
ح	ḥ	ك	k, g, ŋ
خ	x	كن	ñ
د	d	ل	l
ذ	ḏ	م	m
ر	r	ن	n
ز	z	و، وَا	o, ö, u, ü, v
ژ	j	ه	a, ä, e, h
س	s	ي ي	ı, i, ĩ, y

The signs x (خ), j (ژ), ğ (غ), q (ق), ñ (كن), ŋ (ك) added by us in the proposed transcription alphabet were created according to the latest adopted Latin alphabet in Kazakhstan. *Nasal n* (ŋ) appears as ك / کن in Chagatai texts. Therefore, each of them has been given a separate sign. This transcription alphabet has been proposed in Kazakhstan because there is no unity in transcription in scientific publications and researches of historical texts in Arabic letters. Therefore, this transcription alphabet was applied in some studies and brought to the attention of researchers.

An additional illustration can be provided in the form of a fragment from a Chagatai language hagiography, recounting the tale of Sultan Upi, the third son of Süleyman Bakyrġani. This passage will be transcribed utilizing the proposed transcript alphabet, which serves to showcase the practical application of this transcription system within the context of Chagatai language studies.

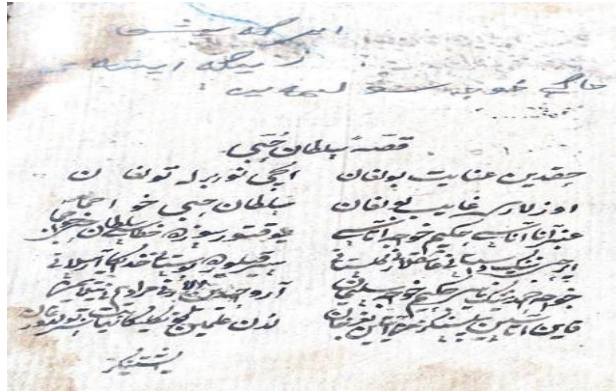


Figure 1: *Qıssa-i Sultān Ḥubbī*

### Translated Text

[1a] (4) *ir ḥubbīniñ dāstāni ‘āşıqlarını gülistāni seyr qılırda büstāni ḥudāyge arslam* (5) *ḥvāce aḥmedniñ nāibi ḥekām ḥvāce süleymān arvāhıdın alarını murādımniñ tiley-men* (6) *qayın atasını bilseñiz men aytayın buğra ḥān ledün ‘ilmin köñlige nihā- yetsiz toldurġan* (Shadkam-Sultanbek, 2022, 9-11).

### Translation to English



(4) The saga of Er Hubbi, the flower garden of lovers walking the garden, the lion of God (5) Hakim Khoja Suleiman, viceroy of Khoja Ahmet, I wish my dream from their spirit (6) If you know the father-in-law, I will tell you Bugra Khan, the science of knowing from the unseen is filled with eternity.

The application of the newly proposed transcription signs is shown on 6 lines selected from the *Destūr'ül-'ilāj* text.

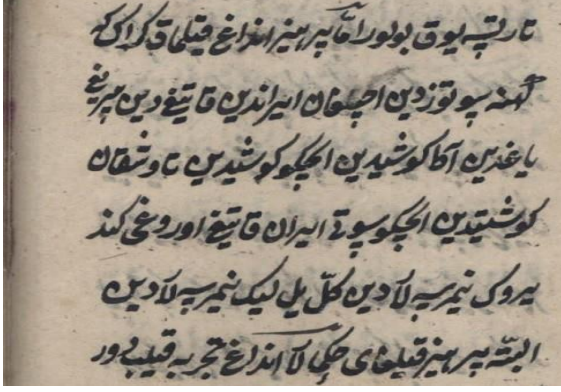


Figure 2: *Destūr'ül-'ilāj*

### Translated Text

[28a] (3) *tartsa yoq bolur ammā perhiz andağ qılmaq gerek ki* (4) *köhne su tuzdın açılğan ayrandın qatığdın sarığ* (5) *yağdın aţ göşidin içkü göşiden tavuşqan* (6) *göstidın içkü süti ayran qatığ uruğı kend-* (7) *-dirüñ nimerseleerdin külli yellik nimerseleerdin* (8) *elbette perhiz qılğay hükemālar andağ tecrübe qılıpdur.*

### Translation to English

If it is pulled, it will disappear, but a diet must be kept. All products like soured/oaky ayran, yoghurt from old water with salt, products such as ayran, yoghurt, which were made from yellow oil (butter), horse meat, goat meat, rabbit meat, goat's milk, hemp seeds, and all gas-producing products should of course be avoided, as physicians have experienced.

The application of the newly proposed transcription signs is shown on 4 lines selected from the *Durru'l-'acāyib* text.

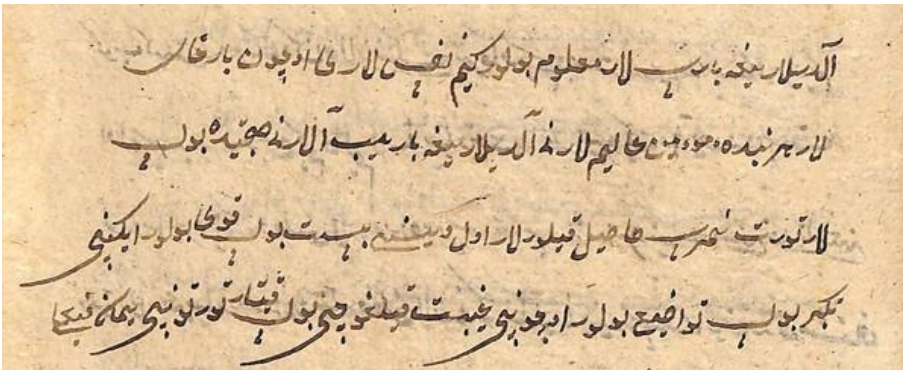


Figure 3: *Durru'l-'acāyib*



## Translated Text

(1) *aldılarığa barsalar ma'lüm bolur kim näfsläri üçün barğay-(2)-lar här bändä-i mu'min 'älimläрни aldılarığa barıp alarnı şöhbätidä bolsa-(3)-lar tört nämärsä häşil qılurlar ävväl dini päst bolsa qavı bolur ikinçi (4) tākābbür bolsa teväzu' bolur üçünçi ğıybet qılğuçı bolsa qaytar törtünçi yaman fe'l.*

## Translation to English

If they go in front of them, it is known that it is for their nafs. Every believer will gain four things if they spend time with scholars in me / have conversations. If Allah gives mercy, firstly, if he is weak in the way of religion, he will become stronger, secondly, if he is arrogant, he will be humble, third, if someone backbites, he will return from this path, and the fourth will turn from his bad (sinful) actions.

## Conclusion

The evolution of a written language from its parent language is a gradual process and does not entail complete independence from the source language. The earliest works of literature were produced by language groups that have separated from their parent language and developed their own written systems. These texts provide valuable insights into the formation and development of the written system and serve as primary sources for researchers. As such, they are of great significance in the field of linguistics.

In the studies carried out in the researches of historical Turkic texts written by Arabic Letters in Kazakhstan:

- The lack of consistency in the transcription signs of the studies on Turkic texts written by Arabic letters since the Soviet Era;
- Some of the studies have been transliterated and some of them have been translated only into Kazakh;
- Pronunciation of Arabic-Persian words was done in accordance with the pronunciation of the Kazakh language;
- There are errors in the translation of Arabic-Persian phrases;
- A full catalog of manuscripts has not been done and transferred to digital media;
- The coverage of courses related to examining historical period texts in the curriculum of the Turkology department is insufficient;
- We witness the mixed use of Latin, Cyrillic and Latin-Cyrillic alphabet in the translated texts, as shown in the examples above.

From all these, we unfortunately see that the transcription alphabet does not comply with Ahmet Baytursynov's definition of a sufficient alphabet about 110 years ago. We tried to suggest a transcription alphabet by taking these situations into consideration.

The issue of transcription is of great importance for research in language history, literary history, writing history, etymology, and other fields. In order to achieve unity in terms of transcription mark in Kazakhstan, first of all, experts should not only transfer the historical Turkic texts by Arabic letters, but also do the transcription of the texts in close collaboration.

This study aims to introduce newly developed transliteration symbols, based on the work of R.R. Arat and the recently adopted Kazakh Latin alphabet, for the

transcription of historical texts. Rapid adoption and clarification of these symbols are crucial to expedite future studies and avoid unnecessary time and economic costs. Implementation of these symbols will enhance the accuracy and consistency of historical text transcriptions, thereby contributing to the advancement of scholarly research.

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## Annex-1

### Transcription Alphabet used in Gulistan (Nadjip, 1975, 3).

#### ГЛАВА ТРЕТЬЯ

#### О порядке арабского алфавита в словаре и о принятых транскрипционных знаках

ح	ح	ج	ت	ت	ب	ا	او	ا	ا
x	h	ç-c	a	t	b	i-l-e	a-â,u-û	a-a-e	
غ	ع	ظ	ط	ض	ص	ش	س	ز	ر
ğ	'	z	t	z	a	š	s	z	r
		ی	ه	و	ن	م	ل	ك	ك
		ı	h	v	n	m	l	ng	k-g
								q	f

Annex-2

Transcription marks used in Abay Kunanbayuly’s “The book of Words” published in Kazakhstan (Petek, 2020, 8).

	1907 жылғы қолжазбада қолданылған араб қаріптері			Оқылуы				
	Сөз басында	Ортасында	Соңында					
Дауыстылар	ا	ا	ا(a)	a				
	آ	-	-	ә				
	اي	ي (ï, ы, i)	ي (ы, i) ا(e)	ï, ы, i, e				
	او	و	و	o, ө, ұ, ү, ў				
Дауыссыздар	Араб қаріптері			Оқылуы	Араб қаріптері			Оқылуы
	Бас.	Орт.	Соң.		Бас.	Орт.	Соң.	
Дауыссыздар	ب	ب	ب	б	ث	ث	ث	с
	پ	پ	پ	п	ش	ش	ش	ш
	ت	ت	ت	т	ع	ع	ع	ʿ (ғайын)
	ط	ط	ط	т	ف	ف	ف	ф
	ج	ج	ج	ж	ق	ق	ق	к
	ح	ح	ح	h	ك	ك	ك	к
	خ	خ	خ	x	ك	ك	-	г
	ه	ه	ه	h	غ	غ	-	ғ
	د	د	-	д	ل	ل	ل	л
	ر	ر	ر	р	م	م	م	м
	ز	ز	ز	з	چ	چ	چ	ч
	ظ	ظ	ظ	з	ي	ي	ي	й
	ض	ض	ض	з	ذ	ذ	ذ	н
	ذ	ذ	ذ	з	-	نك	نك	ң
	س	س	س	с	-	ق	ق	ұу, үу, у
	ص	ص	ص	с	و	و	-	в

Annex-3

Kazakhstan’s Latest Adopted Latin Alphabet.

Латын графикасына негізделген қазақ тілінің әліпбиі

№	Әріп	Әріптің атауы	№	Әріп	Әріптің атауы
1	A a	a	18	O o	o
2	Ä ä	ә	19	Ö ö	ө
3	B b	бы	20	P p	пы
4	D d	ды	21	Q q	қы
5	E e	e	22	R r	ыр
6	F f	фы	23	S s	сы
7	G g	гі	24	Ş ş	шы
8	Ğ ğ	ғы	25	T t	ты
9	H h	һы	26	U u	ұу
10	İ i	іі	27	Û û	ұ
11	J j	і	28	Ü ü	ү
12	J j	жы	29	V v	вы
13	K k	кі	30	Y y	ы
14	L l	ыл	31	Z z	зы
15	M m	мы			
16	N n	ны			
17	Ñ ñ	ың			

\*C, X, W таңбалары қиғатталық қағидамен жазылатын шеттiлдiк сөздерде қолданылады.

([https://qazaqstan.tv/news/139867/?fbclid=IwAR1ubMD6aWVQ7yFYn8prI9n-p7a8hGDcoYq\\_BwKPZPmbRnEdfqilzbBsFAk](https://qazaqstan.tv/news/139867/?fbclid=IwAR1ubMD6aWVQ7yFYn8prI9n-p7a8hGDcoYq_BwKPZPmbRnEdfqilzbBsFAk)) Date of access 07.05.2021.

