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THE SCOPE OF TOPONYMS IN FOLK PROSE

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Abstract. The artistically valuable area of Kazakh folklore, in which the historical character prevails, is legends. It is dominated by narrated events and the names of the characters, toponyms, and address details. The article examines the legends common to the Turkic peoples, the relation of place names to the event, and its functions. It is known that toponymic legends and traditions can be considered an important component of the spiritual and cultural heritage of the Turkic peoples. The attribution of geographical names with toponymic legends in terms of semantic content to toponymic territorial systems and their understanding as sources of geoinformation is proved. Attention is focused on the importance of using toponymic legends in the field of tourism and educational activities. The conclusions drawn in the course of the study allow us to establish that the genres of folk prose, the main purpose of which is to reveal the signs of ancient cultural heritage, are recognized by place names.

Key words: toponyms, folklore, culture, genre, legends and stories, folklore text.

Introduction

Turkic civilization takes a special place in the world culture. The existence of the culture of any nation is measured by the history of its writing. It is enough to recall the Orkhon inscriptions, carved on stone and considered a historical monument and ancient folklore heritage of all languages. These unsurpassed and valuable inscriptions, left over from ancient times, seem to show that the spiritual origins of all Turkic peoples are the same [1, 16].

Another common feature of the spiritual unity of the Turkic peoples is clearly visible in their creativity, namely in folklore works. As is known, there are many genre types of folklore, among them I would like to highlight the actively developing genre in recent years - toponymic folklore, which determines the relevance of the chosen topic. It is important to note that this genre took on the task of studying groups of toponyms covered by metaphorical names on the territory of the Great Steppe, as well as various legends, stories, tales and myths associated with these names, generated by folk art. That is why we will try to reveal the essence and meaning of the toponymic folklore of the Turkic peoples in more detail in this article.

The relevance of studying toponymic folklore from a geographical point of view is related to interdisciplinarity and the importance of the position in modern society. On the one hand, toponymic legends and stories are manifestations of folklore, an integral part of the spiritual and cultural heritage of society. They reflect the history and nature of the region, preserve the culture and language tradition. On the other hand, toponymic legends are the part of "folk toponymy". They explain the origin of geographical names and they are closely connected with toponymic territorial systems. Now, not only in Kazakhstan, but also in many post-Soviet countries, there is an increasing interest in toponymic research, which is connected with political, social and economic transformations [2, 72]. However, at the same time, toponymic folklore remains a virtually unexplored concept today. Its study should be carried out at the intersection of geography, toponymy, history, cultural studies, folklore and linguistics. There is no single definition of the concept of "toponymic folklore" and no clear classification system. Moreover, in modern science toponymic legends are almost never studied from a geographical standpoint. But in some publications the question of the need for a scientific

distinction between the concepts of “toponymic legend” and “toponymic myth” still arises. This depends on the plot of the folklore text and the degree of its reliability.

People of the first period, the period of myths and even the Middle Ages, composed fairy tales usually through personification. These works, which were the common property of society, became models for legends and tales, which were later transferred to written sources by presenting more or less historical facts in a space prepared by new religious, cultural and economic conditions [3, 312]. Various definitions of the term “legend” have been given by many domestic and foreign scientists. [4, 9]. Many legends are of descriptive nature, for example, they try to answer the question of why and how all living things appeared in the world [5, 190].

An analysis of the experience of studying toponymic legends as an object of folklore studies, linguistics and cultural studies, and partly cultural geography, shows that a significant array of toponymic legends has been accumulated and relatively studied to date. In particular, such outstanding scientists as S.A. Kaskabasov, A.Sh. Pangereev, E.S. Berezovich, I.S. Veselova, O.V. Gordeeva, I.S. Karabulatova, G.I. Kanakina and others are studying toponymic texts.

In this study, we will examine the texts of toponymic legends belonging to the Turkic peoples, classifying them by subject matter.

Methods and materials The aim of our research is to study Turkic toponymic folklore as the basis of geographical names of localities.

Toponymic studies involve the use of various approaches and methods. The theoretical part of the study involved literature review methods, data collection and systematization, linguistic interpretation, and complex etymological analysis. Historical-cultural and descriptive methods were used to analyze folklore material.

The literature review is crucial for formulating the main ideas and trends, and substantiating the theoretical basis of our study. To achieve the goal of the study, we used historical-cultural and descriptive methods that are effective in studying toponyms in folklore texts, and systematized information about the studied toponyms using the data systematization method. Linguistic interpretation is based on the use of geographical terms – words denoting the characteristics of a geographical object, its type and gender, allowing us to reconstruct past geographical situations and identify various components of the natural landscape.

The study data included Turkic toponymic texts related to the names of individual geographical objects. The importance of collecting, analyzing and systematizing toponyms is that over time they can disappear or transform.

Discussion

The folklore of the Turkic peoples has its own peculiarities in composing names of localities and water basins. It can be said that such a feature is characteristic of the spiritual heritage of the Turkic peoples who led a nomadic lifestyle. In order not to forget the places from which they migrated and to which they would return again, the Turkic-speaking people called the areas on the territory of the Great Steppe by names corresponding to the unique features of the lands, turning these names into an unforgettable melody that penetrates the hearts. In order not to forget the places from where they migrated and where they will return again, the Turkic-speaking people called the areas on the territory of the Great Steppe with names corresponding to the unique features of the lands, turning these names into an unforgettable melody that penetrates into the hearts.

Such toponymic names are an indispensable source of information about the history of the region, physical and geographical features and landscapes of the places of residence of the Turkic peoples [6, 13].

Toponyms can perform cognitive, informative and aesthetic functions. And in folklore plots, along with the noted functions, a special place is given to the symbolization and embodiment of the Blessed Image of one's native land. R. Syzdykova wrote: “A symbol is a material (essential) image of an idea, a metaphorical image” [7, 10].

Kazakh poetry was well aware of these symbols. The 15th century poet Kaztugan praises the Volga River as a symbol expressing the idea of “Motherland, Fatherland, the permanent home of the

people”. Thus, the inclusion of the landscape of the native land in the poem is also characteristic of the folklore of other Turkic peoples.

In addition, toponymic names are valuable because they have symbolism in their data, whether in the plot of an epic or in a legend. Proving the factual nature of toponyms, the scholar R. Berdybaev asserts that “in the Song of Toktamys, among the documentary evidence defining the historical era of that time, one can see the names of places, people and clans. All these are facts necessary for establishing the historical geography of the poem.” [8, 158].

Toponyms used in genres, whether heroic epic or romantic epic, show the love and deep, patriotic feelings of the Turkic peoples for the names of the places of their homeland, every time when a Turkic-speaking person who grew up freely in the steppes, being far from his home, performed these songs, which are a cultural monument.

According to academician S. Kaskabasov, legends tell about important events that happened in life, about outstanding people who lived in the past, about a certain area, water basins, lands.

In most cases, the plots of legends are only national. The legend of one country is not transferred to another country, and even most of them are only regional (local) in nature [9, 156]. In general, a toponymic legend first of all begins with the search for an answer to why certain places, rivers, lakes, mountains and rocks that are present in people’s minds are called that way, and what events took place in these places.

Legends, fables, mythological stories created on the basis of toponyms are the creativity of not only the Kazakh people, but also the common spiritual heritage of all Turkic peoples.

Although toponymic legends are born in different regions, on the territory of different republics, their structural motive is close to each other. That is, the overwhelming majority of toponymic legends of the Turkic peoples are based on revealing the reason for the name of natural objects. Similar toponymic legends are numerous in the folklore of the Turkic peoples. Along with toponymic legends, another type of creativity of the Turkic peoples is widespread - toponymic traditions. Researchers often note that the question of classifying toponymic traditions and legends still remains open.

Previously, toponymy was considered as an object of linguistics and only in the linguistic direction. However, its social significance, involvement in the national mentality, the reasons for its constant presence in folklore plots remained outside the scope of the study. We believe that now is the time to take a fresh look at this issue and study the connection between toponymy and national folklore.

Both folklore and toponymy are two separate sciences. The first studies the creative heritage of the people, and the second studies the geographical places named by the people. That is, both are products of folk creativity, which is where the similarity of these sciences lies.

Among Kazakh writers, Bazarbayev was the first to notice the connection between the two sciences. According to the scientist: “Man and the earth, nature and the place where he lived, the concepts associated with him, as well as the problem of language were the first materials for fiction, namely for the art of figurative thinking and the people’s cognition of the surrounding world through images and ideas...” [10, 67]. Thus, one of the first folklore genres to emerge is the toponymic legend, which tells about the peculiarities of the history of a certain place, land, water, river, lake, mountain or rock.

Like all societies in the world, Kazakhs have many different legends. The study of Kazakh legends began in the 19th century. The first researchers were soldiers, scientists and missionaries sent to Turkestan by the Russian Empire.

Shokan Valikhanov’s name should be mentioned. He called the narratives about history “historical legends” and was the first to prove that a legend concerns historical figures and events, and separated a legend from fairy tales and epics. Continuing Valikhanov’s thoughts, Potanin also called the stories about the emergence of Kazakh tribes and stories about historical heroes “legends” [11, 160].

Various classification studies have been conducted on the legends of the Turkic peoples. A. Konyratbaev divided the Turkic legends into mythical and historical [12, 191].

S. Kaskabasov conducted the most complete study of the legends and divided them into historical and toponymic (associated with the names of places and water). Kuy/musical dialects were considered separately.

Research Results

In this study, we classify the texts of toponymic legends taken as examples. We divide these folklore texts by three main factors:

1. Names of various water basins (hydronyms);
 2. Names of mountains, ridges, peaks, hills (oronyms);
 3. Names of cities, regions, states (horonyms).
1. Legends about the names of rivers, lakes and springs.

The legend of Lake Balkhash tells of a once famous, rich and powerful sorcerer. The sorcerer's only daughter, Ili, was to become the bride of the richest groom. Contenders for the hand and heart of the beauty gathered from all corners of the world. Descendants of the mighty emperor of China, and majestic Mongolia, and the richest merchants of Bukhara came to try their luck. However, the numerous gifts did not attract her attention. The beauty Ili liked a simple shepherd who did not have a penny in his pocket. Her father was furious when Karatal (that was the name of the simple shepherd) became the winner of the competition. He shamefully kicked out the young shepherd, but the bride decided to violate her father's will and ran away from home with her chosen one at night. When the sorcerer learned of the escape, he cast such a powerful spell on the fugitives that Ili and Karatal became full-flowing rivers. Even though they had been turned into rivers, the lovers rushed towards each other from the mountain slopes. Father Balkhash was so angry that he turned into a huge lake between the two rivers. Nevertheless, the lovers were able to find each other, uniting in the waters of Balkhash.

Lake Issyk-Kul is often called the “pearl of Kyrgyzstan”, there are many legends about the origin of the lake. According to one legend, a cruel ruler falls in love with a girl of unearthly beauty. He orders his subjects to steal her from her native village and bring her to his palace. But the girl is in love with an ordinary shepherd and rejects the khan. The young lover of the beauty flew to her on the magic horse Tulpur and saved her. The khan was angry and sent warriors after the girl. She was returned, but she preferred death to captivity. The young beauty threw herself out of the window, and the khan did not remain unpunished for his crime. Pure mountain water gushed into the valley where his palace stood and completely flooded it. A lake formed in place of the valley.

Speaking of flooded buildings, there are actually ruins of a monastery under the waters of Issyk-Kul. It is unknown why and by whom it was destroyed, but Shintoism, Christianity, Islam and Buddhism coexisted on this territory.

There is a legend about Lake Akchakul, according to which during the time of Genghis Khan, the troops were unable to take all the gold with them and drowned the treasures in this lake. Thus, a belief arose that any visitor who bathes in Lake Akchakul will increase his material wealth.

In ancient times, in the steppes of Bashkiria, there was a high mountain called Asyltau. And one day, hunters met an amazing white marten on its slopes, which surprised them greatly. The elders immediately said that the animal was the guardian of the mountain and that it was absolutely forbidden to hunt it. And so it has been since then. However, there lived a khan nearby, rich, powerful and arrogant. He wanted to catch a marten, went to Mount Asyltau with his retinue and began to look for a white marten. Despite all their efforts, the khan did not succeed. But he only found a hole, and the amazing animal did not show up.

Then the hunters began to flood the marten's home with water. People emptied all the wells, all the ponds and all the surrounding lakes, but they still did not catch anyone. For 40 days all the surrounding residents carried water, on the 41st day the top of Asyltau was covered in a black cloud, thunder struck and lava flowed down the slopes. It swallowed up both the evil khan and his retinue. The mountain raged for several days, and then people saw that it had disappeared. But in its place, Lake Aslikul formed – the largest in Bashkiria. Local belief says that a good spirit lives in it, warning local residents of impending troubles.

Table 1 – Legends about the names of water bodies

Toponym	Distribution area	Description
Balkhash	Almaty region, Zhambyl region, Karaganda region, Zhetysu region, Kazakhstan	The legend tells of an unhappy love
Issyk-Kul	North-eastern part of Kyrgyzstan	The legend tells of an unhappy love
Akchakul	Karakalpakstan	Legend of a historical figure
Aslikul	Bashkortostan	The legend teaches us to be careful with nature

2. Legends about the names of mountains/ranges/peaks/hills.

Most legends on this topic are related to the transformation of people or animals into stone. Often the heroes of these legends were turned into stone as a result of their prayers to God, so as not to fall into the hands of the enemy.

One of the legends about Zhumbaktas (“stone – riddle”) says: “In ancient times, there lived a bai (richman) in the steppes. This bai had many sons, but his main joy, the diamond of his wealth, was his only daughter - a beauty, a clever girl, a craftswoman and a dashing horsewoman. Only bais and biis (speakers) wooed her. Even the mighty khan himself, having heard about the extraordinary beauty of the girl, looked into that aul (village), but the khan was beaten to it by a poor akyn (poet). The singer, who had a golden voice, played the dombra masterfully and was, moreover, handsome. The bai's daughter fell in love with him at first sight. Realizing that the bai would never agree to his daughter's marriage to a lowborn akyn, the young couple decided to run away. Having saddled magnificent argamaks (thoroughbred racehorses), they fled from the village at night. They rode for a very long time, without rest. And when the lovers finally stopped at Lake Burabay, the girl's brothers found the runaway. By that time, the singer had made a boat to enjoy the quiet surface of the lake with his beloved. When the boat sailed, the cruel sons of the bay shot arrows. One of them hit the heart of a horseman in love. The girl, stretching her hands to the setting sun, asked to turn her into stone. Life without her beloved had no meaning, so the rock Zhumbaktas appeared on the lake. Literally - a mysterious stone. This stone is actually a mystery. If you look at it from one side, you see a girl with hair fluttering in the wind, from the other – it's a boat, perhaps the very one built by the singer's hands.

In the legend of Mount Tolagai, the hero who carries a small mountain on his back to his hometown falls asleep from exhaustion. That is how the mountain was formed. Mount Shubarat was named after the horse that came first in the competition, climbing a steep mountain that no other horse could climb

The Khan-Tengri peak has been known since ancient times. From afar, you can see a pyramid reaching upwards, the height of which reaches 6995 meters. According to legend, in ancient times people believed that a deity, Tengri, lived on the top. So this peak was called Khan-Tengri.

Table 2 – Legends about the names of mountain objects

Toponym	Distribution area	Description
Zhumbaktas	Northern Kazakhstan, Akmola region, Burabay district	The legend tells of an unhappy love
Tolagai	East Kazakhstan region, Kokpektinsky district	The legend tells of a hero
Shubarat	Akmola region, Kazakhstan	The legend tells of a historical event

Khan-Tengri	Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of China	The Legend of the Mythical Deity
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3. Legends about the names of cities, districts, states.

Bayanaul - the name itself refers us to Bayan-Sulu. As is known, Bayan-Sulu is the heroine of the folk epic poem “Kozy-Korpesh and Bayan-Sulu”, which tells the tragic fate of two lovers. On the territory of the Bayanaul Mountains there is a national natural park of the same name.

The legend of the city of Samarkand tells us that once upon a time there lived a poor man in these lands. The dry climate made it impossible to farm on the depleted land, but the poor man did not lose hope and continued to cultivate the land. One fine day, he dug up a spring that irrigated the land, and the fields and trees grew green. People began to move closer to the water, start farms and build houses for their families. Soon the city grew and was named Samarkand in honor of the poor man Samar who gave them water.

There is a legend told by a veteran miner about the city of Ekibastuz. Two horses died near a Salt Lake, and their heads were erected in this place as a monument. Since then, the lake has been called “Eki atbasy kalgan tuz”, that is, literally, “Salt Lake where two horse skulls remained”. According to legend, the Bashkirs were looking for a land (the period of the Great Migration of Peoples) to live on. A wolf came out to meet them. The wolf showed the way to their native land and became the main symbol. The Bashkort people were named in his honor (bash - main, kort - wolf). This is how the country of Bashkortostan appeared.

Table 3 – Legends about the names of cities, regions, states

Toponym	Distribution area	Description
Bayanaul	Kazakhstan, Pavlodar region, Bayanaul district	The Legend of the Tragic Fate of Two Lovers
Samarkand	Uzbekistan	The legend tells of a hero after whom the city was named
Ekibastuz	Kazakhstan, western part of Pavlodar region	The mythical legend of two horses
Bashkortostan	Bashkortostan, Russian Federation	Mythical Legend of the Wolf

An analysis of the frequency factor of toponymic names in folklore showed that, based on the texts of Turkic oral folklore, the most numerous uses of toponyms and microtoponyms are observed in toponymic legends, which truthfully explain the origin of the names of some geographical objects. Each legend contains certain information and is interesting in its essence. If a folklore text lacks names of bodies of water and places, the text loses its credibility and is perceived as some kind of abstraction. In any case, wars for freedom, folk chronicles, patriotism and brave girls are a symbol of heroism preserved by the people. Toponyms are the core of a legend that will forever remain in people's memory.

Conclusion

Both folklore and toponymy are two separate sciences. The first studies the creative heritage of the people, and the second studies the geographical places named by the people. That is, both are products of folk creativity, which is where the similarity of these sciences lies.

Thus, we can conclude that toponymic legends have a certain linguocultural value, since they allow us to see not only the process of nomination, but also the ideological features of the creators of toponymic stories. There are a number of features that reveal the literary specificity of toponymic folklore as a genre of oral folklore. Toponyms in folklore texts reflect the historical past of the territory under study, changes in religious views, economic and cultural development. Sometimes they help to supplement existing information about a specific area with new facts. The examples of toponymic legends presented in the article confirm that toponyms are a component of folk prose.

They are closely connected with the national mentality and are woven into the plot line of folk works. Toponyms add color to legends, help convey their content more accurately, and form national cultural identity. Undoubtedly, folklore toponyms represent unique material for studying the national mentality of the Turkic peoples and reconstructing their worldview.

In conclusion, it should be noted that the study of toponymic folklore provides valuable information about the cultural landscape and the collective identity of a community. Toponyms, or geographical names, contain historical narratives, social values, and the linguistic evolution of a region. They serve as a bridge between the past and the present, reflecting the interaction between different cultures and languages over time. By studying the folklore associated with these names, we gain a deeper understanding of the myths, legends, and traditions that define the people's relationship with their environment. Moreover, the preservation and study of toponymic folklore is essential for maintaining cultural heritage, promoting intercultural dialogue and strengthening national identity. As communities increasingly recognize the importance of their unique history and identity, the study of toponymic folklore will continue to play a key role in the development of cultural tourism and the enrichment of the social fabric of society.

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СФЕРА ПРИМЕНЕНИЯ ТОПОНИМОВ В НАРОДНОЙ ПРОЗЕ

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Аннотация. Художественно – ценная область казахского фольклора, в которой преобладает исторический характер – это легенды. В нем преобладают рассказываемые события и имена героев, топонимы, адресные реквизиты. В статье рассматриваются общие для тюркских народов легенды, отношение топонимов к событию, его функции. Известно, что топонимические легенды и традиции можно считать важной составляющей духовного и культурного наследия тюркских народов. Доказано отнесение географических названий с топонимическими легендами по смысловому содержанию к топонимическим территориальным системам и понимание их как источников геоинформации. Акцентируется внимание на важности использования топонимических легенд в сфере туризма и учебно-воспитательной деятельности. Выводы, сделанные в ходе исследования, позволяют установить, что жанры народной прозы, основной целью которых является раскрытие признаков древнего культурного наследия, распознаются топонимами.

Ключевые слова: топонимия, топонимы, топонимические легенды, духовное и культурное наследие, народная проза.

ХАЛЫҚ ПРОЗАСЫНДАҒЫ ТОПОНИМДЕРДІҢ ҚОЛДАНЫС АЯСЫ

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Аңдатпа. Қазақ фольклорының тарихи сипаты басым көркем де құнды саласы – аңыздар. Онда айтылатын оқиғалар мен кейіпкер аттары, жер-су атаулары, мекен-мезгіл мөлшерінің деректілігі басым келеді. Мақалада түркі халықтарына ортақ аңыздар, ондағы топонимдердің оқиғаға қатысы, атқаратын қызметі қарастырылады. Топонимикалық аңыздар мен дәстүрлерді түркі халықтарының рухани және мәдени мұрасының маңызды құрамдас бөлігі деп санауға болатыны белгілі. Семантикалық мазмұны бойынша топонимикалық аңыздары бар географиялық атауларды топонимикалық аумақтық жүйелерге жатқызу және

оларды геоақпарат көзі ретінде түсіну дәлелденді. Топонимикалық аңыздарды туризм және оқу-тәрбие қызметі саласында қолданудың маңыздылығына назар аударылады. Зерттеу барысында жасалған тұжырымдар көне мәдени мұраның белгілерін ашуды басты мақсат еткен халық прозасының жанрлары топонимдер арқылы танылатынын анықтауға мүмкіндік береді.

Түйін сөздер: топонимия, топонимдер, топонимикалық аңыздар, рухани және мәдени мұра, халық прозасы.