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TOPONYMIC FOLKLORE RESEARCHES IN THE EURASIAN SPACE

Annotation. Every nation on earth has cognitive features that reflect its national spiritual world. Such unique features that reveal the national spiritual world of the peoples living and developing in the Eurasian space are revealed through their legends and myths. The study of toponymic folklore allows for an exploration of the linguistic worldview and the peculiarities of the everyday life of a particular people. Toponymic legends and narratives, as part of the cultural heritage, reflect all aspects of human spiritual and material life, individuality, and mentality. The aim of the article «Toponymic folklore researches in the Eurasian space» is likely to explore and analyze the theoretical frameworks and methodologies involved in studying toponymic legends or narratives associated with place names – within the diverse cultural and geographical context of the Eurasian region. The methodological foundation for studying toponymic legends and narratives in the Eurasian space is based on the use of theoretical and conceptual approaches from various scientific disciplines, such as folklore, history, cultural studies, ethnography, ethnology, linguistics, and philosophy. In conclusion, it is noted that the study of toponymic narratives in the Eurasian space not only demonstrates their cultural, historical, and social value, but also reveals the basis for the formation of cultural ties between peoples. The practical significance of the work lies in the fact that the results of the scientific article can be used in educational institutions for developing courses and programs in folklore studies, history, cultural studies, ethnography, and linguistics. This enables students to gain in-depth knowledge about toponymic legends and narratives, their cultural and historical significance.

Keywords: toponyms, folklore, geography, history, toponymic legends, toponymic narratives, Eurasian space.

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Исследования топонимического фольклора евразийского пространства

Аннотация. У каждого народа на земле есть когнитивные признаки, отражающие его национальный духовный мир. Такие уникальные черты, раскрывающие национальный духовный мир народов, живущих и развивающихся на евразийском пространстве, раскрываются через их легенды и мифы. Изучение топонимического фольклора позволяет изучить языковую картину мира и особенности повседневной жизни конкретного народа. Топонимические легенды и предания, являясь частью культурного наследия, отражают все стороны духовной и материальной жизни человека, его индивидуальность и мышление. Целью статьи «Исследования топонимического фольклора евразийского пространства» является изучение

и анализ теоретических исследований и методологий топонимических легенд, связанных с топонимами в разнообразных культурных и географических контекстах евразийского региона. Методологической основой изучения топонимических легенд и преданий на евразийском пространстве базируются на использовании теоретических и концептуальных подходов различных научных дисциплин, таких как фольклор, история, культурология, этнография, этнология, языкознание, философия. В заключение отмечается, что изучение топонимических нарративов на территории евразийского пространства не только демонстрирует их культурно-историческую и социальную ценность, но и раскрывает основу формирования культурных связей между народами. Практическая значимость работы заключается в том, что результаты научной статьи могут быть использованы в образовательных учреждениях при разработке курсов и учебных программ по фольклористике, истории, культурологии, этнографии, языкознанию. Это позволяет учащимся получить глубокие знания о топонимических легендах и преданиях, их культурном и историческом значении.

Ключевые слова: топонимы, фольклор, география, история, топонимические легенды, топонимические нарративы, евразийское пространство.

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Еуразия кеңістігінің топонимдік фольклорын зерттеу

Аннотация. Жер бетіндегі әрбір халықтың өзінің ұлттық рухани дүниесін көрсететін танымдық белгілері бар. Еуразия кеңістігінде өмір сүріп, келе жатырған халықтардың рухани жан дүниесін танытатын сондай бірегей белгілері олардың аңыздары мен әпсаналары арқылы айқындық табады. Топонимдік фольклорды зерттеу белгілі бір халықтың тілдік дүниетанымын, күнделікті өмірінің ерекшеліктерін зерделеуге мүмкіндік береді. Топонимдік аңыздар мен әпсаналар мәдени мұраның бір бөлігі бола отырып, адамның рухани және материалдық өмірінің барлық аспектілерін, оның даралығы мен ой-санасын бейнелейді. «Еуразия кеңістігінің топонимдік фольклорын зерттеу» мақаласының мақсаты – Еуразия аймағының сан алуан мәдени-географиялық контекстіндегі жер-су атауларымен байланысты топонимдік аңыздар туралы теориялық зерттеулер мен әдістемелерді зерделеу және талдау. Еуразия кеңістігіндегі топонимдік аңыздар мен әпсаналарды зерттеудің әдіснамалық негіздері фольклортану, тарих, мәдениеттану, этнография, этнология, лингвистика және философия сияқты түрлі ғылыми пәндердің теориялық және тұжырымдамалық тәсілдерін қолдануға негізделген. Қорытындылай келе, Еуразия кеңістігіндегі топонимдік баяндауыштарды зерттеу олардың мәдени, тарихи және әлеуметтік құндылығын көрсетіп қана қоймай, халықтар арасындағы мәдени байланыстардың қалыптасуының негізін ашатыны атап өтіледі. Жұмыстың практикалық маңыздылығы ғылыми мақаланың нәтижелерін білім беру мекемелерінде фольклортану, тарих, мәдениеттану, этнография және лингвистика бойынша курстар мен оқу бағдарламаларын әзірлеу үшін пайдалануға болады. Бұл білім алушыларға топонимдік аңыздар мен әпсаналар, олардың мәдени және тарихи маңызы туралы терең білім алуға мүмкіндік береді.

Түйін сөздер: топонимдер, фольклор, география, тарих, топонимикалық аңыздар, топонимикалық әңгімелер, Еуразия кеңістігі.

1. Introduction

The relevance of this article lies in the fact that toponymic legends and narratives are an important part of the cultural heritage of various peoples and regions, reflecting their history, culture, and mythology. However, their study often encounters a number of

theoretical problems, such as methodological approaches, interpretation and digitization of the collected information, as well as issues of preservation and transmission of these legends and traditions to future generations. It is important to develop theoretical approaches to the study of toponymic legends and narratives in order to preserve their value and pass it on to future generations.

The aim of our work is to identify and analyze the key theoretical issues related to the study of toponymic legends and narratives, which will help enhance the level of theoretical knowledge about toponymic folklore, and may contribute to a deeper and more comprehensive study of them.

Toponymic narratives is considered an integral part of the cultural heritage of the Eurasian peoples. It reflects historical events, ethnic processes, and the interaction of different cultures and civilizations. The study of these narratives allows for the reconstruction of historical pasts, an understanding of the evolution of ethno-cultural ties, and the cultural heritage of regions. In the context of globalization and the growing interest in preserving individuality and cultural traditions, the study of toponymic folklore contributes to the preservation and popularization of cultural heritage.

Toponymic folklore plays an important role in shaping the identity of peoples. It serves as a means of transmitting cultural values, norms, and worldviews from generation to generation. The study of legends and myths allows for the identification of the ethno-psychological characteristics of peoples, their perceptions of the world, nature, social relations, and interactions with other ethnic groups.

1. A comparative analysis of toponymic narratives can serve as a basis for the development of interdisciplinary research that brings together folklore, ethnography, culture, and other sciences. In this context, the words of the Russian Historian L.N. Gumilev are significant: «Tales and legends are the keepers of the cultural code of a nation, passed down from generation to generation» (Bobritskikh, 2003: 131-138).

I.V. Erofeeva, who studied the history and traditions of the Kazakh people, wrote: «Myths and legends are the key to understanding the history and culture of our people» (Yerofeyev S, 2001: 75). Moreover, the «UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage» highlights the importance of preserving and studying folklore as a part of the cultural heritage of humanity (Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage).

Russian ethnographer S.A. Tokarev noted that «Folklore is a mirror of the people's soul, reflecting their fears, hopes, and aspirations» (Tokarev, 1982: 107). According to the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan «On Languages in the Republic of Kazakhstan» (Article 4), «The preservation and development of the languages of the Kazakhstan peoples is one of the main tasks of the state cultural policy». The analysis of toponymic texts allows for the determination of mutual influence between languages and the processes of language transformation. In the address of the President of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, to the people of Kazakhstan in 2020, the necessity of strengthening intercultural ties and preserving cultural heritage was emphasized as a key element of national identity and security. This, in turn, contributes to the strengthening of intercultural connections,

the development of cultural tourism, and the promotion of cultural heritage (Address of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev to the People of Kazakhstan, 2020).

2. Methods and materials

2.1 Methods

Toponymic legends and traditions are a rich and fascinating phenomenon that reflects the close relationship between the history, culture, and nature of a particular region. The study of these phenomena in the Eurasian space can shed light on the history and culture of various peoples, as well as their interconnections.

Toponymic research involves the use of various approaches and methods. In our research we used such methods as literature review, data collection and systematization. The literature review is crucial for formulating the main ideas and trends, as well as justifying the theoretical foundation of our study.

2. The historical methodology is based on the works of such authors as Arnold Toynbee and Karl Jaspers, who emphasised the importance of studying historical processes in terms of their influence on cultural and social phenomena. The cultural approach is based on the works of Edward Sepir and Benjamin Wharf (Zvegintsev, 1960: 111-134), who investigated the influence of language on cultural thinking and worldview. The Sepir-Whorf hypothesis of linguistic relativity can be used to analyse the symbolism of toponymic legends. It is based on the works of Claude Lévi-Strauss and Victor Turner, who emphasized the importance of ethnographic methodology. The philosophical methodology is based on the works of Friedrich Nietzsche and Mikhail Bakhtin, who studied the problems of existence and meaning through the prism of cultural phenomena. Philosophical analysis can be used to understand the essence and meaning of toponymic legends and narratives as an expression of the collective consciousness of the Eurasian peoples.

2.2 Materials

The materials for the article were collected from various sources, such as literary works and publications of scientific research. It is important to consider that toponymic legends and narratives can vary in their format and content – ranging from fairy tales and myths to historical accounts and anecdotes.

3. Results and Discussion

The first researcher of ancient Turkic toponymy was Mahmud Kashgari. «Divan-u Lugat-it-Turk» is the only source about the life of the Turks in the 11th century. The toponyms constitute the tribal division of the city, and all the data about them can be found in the works of M. Kashgari (Makanqali, 2011: 115). The role of toponyms, recorded in ancient Turkic monuments, was immense in the history of the formation and development of ancient Turkic states. The Turks settled across a vast territory of the Eurasian continent. Therefore, the toponym of any geographical object allows us to determine the historical territory of the population. The toponyms studied in ancient Turkic monuments played an important role in the research of the ancient Turkic state.

Toponymic narratives and legends have a long history dating back to ancient times. In our study, we examine four research groups divided by the directions of the research:

Research areas	Researches
Historical	Strabo, Herodotus ('Histories'), Ibn Khordadbe ('The Book of Roads and States'), Sebastian Munster ('Cosmographies'), John Speed ('Historical Maps of England').
Geographical	Vladimir Toporov, Alexei Gura ('Slavic Traditional Culture and Mythology'), Sergei Tolstov ('Traces of the Ancient Khorezm Civilisation'), Abdusamad Samadov ('Toponyms of Tajikistan'), George Stewart, Paul Fite, Ewan Carlson.
Methodological	George Ripple ('Etymological Toponymic Dictionary'), Nikolai Trubetsky ('Etymology of Slavic Toponyms'), Claude Levi-Strauss, Mikhail Kustov, Gumilev ('Ancient Russia and the Great Steppe'), John Hale, Yuri Rozhansky, Marina Kuleshova ('Linguistic Aspects of Toponymy').
Thematic	Joseph Campbell, Mircea Eliade, Elias ('The Myth of Eternal Return'), Boris Rybakov, Alexander Afanasyev ('The History of Religious Ideas'), Sergei Averintsev ('Symbols in the Culture of the Ancient World'), Yuri Nechaev, Andrei Zolotarev, S.A. Kaskabasov ('Golden Vein'), A.Sh. Pangereev (Genre Types of Toponymic Folklore), M.I. Igilik ('The History of Religious Ideas'), Zhamankozova A.T., Tusipbekova M.J., Kazhikenova N.K., Tuyakbaev G.A., Kulbarak S.O., Zakirova A.S., Mamysheva M.E.

In the first group, we examine researchers chronologically, dividing them into historical periods. Ancient authors such as Herodotus and Strabo were the first to record toponymic legends in their works. Herodotus frequently mentioned toponyms in his «Histories» and associated them with legends, which allowed for the development of early ideas about the significance of toponyms. In the Middle Ages, Ibn Khordadbiḥ made significant contributions to the study of toponyms. In his «Book of Roads and Kingdoms», Ibn Khordadbiḥ provided detailed descriptions of Islamic toponyms and their legendary stories. During the Renaissance, Sebastian Münster systematically described the world in his «Cosmography», including legends associated with toponyms. In his «Historical Maps of England», John Speed included legends and stories explaining the origins of various geographical names.

The second group consists of researchers categorized by geographical region. European authors such as Vladimir Toporov and Alexey Gura focused on toponymic legends and myths of Eastern European and Slavic peoples. Osarov analyzed rituals related to toponyms in his study of the mythopoetic heritage of Eastern Europe, while Gura explored Slavic toponyms and their associated legends in «Slavic Traditional Culture and Mythology.» Asian authors such as Sergey Tolstov and Abdusamad Samadov concentrated on Central Asia. Tolstov studied the toponyms of Central Asia in «Traces of Ancient Khwarezmian Civilization,» and Samadov examined Tajik toponyms and their legends in «The Toponyms

of Tajikistan.» American researchers such as George Stewart analyzed toponyms in the United States and explained their origins and mythology in detail. Australian and African authors like Paul Fyfe and Ewan Carlson researched legends related to the toponyms of the indigenous peoples of Australia and Africa.

The third group consists of authors divided by research methodology. Etymological studies were presented by George Ripple and Nikolai Trubetskoy. Ripple analyzed the origin of geographical names in the «Etymological Toponymic Dictionary,» while Trubetskoy studied Slavic toponymy in his work «Etymology of Slavic Toponyms.» Ethnographic research was conducted by Claude Lévi-Strauss and Mikhail Kustov. Lévi-Strauss examined mythology and toponymy within the cultural traditions of various peoples. Historical research was represented by Gumilev and John Hale. Gumilev studied historical toponyms and their connection to Eurasian steppe mythology in «Ancient Rus and the Great Steppe.» Linguistic studies were conducted by Yuri Rozhansky and Marina Kuleshova, who explored the linguistic analysis of toponyms in «Linguistic Aspects of Toponymy,» while Kuleshova analyzed the phonetic and morphological features of toponyms.

The fourth group includes authors categorized by the thematic focus of their research. Mythological studies were conducted by Joseph Campbell and Mircea Eliade. In «The Myth of Eternal Return,» Eliade analyzed mythological themes related to geographical names. Legendary studies were represented by Alexander Afanasyev and Boris Rybakov. Afanasyev compiled Russian folk tales in «Halyk's Russian Tales» that are «related to toponyms.»

Religious studies were conducted by Mircea Eliade and Sergey Averintsev. Eliade studied religious ideas and their connection to geographical names in «History of Religious Ideas,» while Averintsev analyzed religious symbols and legends related to toponyms in «Symbols in the Culture of the Ancient World.»

Geographical studies were represented by Yuri Nechaev and Andrey Zolotarev. Nechaev examined the geographical aspect of toponyms, while Zolotarev analyzed geographical names and their meanings. Among domestic authors, works on toponymic legends and narratives were written by S. Igilikova, M.I. Igilik, A.T. Zhamankozova, M.Zh. Tusipbekova, N.K. Kazhikenova, G.A. Tuyakbaev, S.O. Kulbarak, A.S. Zakirova, and M.E. Mamysheva.

Among domestic authors, the works on the topic of toponymic legends and myths have been dedicated by S. Igilikova (Igilikova, Suyerqul, 2018:168-178), A.T. Zhamankozova (Zhamankozova, Tussupbekova, Kazhikenova, 2023: 234-247), Z.A. Ismailova (Ismailova, 2014: 152), G.A. Tuyakbaev (Tuyakbayev, Abasilov, Saryshova, 2022: 76-82), S.O. Kulbarak (Kulbarak, Botabayeva, Kulamanova, 2023: 78) and M.E. Mamysheva (Mamysheva, 2022).

In this regard, we would like to mention the works of Pangereev Abat Shamyuly. In his works, A.Sh. Pangereev studied the relationship between folklore and toponymy. He introduced a new genre called «Toponymic Folklore» into the field of folklore studies. In his article «Toponyms and National Consciousness», the discussion revolves around how geographic names (toponyms) reflect the cultural, historical, and spiritual values of the people. The authors emphasize that toponyms emerging from folklore themes are an essential part of national memory and cultural heritage. They also address the influence of historical events on the formation of place names and their significance in preserving the

history of the people. In the article «Formation of Toponymic Folklore and Genre Features» (Pangereev, Pykhtina, 2021: 142-151), A.Sh. Pangereev and Yu.G. Pyhtina analyze the formation of the toponymic folklore genre and its genre forms. The authors highlight that despite the slow development of toponymy, it is an essential part of folklore, and the toponyms found in folklore works have poetic and cognitive significance. They note that in toponymic legends, despite historical difficulties and external threats, the bravery of the Kazakh people is reflected, showcasing their fidelity to and protection of their land.

Among scholars who have extensively studied folklore, S.A. Kaskabasov holds a special place. The folklore researcher has dedicated numerous works to the study of this genre. Among them, the book «Oyöris» (Qaskabasov, 2009) addresses significant issues in folklore studies. The articles in this book cover the history and theory of the development of folklore. Meanwhile, the work «Zhanazyq» (Qaskabasov, Zhanzhak, 2002: 130), published in 2022, focuses on the study of prose folklore.

The Eurasian space holds a unique historical and cultural significance shaped by various peoples, cultures, and languages over the centuries. Mass migrations, conquests, trade routes, and cultural exchanges have contributed to the emergence and spread of myths and legends, influenced by specific geographical features. For example, grand historical events such as the Silk Road created favorable conditions for the emergence and preservation of legends and stories among diverse peoples and cultures. These myths are often enshrined in the names of rivers, mountains, valleys, and other natural features, becoming an integral part of the cultural uniqueness of the peoples of Eurasia. Legends and myths about geographical features not only explain the origins of place names but also carry deep meanings related to the worldviews and religious beliefs of these peoples.

The study of toponymic folklore began with the earliest ethnographic expeditions and efforts to systematize folk traditions. In the 19th century, researchers started to collect and document local legends and myths, linking them to specific toponyms. These initial works laid the foundation for scientific research in this field.

The core concepts of the research are «toponymic folklore,» «legends,» and «myths.» Therefore, it is deemed appropriate to consider and analyze the development and research status of the categories being studied.

In general, a toponym is a name of a geographical feature that has been officially registered in documents and affirmed through time (such as rivers, deserts, mountains, cities, villages, etc.) (Shuriyeva, A., Kuzembayeva, G., Pangereyev, A., Abisheva, S. & Zhetkizgenova, A 2024: 16-28).

Thus, the analysis of toponymic narratives and legends encompasses a wide range of geographical, methodological, and thematic directions, providing valuable material for further research and understanding of the cultural and historical significance of geographical names.

Considering the above, it can be noted that despite the considerable attention given by domestic and foreign scholars to the study of toponymic narratives and legends in the context of the cultural and historical changes of modern society, this issue has not received adequate focus. Furthermore, the territory of the Eurasian space is unique for the study of toponymic folklore, encompassing many countries with rich and diverse cultural heritage. However, it is essential to emphasize that the problem with studying the toponymic

folklore of the Eurasian space lies in the inadequacy of the analytical systematization of this phenomenon. It is important to take into account the influence of historical, cultural, and ethnographic factors on the formation and preservation of toponymic narratives.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the theoretical study of toponymic legends and narratives in the Eurasian space reveals the intricate relationship between geography, culture, and identity. The study underscores the importance of toponyms as not just labels, but as carriers of cultural memory and social significance. Toponymic legends hold significant linguistic and cultural value, as they allow us to observe not only the process of naming but also the worldview characteristics of the creators of toponymic narratives. As one of the genres of oral folk creativity, they possess several features that reveal their folkloric specificity. First and foremost, they are historical and reflect reality. Toponyms in folkloric texts serve as a reliable source for uncovering the historical past, changes in religious beliefs, and the economic and cultural development of the studied area. At times, they also help to supplement existing information about the region with new facts. As narratives evolve, they reflect the dynamic nature of identity and belonging in an increasingly interconnected world. This exploration of toponymic landscapes serves as a reminder of the richness of human experience embedded in our geography, encouraging further interdisciplinary inquiry into the ways these elements shape and are shaped by the diverse narratives across Eurasia. Future research could enhance our understanding of how these toponyms continue to influence contemporary socio-political contexts and cultural expressions.

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