



## Research Article

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# Nomadic Place Names

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### Abstract

*This paper considers some toponyms of the Republic of Kazakhstan as the cultural, historical, and linguistic heritage of nomads and labels them the nomadic toponymic sphere. An in-depth study of nomadic toponyms assisted in finding new nomadic types of comonyms like “qystaus” and “zhailaus”, which were characterized here as unique time- and space-bound nomadic types of comonyms by means of explanatory research. It also revealed that existing definitions of “qystaus” and “zhailaus” do not correspond to the nature of these nomadic comonyms, which differentiate the toponymic sphere of nomadic culture from that of sedentary culture. A detailed etymological analysis of nomadic place names revealed that they primarily served descriptive and informative purposes. In addition, etymological analysis showed some main mechanisms of naming the geographical objects used by nomads who once lived in Central Asia. Further, these mechanisms served as the base that was used to classify nomadic place names into the five groups.*

**Key words:** toponym, comonym, nomadic toponymic sphere, nomadic culture, place names

## 1. Introduction

A place name is a bridge that communicates a place to the people of the world (Kapur, 2019: 2). From our earliest moments, we become aware of place names. Our relatives and friends live in towns or countries that we learn about as we grow older (Randall, 2001: 3). This fact coincides with Kapur's (2019: 5) statement that the place name bonds people with a place. Place names help locate and differentiate between places (Kapur, 2019: 2). People have been naming places and using place names since ancient times. And without question, place names were part of even the most primitive languages (Randall, 2001: 5). Humans needed to know the location and nature of certain features back then, as they do now (Randall, 2001: 5). And it implies that people used place names for different functions. As Kapur (2019: 2) underlined, a place name performs diverse functions. And, as previously stated, the three main ones are to locate, differentiate, and inform about the nature of a specific location. Functions are the main source of motivation in the process of naming places. And Stewart (1954: 1) observed that all place naming is motivated by the desire to identify a location and thus distinguish it from others. In order to do so, the namer makes use of one of several different mechanisms, e.g., description (Stewart, 1954: 1). And Stewart made the classification of place names

based on the mechanisms for naming the places. His classification considers nine main classes of place names as: 1) descriptive names; 2) possessive names; 3) incident names; 4) commemorative names; 5) euphemistic names; 6) manufactured names; 7) shift names; 8) folk etymologies; and 9) mistake names (Stewart, 1954: 2).

As a linguistic unit that was shaped by the culture and history of a particular nation, place names that belong to the nomadic toponymic sphere accomplish several specific functions. They were used as an oral map, instruction, and guide to teach nomadic people how to live in a vast territory in the heart of the Eurasian continent. They were the stars in the night sky that guided the sailors. In fact, nomadic toponyms are more than just place names. They not only locate and distinguish places, but also contain specific information for nomads. The final function of toponyms is unique to nomadic cultures, and it distinguishes the nomadic toponymic sphere from that of sedentary cultures. As was already noticed by scholars, toponyms contain linguistic, historical, and cultural data. For example, Crljenko (2020: 60) said that when the potential and importance of geographical names (toponyms) in the interpretation of various phenomena (heritage, landscape, social change, language, etc.) are emphasized in scientific publications, toponyms are mostly described and defined in cultural, historical, and linguistic contexts. The cultural, historical, and linguistic value of toponyms allows scholars to study the culture of a specific people through a qualitative study of their place names. And also, a place name contains information on a given community's worldview, on the views of the name giver, and on the characteristics of the geographical feature that were thought to be essential for its marking and evaluation at a certain moment (Crljenko, 2017: 82). As a result, it is obvious that a place name, as a linguistic unit, is a source of information about a particular people's worldview as well as a source of cultural studies. Hence, the geographical names of nomads must be studied as a nomadic toponymic sphere. Below are given the research questions of this paper, which will help to distinguish the nomadic toponymic sphere from the toponymic sphere of the sedentary culture. They are:

1. Are there any differences about the types of place names between nomadic toponymic and traditional toponymic spheres (the sphere of place names that belong to the sedentary culture)?
2. What is the functional peculiarity of the nomadic toponymic sphere?
3. Do nomadic toponyms need a classification that is peculiar to the nomadic toponymic sphere?

## 2. Methodology

This research work is based on the approaches of qualitative research, such as document study, explanatory research, classification, structural word-formational analysis, and etymological analysis. The research data is gathered through qualitative data collection. The maps of the regions of the Republic of Kazakhstan and scientific papers that were devoted to the place names of the regions of the Republic of Kazakhstan, such as monographs of Arshabekov, Taspolatov, Seidimbek, Koshimova are taken here as the source of data.

The process of conducting given research starts with the collection of qualitative data because qualitative data deals with meaning, whereas quantitative data deals with numbers (Dey, 2005: 3). Collecting qualitative data or qualitative documents is one of the four main procedures of collecting the data (Creswell and Creswell, 2018: 262-263), and it implies the act of gathering information from scientific papers and monographs. Data began to become research objects for etymological analysis and explanatory research after assembling all toponyms that could form the base of the nomadic toponymic sphere. In toponomastics these two methods of qualitative research supplement each other. If etymological analysis reveals the meaning of the toponyms, then explanatory research, as Maxwell and Mittapalli (2008: 323) stated, intends to explain the phenomena studied.

Explanatory research builds on descriptive and exploratory studies but goes beyond to discover why things are the way they are observed and described (Riazi, 2016: 114). Explanatory research

supplements etymology, which is defined as the study of the origin of words and of their history and changes in meaning (Schmidt and Richards, 2010: 205). The usage of explanatory research and etymological analysis in order to find information about the etymology and functional aspects of the nomadic toponymic sphere leads to the act of classifying the above-mentioned linguistic units. So it means that the method of classification is another method used in this research. Classification is the method by which a writer groups people, things, or ideas in some principled order, thus classifying and explaining them (Schmidt and Richards, 2010: 364).

Structural word-formational analysis is a method of data analysis that aids in revealing information about the etymology of place names; this method may also aid in considering the motivations for naming place names. This type of analysis helps set the grammatical structure of toponyms and assists in conducting correct scientific etymological analysis (Voronina et al., 2019: 79). Classification and structural word-formational analysis, in combination with all other approaches to qualitative research, serve as a base to classify nomadic toponymic sphere into particular semantic classes. These semantic classes of the nomadic toponymic sphere are based on the cults of nomads.

### 3. Results and Discussions

- 1) According to the first research question, the significant difference between the toponymy of nomadic culture and that of sedentary culture is the fact that the nomadic toponymic sphere has its own specific types of toponyms. They are the names of “qystaus” and “zhailaus”. An explanatory dictionary of the Kazakh language defines “qystau” as a place where shepherds overwinter with their cattle (Zhanuzaqov, 2008: 565), and “zhailau” as a summer pasture (Zhanuzaqov, 2008: 249). Nevertheless, these definitions of the above-mentioned nomadic terms can’t give a full explanation of them. They are overly simplistic in describing the culturally shaped nature of these types of toponyms. In fact, they like comonyms, which are names of villages (Kladnik et al., 2020: 15). In addition, unlike villages in sedentary cultures, nomadic villages are not only location-bound but also season-bound. And if “qystau” is the name of a place where nomadic groups of people settle their village to overwinter, then “zhailau” is a place where they settle their village in the summer. Now it is obvious that “qystau” and “zhailau” are villages of nomadic culture. Therefore, the names of “qystaus” and “zhailaus” are nomadic comonyms. So qystaus and zhailaus are nomadic villages where people do not just overwinter with their domestic livestock or where nomads only visit in the summer. They were nomadic villages where nomads lived with their peculiar nomadic culture. Most nomads were born, grew up, and spent their whole lives in such nomadic villages. They are descended from ancient nomadic Turkic culture. And such village types aided Turkic people in colonizing a large portion of the Eurasian continent. They were the origins of the great warriors of the Turkic Khaganate and the Golden Horde. Qystaus, zhailaus, and all other types of nomadic toponyms are one of the foundations of nomadic culture.

Nomadic comonyms are time- and location-bound place names that assist the nomads of the Hordes and then Khanates to master time and space. Seidimbek stated (1996: 96) that the way nomads formed their material and spiritual treasures and the way they take care of their cattle by mastering the secrets of time and space established their nomadic culture. After discussing the values of nomadic villages and their material treasures, it is appropriate to discuss the Scythians, one of the first nomadic tribes that lived in what is now Central Asia and Siberia. Grousset (1970: 7) underlined that the Scythians had no cities, but what they had were “traveling cities,” which were the wagon trains that accompanied them on their seasonal migrations. On these wagons they piled their women and their wealth: gold ornaments, plaques for harness and equipment, and no doubt carpets too – all wares for which the demand was to bring Scythian art to birth and determine its form and general orientation.

The nomads had a distinctive material culture, composed especially of small, light, and precious

artifacts that could be worn or carried along by themselves or on their horses (Amitai et al., 2014: 4). In fact, their craftsmen were so amazingly skilled that they made clothing from gold. And Golden Men that were found in different places in Kazakhstan are pure evidence of such clothing. Also, Biran noticed that nomadic culture had its own set of organizational tools, the most typical and long-lived among them being decimal military organization (Amitai et al., 2014: 4). As a result, accepting nomads' unique cononyms as pastures or seasonal pastures would be a distortion of the essence of nomadic culture.

Due to the fact that the culture of nomads passed into the past with the pages of history, nowadays we can't face nomadic qystaus and zhailaus on the territory of modern Central Asia. But still, our ancestors' worldview, which left a trace on our brain and influenced our worldview, influenced us to save the names of their specific types of toponyms and the mechanisms to name them. Only in today's Qaragandy region can we find 114 Qystaus and 55 Qystaus in the Atyrau Region. That implies that we are still preserving our ancestors' culture unconsciously.

Our nomad ancestors left after themselves huge amount of geographical names, except names of qystaus and zhailaus. They are names of mountains, rivers, lakes, and wells. Wells played a crucial role in the lives of our ancestors, and they used to name each of them. It was very important to dig wells for our ancestors. They were like stations during their movement from one place to another. Most of zhailaus', qystaus' and wells' names are possessive names. For example, *Khozhaakhmet qystauy* (in English "Khozhaakhmet's qystau"), *Zhylqybai qystauy* (in English "Zhylqybai's qystau"), *Rakhmet qystauy* (in English "Rakhmet's qystau"), *Tilenshi qystauy* (in English "Tilenshi's qystau"), *Baimurat qudygy* (in English "Baimurat's well"), *Qaliquzha qudygy* (in English "Qaliquzha's well"), *Naushabai qudygy* (in English "Naushabai's well") and etc.

The main mechanisms for naming modern qystaus of the Region of Qaragandy are:

1. Possessive names of qystaus: *Aryqbai qystauy*, *Akhmet qystauy*, *Alimbek qystauy*, *Aueskhan qystauy*, *Baitileu qystauy*, *Baiakhmet qystauy*, *Bek qystauy*, *Bizhan qystauy*, *Zhangabai qystauy*, *Zhylqybai qystauy*, *Qozhaakhmet qystauy*, *Qozybek qystauy*, *Maqat qystauy*, *Mausymbek qystauy*, *Moldabai qystauy*, *Musa qystauy*, *Nurzhan qystauy*, *Rakhmet qystauy*, *Toqbergen qystauy*, *Toleppek qystauy*, *Torebai qystauy*, *Tilenshi qystauy*, *Urymbai qystauy*, *Shortanbai qystauy*, *Yntyqybai qystauy*, *Izbasar qystauy*.
2. Names of qystaus derived from other toponyms: *Alakol qystauy* (Alakol is the name of lake which is situated between the district of Urzhar in East Kazakhstan Region and the district Alakol in Almaty Region), *Zhaqsy Qazygurt qystauy* (Qazygurt is the oronym itself, which then became the name of the district and village in Turkestan Region), *Qazaly qystauy* (Qazaly is the name of the district in Qyzylorda Region).
3. Descriptive names of qystaus: *Qoyandy qystauy* (The Kazakh word "qoyan" translates to the English word "rabbit". Therefore, we can assume that this qystau was named "Qoyandy" because the location of qystau is where rabbits reside), *Saryshop qystauy* (The Kazakh word "sary" means "yellow" in English, while the word "shop" means "grass" in English. So we can conclude that this specific toponym is the descriptive one), *Tulkili qystauy* (the kazakh word "tulki" means "fox" in English. And this toponym means that given place is inhabited by foxes).
4. Names of qystaus named after different traditions of nomadic culture: *Baigazy qystauy* ("Baigazy" is Kazakh word it is a kind of present which Kazakh people use to give to someone with good news), *Qonaq qystauy* ("Qonaq" is a Kazakh word, which means in English "a guest". And Kazakh people as all nomads have a special tradition to take care of their guests), *Kokolen qystauy* (the word "olen" which someone can see in the structure of the given toponymy in English can be translated as "a song". For Kazakh people, who have rich folklore the role of song is very important. Our ancestors have a special tradition which is called "Aitys" where "aqyns" in English "bards" use to compite orally in words in the form of songs. All forms of literary masterpieces of Kazakh folklore are mostly given in the form of songs), *Itauyz qystauy* (another name of qystau which can be translated into English as

“the mouth of the dog”). But when trying to analyse the origin of such name a scholar must keep in mind that dog is a special spiece of animals for nomads which was regarded by our ancestors as one of the seven weapons of the “zhigit”. All things and creatures that belong to the seven weapon of the real man in Kazakh “zhigit” are of high impotence among nomads. They are wisdom, gun, eagle, dog and etc. And they are main phenomena, creatures and things which are valuable to every nomad. These four main mechanisms of naming qystaus in Qaragandy region were revealed during the given research.

- 2) The names of geographical objects that are classified here as linguistic units that belong to the nomadic toponymic sphere are descriptive and informative place names. They may contain information that is necessary for nomads during their journey. For instance, mount “*Aiuly*” in the district of Zhanaarqa in the region of Qaragandy. The name of the mount denotes a specific location with bears (Arshabekov, 2020: 162). Such place names perform an informative function, and they were named to prewise nomads and to inform them to take care of their domestic livestock.

The mount “*Borili*” in the district of Zhanaarqa in Qaragandy region performs the same function as the mount “*Aiuly*”. And it means that this place is a location where one can meet wolves (Arshabekov, 2020: 163). The same function of the above-mentioned oronyms is peculiar to the mount “*Zhylandy*” in the district of Zhanaarqa in the Qaragandy region. The name of this oronym indicates that there are lots of snakes in this area. The name of the hill “*Tulkili*” indicates that it is a site where foxes reside. This hill is situated in the Qyzylorda region. These geographical names were named with the names of wild animals that can cause danger to nomads’ domestic livestock. Another group of geographical names that perform an informative function are named after the names of species of nomads’ livestock; for example, the name of the river “*Buzauolgen*” in the Qaragandy region. This name stand from the noun “buzau” in English “calf” and past participle form of the verb “olu” in English “to die” and the whole name in English means that this is the river where once calf died. It is an incident name, and the river was named so because of an incident in which the given river overflowed and flooded calves (Arshabekov, 2020: 149). It warned our ancestors to be careful near this river during the spring.

The river “*Qulanotpes*” in the Qaragandy region gets its name from two Kazakh words: “qulan” (which means “wild horse”) and “otpes” (which means “can’t cross”). And this hydronym means that qulans can’t cross the river. This name was used to warn nomads not to cross the river when moving from one place to another. Generally, species of domestic livestock are connected with nomads’ four main cults. They are: sheep worship, horse worship, camel worship, and ox worship. These four worships of nomadic culture went deeper inside the worldview of nomads, and they formed one of the four main pillars of nomadic culture. Every aspect of our forefathers’ lives is intertwined with them. Kazakh people used to name geographical objects that surround them with the names of species of their domestic livestock; they even used to name their children with the names of their domestic livestock.

So our ancestors used the names of species of their cattle to describe features of some geographical objects. For example, the name of the mail horse in Kazakh meant “big” or “huge” as a part of the toponym. The name of the male horse in Kazakh is “*Aigy*”. For instance, the word “*Aigy*” in the name of the spring “*Aigyrbulaq*” implies in English “big spring”. The word “camel”, which is in Kazakh “*Tuie*” as the component of the geographical name also indicates that the particular geographical object is big or huge. The meaning of the name of the well, “*Tuiequdyq*” in the Qyzylorda region implies that this well is a big one. Another mechanism for naming geographical objects was based on similarities between the view of a geographical object and Kazakh domestic livestock species. The name of the hill “*Ogizmuiz*” is an example of such a name. The hill was given the name “*Ogizmuiz*” because it resembled an ox’s horn. This hill is situated on the western part of Mount Qaratau.

Descriptive usage of names of species of domestic livestock like “*aigy*”, “*tuie*” in the meaning of big and huge can also be noticed in the name of the hill “*Aigyryzhal*” in the district of Tupkarygan. The

onym implies “big cliff” (Koshimova, 2010: 14). The etymology of the toponym “*Aigyrlı qonysy*” also means that the given “qonys” is a big one (Koshimova, 2010: 14).

Another group of geographical names that are related to the cult of species of domestic livestock are also peculiar only to the nomadic toponymic sphere; they are names of geographical objects whose etymology is connected to the different traditions related to the given cult, for example the name of the hill “*Baigetobe*”. The etymology of the given place name means that this place is the one where our ancestors organized “baige” in English, the race on horses. Nomads used to organize different competitions and games with cattle in order to raise the future members of nomadic society.

3) In general, all toponyms of the nomadic toponymic sphere can be classified according to the basic concepts of nomads and nomadic culture cults. They are:

- *Nomadic place names are named after the nomadic tribes.*
- *Names of geographical objects associated with nomadic culture’s cult of the woman.*
- *Nomadic toponyms related to the names of species of domestic livestock.*
- *Nomadic toponyms related to the cult of wild animals and birds.*
- *Nomadic toponyms related to the concepts of “good” and “bad”.*

### 3.1 *Nomadic place names named after nomadic tribes*

Nomadic ways of living life are social phenomena. This kind of life is possible when the members of a nomadic society have unified aims and goals. The only social and political model of giving this kind of opportunity is the system of nomadic tribes (ruys). Nomadic toponyms are one of the most authentic historical records of tribes’ lives and movements, particularly seasonal movement in such a vast area. Nomadic place names named after nomadic tribes are etnotoponyms, and they can be accepted as the source of evidence about tribes’ history, their lives, and their movements. In some cases, tribes to whom particular etnotoponyms may belong may move to another location, but they may have a group of etnotoponyms left in some geographical area named after themselves. Nowadays etnotoponyms of Kazakh even Turkic people scattered all over the Eurasian continent (Seidimbek, 2008: 485).

One of the big nomadic tribes of Kazakh and even Turkic people is called “Argyn”. There are lots of place names whose etymology may be described as if they related to these nomadic tribes in different parts of the Republic of Kazakhstan and even the Eurasian continent. For example, there is a place in the district of Aqzhar in the North Kazakhstan region that is named “*Argyn qonysy*”. Argyns used to live in a specific area of our country during the Kazakh Khanate.

Another place name related to the given nomadic tribe’s name is the oronym “*Arganaty*”. Seidimbek (2008: 491) states that the name derives from the Kazakh words “Argyn” and “ata”. This hypothesis is more credible because the “Argynaty” mountains are located in modern-day Central Kazakhstan, one of the historical locations where argyns lived during the Kazakh Khanate. Also, the name of the lake “*Argynkol*” in the Oral region is one of the hydronyms that belong to the etnotoponyms that relate to argyns. ‘Argyn’ is one of the Turkic nomadic tribes that existed before the period of the Kazakh Khanate, and when khans Kerey and Zhanibek founded the Kazakh Khanate, argyns joined them. So it implies that members of a given tribe could live in different places outside the Kazakh Khanate. And some place names that are related to Argyns outside the territory of the Republic of Kazakhstan can prove it. They are:

- The settlement named “*Argyn*” near the city Tashkent in Uzbekistan.
- The river “*Argyn*” in the district of Qazaq in Azerbayzhan.
- The city “*Argyn*” in the district of Qazaq in Azerbayzhan.
- The group of mounts “*Areguni*” on the western part of the lake Sevan in Armenia. And these are the etnotoponyms of only one nomadic tribe. All tribes of Kazakh people have their own etnotoponyms.

### 3.2 Names of geographical objects related to the cult of woman of nomadic culture

Maiden worship is something special in the Steppe. And you can hardly find such a boundless land where the glorification of female beauty is kept in people's memory by means of legends and fables, but the most important place is in the names of many rivers, lakes, and the area itself, whether it is a mountain valley, steppe plateau, or river bend (Kairbekov, 2012: 73).

Kazakh people show so much respect to their women that they gave beautiful girl's names – Sholpan, Sumbile – to the stars and planets (Kairbekov, 2012: 75). For example, "Sholpan" is the Kazakh name of the planet Venus, and the brightest star in the night sky, Sirius, is called "Sumbile" by the Kazakh people. These are genuine examples that prove how nomadic people who once inhabited a huge area respected their women. Women were always on the same level as men in nomadic society, and their role was always important for every member of such a unique society. The Scythian queen Tomyris was one of the first female rulers who history will never forget. Tomyris was the bravest woman queen and commander who defeated Cyrus the Great, who was also known as King of Persia, King of Media, King of the World, and King of Kings.

Since ancient times, nomadic tribes of Central Asia have named every creature with supernatural power "ana" in Kazakh (in English, "mother"), for example, "Ot ana" means "mother fire," "Zher ana" means "mother land," and so on. Such names suggest that nomads had a special regard for their mothers and females. And this understanding of nomads was the foundation for maiden worship, or the nomadic cult of women. Such a cult eventually became one of the fundamental methods for naming geographical objects. A brief list of such names is shown below:

- The name of the river "Bikesh" (in English, "Lady") in the district of Osakarov in Qaragandy Region.
- The name of the river "Zheti qyz" (in English, "Seven Girls") in the district of Ulytau in Qaragandy Region.
- The name of the spring "Qyza uyz" (in English, "the mouth of a girl") in the district of Ulytau in Qaragandy Region.
- The name of the mountain "Aqqyz" (in English, "white girl") in the district of Zhangaarqa in Qaragandy Region.
- The name of the hill "Kelinshek tobe" (in English, "the hill of the daughter-in-law") in Qyzylorda Region.
- The name of the mount "Kelinshektau" (in English, "the mount of the daughter-in-law") in the district of Sozaq in Turkestan Region.
- The name of the lake "Kelinshek" (in English, "daughter-in-law") in the district of Zaisan in East Kazakhstan Region.

And there are lots of anthrotoponyms in the nomadic toponymic sphere, like the river "Aiagoz", the city "Baikonur", the settlement "Shaueldir", the river "Ile" and etc.

### 3.3 Nomadic toponyms related to the names of species of domestic livestock

The Earth is the mother nurse, and the cattle is the child Earth, according to nomadic Kazakh people. Domestic cattle cults coexist with nomadic culture. They can be accepted as the four main pillars of nomadic life. They are sheep worship, horse worship, camel worship, and ox worship. Such worships or cults have deeper roots, to the very essence of nomadic culture and a nomadic world view. Kazakh people believed that cows were created from water, camels from the Sun, horses from the wind, and sheep from heaven (Kairbekov, 2012: 105). These cults are closely connected with the religion and worldview of nomads. Each of the above-mentioned species of domestic livestock has its own saint spirits who protect them, as nomads believed. And as one of the main pillars of nomads' lives, they also became the essence of another mechanism for naming geographical objects. Place names like the spring "Aigyrbulaq", the hill "Ogizmuiz", the hill "Aigyrzhal", the hill "Baigetobe" are among the

hundreds of place names related to the names of types of cattle in the nomadic toponymic sphere. A short list of nomadic toponyms related to the names of the types of cattle.

- 1) The name of the river “*Qoikol*” in the district of Shet in Qaragandy Region. This hydronym is made up of two words: “*qoi*” (which means “sheep”) and “*kol*” (which means “lake” in English).
- 2) The name of the river “*Taishyq*” in the district of Qarqaraly in Qaragandy Region. This hydronym means “a little foa”. Kazakhs have a unique worldview connected to horses. Horses were special means of transportation for nomads in ancient times. They helped nomads inhabit such a huge territory in the heart of Central Asia. There are lots of toponyms related to horses. They are: the name of the city “*Atbasar*”, the name of the peninsula “*Qaraala aigyr dyn tubegi*”, the name of the settlement “*Aigyrzhal*”, the name of the lake “*Basbaital*”, the name of the qystau “*Alaigyr*”, the hill “*Aigyrzhal*”, the hill “*Baigetobe*”.
- 3) The name of the settlement “*Shopan*” in the district of Shet in Qaragandy Region. “*Shopan*” means “shepherd” in English. Also, we have a saint spirit who, as we believe, protects sheep, and that spirit is Shopan Ata. Legends state that Shopan Ata was one of the followers of Khodzha Akhmed Yassawi.
- 4) The name of the settlement “*Qoitas*” in the district of Shet in Qaragandy Region. The given toponym stands from two words: “*qoi*” (in English, “sheep”) and “*tas*” (in English, “stone”).
- 5) The name of the lake “*Basbaital*” in the district of Ulytau in Qaragandy Region.
- 6) The name of the qystau “*Ogiztau*” in the district of Buqar Zhyrau in Qaragandy Region.
- 7) The name of the hill “*Aigyrbaital*” in Qyzylorda Region.
- 8) The name of qystau “*Alaigyr*” in the district of Qazaly in Qyzylorda Region.
- 9) The name of the qystau “*Ogizboget*” in Qyzylorda Region.
- 10) The name of the city “*Atbasar*” in the district of Atbasar in Aqmola Region.

#### 3.4 Nomadic toponyms related to the cult of wild animals and birds

Since the beginning of time, nomads have revered the natural environment. They believed that certain wild animals and birds, like wolves, eagles, snakes, and others, have a spirit that protects them. They were nomads who worshipped these wild animals as saintly spirits while recognizing that they could also cause them considerable pain and trouble. Kazakhs, for example, wore wolf fangs as amulets and regarded the wolf as their mother.

Nomads were cognizant of the fact that the wolf is a wild animal and the principal predator of cattle. When naming diverse geographical features, Kazakhs relied mostly on the descriptive and informative capabilities of toponyms. The use of the word “wolf” in place names is intended to warn nomads of the need for vigilance in that particular region.

A prime example of such toponyms is the ridge “*Borioinak*” in the region of Qyzylorda. One of the hypotheses on the etymological origin of this toponym suggests that this hill is home to wild wolves, who occasionally make frightening nighttime sounds. The vast terrain in which our ancestors formerly resided was teeming with several wolf species. Kazakhs distinguished them based on their weight and size, labeling some as “*qasqyr*” and others as “*bori*” the English equivalent of these two terms is ‘wolf’. As a result of their size, qarsaqs are highly hazardous to sheep and pose a significant threat to nomads’ cattle. And the toponym “*Qarsaqty*” in the territory of Turkestan serves the same descriptive and informational role as “*Borioinaq*”. “*Qarsaqty*” is a location on the western outskirts of Turkestan where one can encounter a large number of qarsaqs wild animals, such as wolves.

In some circumstances, though, nomadic Turkic people revered the wolf as their mother and named particular geographical features after them. The toponym “*Qazygurt*” is an excellent example of this. If we examine the etymology of the given toponym in depth, then it is evident that this toponym derives from two distinct words in two distinct Turkish dialects. The first component is the Kazakh term “*khas*”, and the second portion is the Turkish word “*kurt*”. The Kazakh term “*khas*”

translates to “authentic, genuine” in English, while the Turkish word “kurt” means “wolf” in English. We can therefore conclude that the meaning of this toponym is “genuine wolf or real wolf”. The fact that this mountain is situated in a region regarded as the historical homeland of modern-day Turks is another element that lends credence to such a hypothesis. Also, there are numerous toponyms that demonstrate the close relationship between Turkic peoples; they include the name of the city *Turkestan* and the place known as *Turkibasi*.

Snakes are another type of wild animal that lived in Central Asia and the region where our nomadic forefathers lived. Nomads understood that this wild animal was extremely dangerous not only to their livestock but also to themselves, and they maintained certain traditions regarding their relationship with snakes. Nomads referred to snakes as the dragons of the Steppe. Nomads believed that snakes were not only wild animals but also possessors of supernatural power. Most nomads, despite knowing that snakes are extremely dangerous, did not kill them when they encountered them near their home or village. Instead, they would pour a white liquid over the snake’s head. And they believed that the particular snake would never return. Kazakhs have toponyms such as “*Zhilandibulq*”, “*Zhilandi*”, and “*Zhilan ordasi*”, and etc. These toponyms contain the Kazakh word “*zhilan*”, which translates to “snake”. The short list of nomadic toponyms related to the cult of wild animals and birds.

- 1) The name of the river “*Ulken Qundyzydy*” in the district of Osakarov in Qaragandy Region.
- 2) The name of the lake “*Qargaly*” in the district of Osakarov in Qaragandy Region.
- 3) The name of the settlement “*Zhylandy*” in the district of Shet in Qaragandy Region.
- 4) The name of the qystau “*Qoiandy*” in the district of Ulytau in Qaragandy Region. It is a descriptive toponym and means that in particular location where one can face some rabbits.
- 5) The name of the mountain “*Aiuly*” in the district of Zhangaarqa in Qaragandy Region. “*Aiuly*” is a Kazakh word, and it is an adjective form of the noun “*aiu*” (in English, “bear”). As an adjective, this toponym means that a particular mount was inhabited by bears.
- 6) The name of the mount “*Borili*” in the district of Zhangaarqa in Qaragandy Region.
- 7) The name of the mountain “*Zhylandy*” in the district of Zhangaarqa in Qaragandy Region. This oronym means that the given mount is the place where snakes live.
- 8) The name of the hill “*Tulkili*” in Qyzylorda Region. *Tulki* is a Kazakh word that translates to “fox.” As a name of the hill, it means that one can meet foxes there.

### 3.5 Nomadic toponyms related to the concepts of “good” and “bad”

This is the last group of toponyms in the nomadic toponymic sphere. All toponyms that are classified as nomadic toponyms related to the concepts of “good” and “bad” perform a descriptive and informative function. As previously mentioned, all toponyms that belong to the nomadic culture were used to guide nomads in the huge territory. All nomadic toponyms served as maps for nomads. In the process of moving from one place to another, seasonal nomads tried to search for a better place for their cattle and themselves. And one of the pure evidences of such an act, which was done by nomads, are place names that contain the Kazakh words “*zhaqsy*” (in English, “good”) and “*zhaman*” (in English, “bad”). Kazakhs simply used to give such names to the geographical objects in order to clarify that particular place is comfortable or uncomfortable to make it their qystaus and zhailaus.

Nomads would always seek out territory that was suitable for their livestock because livestock was essential to the nomads’ way of life. A concise list of nomadic toponyms associated with the notions “good” and “bad”.

- 1) The name of the lake “*Zhaqsyang*” in the district of Zhambyl in the North Kazakhstan Region. The word “*zhaqsyang*” means “good animal” in English.
- 2) The name of the settlement “*Zhaqsyat*” in the city of Ekibastuz in Pavlodar Region. The word “*Zhaqsyat*” means “good horse” in English.
- 3) The name of the qystau “*Zhaqsyqum*” in the district of Zaisan in the East Kazakhstan Region.

- The word “zhaqsyqum” means “good sand” in English.
- 4) The name of the mountains “Zhaqsy Abraly” in the city of Semei in the East Kazakhstan Region.
  - 5) The name of the mountain “Zhaqsy Arganaty” in the district of Tarbagatai in the East Kazakhstan Region.
  - 6) The name of the hill “Zhaqsy Zhalgyztau” in the district of Aiyrtau in the North Kazakhstan Region.
  - 7) The name of the mount “Zhaqsy Sarytau” in the district of Baianauyl in Pavlodar Region.
  - 8) The name of the mountain “Zhaqsy Aiyrtau” in the district of Zhangaarqa in Qaragandy Region.
  - 9) The name of the lake “Zhamantuz” in the district of Zhangaarqa in Qaragandy Region. The word “zhamantuz” means “bad salt” in English.
  - 10) The name of the lake “Zhamankol” in the district of Aqkol in Aqmola Region. The word “zhamankol” means “bad lake” in English.
  - 11) The name of the lake “Zhaman Aqkol” in the district of Zhangel'din in Qostanai Region.
  - 12) The name of the lake “Zhaman Alakol” in the district of Taran in Qostanai Region.

#### 4. Conclusion

Nomads created a nomadic toponymic sphere unique to their nomadic culture. The existence of nomadic toponymic terms such as “qystau” and “zhailau,” as well as the nomadic worldview that formulated nomadic mechanisms of naming geographical objects, which were classified here as the groups of the nomadic toponymic sphere, are clear indications of the uniqueness of the nomadic toponymic sphere. These facts allow us to distinguish the toponymic sphere of nomadic cultures from that of sedentary cultures. Nomadic toponymic terms such as “qystaus” and “zhailaus” are regarded as nomadic comonyms in this article. Their distinct role in nomadic culture as time- and space-bound nomad settlements is also clarified. The groups of nomadic toponymic spheres that are analyzed here may demonstrate the values and pillars of nomadic culture.

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