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THE SETTLEMENT AREA OF THE OGHUZ AND THEIR TOPONYMS

Abstract

Introduction. Taking into account the place names of certain tribes and clans, as well as the history of the formation of historical toponyms, is considered one of the relevant topics in studying the issues of a people's ethnic history. Since toponymic named are connested with several disciplines such as history, geography, literature, and folklore, conducting a comprehensive study will undoubtedly yield valuable results. The relevance of this research is determined by the need to identify the contribution of the Oghuz to the ethnic processes of Eurasia and to reconsider historical toponyms from a new perspective. *Aim and Objectives.* The main aim of the research is to determine the historical and geographical range of Oghuz migrations and to reveal the historical, ethnolinguistic meaning of related geographical names. The objectives include analyzing the origins of toponyms, identifying regional features, and evaluating them in the context of ethnic history. *Results.* The analysis systematized the Oghuz settlement areas. It was found that many geographical named have preserved the ethnocultural influence of the Oghuz. Historical layers of toponyms shed light on the political and cultural connections of the Oghuz. *Conclusion.* The materials discussed provide a deeper understanding of the Oghuz ethnic history. Place names, as part of historical memory, reflect the shared heritage of the Turkic peoples and serve as an important source for future ethnohistorical research.

Keywords: toponyms, legends, city names, Zhanakent, Barshynkent, Kumkent, Oghuz cities and settlements, ethnic history.

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ОҒЫЗДАРДЫҢ ОРНАЛАСУ АРЕАЛЫ ЖӘНЕ ЖЕР-СУ АТАУЛАРЫ

Аңдатпа

Кіріспе. Белгілі бір ру-тайпалардың мекен еткен жер-су атауларын, тарихи топонимдердің қалыптасу тарихын халықтың этникалық тарихы мәселесін зерттеуде басшылыққа алу өзекті тақырыптардың қатарынан саналады. Топонимикалық атаулар тарих, география, әдебиет, фольклор тәрізді бірнеше ғылым саласымен байланысты болғандықтан да кешенді зерттеу жүргізу құнды нәтиже берері сөзсіз. Зерттеудің өзектілігі – оғыздардың Еуразиядағы этникалық процестерге қосқан үлесін айқындау және тарихи топонимдерді жаңа қырынан зерделеу қажеттілігімен айқындалады. *Зерттеудің мақсаты мен міндеттері.* Оғыз тайпаларының көші-қон ареалын тарихи-географиялық тұрғыдан анықтау және сол кеңістікте сақталған жер-су атауларының тарихи, этнолингвистикалық мазмұнын ашу. *Міндеттері:* тарихи деректерді жүйелеу негізінде оғыздарға қатысты топонимдердің шығу тегін талдау, этникалық тарих контекстінде бағалау. Осыған байланысты мақалада оғыздардың мекен еткен территориялары тарихи-жазба деректермен негізделі отырып, фольклорлық деректер арқылы қала атауларына талдаулар жасалады. *Нәтижелер.* Жүргізілген талдау нәтижесінде оғыздардың орналасу аймақтары жүйеленді. Көптеген жер-су атаулары оғыздардың этномәдени ықпалын сақтап қалғаны анықталды. Сонымен қатар, топонимдердің тарихи қабаттары арқылы оғыздардың саяси және мәдени байланыстары айқындалды. *Қорытынды.* Мақалада қарастырылған материалдар оғыздардың этникалық тарихын терең түсінуге мүмкіндік береді. Жер-су атаулары тарихи жадының бір бөлігі ретінде түркі халықтарының ортақ мұрасын танытады және болашақтағы этнотарихи зерттеулер үшін маңызды дереккөз болып табылады.

Кілт сөздер: топонимдер, аңыздар, қала атаулары, Жаңақент, Баршынкент, Құмкент, оғыз қалалары мен мекендері, этникалық тарих.

Алғыс айту. Мақала Қазақстан Республикасы Ғылым және жоғары білім министрлігінің №АР23488984 «Қазақ халқының этникалық территориясының қалыптасу аспектісіндегі ортағасырлық топонимика» атты ғылыми-зерттеу жобасы аясында дайындалды.

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АРЕАЛ РАССЕЛЕНИЯ ОГУЗОВ И ТОПОНИМЫ

Аннотация

Введение. Принятие во внимание названий мест проживания определенных родоплеменных объединений и истории формирования исторических топонимов при исследовании проблем этнической истории народа относится к числу актуальных тем.

Топонимические названия связаны с такими науками, как история, география, литература, фольклор, поэтому проведение комплексного исследования, безусловно, даст ценные результаты. Актуальность исследования определяется необходимостью нового осмысления вклада огузов в этнические процессы Евразии и переосмысления исторических топонимов с новых позиций. *Цель и задачи.* Основная цель исследования – определить ареал миграций огузских племён в историко-географическом аспекте и раскрыть историческое и этнолингвистическое содержание географических названий, связанных с ними. Задачи включают систематизацию исторических данных, анализ происхождения топонимов, выявление региональных особенностей и их оценку в контексте этнической истории. *Результаты.* В ходе анализа были систематизированы территории расселения огузов. Установлено, что многие географические названия сохранили огузское этнокультурное влияние. Через исторические пласты топонимов выявлены политические и культурные связи огузов. *Заключение.* Представленные материалы позволяют глубже понять этническую историю огузов. Географические названия, как часть исторической памяти, демонстрируют общее наследие тюркских народов и служат важным источником для последующих этноисторических исследований.

Ключевые слова: топонимы, легенды, названия городов, Жанкент, Баршынкент, Кумкент, огузские города и поселения, этническая история.

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Introduction

The study of medieval Turkic peoples' ethnic history requires the use of diverse sources, among which toponymic materials occupy a special place. Toponyms not only represent geographical markers but also serve as cultural and historical evidence of past human activity. In particular, the settlement areas of the Oghuz tribes and the place names associated with them constitute valuable sources for reconstructing historical and ethnogenetic processes. These toponyms preserve layers of ethnocultural memory, offering insights into the movement, interaction, and transformation of communities over time. Moreover, they provide an important reflection of the spatial dimensions of nomadic and semi-nomadic lifestyles, thereby linking material culture, social practices, and territorial identity.

At present, the study of historical place names of medieval towns and settlements on the territory of Kazakhstan requires not only a linguistic approach but also ethno-ontological and ethno-historical perspectives. Toponyms such as Zhankent, Barshynkent, Kumkent, Ekioghuz, Sutkent, Karnak, Sygnak, Zhent, Shauldir, Bayandy, and Darku illustrate the wide settlement area of the Oghuz tribes and their involvement in political and economic life. Analyzing the historical information preserved in these named provides deeper insights in to the nature of ethnic processes across the Eurasian space.

Since place names are directly connected with the territories inhabited by human communities, it is not surprising that their origins often conceal traces of historical events. Such toponyms may be associated with the names of particular clans and tribes, leaders or rulers, as well as collective symbols and battle cries. In the case of Kazakh history, it is indeed true that a considerable number of such historical references have been preserved within oral literary traditions. It is natural that such information is reflected in epic legends, genealogical narratives, and heroic epics, often embedded in hidden yet genuine historical references. Nevertheless, the task of the historian is to extract the relevant data necessary for scholarly analysis. From this perspective, the legendary accounts connected with the names of Oghuz tribes, as well as the toponyms of settlements and cities across the Great Steppe inhabited by the Oghuz, can serve as valuable sources for research.

Materials and Methods

In the course of this research, a wide range of sources was examined in a comprehensive manner. The study relied on medieval written records, geographical descriptions, and genealogical legends. Comparative analysis was conducted on toponymic data found in the works of Mahmud al-Kashgari's *Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk*, al-Idrisi, al-Mas'udi, and Ibn Hawqal. Furthermore the results of archeological investigations and historical maps were extensively utilized.

For the collection of toponymic material, the results of field studies conducted along the Syr Darya, the Aral region, Turkistan and Mangystau areas, as well as in medieval Oghuz settlements and cities such as Zhanakent, Barshynkent, and Kumkent, were taken into account. Reports of archeological expeditions carried out in these areas, as well as archeological maps and schematic diagrams, were also examined.

Methodologically, the study was based on an interdisciplinary approach. By applying the historical-comparative method of analysis, the transformations of toponyms across various historical periods were examined, thereby establishing their correlation with the ethnic composition of the respective population. Ethnolinguistic analysis focused on the root structure and semantics of place names, while their etymology was compared with legends and oral narratives preserved in collective memory. By employing the method of integrating archaeological data, material culture findings from medieval settlements were correlated with historical toponyms. Using the cartographic method, medieval and archeological maps were examined to illustrate the settlement areas of the Oghuz. In addition, the toponymic analysis method was applied to identify the origins, semantics, and structural features of place names.

This set of comprehensive methods makes it possible to gain a deeper understanding of the historical dynamics of place names and their significance in the formation of the Oghuz ethnos.

Discussion

The sources on the history of the Oghuz date back to the early medieval period. Arab-Persian geographers and historians described the regions inhabited by the Oghuz tribes and recorded numerous place names. In his seminal work *Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk*, Mahmud al-Kashgari provides detailed accounts of the names, settlements, and ethnic composition of the Oghuz tribes. In the works of authors such as al-Mas'udi, al-Idrisi, and Ibn Hawqal, references are made to Oghuz settlements and towns located along the Syr Darya, in the Aral Sea region, and in adjacent territories.

Among the studies conducted during the Soviet period, the works of V.V. Barthold hold particular significance. He not only examined the political history of the Oghuz-Kypchak era but also proposed original conclusions regarding the history of cities and toponymy. S.P. Tolstov, through archaeological expeditions in Khorezm and the lower Syr Darya region, identified cultural layers associated with the Oghuz and linked historical toponyms with archaeological evidence.

In recent years, new archaeological and ethnographic investigations have further enriched this field of study. In particular, S.Azhigali, by examining the historical and cultural landscape of medieval fortifications, burial mounds, and settlements in the Kazakh steppe, paid special attention to their connection with ethnic history. His research contributed to a deeper understanding of the stratigraphy and historical context of toponyms. During archaeological expeditions led by M.Eleuov, material evidence related to toponyms of the Syr Darya and Kyzylorda regions was identified and compared with historical legends and local ethnographic data. As a result of these studies, earlier findings were supplemented with new materials, providing an opportunity to reinterpret the historical presence of the Oghuz in this geographical space.

In international scholarship, the works of P.Golden, D.Christian, D.Sinor, and others have examined the migration, ethnogenesis, and role of the Oghuz within the broader context of Eurasian history. The comparative data and conclusions presented in these studies serve to complement and enrich domestic research.

The current historiographical base constitutes a broad interdisciplinary field of research that integrated archaeology, ethnography, historical linguistics, and written sources. Such recent investigations have revealed new dimensions of the topic and have provided fresh impetus for the comprehensive study of Oghuz toponymy and ethnic history.

Research Results

Kazakh history originates in antiquity, beginning with the Saka and Hun periods, continuing through the early Middle Ages with the history of Turkic peoples and khaganates, and further developing into the history of medieval states. An integral part of this historical continuum is directly connected with numerous ethnic formations, including the Oghuz. The Oghuz tribes, which left a significant imprint on the ethnogenesis of many peoples, inhabited the territory of the Great Steppe and established a powerful state of their own.

Historical events had a significant impact on the territorial shifts of the Oghuz. As a result of well-documented historical developments – specifically, the weakening of the Western Turkic and Turgesh khaganates, the internal conflict and power struggles among their constituent tribes, and the subsequent consolidation of the Karluk Khaganate's rule – the Oghuz, who had previously inhabited the territory of Western Zhetysu, extended their control over the middle and lower reaches of the Syr Darya as well as the Aral region. By the end of the ninth century, Oghuz leaders who had gained political dominance in the northern Aral region allied themselves with the Khazars to deliver a new blow against the Pechenegs, ultimately seizing the territory between the Volga and Ural rivers.

In the tenth century, the city of Zhankent (also known as Yangikent or New Guziaz) became the capital of the Oghuz state. Situated at the intersection of major caravan routes connecting Europe and Asia, Zhanakent served as a vital hub linking trade routes to the lands of the Kimaks, Khwarazm, and Transoxiana. In 965, the Oghuz ruler formed a political alliance with Prince Sviatoslav of Kiev, decisively defeating the Khazars and bringing about the collapse of the Khazar Khaganate. This event further strengthened the political power of the Oghuz state. By the end of the tenth century, Oghuz yabghuz, in alliance with the Kievan princes, inflicted a crushing defeat on the Volga Bulgars. However, the internal political circumstances within the Oghuz state during the 11th century led to its weakening, a situation that was effectively exploited by the Seljuks in the south. Following the death of the Oghuz ruler Shahmalik at the hands of the Seljuks, internal strife intensified, and subsequent attacks by Kipchak tribes advancing from the northeast brought about the final collapse of the state. As a result, part of the Oghuz migrated westward under Kipchak pressure toward Asia Minor and Eastern Europe, while others merged with the Karakhanids in Transoxiana, the Seljuks of Khorasan, and the Kipchak tribes of the Dasht-i Kipchak. Those Oghuz tribes that remained in the Great Steppe played a significant role in the later ethnogenesis of the Kazakh tribal confederation.

Oghuz Settlements

At this point, turning to the historical records and scholarly research concerning the settlements of the Oghuz, we will examine the towns and localities they once inhabited or migrated through, and provide an analysis of the etymology of some of their names.

Historical sources and archaeological evidence indicate that the Oghuz tribes occupied a wide geographical area, leaving behind a network of settlements, both permanent and seasonal, which played a crucial role in their socio-political and economic life. These settlements, often located along river valleys and caravan routes, reflect the transitional character of the Oghuz between a nomadic-pastoral and semi-urbanized lifestyle.

According to Abulgazi, the earliest Oghuz settlements were located around the Issyk-Kul region and the Chu valley. To cite precisely: “The eastern boundary of the Oghuz lands was Issyk-Kul and Almalyk; to the south – Sayram, Mount Kazyghurt, Mount Karashyk; to the north (their ‘pole star’) – Uluktagh and Kishiktagh, known for its copper deposits; to the west – the lower reaches of the Syr River, Yangikent, and the Karakum. In these lands they dwelled for four to five thousand years, and from whichever clan was the largest, they raised a ruler” [1, p. 21].

With the consolidation of Karluk authority in Zhetysu, the Oghuz tribes initiated a large-scale westward migration. Historical accounts indicate that during the reign of al-Mahdi, certain Oghuz groups had already crossed into Transoxiana, seeking new pastures and political alliances [2, p. 167]. By the tenth century, written sources clearly demonstrate that the demographic and political center of the Oghuz had shifted from their earlier strongholds in the Zhetysu and Issyk-Kul regions to the

vicinity of the Aral Sea and the middle and lower reaches of the Syr Darya. This relocation was not merely a geographical shift but reflected deeper processes of ethnic consolidation, interaction with neighboring peoples, and adaptation to new ecological and political environments. The Oghuz migration, therefore, represents a crucial stage in the transformation of the Great Steppe's ethno-political landscape, setting the stage for their later state-building activities and their prominent role in Eurasian history.

By the tenth century, the name Oghuz had become firmly associated with the vast territory stretching from present-day northern Turkmenistan to southwestern Kazakhstan. This region came to be known in Arabic and Persian sources as the “Steppe of the Oghuz” (Mufāzat al-Oghuziyya). The ethnonym had by then acquired such widespread usage that it served as a collective designation for all the nomadic tribes inhabiting the areas surrounding the Aral Sea. Consequently, the tribal groups settled between the Aral Sea and the eastern shores of the Caspian were commonly referred to by eastern authors under the general appellation of Oghuz.

Eastern historical sources frequently record the names of tribes that formed part of the Oghuz confederation. Some of these tribal names have been preserved to the present day, both among Turkmen clans and in the toponyms of Kazakhstan. As the Oghuz migrated westward from Zhetysu toward the Syr Darya basin, they incorporated segments of the indigenous population into their union. By the eleventh century, these processes had already led to the consolidation of the Oghuz as a more cohesive and unified ethnos.

Narrative sources indicate that during the 10th century the Oghuz occupied and migrated across a vast territory stretching along the rivers Yrgyz, Ural (Zhayyq), Zhem, Oyil, and Sagyz, as well as around Lake Aralsor and the Aral Sea. Their settlement area further extended eastward toward the Chu and Ili rivers and the Talas Alatau mountain range, covering a long and dispersed expanse. Within these regions, the Oghuz constructed relatively small fortified strongholds, such as Darku and Daranda, which served as protective refuges in times of external threat.

Settlements such as Sauran, Sygnak, Zhanakent, Zhent, and Zhuwara, as well as the Mangystau region, constituted one of the important centers of Oghuz urban culture. This is further evidenced by the presence of urban settlements such as Zhezdi and Kyzkala, located to the north and northeast of the locality known as Shetpe in Mangystau region, as well as medieval fortified sites such as Ashyqtaypaq. Additionally, fortification monuments dating back to the Oghuz period, including Baylama, Karlybas, Dagar, Kertti, Sygyndy, and Shömishtiköl-2, have also been identified. According to al-Khusayni's account, alongside the Kipchaks in Mangystau, one of the principal tribes of the Mangyshlak Oghuz – the Yazghur (Yazir) tribe – was also settled in this region [3, p. 61].

From the foregoing, it becomes evident that the Oghuz State was established and endured as a distinct political entity for several centuries, with its primary territory encompassing the middle and lower reaches of the Syr Darya, as well as the regions surrounding Aral and Caspian Seas. Furthermore, the Syr Darya valley, which later became a stronghold vigilantly defended by the Kazakh Khanate from external powers, was already densely populated with cities once inhabited and governed by the Oghuz. This also indicates that the historical territorial continuity between the Oghuz and the later Kazakh people was never fully disrupted. In other words, although the Oghuz at times departed from these regions due to various historical circumstances, a portion of their tribes remained in the territory of present-day Kazakhstan, gradually assimilating into the local populations that later formed part of subsequent states [4; 5].

As noted above, the cities located in the northern part of the Syr Darya and within the territory known as the “Güz steppe” (in Arabic sources, Oghuz) [6] between the Aral and Caspian Seas – such as Arkök, Ak-korğan, Barshynkent, Üzgent, Syghnak, and Sawran – later occupied a significant place in the political and economic life of the Kazakh state during the 15th-16th centuries. Meanwhile, the city of Turkistan (Yassy) in the southern region rose to the status of a capital. From early times, cities such as Syğanaq and Qumqala served as major trade centers, strategically situated at the crossroads of caravan routes, and thus retained their former importance well into later centuries.

The territorial scope of the Oghuz becomes clearer when examining historical data. The settlement of Oghuz tribes in the 10th-11th centuries is reflected in the historical-geographical accounts of al-Istakhri's *Kitab Rujar* [2, p. 58]. From these records, it can be inferred that the Oghuz tribes occupied the steppe zones of Kazakhstan, ranging from the southern Balkhash region to the lower reaches of the Volga River. In the studying the ethnic and cultural connection of tribes inhabiting the western regions of medieval Kazakhstan with neighboring areas, historian E.M. Uzhkenov also emphasizes that the territorial distribution and migration routes of the Oghuz can be determined with considerable precision [7]. Drawing on the account in *Kitab Rujar*, the author states: "The Oghuz tribes inhabited the steppe regions of Kazakhstan, stretching from the southern shores of Lake Balkhash to the lower reaches of the Volga. Their migratory routes included the banks of the Yrgyz, Ural, Emba, and Aralsor. The Oghuz also settled around the Ural region, in the Syr Darya valley, at the foothills of the Karatau Mountains, and along the Chu, Talas, and Ili rivers. Of course, it cannot be said that the Oghuz constituted the predominant majority of the population across all of these vast territories". In this way, the territorial boundaries of the Oghuz tribes are outlined [7, p. 33].

In the 10th century, a segment of the Oghuz tribes roamed along the Chu River and the Talas Alatau, establishing their seasonal pastures in these areas. The tribes inhabiting this region were noted for their bravery and independence. During the same period, Oghuz groups also settled along the middle reaches of the Syr Darya and at the foothills of the Karatau Mountains. The presence of the Oghuz in the middle course of the Syr Darya is further corroborated by other Arabic-language sources dating from the 10th century. In the work of Ibn Hawqal, it is noted that the Oghuz lived in the steppe region where the Chach River interested with the frontier of Sawran. Information concerning the settlement of the Oghuz in this Syr Darya region is also found in the Persian version of al-Istakhri's work: "When the (Chach River) passes the boundaries of Sawran, in the locality of Daruye, there are the dwellings of the Ghuz (Oghuz)" [6, p. 36].

The Oghuz nomads also penetrated the left bank of the Syr Darya. This is mentioned in the aforementioned work of al-Istakhri, where it is stated that the city of **Sutkent** was regarded as a frontier outpost between the nomadic Turk-Oghuz and *Māwarā' al-Nahr*. In the 10th-11th centuries, **Sutkent** was incorporated into the Farab district. A group of Oghuz tribes inhabited the Syr Darya region between Farab and **Kendjīd**. The **Kendjīd** area was situated along the middle course of the Arys River, with its main city being Subakent [6, p. 39].

The historical and geographical materials under consideration make it possible to ascertain that the Oghuz were settled in the foothills of the Karatau, in the areas of Buguni, Shayan, and along the Arys River up to the vicinity of Shymkent. The southern range of the Oghuz migratory territory extended from Shauldir to the eastern limits of the Alakol Sands.

Another part of the Oghuz in the 10th century lived in the Keles steppe, as well as in the Angren and Chirchik valleys and in the Ogem highlands. In these regions, the Oghuz coexisted with the Karluks and other Turkic-speaking groups. The Oghuz tribes were settled not only along the middle reaches of the Syr Darya River but also in its lower course, where their cities of Zhand, Yangikent, and Khora were located.

In addition, during this period, as al-Mas'udi noted, the main part of the Oghuz tribes roamed the steppe lands between the Aral and Caspian Seas [8]. The nomadic Oghuz and their fortified headquarters stretched westward from the Aral. In 10th-century geographical atlases, the Oghuz were depicted as settled along the northern and eastern shores of the Caspian Sea.

In ancient maps, a mountain called Siyahkuh is depicted in the northern Caspian region. In *Hudud al-'Alam*, it is mentioned that "Turkic groups of the Oghuz" were settled in Siyahkuh. The Oghuz tribes settled in Siyahkuh Mountain are also represented on Idrisi's map. Some researchers identify Siyahkuh with the Mangyshlak (Mangystau) Peninsula. According to Istakhri's map and the testimony of Ibn Rustah, in the 10th century Siyahkuh denoted not only stony semi-desert lands of Mangyshlak, but also the steep escarpments of the Ustyurt Plateau. In the 10th century, the western frontier settlements and fortresses of the Oghuz extended as far as the Southern Urals and the Lower Volga. The Oghuz roamed along the Irgiz River, at the foot of the Mughalzhar Mountains, and on the banks of the Emba, Ural, and Aralsor.

In Hudud al-‘Alam, it is noted that the Oghuz were settled up to the Khazar Sea (Caspian) and northwards as far as the Volga (Attil). The source states: “The eastern territory of the Oghuz borders the Oghuz steppe and the cities of Mawarannahr, while its southern part is likewise bounded by certain sections of this Oghuz steppe. On the other side, this land is bordered by the Khazar Sea, and to the south and north lies the River Attil (Volga)” [9, p. 37].

Thus, unable to withstand the pressure of the Kipchaks, a number of Oghuz clans and tribes migrated from the territory of present-day Kazakhstan to Eastern Europe and Asia Minor, while another part entered the domains of the Karakhanids in Mawarannahr and the Seljuks in Khurasan, and yet another portion assimilated with the Kipchak tribes of the Dasht-I Kipchak. In this way, the Oghuz contributed to the ethnogenesis of the modern Turkic peoples, whose primary homeland is directly connected with the land of Kazakhstan [10, p. 156]. These facts allow us to highlight the significant role of the Oghuz confederation in the history of the Kazakh people.

In the medieval work Hudud al-‘Alam min al-Mashriq ila al-Maghrib, we find valuable information regarding the settlement areas of the Oghuz, as well as the towns and wintering sites they established. The source indicates that the Oghuz inhabited the Syr Darya region, the Aral area, as well as the Kara-Kum and Kyzyl-Kum deserts. From the manuscript, it becomes evident that the chronicler himself traveled across this territory. While describing the distances between a number of geographical points, he notes: “All the lands surrounding the Khwarazm (Aral) Sea are under the possession of the Guz (Oghuz)”. Likewise, the source provides concrete information about the settlements of the Kipchaks, Kimaks, Chigils, Tukhsis, and Karluks. About a century after the composition of Hudud al-‘Alam min al-Mashriq ila al-Maghrib, one of the great universal figures of the Turkic world, Mahmud al-Kashgari, in his renowned work Diwan Lughat al-Turk (compiled between 1072-1074), identifies settlements such as Karnak, Karajuk (Karashyk), Sabran (Sawran), and Sughnaq (Sygnak) as Oghuz cities [11, p. 135].

By the mid-11th century, the Oghuz suffered a devastating defeat at the hands of the Kipchak tribes and ceased to exist as a political entity. Thereafter, they dispersed across various regions of the world, becoming assimilated into different peoples who today constitute the Turkic world. Nevertheless, the history of the Oghuz, who left an indelible mark, has retained its relevance to the present day.

Much can be discerned from a single verse of the medieval Turkic poet Yusuf Balasaghuni. He writes:

*“Bolgan talai kalalar da, khalyk ta,
Uakyt komdi barin zherlep tabytka.
Bolgan talai auylymyz, taipamyz,
Endi sonyng izin tauyp baikangyz”.*

*“Many cities and peoples have existed,
Yet time has buried them all in a coffin.
Many were our villages and tribes,
Now seek and trace their remains” [12].*

These lines may also be understood in relation to the Oghuz.

It is evident that many states once had their own centers, settlements, cities, and towns. The poet’s words suggest that if the legacies of the numerous tribes – forefathers of today’s peoples – were unearthed from their ancestral lands, invaluable artifacts would emerge, each revealing fragments of their histories. These remnants, buried beneath the sands, appear as if they were entrusted to future generations, whose duty is to uncover forgotten cities and renew historical memory. Among such prominent urban centers, we may single out the ancient city of Sygnak, which rose to become the capital of one of the strongest states on the Kazakh steppe and earned a distinguished place in history. The fact that Sygnak once served as the capital of the first Kazakh state, the White Horde, remains a subject whose mysteries have not yet been fully revealed [13, p. 103].

The earliest reference to the city of Sygnak is found in the work Hudud al-‘Alam min al-Mashriq ila-l-Maghrib (“The Regions of the World from East to West”), whose author remains unknown, where it appears under the name Sunakh [14, p. 90]. In the 11th century, the eminent scholar and expert in Turkic languages, Mahmud al-Kashgari, mentioned Sygnak among the Oghuz cities in his

renowned Compendium of the Turkic Dialects. As noted earlier, the 10th-century Arab geographer al-Maqdisi described Sygnak as a twin city of Otrar, noting their close historical and cultural interconnectedness.

Thus, as we can see, there is a considerable body of information and historical sources about the city of Sygnak, which held great significance and a distinct place in the history of Kazakh statehood. The site of this city is located in present-day Zhanakorgan district of Kyzylorda region, about 8 kilometers from the Tomenaryk railway station, on the southwestern foothills of the Karatau ridge, approximately 15 kilometers from the Syr Darya River. The ruins occupy an area of about 20 hectares in the form of a pentagonal mound situated on the Belkor plateau.

In the 9th-11th centuries, the city of Sygnak was inhabited by the Oghuz tribes, while in the 11th-12th centuries it became the capital of the Kipchak state. During the 13th-14th centuries, it served as the capital of the White Horde, and in the 15th century, Sygnak once again rose as the capital of the Kazakh Khanate. This continuity may rightly be regarded as a vivid example of historical connection and succession. As the capital of several major states that existed on Kazakh soil, the city of Sygnak holds a distinguished place in history, preserving many untold stories for future generations [13, p. 104].

In any case, it is clear from its very foundation the city of Sygnak experienced major political events. “The people of Sygnak were sedentary. Trade and handcrafts were well developed there, and the city held great military-strategic importance. For the Kazakh Khanate, it served as a crucial economic, political-administrative center and military stronghold. The inhabitants of Sygnak, like the population of other cities along the Syr Darya, engaged in irrigated agriculture” [15, p.7]. Regarding this, Ibn Ruzbikhan noted in his work: “The canals used to irrigate the farmlands originated from the Seyhun (Syr Darya)”.

The Syr Darya region has long been known in history as a blessed land for humankind. As time progresses, new and valuable information about it continues to emerge. The ruins of ancient cities, mausoleums, and towers along the Syr Darya bear witness to the Oghuz era, representing some of the most complex and valuable remnants of that period. Since this tribe was a prominent community that roamed between the Syr Darya and the Torgai steppe in the 8th-11th centuries, historical monuments related to them are frequently encountered in this area. Among the most renowned settlements of the Oghuz in the region were the cities of Yangikent (Zhanakent), Zhent, Uzgent, and Barshynkent (Kyzkala).

According to Abu'l-Ghazi's Genealogy of the Turkmen, the Oghuz people gathered in the city of Zhankent, where they raised Inal Yaum of the Kayi tribe to the throne and appointed Korkyt Ata as his vizier.

Turning to the capital of the Oghuz, the city of Zhankent (also known as Yangikent), written sources indicate that it was first mentioned in the work of the Arab historian Ibn Rustam. Furthermore, the Arab geographer Ibn Hawkal notes that the principal city of the Oghuz was Zhankent, which Persians referred to as Nau-Kerde, Arabs as al-Hariyat, and Sarmatians as Dahi-Nau. The city was located on elevated terrain. The name Zhankent itself – Yangikent, Zhanakent, or Zhankent – literally means “New City”. Its history lies deep within the centuries, with its flourishing period corresponding to the second half of the 9th century and the first quarter of the 11th century [16, p. 138].

While the history of a people is primarily defined through the lives and activities of individuals and communities, the material environment that accompanied them – cities, towns, settlements, mausoleums, fortresses, burial sites, and other monuments – must equally be regarded as an inseparable component of historical inquiry. The study of the past attains its full integrity only when these tangible cultural and spatial elements are examined in conjunction with socio-political and cultural processes. Accordingly, the safeguarding of historical sites and the transmission of material heritage from earlier epochs to subsequent generations continues to represent one of the most critical and enduring imperatives within the field of historical and cultural studies. Among such urban centers, in addition to those mentioned by Mahmud al-Kashgari [17], one may also refer to the records of contemporary Arab envoys and travelers, which document the presence of Oghuz settlements in the Zhetysay region, such as Ekioghuz, as well as the cities of Sawran, Sutkent, Syganak, Karnak,

Khwar-juwara, Zhent, and Darku. Furthermore, other significant Oghuz urban centers of the region included Uzgend, Barshynkent, and Yangikent, all of which are regarded as prominent cultural and political hubs of the Oghuz in these territories.

Alongside oral traditions information concerning place names is also encountered in epic works well known among many Turkic peoples, such as Oghuz-name and The Book of Dede Korkut. In particular, the tale of Bamsi Beyrek in the Book of Dede Korkut, according to the determination of many scholars, closely resembles the celebrated epic of Alpamysh Batyr – still performed among various Turkic peoples today – in its poetic structure, narrative motifs, symbolic references, and heroic spirit. The figure of Banu Sheshek (the wife of Bamsi Beyrek) in the Korkut epic can be identified with the character of Gulbarshyn, the wife of Alpamysh, a tradition preserved not only among the Kazakhs, but also among the Uzbeks, Karakalpaks, Tatars, and Bashkirs. The name Barshyn is likewise mentioned by Abu'l-Ghazi among the girls who rendered judgments for the Oghuz: According to the accounts of respected scholars and elders familiar with Turkmen history, seven girls held authority over the entire Oghuz people and exercised leadership for many years.

The first was Altyn Gozdeki, daughter of Sundun Bay, and wife of the great Salor Kazan: she was known for her tall stature. The second was Barshyn Salor, daughter of Karmys Bay and wife of Mamish Bek (Alpamysh). Her grave was located on the banks of the Syr River and was well known among the people; the Uzbeks called it Barshyn's Blue Mausoleum. The mausoleum was noted for its beauty and magnificent dome [18, p. 15]. Thus, the name of Barshyn Sulu, daughter of Karmysh Bay and wife of the hero Mamysh (Alpamysh), has been preserved to this day in the toponyms found along Syr Darya. In earlier times, there existed a city which later fell into ruin, yet its name has remained in history as Barshynkent. The site was located near the present-day city of Kyzylorda. Because Barshyn Sulu was highly revered by the people – much like Bayan Sulu in the epic *Kozy Korpesh – Bayan Sulu* – Barshynkent also came to be known as Kyzkala (Maiden's Fortress). Archeological surveys of the region confirm traces of medieval urban culture, supporting the historical accounts that identify the site as one of the significant centers of the Oghuz period.

The elegant mausoleum of Barshyn Sulu is located not far from the city, situated on a high elevation on the right bank of the Syr Darya. Below the city of Signak. According to Abu'l-Ghazi's *Turkmen Genealogy*, this mausoleum was erected during the Oghuz-Kipchak period (10th-11th centuries) in honor of Barshyn Sulu. In oral tradition, it is widely known as “Barshyn's Blue Complex”, or in Kazakh, “Kokkesene” [19, p. 551].

S.Kondybai, in his analysis of historical and geographical toponyms related to “Man”, presents the following view: “The second station is Barshynkent on the Syr River. This is located in the Tomenaryk area of present-day Kyzylorda region. It is also known as Kok Kesene and among local Kazakhs as Kyzkala. The renowned scholar A.Margulan once wrote that this historical site was “the Oghuz city of Barshynkent”. Barshynkent is considered to be the homeland to Gulbarshyn, the bride of the epic hero Alpamys. Her ancient name was Banu-Sheshek, and if we assume that the original form of the word Banu was Manu, then this is the ‘second Man’ on our path. Although the construction of the mausoleum is dated to the Oghuz-Kypchak period (11th century), there is sufficient reason to suggest that legends and myths about Banu (Manu) Kyz existed in the region long before the mausoleum was built” [20, p. 400].

Legends related to the history of the Oghuz-Kypchak era include such narratives as “The Legend of Zhankent, “Arystan the Giant and Toyma the Beautiful” and “Kok Kesene”. The characters and events described in these works often intersect with the historical realities of the 8th-11th centuries. The city of Zhankent, which served as the capital of the Oghuz union during this period, played a significant role in trade, cultural, and political relations with Central Asia, the Near East, Zhetysu, China, and the Volga region. From an archeological perspective, the ruins of Zhankent are located on the left bank of the Syr Darya River, approximately 20-30 kilometers downstream from present-day Kazaly.

There are still no precise chronological data that indicate when and how the city of Zhankent was destroyed. Nevertheless, it is beyond doubt that its downfall resulted from military invasion. For

instance, in 1897 a source was published stating: “After conquering the city of Zhent and its surroundings, the Mongols captured Zhankent. They descended further down the river, though it remains unclear whether Jochi himself participated in this campaign. What is certain, however, is that after subjugating the entire Zhent region, Jochi set out for Bukhara to join his father” [21, p. 12].

Thus, like Zhent, Sygnak, and other flourishing cities of the Syr Darya during the Oghuz-Kipchak period, Zhankent – once the capital of the Oghuz – suffered devastation during the Mongol invasions led by Chinggis Khan.

In the legends that have reached us, the history of the city of Zhankent is narrated purely within the framework of folkloric tradition. Alkey Margulan writes: “In Kazakh legends about Zhankent, the destruction of the city and disappearance of its inhabitants are explained by a popular belief that the settlement was overrun by swarms of serpents. According to these tales, the city’s most renowned figures – Korkyt Ata, Sarman Kusa, Sanzhak Sultan, his wife Bikem, along with their parents – all perished from snake bites. To preserve the kingdom of Zhankent, a violent storm sweeps across the Syr valley, and a camel (bura) appears as the powerful spirit of Korkyt”. [22, pp.150-151].

Thus, the historical event of the city’s destruction in warfare has been preserved in the people’s memory in a mythological form.

In the legend, Korkut Ata appears as the protector of Zhankent, a “spiritual shield”. He embodies the symbolic guardian of both the city and the people. His appearance in the form of a “bura” (sacred camel) signifies the material embodiment of Korkut’s powerful spirit, representing an elemental natural force. Here, the bura symbolizes the purifying storm, the spirit that safeguards the people. Figures such as Sarman Khusa, Sanzhak Sultan, and Bikem within the legend collectively form the mythic image of Zhankent’s “golden age”. Their death caused by snakebite symbolizes the end of an era and the people’s downfall.

– While the historical collapse of Zhankent is connected to a specific military invasion, in the collective memory it is explained through a mythic catastrophe (the infestation of snakes).

– Such mythological interpretations are not only characteristic of Kazakh folklore but also belong to widely shared archetypal motifs found in world traditions.

– The presence of Korkut elevates the legend to a sacred-epic level, presenting Zhankent not merely as a city but as a spiritual center.

Among the people, there also exist less widespread versions of the legend concerning the destruction of Zhankent. In one such account it is said: “...Sanzhar Khan issued a decree to his people: ‘The Black Wineskin must be guarded daily, in turns, by one person’.

One day, the duty fell upon a simple-minded man. Driven by curiosity, he thought: ‘What is hidden inside this wineskin that it must be guarded like a treasure of gold?’ He then cut the great Black Wineskin with his dagger. To his horror, it was filled with snakes. The first serpent to crawl out bit the guard and killed him instantly. The snakes then scattered in all directions, attacking and biting everyone they encountered. Thus, the inhabitants of Zhankent perished from snakebites. Terrified by this calamity, a married couple fled the city, leading with them their only goat, abandoning their home in search of safety”. Through this unexpected and tragic motif, the legend symbolically narrates the fall of Zhankent and the exodus of its people [23, p. 19].

It is difficult to determine the exact period when the legends about the destruction of the city of Zhankent first emerged. According to A. Margulan, this legend reflects the episode described in the Book of Dede Korkut and the Oghuz-name, where the Bechenek tribe destroys the palace of Kazan Bek. What is noteworthy here is a clear case of historical anachronism: the downfall of Zhankent is narrated as if it had occurred in later times. In reality, Zhankent experienced several waves of devastation: the Arab invasions, the Mongol conquest, and the campaigns of Timur (Tamerlan). It is difficult to pinpoint which of these historical events served as the primary basis for the above-mentioned legend. However, considering that folklore absorbs and reflects traces of every epoch, it is possible that the initial foundation of the legend was the incursion of the Arabs, who entered the city while spreading Islam. The presence of distinctly Islamic motifs in the narrative further supports this interpretation. Over time, the legend absorbed elements from subsequent historical events. Yet,

as centuries passed, the actual events became blurred, and imagination began to dominate the tale. Thus, the legend has reached us in a transformed form, embellished with many additions and altered in character. It contains elements of the marvelous typical of myth and legend, where fantastical motifs serve an important artistic function. Moreover, the text demonstrates the defining feature of a hikayat: a strong presence of religious (Islamic) mythology. Taken together, these characteristics suggest that the legend of Zhankent has evolved, in terms of genre, into a blend of legend (äpsana) and hikayat.

The legend of Begim Ana, widely preserved in oral tradition of the Syr region, is closely associated with the historical city of Zhankent, which served as the capital of several states in the Middle Ages. According to the narratives, Begim, the daughter of Karabura saint, married the ruler Sanzhar (in some versions an unnamed cruel khan). Misled by slander, the ruler unjustly punished her by mutilation. However, through divine intervention her wounds were healed, thus proving her innocence. As a consequence of the ruler's injustice, the city of Zhankent was destroyed: serpents descended from the sky and annihilated the population.

Alternative versions of the legend emphasize different outcomes: in one the beautiful Begim transformed into a bird and flew away, while at the place of her descent a monumental tower appeared, known today as the "Begim Ana Mausoleum". Begim then vows, "From now on, I shall never look upon a man", and spends the rest of her life within that tower. This symbolizes purity, fidelity, and spiritual strength that endure beyond worldly suffering. Over time, the Begim Ana Tower became a sacred site, associated with female chastity and maternal sanctity. For this reason, the present-day Begim Ana Tower is considered a sacred place where men are not allowed to enter [24, 84-87 pp.].

The legends surrounding Zhankent integrate Islamic concepts with mythological and folkloric motifs, including the descent of snakes, miraculous healing, and metamorphosis into a bird. These narratives suggest that the city's destruction may have been linked to historical invasions by Arabs, Mongols, or Amir Timur. However, as with many oral traditions, the accounts gradually transformed: while originally rooted in real historical events, they later absorbed elements of the fantastic and the supernatural, reflecting the evolving worldview of the local population. Within this context, the Begim Ana legend holds particular significance as a toponymic heritage, embodying both the historical memory of Zhankent's downfall and its reinterpretation through myth and sacred narrative.

In southern Kazakhstan, numerous legends are associated with the origin of the city name Shauwildir. According to one version, the story begins with Murundyk Khan, ruler of the city of Buzuq, who declared that whoever could bring water to the city would be rewarded with the hand of his beautiful daughter, Duriya. Among those aspiring to win her was Shamil, the khan's horseman, who was deeply in love with Duriya. Although the two young people cherished mutual affection, they were separated by social inequality. Hearing of the decree, Shamil considered it his only chance to be united with his beloved. Through determination and effort, he successfully provided water to the residents of Buzuq. However, in the end, the ruler broke his promise and attempted to deny Shamil the reward. Defying this injustice, Shamil abducted Duriya and sought refuge in the forest. Enraged, the khan ordered that both be killed. The place where the two lovers once lived came to be known among the people as "the village of Shamil and Duriya". Over time, the name was shortened to Shamildur and eventually transformed into Shauwildir, the toponym by which it is still remembered today [24, pp. 269-270].

According to the second version of the legend about the origin of the name Shauwildir, the ruler of Otyrar, Kayyr Khan, had a younger brother who served as commander of the army. The commander had an only daughter named Dur, renowned for her exceptional beauty. She grew up alongside Shamil, the son of Kayyr Khan, who in turn was a handsome and noble young man. Despite their kinship, enemies who sought to overthrow Kayyr Khan devised a cunning plan. While the ruler was away on a hunting expedition, they tricked the two young people into drinking wine until they became intoxicated and then spread malicious rumors among the populace. As a result, both Dur and Shamil were condemned to death. The city's inhabitants became divided, while the executioners were

ordered to cut their way through the crowd to reach and punish the young couple. Although weapons were used against Shamil, he miraculously survived but later disappeared without a trace. Dur, however, was executed by beheading, and his body was subsequently buried near Arystanbab. In time, the settlement came to be known as: “Shamil-Dur”, which gradually transformed into Shauwildir [24. Pp. 271-272].

It is evident that the legend concerning a historical figure, embedded in the collective consciousness of the people, has been preserved and transmitted across generations, ultimately reaching the present day in the form of toponyms and ethnonyms.

Similarly, according to oral traditions, the destruction of the Oghuz city of Kuniyan was also caused by an invasion of venomous snakes [24, p. 183]. In other words, the city's fate, like that of Zhankent, ended with devastation attributed to snakes. It is evident that beneath these legends lies a certain degree of historical truth. Historical records indicate that in the mid-11th century, Kipchak tribes overthrew the Oghuz state. The Kipchak tribal confederation also included the Kimaks. Written sources confirm that the Kimaks regarded the snake as their totem. Among scholars, there is a view that if the Kimaks were symbolically associated with snakes, then the Oghuz were regarded as “the Pale Ones” (Akshyldar). In this connection, an Armenian historian once remarked: “The people of the snake” – a designation that, at first glance, seems questionable. He further suggested that it might be more accurate to associate them with the Kai or the Khitan. Thus, the Armenian historian linked the account of the “Snakes” attacking and defeating the “Pale One” to the migration frontier of the Kai, who advanced into the region of Šārī / Sārī [25].

The Kai carried snake images on their military banners, and their tribal tamga also resembled a coiled serpent. As for the Kimaks, the Kazakh historian S.M. Akynzhanov wrote: “The Kimaks were newcomers who migrated to the Irtysh. The ethnonym Kimak itself appears only in written records, used by Arabic and Persian informants. Their true self-designation must originally have been Kai. Surrounded by Turkic-speaking Kipchak and Imek tribes who had long inhabited the region of present-day Eastern Kazakhstan, they might have acquired the name Uran. For both Kai and Uran, when translated, convey the meaning of ‘snake’. Thus, the Kimaks were a people of the serpent, the dragon” [16, p. 146]. Although al-Marwazi noted that the Quns (Kuns) abandoned their lands due to “a lack of pastures”, B.E. Kumekov explained the deeper reason: “They were forced to flee because of persecution by the people known as the Kai. The Kai were far more numerous and powerful. As a result, the Kuns moved into the land of the Saris; the Saris, in turn, migrated into the territory of the Turkmens. The Turkmens then resettled in the eastern lands of the Oghuz, while the Oghuz themselves moved into the country of the Pechenegs” [26, p. 551].

Some researchers argue that the ethnonym Kai among the Kimaks and the ethnonym Kayi among the Oghuz represent two different groups, two distinct peoples. However, S. Akynzhanov points out that the tribal tamgas of the Kimak Kai and the Turkmen Kayi are identical – both represented by a serpent [16 Akynzhanov S. Kypchaki..., p. 112]. “In the Chinese source of the 8th century, Tanghuiyao, in the section on the horse tamgas of vassal principalities, the tamga of the Kai tribe is given, depicted in the form of a snake. The same tamga is preserved among the Kai tribe, later mentioned in sources as part of the Oghuz-Turkmen tribes of Central Asia”. Thus, their common origin is clearly evident.

If we say that the land of present-day Kazakhstan is steeped in history, then the Syr Darya region – once inhabited by the Oghuz – should be considered an integral part of that past. The rich history of the Kazakh people calls for deeper and more comprehensive research, which is the demand of our time. Today is the time when a nation is recognized and understood through its history.

Oghuz Tribes and Toponymy in Kazakhstan

In the regions of Kazakhstan once inhabited by the Oghuz tribes, the subsequent emergence of place names derived from these ethnonyms is a matter that requires historical consideration. The fact that toponyms connected to the 24 tribes within the Oghuz confederation have been preserved in certain localities, with ancient ethnonyms concentrated in relatively small territories in the form of place names, can itself be regarded as an empirical fact.

For instance, the toponym of the Sazdy or Zhabaghyly-Saz valley, where the mausoleum of “Baba Tukti” is located, may be interpreted as reflecting the historical memory of the early Oghuz political structure in this region. Specifically, it can be assumed that this territory once served as the residence or central encampment of the Oghuz tribal confederation’s ruler – the yabghu. The semantic roots of the toponym ‘Zhabaghy’ suggest a possible derivation from forms such as Yabghuly or Yabaguly, both of which are etymologically connected to the Turkic title yabghu, a high-ranking position within the Oghuz political hierarchy. This interpretation not only emphasizes the political significance of the site but also demonstrates how collective memory and linguistic continuity preserved in place names can serve as an important source for reconstructing the socio-political geography of the Oghuz period. In other words, is at some historical stage the Turkmen-Oghuz of Mangystau had formed a political union, then it is highly plausible that the center of the ruling clan or dynasty of that union was located in Zhabaghyly [27, P. 360].

The presence of Oghuz tribes in southern and western Kazakhstan has left a significant imprint on local toponomy. As a migratory people, the Oghuz not only transported cultural traditions and social structures but also embedded their ancestral heritage into the geography of newly inhabited regions. Place names associated with the Oghuz thus serve as markers of both historical settlement and cultural memory. One striking example is the *Ögiz-Öreuli* locality in the Ushtagan region, situated close to Zhabaghyly Saz. Scholars have suggested that the toponym *Ögiz may be linked to Oghuz Khan himself, reflecting the enduring memory of the tribe’s legendary ancestor. Such connections between personal or tribal names and geographical locations demonstrate how oral traditions and collective memory shaped the naming of landscapes. These toponyms are more than linguistic relics; they embody layers of history, mythology, and identity. The survival of Oghuz-related place names in Kazakhstan today reveals how ancient tribal migrations contributed to the cultural and historical fabric of the region.* [27, p. 361].

The study of Oghuz toponyms in Kazakhstan highlights the deep interaction between history, myth, and geography. Each place names not only preserves the legacy of the Oghuz but also reflects the ways in which nomadic peoples inscribed their presence onto the land, ensuring that their cultural memory would endure across generations.

Oghuz Toponyms and the Case of Kayghurt

Researcher B.Koshym-Nogai notes that in *The Genealogy of the Turkmens (Shajara-i Tarakima)* by Abu’l-Ghazi Bahadur Khan, the name Kazyghurt appears several times as an ethnonym and once as a toponym [11, p. 44]. According to the chronicler, the boundaries of the Oghuz lands were described as follows: “The eastern border of the Oghuz country is Issyk-Kul and Almalyk; to the south lies Sayram, Mount Kazyghurt, and Mount Karazhyk; to the north – Uluktau and Kishiktau, rich in copper deposits; to the west – the lower course of the Syr River, Yangikent, and the Karakum desert. In these lands they lived for four to five thousand years. Whichever tribe was the most numerous, from them a ruler was chosen” [18, p. 21].

From this account, it becomes evident that Mount Kazyghurt was situated on the southwestern frontier of the Oghuz Khaganate. Thus, it could well have been regarded as the “Oghuz Mountain”. Supporting this idea, we recall that the westernmost edge of the Karatau range, once within the Oghuz Khaganate, is still called *Ögizmuyis* (“Oghuz Cape”) to this day. Furthermore, the “Karazhyk” mountain mentioned by Abu’l-Ghazi may in fact correspond to the well-known Karatau. It is clear that such toponyms were often tied to tribal names. Interestingly, a river originating from Karatau still bears the name Karashyk (Karajyk = Qarajuq).

As B. Koshym-Nogai concludes, these examples underscore the deep interconnection between ethnonyms and toponyms in the Oghuz cultural and historical landscape [11, p. 223].

From this, we can observe that not only the Oghuz, but in general, tribal and clan communities that existed in different historical periods had a significant influence on the formation of place names in various regions. Such names do not merely represent the history of the land itself; they embody the history of the tribes and entire peoples who once lived there. Therefore, the study of toponymic origins should not be approached from a one-sided perspective. Beneath each toponym may lie the legacy and testimony of several centuries.

The well-known scholar Serik Azhigali, in his work devoted to the study of monuments in the Aral-Caspian region, notes that the participation of the Oghuz in the ethnogenesis of the Kazakh tribes raises no doubt. Their settlement in the territory of Western Kazakhstan can be observed from the toponyms preserved there. Thus, by analyzing the location of the names Chagraoguz, Dzhagraoguz, and Chagra found in medieval sources, Azhigali concludes that the Shaghyray plateau is an Oghuz toponym, and furthermore, “Shaghyray” became the battle cry of the Sherkesh tribe of the Junior Zhuz Kazakhs. Researchers further connect the Sherkesh tribe’s links with the Oghuz to the Turkic tribe Dzhagra, which in the 8th-10th centuries became part of the Oghuz confederation [28, pp. 391; 315]. It is possible to agree with the researcher’s conclusion that the northeastern Caspian region was inhabited by Turkic-speaking tribes in the 10th century. In the ethnic processes of the Aral-Caspian area, the Oghuz component played a major role in linking the “ancient (‘Massagetic’) and later (Turkic) cultural and ideological traditions” [28, p. 90].

In this regard, we may cite several toponymic names in Mangystau that correspond to the names of Oghuz Khan’s grandsons:

Table 1-toponyms of Mangystau [27, 6. 359]

№	Toponyms	Ethnonyms	Location
1	Emir	Imur (Emur, Eimur)	The name of the station in the middle of the Shetpe-Aktau branch of the Mangistau railway line. 35-40 km from Aktau city.
2	Ausa Ausary	Aushar (Afshar)	It is a watery valley at the northwestern foot of the Eastern Karatau ridge, 8 km east of Shetpe village.
3	Karkyn	Karkyn	1-Karkyn. In mountainous Mangistau, a small intermountain valley between the South Aktau and West Karatau ridges. 25-30 km from the outskirts. Between Tushchybek and Jinglydi villages. 2-Karkyn. Plateau, near Bosaga-Karagan, southeast of Kaigyly-Baba. 3-Karkyn. Ruined, written in Russian as “Karkon”. In the valley between the northern slope of West Karatau and North Aktau, between the lands of Kulaat, Kyrykkez, Kady, 12 km northwest of Shayyr village.
4	Egdir	Igdir	On the Bozachy Peninsula, 28 km west of the village of Tushchykudyk, 9 km northwest of the village of Kiikti.
5	Shaudir	Chauldur	On the Bozachy peninsula, 32 km west of Tushchykudyk village, 12 km northwest of Kiyakty village. Shaudir settlement is also near Otyrar.
6	Bayandy	Bayandur	The name of a settlement near the city of Aktau, near the Khasarly Sea.
7	Jazgurly	Jazyr (Yazgur)	The name refers to a closed depression located in southern Mangystau, which in local usage is also known in a doubled form as Basghurly-Jzghurly. It is 70 km south-east of Zhanaozen city.

Overall, the interconnection between ethnonyms recorded in historical sources and the toponyms of a particular land reveals significant insights into the cultural and ethnic history of a region. For example, it is noted that “In Azerbaijan, regarded as one of the closest heirs of the ancient Oghuz tribes, there is a city called ‘Nakhichevan’. According to the Geographical Encyclopedic Dictionary, the Azerbaijani form of the name, rendered in Russian as ‘Nakhizhevan’, is actually ‘Nakhchivan’. A closer look shows that the name ‘Nakhchivan’ and the toponym ‘Shobanak’ share a similar meaning: ‘Nakh + chyvan’ = ‘Shoban + nakh’. Such parallels in toponyms can often be traced both

in the Turkic inscriptions carved in stone and in modern place names” [11, p. 140]. Such correlations demonstrate that the name of places often preserve traces of the presence migration, and settlement of specific tribes or peoples. Consequently, the relationship between ethnonyms and geographical names not only reflects the processes of ethnic integration and cultural interaction but also provides valuable evidence for identifying historical proximities and ties among different peoples. In this respect, toponymy serves as an important auxiliary discipline that helps to reconstruct the ethnic map of the past and to trace the continuity of cultural memory across generations.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we can state that the migration of the Oghuz, which began in the southern Altai, eventually led them through the lands of Zhetysu to the middle and lower reaches of the Syr Darya by the 9th century, where they established and consolidated their new state in the Aral region. This state, with its capital at Zhankent, is well known in world history. However, the stages of Oghuz migration between their initial settlements and subsequent territories remain insufficiently studied in our historiography. Nevertheless, there exists a considerable amount of historical evidence on this issue. Taking this into account, we have attempted to more precisely define the settlement area of the Oghuz state during the 9th-11th centuries, while also examining oral traditions and the etymology of city names to reveal the historical roots of settlements named after the tribes and clans that once inhabited these regions. Considering that the Oghuz confederation, which played a decisive role in the ethnogenesis of several peoples, originated from this Syr Darya state, we believe this issue holds great importance for historical science.

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К ВОПРОСУ ИНТЕГРАЦИИ КАНДАСОВ В КАЗАХСТАНЕ

Аннотация

Статья посвящена исследованию интеграции кандасов в современное казахстанское общество, что представляет собой важную тему в контексте многонационального и многокультурного Казахстана. Актуальность исследования обусловлена востребованностью эффективных процессов адаптации репатриантов, исходя из исторического контекста их возвращения и сложностей, с которыми они сталкиваются. Цель исследования состоит в выявлении ключевых факторов, способствующих успешной интеграции кандасов, а также в анализе существующих проблем, предложений и практических рекомендаций для улучшения их адаптации. Новизна исследования заключается в комплексном подходе к интеграции, который объединяет социальные, культурные, экономические и правовые аспекты. В статье представлены не только аналитические результаты, но и обоснованные рекомендации, направленные на развитие многоуровневых интеграционных программ, что позволяет выявить недостатки существующих механизмов и предложить новые решения. Практическая значимость работы заключается в том, что разработанные рекомендации могут быть использованы государственными и общественными организациями для создания инициатив, направленных на поддержку репатриантов. Теоретическая значимость исследования состоит в расширении научного понимания интеграционных процессов, что открывает новые горизонты для будущих исследований в данной области. Практическая значимость заключается в предложении конкретных рекомендаций, которые помогут государственным и общественным организациям Казахстана разработать эффективные программы поддержки интеграции кандасов, учитывающие выявленные языковые, экономические, культурные и психологические аспекты.

Ключевые слова: интеграция, репатриация, кандасы, социальная адаптация, многонациональное общество, культурный обмен.