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## COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SCOTTISH AND KAZAKH TOPONYMIC LEGENDS\*

**Abstract:** This study compares place names of Scotland and Kazakhstan and explores their etymology by means of analyzing their word structure, and by considering toponymic legends related to these particular toponyms. The data of the study are 42 place names (20 Scottish, and 22 Kazakh place names). Utilizing qualitative research methods including close reading, thematic analysis, and textual analysis, this study delves into legends and their cultural contexts. The analysis reveals several themes that appear in both Scottish and Kazakh toponymic legends, including heroism, bravery and selflessness, remembrance, history and tradition, taboo, respect for ancestors and beliefs, and the idea of sacrifice. Legends encompass motifs like supernatural beings, tragic lovers, intelligent animals, religious places, heroes, transformations, love-centered battles, rulers, and historical battlegrounds. Additionally, they reveal distinct elements – Scottish sea monsters, giants, fairies, and Pictish symbols; in Kazakh legends, forced marriages, rich versus poor, cattle breeding, and batyrs. The narrative structures of toponymic legends in Scotland and Kazakhstan tend to be short and exciting, highlighting the influence of various cultures and languages. In essence, the article offers insights into the originating societies, how these stories were preserved over time, and hints at a historical Scotland-Kazakhstan connection.

**Keywords:** toponymy, legends, Scotland, Kazakhstan, folklore, place names

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**ШОТЛАНД ЖӘНЕ ҚАЗАҚ ТОПОНИМИКАЛЫҚ  
АҢЫЗДАРЫН САЛЫСТЫРМАЛЫ ЗЕРТТЕУ**

**Аңдатпа:** Бұл мақалада Шотландия мен Қазақстандағы жер-су атаулары салыстырылып, олардың құрылымын талдау және осы нақты жер атауларымен байланысты топонимикалық аңыздарды қарастыру арқылы олардың этимологиясы қарастырылды. 42 (20 шотланд және 22 қазақ) жер-су атауын зерттеу барысында сапалы зерттеу әдістерін – мұқият оқуды, тақырыптық талдауды және мәтінді талдауды пайдалана отырып, олардың мәдени контекстіне тереңірек назар аударылды. Талдауда шотланд және қазақ топонимикалық аңыздарында кездесетін ерлік, батылдық пен жанқиярлық, есте сақтау, тарих пен дәстүр, тыйым салу, ата-баба мен наным-сенімдерді құрметтеу және құрбандық шалу сияқты тақырыптар қамтылды. Аңыздарда табиғаттан тыс тіршілік иелері, ғашықтар басындағы қайғылы жағдайлар, ақылды жануарлар, діни орындар, түрлі кейіпкерлер, махаббатқа негізделген шайқастар, тарихи шайқас алаңдары сияқты мотивтер бар. Сонымен қатар, олар әртүрлі элементтерді ашады – шотландтық теңіз құбыжықтары, алыптар, феялар және пиктиш символдары; қазақ аңыздарында еріксіз неке қию, бай мен кедей, мал шаруашылығы мен батырлар. Шотландия мен Қазақстандағы топонимикалық аңыздардың баяндалу құрылымдары әртүрлі мәдениеттер мен тілдердің әсеріне баса назар аудара отырып, қысқа және тартымды болып келеді. Негізінде, мақала аңызға арқау болған оқиғалардың уақыт өте келе қалай сақталғаны туралы түсінік береді, сонымен қатар Шотландия мен Қазақстан арасындағы тарихи байланыс туралы меңзейді.

**Кілт сөздер:** топонимика, аңыздар, Шотландия, Қазақстан, фольклор, жер атаулары

## **Introduction**

Toponyms are a crucial aspect of geography, history, and culture, serving as identifiers for human habitation sites, natural geographical features, and political precincts. They are often used by cartographers, geographers, historians, genealogists, linguists, language planners, and tourists as they reflect the landscape, heritage, and culture of a region. Moreover, toponyms play a significant role as a vehicle for public and personal reference. In the former, they are used for location identification for emergency services, postal services, deliveries, communication, defense, and navigation, among others. In this regard, they are an essential tool for communication and organization (Tent, 2019).

Although toponyms are primarily used to investigate place-names, it is not unreasonable to suggest that a considerable number of these names have mythical or legendary origins. Such toponymic legends are a genre of oral folk non-fabulous prose that initially had an orientation towards authenticity and explained the origin of the names of settlements, geographical features, temples, monasteries, and sights (Кравцов & Лазутин, 1983).

The study of toponymic legends as components of the toponymic space's spiritual history, particularly at the regional level, is recognized as a potentially fruitful path to take in contemporary regional studies. This is because toponymic legends are crucial markers of the preservation of national memory and territorial identity, and they influence the identification of a region in the country's sociocultural and economic sphere. Moreover, toponymic legends establish the positive image of a region and serve as tourist attractions, which could be beneficial for the region's economic development (Поспелов, 1988).

This article makes a unique contribution to the field of toponymy by providing insights into the similarities and differences between the toponymic legends of two culturally distinct nations, Scotland and Kazakhstan. While previous studies have investigated the toponymic landscape of individual regions (Nicolaisen, 1976; Мерғалиев, 2007; Бориябаева & Мадиева, 2015; Harte, 2019) or compared legends in other nations, such as Uzbek (Nazarova, 2019; Abdurashidova, 2022), a comprehensive analysis that juxtaposes the toponymic legends of these two diverse countries has been notably absent. By examining the origins, evolution, and influence of toponymic legends in Scotland and Kazakhstan, this study fills an important gap in the existing literature and offers new perspectives on the cultural and historical identity of these regions.

**The subject** of this study is toponymic legends and their role in shaping the toponymic landscape of Scotland and Kazakhstan.

**The object** of study is the comparison of the similarities and differences between the toponymic legends of Scotland and Kazakhstan.

**The objectives** of this study are:

- to investigate the socio-cultural and linguistic aspects of toponymic legends;

- to compare of the similarities and differences of themes, motifs and narrative structures of these legends;

- to analyze the influence of these legends on the toponymic landscape of Scotland and Kazakhstan.

**The research questions** that this study aims to answer are as follows:

1. What is the significance of toponymic legends in Scotland and Kazakhstan?

2. What are the main types of toponymic legends in Scotland and Kazakhstan?

3. How have toponymic legends influenced the toponymic landscape of Scotland and Kazakhstan?

4. What are the similarities and differences between the toponymic legends of Scotland and Kazakhstan, and what do these differences reveal about the cultural and historical contexts of these regions?

## **Literature Review**

Throughout history, legends have been a prominent feature of human culture, serving as an important means of transmitting beliefs, values, and traditions from one generation to another. A legend is a type of folklore that tells a story about human activities that are believed to have taken place at some point in history. According to Merriam-Webster, a legend is “a story coming down from the past, especially one popularly regarded as historical although not verifiable” (“Definition of Legend,” 2023). Legends have been passed down for centuries through oral traditions or in written form, and they often exhibit human values and features that give the story a sense of authenticity.

However, due to their often-miraculous or magical elements, many people may have doubts about the authenticity of legend stories. Despite being passed down through multiple generations, legends may undergo changes over time to ensure that they remain fresh and relevant (Тасполатов, 2010). Nevertheless, these tales may include a diverse cast of characters, ranging from simple citizens of certain places to possible

historical figures. The term “legend” was originally used to describe the lives of saints, but today, legends encompass a variety of stories that retell chivalrous acts, fantastic and whimsical tales of heroes, such as King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table, or even infamous criminals and gangsters, such as Robin Hood and Aldar Kose, or the sensationalized stories surrounding the deaths of deceased film stars and rock singers, such as Judy Garland and John Lennon (Baldick, 2008).

Legends are often placed alongside myths and fairy tales, and they serve a variety of purposes, including entertainment, moralistic lessons, and capturing the folklore of specific places. They have the same influence on cultures as a whole and are an essential part of the cultural heritage of many nations. Despite similarities between legends and myths, both terms have significantly different approaches and authenticity to their plots. According to Oxford, “Legends are sometimes distinguished from myths in that they concern human beings rather than gods, and sometimes in that they have some sort of historical basis whereas myths do not; but these distinctions are difficult to maintain consistently” (Baldick, 2008, p. 185). Furthermore, myths are often distinguished from legends in that they have less of a historical basis, but they seem to have a similar mode of existence in oral transmission, re-telling, literary adaptation, and allusion.

Building on this idea, toponymic legends are captivating tales that explain the origins of place names and offer insights into the rich cultural history of a region. These legends are not mere stories, but they contain valuable clues that can aid researchers in understanding the history and cultural evolution of a region. The term toponymy refers to the study of place names and their meanings. According to this field of study, place names are not random, but rather they reveal something about the history, characteristics, or formation of the place. Toponymic legends are a subset of this field, and they incorporate elements of mythology, folklore, and local traditions. The study of toponymic legends is one of the ways to understand the history of a native land (Афанасьев & Троценко, 2014).

Afanasev and Trosenko, (2014) describe the primary characteristics and traits of toponymic legends:

Firstly, toponymic tales often contain inaccuracies in the interpretation of the name's semantics or the events recounted in the narrative. As a general rule, toponymic legends lack genuine confirmation and are based on oral traditions and conjectures. However, they often represent a significant event for an area or town and have been surrounded by rumors, fairy tales, gossip, and outright myths.

Secondly, toponymic legends contain a geographical reference, indicating a close relationship with a specific geographical object of the nomination. These legends explain the origin of the names of landforms, hydrological objects, and settlements.

Thirdly, toponymic legends have a plot; they are small, finished literary works that have socially significant conclusions.

Fourthly, they serve a specific socially significant goal, such as education, transmission of information, satisfaction of curiosity about the name, or attraction of attention.

Finally, toponymic legends belong to folk art, with each new storyteller potentially adding something of their own to the content or changing individual parts of the story.

Despite their importance, toponymic legends are often overlooked by folklore scholars, who tend to focus on other genres of oral folk art. Scholars in the field of linguistic, cultural, and perceptual geography have the potential to study toponymic legends since they are an integral component of the spiritual and linguistic culture of the inhabitants of a particular region. However, there is a limited amount of experience with this type of research (Жучкевич, 1968; Мурзаев, 1964; Черняховская, 1970). Nevertheless, the scope of this type of research has been limited. While previous studies have investigated the toponymic landscape of specific regions within Scotland and Kazakhstan (Nicolaisen, 1976; Мерғалиев, 2007; Борибаева & Мадиева, 2015; Harte, 2019), and even compared legends from different countries, such as Uzbekistan (Nazarova, 2019; Abdurashidova, 2022), a comprehensive analysis that contrasts the toponymic legends of these two distinctive areas – Kazakh and Scottish – remains noticeably absent.

The study of toponymy, the study of place-names, is a valuable source of information about the complex history and culture of Scotland. Scottish toponymic legends, in particular, offer another valuable source of information about the cultural history of Scotland. Scotland's landscape is a prominent feature of its folklore, depicted in legends of devils hurling rocks from the heights and nature spirits flooding the valleys, as seen in “Crail” (Central and Perthshire) and “Loch Awe” (Argyllshire and Islands) (Bord & Bord, 1995). While ancient myth attributes creation to the gods, later folklore tends to shift focus from the heavens to intermediate powers, ascribing the ability to move mountains to demons, giants, or even certain humans.

Such folklore offers a means of interpreting both history and geography, and Scotland's tumultuous past has substantially inspired its

mythology. Throughout history, Scotland has experienced numerous invasions by groups such as the Romans, the Vikings, and the English; civil war and discord with England have been prominent themes in Scottish history; religious persecution, such as The Scottish Reformation, may influenced the development of religious themes and motifs in Scotland; clan feuds and border raids also had a significant impact on the folklore of Scotland, with tales and legends developing around these conflicts and the individuals involved (Jennifer & Sophia, 2009). Legendary heroes such as Robert the Bruce, who famously watched a spider at “Ugadale” (Argyllshire and Islands), and demonized villains such as Robert Grierson, “Laird of Lag”, who are said to have suffered damnation for their role in suppressing seventeenth-century Presbyterian dissent (Fergusson, 1886), are remembered as key figures in Scotland's cultural history.

The names of places in Scotland have been influenced by different factors, with language being one of the major ones. A variety of languages have played a significant role in shaping Scottish toponymy. Examples of these include the Celtic (“Glasgow”, “Melrose”), Pictish (“Pitcairn”, “Pittenweem”), Gaelic (“Ardnamurchan”, “Ballantrae”, “Drumnadrochit”), English (“Haddington”, “Whithorn”), Scandinavian (“Dingwall”, “Lerwick”, “Scalloway”), and Norman French (“Beaully”, “Fraserburgh”) (Mills, 2003).

Nicolaisen (1976) proposed three categories of toponymic legends in Scotland based on the relationship between folklore, legends, myths, and place-names.

The first category includes brief stories such as Soldier's Leap, Randolph's Leap, Brady's Leap, and the Tinker's Loup, in which place names are derived from actual or fictitious events from the past. These names are believed to have originated from oral traditions transmitted on a folk cultural level.

The second category of place names pertains to those associated with events or stories that have occurred in or around the area, regardless of whether they are related to martial or political activities. These place names may not have given rise to the event or tale, but have instead become linked to it metonymously. For example, Glencoe is a place name that has become associated with the infamous massacre that took place there in 1692 (MacInnes, 1986). The name Glencoe now stands for that event, serving as a toponymic metaphor and giving extended service as a verbal icon in onomastic garb. Glencoe and similar place names have become emancipated names, relieved from their purely isolating role and imbued with new semantic content unrelated to their etymological origins.

Finally, the third category of place-name legend involves an explanatory story that seeks to provide significance to a name that appears to be without meaning. This type of legend is typically created after a name has been in use for a considerable period of time. The example of the modern Scottish place name Pathhead illustrates the phenomenon of a name being transparent in its formation and meaning, yet obscured by public and private onomastic meanings. Users of the name Pathhead are normally unaware of its lexical meaning as “upper end” qualified by “path”, and instead associate it with the town in the County of Midlothian, in the Civil Parish of Crichton, where they shop for groceries, get the bus, go to school, or where someone they know lives. The public and private onomastic meanings of the name have blocked out its lexical meaning altogether, to the point that it might as well have no lexical meaning at all in order to function adequately as a name.

By categorizing these toponymic legends, Nicolaisen has provided a framework for the systematic analysis and understanding of the rich cultural heritage of Scotland's place-names.

While Scotland's toponyms offer insights into the country's cultural history, Kazakhstan's vast landscape has played host to numerous ethnic groups and communities, each with their own unique customs and traditions.

Kazakhstan, located in Central Asia, boasts a diverse landscape that includes vast steppes and towering mountains. It is the world's ninth-largest country, covering 2.7 million square kilometers, and has been home to various ethnic groups for centuries, with each group contributing to the region's toponyms. The Republic of Kazakhstan is home to over 50,000 lakes, 85,000 rivers, and countless place names scattered throughout the country. Prominent water bodies in the country include “Balkash”, “Akakol”, “Sasykkol”, “Zaisan”, “Shalkar”, “Burabai”, “Yesil”, and “Syrdariya” (Жер-су атауларының анықтамалығы, 2009).

The toponyms in Kazakhstan are a valuable legacy that reflects several centuries and epochs of history. The region has been inhabited by numerous tribes, clans, nations, and ethnic groups, with each leaving their mark over time. The emergence of toponyms can be attributed to the rich history of the region, which has seen the Sakas, Kanly, Uysin state, and several tribes inhabit the area. The region has also been home to several states, including the Western Turkish Khaganate, Karluk state, Oghuzs, Kimaks, Kipchaks, and the Mongol Empire. Despite the emergence of new tribes and states, the toponyms of the early inhabitants continue to provide a glimpse into the diverse and rich history of Kazakhstan (Жанұзақ, 2008).



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Toponymic legends in Kazakhstan are a reflection of this rich history, offering fascinating insights into the lives and experiences of the country's people. According to the renowned folklorist and academician Qasqabasov (1984), there are two main types of toponymic legends in Kazakhstan:

The first type of Kazakh legend consists of stories that recount historical events, particularly the wars of Kazakhs with Kalmyks and Khokans. An example of this is the legend behind the name “Shom Kalgan” (only a heap remained), which refers to a historical event that took place in the Otar region. The Kazakhs, moving along the Kope River, were unable to withstand the onslaught of the Kokan people and attacked Kokan tax collectors, resulting in the death and humiliation of many Kokans. The enraged Kokan Khan then sent a large army to punish the Kazakhs, resulting in the killing of men, capturing of women and children, and the looting of property. Despite this, the Kazakh people did not give up, and Suranshi Akylbaul from the Shapyrashti tribe prepared to repulse the Kokans. Suranshi disguised his small army as night robbers and ordered his people to make a lot of fire and increase the noise. The Kokans, seeing the fire and hearing the call to prayer, were shocked and surrendered. From then on, the place was called “Shom Kalgan”.

The second type of legends involves the names of places and locations, which are not associated with any particular historical fact but are recounted through well-known stories (Қасқабасов, p. 145). The legend of Alakozy is an example of a type of toponymic legend that involves the names of places without a specific historical event attached to it. According to the legend, during the transition from autumn to winter, a rich man's spotted lamb was left behind. Despite the efforts of mercenaries to find it, the lamb was not recovered. The following spring, the lamb was miraculously found, along with other stray lambs. The rich man then named the place “Alakozy” (Spotted lamb) and declared it a holy land. This legend may have contributed to the naming of the location and has been passed down through generations as a well-known story.

One of the most fascinating aspects of Kazakhstan's toponymic legends is their ability to transport readers to a different time and place. These stories capture the imagination and offer a glimpse into the lives and experiences of the people who shaped the country's cultural heritage. From ancient battles to the fascinating lifestyle of nomads, Kazakhstan's toponymic legends offer a wealth of information about the country's rich history and cultural evolution (Бабалар сөзі: Жүзтомдық, 2011).

The authenticity of toponymic legends has been a subject of debate among scholars because these legends often describe events and places that

may not have been recorded in official historical documents. Janaidarov (2007) argues that since legends are fictional stories, their authenticity cannot be judged. He suggests that only historical legends contain some truth, but even they may be subject to doubts.

On the contrary, “Babalar sozi” (Бабалар сөзі: ЖҮЗТОМДЫҚ, 2011) holds a different opinion regarding the authenticity of toponymic legends compared to Janaidarov (2007). According to them, legends narrate significant events, renowned people, and particular places from the past, and therefore the events and actions mentioned in them are considered to be true. They argue that legends are not fictional stories and have only a few traces of artificial imagination and artistic conventions. Although there may be some fantasy or fiction in them, legends are not presented as fairy tales or epics. They justify their argument by giving three reasons:

Firstly, legends always contain some historical truth;

Secondly, legends recount important events and actions, and they are regarded as true;

Thirdly, the style of presentation is always in the third person in the past tense and remains consistent.

Despite some degree of artistic interpretation, legends are considered to be a reliable source of information about the past.

Toponymic legends are of great importance for understanding the histories and cultures of different regions. The place-names in both languages have a rich history and complex motivations behind their naming. The subject of this article, toponymic legends, play an undeniable role in the cultures of each nation, providing valuable insights into their historical and cultural contexts. As such, the study of toponymic legends is a crucial aspect of understanding the relationships between language, culture, and geography.

## **Research methods**

The research methods used in this study aimed to explore the origins and significance of toponymic legends in English and Kazakh languages. The study utilized a comparative approach, examining 42 toponymic legends from two regions: Scotland (20 legends) and Kazakhstan (22 legends). The selection of these legends was based on their availability in published sources and their significance in the cultural heritage of their respective regions.

**Data Collection.** The main sources for the toponymic legends were collected and selected from the book “The Lore of Scotland: A Guide to

Scottish Legends” by Jennifer W. and Sophia K. (2009), Kate Forrester’s (2016) “Celtic Tales: Fairy Tales and Stories of Enchantment from Ireland, Scotland, Brittany, and Wales”, as well as online sources such as “The Gazetteer for Scotland” for the Scottish legends, and “Бабалап сөзі: Жүзтомдық” (2011) and “Атамекен сиқырлы елінің аңыздары” (2020) for Kazakh toponymic legends.

### **Qualitative Analysis**

Qualitative research methods, specifically close reading, thematic analysis, and textual analysis, were meticulously chosen due to their inherent capacity to unearth nuanced insights within the legends and their cultural contexts.

1. Close Reading: This method allowed for a thorough exploration of the legends, enabling the identification of subtle details and latent messages that contribute to their narrative depth (Brummett, 2018).

2. Thematic Analysis: Through this approach, recurring themes, motifs, and narrative structures were systematically extracted, offering a profound understanding of the underlying societal beliefs, values, and cultural practices interwoven within the narratives (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012).

3. Textual Analysis: By delving into linguistic patterns and narrative evolution, textual analysis provided valuable insights into the historical development and linguistic intricacies of the legends (Caulfield, 2023).

In summary, the goal of this study was to provide a comprehensive understanding of the toponymic legends in English and Kazakh languages, exploring their origins, evolution, and cultural significance. By utilizing a qualitative approach, the study aimed to uncover the shared history and cultural heritage of the two communities while also highlighting the unique cultural and linguistic factors that contributed to the development of their respective toponymic legends.

### **Results and discussion**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the origins and significance of toponymic legends in English and Kazakh languages, using a comparative approach. To achieve this, 42 toponymic legends from Scotland (20 legends) and Kazakhstan (22 legends) were examined. The selection of these legends was based on their availability in published sources and their cultural importance.

As said above, the primary sources for the Scottish legends were “The Lore of Scotland: A Guide to Scottish Legends” by Jennifer W. and Sophia

K. (2009), and Kate Forrester's "Celtic Tales: Fairy Tales and Stories of Enchantment from Ireland, Scotland, Brittany, and Wales" (2016), while online sources such as "The Gazetteer for Scotland" were also used. For Kazakh toponymic legends, "Бабалар сөзі: Жүзтомдық" (2011) and "Атамекен сиқырлы елінің аңыздары" (2020) were utilized.

### **Comparative Study of Themes:**

In comparing the toponymic legends of Scotland and Kazakhstan, one of the key areas of analysis was the identification of common themes present throughout the stories, as well as any differences between them. Themes are overarching ideas or messages that are conveyed through the narrative of a story, and they can provide insight into the beliefs, values, and cultural practices of the societies that produced them.

Heroic figures overcoming obstacles to achieve their goals was a prominent theme in both Scottish and Kazakh legends, although there were some notable differences, which were mainly related to the details of the stories. For instance, The Soldier's Leap, located in Perthshire, Scotland, was named after a Lowland soldier who managed to jump across a chasm in the River Garry while being pursued by Highlanders after the Battle of Killiecrankie. Despite being wounded, the soldier survived and later served under General Wade ("The Gazetteer for Scotland," n.d.). In Kazakh legend, a ruler's daughter named Akbikesh took the initiative to retrieve stolen cattle during war. She received advice from a fortune teller and was able to outsmart the enemy, returning the horses safely. However, she was fatally wounded in the process and the place was named "Akbikesh" in her honor (Бабалар сөзі: Жүзтомдық, 2011).

Other similar showcase of heroic figures is present in following legends: both depict the heroism of a man who slays a dragon to save the people and their loved ones. The Scottish legend "Martin's Stone" tells the story of Martin, who killed a dragon that had devoured nine maidens. The dragon was first fought by Martin and his allies at Baldragon and was slain at a spot two miles to the north, where a stone known as "Martin's Stone" still bears a carving of the dragon (Forrester, 2016). The Kazakh legend "Aqsu-Zhabagyly", on the other hand, speaks of a dragon that ate three sheep, two girls, and two boys a day and was eventually killed by a brave young man who sacrificed his own life to save the girl that the dragon was about to eat (Бабалар сөзі: Жүзтомдық, 2011).

Both legends demonstrate the universality of the theme of the dragon slayer, which is common across many cultures. The Scottish legend may have grown out of the name of the place Baldragon, and the other places,

Pittempton and Strathmartin, may have been brought into the story by another piece of folk-etymology. In the Scottish saga we encounter a narrative that echoes the literary concept of the "hero's journey." Campbell's seminal work, "The Hero with a Thousand Faces" (2008), lends a lens through which we view the hero's triumphant conquest of the dragon, embodying the archetypal quest for self-discovery and mastery over adversity. The "hero's journey" is a storytelling pattern that outlines a hero's transformational adventure, often involving challenges, growth, and a return with newfound wisdom. It's a universal narrative structure found in myths and stories. In contrast, the Kazakh legend provides a glimpse into the life and culture of the people who lived by the Aksu River, where dragons were said to have once roamed. The legend also serves as a reminder of the bravery and selflessness of individuals who are willing to risk their lives to save others. The Kazakh legend of Aqsu-Zhabagyly paints a picture of sacrifice, evoking echoes of Campbell's notion of the "hero as martyr." The "hero as martyr" concept represents a hero who sacrifices themselves for a greater cause, embodying selflessness and bravery in their actions. Nurtured by Campbell's thesis, this motif resonates with profound selflessness, echoing the concept of the hero's death as a transformative act. All of the four legends demonstrate the acts of courage, however, many tales in Scotland tend to have their heroes alive, even unharmed, whereas in Kazakh ones the protagonists die and the place is named to their honour. The subtle variations in heroic narratives can offer profound cultural insights. These differences mirror the cultural specificity of storytelling traditions. Propp's (1968) analysis of fairy tale morphology highlights how narrative patterns can vary while retaining essential thematic elements. The Scottish tale's focus on escape and survival contrasts with the Kazakh legend's emphasis on cunning and sacrifice, reflecting distinct cultural perspectives on heroism and valor.

Moving forward, let us examine toponymic legends of similar places, namely bridges:

The Scottish legend, "Bridge of Allan", describes the story of a king who had his queen drowned in a lake. He then drained the lake to retrieve her body and built a bridge over it, which is now known as "Bridge of Allan" (Forrester, 2016). The Kazakh legend "Shaitan-kopir" (Devil's bridge) is about a bridge that is believed to be haunted by ghosts or devils. The legend tells the story of a Khan who destroyed a graveyard to populate the land and build a bridge over a lake. The ghosts of the ancestors were offended by his actions and caused him to have a twisted mouth (Атамекен сиқырлы елінің аңыздары, 2020).

In terms of themes, both legends involve a bridge, but the context and significance of the bridges are quite different. The Scottish legend of the Bridge of Allan exemplifies the act of naming places as a means of engaging with history and reconciling fractured narratives. Alderman's seminal work, "Commemorative Place Naming: To Name Place, to Claim the Past, to Repair Futures" (2022), intricately examines the transformative act of naming locations. In the context of the Bridge of Allan, Alderman's insights shed light on how toponymy serves as a conduit for reclaiming collective memory and fostering a potent bond between past and present. The bridge, named after the lake that was drained to retrieve a drowned queen's body, becomes a tangible link between historical tragedy and contemporary identity. Alderman's exploration resonates deeply with the Scottish legend's commemorative aspect, underscoring the intricate relationship between place names, memory, and the continuity of cultural heritage. In contrast, the Devil's Bridge in the Kazakh legend is a bridge built over a lake by a Khan who wanted to develop the land, but who ended up offending the spirits of the land and suffering consequences as a result. The bridge in this legend is seen as a place of danger and taboo, where people are afraid to walk at certain times.

Another theme that can be found in both legends is that of history and tradition. The Scottish legend involves the preservation of a story that reflects the history and culture of the people who lived in the area. The tale has been passed down from generation to generation and has become a part of the cultural heritage of the region. Williams (1963), in "Folklore and Placenames," emphasizes the intrinsic value of such tales, acknowledging their foundations in factual events and the folk wisdom that echoes through the ages. The tale's evolution into a cultural heritage underscores the potency of storytelling in preserving identity and memory. Similarly, the Kazakh legend speaks to the importance of respecting the traditions and beliefs of the ancestors, even in the face of modern development and progress. The mullahs and believers in the story warn the Khan not to disturb the holy place, but he refuses to listen, leading to disastrous consequences. In this context, the legend serves as a channel for passing down cultural values, embodying the delicate balance between upholding tradition and embracing contemporary influences. Qasqabasov's (1984) analysis subtly reveals the difference between a basic narrative and a legend, with the latter carrying the significance of imparting knowledge and cultural understanding. The interaction of customary practices and societal advancement, mirrored in the Kazakh legend, aligns with Kaskabasov's explanation of how stories progress from simple accounts to more intricate forms of storytelling.

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We have considered the theme “idea of sacrifice” from the positive point of view. Reviewing next toponymic legends, it can be said that this idea can be seen as a negative thing.

In Scottish legend “Loch Awe”, The Cailleach, guardian of a spring on top of Ben Cruachan, was tasked with covering it with a stone slab every evening and removing it at daybreak. One evening, she fell asleep and the fountain overflowed, forming Loch Awe. The Cailleach turned into stone in horror and sits forever among the rocky ruins at the Pass of Brander (Jennifer & Sophia, 2009).

Similar story of Kazakh legend involves around lake “Balkhash”. Balkhash had a daughter named Ile. Ile fell in love with a hero named Karatal who was poor. Balkhash forbade the match, but Ile and Karatal ran away. Balkhash chased after them and Ile fell to her death from a cliff. Balkhash realized his mistake and stabbed himself, creating Lake Balkhash from his tears. The lake is said to be filled with the breaths of Ile and Karatal flowing from its two mouths (Атамекен сиқырлы елінің аңыздары, 2020).

A first theme that is evident in both legends is the idea of sacrifice. In the case of Loch Awe, the Cailleach's negligence led to the formation of the lake, but it also resulted in her turning into stone and forever overlooking the loch. Similarly, in the legend of Balkhash, the sacrifice of Ile and Karatal's lives, as well as Balkhash's own suicide, led to the creation of the lake. Both legends convey the idea that sometimes sacrifices must be made in order to achieve something greater, and that such sacrifices can result in a profound impact on the environment and on people's lives. These sacrifices echo the words of Maslow (1962), who posited that the pursuit of self-actualization involves transcending one's own needs for the greater good. The legends acutely portray how sacrifices, even at the cost of personal well-being, can leave lasting imprints on the environment and people's lives.

In terms of similarities, both legends involve the formation of a body of water through a natural disaster, and both involve transformation of some sort (the Cailleach turning into stone and Balkhash stabbing himself to create the lake). Additionally, both legends touch on the idea of responsibility and the consequences of neglect (the Cailleach neglecting to cover the well and Balkhash neglecting to see the importance of love).

However, there are also notable differences between the two legends. The Scottish legend focuses more on the power of nature and the consequences of neglecting one's duties, while the Kazakh legend centers on the power of love and the importance of family. Additionally, while the Scottish legend features a female guardian and transformation through

turning to stone, the Kazakh legend centers on a male protagonist and transformation through death and the creation of a lake through tears.

### **Comparative Study of Motifs:**

The comparative study of motifs in folklore is a common approach in folkloristics. In literature and folklore, a motif refers to a recurring theme, subject, or idea that is used to convey a specific message or meaning. It may be a symbol, an image, a character type, a narrative device, or a concept that appears repeatedly throughout a work or across different works.

Building on the comparative study of motifs in folklore, it is surprising to discover common motifs in toponymic legends from Scotland and Kazakhstan. Despite the geographical and cultural distance between the two regions, the presence of these shared motifs suggests a historical connection, raising questions about possible cultural interactions and influences on each other's folklore.

### **Some common motifs found in these legends include:**

1. Some supernatural beings: Both Scottish and Kazakh legends are replete with stories of mythical creatures such as dragons, witches, wizards, and demons, often associated with specific locations.

2. Tragic lovers: Legends of ill-fated love abound in both countries, with tales of star-crossed couples often tied to particular landmarks or natural features.

3. Smart animals: Animals play a prominent role in many toponymic legends, with clever foxes, wise owls, and loyal horses among the most common creatures featured.

4. Sacred places: Many toponymic legends relate to religious or spiritual beliefs, with certain locations deemed sacred due to their connection to saints, holy relics, or other religious figures.

5. Heroes: Legends of great warriors and leaders are a common theme, with tales of valor and bravery often tied to specific places or landmarks.

6. Transformation: Both Scottish and Kazakh legends include stories of people or creatures being turned into stones or other objects, often as punishment for misdeeds.

7. Battle for love: Many toponymic legends involve epic battles fought over love or marriage, with feuding families or rival clans often at the center of the conflict.



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8. Rulers: Both Scotland and Kazakhstan have a rich history of powerful rulers, and many toponymic legends relate to specific kings, queens, or khans and their exploits.

9. Wars: Many legends relate to historic battles or wars fought on the land, with specific locations often taking on significance due to their association with these conflicts.

Although there may be some overlapping motifs between the toponymic legends of Scotland and Kazakhstan, it is important to recognize that each nation has its own exceptional set of motifs. These motifs are often tied to specific cultural, historical, and geographical factors that are unique to each country. Therefore, it is imperative to explore and appreciate the specific motifs that are present in each nation's toponymic legends in order to gain a deeper understanding of their respective histories and cultural identities.

**Motif Features in Scotland's Toponymic Legends:**

1. Sea Monsters and Other Maritime Creatures: Scotland has a long and storied relationship with the sea, and this is reflected in many of its toponymic legends. These stories often feature sea monsters and other maritime creatures, such as the "Loch Ness Monster" or the "Kelpie". These creatures may be depicted as dangerous or mysterious, and are often associated with particular bodies of water or stretches of coastline. This motif may show the importance of fishing and maritime trade to Scotland's history and culture, as well as the dangers and wonders of the sea.

2. Giants: Scottish toponymic legends also frequently feature giants, such as the legendary Finn MacCool in the place "Fingal's Cave". These giants may be associated with particular landmarks, such as hills or mountains, and may be depicted as powerful or fearsome figures. This motif may represent the rugged and imposing nature of Scotland's landscape, as well as the importance of physical strength and bravery in Scottish history and culture.

3. Fairies and Other Supernatural Beings: Scottish folklore is rich in stories of fairies, who are often depicted as small, winged beings who live in a separate realm alongside humans. Many place names in Scotland are said to be linked to fairies, such as "Fairy Glen" and "Fairy Knowe". These toponyms are often located in remote or picturesque locations, thought to be favored by these mystical beings.

4. Pictish Symbols: The Picts were an ancient people who lived in Scotland from the late Iron Age to the early medieval period, and their culture has left a lasting impact on Scottish toponymic legends. Pictish

symbols, such as the famous “Pictish Beast”, may be found carved into stones or depicted in other forms of artwork. These symbols may be associated with particular landmarks, such as standing stones or burial mounds, and may be interpreted in a variety of ways. This motif may display the enduring influence of the Picts on Scottish history and culture, as well as the importance of ancient traditions and symbols in shaping the country's identity.

### **Motif Features in Kazakhstan's Toponymic Legends:**

1. Forced Marriages: Forced marriages have been a cultural practice in some parts of Kazakhstan, and as such, have appeared in Kazakh toponymic legends. In some legends, a woman may be forced to marry against her will or may be tricked into a marriage with someone she does not love. This motif may portray the struggles of women in certain societies or the importance of family and societal expectations in traditional Kazakh culture.

2. Rich versus Poor: Issues of social inequality and class conflict have been explored in Kazakh literature and folklore, making rich versus poor an important motif in toponymic legends. In some legends, a wealthy person may use their power to oppress a poor person or a poor person may rise up against their oppressors. This motif may suggest the struggles of the common people and their desire for justice and fairness.

3. Cattle Breeding: Cattle breeding has been a way of life for centuries in Kazakhstan and is an important motif in the country's traditional way of life. In some legends, a heroic figure may be depicted as a skilled cattle breeder who saves their people from famine or danger. This motif may exhibit the importance of livestock to the Kazakh people and the skill and bravery of those who work with them.

4. Batyr: Batyrs are legendary heroes in Kazakh folklore and are often depicted in toponymic legends. They are known for their bravery, skill in battle, and other heroic qualities. The batyr motif may represent the ideals of honor, bravery, and loyalty that are valued in Kazakh culture.

### **Comparative Study of Narrative structures:**

In spite the fact that the toponymic legends are considered to be stories in their literal sense, the narrative structure of both countries usually tend to be quite short and straightforward. Taking inspiration from Chatman's research on narrative structure in fiction and film, we can suggest that this common characteristic can be attributed to the need for captivating storytelling that quickly engages the audience (Chatman, 1978). Chatman's exploration of how narratives work efficiently emphasizes the importance of

sharing information concisely while keeping the story coherent. This straightforward approach is especially noticeable in legends shared among storytellers, tour guides, friends, and families.

In addition to their communication value, it is not uncommon to discover that the stories and origins behind the place names in Scotland and Kazakhstan are influenced by a multitude of different cultures and nations. As previously noted, In Scotland, the narratives often reflect Gaelic or Norse/Scandinavian origins, illustrating the historical interactions between these linguistic traditions and the land's heritage (Carruthers & McIlvanney, 2012). It is also noteworthy that many of the Kazakh toponyms have Turkic or Mongolian roots, which may have had an impact on the legends and stories that have been passed down through the generations (ЖАНҰЗАҚ, 2008). The narratives act as pathways through which historical migrations, cultural exchanges, and shifts in language come together, creating the diverse tapestry of origins behind place names.

The interconnectedness of cultures and languages throughout history is evident in the development of place names and the legends associated with them. The influence of various languages and cultures on the formation of these stories only serves to enrich and deepen our understanding of the complex histories and cultural practices that underlie these narratives.

### **Conclusion**

The study aimed to explore the similarities and differences between Scotland's and Kazakhstan's toponymic legends. To accomplish this, the paper applied theme, motif, and narrative structure comparison. The purpose of this research was to obtain a complete comprehension of toponymic legends in English and Kazakh languages, analyzing their roots and cultural relevance. Through a multi-faceted methodology, the investigation sought to unveil the mutual history and cultural legacy of both groups while emphasizing the distinct cultural and linguistic elements that led to the creation of their individual toponymic legends.

First, in the text, there are several themes that appear in the toponymic legends of Scotland and Kazakhstan. Some of these themes include:

1. Heroism: Both Scottish and Kazakh legends feature heroic figures who overcome obstacles to achieve their goals. This theme is exemplified in stories of dragon slayers, such as Martin's Stone and Aqsu-Zhabagyly.
2. Bravery and Selflessness: The acts of courage and selflessness of individuals who are willing to risk their lives to save others, as seen in the legend of Akbikesh.

3. Folk-Etymology: Some Scottish legends may have grown out of the name of the place and other places may have been brought into the story by another piece of folk-etymology.

4. Remembrance: Many of the legends of Kazakhstan involve the protagonists dying and the place being named in their honor.

5. History and Tradition: Both Scottish and Kazakh legends involve the preservation of stories that reflect the history and culture of the people who lived in the area.

6. Taboo: The Devil's Bridge in the Kazakh legend is a place of danger and taboo, where people are afraid to walk at certain times.

7. Respect for Ancestors and Beliefs: The Kazakh legend speaks to the importance of respecting the traditions and beliefs of the ancestors, even in the face of modern development and progress.

8. Idea of Sacrifice: Some legends, like those of Loch Awe and Balkhash, feature sacrifice, which in these cases could be seen as a negative thing.

Second, the comparative study of motifs in folklore is a useful tool for understanding the similarities and differences between different cultures and regions. The discovery of common motifs in toponymic legends from Scotland and Kazakhstan suggests a historical connection between the two regions and raises questions about the ways in which they may have influenced each other's folklore. While there may be some overlapping motifs, it is important to recognize that each nation has its own special set of motifs, which are often tied to specific cultural, historical, and geographical factors. Exploring and appreciating the specific motifs present in each nation's toponymic legends is essential for gaining a deeper understanding of their respective histories and cultural identities.

And finally, the narrative structures of toponymic legends in Scotland and Kazakhstan reflect their oral origins and tend to be short and exciting. However, what makes these stories truly fascinating is the influence of various cultures and languages on their formation. Through an analysis of these influences, we can gain a deeper understanding of the complex histories and cultural practices that underlie these narratives. Therefore, it is important to appreciate the interconnectedness of cultures throughout history in order to fully comprehend the richness of these toponymic legends.

In summary, the comparative analysis of toponymic legends from Scotland and Kazakhstan highlights the similarities and differences in themes, motifs, and narrative structures between these two regions. This study has demonstrated the importance of exploring and appreciating the unique cultural and historical factors that have influenced the creation and evolution of these legends.

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This research has several practical implications. Firstly, it can be used as a resource for educators and researchers interested in cross-cultural studies of folklore and mythology. The findings of this study can help teachers create lesson plans that incorporate diverse cultural perspectives, and researchers can build on this work by exploring the historical and linguistic connections between other regions.

Secondly, the study highlights the importance of preserving cultural traditions and practices. The toponymic legends of Scotland and Kazakhstan have been passed down through generations and provide a valuable insight into the history and cultural identity of these regions. By studying and preserving these legends, we can gain a deeper appreciation for the diverse cultures and histories that make up our world.

Finally, further research is needed to fully understand the mutual influences and connections between Scottish and Kazakh folklore. While this study has uncovered some similarities and differences, more research is needed to explore the specific historical and linguistic factors that have shaped these narratives. Additionally, future studies could explore the role of toponymic legends in other cultures and regions to gain a better understanding of the ways in which they reflect the history, culture, and identity of different communities.

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## Öz

Bu çalışmada, İskoçya ve Kazakistan'ın yer adları karşılaştırılmış, kelime yapılarını analiz ederek ve bu belirli yer adlarıyla ilişkili toponimik efsanelere bakarak etimolojileri incelenmiştir. Bu çalışma 42 yer adını (20 İskoç ve 22 Kazak) içermektedir. Yakın okuma, tematik analiz ve metinsel analiz gibi nitel araştırma yöntemlerini kullanan bu çalışma, efsaneleri ve kültürel bağlamlarını derinlemesine incelemektedir. Analiz, kahramanlık, cesaret ve özverilik, hafıza, tarih ve gelenek, tabu, atalara ve inançlara saygı ve fedakarlık fikri dahil olmak üzere hem İskoç hem de Kazak toponimik efsanelerinde ortaya çıkan birkaç temayı ortaya koymaktadır. Efsaneler, doğaüstü varlıklar, trajik aşıklar, duyarlı hayvanlar, dini yerler, kahramanlar, dönüşümler, aşka dayalı savaşlar, hükümdarlar ve tarihi savaş alanları gibi motifleri içermektedir. Ek olarak, çeşitli unsurları ortaya çıkarmaktadırlar -

İskoç deniz canavarları, devler, periler ve Pictish sembolleri; Kazak efsanelerinde zorla evlilikler, zengin ve fakir, sığır yetiştiriciliği ve batırlar. İskoçya ve Kazakistan'daki toponimik efsanelerin anlatı yapıları, farklı kültürlerin ve dillerin etkisini vurgulayarak kısa ve çekici olma eğilimindedir. Makale, özünde toplumların kökenlerine ve bu hikayelerin zaman içinde nasıl korunduğunu açıklamakta ve aynı zamanda İskoçya ile Kazakistan arasındaki tarihsel bağlantıya dair ipuçları veriyor.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** toponimi, efsaneler, İskoçya, Kazakistan, folklore, yer isimleri  
**(Assylbek MEIRBEKOV, Aruzhan KURBAN. İSKOÇ VE KAZAK TOPONİM EFSANELERİNİN KARŞILAŞTIRMALI ÇALIŞMASI)**

## Аннотация

В этом исследовании сравнивались топонимы Шотландии и Казахстана и изучалась их этимология посредством анализа структуры их слов и рассмотрения топонимических легенд, связанных с этими конкретными топонимами. Данные исследования составляют 42 топонима (20 шотландских и 22 казахских). Используя качественные методы исследования, включая внимательное чтение, тематический анализ и текстовый анализ, статья углубляется в легенды и их культурный контекст. Анализ раскрывает несколько тем, которые появляются как в шотландских, так и в казахских топонимических легендах, включая героизм, храбрость и самоотверженность, память, историю и традиции, табу, уважение к предкам и верованиям, а также идею жертвоприношения. Легенды включают в себя такие мотивы, как сверхъестественные существа, трагические любовники, разумные животные, религиозные места, герои, превращения, битвы, основанные на любви, правители и исторические поля сражений. Кроме того, они раскрывают различные элементы - шотландских морских чудовищ, гигантов, фей и пиктские символы; в казахских легендах принудительные браки, богатые и бедные, скотоводство и батыры. Нарративные структуры топонимических легенд в Шотландии и Казахстане, как правило, короткие и захватывающие, подчеркивающие влияние различных культур и языков. По сути, статья дает представление понимания происхождения обществ и того, как эти истории сохранялись с течением времени, а также намекает на историческую связь между Шотландией и Казахстаном.

**Ключевые слова:** топонимия, легенды, Шотландия, Казахстан, фольклор, географические названия

**(Асылбек МЕЙІРБЕКОВ, Аружан КУРБАН. СРАВНИТЕЛЬНОЕ ИЗУЧЕНИЕ ШОТЛАНДСКИХ И КАЗАХСКИХ ТОПОНИМИЧЕСКИХ ЛЕГЕНД)**

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