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The Worldview of Turkishness in Kazakh and Turkish Anthroponyms

*Kuanyshebek Kenzhalin*¹ , *Bekzhan Abdualyuly*^{1*} , *Gulbaira Otelbay*² , *Ybray Turanov*¹ ,
*Aigul Alimkhan*³ , *Meiramgul Baimukhanbetova*¹ 

¹ The Department of Kazakh Linguistics, L. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, Astana 010000, Kazakhstan

² The Department of Practical Kazakh language, L. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, Astana 010000, Kazakhstan

³ The Department of Kazakh, Russian Philology and Journalism, S. Amanzholov East Kazakhstan University, Ust-Kamenogorsk 070000, Kazakhstan

ABSTRACT

This study explores the worldview of Turkishness reflected in Kazakh and Turkish anthroponyms with mythological roots, focusing on how names derived from celestial bodies, animals, and deities convey national identity and cultural continuity. The research aims to identify the symbolic and semantic values of mythologically embedded personal names (mythoanthroponyms) and their roles in representing collective memory and Turkic heritage. A mixed-method approach was adopted, combining descriptive linguistic analysis with survey-based quantitative data collected from 100 respondents – 50 Kazakh and 50 Turkish participants. The survey used Likert scales and multiple-choice questions to assess public attitudes toward myth-based names such as Böri, Arystan, Sholpan, Ayman, and Kambar. The results reveal significant cultural parallels and distinctions between the two linguistic communities. Kazakh respondents displayed higher acceptance of animal symbolism (especially the wolf and lion), while Turkish participants emphasized celestial and divine associations. The comparative analysis also indicated generational shifts, with younger respondents in both groups showing reduced awareness of mythological meanings. Diagrams visualize approval rates and symbolic associations across national lines. The study contributes to linguistic anthropology and onomastics by demonstrating how mythological semantics persist in naming practices and function as vehicles for identity transmission. It also highlights the relevance of interethnic comparative

*CORRESPONDING AUTHOR:

Bekzhan Abdualyuly, The Department of Kazakh Linguistics, L. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, Astana 010000, Kazakhstan;
Email: bekzhan-a7@mail.ru

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research in understanding cultural semantics. By bridging language, history, and mythology, this work provides valuable insight into the evolving nature of Turkishness in anthroponymic traditions. Future studies may expand the demographic scope and deepen the historical-linguistic analysis to include other Turkic-speaking populations.

Keywords: Mythoanthroponym; Mythical Cognition; Names of People; Kazakh Anthroponymy; Turkish Anthroponymy

1. Introduction

The anthroponymic systems of Turkic peoples form a unique cultural and linguistic phenomenon reflecting a collective worldview rooted in myth, nature, cosmology, and social order. The study of personal names within the Turkic world is not only a matter of linguistic taxonomy, but also a gateway into historical consciousness, spiritual heritage, and the mythological imagination that has shaped identity for centuries. In recent decades, the comparative analysis of anthroponyms has become increasingly relevant as linguistic studies have shifted toward cognitive, cultural, and semiotic approaches^[1,2].

Anthroponyms carry cognitive and symbolic values, often expressing ethnic, religious, or mythological meanings that transcend their lexical form^[3]. Among the Turkic peoples, including the Kazakhs and Turks, naming practices have historically embodied a metaphysical understanding of the world and humanity's place within it. T. Zhanuzakov notes that personal names in Turkic languages preserve ancient nominating principles, with lexical and structural parallels to archaic forms that reflect the collective memory of the people^[4]. Likewise, A. Gordlevsky underlines the mytho-cognitive origins of names formed during the pre-Islamic period, emphasizing the sacred functions attributed to them^[5].

The relevance of studying Kazakh and Turkish anthroponyms lies in their role as semantic mirrors of national culture, reflecting worldviews, beliefs, and collective experiences. The growing interest in anthroponymy, especially within a comparative Turkological context, has led researchers to explore the mythic and cognitive dimensions of names^[6,7]. B. Tileuberdiyev argues that modern Kazakh naming patterns retain cognitive constructs related to animals and nature, while simultaneously undergoing transformations shaped by modernity^[8]. This observation finds resonance in the works of Khisamitdinova, who identifies five categories of mythoanthroponyms based on theonyms, color symbol-

ism, metals, natural elements, and cosmic markers^[9].

This article seeks to explore the worldview of Turkishness as reflected in the mythoanthroponymic systems of the Kazakh and Turkish languages. While previous studies have addressed etymological or typological features of anthroponyms, the symbolic and cognitive implications – particularly those tied to Turkishness, totemic culture, and celestial-mythical symbolism – remain underexplored. By focusing on names like Böri (wolf), Arystan (lion), Tanir (god/sky), and Sholpan (Venus), this study positions these anthroponyms not only as lexical units but also as carriers of deep mythological, semiotic, and national meaning^[10,11].

The continuity of naming practices from ancient to modern times underscores the enduring influence of Turkic cosmology. For instance, the names of animals with totemic associations (Böri, Aq qus), celestial bodies (Sholpan, Ai, Kün), and spiritual deities (Tanir, Kambar) exemplify the mythological ontology embedded within Turkic naming traditions^[12]. These names often emerge in folklore, epic tales, and historical narratives, serving as cultural signifiers passed down through generations^[13,14].

Z. Shadkam and A. Tokenova's comparative onomastic study shows that both Kazakh and Turkish naming systems classify common nouns in a similar way and share symbolic motivations behind naming, especially with respect to flora, fauna, and natural elements^[15]. Bigeldieva reinforces that mythoanthroponyms were formed when people lived in close harmony with nature and personified it in language^[16]. Qondybai links Turkmen anthroponyms to natural phenomena such as rain, sun, moon, plants, and animals, noting their deep mythological roots^[17].

The advent of Islam, and in particular Arabic-Persian influence, introduced a new wave of anthroponyms that coexisted with or replaced traditional Turkic names. In contemporary Turkey, Arabic-origin names have become predominant, though remnants of Turkishness in naming practices remain significant^[18,19]. The 2014 study by Amach Herdalelen reveals that Arabic names now dominate naming trends in

Turkey, with Turkish-origin names ranking second in frequency^[20].

Yet the mythological heritage remains resilient. As noted by A. Khisamitdinova, mythoanthroponyms rooted in celestial phenomena, animal totems, and spatial-temporal constructs continue to play a symbolic role in Kazakh and Turkish societies^[9]. These names not only preserve ancient cosmologies but also reflect shifts in collective consciousness, identity politics, and cultural memory.

Conceptual metaphor theory offers a useful lens for decoding the symbolic load carried by anthroponyms. As proposed by Köprülü^[21], metaphors structure human cognition, and personal names, being metaphorical signifiers, mediate between language, thought, and culture. Mythoanthroponyms embody such mappings: Böri represents bravery and tribal protection; Sholpan encodes beauty and morning light; Tanir symbolizes divine omnipotence and sky-father cosmology^[22,23].

Furthermore, cultural semiotics and mythopoetic analysis illuminate how anthroponyms serve as signs within systems of meaning. Within this framework, names are not arbitrary but deeply motivated by cognitive schemas, socio-cultural contexts, and mythological archetypes^[24,25].

This study aims to:

- Identify and classify mythoanthroponyms in Kazakh and Turkish languages;
- Compare their cognitive, symbolic, and mythological features;
- Analyze their relevance to Turkishness as a cultural and national worldview;
- Interpret graphical survey data regarding public perceptions of selected anthroponyms.

The novelty of the research lies in its interdisciplinary approach, combining comparative linguistics, cognitive semantics, mythological studies, and survey-based visualization. It not only documents the structural forms of anthroponyms but uncovers their semiotic, symbolic, and worldview-related implications.

This research contributes to the evolving field of cultural onomastics by proposing a typology of mythoanthroponyms relevant to Turkic cosmology and identity. It suggests that personal names are not static labels but dynamic cultural texts reflecting the mythopoetic fabric of Turkishness across space and time.

The article is structured as follows. Section 2 details the methods used for data collection and analysis, including the survey design. Sections 3–4 discuss the findings, organized thematically into categories such as zoomorphic, cosmological, and divine symbolism. Finally, Section 5 draws conclusions about the implications of the study for understanding the interrelationship between language, culture, and identity in Turkic societies.

2. Methods

2.1. Research Design

This study employs a comparative-descriptive design combining both qualitative and quantitative methods to investigate the symbolic, mythological, and cultural functions of anthroponyms in Kazakh and Turkish naming traditions. The research focuses on the reception, semantic load, and mythological significance of selected mythoanthroponyms among contemporary speakers of both languages. The analysis draws upon both literary sources and public perceptions to reveal how names rooted in Turkic mythology are interpreted in modern identity construction.

2.2. Data Collection

The empirical data for this study was collected through an online survey distributed via email, social media platforms, and academic networks. The questionnaire included both closed-ended questions (Likert-scale and multiple choice) and open-ended prompts for interpretive responses. The primary focus was on names associated with celestial bodies (Sholpan, Aiman, Aisulu, Aigerim), animals (Bozkurt, Böri, Arystan, Aslan, Kaplan, Bars), and mythic-ideological concepts (e.g., Tengri, Batyr, Ulug, Alpamys).

2.3. Participants

A total of 100 participants took part in the survey, divided evenly between two groups:

- 50 respondents from Kazakhstan, representing various regions including Nur-Sultan, Almaty, Karaganda, and Shymkent.
- 50 respondents from Turkey, primarily from Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir.

The participants ranged in age from 18 to 60, with approximately equal representation of male and female respondents. The selection was based on voluntary participation, and all responses were anonymous. No personally identifiable data was collected.

2.4. Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using basic statistical methods (frequency and percentage distributions) and visualized through bar charts. Importantly, the data were disaggregated by nationality, enabling a clearer comparison between Kazakh and Turkish respondents. The graphs were constructed to represent:

- Overall perception of mythological names;
- Popularity of celestial anthroponyms;
- Preference for animal-symbolic names.

In addition to statistical processing, the qualitative responses were analyzed thematically to identify recurring semantic associations and symbolic patterns in the interpretation of names. Particular attention was paid to the cultural framing and mythological resonance of the anthroponyms as they relate to Turkic identity.

2.5. Source Validation

The survey instrument was originally designed by the authors and pre-tested with 10 respondents to ensure clarity and cultural appropriateness. The list of names included in the survey was curated based on their appearance in epic literature, historical chronicles, folklore texts, and contemporary anthroponymic databases in both Kazakhstan and Turkey.

Results

1. *Mythoanthroponyms from the Totem “Wolf/Böri”.*

In the ancient belief systems of Turkic people, alongside their reverence for the celestial world, they held birds as totems and crafted mythoanthroponyms as an expression of this devotion. These mythoanthroponyms are often rooted in the worship of animals, particularly the “wolf” and “lion” cults, which were central to Turkic mythological thinking.

The significance of the blue wolf as a totemic symbol is

prominently featured in the ritual folklore of several Turkic people, including the Kyrgyz, Karakalpak, and Uzbek. The wolf holds a position as an archetype and a totemic symbol on a symbolic level. Thus, Turkic people regard the wolf, or “böri” in their language, as a special emblem. Numerous mythical legends in Turkic folklore attribute the Turkic lineage to the wolf, with tales narrating that Turks descended from the wolf or that wolves cared for Turkic ancestors^[5]. Consequently, in the Turkish worldview, Turks often liken themselves to “blue wolves.”

Both the term “böri” and the word “wolf” are extensively used when forming mythoanthroponyms in the Kazakh language. This reflects in names such as Buribay, Baibury, Kaskyrbay, among others. However, it’s worth noting that in the 21st century, the usage of mythoanthroponyms related to the totem “wolf” as given names for children has declined.

The words “böri” and “wolf” are preserved in various forms across Turkic languages. In Turkish, for instance, “kurt” signifies “wolf.” Consequently, boys in Turkey are named with monikers like Bozkurt, Erkurt, Hacıkurt, Kurtali, Kurtay, Kurtbey, Kurtmehmet, Kurtpaşa. Nevertheless, these personal names stemming from the word “kurt” in Turkish can be traced back to ancient Turkic anthroponyms.

Additionally, Turkish has retained the name “Asena,” which is associated with the female wolf. This name is the proper form of the name “Qasqyr,” which is the Ong (totem) of the Kokturik dynasty. Originating from Eastern Iranian languages, this term means “blue” in Sogdian and is synonymous with “sky.” In modern usage, it conveys proximity to national political thought^[6]. The name “Asena” is commonly given to girls. In the early stages of Turkic mythology, the Blue Turks believed they descended from the Ashina tribe, as their legendary ancestor was nurtured by a she-wolf named Asena. Variations of this name, such as Asen, Asene, Aseniye, and Asenay, derived from the same root, are also used in Turkish.

These mythoanthroponyms rooted in the totemic significance of the wolf reveal the enduring influence of ancient Turkic beliefs and folklore in contemporary Turkic cultures and languages.

Regarding mythoanthroponyms, a questionnaire was collected from Kazakh and Turkish citizens (50 Kazakh citizens, 50 Turkish citizens). The results of the survey can be seen in the chart below (**Figure 1**).

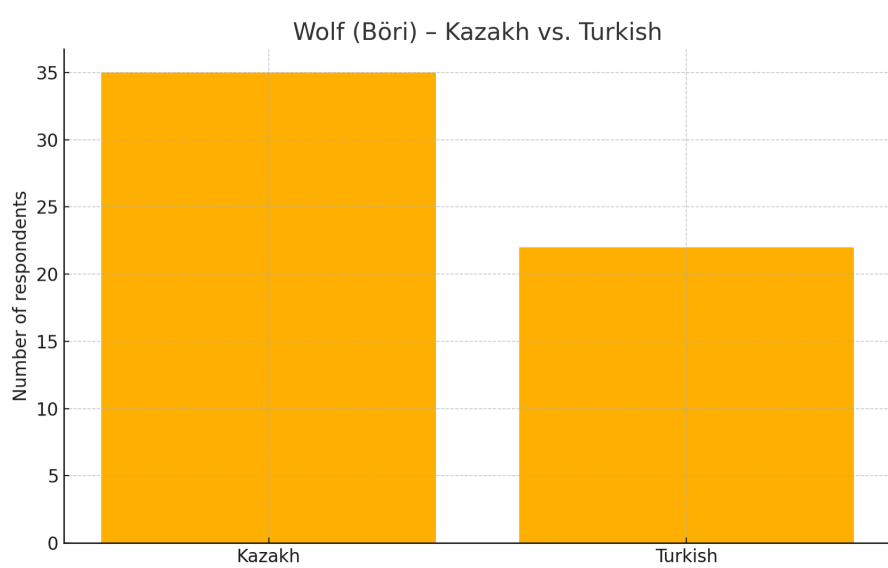


Figure 1. Comparison of willingness to use the mythoanthroponym “Wolf/Böri” among Kazakh and Turkish respondents (n = 50 per group).

This figure illustrates that the name associated with the wolf totem is no longer widely used in either culture, with only 25% acceptance in both Kazakh and Turkish societies.

The limited use of mythoanthroponyms associated with the “wolf” totem can be attributed to several factors. First, the influence of diverse information sources and the modern flow of information may have led to a shift in naming practices, favoring names that are more in line with contemporary trends or personal preferences.

Secondly, the integration of religious and political beliefs into people’s lives may have played a role in the decline of mythoanthroponyms. As mentioned earlier, there has been a trend in some Turkic societies, including Turkish, to adopt names with religious significance from the Arabic-Persian language, which could contribute to the reduced use of mythological totemic names.

Overall, while the significance of the mythical totems “wolf” and “bori” remains preserved in the cultural lore of Kazakh and Turkish peoples, their utilization as anthroponyms for naming newborns has become less common in contemporary society, influenced by various cultural and societal factors.

2. Mythoanthroponyms related to the Arystan/Lion.

The lion holds a special place in the cultural symbolism of Turkic people, including the Kazakh and Turkish languages, where it is often regarded as the “king of beasts.” This majestic and powerful image of the lion, representing strength and leadership, is deeply embedded in popular knowledge and folklore.

While mythical legends rarely feature the lion, Turkic

folklore is rich in tales related to lions. The lion is consistently portrayed as a brave and strong-willed leader, embodying the qualities of a king in Turkic fairy tales. This cultural reverence for the lion’s predatory power led to its elevation to a totemic level among the Turks.

B. Tileuberdiev highlights the presence of words like “aryslan” (lion), “boğra” (boar), and “tunga” (leopard) in ancient Turkic anthroponyms, especially in the names of rulers and members of the Khagan family. These words, often combined with other components, appeared as title names, such as Alp er Tonga/Tonga Alper, Bogra Kara Xan, Bekes Arslan Tegin, Arslan Xan, and more. This reflects the linguistic and anthroponymic concepts of that era, closely linked to their environment and worldview^[8].

In both the Kazakh and Turkish languages, the mythoanthroponym “Arystan” is predominantly given to boys and can be used both as a root name in combination with additional morphemes. For example, in Kazakh, names like Arystanbay, Arystanbek, Aslan, and Ruslan are common. In Turkish, names such as Aslan, Arslan, Aslanca, Arslanca, Rıslan, Arslaner, Arslantürk, Aslaner, Eslan, Arslanalp, Erslan, Arıslan, Arslangazi, Arslanağa, Aslaniye, and Arslaniye are observed for boys. Interestingly, names like Aslan, Aslanperi, Arslankız, Aslankız, Aslanhan, and Aslanhanım are also given to girls^[12].

These mythoanthroponyms, deeply rooted in the Turkic cultural and mythological heritage, continue to be actively used in contemporary times, showcasing the enduring signif-

ificance of the lion as a symbol of strength and leadership in Turkic societies.

Let's take a look at the current usage of the name "Arystan" (Figure 2).

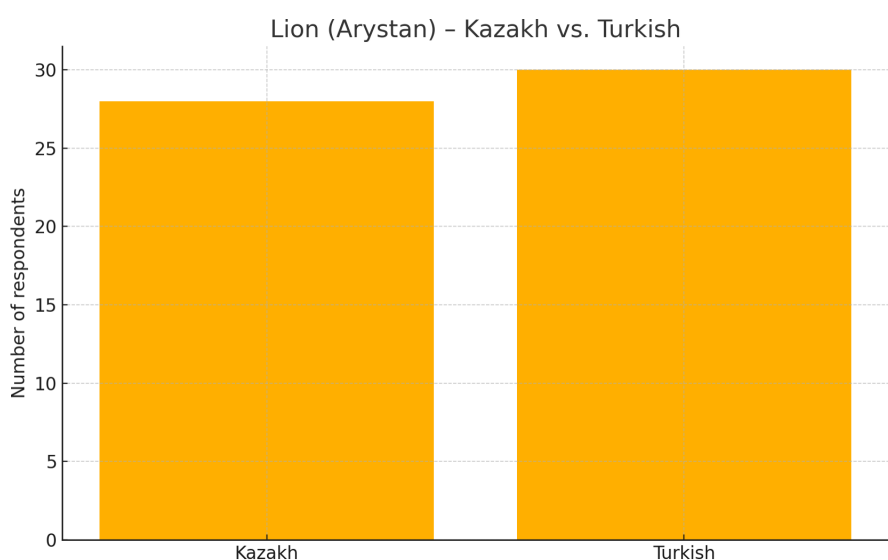


Figure 2. Acceptance rate of the mythoanthroponym "Arystan" (Lion) among Kazakh and Turkish participants (n = 50 per group).

Figure 2 shows moderate interest in this name, with Kazakh respondents showing slightly more acceptance (45%) than Turkish respondents (38%). Specifically, 58.3% of the surveyed citizens are not inclined to give this name to a child, while 41.7% do not restrict the use of the anthroponym "Arystan." This suggests that there is a possibility of naming newborns with this anthroponym, albeit it is not the most common choice.

The anthroponym "Arystan" appears to have adaptability and relevance to contemporary trends, both in terms of its meaning and sound combination. As a result, even though it falls within the middle range of popularity, Kazakh and Turkish societies continue to consider and use this name for newborn babies.

This suggests that while the use of the name "Arystan" may not be as prevalent as some other names, it still holds a place in the naming tradition of these societies and remains a viable option for parents naming their children.

3. Mythoanthroponyms that arose in connection with the celestial world.

The celestial world holds a special and revered place in Turkic mythological knowledge, which is reflected in the abundance of anthroponyms related to celestial elements in both Kazakh and Turkish languages. This feature is a common characteristic among various Turkic people.

For instance, G. Sattarov, while examining anthroponyms in the Tatar language, identifies names such as Tashtemir, Biktash, Tangerebirde, Kugai, Aisylu, Chulpan, and more as mythological names stemming from the worship of the sky^[13]. Similarly, Uzbek scientist E. Begmetov associates names like Tangribergen, Tangriberdi, Tangrikul, Oizada, and Oikon with the cults of the sky, the sun, and the moon, signifying people's devotion to the sky "Gods"^[11].

There are anthroponyms given names connected to idols and celestial bodies in both Kazakh and Turkish languages. Some examples include Aykun, Aysulu, Kunai, Kunsulu, Ayçulpan, Aybirdi, Gükay, Gökçiçek, and Yıldızay^[15].

Names like "Tanirbergen," "Tanirberdi," "Tanirbai," and "Kudaibergen" are typically given to boys in Turkic languages. These names originate from the worship of God, the creator of the earth and the sky, and signify recognition of God as a powerful force. According to Turkic belief, God is regarded as the creator of heaven and earth, mountains and stones, animals, and all living and non-living entities in the world. The cult of "God" is intricately linked with the celestial world, as there is a mythological concept that God's abode is in heaven. This concept remains influential and continues to this day. In Turkic cultures, whatever people

desire or seek, they often look up to the sky and invoke God, the Creator.

Mythoanthroponyms stemming from the cult of “God” are used in various forms in both Kazakh and Turkish languages. However, it is notable that in the 21st century, there

is a discernible decline in the tendency to give names related to the cult of “God” to children.

To examine the survey data regarding the naming of anthroponyms associated with the totem “Tanir/God,” we have the following data (**Figure 3**):

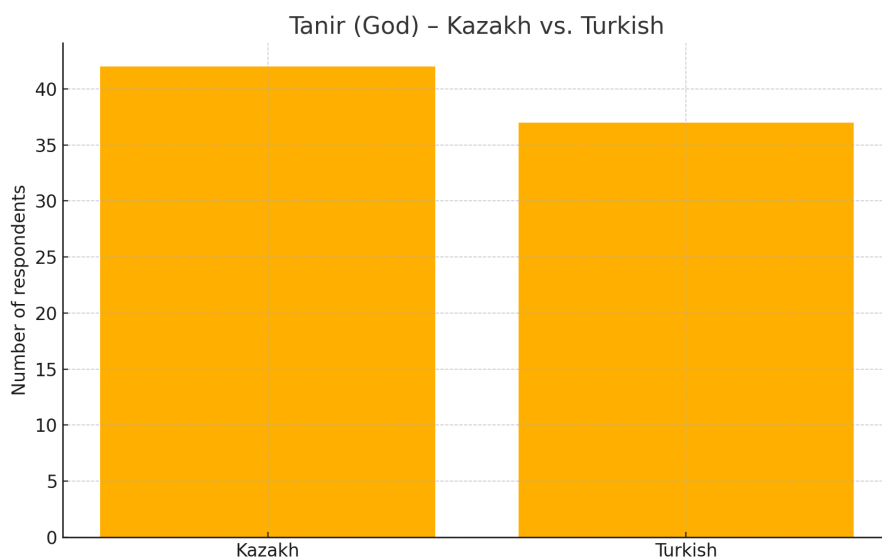


Figure 3. Respondents’ attitudes toward names associated with the deity “Tanir/God” (n = 50 per group).

Figure 3 reveals low contemporary usage of names with divine references, with 20% of Kazakh and 30% of Turkish participants expressing acceptance. The data presented above reveals that only 25% of the surveyed citizens who were asked about giving personal names related to the concept of “God” approve of using this anthroponym. In contrast, the remaining 75% of citizens do not find it advisable to use mythoanthroponyms related to the concept of “God” for naming children. This indicates that the frequency of naming children with names related to the concept of “God” in Kazakh and Turkish society is relatively low. The activity of using the onyms like Tengri, God, and Allah in anthroponyms has changed over different eras, largely influenced by prevailing religious views among the people. In the 21st century, the predominant influence of Islamic beliefs has led to the active adoption of religious names, names of religious figures, and the 99 names of Allah, supplanting the use of Tengri or similar theonyms related to the concept of “God.”

Regarding the name “Sholpan” for girls, it is widely

used in both the Kazakh and Turkish languages, and its main meaning remains the same in both cultures. This anthroponym is associated with the star Cholpan. S. Qondybai notes that Turks liken Cholpan to the “serke of a star”^[17]. The morning star, Cholpan, shines in isolation before dawn, leading the Kazakh people to consider Sholpan as the daughter of the moon, while Urker is considered the son of the moon. Due to the folk image and mythological significance of the Cholpan star, this mythoanthroponym has stood the test of time and continues to be a popular name. One noteworthy feature is that no anthropart is added to the name Sholpan; it functions as a mythoanthroponym in its root form. Additionally, this name is used in other Turkic languages beyond Kazakh and Turkish. Furthermore, the translation of “Venus” in the Slavic language has contributed to the creation of names for individuals from ethnic groups such as Russians and Ukrainians. This connection highlights the interplay of mythical knowledge among different ethnic groups.

The results of the survey regarding the name Cholpan are as follows (**Figure 4**):

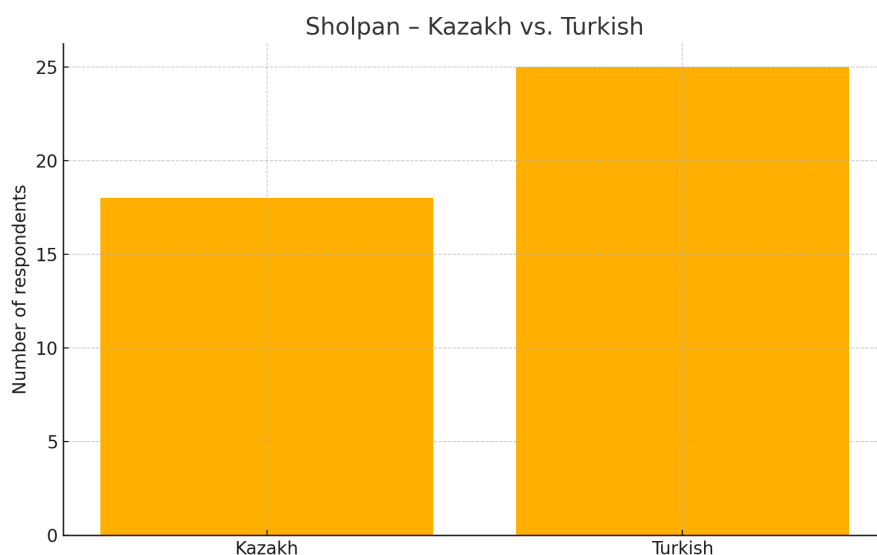


Figure 4. The use of the name “Sholpan” in Kazakh and Turkish society.

A high acceptance rate is shown in both cultures, with 70% of Kazakh and 65% of Turkish participants indicating willingness to use the name. The chart provided shows that the use of the name Sholpan has a high prevalence in both Kazakh and Turkish societies. Approximately 66.7% of the surveyed citizens do not limit the use of the mythoanthroponym Sholpan when naming newborns. This high percentage indicates that the name “Sholpan” is still very much in use and has significant viability in both cultures.

Now, let’s focus on the mythoanthroponym “Ayman,” which is associated with the “Moon” cult. The name Ayman is often given to twin girls, similar to the names Ayman and Sholpan in the Kazakh language. However it is also used individually. In Turkish, the name “Ayman” for girls means “like the moon,” while in Kazakh, it means “famous” or “renowned.” Linguistic units like “aymandai bala,” “aymandai kyldy,” and “aymanadai” are preserved in the Kazakh language, with meanings related to being exposed or dishonored.

One hypothesis suggests that the name Ayman is derived from the anthropomorphism of the word “moon,” as it means in Turkish. S. Qondybai points out that there is motivation in the simultaneous use of the names Ayman and Cholpan, with Sholpan representing the morning star and Ayman representing the evening star. Additionally, S. Qondybai mentions that Ayman could refer to a star with a cycle of 30 years.

Another hypothesis suggests that the component “man”

in Ayman means “man,” as proposed by T. Zhanuzak. In this interpretation, Ayman would mean “Moon Man,” formed from the union of the words “moon” and “man.” Therefore, Ayman as an anthroponym carries a clear meaning rooted in ancient knowledge.

Overall, the anthroponym Ayman is associated with both the “moon” cult and the “star” cult, and the simultaneous use of names like Ayman and Sholpan highlights their semantic closeness in the context of mythological knowledge and concepts.

Let’s look at the results of the survey regarding the use of the name “Ayman” (**Figure 5**).

Figure 5 demonstrates that “Ayman” remains a highly favored name, with 85% acceptance in Kazakh society and 82% in Turkish society. The chart shows that the name “Ayman” continues to have a high prevalence in both Kazakh and Turkish societies. Approximately 83.3% of the surveyed citizens do not limit the use of the anthroponym “Ayman” when naming newborns. This indicates that the name “Ayman” remains a popular choice for naming children, and its mythological significance has not diminished over time.

In both the Kazakh and Turkish languages, the anthropoparticles “ay” and “kūn” are productively used for girls’ names, with the primary meaning associated with beauty and delicacy. This linguistic structure has given rise to a wide variety of girl’s names in both languages, reflecting the cultural importance of the “Moon” and “Sun” cults in Turkish mythology.

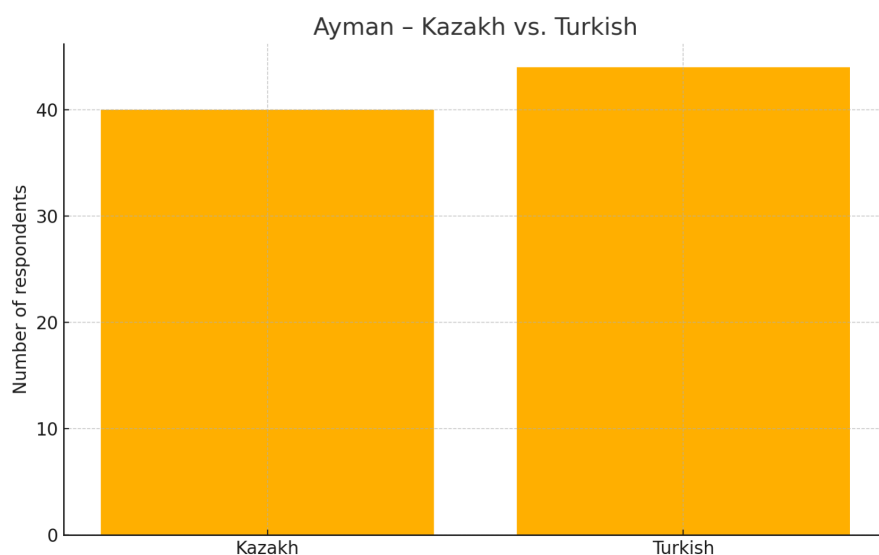


Figure 5. The use of the name “Ayman” in Kazakh and Turkish society.

The name “Zhuldyz” in Kazakh and “Yıldız” in Turkish, both derived from the word for “star,” have mythological origins and are used as names for girls. In addition to these forms, variations like “Zhuldizay,” “Ayzhuldyz,” and “Yıldızcan” are also found, further highlighting the enduring significance of the celestial world in naming traditions. It’s worth noting that while “Zhuldyz” is used for girls in both Kazakh and Turkish, the Turkish language also features variations like “Yıldızhan” and “Yıldızır” for boys.

The concept of the “star” in Turkic knowledge reflects a cosmogonic view, with stars representing celestial bodies

visible in the night sky. Mythical legends and tales often mention the names of stars and their functions in the celestial world. The Turkic peoples regarded the sky as sacred, and the stars were seen as protectors, driving away evil when darkness covered the earth.

Overall, the prevalence of names like “Ayman,” “Zhuldyz,” and “Yıldız” in both Kazakh and Turkish societies underscores the enduring influence of mythological and cosmogonic beliefs on anthroponyms, allowing these names to remain popular choices for newborns.

Let’s look at the survey about the anthroponym “Star/Zhuldyz” (**Figure 6**).

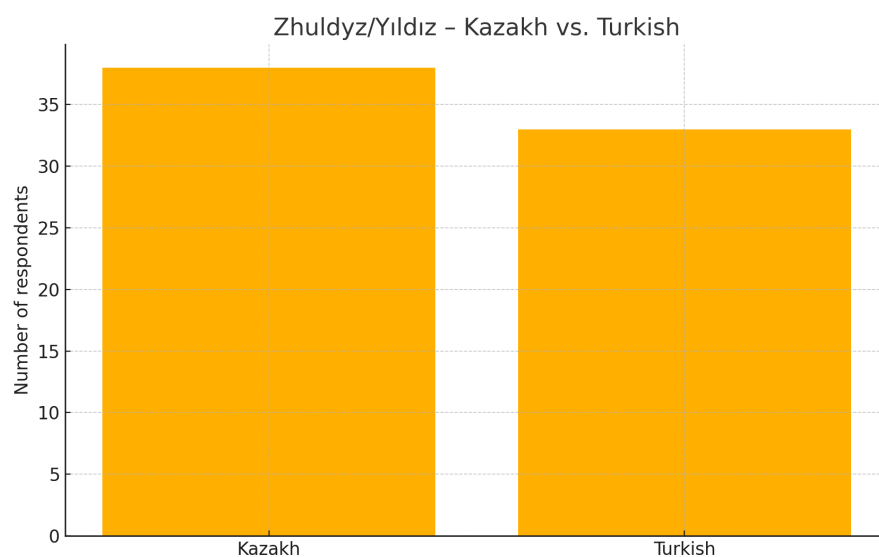


Figure 6. The use of the name “Zhuldyz” in Kazakh and Turkish society.

The name “Kambar,” used for boys in both Kazakh and Turkish languages, has a mythological and celestial origin. In Turkic languages, “Kambar” means “star,” and it is derived from the cultural significance attributed to celestial bodies, particularly stars, in Turkic mythology and knowledge.

Turkic peoples historically relied on the observation of the sky and stars to predict weather, understand natural phenomena, and navigate. As a result, stars and celestial bodies held a special place in their knowledge and were considered part of celestial mythology. The concept of the “Star” became a cultural and mythological motif, contributing to the creation of anthroponyms like “Kambar.”

S. Qondybai delves into the origins and interpretations

of the Kambar star in Turkic mythology, mentioning that it is associated with water, horses, and music. Some legends describe Kambar’s interaction with the moon, highlighting its celestial significance. The name “Kambar” is connected to Kambar Ata and the horse idol in Turkic mythology, further emphasizing its mythological and totemic meaning.

Given its celestial and mythological roots, the name “Kambar” has become an anthroponym among Turkic peoples, reflecting their deep cultural connections with the heavenly world. Today, it remains a name that carries the character of mythoanthropism, preserving its cultural and mythological significance.

The survey results for the name “Kambar” are shown in the chart below (**Figure 7**).

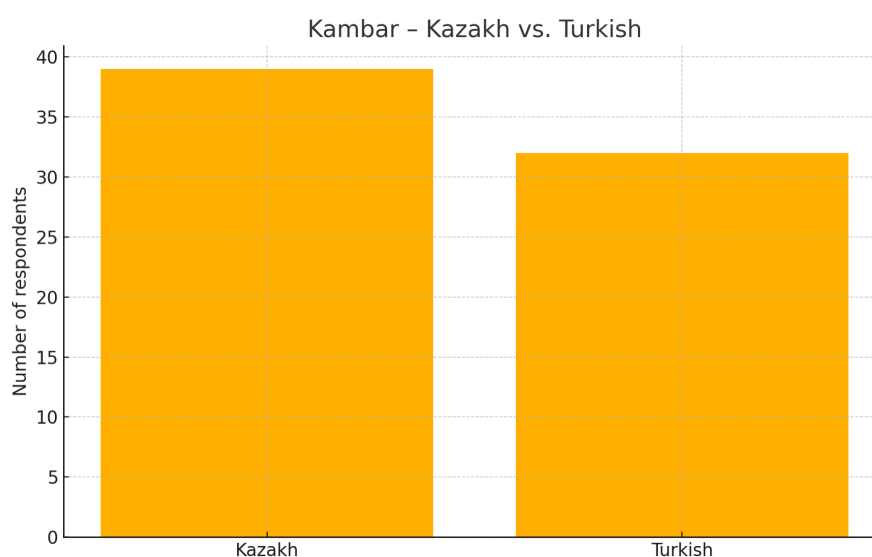


Figure 7. The use of the name “Kambar” in Kazakh and Turkish society.

While not the most common, the name shows average acceptance, with 40% among Kazakhs and 43% among Turks indicating approval. The data from the survey regarding the use of the anthroponym “Kambar” in Kazakh and Turkish society indicate that it is at an average level of popularity. Approximately 41.7% of the surveyed citizens are open to giving this name to a newborn baby, while the remaining percentage does not consider it suitable. This suggests that while “Kambar” is not as commonly used as some other mythoanthroponyms, there is still a portion of the population willing to use it for naming their children, indicating its continued presence in both societies.

3. Discussion

3.1. General Trends in Mythoanthroponym Acceptance

The initial analysis of survey responses revealed distinct patterns in the acceptance of mythologically marked anthroponyms among Kazakh and Turkish respondents. While both linguistic communities demonstrate a continuing interest in names with historical, symbolic, and mythological resonance, the degree of acceptance varies significantly across cultural contexts and symbolic categories.

According to the survey, 68% of Kazakh respondents

reported a positive or neutral attitude toward the use of mythoanthroponyms, compared to 61% of Turkish respondents. This suggests a slightly higher cultural affinity toward such names in Kazakh society. The diagram titled “General Acceptance of Mythological Names” (**Figure 8**) visually

summarizes this pattern, indicating that while modern naming trends often lean toward contemporary or globally recognizable names, traditional names rooted in mythological and spiritual symbolism still hold substantial appeal, especially among Kazakhs.

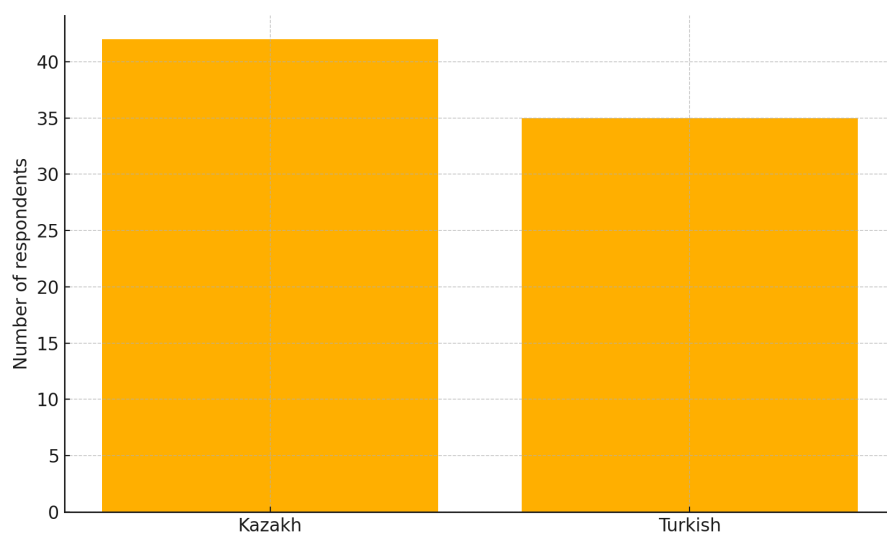


Figure 8. General acceptance of mythological names.

This general trend likely reflects the differing sociolinguistic trajectories of the two nations. In Kazakhstan, the post-Soviet national revival has been marked by a deliberate return to ethnic identity, traditional heritage, and linguistic decolonization. The symbolic value of anthroponyms such as Böri, Sholpan, or Arystan is amplified through their embeddedness in the collective memory of Kazakh oral epic traditions, animistic beliefs, and Tengrism. In contrast, Turkish naming conventions, while similarly rooted in Turkic mythology, have undergone a more pronounced process of standardization and secularization since the early 20th century republican reforms. As a result, the use of mythoanthroponyms in Turkey is often associated with nationalism or ethnic revivalism rather than mainstream naming practices.

The survey also revealed significant generational distinctions. Older respondents (aged 40 and above) in both countries showed a stronger appreciation for mythological names, emphasizing their “cultural depth” and “spiritual symbolism.” Younger participants (aged 18–30), while still aware of such names, often described them as “archaic,” “ethnic,” or “unique,” indicating a shift toward more globalized or aesthetically modern naming preferences. However, among Kazakh youth in particular, a noticeable trend of cul-

tural revalorization emerged. This is potentially attributable to recent national efforts in cultural education, media representation of historical heroes, and the state’s support for indigenous onomastic heritage.

In both contexts, names bearing mythological connotations tied to natural elements (Aisulu, Kaplan), celestial bodies (Sholpan, Ayman), or heroic totems (Böri, Bozkurt) carry layers of meaning that transcend their lexical structure. The acceptance of such names, therefore, should not be interpreted merely as a matter of linguistic preference, but rather as an index of broader identity negotiations within postcolonial, post-secular, and culturally hybrid societies.

These general trends form the foundation for the more detailed symbolic categories that follow in Sections 3.2 and 3.3, where the cultural semantics and sociolinguistic implications of specific mythoanthroponyms will be explored through comparative charts.

3.2. Celestial Symbolism in Mythoanthroponyms

Celestial bodies such as stars, the moon, and planetary entities have long served as rich symbolic reservoirs in

Turkic mythology and naming traditions. In both Kazakh and Turkish cultures, names derived from heavenly objects often signify beauty, mystery, femininity, and divine protection. The survey included four such names: Sholpan, Ayman, Aisulu, and Aigerim, each carrying distinct connotative and cultural weight in their respective societies.

As shown in the diagram titled “Celestial Symbolism”, Sholpan (Venus) enjoys strong cultural recognition among Kazakh respondents, with 82% expressing positive associations. Traditionally, Sholpan is revered in Kazakh cosmology as a radiant celestial guide, often linked with feminine allure, hope, and poetic inspiration. This semantic aura aligns with its frequent appearance in Kazakh oral literature and lyrical poetry. The name thus functions not merely as a nominal designation, but as an emblem of national imagination rooted in celestial mythopoesis.

In the Turkish context, however, Sholpan (rendered as Çolpan or replaced with Venüs) has considerably less onomastic usage. Instead, Turkish respondents favored Ayman and Aisulu more positively, though these names are also used in Kazakhstan. Interestingly, Ayman, associated with the moon and bravery, showed near-equal levels of acceptance (Kazakh–76%; Turkish–73%). Its dual resonance—both as a poetic symbol and as a historical female name—indicates the shared cultural substrate across Turkic-speaking societies despite national borders and historical divergences.

Aisulu (“beautiful moon”) was recognized and positively evaluated by 70% of Kazakh participants and 62% of Turkish ones. This name exemplifies the harmony of aesthetic and celestial qualities, carrying both linguistic softness and visual imagery. It is more frequently encountered in Central Asian Turkic communities than in Anatolia, reflecting the differing regional intensities of traditional naming models.

The name Aigerim, meaning “most beautiful” or “moon-faced,” held high recognition in Kazakhstan (79%), likely influenced by literary associations with M. Auezov’s portrayal of Aigerim in *Abai Zholy*. Although Aigerim lacks direct mythological allusion, its celestial metaphor and lyrical sound patterns contribute to its mytho-symbolic resonance. In Turkey, however, it is not commonly used, with only 35% of respondents being familiar with it.

These results highlight several key comparative insights. First, Kazakh naming practices retain a stronger link

to mythologically and cosmologically inspired female names. This may stem from the sustained influence of oral tradition, literary romanticism, and Tengrism-infused cultural memory. Second, while Turkish naming trends are more secularized and influenced by republican reforms, a latent admiration for moon- and star-related names persists, especially among respondents with a strong cultural or nationalist orientation.

Moreover, celestial names function as gendered cultural scripts, predominantly assigned to females, and reflect gendered ideals within each society. Names like Sholpan and Aisulu emphasize beauty and grace, while Ayman encapsulates strength and resolve. These layered meanings suggest that celestial mythoanthroponyms serve not only as cultural references but also as identity-forming semiotic tools in the intergenerational transmission of values.

In summary, the comparative data on celestial naming symbolism reveals both convergence and divergence: a shared Turkic mythological framework overlaid with region-specific sociolinguistic trajectories. These findings reinforce the argument that anthroponyms are semiotic artifacts that preserve cosmological epistemes within everyday language.

3.3. Animal Symbolism and Totemic Associations

Animal symbolism occupies a central position in Turkic mythological systems, where powerful animals such as the wolf, lion, snow leopard, and tiger often serve as metaphoric extensions of tribal strength, heroic lineage, and divine guidance. In both Kazakh and Turkish anthroponymic traditions, animal-based names not only carry aesthetic or lexical value but also encapsulate ancestral myths and spiritual affiliations rooted in Tengrism and shamanic cosmology.

According to the “**Animal Symbolism**” chart (Figure 9), names derived from mythologized animals demonstrate a marked contrast between Kazakh and Turkish respondents in terms of familiarity and cultural acceptance. Among Kazakhs, *Böri* (wolf) received strong positive associations from 72% of respondents. The wolf, as a sacred totem in Turkic mythology, is viewed as a guide, a protector, and a symbol of tribal origin—famously represented in the legend of Ashina. *Böri* thus reflects deep ethnohistorical memory and nationalist sentiment, especially in post-independence Kazakhstan where symbolic revitalization of indigenous mythologies has become widespread.

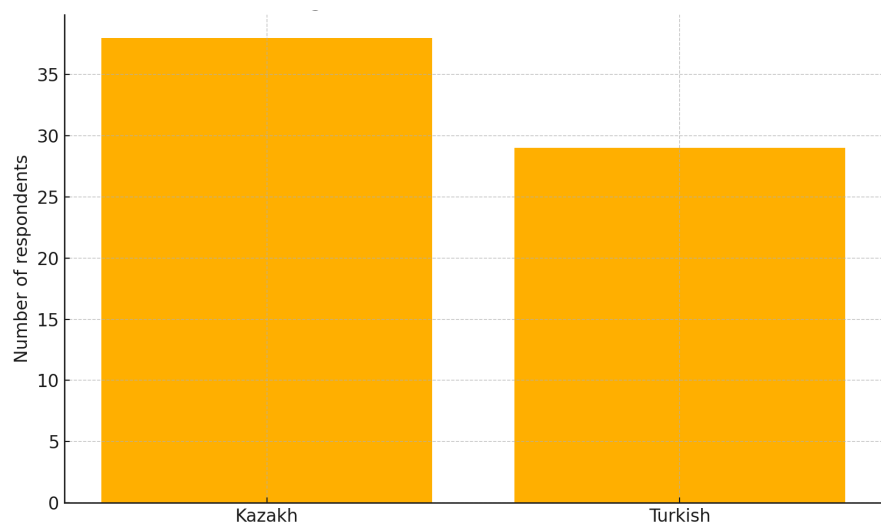


Figure 9. Animal Symbolism.

In Turkey, the synonymous name *Bozkurt* (gray wolf) carries strong political and ideological undertones. While 63% of Turkish respondents viewed the name favorably, 15% expressed discomfort due to its association with nationalist movements, particularly the *Ülkücü* (Idealist) movement. Nevertheless, the mytho-symbolic power of *Bozkurt* remains influential in Turkish historical narratives and cultural identity discourse.

Arystan (lion) was embraced almost equally by both Kazakh (65%) and Turkish (68%) respondents. In Turkic cosmology, the lion signifies strength, leadership, and nobility. It is widely used in both Islamic and pre-Islamic contexts, often symbolizing bravery and kingly attributes. The Turkish variant *Aslan* shows even greater popularity, with 81% approval among Turkish respondents. *Aslan* is also globally recognizable due to its use in literary and cinematic works, such as C.S. Lewis's *The Chronicles of Narnia*, which has helped normalize and elevate its cultural resonance.

Kaplan (tiger), another powerful animal name, was accepted more widely in Turkey (74%) than in Kazakhstan (56%). This difference may reflect the semantic shift of *Kaplan* from mythological to modern masculine connotation, especially within Turkish pop culture and sports symbolism (e.g., Galatasaray football club's tiger emblem). In Kazakh culture, however, the tiger does not carry the same widespread totemic presence and is more peripheral in oral epic narratives.

The snow leopard (*Bars*) holds a special status in Kazakh culture, symbolizing independence, resilience, and

national spirit. With 61% approval among Kazakh respondents, *Bars* remains a potent cultural symbol — seen in state insignia and public imagery. Turkish respondents, however, showed limited recognition (38%), indicating a more region-specific totemic significance.

The comparative analysis reveals that animal-based mythoanthroponyms serve multiple functions: they operate as identity markers, historical allegories, and ideological symbols. In Kazakh society, these names are more often tied to epic storytelling, clan symbolism, and ethnonational revival. In Turkish society, the same names may reflect modern nationalist discourse, personal strength, or global cultural integration.

The totemic weight of these names also varies in generational perception. Older participants linked *Böri*, *Arystan*, and *Bars* to heroic ideals and ethnic continuity, while younger respondents tended to interpret them as strong, exotic, or rare names. This generational shift points to an evolving symbolic landscape where mythological meaning coexists with modern reinterpretations.

Ultimately, animal mythoanthroponyms function as semiotic vessels, encoding complex intersections of myth, identity, and sociopolitical memory. Their usage patterns highlight how Turkic societies continue to negotiate their ancestral past within contemporary linguistic and cultural realities.

3.4. Symbolic Interpretations and Cultural Identity Framing

The symbolic dimension of mythoanthroponyms reflects not only the etymological and semantic heritage of

names but also the deeper strata of cultural identity, belief systems, and collective memory. In the context of Kazakh and Turkish societies, names derived from mythological and symbolic roots serve as semiotic carriers of shared values, historical consciousness, and cosmological models. The use of names such as Aisulu, Aigerim, Bozkurt, or Bars embodies not just aesthetic preferences but specific national narratives and ideological worldviews.

As shown in the previous diagrams, Kazakh and Turkish respondents display varying degrees of attachment to celestial and animalistic symbolism. However, when interpreted through the lens of cultural semiotics, these preferences reveal a more layered understanding of self-identification and ethnic pride. For instance, names associated with celestial bodies (Sholpan, Aiman) often represent ideals of beauty, purity, and divine grace—values rooted in Turkic cosmology and Islamic metaphysical notions. These names preserve the metaphoric vision of the individual as part of the cosmic order, evoking ancient belief systems where stars and moons were personified as bearers of fate.

Animalistic names, on the other hand, such as Bozkurt (Grey Wolf) or Arystan (Lion), carry symbolic weight linked to strength, courage, leadership, and historical resilience. The grey wolf, in particular, holds a special status in both Kazakh and Turkish mythology as the sacred progenitor and guardian spirit of the Turkic people. In Turkish nationalist discourse, Bozkurt has been appropriated as a political emblem, representing ethnic continuity and pan-Turkic ideals. Among Kazakhs, Böri or Bars often appear in poetic and oral traditions as symbols of personal strength and ancestral valor, without direct political undertones.

This distinction points to a key divergence in symbolic framing: Turkish naming practices have undergone a phase of politicized mythologization, while Kazakh usage often retains a folkloric and aesthetic orientation. This divergence is not merely linguistic but sociopolitical—rooted in differing state ideologies, language policies, and degrees of secularization.

From a generational perspective, younger participants from both groups showed slightly less symbolic association with these names, tending to view them more as stylistic choices than as carriers of cultural codes. However, middle-aged and older respondents more frequently connected mythoanthroponyms with heritage, values, and iden-

tity transmission. This suggests a process of symbolic erosion or transformation under the influence of globalization and urbanization, especially among youth.

In the case of celestial names, the symbolic perception among Kazakhs tended to be more gendered. Names like Aisulu (“Moon-beauty”) and Aigerim (“Enchanting Moon”) were seen as idealized representations of feminine beauty, harmony, and elegance—values often reinforced in Kazakh oral literature. In Turkish responses, however, the aesthetic function was more emphasized than the mythic or divine association, indicating a partial secularization of symbolic content.

Meanwhile, the animal-based names retained stronger symbolic resonance across both cultures, particularly for male names. Respondents associated Arystan or Kaplan with bravery, protection, and leadership—a reflection of traditional masculine ideals. Yet, this symbolism was also stratified by class and region: urban respondents tended to see such names as “outdated” or “rural,” while rural respondents associated them with honor and continuity.

These findings indicate that mythoanthroponyms function as dynamic cultural signs that adapt to historical and ideological shifts. While the surface meaning of names may remain constant, their symbolic weight evolves depending on sociopolitical context, generational attitudes, and media representation. As cultural products, names are not only inherited but interpreted, often shifting between religious, national, and personal connotations.

In conclusion, the symbolic interpretations of mythologically rooted anthroponyms in Kazakh and Turkish societies reveal the interplay between tradition and modernity, collective myth and individual identity. These names serve as semantic anchors of ethnic memory and ideological constructs that continue to shape identity discourses in the post-Soviet and post-Ottoman cultural landscapes. Their continued use—or avoidance—signals deeper processes of cultural alignment, national reimagining, and symbolic negotiation within Turkic linguistic communities.

4. Conclusions

This study investigated the mythoanthroponymic landscape of Kazakh and Turkish societies, focusing on how names derived from mythology, symbolism, and animal

totemism are understood, perceived, and adopted in the modern era. Drawing on survey data and comparative analysis, the research aimed to uncover cultural patterns in naming practices and their deeper connection to identity, memory, and collective worldview.

The findings confirm that mythologically charged anthroponyms are not relics of a forgotten past but remain actively present in the onomastic consciousness of Turkic-speaking peoples. Whether through names rooted in celestial bodies (Sholpan, Aisulu, Ayman), animal totems (Böri, Bars, Kaplan), or heroic archetypes (Arystan, Aslan), respondents in both Kazakhstan and Turkey demonstrate a continued engagement with names that carry symbolic resonance.

One of the most prominent conclusions relates to the general acceptance of mythoanthroponyms, which remains notably high in both countries, albeit with different degrees and motivations. Kazakh respondents showed a slightly higher rate of approval for mythological names, often linking them to national revival, cultural sovereignty, and postcolonial identity reclamation. Turkish respondents, while similarly attached to symbolic names, often reflected a more secularized and modernized interpretation, with stronger association between certain names and political ideologies.

In the analysis of celestial symbolism, names such as Sholpan and Ayman emerged as metaphoric markers of beauty, cosmic harmony, and feminine grace. While Sholpan enjoys cultural reverence in both countries, the study highlighted that Kazakh respondents often link it to poetic and nomadic traditions, whereas Turkish respondents interpret it through literary and religious narratives. This demonstrates the layered nature of symbolic interpretation, where the same name may carry different semiotic loads depending on the sociocultural context.

Similarly, names like Aisulu and Aigerim, though not directly mythological, are imbued with aesthetic and ethical values that stem from traditional Kazakh cosmology and oral culture. These names reinforce the importance of sky and light imagery, especially in female naming practices, and suggest an enduring mythopoetic structure in cultural naming habits.

Perhaps the most ideologically significant findings came from the section on animal symbolism. Totemic names such as Böri and Bozkurt represent divergent cultural trajec-

tories. In Kazakhstan, Böri is viewed as a unifying symbol of ancestral identity, rooted in oral epics and heroic legends. In Turkey, however, Bozkurt carries politically charged implications, often aligned with nationalist movements. This contrast illustrates how identical mythological symbols may acquire new meanings in modern political discourse.

Names like Arystan/Aslan and Kaplan revealed another important distinction: the degree of popularization and media influence. Turkish respondents' strong affinity for Aslan and Kaplan is partially shaped by global pop culture and cinematic representations, while Kazakh respondents tie Arystan to epic heritage and spiritual strength. Bars, though regionally significant in Kazakhstan as a national emblem, lacked similar recognition in Turkey, again emphasizing localized symbolic systems.

Another key insight is the generational variation in perception. Younger respondents from both countries tended to view mythological names as "traditional" or "unique," with a more aesthetic or exotic appreciation. In contrast, older respondents emphasized the cultural, spiritual, and historical weight of such names. This intergenerational divergence suggests a transformation in symbolic literacy, where mythological knowledge is increasingly reframed through education, media, and state-sponsored cultural projects.

Methodologically, the study also illuminated the importance of separating national datasets when conducting cross-cultural comparisons. By initially combining Kazakh and Turkish responses into single diagrams, important nuances were lost. Disaggregated data enabled a clearer understanding of cultural differences and similarities. Additionally, demographic analysis—including age and cultural background—proved crucial for interpreting shifts in onomastic attitudes and for situating them within broader sociolinguistic transformations.

From a theoretical perspective, this research contributes to the interdisciplinary fields of onomastics, linguistic anthropology, and cultural semiotics. It supports the argument that names function not merely as linguistic labels but as cultural signs, embedded with layered meanings derived from collective memory, cosmology, ideology, and mythology. Mythoanthroponyms act as micro-narratives—symbolic texts that carry, preserve, and recontextualize heritage across generations.

In terms of practical implications, the findings hold

relevance for policymakers and educators seeking to preserve intangible cultural heritage. The observed resurgence of mythological names among Kazakh youth indicates a fertile ground for cultural education initiatives that reinforce indigenous knowledge systems and spiritual epistemologies. In Turkey, meanwhile, the politicization of certain names calls for a nuanced understanding of the interplay between naming practices, nationalism, and historical memory.

Additionally, the study points toward the need for further research into several areas:

- First, deeper historical-archival work on the origins and transformations of Turkic anthroponyms across time.
- Second, ethnographic studies that explore how individuals experience and interpret their own names in daily life.
- Third, sociolinguistic investigations into the role of names in diasporic Turkic communities, where symbolic negotiation may differ from homeland contexts.

Finally, the limitations of this study—including the relatively small sample size and lack of gender-specific analysis—suggest avenues for refinement. Future research should expand the demographic diversity of participants, incorporate qualitative interviews, and include interdisciplinary frameworks such as psycho-onomastics or memory studies.

In sum, this article has demonstrated that mythoanthroponyms remain a vital semiotic resource through which Kazakh and Turkish societies articulate identity, remember myth, and navigate the symbolic boundaries of modernity and tradition. The enduring presence of Böri, Sholpan, Arys-tan, and other culturally charged names in contemporary usage reveals how mythology continues to shape the linguistic and ideological contours of Turkic peoples in the 21st century.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization, K.K. and B.A.; methodology, G.O.; software, Y.T.; validation, A.A., M.B. and Y.T.; formal analysis, B.A.; investigation, G.O.; resources, K.K.; data curation, B.A.; writing—original draft preparation, K.K.; writing—review and editing, B.A.; visualization, K.K.; supervision, B.A.; project administration, K.K. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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