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CENTRAL ASIA THROUGH THE LENS OF AN INDIAN TRAVELER: PEOPLE, CUSTOMS, AND TOPONYMY

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Abstract. *Introduction.* The article examines the work of the Indian traveler Mir Izzatullah “Masir-i Bukhara” based on the original source. The Indian traveler’s travelogue to Central Asia was written in Persian. Mir Izzatullah was a representative of the local people who worked for the British East India Company. He went on a trip to Central Asia at the request of William Moorcroft (1767-1825) a representative of the British East India Trading Company. The work contains valuable information about the local people of Central Asia and their lives, geographical names and distance names encountered along the way, and household items. *Research objectives and tasks.* The purpose of the research work is to study the toponyms in Mir Izzatullah’s work and identify the toponyms found in the Turkic language among them and analyze them by dividing them into groups. To identify the terms and job titles in the Turkic language that were used in the Central Asia, Kashgar, and Turfan regions during the traveling years of Mir Izzatullah and to present them in the table with their definitions. The objectives of the research work are to present the original version of more than a hundred Turkic toponyms identified during the study in the table, along with their definitions. To analyze the information identified in the traveler's notes regarding the life and the standard of living in Central Asia, compare it with other historical dates and share the results. *Methods and materials.* Since the study worked with the original manuscript, this study used the methods of textual, thematic, and documentary analysis. In order to identify and study the main thematic issues in the travelogue, a discourse analysis was conducted to compare the original text of the work “Masir-i Bukhara” with its translations in English and Russian. The article used the method of content analysis to quantitatively and qualitatively systematize the main concepts, toponyms, or ethnographic characteristics frequently found in the travelogue. In addition, interdisciplinary methods were used along with the historical-anthropological method. The manuscript of the “Masir-i Bukhara” preserved in the National Library of France (Supplement Persan 1346) was used as the main material for the research. *Results.* The article uses textual, thematic and content analysis methods to access previously little-considered information in the travelogue of the Indian traveler Mir Izzatullah. In particular, a comprehensive analysis of the words yool, qulash, talqān, tübut, which have been overlooked by researchers, was conducted, and the fact that these words are still in use in the Kazakh language was clarified through examples. The abundance of Turkic toponyms in the work and

the fact that most of them have been preserved in their original form despite various political situations indicate the stability of Turkic toponyms and that they have not gone out of use despite going through difficult times. *Conclusions.* The article identifies and makes a complete list of all Turkic toponyms in the work of the Indian traveler. The Turkic toponyms are divided into topics according to the routes traveled by the Indian traveler, and the results are presented in a table with their original versions and definitions. Mir Izzatullah's information about Turkmen, Uzbek and Kazakh horses is studied in a comparative manner from the perspective of historical events. Among them, comprehensive information was provided about the Karabair horse, which is a horse widespread in Central Asia.

Keywords: Mir Izzatulla, Central Asia, India, Kashgar, Kokand, Bukhara, travelogues, Kazakh horse.

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ҮНДІ САЯХАТШЫСЫНЫҢ КӨЗҚАРАСЫНДАҒЫ ОРТАЛЫҚ АЗИЯ: ХАЛЫҚ, ӘДЕТ-ҒҰРЫПТАР ЖӘНЕ ТОПОНИМИКА

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Андатпа. *Kipicne.* Мақалада үнділік саяхатшы Мир Иззатулланың “Масир-и Бухоро” шығармасы түпнұсқа дереккөзге сүйене отырып қарастырылды. Үнділік саяхатшының Орталық Азияға жасаған сапарнамасы парсы тілінде жазылған. Мир Иззатулла Британ Ост-Индия компаниясына жұмыс істеген жергілікті халықтың өкілі. Орталық Азия сапарына Британ Ост-Индия сауда-саттық компаниясының өкілі Уильям Муркрофтың (1767-1825) тапсырысымен барады. Шығармада Орталық Азия халқы мен оның тұрмысы, жол бойы кездестірген географиялық атаулар мен қашықтық атаулары және тұрмыстық заттарға қатысты құнды мәліметтер қамтылады. *Мақсаты мен міндеті.* Зерттеу жұмысының мақсаты Мир Иззатулланың шығармасындағы топонимдерді зерттеу мен олардың ішіндегі түркі тілінде кездесетін топонимдерді анықтау және оларды топтарға бөліп талдау. Мир Иззатулла саяхаттаған жылдары Орталық Азия, Қашғар, Турфан аймағында қолданыста болған түркі тіліндегі терминдер мен лауазым атауларын анықтау және оны түсініктерімен таблица түрінде ұсыну. Зерттеу жұмысының міндеттері зерттеу барысында анықталған жүзден астам түркі тіліндегі топонимдерді таблица түрінде түпнұсқа варианты мен оның түсініктерін қоса ұсыну. Саяхатшының жазбасындағы Орталық Азия халқының тұрмысы мен тіршілігіне қатысты анықталған мәліметтерді саралап, оны басқа да тарихи деректермен салыстырып, оның нәтижесімен бөлісу. *Әдістер мен материалдар.* Зерттеуде қолжазбаның түпнұсқасымен жұмыс істегендіктен осы зерттеуде мәтіндік, тақырыптық және құжаттық талдаулар әдісі қамтылды. Саяхатнамадағы негізгі тақырыптық мәселелерді анықтау және зерттеу үшін «Масир-и Бухоро» шығармасының түпнұсқа мәтінін осы шығарманың ағылшын және орыс тілдеріндегі аудармаларымен салыстыру мақсатында дискурстық талдау жүргізілді. Мақалада саяхатнамада жиі кездесетін негізгі ұғымдарды, топонимдерді немесе этнографиялық сипаттамаларды сандық және сапалық тұрғыдан жүйелеу үшін контент-анализ әдісі қолданылды. Сонымен қатар, тарихи-антропологиялық әдіспен бірге пәнаралық әдістерге жүгінді. Зерттеу жұмысының басты материалы ретінде “Масир-и Бухоро” шығармасының Франция Ұлттық кітапханасында сақталған қолжазба нұсқасы (Supplement Persan 1346) басшылыққа алынды. *Нәтижелер.* Мақалада мәтіндік, тақырыптық және контент-анализ әдістерін қолдана отырып үнділік саяхатшы Мир Иззатулланың сапарнамасындағы бұрындары аз қарастырылған мәліметтерге қол жеткізілді. Атап айтқанда зерттеушілер назарынан тыс қалып қойған *йол, құлаш, талқан, түбіт* сөздеріне жан-жақты талдау жасалды және бұл сөздердің әлі күнге дейін қазақ тілінде қолданыста

бар екендігі мысалдар арқылы нақтыланды. Шығармада түркі тіліндегі топонимдердің мол кездесетіндігі мен түрлі саяси жағдайларға қарамастан көпшілігінің әлі сол қалпында сақталғандығы түркі тіліндегі топонимдердің орнықтылығын әрі қилы заманды басынан кешірсе де қолданыстан шықпағандығын көрсетеді. *Қорытынды.* Мақалада үнді саяхатшысының шығармасындағы түркі тіліндегі топонимдердің барлығы анықталып, толық тізімі жасалды. Түркі тіліндегі топонимдер үнді саяхатшысы жүріп өткен маршруттарға сай тақырыптарға бөлініп оның нәтижелері таблицада түпнұсқа нұсқасы және түсініктерімен бірге ұсынылды. Мир Иззатулланың түркмен, өзбек және қазақ жылқылары жөнінде берген мәліметтері тарихи оқиғалар тұрғысынан салыстыра отырып зерделенді. Соның ішінде қарабайыр жылқысының Орталық Азияға кең тараған жылқы екендігі туралы жан-жақты мәліметтер берілді.

Кілт сөздер: Мир Иззатулла, Орталық Азия, Үндістан, Қашқар, Қоқан, Бұхара, саяхат жазбалары, қазақ жылқысы.

Дәйексөз үшін: Қамбарбекова Ғ.Ә. Үнді саяхатшысының көзқарасындағы Орталық Азия: халық, әдет-ғұрыптар және топонимика // Отан тарихы. 2026. Т. 29. № 3. 1044–1062-бб. [ағылшын тілінде]. DOI: 10.51943/2788-9718_2026_29_3_1044-1062

ЦЕНТРАЛЬНАЯ АЗИЯ ГЛАЗАМИ ИНДИЙСКОГО ПУТЕШЕСТВЕННИКА: НАРОДЫ, ОБЫЧАИ И ТОПОНИМИКА

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Аннотация. *Введение.* В статье рассматривается труд индийского путешественника Мир Иззатуллы «Масир-и Бухоро» на основе первоисточника. Путевые заметки индийского путешественника по Центральной Азии написаны на персидском языке. Мир Иззатулла — представитель местного населения, работавший на Британскую Ост-Индскую компанию. Он отправился в путешествие по Центральной Азии по просьбе Уильяма Муркрофта (1767–1825), представителя Британской Ост-Индской торговой компании. Труд содержит ценную информацию о народах Центральной Азии и их жизни, географических и географических названиях, встречавшихся по пути, а также об предметах домашнего обихода. *Цели и задачи исследования.* Целью исследовательской работы является изучение топонимов в труде Мир Иззатуллы, выявление среди них топонимов на тюркском языке и их анализ путем разделения на группы. Целью исследования было выявление терминов и названий профессий на тюркском языке, использовавшихся в Центральной Азии, Кашгаре и Турфане в годы путешествий Мира Иззатуллы, и представление их в виде таблицы с определениями. Также ставились задачи: представить в виде таблицы и определений оригинальные версии более ста выявленных в ходе исследования тюркских топонимов; проанализировать информацию, найденную в путевых заметках о жизни и быте населения Центральной Азии, сравнить её с другими историческими данными и представить результаты. *Методы и материалы.* Поскольку исследование проводилось с использованием оригинального рукописного текста, были применены методы текстового, тематического и документального анализа. Для выявления и изучения основных тематических вопросов в путевых заметках был проведен дискурсивный анализ, сравнивающий оригинальный текст произведения «Масир-и Бухоро» с его переводами на английский и русский языки. В статье использован метод контент-анализ для количественной и качественной систематизации основных понятий, топонимов и этнографических характеристик, часто встречающихся в путевых заметках. Кроме того, применялись междисциплинарные методы наряду с историко-антропологическим методом. В качестве основного материала для исследования использована рукопись «Масир-и Бухоро», хранящаяся в Национальной библиотеке Франции

(Supplement Persan 1346). *Результаты.* В статье с помощью текстового, тематического и контент-анализа получены ранее малоизученные сведения из путевых заметок индийского путешественника Мира Иззатуллы. В частности, проведен всесторонний анализ слов *yool*, *qulash*, *talqān*, *tūbut*, которые ранее не были изучены исследователями, и на примерах подтверждено, что эти слова до сих пор используются в казахском языке. Обилие тюркских топонимов в произведении и тот факт, что большинство из них сохранились в первоначальном виде, несмотря на различные политические ситуации, свидетельствуют о стабильности тюркских топонимов и о том, что они не вышли из употребления, несмотря на трудные времена. *Выводы.* В статье выявлены и составлен полный список всех тюркских топонимов в труде индийского путешественника. Тюркские топонимы разделены по темам в соответствии с маршрутами путешествий индийского путешественника, а результаты представлены в таблице с оригинальными вариантами и определениями. Сведения Мир Иззатуллы о туркменских, узбекских и казахских лошадях изучена в сравнительном порядке с точки зрения исторических событий. Среди них представлена исчерпывающая информация о карабайрской лошади, широко распространённой в Центральной Азии.

Ключевые слова: Мир Иззатулла, Центральная Азия, Индия, Кашгар, Коканд, Бухара, путевые заметки, казахская лошадь.

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Introduction. Mir Izzatullah's account of his journey to Central Asia, titled "Masir-i Bokhara", chronicles an expedition that took place between 27 Rajab 1227 and Dhul Hijjah 1228 (corresponding to August 5, 1812 – December 16, 1813). The journey was initiated by William Moorcroft, a representative of the British East India Company. Moorcroft, remarkably the first Englishman to receive a veterinary degree in France, possessed a profound professional interest in thoroughbred horses. His research for superior equine breeds initially led him to India, where he visited several cities. Upon learning that Bokhara hosted a world-renowned market for the finest thoroughbreds, he resolved to reach the city [Steinigeweg, 1991: 183–185].

Unable to travel to Bokhara immediately, Moorcroft dispatched Mir Izzatullah, an Indian Muslim, to survey the region and gather information on local horse breeds. Izzatullah was instructed to maintain a detailed record of his observations, particularly regarding the distances between settlements and the condition of the roads. The successful completion of this mission is documented in the work "Masir-i Bokhara". In this manuscript, the author provides comprehensive data on settlement names, topographical distances, the socio-economic conditions of the local people, water sources, fuel supplies, property ownership, languages, religions, and administrative systems.

Mir Izzatullah's travelogue is particularly valuable for its broad geographical scope, covering a route that passed through major hubs such as Atok, Kashmir, Tibet, Yarkand, Kashgar, Kokand, Khujand, Samarkand, Bokhara, Kholm, Bamiyan, and Kabul. According to modern geographical maps, his journey crossed contemporary India, China, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. Navigating such vast distances was a formidable undertaking, especially given that Central Asia and East Turkestan were landlocked regions, isolated from open seas yet strategically significant to many foreign powers. Mir Izzatullah remains a notable figure for reaching Central Asia via Kashmir and Kashgar well before many European explorers.

While several scholarly works have been dedicated to "Masir-i Bokhara" [Иззет-Улла, 1956; Каландарова, 1995; Szupre, 1996; Мейер, Бризак, 2006; Мавлонов и др., 2017; Isakov, Jobborov, 2022; Суйнова, Дюсембекова, 2022; Kumar, 2023; Abdurahmanov, 2023; Kholikulov, 2024], a significant number of researchers have relied on translations rather than the original manuscript. The purpose of this research is to introduce new insights by working directly with the original text of "Masir-i Bokhara". This article analyzes geographical names, terminology related to distance, equine nomenclature, and other concepts that define the lifestyle and worldview of the local population.

Accordingly, the study addresses the following objectives: 1) identifying and defining Turkic loanwords used in Mir Izzatullah's work; 2) explaining the Turkic origin of specific toponyms and their cultural significance among local Turkic peoples; 3) analyzing definitions related to horse breeds, including Kazakh horses.

Materials and methods. The methodology of this study encompasses textual, thematic, and documentary analyses of the original manuscript, supplemented by a diachronic approach. Furthermore, a

discourse analysis is conducted to compare the original “Masir-i Bokhara” with its English and Russian translations to identify and examine key thematic issues. The article used the method of content analysis to quantitatively and qualitatively systematize the main concepts, toponyms, or ethnographic characteristics frequently found in the travelogue. In addition, interdisciplinary methods were used along with the historical-anthropological method. The manuscript of the “Masir-i Bokhara” preserved in the National Library of France (Supplement Persan 1346) was used as the main material for the research.

Discussion. Biographical details regarding Mir Izzatullah remain scarce. Available records indicate that he originated from a Muslim family in India and served the British Empire. The inclusion of the title “Sayyid” (Syud) in the preface of the English translation suggests that his lineage traces back to Indian Sayyids [Izzut-Oollah, 1872]. Mir Izzatullah’s work, written in Persian, follows the traditional travelogue style typical of Eastern authors of that period [Abdurahmanov, 2023: 60].

Three primary manuscripts of his work, *Masir-i Bokhara*, are known to exist. One is housed in the National Library of France (BNF) [Blochet, 1906: 377], while the other two are located in Great Britain—specifically at the Bodleian Library in Oxford and the British Library in London [Rieu, 1879; Ethe, 1889]. Maria Szuppe, who researched the manuscript of “*Masir-i Bokhara*” notes that the variations between these three copies are minimal [Szuppe, 1996: 93]. For the purpose of this study, we referred to the Paris version, held at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France under the reference Supplement Persan 1346.

The “*Masir-i Bokhara*” was included into the National Library of France (BNF) through the collection of Charles Henri Auguste Schefer (1820–1898). A prominent French orientalist, philologist, and historian, Schefer served as a professor of Persian and worked as a translator for the French embassy in Istanbul. Following his diplomatic service, he led the French Institute of Oriental Languages and Civilizations (INALCO) from 1867 until his death. In 1898, the BNF obtained Schefer’s comprehensive collection, which comprised 13,000 volumes and 941 manuscripts. This collection included 276 manuscripts in Arabic, 276 in Persian, and 239 in Turkic languages [Blochet, 1909: III-V]. Among the Persian manuscripts is Mir Izzatullah’s account of his journey to Bokhara.

The work was first translated into French by the scholar Amédée Jaubert (1779–1847) and published in *Magasin Asiatique* in 1826 [Jaubert, 1826]. Subsequently, an English translation by Captain Henderson was released in 1872 [Izzut-Oollah, 1872: 100]. In 1956, Yu.P. Sokolov published a Russian translation by comparing the existing English and French versions [Изет-Улла, 1956]. However, the Russian edition is incomplete, covering only the section from Kashgar to Kokand. Most recently, in 2023, A. La’lzaḍ translated Henderson’s English version back into Persian [La’lzaḍ, 2023: 136]. Notably, there is a marked variation between this modern Persian translation and the original manuscript.

French scholar E. Blochet notes in his catalogue of Persian manuscripts that Mir Izzatullah served as W. Moorcroft’s secretary and translator until his death in Kabul in 1824 [Blochet, 1906: 377]. Given the historical context, Moorcroft’s choice of a Persian-speaking Muslim secretary was highly pragmatic. For centuries, Persian had been the court language of the Indian subcontinent, used for all official correspondence and protocols. Although its influence began to decrease with the introduction of English, it remained vital for regional diplomacy and travel.

Izzatullah’s travelogue demonstrates that Persian was a strategic necessity for any journey toward Kashgar and Central Asia. In major urban centers such as Samarkand, Kokand, and Yarkand, Persian functioned as the primary lingua franca for communicating with local populations prior to reaching Bokhara. Furthermore, “*Masir-i Bokhara*” reveals that Izzatullah was likely multilingual; his detailed explanations of Turkic toponyms, household items, and cuisine suggest that he possessed a functional command of Turkic languages alongside his mastery of Persian.

Results. *Turkic terminology in the “Masir-i Bokhara”.* Throughout his travels, Mir Izzatullah recorded the meanings of Turkic terms, including toponyms and local products. A notable example is his discussion of the name “Tibet” while describing the region of Leh: “In the local language, the ruler is called Laddagh (لداغ). The Kashmiri people refer to the ruler as Botan (بۆتن), while the people themselves are called But (بوت). In Persian and Turkic, this country is called Tūbat (تبت). This is because tūbat (or tūbit) is the Turkic word for a woolen shawl. Since the finest quality shawls originate here, the ruler is also referred to as Tūbat” [Izzatullah, 1813: 10].

In Turkic languages, specifically Kazakh, tūbit refers to the exceptionally fine, soft, and warm undercoat of animals like sheep, goats, or camels, used as a premium raw material in textiles (e.g., a tūbit scarf). The Explanatory Dictionary of the Kazakh Language confirms this definition, noting its secondary figurative use to describe soft, newly grown facial hair [Кеңесбаев, 1961: 379].

While the pronunciation of *tübit* is phonetically similar to “Tibet”, the etymology of the latter may also be traced to the Old Turkic word *töpü*, meaning “peak” or “height” [Кеңесбаев, 1961: 365]. This aligns with the country’s high-altitude geography. Cognates such as the Kazakh “*töbe*” and the broader Turkic *teppe* or *täppe* similarly signify “hill” or “advantage”, consistent with Tibet’s reputation as a mountainous highland.

In his account of Tibet, Mir Izzatullah identifies the staple food of the local population as *talqān* (تَلْقَان), which he compares to “*sattu*” [Izzatullah, 1813: 20-21]. This unsweetened dish often incorporates meat or is prepared as *harira*, a thick, nutritious soup.⁴ While *harira* is best known today as a cornerstone of North African cuisine and a symbolic dish for breaking the fast during Ramadan, Izzatullah’s observations highlight its regional variations in Central Asia.

The English translation of Izzatullah’s work provides *talqān* as “*suttoo*” – parched grain reduced to meal and made into a paste [Izzut-Oollah, 1872: 11]. However, the original manuscript specifically uses the vowelized form *sattu* (سَتْتُو). Of particular interest is the term *talqān* itself, a traditional food made from parched and ground wheat or barley. This word remains central to the Kazakh language and culinary heritage, serving as a staple for various Turkic nomadic cultures due to its long shelf life and ease of preparation.

The historical depth of this term is confirmed in Mahmud Kashgari’s 11th-century dictionary, *Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk*, where *talqān* is noted as a word that has retained its meaning since the Old Turkic era [Қашқари, 1997: 499]. Kashgari describes it as an ideal “road food” for nomadic life. Variations of *talqān* (or *dalgan*) are found across Altai, Khakass, Bashkir, Kyrgyz, and Tuvan cuisines. Ethnographer S.I. Wainstein further notes its significance among nomads, especially *tuvans* describing how guests were traditionally served wooden cups of *talqān* topped with thick milk foam [Вайнштейн, 1991: 125].

Following his description of *talqān*, Mir Izzatullah notes that the populations of Kashmir and Tibet consist of both Sunni and Shia Muslims. He mentions a mosque that has stood since the reign of Ibrahim Khan, a Timurid Sultan. During that era, Tibet was conquered by the Kalmyks, prompting the local population to seek aid from the Mughal Emperor in India. Afterwards, the Khan expelled the Kalmyks and installed a Raja in their stead, after which the people embraced Islam and pledged their submission.

Izzatullah observes that Raja Mahmud Khan remained content as long as Kashmir did not interfere with Tibet. This peace was primarily economic; the shawl trade relied heavily on this route, and any conflict would have disrupted shawl production for several years. Furthermore, Izzatullah states the Tibetan language bears similarities to both Turkic and Kashmiri [Izzatullah, 1813: 27]. Given that his primary interactions were likely with the Muslims residing in Tibet, it is probable that this perceived linguistic connection was based on the specific dialects or Persian-Turkic loanwords used by those communities.

Another Turkic word that has attracted special attention in the “*Masir-i Bokhara*” is the word for smell, *eesh/ees* (ایش). On the way from Leh to Yarkand, Mir Izzatullah describes each village one by one. While the word for smell is Turkic, in Persian it is *boo* (بو). Usually, a person falls ill from a foul smell; both humans and animals, especially horses, can be affected.

The “smell disease” (*ees*) is located at a *manzil* (waystation) ten and a half hours northwest of the *Mandliq* region. This place is situated on the right side of a frozen spring, to the left of the *Shayok* region. Firewood is abundant there, but grass is very limited, and the road through the gorge is covered in stones and gravel [Izzatullah, 1813: 14].

It is worth noting that “smell disease” is used in the modern Kazakh language in exactly the same sense. To this day, Kazakhs use this term to describe the condition that causes shortness of breath due to a lack of oxygen when climbing high mountains. The scientific term for this condition is *hypoxia*, also known as *mountain sickness*, which typically occurs at altitudes above 2,000 meters. In Persian, the term used is *hypoxia* (هیپوکسی), derived from English, as the word *boo* (بو) refers only to the literal smell and not the name of the disease itself.

An fascinating detail in Mir Izzatullah’s “*Masir-i Bokhara*” is the use of the word “*yool*” (يول - road). At the request of William Moorcroft, Izzatullah precise annotation his routes and the distances between settlements from Attock to Kashmir, Tibet, Kashgar, and beyond. To indicate these distances, he engaged several terms of measurement: *manzil* (station), *sa’at* (hour), *kurwah* (distance), and *yool* (distance).

⁴ *Harira* is a traditional thick and nutritious soup typical of North African cuisine (mainly Morocco and Algeria). It is known for its rich taste and medicinal properties. It is also written that *harira* is not only a food but also a symbol of the month of Ramadan. <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/culture/article/to-break-the-ramadan-fast-in-morocco-start-with-soup>

While manzil refers to a station or a day's journey and sa'at is a standard measure of time, Izzatullah also uses kurwah (كروه), which equals roughly 1.5 farsakhs (about two kilometers). However, the most frequent term used throughout the book to denote distance is the Turkic word "yool". Rather than its literal modern meaning of "road", Izzatullah uses it as a specific unit of length.

In his notes on Kashgar, he explains: "Kashgar is a famous city located 30 yools away. A yool is a Turkic word meaning a straight road (absolute way). Some define a yool as 360 qulash. A qulash (قولاچ) is the distance between the fingertips of two outstretched arms (approximately 150–180 cm), equivalent to two gyaz (گز - roughly 80–90 cm each). According to Izzatullah, an average daily station (manzil) consists of about 70 to 80 yools [Izzatullah, 1813: 70].

These terms, yool and qulash, remain part of the modern Kazakh language, where qulash is still defined as the span of outstretched arms [Кеңесбаев, 1961: 87]. Based on these measurements—where one yool equals 360 qulash (approx. 540–648 meters) – we can calculate the pace of the caravan. By multiplying a yool by the 70–80 units that make up a manzil, it appears Izzatullah's caravan traveled an average of 39 to 43 kilometers per day, occasionally reaching up to 45 kilometers.

Information regarding horses in "Masir-i Bokhara". One of the primary tasks assigned to Mir Izzatullah by William Moorcroft was to visit the horse bazaars of Bokhara and collect detailed information on thoroughbred horses. Starting from the section titled "Stations from Kashgar to Kokand", Izzatullah provides valuable insights into the Kazakh, Kyrgyz, and Uzbek peoples, as well as the regional horse trade.

The original text states: "Qashgar (قاشغار), also known as Kashgar (كاشكار), is a renowned city with defensive walls made of mud. The city features four gates; the Friday market is held within the city walls, while the horse market is located outside. A great number of horses are brought to this market, most of which are of Kyrgyz or Kazakh breeds. These horses are of excellent stock, with prices ranging from twenty tenge to one yanboo (يَنبُو) [Izzatullah, 1813: 72]. A yanboo (or yambo) was a boat-shaped silver ingot weighing approximately 1.87 kg, commonly used in trade between Central Asia and China (Davidovich, 1983: 114). In Kazakh tradition, this term has been preserved as a measure of precious metal and serves as the linguistic root for the national game "jamby atu" (silver ingot shooting) [Жәнібеков, 2001: 477].

This account provides insight into the scale of the Kyrgyz and Kazakh horse trade at the Kashgar market. In the text, the word "aygaz" (اَيْغَز) likely refers to a stallion; the spelling suggests an extra dot was mistakenly added, as the correct Turkic term for an uncastrated male horse is "aygyr". It is also worth noting a discrepancy in Captain Henderson's 1872 English translation. In the preceding passage, Henderson transliterates "Kyrgyz" as "Kurghuree" and confuses the word "Kazakh" with "Cossack". He also describes the horses as "geldings", whereas the original context suggests they were breeding animals: "A large number of horses, principally of the Kurghuree and Cossack breeds, all geldings, are brought for sale; the price of these animals varies from 20 tengas to 1 yambo" [Izzut-Oollah, 1872, 1872: 45]. Despite this, Henderson correctly uses the spelling "Kirghiz" in other parts of the travelogue [Izzut-Oollah, 1872: 48].

The Indian traveler describes Margilan as follows: "Margilan is a major city in the Fergana region, also known as Murgalan. It is home to the tomb of the legendary King Eskander, also known as Alexander the Great. It is a pleasant city with polite inhabitants, ruled by the son of the Emir of Kokand. Silk is produced here in large quantities, as well as the wool used for shawls, which is called kurk (كُرْك) in Persian and tübit (تُوتِب) in Turkic. While shawls are woven here, their quality is inferior to those from Kashmir" [Izzatullah, 1813: 81]. Mir Izzatullah had previously noted the origins of the word tübit.

Following arrival in the capital of Bokhara, Mir Izzatullah visited the horse market and provided the following details regarding local breeds: "A horse market is held in Bokhara four times a week—on Saturdays, Mondays, and Tuesdays. Generally, affordable horses are brought to the market, purchased by middlemen for ten to fifteen tilla (طلا – gold coins). Mares are less common, and their price can reach twenty thousand tilla, depending on market demand. While fifty to sixty horses are typically brought to market, only five to fifteen are usually sold. Kazakh horses are superior in staying power and capable of traveling long distances. Generally, mares are kept for breeding, while males are sold. These horses are found in Miankal, near the city of Sanbar, before being brought to Bokhara for sale. Turkmen horses, on the other hand, are prized for their beauty and speed, though they are said to lack the hardiness of the Karabair breed. These horses arrive from two directions: the Jeyhun River and Merv. Currently, however, Turkmen horses are rare. The Kazakh horse is described as stout, short, and a pacer (yorga – يورغه), yet it is small and sensitive to heat. Despite Bokhara's cold winters, these horses are difficult to maintain during the summer. While once numerous in Yarkand and Kashgar, few Kazakh horses reach Bokhara now. This decline is due to a multi-year famine in the Kazakh lands caused by a shortage of grass and grain, which led to the death of many

animals; the survivors were often consumed out of necessity. Additionally, the Kazakh camel has two humps and thick wool, but like the horses, it does not tolerate heat well, though it remains a reliable pack animal” (Izzatullah, 1813: 94-95). It is necessary to clarify several points provided by Mir Izzatulla, beginning with the “Kazakh horse”, specifically the Karabair breed (Karabahir – قره بهير). Considerable information exists regarding the Karabair, a adaptable breed common across Central Asia and valued for its genetic and economic significance. While many researchers identify Uzbekistan as its primary homeland, the breed is also traditionally raised in regions of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. According to Nurmatov and Hafizov (2024), the Karabair emerged from crossbreeding local Central Asian Argimaks with Mongolian, Turkmen, and Arabian horses. Early comprehensive studies, such as Bakhmetyev (1870), note that the first generation – sired by an Argimak and a Kazakh mare – resembled the Argimak, while the different Karabair phenotype appeared by the third generation. Known for its endurance and suitability for both long distances and agricultural work, the Karabair is described by Mir Izzatulla as a short, hardy pacer that struggles with extreme heat. This suggests the breed's historical range extended beyond Uzbekistan and Tajikistan into the colder Eurasian steppes, as its sensitivity to the heat of Bokhara indicates an adaptation to more temperate climates.

In his descriptions of the Kazakh Karabair, Mir Izzatullah also evaluates the world-renowned Turkmen horse. While acknowledging its physical beauty, elegance, and speed, he concludes that it lacks the endurance of the Karabair. The Turkmen horse, derived from the Akhal-Teke breed, is often prized for its elegant and noble qualities rather than domestic functionality. However, Izzatullah provides specific insights into its performance in combat: “In Kholm, Turkmen horses are brought in from surrounding areas, and while military men praise them for field battles, they are fragile and unsuitable for mountainous or rocky terrain. Conversely, the Karabair (Karabahir) horses of Shahrisabz are excellent for both riding and military use; they are hardy and sure-footed in the mountains”.

Izzatullah also notes the scarcity of quality breeding stock in the Kholm markets. High-quality mares are rarely sold unless for an exorbitant price or by an undisciplined seller; typically, only those with defects are brought to market. Prices in Kholm are significantly lower than in India, where a horse might cost 400 rupees. Wholesale purchases are generally made from the local Uzbeks, whom Izzatullah notes are willing to travel long distances for modest profit [Izzatullah, 1813: 156-158].

An analysis of Mir Izzatullah's accounts suggests that while Turkmen horses were suitable for field battles, there is little evidence of their use in sustained wars, long-distance campaigns, or varied climates. This indicates that the Turkmen horse was primarily an elite animal, prized for its aesthetic beauty and use on special occasions. This distinction between Turkmen and Uzbek horses is also noted by M. Szuppe (1996) in her description of Central Asian equine culture during Izzatullah's era. Similarly, Alexander Burnes, another traveler to Bokhara, offers further insights into the Turkmen breed, noting that they were treated with the affection shown to a child and rarely sold. Burnes also provides a contrasting description of the Kazakh horse: “In Bokhara there are many Kuzzak horses, a sturdy and little animal, with a shaggy coat and a very long mane and tail, much and deservedly admired. They are brought from the deserts between Bokhara and Russia” [Burnes, 1834: 277]. It is clear that Burnes's “Kuzzak” refers to the Kazakh horse, as Izzatullah and other contemporaries frequently documented the sale of Karabair-Kazakh horses in the Bokhara bazaars. Furthermore, historical records from this period often show a common linguistic confusion between “Kazakh” and “Cossack”.

In his accounts of the Kazakh horse, Mir Izzatullah provides evidence of high mortality and injury rates among these animals during his travels through Central Asia in 1812–1813. By analyzing his records alongside data regarding livestock losses in the Dasht-i Qipchaq (Kipchak Steppe), we can link these occurrences to major political significant disruptions of the era. Most notably, the Kokand Khanate forcefully expanded into the region, launching frequent raids that resulted in significant plunder and loss of life for the Kazakh people. This expansion intensified under Omar Khan (r. 1810–1822), who led several campaigns into the steppe, beginning in the spring of 1812 [Бабаджанов, 2010]. These systematic invasions, which led to the capture of Tashkent and Turkestan, imposed a heavy tax load and a cycle of looting on the local population. Consequently, the Kazakhs suffered devastating losses in human life, livestock, and essential horse populations [Лебедев, 1940].

The second major political event involves Napoleon Bonaparte's 1812 invasion of Russia. In response to the invasion, the Russian Tsar issued a manifesto calling for the nation's defense. This appeal reached Kazakh auls (villages) by autumn through the Governor of Orenburg, G.S. Volkonsky. Translated into Tatar

for distribution among Muslim populations, the call for aid resulted in the Inner Horde sending 47,200 horses to the Russian effort between 1804 and 1815.

Remarkably, Mir Izzatullah learned of the Napoleonic Wars from a judge in Samarkand. According to the judge, “Francis” (Napoleon) intended to conquer Russia before advancing toward Turkestan and India. The hypothesized route involved traveling to Haji Tarkhan (Astrakhan), then sailing to Ming Qishlak (“A thousand villages”) within a week. From there, the Aral Sea could be reached in ten days, with another ten days to Urgench, and finally a ten-day overland journey to Bokhara. Mir Izzatullah concluded that if Napoleon were to reach the region, the local populations would be unable to resist due to their lack of unity and centralized leadership [Izzatullah, 1813]. This geopolitical pressure added to the Kazakhs' hardships; already suffering from years of raids by the Kokand Khanate, the additional burden of providing financial aid and over 47,000 horses to Russia deeply strained the people.

The third factor was the devastating weather event of 1796, known in Kazakh history as the “Aq-taban” (A year of mass starvation of livestock) or the “Year of the Rabbit” disaster. This natural catastrophe coincided with the political crisis surrounding the uprising led by Syrym Datuly (1753–1802), a prominent leader of the Junior Zhuz who resisted Russian imperial expansion. We find evidence of the disaster's severity in a letter from Gubeidulla Fetkhullin to the Orenburg Military Governor, S.E. Vyazmitin, describing the catastrophic loss of life and livestock caused by the extreme winter (Lebedev, 1940). The socio-economic recovery was slow, and various sources document years of lingering poverty following the livestock plague of 1796.

Mir Izzatullah traveled through Central Asia during this period of hardship and witnessed the consequence. While he observed the Kazakh horse in the Bokhara markets, his brief accounts of animals dying from disease hint at a much larger crisis. His writings suggest that the Kazakh horse population was being decimated by a combination of plague, systemic poverty, warfare, and heavy taxation. It is likely that he gathered this information through multiple accounts from locals he encountered in the markets and along his journey.

A comparative analysis of Mir Izzatullah's records demonstrates his commitment to historical accuracy. His detailed observations on the Central Asian horse reveal a scrupulous who carefully documented both firsthand sightings and oral accounts.

The horse has historically held a central role in the lives of the peoples across Central Asia and Eurasia, a fact supported by an abundance of ancient petroglyphs and stone steles. These carvings, such as those found at the Tanbaly Archaeological Landscape near Almaty, provide vital evidence of the “horse cult” and the varying cultural perspectives on the animal throughout Eurasian history. Furthermore, the region's harsh, continental climate shaped the physical evolution of these horses, resulting in a breed characterized by endurance, short legs, and a large, elongated head. Descriptions of this distinct phenotype date back to the Saka era. Archaeological evidence from the 8th-century BC Arzhan kurgan (Arzhaan), discovered in the 1970s, includes the remains of 162 horses. The skeletal remains and contemporary artistic depictions confirm that these ancient Central Asian horses possessed the large-headed features noted in later historical periods [Нестеров, 1990].

The results of morphometric analysis show that the horses buried in the Arzhan mound had a shoulder height of 144 cm. that is, the horses belong to the medium and below-medium height groups [Боковенко и др., 2020: 229]. Comparing the various factors listed above, we come to the conclusion that Mir Izzatullah's definition of the primitive horse can be a common characteristic of most horses found in the Central Asian region.

Turkic Toponyms in “Masir-i Bokhara”. Among the most captivating elements of Mir Izzatullah's “Masir-i Bokhara” is the presence of Turkic toponyms. To explore this topic, we identified over one hundred toponyms of Turkic origin along the author's route. These toponyms, terms, and titles are presented in the following list, preserving the original nomenclature used in the travelogue. The table categorizes these names by route, covering the parts from Leh to Yarkand, Yarkand to Kashgar, the settlements between Beijing and Kashgar (as identified by Molla Nazar), and the reaches from Kashgar to Kokand, Samarkand, Bokhara, and Kholm. Each entry is organized to include the Turkic name, its Kazakh equivalent, the original spelling, and its etymological meaning. Analysis shows that these historical names remain highly recognizable to modern Kazakhs and other Turkic-speaking populations across Central Asia and Eurasia. While minor linguistic variations exist across the Turkic world, this study primarily uses Kazakh versions due to their close proximity to the original historical forms.

Table 1. Toponyms from Leh to Yarkand in Turkic language

№	Name in Turkic	Modern Kazakh equivalent	Original writing (Arabic script)	Meaning and additional information
1	Yar tüba	Jar-tbe	يارتوبى	The hill above the cliff
2	Sarig ot	Sari ot	سارغ اوت	Yellow grass pasture, grassy land
3	Qizil tag	Qizil tau	قزىلتاغ	The mountain is called Red Mountain because of the color of its rock
4	Chadur tash	Chadur tas	چادر تاش	A rock resembling a roof, a cliff
5	Aq tag	Aq tau	اق تاغ	A high mountain, pass in the Karakorum Range
6	Bagh-e Khadji Mohammed	Khaji Mohammed baghi	باغ خواجه محمد	A place with a Kyrgyz village
7	Yangi dovan	Zhana asu	يىڭى دوان	Yangi - new, dovan - crossing, pass
8	Qulan öldy	Qulan öldi	لان اولدى قو	The station after Yangi Dovan
9	Tizaklik	Tezekti	تيزك لك	The place where the Kargaly River flows
10	Chiqliq	Shiqti	چىقلىق	A crossing or a rising point on a road
11	Aq masjid	Aq meshit	اق مسجد	Another name is Ak Masi. A place where there is practically no mosque
12	Urtang	Ortang	اورتنك	Station, a place where guards live
13	Kükyar	Kökjar	كوكيار	Village at the foot of the mountain
14	Tuqay	Toqay	توقايى	Toqay is grove. A place near the village of Kargalyk
15	Qargaliq	Qarghali	قرغاليق	A place with many black crows. It had madrasas and an administration
16	Yarkend	Jarkent	ياركند	The city has four gates: Altyn, Haniqaq, Muqra, and Kabyk Atqan.
17	Yangi Hisar	Yangi Hisar	يىڭى حصار	The name of the fortress. The Arabic word Hisar means fortress. Among the toponyms there are names that are half Persian or Arabic, and the other half Turkic.

Table 2. Toponyms from Yarkand to Kashgarin in Turkic language

№	Name in Turkic	Modern Kazakh equivalent	Original writing (Arabic script)	Meaning and additional information
1	Qarauyl jash	Qarauyl jas	ول جاش قرا	Guard post, place with guard
2	Kök Rabat	Kök Rabat	كوك رباط	Blue caravanserai or fortress
3	Tübliq	Tübki	توبلوق	Main, primary settlement
4	Yangi Hisar	Jana Hisar	حصار يانگی	New Fortress (now the city of Yangishar)
5	Khan ariq daryasi	Khan ariq özeni	اریق خان	Major water system and river on the way to Kashgar
6	Kashgar	Kashgar	كاشغر	The largest historical city in southern Xinjiang

Table 3. Toponyms from Beijing to Kashgar, recorded by Molla Nazar

№	Name in Turkic	Modern Kazakh equivalent	Original writing (Arabic script)	Meaning and additional information
1	Turfan	Turpan	فان طر	A large oasis-city at the beginning of the road
2	Bugan	Bugan	بوغان	Settlements near Turpan
3	Aigyr bulaq	Aigyr bulaq	ایغر بولاق	A spring with abundant water and a roaring stream
4	Kumush-aqma	Kumis-aqpa	آقماكموش	A place with flowing water that shines like silver
5	Ushaq tal	Oshaq tal / Usaq tal	اوشاق تال	A place where small willows grow
6	Qara shahar	Qara shahar	شهر قرا	Historically important city (present-day Yangtze)
7	Qarasu	Qarasu	سوقرا	A place with fresh water coming from underground
8	Yangi Hisar	Jana Hisar	ینگی حصار	Roadside fort
9	Charchi	Sharshi	چرچی	Literally meaning "four-cornered" or square
10	Qamush türa	Qamys töre	قموش توره	A tower or post in a reedy land
11	Kücha	Köshe / Kösher	كوچه	Old Town (now Kucha)
12	Qyzil	Qyzyl	قرل	It is so named because of the color of its mountains and soil

13	Sayram	Sayram	سيرام	A historical village between Kucha and Aksu
14	Un bash	On bas	اون باش	Ten-house or land under the control of a ten-man
15	Baq ariq	Baq ariq	اريق باق	Garden irrigation ditch (translated into English as Buk-a-reck)
16	Qara yulgan	Qara jolgin	يولغان قارا	Toponym related to the nature of the road
17	Aqsu	Aqsu	اقسو	Toponym related to the nature of the road
18	Yangi Ariq	Jana Ariq	اريق يانگى	A village with a water canal
19	Otuz kima	Otuz keme	اوتوز كيمه	A place where you can cross a reedy river by boat
20	Qingiraq	Qiniraq	قنغراق	Confined, narrow place or tool name
21	Kökchul	Kökshöl	كوکچول	Local toponym, desert land
22	Barchuq	Barchiq	بارچوق	Historical site in the present-day Maralbasy region
23	Qushköpruk	Qos köpir	كوشكپرو	Crossing with two bridges
24	Aq chekel	Aq shagal	اق چقل	Land with light soil or rock, land with limestone
25	Yangi-Abad	Jana-Abad	يانگى اباد	Newly settled, green land
26	Kashgar	Kashgar	كاشغر	The final point of the trip

Table 4. Toponyms from Kashgar to Kokand and from Kokand to Samarkand in Turkic language

№	Name in Turkic	Modern Kazakh equivalent	Original writing (Arabic script)	Meaning and additional information
1	Gülbag	Güldi baq	گل باغ	A place where Chinese leaders meet
2	Kuchek andijan	Kishi Andijan	كچك اندجان	Small Andijan settlement
3	Kunne Qarauyl	Köne Qarauyl	كهنه قراول	Old guard post
4	Qanchiglig	Qanjigaliq	قنچغلىق	Historical toponym
5	Qyzyl üy	Qyzyl üy	قزل اوئى	There are Kyrgyz villages (in Russian translation - it is written as Kzyl aul)
6	Shorbulaq qorgashim	Shorbulaq qorgasin	شوربولاق قورغشم	Mir Izzatullah wrote in Turkic that lead is surb (سرب), and spring is cheshmeh (چشمه)
7	Shorbulaq	Shorbulaq Molla	ق ملا چىبولا شور	Road crossing, turn

	Molla chap	chap		
8	Oq salur	Oq salar	اوق سالور	Historical toponym
9	Shorbulaq yasa kechuk	Shorbulaq jasa keshu	شور بولاق يسا كچك	Yasa — together (to live together), kechuk — a path to walk together (to pass)
10	Yasa kechuk	Jasa keshu	كچك يسا	Part of path
11	Sar qamush	Sari qamis	سر قموش	Name given due to the presence of reeds
12	Semiz khatun	Semiz khatyn	سيميز خاتون	Local toponym
13	Naqare chaldi	Naqare shaldi, dabyt qaqti	نقاره چالدى	Local toponym
14	Yangin	Jangin	ينغين	The area where the Kyrgyz villages are located is translated into Russian as Engin. It is a place with a lot of wood, probably for firewood
15	Tuqay bashi	Togay basi	توقاي باشى	The beginning of the grove
16	Küksy	Köksu	كوكسو	Water source or river
17	Archalik	Arshali (jer)	ارچلك	A place with many juniper trees
18	Yaman qiz	Jaman qiz	يمن قز	Kyrgyz village
19	Mazar gönbad	Mazar Kümbez	مزار گنبد	Kyrgyz village
20	Chugirchiq	Shygyrchyq	چوق چوغير	Pass or mountain pass
21	Zir tappe	Zir töbe	زير تپه	Kyrgyz village
22	Osh	Osh	شاو	Ancient city
23	Aruana	Aruana	اروانه	A place with a Kyrgyz village, aruana is the name of the one-humped camel
24	Ming tappe	Ming töbe	تپه منگ	The pastures of the Turkic and Kipchak communities
25	Qishlaqi kopruk	Köpir qistagi	قشلاق كپروك	Local toponym
26	Aq beik	Aq bek / Aq Biyk	اق بيك	Local toponym
27	Qara qitay	Qara qitay	قرا خطاي	Historical ethnic name
28	Quqan	Qoqan	قوقان	Central city
29	Bish Ariq	Bes Ariq	بيش اريق	Local toponym
30	Shah-Berdi	Shah-Berdi	شاه بردى	Local toponym
31	Khojent	Khojent	خوجند	City on the Syr Darya River

32	Aq teppe	Aq töbe	اق تپه	Local toponym
33	Aqsu	Aqsu	آق سو	Local toponym
34	Ur teppe	Ura teppe	اور تپه	Local toponym
35	Quduq	Quduq	قُدُق	In Turkic, it is called a well (قُدُق), and in Persian, it is called a choh (چاه)
36	Yilan oti	Jilan oty	یلان اوتی	A place with a lot of snakes, especially in August
37	Yangi Qurgan	Jana Qurgan	قورغن یانگی	Local toponym
38	Bulaq Molla chap	Molla Chap Bulagi	ق ملا چپبولا	Local toponym
39	Khoshk köpruk	Qurgaq köpir	خشک کپروک	Local toponym, dry bridge
40	Samarqand	Samarqand	سمرقند	Central city

Table 5. Toponyms from Samarkand to Bokhara, from Bokhara to Kholm and Kabul in Turkic language

№	Name in Turkic	Modern Kazakh equivalent	Original writing (Arabic script)	Meaning and additional information
1	Ashiq Ata	Gashiq ata	عاشق انا	Located on the ancient caravan route between Samarkand and Bokhara
2	Qarasu	Qarasu	قرا سو	A settlement near Kattakorgan between Samarkand and Bukhara. A well-watered stop along the way where caravans rested their horses.
3	Katta Qurgan	Katta Qurgan	کته قورغان	In Uzbek: Kattaqo'rg'on is a city in the Samarkand Region of Uzbekistan, located in the valley of the Zarafshan River (translated into English as Kutuh koorman)
4	Iranji	Iranji/ Yerenji	ایرنجی	This station is found after Kattakorgan, on the way to Bokhara (translated into English as Airap khee)
5	Bokhara	Bokhara	بخارا	Central city
6	Rabat Qarauyl	Rabat Qarauyl	رباط قراول	A Rabat built as a guard post
7	Qara tappe	Qara töbe	قرا تپه	A guard post or fortified hill along the historic caravan route from Bokhara to Kholm (Afghanistan)
8	Qiz qudyq	Qiz Quduq	قز قودوق	Located in the desert region between Bokhara and

				the Amu Darya
9	Chulbur	Sholbura, Shol - desert, bura - camel	چول بور	Historical and geographical object. An important checkpoint in the Kyzylkum desert on the road from Bokhara to Kholm (Afghanistan).
10	Shurquduq	Shurqudyq/ Sorqudyq	شور قودوق	Located in the southeastern part of the Kyzylkum Desert, it was a strategic water source for caravans from Bokhara to rest their horses before reaching the Amu Darya. It was named after the taste of its water (shor - bitter, salty well).
11	YangiAriq	Zhana ariq	يىڭى اريق	Name of the settlement and river
12	Aq saray	Aq saray	اق سراي	Name of the village and river
13	Qundyz	Qundyz	قندوز	City name
14	Talqan	Talqan	تالقان	Name of the river branch
15	Qush Uluch	Құс ұлыс	قوش اولوچ	Bird habitat, village name
16	Tash Qurgan	Tasqurgan	تاش قورغان	The name of the city, one in Kholm, the other in Qunduz/Kunduz
17	Aibek	Aibek	ايبيك	Елді мекен
18	Qal'e Mink Bigi	Qale Ming-Begi	قلعه منک بيگى	Name of the fortress
19	Aq Rabat	Aq Rabat	اق رباط	Name of the settlement
20	Kabul	Kabul	کابل	Central city

Table 6. Posts and terms in Turkic language

Terms and posts in Turkic	Terms and posts in Kazakh	Original writing (Arabic script)	Meaning and explanation
Aq saqal	Aq saqal	اق سقال (White beard)	Local governor, administrator (written as Aksukal in the English translation)
Tenge tanga	Tenge, Jamby	تنگه تنگه ىنبو	Monetary unit, silver bullion
Qara tagli Aq tagli	Qara tauily, Aq tauily	اق تاغليق قرا تاغليق	Two political-religious groups of lords in the Yarkent region
Ming bashi Yuz bashi	Minbasy, juzbasy	مينك باشى يوز باشى	Military and administrative officials (Chiliarch, Centurion)

The Kazakh spelling and pronunciation of the toponyms presented in these tables closely mirror the Turkic originals, with many being identical. While these geographic names share a common linguistic root across various Turkic languages, this study focuses specifically on those of Turkic origin, which constitute the vast majority of the names along Mir Izzatullah's route.

It is important to note that Mir Izzatullah did not travel to Beijing personally; rather, he recorded data provided by individuals such as Molla Nazar Kashgari (referred to as “Moollah Nuzur” in English translations) and the Governor of Kashgar, Sekunderbek Wang. While most of these toponyms (Table 1) remain preserved in the collective memory and historical records of Turkic peoples, several have been replaced by different names on modern official administrative maps of China.

Studying these tables highlights the vital importance of working with original source texts. In various translations of “Masir-i Bokhara”, many concepts related to the Turkic lifestyle and worldview were inaccurately conveyed, leading to errors in both spelling and pronunciation. Mir Izzatullah likely possessed some knowledge of the Turkic language, as he employed Arabic vowelization (harakat) to ensure the names were recorded as accurately as possible. Despite his efforts, English and French translations frequently contain errors. Furthermore, the Russian translation by Yu.A. Sokolov is not only incomplete—covering only the section from Kashgar to Kokand—but was also translated from English and French secondary sources rather than the original Persian. Sokolov himself noted that neither European version was based on a complete manuscript [Иззет-Улла, 1956]. This study includes examples of these errors in the tables to illustrate how linguistic limitations in European and Russian translations often result in the misspelling of Turkic toponyms and personal names.

Conclusion. Our research into Mir Izzatullah’s “Masir-i Bokhara” yields several key findings. First, we clarified the meanings of the ancient Turkic distance markers qulash and yool (يول). While Izzatullah effectively integrated Turkic terms alongside Arabic and Persian ones, previous translations often failed to convey the specific meaning of yool.

Second, our analysis of the terms tübut, tibet, talqān, and ees demonstrates their continuous use from antiquity to the present. Notably, talqān remains a staple national dish for all Turkic peoples, including Kazakhs and Tuvans. Such enduring terms serve as linguistic evidence of shared cultural heritage across generations.

Third, we compiled a comprehensive table of the Turkic toponyms found in the text, providing their original forms, Kazakh equivalents, and etymologies. We observed that while most places were named after natural landscapes or environmental conditions, others—such as Semiz Khatun (Fat Woman), Jaman Kyz (Bad Lady), and Otiz Keme (Thirty Ships)—reflect unique historical events. Because every toponym carries its own narrative, determining their origins offers a vital pathway to identifying significant historical episodes. Consequently, the further study of each toponym on this list remains a priority for historical and linguistic research.

The toponyms in “Masir-i Bokhara” reflect the natural features of the landscape, including mountains, water bodies, rivers, and settlements. These Turkic names serve as vital indicators of historical environmental conditions. For instance, names such as Qara Tobe (Black Hill), Aqsu (White Water), and Tasqurgan (Stone Fortress) provide specific details about the local geography, such as the composition of hills, the clarity of springs, and the nature of mountain passes. Based on these characteristics, the Turkic toponyms can be categorized into several groups:

Oronyms (Mountains and Hills): Examples include Qyzyl Tau (Red Mountain), Aq Tau (White Mountain), and various “tepe” or “tappe” formations such as Yar Tappe (Cliff Hill), Myng Tappe (Thousand Hills), and Ura Teppe (Hollow Hill).

Fortifications and Settlements: This group includes Zhana Qurgan (New Fortress), Katta Qurgan (Big Fortress), and Tas Qurgan (Stone Fortress). The term Yangi Hisar (New Fortress) appears twice; notably, while Hisar is of non-Turkic origin, it is extensively used across Turkic cultures.

Hydronyms (Water, Rivers, and Canals): This category features Baq Aryq (Garden Canal), Koku (Blue Water), and Aigyr Bulaq (Stallion Spring). Many names indicate water quality, such as the saline Shorbulaq (Salty Spring) and Shorquduq (Salty Well), or aesthetic qualities like Kumush Aqma (Silver Flow). Interestingly, some toponyms recur in different regions; for example, Yangi Aryq is found in both Kashgar and near Bokhara.

Zoonyms (Toponyms related to animals): This category includes Qulan Uldi (The Onager Died), Qargaly (Place of Crows), Aigyr Bulaq (Stallion Spring), Qus Ulush (Bird’s Portion/Place), Zhilan Oty (Snake Land/Grass), and Qunduz (Beaver).

By conducting a diachronic analysis of the Turkic toponyms given in the table, it was determined that the toponyms written by Mir Izzatullah correspond to the names on today’s maps and have been preserved to this day. However, some toponyms located in today’s China have been preserved in the people’s memory, but their names on official maps have changed. Some of the toponyms in Mir Izzatullah’s travelogue related to

today's Central Asia have also changed. Although the names of large cities, settlements, rivers and stations have been preserved, the names of small villages, canals, ditches, wells, crossings and passes have changed. It is known that many toponyms changed during the Soviet Union. However, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, some historical and geographical names were returned. From the point of view of restoring historical and geographical names, the study of Mir Izzatullah's work "Masir-i Bokhara" becomes increasingly important.

This study reveals that "Masir-i Bokhara" remains little-studied, with few studies utilizing the original Persian text. This is largely due to the sheer depth of Izzatullah's ethnolinguistic data regarding Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, Uzbeks, and Kalmyks. Because this material is so enormous, we intend to explore its historical, ethnographic, and linguistic dimensions in subsequent papers. There is a clear need for a full translation of "Masir-i Bokhara" into Russian and Kazakh, accompanied by rigorous scientific commentary. Given the abundance of Turkic toponyms and cultural nuances, such a translation must be conducted by scholars proficient in both Persian and Turkic languages.

Furthermore, this study comprehensively examined Izzatullah's data on purebred horses—specifically Kazakh, Uzbek, Kyrgyz, and Turkmen breeds. The findings confirm that the Kazakh, Kyrgyz, and Uzbek horses belong to an ancient, hardy lineage recognized across Central Asia and Eurasia for centuries. We also analyzed market prices and the historical context of the mass decline of the Kazakh horse following the 1796 famine. Izzatullah's journey (1812–1813) occurred during a period of global political disruption, and his ability to reflect these events provides a novel perspective through which to view the era.

Ultimately, "Masir-i Bokhara" is more than a travelogue; it is a cultural crossroads between India and Turkestan. It records a critical moment – the "last breath" before colonization—when Central Asia's ethnic and toponymic landscape began to change. Izzatullah's synthesis of Turkic meaning within Persian form allows us to reconstruct a "living" 19th-century geographical map of Central Asia.

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СОДЕРЖАНИЕ / МАЗМУНЫ ОТАН ТАРИХЫ № 29(3). 2026

<i>Dinasheva L.G., Alimbekuly A.A., Saparbekova B.</i> HISTORIOGRAPHY OF WRITTEN SOURCES ON THE HISTORY OF KAZAKHSTAN FROM THE 6th TO THE EARLY 13th CENTURIES: EVOLUTION OF TRANSLATIONS, TEXTUAL CRITICISM, AND HISTORICAL-GEOGRAPHICAL INTERPRETATION.....	964
<i>Suleimenova D.K., Agatay O.M.</i> ULUS OF JOCHI AND THE GRAND DUCHY OF LITHUANIA, 1380–1395 FROM VASSALAGE TO ALLIANCE.....	973
<i>Порсин А.А.</i> ВЛИЯНИЕ КЛИМАТА И ЭПИДЕМИЙ НА ПОЛИТИЧЕСКУЮ СИТУАЦИЮ В ЗОЛОТОЙ ОРДЕ В КОНЦЕ XIII – НАЧАЛЕ XIV ВВ.....	985
<i>Джумагалиев Д.А., Сабитов Ж.М.</i> «КРИЗИС XIV ВЕКА» И ФОРМИРОВАНИЕ НОВЫХ МЕХАНИЗМОВ ЛЕГИТИМАЦИИ ВЛАСТИ (ПО МАТЕРИАЛАМ «МАДЖМУ АТ-ТАВАРИХ»).....	997
<i>Амирбекова С.К., Саркыткан К., Дюсенов Б.Д.</i> ХОРЕЗМ, МАВЕРАННАХР И ДЕШТ-И КИПЧАК В АРАБСКИХ РУКОПИСЯХ ВАТИКАНСКОЙ АПОСТОЛЬСКОЙ БИБЛИОТЕКИ.....	1011
<i>Koshymova A.O., Nogaibaeva M.S.</i> TOPONYMS IN KAZAKH EPICS: HISTORICAL, TOPONYMIC AND ETHNOCULTURAL ANALYSIS (BASED ON THE POEM “KOBYLANDY BATYR”).....	1032
<i>Kambarbekova G.A.</i> CENTRAL ASIA THROUGH THE LENS OF AN INDIAN TRAVELER: PEOPLE, CUSTOMS, AND TOPONYMY.....	1044
<i>Тылахметова А.С., Черниенко И.Б.</i> ГОСУДАРСТВЕННАЯ ДЕЯТЕЛЬНОСТЬ ХАНА АБИЛМАМБЕТА В ОЦЕНКАХ ИСТОРИОГРАФИИ.....	1063
<i>Abenova G.A., Tokishkadirov B.B., Mamyrbekov A.M.</i> KAZAKH–DZUNGAR RELATIONS IN MODERN HISTORIOGRAPHY	1079
<i>Beisembayeva A.R.</i> KAZAKH–DZUNGAR RELATIONS FROM THE SECOND HALF OF THE XVII CENTURY TO THE 1750S: THE SOURCE BASE OF THE RESEARCH.....	1092
<i>Galimov Ye.A., Kabuldinov Z.Ye.</i> UPRISINGS OF THE KAZAKHS OF THE JUNIOR ZHUZ AGAINST THE ABOLITION OF THE AUTHORITY OF SULTAN-RULERS.....	1104
<i>Toraigyrov Ye.M.</i> THE KAZAKH POPULATION AND THE MILITARY- ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY OF THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE ON THE RIGHT BANK OF THE IRTYSH RIVER (SECOND HALF OF THE XVIII CENTURY TO THE EARLY XIX CENTURY).....	1117

Төлебаева Ж.М., Хайрулдаева А.М.

ШОҚАН УӘЛИХАНОВ ЕҢБЕКТЕРІНДЕГІ ҚАЗАҚТАР МЕН ОРТА АЗИЯ
ХАЛЫҚТАРЫНЫҢ XIX ҒАСЫРДАҒЫ ҚАРЫМ-ҚАТЫНАСТАРЫ.....1131

Құрманбек Қ., Қайполла Қ., Нұржанбек Н.

ҚАЗАҚ АҒARTУШЫЛАРЫНЫҢ ЕҢБЕКТЕРІНДЕГІ
ШАҒАТАЙ ТІЛІНДЕГІ ДІНИ ТЕРМИНДЕР
(Зәкірия бин Ибраһимнің «Мұхтасар ‘илм-И Ғал» еңбегі негізінде).....1143

Ахметова Г.М.

ТОРГОВОЕ ПРЕДПРИНИМАТЕЛЬСТВО В ПРОЦЕССАХ
ЭКОНОМИЧЕСКОЙ МОДЕРНИЗАЦИИ СЕВЕРО-ВОСТОЧНОГО
КАЗАХСТАНА (КОНЕЦ XIX – НАЧАЛО XX ВЕКА).....1156

Черниенко Д.А., Тойбаев А.Ж.

ЭТНОДЕМОГРАФИЧЕСКИЕ ПРОЦЕССЫ В ЖЕТЫСУСКОЙ ОБЛАСТИ
В КОНЦЕ XIX – НАЧАЛЕ XXI В. (ПО ДАННЫМ ПЕРЕПИСЕЙ НАСЕЛЕНИЯ).....1173

Оразов Р.Е., Тілеубаев Ш.Б., Қоңқабаева А.Н.

ЖЕТИСУ ОБЛЫСЫНДАҒЫ 1916 ЖЫЛҒЫ КӨТЕРІЛІСТІҢ КЕЙБІР АСПЕКТІЛЕРІ.....1195

Abdrakhmanova G.S., Kalenova T.S., Tuleubayev Zh.Z.

THE IDEA OF NATIONAL REVIVAL IN THE WORKS
OF THE ALASH FIGURES: A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS.....1213

Жүсіп С.А., Маслов Х.Б.

ЧЕХИЯ МЕН СЛОВАКИЯ ДЕРЕККӨЗДЕРІНДЕГІ ҚАЗАҚ ХАЛҚЫНЫҢ
БЕЙНЕСІ: МӘДЕНИЕТ, ҰЛТ ЗИЯЛЫЛАРЫ ЖӘНЕ АЛАШ ОРДА.....1228

Сулейменова Г.Ж., Оразаева Ж.Ж., Аликулова Н.С.

XX ҒАСЫР БАСЫНДА ҚАЗАҚ ӨЛКЕСІНДЕГІ
БІЛІМ БЕРУДІҢ ТРАНСФОРМАЦИЯСЫ, ЖАҢАША
ТЕНДЕНЦИЯ, ОҚЫТУ ЖҮЙЕСІНДЕГІ МӘСЕЛЕЛЕР.....1241

Байсалдина Г.Ж., Козыбаева М.М.

1918–1936 ЖЫЛДАРДАҒЫ ҚАЗАҚСТАНДАҒЫ САЙЛАУ
ҚҰҚЫҒЫНАН АЙЫРУ САЯСАТЫ: ҚҰҚЫҚТЫҚ НЕГІЗДЕР,
ӨҢІРЛІК ПРАКТИКА ЖӘНЕ ӘЛЕУМЕТТІК САЛДАРЛАР.....1254

Shakenov A.

HISTORICAL FIGURES IN RURAL STREET NAMES
OF NORTHERN KAZAKHSTAN: FROM SOVIET TO NATIONAL PANTHEON.....1268

Сулейменова А.

1925–1933-ЖЫЛДАРДАҒЫ «КІШІ ҚАЗАН» НАУҚАНДАРЫНЫҢ
ҚАЗАҚСТАННЫҢ ШЫҒЫС ӨҢІРЛЕРІНДЕ ЖҮРГІЗІЛУ ТАРИХЫ:
АРХИВТІК ДЕРЕККӨЗДЕРГЕ ШОЛУ.....1281

Омарова Г.А., Төленова З.М., Қожаханова Қ.К.

ҚАЗАҚСТАНДАҒЫ 1931–1933 ЖЫЛДАРДАҒЫ
АШАРШЫЛЫҚТЫҢ ӘЛЕУМЕТТІК-ДЕМОГРАФИЯЛЫҚ ЗАРДАПТАРЫ:
АЛМАТЫ ОБЛЫСЫ МЕН ҚАЛАСЫ МАТЕРИАЛДАРЫ НЕГІЗІНДЕ.....1301

Әлібек С.Н., Косанбаев С.К., Пазиров Е.Д.

1930-ШЫ ЖЫЛДАРЫ ОҢТҮСТІК Өңірде саяси

қуғын-сүргінге ұшыраған оқу-ағарту

саласы қызметкерлерінің қасиетті тағдыры.....1316

Issabek M.K., Gündoğdu A.

WOMEN OF SOUTH KAZAKHSTAN IN THE CONTEXT

OF STALINIST REPRESSIONS: THE FATE OF MOTHERS

AND THE FORMATION OF HISTORICAL MEMORY.....1331

Kassymova D.B., Abdrakhmanov B.N., Kenzhegalin A.K.

MIGRATIONS IN THE SYSTEM OF THE SOVIET-CHINESE

BORDER IN THE 1940S: SOCIETAL SECURITY IN THE KAZAKH SSR.....1347

Turgunbayev I.E., Makhayeva A.Sh., Zhanatayeva K.B.

MODERNIZATION IN THE EARLY REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE:

INTELLECTUAL EMIGRATION AND THE IDEOLOGICAL TRANSFER.....1360

Сауыркан Е., Каипбаева А.Т.

ТРАНСШЕКАРАЛЫҚ КӨШІ-ҚОН: XX ҒАСЫРДЫҢ

БАСЫНДА ҚЫТАЙ МЕН МОҢҒОЛИЯҒА ӨТКЕН

ҚАЗАҚ БОСҚЫНДАРЫ ЖӘНЕ БАЛАЛАР ТАҒДЫРЫ.....1371

Базарбаев К., Батырбекқызы Г., Эрен Акдениз

ТҮРКІЯ–ҚАЗАҚСТАН ҚАТЫНАСТАРЫНДАҒЫ

ЖҰМСАҚ КҮШ ПЕН ЭТНИКАЛЫҚ СӘЙКЕСТІК ЫҚПАЛЫ.....1388

Zharylgassynova B., Duisenbay D.

AGRICULTURAL CULTURE OF THE KARAKUYS

SETTLEMENT: BASED ON ARCHAEOBOTANICAL

MATERIALS OF THE EARLY IRON AGE.....1405

Турганбаева Л.Р., Азитаев С.С.

АРХИТЕКТУРНОЕ ИССЛЕДОВАНИЕ СРЕДНЕВЕКОВОГО МАВЗОЛЕЯ

НА ГОРОДИЩЕ КЫШКАЛА (КЫЗЫЛОРДИНСКАЯ ОБЛАСТЬ).....1418

Ергали Г., Қалыш А.Б., Исаева А.И.

ЭТНОЛОГИЧЕСКИЙ АНАЛИЗ БРАЧНОЙ НЕСТАБИЛЬНОСТИ

СРЕДИ КАЗАХОВ КАРАГАНДИНСКОЙ И УЛЫТАУСКОЙ ОБЛАСТЕЙ.....1432

Ахантаева Ә.Ж.

ЖЕТІСУ Өңіріндегі егіншілік өнімдері

және оның тұрмыста қолданылуы.....1445



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