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Onomaconcept as a verbal sign of nomadic Middle-Age conceptual sphere

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Abstract: The article presents the methods relevant for the etymological analysis of the ethnonyms of the medieval nomadic tribes and a new term, *onomaconcept*. The structure of onomaconcept modeling enables one to reveal the conceptual semantics of ethnonyms. Onomaconcept as a type of linguacultural concept can "unfold" the pre-ethnonym and ethnonym meaning of the onyms investigated. The study of the proper names of nomadic tribes has revealed the system of onomaconcepts verbalized by ethnonyms. The system of onomaconcepts reconstructs archaic mental mindsets, reflections, and the worldview system of medieval nomadism as thoroughly as possible. Moreover, onomaconcepts reveal hypothetically the principles of the nomadic mind (nomadic consciousness).
Keywords: nomadic tribal names, the Middle Ages, Central Asia, onomaconcept, consciousness.

Introduction

It is well known that language reflects the evolution of human cultural consciousness, its internal self-consciousness and self-identification in the surrounding world. We consider the tribal proper names of nomadic peoples as linguistic signs encoding mental goals and priorities. Moreover, we perceive ethnonymic names as linguistic texts "created" by the language and consciousness of Central Asian tribes, peoples and generic alliances that fell into oblivion a long time ago. The learning of sense and meaning of ethnonyms is a quite complicated task in onomastics. This article presents a principally new approach to the analysis of ethnonyms – a conceptual approach. The analysis of the national and cultural conceptual sphere of the nomadic mind on the set of historical ethnonyms and genonyms enables to describe the concepts of diachronic consciousness. For this purpose, we have offered the new term of *onomaconcept* as a linguistic unit of the nomadic conceptual sphere (Zhamsaranova 2011: 12).

Linguistics in the 21st century defines the perception of language as a sign-based quintessence of national culture in its integrity, in which the logical lies as if "on the surface" and seems obvious and visible, while the pre-logical forms the essence, a conceived and coded symbolic sign. Linguistic conceptology (cognitive linguistics), an interdisciplinary linguistic science based on the relation between language and culture, is developing actively. Its central issue is to establish dependences and relations in the

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cognitive chain of "mind (consciousness) – language – representation – conceptualization – categorization – perception" (Kravchenko 1996: 34).

We follow modern conceptual investigations, taking into consideration the concept as a "verbalized cultural sense", which is also a "semantic unit of the language of culture whose plan of expression is a two-sided linguistic sign whose linear length is, in fact, absolutely unlimited" (Vorkachev 2007: 10); the concept as a national image (idea, symbol) complicated by the signs of individual representation (Pimenova 2007: 14). In agreement with our general understanding of a concept, S. G. Vorkachev defines the semiotic essence of the linguacultural concept and considers the term *concept*

> is provided by its attributive expansion: the concept-synonym of the notion first became a "cultural concept" and then a "linguacultural concept". During this evolution, its semantic structure became quantitatively and qualitatively more complicated: the notional content reflecting lexically essential signs of an object was complemented by the image component including culturally significant symbolic and value senses and the linguistic, "significant" component itself reflecting the involvement of the concept name in the lexical system of a particular natural language (Vorkachev 2014: 16).

Onomaconcept as a type of linguacultural concept is also a "synthesizing mental formation which replaced the representation, notion and meaning and involved them in the form of corresponding components – notional, image, value and significant, each of which relates the 'sign body' of the concept in its own way" (Vorkachev 2014: 10). The perception of onomaconcept as a sign phenomenon has enabled researchers to define the role of conceptual metaphor and conceptual metonymy, which play an essential role in the nominative practice of medieval consciousness. An onomaconcept is a complex of structural and systemic properties, signs and qualities as a linguacultural concept and linguaconcept, where the latter is determined by the sign nature of a linguistic unit – ethnonym.

T.V. Toporova assumes that the linguistic analysis of onymic material is one of the autonomous and equal approaches to the reconstruction of the Old Germanic model of the world (Toporova 1994: 3). She defines principles of nomination of the basic notions of the Old Germanic world models and their semantic motivation and focuses on the linguistic meaning of the word itself, namely – signification, and not denotation, as lying "on the surface" or the referent meaning of the appellative. T.V. Toporova writes that "the penetration into the sources of a notion's development finally implies the reference to the subject of the language, its archaic logics and linguistic consciousness imprinted in the semantic motivations relevant for a particular epoch" (Toporova 1994: 6). This approach agrees with our methods of searching for the conceptual meaning of ethnonyms of nomadic tribes associated exactly with the significative meaning of appellatives as concept names.

Like A. Wierzbicka and L. G. Babenko, we understand the application of the method of conceptual analysis as identification and description of senses in the verbal

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archaic facts of language (see Babenko 2000: 83; Wierzbicka 2001: 37). L. G. Babenko includes some research procedures – identification of a set of keywords in the text; description of conceptual space denoted by them; and definition of basic concept (Babenko 2000: 83). A. Wierzbicka assumes that the concept analysis is identification of the paradigm of culturally significant concepts and the description of their conceptual sphere. These methods are also essential for the study of onomaconcept.

Materials and methods

It is well known that the national specifics of thinking and national culture are reflected in ethnic language by elaborating a linguistic worldview, which opens the access to learning the peculiarities of national worldview and accumulates its cultural heritage. The specific nature of nomadic conceptual sphere is revealed by ethnonyms, which, undoubtedly, represent an invaluable linguistic material for reconstructing the aspects of language, culture, and mentality of nomadic ethnos.

At the same time, ethnonyms are specific linguistic signs, whose semantic essence informs about disappeared linguistic worldviews. We can reconstruct the linguistic worldview of medieval nomadism using the methods of cognitive linguistic. We know that a concept as a logically structured phenomenon of mentality is a unit of cognitive linguistics. Therefore, we assume that it is possible to reconstruct and cognize the linguistic worldview of medieval nomads by studying its logically structured units – concepts. The content of a concept as a unit of the linguistic worldview is always national-specific. A new term – onomaconcept – is able to represent the semantic potential of such medieval ethnonyms as Mongol, Tungus, Churchzhen' and other congenial names representing the most informative class of proper names in onomastics.

Our investigation of more than 40 ethnonymic names revealed a system of onomaconcepts grouped in linguacultural concepts. The latter are *nature*, *totemic ancestor* and *man* (a human being). The linguacultural concept *nature* consists of an onomaconcept 'soil' verbalized by the ethnonyms *Shivej*; *Churchzhen'*; *Tumat / T'umed* etc. Samoyedologists have a commonly accepted interpretation of Selkup ethnonyms *sysse-gom, schösch-kom, tschûmel-gop, tjûje-gom* as *a man of the land* from *tschu, tju, sye* '*clay, earth, country*' after M. A. Kastren (1845), 'a man made of soil' that is '*a real man* or *a man of a land*' (Haidu 1985; Tuchkova 2005: 279; Bykonya 2011: 50); the onomaconcept 'forest' verbalized by the ethnonyms *Dagur / Daur*; *Duligaad / Dulu*; *Tabanguud / Tabunuud* (Buryat); *Pochegorsky* (Tungus) that is '*a forest man* or *a man of the forest*'; and the onomaconcept 'water' or '*sea*'/'*a man of sea*' verbalized by the ethnonyms *Lamut* (Tungus); *Namyaad / Namysinsky* (Tungus).

The linguacultural concept *totemic ancestor* is represented by the onomaconcept 'bird' verbalized by the Buryat genonymic names *Hengeldeer*; *Khubduud, Khal'bin, Kharganaad*; *Guschaad* as well as the Tungus tribal name *Lunikersky* and others. Most of Selkup tribal names are of 'bird' semantic origin (see A. Castren, R. Ageeva, V. Nikonov); the onomaconcept 'dog' – by the Buryat genonymic names *Khudaj*; *Batanaj*; dog patronyms of 12 Buryat patronyms; the onomaconcept 'wolf' verbalized

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by Mongol and Buryat ethnonyms; the onomaconcept 'ox-ancestor' – by the patronymic name *Vakaroj* (Tungus); by the Buryat genonymic name *Scharajd* (Buryat); the onomaconcept 'bear' – by a Bargut ethnonym.

The linguacultural concept *man / stranger* (not a man) is represented by the onomaconcept 'man' verbalized by the Tungus genonymic names *Nyakugir / Nironovsky* (Tungus), Buryat alethnonym *Khamnigaan* and historical ethnonym *Nikan* vs *Nelyud'* (not men).

It is notable that all these onyms are united by one and the same semantics, but verbalized by lexica of different languages. A numerously represented linguacultural concept is *totemic ancestor*, especially the onomaconcept 'bird', which unites several Buryat and Tungus genonyms. Tungus tribal names are extracted from archive documents of the 17th–19th centuries at the Zabaikalsky State Archive. Most of them are of Samoyedic linguistic origin. The phenomenon of Samoyedic (especially north-Samoyedic) substrate in ethnonymic lexica of Buryat (as one of Mongol-speaking peoples) and Tungus is supported by toponymic names of Samoyedic origin and Buryat-Selkup parallels in lexica (Zhamsaranova 2009: 22–25). These linguistic results are supported by ethnographic and anthropologic closeness of Samoyedic and Buryat peoples.

An onomaconcept structurally consists of the core comprising, in some cases, two or three tops enclosed by the "bundle" of associative representations, notions and images determined by the cultural background of the linguistic consciousness of a nomad. We imagine the tops of onomaconcept as sense constants in the consciousness produced, on the one hand, by the linguistic meaning of a lexical unit itself and, on the other hand, the conceptual meaning of an appellative as a linguistic sign.

These tops can be schematically represented in the following projections:

Table 1. Projections of tops

As a linguistic sign	As a linguistic unit	As a symbol of culture
Ethnonym / sign-symbol	Lexeme	Cultureme
Interpretant / reference	Seme / sememe	Mythologeme
Signification	Archiseme	Archetype

These tops are not similar for different onomaconcepts. Some of them can be perceived as not singled out. In other cases, they may have obvious explanations. That is why the property of onomaconcept determines the existence of two or three tops.

Image components of onomaconcepts are represented in the form of cultural-sense constants, whose nature is similar to archetypes and determined by the mythological view of nomadic consciousness. They are rendered through the description of accompanying connotation factors of historical, ethnographic or archeological character and confirmed by factors of extra-linguistic interpretation.

The structure of an onomaconcept consists of several layers or segments, which relate to language, ethnographic knowledge, and historical (in some cases

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archeological) events of the ethnic past. The last two combinatory segments from various ethnographic and historical sources prove the ethnolinguistic origin of an ethnonym in the context of ethnogenetic succession of medieval ethnonyms (and the nations known under these names) with modern ethnic groups of Siberia and Russia in general, Mongolia and China.

We consider an ethnonym under two aspects of meaning as a proper name, the pre-ethnonym and the ethnonym itself, which may actually belong to different ethnic communities according to the language in which they are coined. The proper ethnonymic meaning of both ethnonym and onomaconcept is tightly related to ethnocultural peculiarities of modern nations as the successors of medieval tribal alliances of Central Asia. The pre-ethnonymic meaning of both ethnonym and onomaconcept is related to the conceptual meaning of the proper name and therefore can receive adequate semantic explanation only from the lexica of substrate languages. We follow V. V. Bykonya, who considers Selkup ethnonymic division into proper ethnonyms (self-appellation) and pre-ethnonyms. The latter are sometimes of alethnonymic origin (i.e. they are given to ethnos from outside) (Bykonya 2011: 50), which is relevant for nomadic ethnonyms too.

The pre-ethnonymic meaning of an onym (or pre-ethnonym) is a verbalized conceptual meaning of an ethnonym situated at the core of an onomaconcept. The previous existence of an onomaconcept in the diachronic collective consciousness certainly enables one to perceive this type of concept as limited by consciousness, since this concept had a local extension (significance) of the name and a set of particular motivational signs only in the consciousness of the people of remote epochs. It means that those tribes were not modern peoples in spite of their name identity or the area they lived.

The place of metaphor in the content-notional field of semantics has been extremely important during the analysis of medieval ethnonyms. Apart from the denotative meaning of an onomaconcept, there are image-perceptive / image-metaphoric and notional (factual) components. The factual component is verbalized through the appellative string representing value, i.e. the central core of the semantic-sense field of onomaconcepts: *earth – forest – sea* (lake); *bird – wolf/dog – ox – bear*; *khan/tsar – person/man – ancestor/shaman – stranger* (another one) (Zhamsaranova 2013: 31).

Image components of onomaconcepts are represented in the form of cultural-sense constants, whose nature is similar to archetypes and determined by the mythologism of the animalist-totemic views of nomads. They are rendered through the description of accompanying connotation factors of historical and ethnographical character and confirmed by factors of extra-linguistic interpretation.

The linguistic meaning of an onomaconcept (in our case) is a product of linguistic consciousness, while conceptual meaning is a phenomenon of human cognitive consciousness (see Sternin 2004: 65–70). The linguistic meaning, being a part of an onomaconcept, renders certain cognitive signs and components included in the sense content of a concept by means of semes and sememes. Moreover, "the conceptual signs

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in the conditions of a concept's verbalization act like semes, while conceptual layers may coincide with sememes" (Sternin 2006: 236, electronic resource).

The conceptual meaning of the onomaconcept of a word seems larger by comparing conceptual meaning with the linguistic meaning of an onym and concept of a word. Conceptual meaning renders semantic content by means of conceptual metaphors and metonymically determined meanings together with a set of conceptual signs. The representation of a conceptual meaning of an onomaconcept as a linguistic sign enables the use of terms of semiotics, according to which a signification is the signified, a denotation is the signifying, and a name is a "thing". Therefore, we believe that the conceptual meaning of an onomaconcept lies in the significative predication of that onomaconcept.

It is signification that contains ethnocultural representations – mythologems and archetypes – rendered by the archiseme extracted from the structural field of meaning. The signification is a higher level in the semantic notional field of an onomaconcept as a linguistic sign, like the archiseme – in the linguistic meaning of a language unit.

The perception of an ethnonym as a sign-symbol is associated, first, with the fact that the sign approach to the interpretation of onym enables to identify the plan of content directed and relevant to the "future". This means that the ethnonym was perceived in tribal consciousness as a "desirable" name (*May the X be like this!*). Second, such representation of ethnonyms for the purposes of study will enable the identification of referential signs of an onym as a linguistic sign and its significative meaning.

An onomaconcept is "covered" by a peripheral field, in which, according to Yu. S. Stepanov's definition, there is the structure of the concept in general, active (relevant) layer of signs and passive (additional) informative basis learned only by some social groups (Stepanov 2004). The active / relevant layer of signs is recognized by all the native speakers and obvious for all those who use language.

The passive sign layer of an onomaconcept is available only in case of adequate interpretation of signification rendered by the identification of the archiseme, whose semantic meaning is supplemented by the archetype of the archaic cultural consciousness of nomads. It is from the passive layer of an onomaconcept that we can extract ethnocultural information potential including ethnohistorical information especially valuable for ethnocultural, ethnogenetic, linguistic and historical studies.

The methods of studying the structure of onomaconcepts involve the following particular techniques: the method of conceptual analysis; the method of component analysis enabling the study of dictionary definitions of onomaconcepts; the method of sememic analysis enabling one to reveal the archisemes that contextually become conceptual signs developing the notional basis of concepts; the method of conceptual analysis of metaphor elaborating an image component of onomaconcepts; the onomaseological method describing the ethnocultural and ethnohistorical background of a concept; and the semasiological method.

The reconstruction of the conceptual field of a congenial name using onomaseological and conceptual analysis has enabled, first, to establish the etymological meaning

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of the onym and, second, to model the conceptual sphere of nomadic consciousness. The complex methods of analysis of ethnonymic lexica have allowed the recovery of the system of archaic mental mindsets, reflections, and the worldview system of medieval nomadism as completely as possible.

Results

Further, we present the results of studying the ethnonym *Mongol*. This ethnonym has no commonly acknowledged explanation in onomastics. The author's approach to the linguistic interpretation of the ethnonym has enabled to identify the onomaconcept *wolf* relevant in the context of studying the conceptual sphere of nomadic consciousness. First, our technique of studying the onomaconcept has enabled to establish the etymological meaning (the etymology of the word-name of a concept) of the onym *Mongol* as the deappellative *meäng* "dog/wolf" from lexica of Koibal language (one of the extinct North-Samoyed language). The Koibal tribe was partially Turkified and then Russified by the 19th century. I. Georgi wrote: "The Koibals' appearance is 'more like Semoyad (Samoyed) than Tatar'. Their language is also a Semoyad (Samoyed) dialect mixed with many Tatar words"; they are mostly engaged in cattle breeding, roam in the "portable" yurts, keep horses, sheep and camels. They are engaged in hunting because it is very profitable. "Koibal women wear braids and caps in the Mongol manner" (Georgi 2007: 294–295). I. Georgi refers the smaller tribes Kamasintsy, Tubintsy, Karagassy and other groups of "Otyak generations" to the "Semoyad (Samoyed) nations" apart from Samoyed themselves and Koibals, Mators and Soyots.

V. V. Radlov mentions Koibals as a part of Abakan Tatars – "a patchwork of various nomadic tribes, which went down the liberated Abakan valley in the 17th–18th centuries" (Radlov 1989: 225–226). Radlov notices that the Koibals have a very developed epic poetry – poetic tales and heroic epos –, creating an ideal world and representing a truly "poetic perception of the world", which has little to do with the religious views of shamanism (Radlov 1989: 245–246).

Second, the linguistic interpretation of the ethnonym *Mongol* has enabled to compare the ethnonym with the name of a mysterious state of dog-headed people Gou-Go (translated as "dog-state", i.e. the state of people-dogs). That state had another name, *Nikanskoye tsarstvo*, the area of which coincides with the territory of Nerchinsky Uezd or Nelyudsky Ostrog in the 17th–18th centuries. The alethnonym *Nikan* or the *Nikan kingdom of dog-headed people*, *Mongol* and *Gou-go* are probably politonomas (i.e. politically conditioned names of one and the same state alliance of the nomadic tribes of Central Asia (Zhamsaranova 2014: 41–49).

The historical chronicles of the 6th-century Tang dynasty mentions the name *Meng-u*: "the Mongols are mentioned under the name of Meng-u among other Northern ethnic groups, which together were called Shiwei" (Philips 2003: 18). The way of life of the Shiwei resembled the way of life of the Turks – a lot of pigs and cows, a few horses and no sheep, which enabled Philips to consider these tribes "that had just begun to pass from the life in the forest to the nomadic life in the steppe" – the Tungus.

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The Meng-u or Meng-ku mentioned in the chronicles of the Liao dynasty together with Ta-ta or Tatars were a little different. Their way of life was closer to steppe nomads, who consumed meat and sour milk. The Jin chronicles (in 1143) report about raids of Meng-u in China. In brief, this was the political situation by the moment of birth of Temujin the Borjigin, who later united different tribes under the common name of *Mongols*.

The analysis of the different variants *Meng-u* or *Meng-wu* / *Meng-uu*, *Meng-ren*, *Men-da* – as *Meng-u Shiwei* ('Shiwei Mongols'), *Meng-wa Bu* ('tribe of Meng-wa'), *Mangguzi* or *Mongus* (*Meng-gu-si*, *Monγus*) has enabled T. D. Skrynnikova to consider them as referring to the same tribe though written as distinct names by the Chinese during the dominance of different tribes (see Skrynnikova 2006: 137–138). This string probably also includes an ethnonym as *Manchurian(s)*; the people it designated inhabited the territory coinciding with the area of Transbaikalye.

We should mention the possibility of "transferring" the ethnonym to various areas of Central Asia. The ethnonym *Meng-da*, especially the morpheme *-da*, may represent the alethnonym of Tatar or Turkic-speaking tribes of the Northern Asia Tatarin / Tatar, i.e. Mongol-Tatarin / Tatar. In the ethnonym *Meng-u* / *Meng-gu* or *Meng-γu*, the second element can be compared to the Chinese appellative *go* 'state', i.e. literally 'the state of the Meng people'.

The linguistic explanation for the transition of the Koibal appellative *meäng* 'dog / wolf' into the ethnonym *Mongol* in various forms – *Meng-u Shiwei* ('Shiwei Mongols, Meng-gγγ'), *Meng-wa bu* ('the Meng-wa, Meng-wu tribe'), *Mangguzi* or *Mongus* (*Meng-gu-si*, *Monγus*) – seems challenging. In the structure of the late form of the *Mongol* ethnonym the second syllable, *-gol*, could "transfer" from the original morpheme *-wu* of the name *Meng-wu* into *-gγγ* originally, according to historical processes of development of phonology, including Buryat language. Earlier we described the phenomenon of transliteration of the uvular consonant γ at the beginning, middle and end of hard row words in all modern Mongol languages in written form (orthographically) as *-g-* (Zhamsaranova 2013: 175) following the investigation of V. I. Rassadin.

V. I. Rassadin (1982: 48) assumes that some time ago, as seen from the examples, "[…] instead of the complex 'vowel + consonant + vowel' (VCV), there are two syllables either with hiatus (V'V), or with the bilabial fricative *w* (VwV) between vowels" – for example, *itawun ~ itaγun* 'partridge'; *šibawun ~ šibaγun* 'bird', etc. (Rassadin 1982: 48). It is commonly acknowledged in Mongol studies after V. I. Rassadin's works that the longitudinal complexes with intervocalic consonants represent the ancient state of the Mongol languages.

The Buryat language and its dialects are characterized by monophthongization of diphthongs caused by the emergence of long vowels (Rassadin 1982: 59–65). Perhaps this historical phenomenon can explain the emergence of *-o-* in the CVC position instead of the initial Koibal diphthong *-eä-* in the appelative *meäng* < *meng-wu* < *meng-gγγ* < *Mongol*.

At the same time, we should mention that some Buryat kinships are named

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nokhoy-uruks ('dog-families') – the patronymic names of western subgroups – *Eke-Shonood* and *Baga-Shonood* ('big wolves' and 'little wolves') – and the name of the mythical ancestor of the Mongols *Börtö-chino* 'Grey Wolf' support our idea. The sign of power, physical strength and endurance of a wolf or a dog (which these animals have not due to their stout, trained tendons of the legs, but their big teeth, fangs and a long tail) can be considered a value sign of the onomaconcept.

With the increased military power due to the flow of new ethnic complements, the tribal name *Mongol* acquires not only ethnocultural but already ethnopolitical actualization and receives double identity: this name was used to denote both Mongols and Tatars, as well as other Siberian tribes, which later became subdued to the Mongols. Mongols became known in Western Eurasia under the name of *Mongol-Tatars* or *Tatar-Mongols*.

Third, the description of the onomaconcept *dog/wolf* allows us to reveal the lexico-semantic similarity of the designation of 'wolf' in various languages using the method of component analysis of dictionary definitions of the concept word-name. In the Mongol language we find 84 lexemes as derivations of the lexeme *chono(n)* 'wolf' /Mong./; in Buryat the quantity of derived lexemes and combinations from the lexeme *shono/shonyn* is represented by more than 68 units, including, apart from set phrases, the words representing various tabooed names for 'wolf' in dialects.

There is an obvious functional frequency of word-groups used to describe the "brutal" essence of a wolf: sharp teeth and tail that distinguish a wolf from a dog and also its wild and severe nature. These lexemes reflect the perception of an animal-wolf and thus actualize the synchronous image of a wolf in human consciousness.

The lexical-semantic group verbalizing the conceptual semantics of the notion of *wolf* is more interesting. In the Buryat language, the lexeme *shono* is a part of the metaphorical expressions *shono bodol,* (literally 'a thoughtful intention, longsighted', which has the additional meaning 'immovable, firm' in the Western Buryat dialect) and *shono hanaan* ('immovable urge, firm will', reflected in the proverb *shono zuuhanaa aldahadaa gurinha bolodog, ere zorihonoo tabihadaa neren khukhardag* 'if a wolf loses its prey, it will starve; if a man abandons what he strives for, he will lose his honor').

In the Mongol language, the lexeme *chin* as a derivative from the Old Mongol *chinu=a* 'wolf' enters a frequency string of words and word phrases translated as 'firm, unmovable'; *chin bat* 'immovable, immovability'; *chin zurh* 'unmovable bravery'; *chin zurhnees* 'deep from the soul, with all the heart'; *chin nut* 'firmness, immovability'; *chin suseg* 'deep faith'; *chin unen* 'simple truth; sincerity; honesty'; *chin unench* 'just; altruistic; honest; sincere; devoted'; *chin hemeen* 'with diligence' (MRD). If we connect the written Mongol *chinu=a* with the dictionary string of derivatives from the *chin* lexeme, we can assume that the diffusion of the ancient words determined the conceptual polysemy represented in the article.

Thus, the component analysis of the word definitions of a word-name concept has enabled to reveal 1) the lexico-semantic similarity of the name of 'wolf' in the Mongol languages; 2) the basic significative sign of the wolf image in the perception

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of the Mongols – the possession of such qualities as immovable firmness together with devotion to family, i.e. wolves' monogamy. Wolf traits such as longsightedness, cruelty, severity, suspiciousness, and physical abilities typical of the image of a predator – sharp teeth, long tail, shape of scull (compare *shontogor* 'sharp-headed' /Bur./) etc. are relevant. The separate groups of Buryats including Barguzin and Selenga groups call the wolf a mythological primal forefather of their families, which indicates the mythological perception of the wolf image (BRD).

It is curious that in the Northern Samoyed (Nenets) language, the notion of wolf image based on the word meaning coincides with the image of the wolf in Mongol languages as *sarkta tibya* 'the fang of a predator' (NRD), manifesting the animal's brutal essence.

Moreover, the analysis of Nenets words describing animal adds such properties as the length of a wolf's tail into the conceptual semantics of the *wolf* onomaconcept. A wolf has a long tail unlike a dog – the allegorical name of the wolf is *tevta* 'tailed, with a tail; wolf' etc. Nenets *tevary* has the meaning 'the spirit assisting a shaman' ('he who reaches a shaman'); the stem *tev* is lexically identical to the stem of the euphemism *tevta*. There reveals an ancient perception of the image of the wolf as a "tailed" creature, therefore able to assist a shaman during his communication with spirits in the Nenets worldview.

All the listed qualities of wolves including guile, cunning, ability to trace, to lie in the ambush in wait for a prey characterize and form the image of the wolf as a strong and ferocious animal with almost human intelligence, which determined the choice of the image of the wolf as the totem ancestor of people in the mythological consciousness of nomads. We reemphasize that the wolf is the only predator that can hunt in a pack chasing its prey into a circle, similar to the principle of Mongol raid hunts.

In the context of conceptual metaphor, the image of the wolf, like the image of the dog, has a substitutional functional role in the mythological consciousness of nomads. Still, one of the main role functions of the image of the wolf is the function of world establishment. Performing the higher will, the will of heavens or Tengri God, the tribe of wolves had to take obligations to prevent tribal conflicts, to establish peaceful co-existence by establishing strictly structured, hierarchic power of one tribal alliance over the others, disappearing and emerging in a qualitatively new, transformed form based on previous alliances, which had not withstood the test of time and reality.

Discussion

Thus, the onomaseological method of studying onyms as verbalized onomaconcepts has enabled to consider an onym as the ethnocultural and ethnohistorical text deciphered by reconstructing the semantic archetype and conceptual archiseme and thereby to justify the author's hypothesis for nomadic conceptual sphere. The conceptual approach in the analysis of ethnonyms based on the corpus of appellative lexica of typologically non-related languages has enabled to reveal the diachronic Ural-Altai areal linguistic union within the territory under study, which allowed us to make a

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conclusion about some typologically similar phenomena in the languages related to different linguistic families – the Mongol and the Samoyed.

The article enlarges the results of studies on historical ethnonyms and adds new methods and techniques as well as new knowledge about the ethnogenetic and ethnolinguistic processes of the historical past of the Asian peoples.

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