

THE STUDY OF TOPONYMS IN HISTORICAL SOURCES

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the formation of Uzbek toponymy and its representation in historical sources. The historical sources used include the works of Abu Bakr Narshakhi, Abu Rayhan Beruni, Mahmud Kashgari, and Zakhiriddin Muhammad Babur. The article discusses the representation of historical toponyms in these sources and the authors' contributions to Uzbek toponymy.

Keywords: Toponym, toponymy, historical source, Narshahi, Beruni, Kashgari, Babur, name of the city.

INTRODUCTION

Toponyms have been widely used from the earliest times up to the present day. Information related to the toponyms of Central Asia, particularly those of Uzbekistan, can be found in the works of Greek scholars, historians, and travelers, as well as in the writings of Ibn Khordadbeh, Al-Istakhri, Al-Muqaddasi, Al-Masudi, and Yaqut al-Hamawi (13th century).

The earliest extensive information about toponyms is associated with the work *Tarikh-i Bukhara*, written in 944–945 by Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Ja'far Narshakhi. In this work, the author notes that Bukhara was known by several names such as Numujkat, Bumiskat, Madinat al-Sufiya (“City of Copper”), and Madinat al-Tujjar (“City of Merchants”), as well as Fakhira. He also provides information about a number of other toponyms, including Karmana, Nur, Tawais, Iskajkat, Shargh, Haromkom, Zandana, Vardana, Afshina, Barkad, Romtin, Romush, Varakhsha, Paykand, and Farab [1; 12–28].

Comprehensive analytical views on toponyms can be found in the work *Hudud al-Alam* (“The Book of the Boundaries of the World from the East to the West”). This source was created in 982–983 in the province of Guzgan in northern Afghanistan and became widely known among scholars as “*Hudud al-Alam*” (a description of Mawarannahr) [6; 63].

The work *Hudud al-Alam* contains information about the boundaries of the continents of the Earth, major water basins (oceans, seas, and rivers), as well as geographical features of land such as islands, mountains, and deserts. The book also presents descriptions of settlements located in the territory of present-day Central Asia, including Axsikat, Bukhara, Farab,

Fergana, Gurganj, Isbijab (Sayram), Jizzakh, Karmana, Kesh, Kot, Paykend, Quva, Samarkand, Sokh, Termez, Chaghaniyan, Khiva, Osh, Uzgend, Zomin, and Shosh [6; 11–13]. Toponyms are also discussed in the works of prominent Central Asian scholars such as Abu Rayhan al-Biruni in *Al-Qanun al-Mas'udi* and *Geodesy*; Mahmud al-Kashgari in *Diwan Lughat al-Turk*; Babur in *Baburnama*; Abu al-Ghazi Bahadur Khan in *Shajara-i Turk* and *Shajara-i Tarakima*; Sharaf ad-Din Ali Yazdi in *Zafarnama*; and Hafiz Tanish Bukhari in *Abdullanama*, which provide valuable information on the study of toponyms [4; 14–23].

In particular, in the two works of Abu Rayhan al-Biruni mentioned above, information is provided about the cities of Central Asia, the history and geography of their territories, the population living in them, their ethnic composition, as well as the natural environment and climate.

In *Al-Qanun al-Mas'udi*, a total of 603 geographical objects are mentioned, of which 85 are directly related to Central Asia. These include Balkh, Barskhan, Paykand, Herat, Ilaq, Jurjaniya, Kot, and Yangi-kent. For instance, the author explains that Tashkent was known as Binkat, one of the cities of Shosh, and that in the Turkic language it was called Tashkent. He also notes that this place corresponds to the fortress referred to by Greek authors as *Burj al-Hijra*.

Furthermore, issues of significant importance in the history and geography of Central Asia, such as the basin of the Amu Darya River and the Karakum Desert, are discussed in Beruni's work *Geodesy*.

The work *Diwan Lughat al-Turk* by the renowned linguist Mahmud al-Kashgari, who occupies a special place in the cultural heritage of the peoples of Central Asia, is also of great importance for the field of toponymy. In this work and in the map attached to it, the names of countries, cities, villages, mountains, deserts, passes, seas, lakes, and rivers are presented, and many of them are accompanied by explanations.

In the index dictionary compiled to interpret the text of *Diwan Lughat al-Turk*, 82 names of cities and villages, 68 names of countries, provinces, valleys, pastures, ravines, hills, passes, and roads, as well as 25 names of seas, lakes, rivers, and streams are recorded. Among them are the following examples:

- Cities: Kashmir, Margilan, Qarnak, Quba, Samarkand, Khujand, Ordu
- Mountains: Azizlig Mountain, Ulalig Mountain, Baqirlig Mountain
- Lakes and rivers: Issyk-Kul, Yulduz Lake, Itil
- Streams and canals: Oqsoy, Baliqlig Okuz
- Villages: Alush, Azig, Abul, Qizil Uz, Yaghma
- Pastures: Ola, Chakla, Tayiz, Tayzang Tayiz.

In the encyclopedic dictionary *Diwan Lughat al-Turk*, Mahmud al-Kashgari also provides information on the etymology of certain toponyms. For instance, he notes that **Shosh** originally derives from **Toshkand (Tashkent)**, meaning “a city built of stone.” Likewise, he explains that **Samarkand** was called **Semiz kand** (“rich” or “large city”) because of its size, while Persians pronounce and use the name in the form **Samarkand** [5; 234].

Mahmud Kashgari may also be regarded as an ethnographic scholar. In his dictionary, 78 ethnonyms (names of clans, tribes, peoples, and nations) are recorded. In addition, *Diwan Lughat al-Turk* contains several terms directly related to toponymy. Among them are: **ort** – a

mountain summit or pass; **ozuk** – seepage water emerging from the ground and forming a pool; **tuz** – a straight or flat land; **yor** – a deep place eroded by water, a ravine; **yozi** – an open or vacant space; **sirt** – a small hill or a small valley; and **qayir** – soft soil or sandy land. On the basis of such terms, a number of toponyms have been formed, including **Muzort, Ayiqort, Qoraozak, Kokozak, Tuzqir, Yortepa, Yorqorgon, Oqyozi, Sariyozi, Qorasirt, Orqaqayir, and Qiblaqayir** [5; 543].

Cases related to toponyms and their interpretations can also be found in the work Baburnama by Babur. This work, which serves as a unique source for the study of the historical names of places, records more than a thousand toponymic names, many of which are described and interpreted in terms of their meanings.

In Baburnama, various categories of geographical names are mentioned. These include names of countries such as Afghanistan, Arabia, India, Iraq, and Moghulistan; names of cities such as Banaras, Bukhara, Delhi, Ghazni, Kabul, Mashhad, Lahore, Kesh, Sayram, Tashkent, and Urgench; and names of villages and settlements such as Muhammadoga Kenti, Archakent, Khudak Kenti, Dehi Afghan, Dehi Yaqub, and Dehi Ghulamom.

The work also mentions the names of rabats (caravanserais) and deserts, including Dashti Shaykh, Rabot-i Zavraq, Rabot-i Sarhang, Rabot-i Sultanbegim, Surkhrabot, Qorarabot, and Tosh-rabot. In addition, the names of palaces and pavilions such as Bostonsaroy, Koksaroy, Ogasaroy, and Chagonsaroy are recorded. Names of fortresses and strongholds are also included, such as Qalayi Dabusi, Qalayi Zafar, Qalayi Ikhtiyoriddin, Olaqorgon, and Toshqorgon. Furthermore, the names of gates (Shaykh al-Islam Gate, Chorrakha Gate, Charmgaron Gate) and bridges (Mirzo Bridge, Mulla Bobo Bridge, Chopon Bridge, Pul-i Salar, Pul-i Ravon) are mentioned [3; 368].

The Baburnama also contains names typical of toponymy related to natural geographical features such as mountains, passes, valleys, slopes, and caves. Among them are Alatog, Sarvtog, Shunqorkhona Mountain, Mehtar Sulaymon Mountain, Itmak Pass, Kandirlik Pass, Obdara, Dara-yi Zang, Dara-yi Nur, Oqkotal, Qipchaq Kotal, and Gori Oshiqon.

Among the names related to water structures are the names of rivers such as Amu Darya, Syr Darya, Ganges, and Indus; streams such as Olassoy and Quruqsoy; springs and fountains such as Yonbuloq, Qarg‘abuloq, Qorabuloq, Bodomchashma, and Garmchashma; lakes such as Qorakol, Koligil, and Koli Malik; as well as the names of irrigation canals and reservoirs such as Qirqariq, Khakan Ariq, and Mallukhan Hovuzi.

Babur also paid attention to the fact that some toponyms were known by several different names. For example: Tashkent – Shosh – Choch; Aksi – Axsikat; Uratepa – Ustrushna – Ustrush; Kesh – Shahrisabz; Karshi – Nasaf – Nakhshab; Rabotak Orchini – Ikki Suv Orasi (“Between Two Waters”); Qalayi Zafar – Shoftevar; and Qahlug‘ – Darband-i Ohanin [3; 63–212]. The work also notes that some place names are presented in both Turkic and Iranian forms, for example: Dilkusha Bogi – Bog‘i Dilkusha and Jud Mountain – Koh-i Jud.

Many of the place names mentioned in Baburnama are still used today in the same form, such as Andijan, Bukhara, Isfara, Mashhad, Sokh, Hushyar, Kabul, Delhi, Piskent, Vorukh, Khujand, and Zomin. However, some toponyms have undergone phonetic changes over time, for example: Dizak – Jizzakh, Kandibodom – Konibodom, Marg‘inon – Marg‘ilon, Uzgend –

Uzgen, Toshkand – Tashkent, Qubo – Quva, Khoqon – Kokand, Tirmiz – Termez, Khuzor – G‘uzor, Siyohob – Siyob, and G‘avo – G‘ova.

In addition, discussions related to toponyms in the 15th century and later periods can be found in works such as *Shajara-i Turk* and *Shajara-i Tarakima* by Abu al-Ghazi Bahadur Khan, *Zafarnama* by Sharaf ad-Din Ali Yazdi, and *Abdullanama* by Hafiz Tanish Bukhari. In particular, a total of 1,357 onomastic units have been identified in the text of *Shajara-i Turk*. Of these, 880 are personal names, 286 are place names, 118 are clan or tribal names, 51 are names of water bodies, and 22 are oronyms (names of mountains and elevations) [7; 22].

In conclusion, Uzbek toponymy possesses historical roots that date back to ancient times. Their comprehensive study remains an important task for contemporary toponymic research.

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