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Etymological Analysis of Turkmen Toponyms in Eastern Historical Sources

Recently, there has been a growing interest in studying toponyms as a historical and cultural heritage. Analysis of the historical etymology of toponyms is essential for understanding the role of place names in the culture and history of a nation, as well as conveying the cultural and historical value of places to future generations. The purpose of this study is to explore the historical etymology of place names territorially related to Turkmenistan, and the subsequent systematization of toponyms to preserve the historical and cultural heritage of the Turkic peoples. The material for the study was drawn from historical sources of East Asia and the Middle East containing toponyms of Turkmenistan. The analysis of toponyms was carried out using historical-comparative, analytical-interpretative, historical-linguistic, functional-systemic and etymological methods. The importance of this study is that it provides a detailed historical description of toponyms territorially related to Turkmenistan, which allows tracing the Turkic roots in their nomination. The novelty of the study lies in the fact that it provides a detailed description of the etymology of toponyms based on Eastern, mainly Chinese and Arabic, historical sources, which as a result leads to direct connections with the Turkic languages. The conducted study enabled us to estimate the significant degree of contact and interrelation of onomastic systems. In terms of theoretical and practical significance, the research focuses on systematizing Turkmen toponymy and generalizing its etymology, as well as preparing reference materials on Turkic onomastics from Eastern sources, useful for scientific research. The following conclusions can be drawn from the research results. It fosters high-level interaction and overcomes onomastic traditions. Studying the origins of ancient Turkmen toponyms creates a sense of solidarity and historical ties between Turkic-speaking communities, emphasizing the shared linguistic and cultural motifs characteristic of Central Asia and deeper regions. This research also focuses on linguistics, exploring semantic patterns and past language exchanges, which contributes to the preservation and revitalization of Turkic languages. The resulting materials are a key contribution to ethnography, history, and linguistics, facilitating a comprehensive understanding of the collective heritage of Turkic ethnic groups and their long-term impact on today's reality.

Keywords: Toponym, Turkmenistan, East Asia, Middle East, Historical Etymology.

Introduction

Of great significance both in theory and practical applications is the study of toponyms — the names of cities, villages, rivers, reservoirs, mountains, etc. — as a means of recording lost historical realities, ancient ethnonyms, and archaic linguistic forms that are important for reconstructing the past of a particular region. Toponyms, or place names, fulfil an essential task of preserving the historical heritage of a nation. Names of places that have emerged in various historical conditions are described to serve the chronological evidence of certain historical events [1]. Toponyms are referred to as persistent linguistic symbols, which can reveal a lot of information about a certain place at the time when it was settled and given its name [2]. Moreover, toponyms are related to various historical epochs, peoples and languages, and in this way, they function as cultural, historical and social formations, which testify to the time when the given territory was developed and inhabited by different peoples [3]. Toponyms relate to the historical stages in which the territory was settled by different ethnic groups, reflecting their economic activity, ancient migrations and interethnic contacts [4]. They are also described as «sacred locations, landforms associated with deities and historical events, springs, trails, and ‘footprints’ of ancestral villages, petroglyphs, and other archeological sites» [5; 324]. Toponyms are historically important as they serve to carry memories of a location's past, representing its collective memory [6].

In addition to the significant historical value, toponyms are of great significance in terms of cultural heritage. Thus, toponyms are referred to as carriers of national and cultural data and background knowledge [7]. The analysis of toponyms makes it possible to give a description of the spiritual culture and worldview of the people inhabiting a certain location at a certain time and speaking a certain language [8]. Moreover,

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the essential role of toponyms is to reflect different elements of a nation's material and spiritual culture, which may include rituals, ceremonies, religious beliefs, etc. [1]. The historical and etymological analysis of toponyms belonging to a particular location is certain to reveal the ethnic and cultural impact that arose during the exploration of this location [9].

The toponyms of Turkmenistan, like those of other Central Asian countries, often have a long history, which is often particularly difficult to restore, since the names of places have undergone many changes, having been used differently at different times in different languages of other countries. The purpose of this study is to trace the historical etymology of geographical names associated with the territory of Turkmenistan, according to Eastern historical sources, and to systematize these names taking into account their Turkic origin. This research emphasizes the significance of Eastern sources in restoring the Turkic origin of Turkmen toponyms. When the original meaning and pronunciation of a toponym are Turkic, information about their further development can be obtained from data preserved in the sources of other nations. In this regard, Eastern historical sources significantly contribute to the preservation of toponyms. Hence, historical sources of the Middle East and East Asia were used for this study, based on which it is possible to reconstruct the long history of the development of Turkmen toponyms, their structure and variants found in other languages. Such etymological analysis of Turkmen toponyms enables understanding the role of place names in the Turkic culture and history, as well as conveying the cultural and historical value of places to future generations.

Materials and Methods

To collect toponyms associated with Turkmenistan, this study employed purposive sampling from Eastern historical sources that belong to East Asia and the Middle East such as Yakut al-Hamawi's «Mu'jam al-buldan», al-Istakhri's «Kitab mesalik al-memalik», al-Balazuri's «Kitab futuh al-buldan», al-Ia'qubi's «Kitab al-buldan», Ibn Ruste's «Kitab al-a'lak an-nafisa», Ibn Fadlan's «Ar-Risala», Ibn Haukalya's «Kitab al-mesalik wa-l-memalik», al-Maqdisi's «Ahsan at-takasim fi ma'arif al-akalim», as-Samani's «Kitab al-ansab». These sources served as the main material for the study enabling the validity of the data, since they are key ancient geographical gazetteers that record the toponyms of Central Asia and contain early references to Turkic territories in the context of conquests, as well as describe routes and place names with precise localizations. Materials for this study also included the works of Western and Russian scientists who conducted research on Turkmenistan and Central Asia in Arabic and Chinese. Their reconstructions of the toponymy of Turkmenistan based on Arabic and Chinese sources confirm the authenticity of the identified forms. The study identified lexical units denoting place names in the region of Turkmenistan mainly from Chinese and Arab historical sources as well as the explanation of their origin and cultural background.

The investigation into the origin of toponyms geographically belonging to Turkmenistan was aimed at identifying those containing links to the Turkic languages. In this respect, this research is of an interdisciplinary character, being directly related to linguistics, historical etymology, geography and cultural studies. To provide a detailed account of the origin and historical meaning of toponyms and analyze the similarities and differences in ancient and contemporary place names, the study utilized the historical-comparative, analytical-interpretative, historical-linguistic, functional-systemic and etymological methods. To implement the historical-comparative method, toponyms from ancient Arabic sources (e.g., Yaqt al-Hamawi's «Mu'jam al-buldan») were compared with modern forms from atlases of Turkmenistan and Turkmen language dictionaries. Thus, the form *Merv* (Arabic: *Marvaranud*) correlates with modern *Mary*, illustrating the phonetic evolution from Middle Arabic /mawr/ to Turkmen /mary/, confirming the Turkic adaptation of the Iranian substrate. The analytical-interpretative method was applied through the analysis of semantic components, for example, in the toponym *Qaraqum* meaning «black sands», the morphemes *qara* («black») and *qum* («sand») were identified, interpreted in the context of a desert landscape, based on parallels in other Turkic toponyms, for instance, *Kum-Dag*. The historical-linguistic method included the reconstruction of proto-forms according to phonetic laws (for example, the transition $\check{g} > j$ in *Murghab* > *Murjab*), and the functional-systemic method included classification by types (hydronyms, oronyms, oikonyms, etc.). Using the etymological method, toponyms of Turkmenistan were classified according to their origin into Turkic, Iranian and other layers of names reflecting the historical migrations of peoples. The etymological analysis allowed the identification of Turkic roots in Turkmen toponyms.

Furthermore, this research systematized the data obtained through the comprehensive analysis in accordance with the type of a toponym, the geographical location, the current and source name, and its value in the culture of Turkmenistan. The historical-comparative and historical-linguistic methods enabled us to trace how place names changed over time and identify the differences between the historical and modern linguistic

data. The analytical-interpretive and functional-systemic methods allowed us to identify common features, as well as cultural and semantic features inherent in place names.

Results and Discussion

The systematic description of Turkmen toponyms was based on two main topological features: the type of geographic feature and linguistic origin. By geographic feature type, toponyms in Turkmenistan, as in other countries, were classified into several main semantic categories corresponding to the types of natural territorial features: oikonyms, hydronyms, oronyms, and others. Oikonyms, or names of populated areas (city, town, village), constitute the most significant part of the toponymic collection. These include major centers such as *Ashgabat*, *Turkmenabad* and *Turkmenbashi*, as well as historical towns and villages such as *Serkhetabad*, *Serdar*, *Keneurgenish*, *Karakongur*, *Dargan-Ata*. These names often mark stages in the region's political and cultural development and reflect its ethnic and linguistic dynamics. In addition to oikonyms, hydronyms, or names of water bodies (rivers, temporary streams, wells, lakes), such as *Murghab*, *Uzunsu* and *Sumbar*, as well as *geyman*, *adyr*, *suv-yatak*, *chin*, *gazma*, *guyy*, *gurruk*, and others, play a significant role in Turkmen toponymy. Hydronyms demonstrate the economic specificity of the steppe region, where the availability of water determined the placement of settlements and caravan routes. Among oronyms, or names of relief (hills, mountains, ridges, deserts, dunes), toponyms associated with large landforms are characteristic of Turkmenistan, for example, *Qaraqum*, *Kum-Dag*, *Merv-Dag*, *Sumbar-Dag*, as well as individual names of mountains and dunes, reflecting ideas about the form and function of a given area.

In addition to typological classification by type of geographic feature, toponyms of Turkmenistan were systematized by linguistic origin, allowing us to identify the layered history of the toponymic background and trace the influence of various linguistic and cultural circles. Several main linguistic layers are typically distinguished in the toponymy of Turkmenistan: Iranian, Turkic and Arabic. The Iranian (ancient) layer is represented primarily by hydronyms, oronyms and individual oikonyms. This layer includes names that originate from ancient Iranian dialects, such as *Murghab*, *Sumbar*, *Serakhs*, *Firyuza*, *Dasht*, *Madau*, as well as many toponyms of the southern and foothill zones. These names are often associated with the natural and geographical characteristics of the area and reflect the early Iranian-language layer. The Turkic (Turkmen) layer is the most widespread in the modern toponymic fund and includes names such as *Karakongur*, *Karakum*, *Kum-Dag*, *Karakala*, *Buyun-Uzun*, *Kyzyl-Ayak*, *Uzunsu*, *Dargan-Ata*, *Keneurgenish*, *Turkmenbashi*. These toponyms are based on Turkmen vocabulary: *suv* (water), *chay* (river), *kel* (lake), *gum* (sand), *dag* (mountain), *kala* (city), *kene* (old). The Arabic and religious-cultural layer includes toponyms associated with Islamic culture and Muslim shrines. In Turkmen toponymy, such names are represented, in particular, by formants that originate in the Arabic language or Islamic tradition, for example, *Khozhambaz*, *Khozthagala*, *Imambaba*, *Gurayysh*. The typology of Turkmen toponyms by geographical type and linguistic origin allowed not only for the organization of the toponymic collection but also for its interpretation as a multilayered sociocultural text that reflects historical migrations, ethnic contacts and the linguistic dynamics of the region.

As a result of the research, we were able to systematize toponyms mentioned in Eastern literature and having relation to Turkic roots in terms of their toponym type, geographical location, current and source name, value in the culture of Turkmenistan. Each description is provided with a cultural and semantic explanation of the given toponym and the names of Eastern historical sources where the meaning of the toponym is explained historically. In what follows below we provide two samples of city names illustrating the results of our systematization — *Daya-Khatyn* and *Koneurgenish* — accompanied by their historical and cultural description from Middle Eastern and East Asian sources.

Daya-Khatyn — oikonym, city name.

Current name: *Daya-Khatyn* (Turkmen: *Daýahatyn*).

Geographical location: The ruins of *Daya-Khatyn* are located 170 km from the administrative center of Lebap province, Turkmenabad (formerly Amul), on the left bank of the Amu Darya River, along the old road to Khorezm.

Architectural monument of the 11th-12th centuries.

Medieval caravanserai of Turkmenistan.

Historical sources: Yakut al-Khamavi «Mu'jam al-buldan», al-Istakhri «Kitab mesalik al-memalik».

Names in the sources: Tahiriya, *Daya-Khatyn*.

The name *Daya-Khatyn* itself is recorded in 19th-century sources as a transformation of the earlier *Takhiriya*, reflecting a phonetic shift and derivation influenced by local dialects and the administrative needs of the Khanate of Khiva: $t > d$, $h > kh$, with the derivative suffix *-yn* (cf. oikonyms like *Darvaza* or *Bayram-Ali*). An alternative interpretation is from *daya* (Turkmen for «aunt») and *khatyn* («wife»), supported by local folklore of the Dargana Turkmen, *Bai-Khatyn* meaning «rich woman».

Cultural and semantic explanation: On the ancient trade route from Chardzhou (medieval Amul) to Khorezm, along the left bank of the Amu Darya, there are many ruins of small post offices and towns. Among them, the ruins of Daya-Khatin, located between Dargan and Jigirband, are of significant historical and cultural value. This route is reminiscent of the medieval *Tahiriya-rabat* [10; 231-232]. The Daya-Khatin caravanserai was built almost in the middle of a large rectangular courtyard formed by a fortress wall. Archaeological excavations have established that this fortress wall is the remains of the Arab ribat of *Tahiriya*, built in the 9th century. The Tahirid dynasty was founded by the ruler of Khorasan, Tahir ibn al-Husayn (776-822) [11; 187]. This is also confirmed by medieval authors, in particular al-Istakhri (10th century) [12; 178] and Yakut (13th century). According to Yakut, the name of this Rabat is associated with Tahir ibn al-Husayn, suggesting that it was built in the 9th century [12; 422]. This archaeological observation is consistent with the data. The identification of the location of the ruins of Daya-Khatyn in written sources with *Takhiriya* is also supported by A.A. Marushchenko [13; 1930]. According to Istakhri, a continuous cultural strip on the left bank, *Takhiriya* (the ruins of Daya-Khatyn), began here, running in a narrow strip toward Khazarasp and then widening [14; 13].

Apparently, during the period of centralization of power in the Khorasan and Khorezm regions, *Takhiriya* itself played the role of a military outpost, and not a fortified point. Caravans stopped here on a difficult route, often passing through flooded coastal forests, and along them — loose sand and deserts. In connection with this, a magnificent caravanserai was built in the early medieval settlement [10; 232]. In fact, the Daya-Khatina caravanserai is much older. A.M. Pribytkova dates it to the first half of the 11th century, I.G. Gulyamov — to the 11th-12th centuries, G.A. Pugachenkova — to the first quarter of the 12th century. Analysis of the architecture of the caravanserai, along with the Khorasan style and Khorezm features in it, allows us to assume that it was built during the reign of the Seljuks, under Sultan Sanjar, and was one of the structures erected by order of the central and Merv authorities [14; 14].

Architectural research and analysis of building materials suggest that the Dayahatyn caravanserai may have been built in the second half of the 11th century. Its walls are faced with fired brick. The caravanserai served from the Seljuk period (11th century) to the Golden Horde period. The palace was rebuilt several times, with some arches and sections of the main entrance walls restored. Scholars believe these works were carried out in the second half of the 15th century, during the reign of Hussein Baykara. His vizier, a classic of oriental literature, and the renowned philosopher Nizam ad-Din Mir Alishir financed the construction of bridges, roads, and canals, as well as the maintenance of old trade routes and roadside structures. However, the most prominent period in the history of the Dayakhatin caravanserai is associated with the Seljuk rule. It was then that Dayakhatin acquired its magnificent façade, which now defines the architecture and is its main feature [11; 187].

Koneurgenish — oikonym, city name.

Current name: *Koneurgenish* (Turkmen: *Koneurgench*) — a city in Turkmenistan, the administrative center of the *Koneurgenish* district of Dashoguz province.

Geographical location: Located 480 kilometers north of Ashgabat, on the territory of the ancient *Sarykamysh atyrau* on the Amu Darya.

Historical sources: al-Balazuri «*Kitab futuh al-buldan*» (Jurjan), al-Ia'qubi «*Kitab al-buldan*» (Jurjan), Ibn Ruste «*Kitab al-a'lak an-nafisa*» (Jurjaniya), Ibn Fadlan «*Ar-Risala*» (Al-Jurjani), al-Istakhri «*Kitab mesalik al-memalik*» (Jurjan), Ibn Haukalya «*Kitab al-mesalik wa-l-memalik*» (Jurjan), al-Maqdisi «*Ahsan at-takasim fi ma'arif al-akalim*» (Jurjaniya), as-Samani «*Kitab al-ansab*» (Jurjan), Yakut al-Hamawi «*Kitab mu'jam al-buldan*» (Jurjan).

Names in the sources: *Gurganjiya*, *Jurjaniya*, *al-Jurjaniya*, *Jurjan*.

Cultural and semantic explanation: *Konurgenish* is one of the oldest cities in Turkmenistan and all of Central Asia, whose toponymic evolution is closely linked to the history of ancient Khorezm and its capital, Urgench (*Gurganj*, *Jurjania*). Mentions of *Yue-gan* in the Chinese chronicles of the History of the Great Han (206 BC) allow us to date the first known name of Urgench to the earliest era of our era, indicating its role as a dependent center of the nomadic Iranian tribes who controlled the middle reaches of the Syr Darya. In the mid-7th century BC, the same source mentions «the ancient lands of *Yue-gan*, belonging to the ruler of the

Lesser Khans», emphasizing the trading functions of the city, where oxen were used to transport goods, which underscores its early economic specialization even in the pre-Islamic period [15; 5-6]. By the mid-6th century, the nomadic Iranians had left the region, and the population of the Zarevshan Valley (Sogdians) and the lower reaches of the Amu Darya (Khwarizmians) came under the rule of the Turkic Empire, which strengthened Urgench as a marketplace between the nomadic steppe and the cultural regions, with trade links to Khorasan and Northern Persia. In 712, Khorezm was conquered by the Arabs, who divided the country into two states. In the south, in Kyata, there was a local king with the title of Khorezmshah, and in the north, in Urgenich (which the Arabs called Jurjaniya), an emir, who was initially subordinate to the caliph. Being the capital of northern Khorezm, Urgenich showed all the signs of its economic growth precisely at this time. Its influence, based on trade relations with Eastern Europe, reached its highest level during the Samanid era [15; 5-6].

The critical analysis of toponymy reveals some contradictions regarding the name *Urgenich*. Prof. Ya. G. Gulyamov states that until the 13th century, Urgenich was called Gurganj [16; 98]. Academician V.V. Bartold, the owner of large works and essays on the history of Khorezm, states that the oldest (1st century BC) Chinese inscription for Khorezm, found in the «History of the Great Han», begins his work with the name of Gurganj — Yuegian or Yuejian, which was previously clarified by A. Yu. Yakubovsky [17; 545]. In another source, the name of the city is indicated as the city of Ulozhan. According to Chen Zhongmian, this corresponds to the city of Urgench. Barthold depicts the city of Gurganj on the map attached to his collected works. He also claims that the Arabs called this city Jurjaniya, and the Mongols and Turks — Urgench. The toponym underwent a consistent transformation: Gurgandzhird → Gurganj → Urgench, with characteristic phonetic shifts (j > ch, vowel reduction) and derivation under the influence of Turkic and Mongolian substrates [18; 247]. This is a very large and rich city, located on the left bank of the Amu Darya in its lower reaches. In the 12th century, it was the capital of the state of Khorezmshahs [18; 247].

Alternative etymological hypotheses add depth. Professor, specialist in the Arabic language, researcher of the history of Khorezm of the 19th century K.E. Zakhau, based on Arabic sources, comes to the conclusion that Urva in the Avesta is the prototype of Urgench [19; 5]. S.P. Tolstov also fully supports this opinion [20; 5]. It should be remembered that Khorezm is often mentioned together with the name of the main city of this region, which at various times was Gurganzh (Kunya-Urgench) [21; 233]. The word «Urgen», according to S. Ataniyazov, comes from the name of the ancient Gurgan people who lived on the southeastern coast of the Caspian Sea (formerly Girkan, i.e. Gurgan), where the modern Gorgan River flows, originating in the western spurs of the Turkmen-Khorasan Mountains. In addition, the Gorgan Bay and the Iranian city of Gorgan are mainly populated by Turkmens. The ethnonym Gurgan derives from the ancient Iranian (Khwarazmian) word «gorg» (wolf), while «an» is the plural affix. The ending with the suffix «ch» or «j» is a shortened form of the Khorezmian, and later Persian, word «jird» (gird/kird/kert), meaning «city». Thus, the ancient toponym Gurganj originally derives from the form «Gurgan + jird» («City of Gurgs»), undergoing subsequent phonetic and morphological evolution [22; 29].

Arab sources such as Ahmed ibn Fadlan describe Jurjaniya as a major city on the Amu Darya, associated with the wintering grounds of the Baghdad Caliph's embassy, while Ibrahim al-Istakhri emphasizes its superiority over Amul, its wealth of silk and its role in caravans to the Khazars and Khorasan [12; 157]. Hamza al-Sahmi in his «Ta'rikh Jurjan and Maqdisi» details its status as a trading center with imported livestock and canals [22; 100]. Juvaini and Yakut describe Gurganj as the capital of the Khorezmshahs, destroyed by the Mongols; besides Yakut records two cities of Gurganj, separated by three farsakhs, which confirms the toponymic complexity [12; 431]. Furthermore, Abu-l-Qasim Hamza Ibn Yusuf as-Sahmi's book «Ta'rikh Jurjan» quotes stories about Central Asian scholars who came to Jurjan [23; 16]. Al-Maqdisi's precise topographic data and detailed architectural descriptions are undoubtedly an invaluable source for the archaeological history of cities. Juvaini in the section «The Story of Events in Khorezm» of his work «Tarikh-i-Jehangusha» provides the following explanation: «The original name of this country is Jurjaniya, and the rulers themselves call it Urgench. In the past, this (Khorezm) was the capital of the sultans of the world and the famous sons of humanity» [12; 486]. This explanation emphasizes that the city of Urgench at that time was a center of science and education. It should also be noted that the «Academy of Mamun» was established in the city of Gurganj, headed by world-famous scientists such as Ibn Sina and al-Beruni [24; 117]. Prof. Sh.S. Kamolladinov's book on al-Beruni's migration to Jurjan, the fact that he wrote unparalleled works here, the scholars around him, etc. is described in more detail [25; 26].

Guided by the opinions of the above-mentioned scholars, S. Ataniyazov suggests that in the «Toponymic Dictionary of Turkmenistan», old Urgenish represents a transformation of the earlier Gurganzhi with a

contextual segment reflecting the Turkification of the Khorezm toponym [22; 151]. He indicates: «Old Urgenish is a region, settlement, and ancient city of medieval Khorezm in the Dashkovuz region (at that time: Urgenish). The date of Urgenish is unknown. In the mid-17th century (in 1646), Abilgazy founded a new city of Urgenish here, and later in the center of the Khorezm region it began to be called New Urgenish, and old Urgenish—Old Urgenish. The embassy, built near the ancient city, conquered by the Mongols and Tamerlane, is also called Koneurgenish. First-century Chinese historians called it Yue-gyan, the Khorezmians called it Gurganj, and ancient Arab historians called it Jurjaniya [22; 151]. Yaqt asserts that there were two cities in Khorezm, called Gurganj, one large and one small, located 3 farsakhs (about 24 kilometers) apart. The former was the capital of the Khorezmshahs, the latter a large city with many bazaars and a dense population. Both cities were destroyed during the Mongol invasion in 618/1221-22 [12; 431]. These excerpts provide valuable sources for completing the toponymic evolution.

Al-Yaqubi, in his work «Kitab al-buldan», describes Jurjaniya as «From Ray to Jurjan is a seven-day journey. Jurjan is a city on the Daylem River (the name of the Caspian Sea). The finest birch boards are produced there. Clothing is made from various types of silk. Large two-mountain camels are found there. There are many palm trees there» [12; 146]. Hamdallah Qazvini, in Chapter 18, «On the City of Mazandaran», of his work «Nuzhat al-Qulub», states that the province consisted of seven reformed districts, and Jurjan was the first of them. He characterizes Jurjan as built by the sultan's grandson, Malikshah, with a fortress of 8,000 paces, a people of artisans, and silk workshops [26; 65].

In the 10th century, major centers of scholarly thought believed that Nishapur, Bukhara, and ancient Urgench [27; 13] were the sites. Muslim historians Ibn al-Athir, al-Juzjani, and an-Naswi likely described the Mongol invasion of Khorezm [28; 85-86]. Similar references are found in At-Tabari's *Tarikh ar-rusul wa-muluk*, Ibn Rust's *Kitab al-a'lak an-nafisa*, and other sources [25; 26]. The book discusses life in the cities of Khorezm, including Konurgenish (Jurjani). Around the 17th century, dehydration of the region may have forced the citizens of Urgenish. After this, the ruins of Gurganj became known as Old Urgench (Koneurgench). Life here likely revived in 1831 after the digging of the Khan-Yab canal. In the mid-19th century, the Khan of Khiva, Muhammad Emin, may have attempted to move the capital, but was defeated. Old Urgench began to grow after 1924 with its inclusion in the Turkmen SSR.

In summary, Turkmen place names appear in multiple forms within Eastern sources, offering comprehensive historical insights into their origins and development, as well as into Turkmen toponymy as a whole. These toponyms, recorded in Eastern historical records, showcase the rich historical progression and distinctive features of Turkmen history and culture. Additionally, they demonstrate how Turkmen heritage is closely intertwined with the wider Turkic history and culture, as reflected by the varied renditions of these names across different languages [29].

Conclusion

This study examined toponyms recorded by orientalists in the ethno-territory of the Turkic peoples associated with Turkmenistan. This paper presents only a small portion of the results obtained during the study, which could have been covered in a single article. An analysis of the historical etymology of Turkmen toponyms in oriental sources allows us to define the ethno-territory of the Turkmen people and obtain important information about the ancient history and culture of the Turkic peoples, reflecting the specific and common features of the local environment, way of life, and historical events. It also shows that some toponyms have been influenced by oriental cultures and languages. The results of this study suggest a significant degree of contact and interconnection between onomastic systems. Theoretically, this study is significant due to its scientific generalization of the etymology and specific features of Turkmen toponymy. The findings fundamentally change our understanding of Central Asian history, demonstrating an earlier and more intense Turkification of the region than previously thought. They also clarify the stratification of loanwords in Turkic languages, contributing to comparative historical linguistics. Their practical significance lies in the compilation of comprehensive materials on Turkic onomastics based on Eastern sources, which will be useful for further research in linguistics, etymology, ethnography, and language contacts. Regarding the potential applications of this research, other scholars will be able to use this toponym database to create interactive migration maps, corpora of parallel texts in Turkic and Eastern languages, and interdisciplinary models of ethnogenesis, complementing them with modern GIS technologies and corpus linguistics.

Moreover, this investigation is of high value as it aims to record and preserve the historical and cultural importance of ancient place names of Turkic origin that have been forgotten or changed. Examining the origins of ancient Turkmen place names promotes a feeling of unity and continuity among Turkic-speaking

populations by highlighting shared linguistic and cultural characteristics found across Central Asia and beyond. This research further contributes to linguistic studies by revealing semantic patterns and historical language contact, supporting efforts to preserve and revitalize Turkic languages. These findings provide important resources for fields such as ethnography, history, and linguistics, deepening the understanding of the common heritage of Turkic peoples and their enduring impact in the modern world.

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CRedit authorship contribution statement

Koshimova B.A. — Conceptualization; Investigation; Data curation; Resources; Writing — review & editing.

Kenbayeva A.Z. — Conceptualization; Methodology; Formal analysis; Investigation; Validation; Writing — original draft; Writing — review & editing.

Abisheva Sh.S. — Investigation; Data Curation; Resources; Validation.

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Шығыс тарихи дереккөздеріндегі Түркіменстан топонимдерінің этимологиялық талдауы

Соңғы уақытта топонимдерді тарихи-мәдени мұра ретінде зерттеуге деген қызығушылық артып келеді. Топонимдердің тарихи этимологиясын талдау олардың халықтың мәдениеті мен тарихындағы рөлін айқындауға, сондай-ақ жер атауларының мәдени-тарихи құндылығын келешек ұрпаққа жеткізуге мүмкіндік береді. Осы зерттеудің мақсаты — Түрікменстан аумағымен байланысты топонимдердің тарихи этимологиясын зерттеу және түркі халықтарының тарихи-мәдени мұрасын сақтау мақсатында оларды жүйелеу. Зерттеу материалы ретінде Түрікменстан топонимдері кездесетін Шығыс Азия мен Таяу Шығыстың тарихи дереккөздері пайдаланылды. Талдау барысында тарихи-салыстырмалы, аналитикалық-интерпретациялық, тарихи-лингвистикалық, функционалдық-жүйелік және этимологиялық әдістер қолданылды. Зерттеудің маңыздылығы — Түрікменстан аумағымен байланысты топонимдерге тарихи-лингвистикалық тұрғыдан жан-жақты сипаттама беріп, олардың атауындағы түркілік түбірлерді анықтауға мүмкіндік беруінде. Зерттеудің ғылыми жаңалығы топонимдердің этимологиясын шығыс тарихи дереккөздері, әсіресе қытай және араб жазба мұралары негізінде кешенді талдау. Нәтижесінде олардың түркі тілдерімен тікелей байланысы мен ономастикалық жүйелер арасындағы өзара ықпалдастықтың жоғары деңгейі айқындалды. Зерттеудің теориялық және практикалық маңызы түрікмен топонимиясын жүйелеу мен оның этимологиясын жалпылауда, сондай-ақ шығыс дереккөздері негізінде түркі ономастикасына қатысты анықтамалық материалдар дайындауда көрінеді. Тарихи түрікмен топонимдерінің шығу тегін зерттеу түркітілдес қауымдастықтар арасындағы тарихи байланыстарды айқындап, Орталық Азия аймағына тән ортақ тілдік және мәдени үрдістерді көрсетеді. Сонымен қатар зерттеу семантикалық заңдылықтар мен тарихи тілдік алмасуларды талдау арқылы түркі тілдерін сақтау және жаңғырту мәселелеріне де үлес қосады. Зерттеу нәтижелері этнография, тарих және лингвистика салалары үшін маңызды ғылыми дереккөз және түркі халықтарының ортақ мәдени мұрасын жан-жақты түсінуге мүмкіндік береді.

Кілт сөздер: топоним, Түрікменстан, Шығыс Азия, Таяу Шығыс, тарихи этимология.

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Этимологический анализ топонимов Туркменистана в восточных исторических источниках

В последнее время возрастает интерес к изучению топонимов как историко-культурного наследия. Анализ исторической этимологии топонимов необходим для понимания роли топонимов в культуре и истории народа, а также для передачи культурно-исторической ценности мест будущим поколениям.

Целью данного исследования является изучение исторической этимологии топонимов, территориально связанных с Туркменистаном, и последующая систематизация топонимов для сохранения историко-культурного наследия тюркских народов. Материалом для исследования послужили исторические источники Восточной Азии и Ближнего Востока, содержащие топонимы Туркменистана. Анализ топонимов проводился с использованием историко-сравнительного, аналитико-интерпретационного, историко-лингвистического, функционально-системного и этимологического методов. Значимость данного исследования заключается в том, что оно дает подробную историческую характеристику топонимов, территориально связанных с Туркменистаном, что позволяет проследить тюркские корни в их номинации. Новизна исследования заключается в том, что оно представляет собой детальное описание этимологии топонимов на основе восточных, преимущественно китайских и арабских, исторических источников, что в результате приводит к установлению прямых связей с тюркскими языками. Проведенное исследование позволяет судить о значительной степени соприкосновения и взаимосвязи ономастических систем. С точки зрения теоретической и практической значимости, исследование направлено на систематизацию туркменской топонимии и обобщение её этимологии, а также на подготовку справочных материалов по тюркской ономастике из восточных источников, полезных для научных исследований. Из результатов исследования можно сделать следующие выводы: оно способствует взаимодействию на высоком уровне и преодолевает ономастические традиции; изучение происхождения древних туркменских топонимов создает чувство солидарности и исторических связей между тюркоязычными общинами, подчеркивая общие лингвистические и культурные мотивы, характерные для Центральной Азии и более глубоких регионов; исследование также фокусируется на лингвистике, изучая семантические закономерности и прошлые языковые обмены, что способствует сохранению и возрождению тюркских языков. Полученные материалы являются ключевым вкладом в этнографию, историю и лингвистику, способствуя всестороннему пониманию коллективного наследия тюркских этнических групп и его долгосрочного влияния на современную реальность.

Ключевые слова: топоним, Туркменистан, Восточная Азия, Ближний Восток, историческая этимология.

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