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HISTORICAL-ETYMOLOGICAL FEATURES OF THE NAMES OF KHOREZM MAHALLAS

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Abstract: This article analyzes the historical formation, origin, and etymological characteristics of mahalla names in the Khorezm region. It examines the factors reflected in these names, including ancient clan and tribal names, traditional occupations and crafts, geographical features, historical figures, and the lifestyle of the local population. The article also highlights the importance of toponyms in studying the history of the region, the cultural memory of its people, and the development of the language. Some mahalla names in Khorezm are explained on the basis of historical sources and oral traditions and are classified according to their lexical and semantic features.

Keywords: Khorezm, mahalla names, toponym, microtoponym, etymology, historical names, clan and tribal names, geographical names, lexical-semantic analysis.

Introduction. Place names are important linguistic and cultural units formed over the long historical development of a people. They provide information about the natural conditions of a particular area, the ethnic composition of its population, occupations, economic activity, religious views, and social life. For this reason, toponyms should be studied not merely as names of geographical objects, but as sources that preserve the historical memory of a people.

Mahalla names constitute a distinct layer of the toponymic system. A mahalla is not only a social space that unites the population of a given area, but also expresses historically formed ways of living and traditions. Mahalla names may reflect the clan or tribe that once lived there, a famous person, a developed craft, a natural-geographic feature, a water structure, or other phenomena that held an important place in the life of the people. Khorezm is one of the most ancient historical and cultural regions of Uzbekistan. Agriculture, irrigation, trade, handicrafts, and urban development have flourished in the oasis since ancient times. The Amu Darya and the canals drawn from it have directly influenced the settlement patterns and way of life of the population of Khorezm. For this reason, concepts such as water, ditch (ariq), canal, lake, bridge, sand, hill, and fortress are frequently found in the mahalla names of the region. In addition, the historical ethnic composition of the population of Khorezm has caused ethnonyms such as Qiyot, Qipchoq, Nayman, Mang'it, Qo'ng'irot, and Qangli to be preserved in mahalla names [1].

Literature Review. The theoretical and practical issues of Uzbek toponymy have been studied by a number of scholars. In S. Qorayev's work "Toponymics," the laws governing the formation of place names, methods of classifying them, and principles of etymological analysis are elucidated. The scholar emphasizes that the emergence of toponyms is not accidental, and that behind every name lies a specific historical, geographical, or social reason. The author shows the necessity of using data from history, geography, and ethnography alongside linguistic information when analyzing place names [2].

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In studying Khorezm toponymy, Z. Do'simov's monograph "Toponyms of Khorezm" is an important scholarly source. The study covers the historical formation, lexical layers, grammatical structure, and etymology of Khorezm place names. The scholar shows that ancient Turkic words, ethnonyms, craft terms, and geographical units denoting water and land structure are actively represented within Khorezm toponymy [3].

In H. Hasanov's work "The Language of the Land," geographical names are assessed as a historical source connecting the past with the present. In the scholar's view, place names preserve information about the natural condition of a territory, the occupations of the population, and historical events. Sometimes a lake or river may dry up, a fortress may fall into ruin, or an old craft may disappear, but information about them is preserved in the place name [4].

T. Nafasov's "Explanatory Dictionary of Uzbekistan's Toponyms" provides explanations of the meaning and origin of various place names. This dictionary is of great importance in determining the meaning of ancient words, ethnic names, and geographical terms found within mahalla names [5].

In the work "A Concise Explanatory Dictionary of Place Names" by Z. Do'simov and X. Egamov, the role of natural conditions, the ethnic composition of the population, occupations, and historical figures in the formation of toponyms is shown. The authors interpret place names as the result of the long historical development of the people's language [6].

Y. G'ulomov's study devoted to the history of irrigation in Khorezm is of great importance in explaining the place names of the region. It provides information about ancient canals, river branches, irrigation structures, and the formation of agricultural areas. Since most of Khorezm's mahallas were established near water sources, it is natural that units such as ariq (ditch), yop (small canal), lake, riverbed, dam, and bridge are involved in their naming [7].

Research Methodology. Descriptive, historical-comparative, etymological, and lexical-semantic analysis methods were used in the study. First, mahalla names were divided into groups according to their lexical basis. Then, the historical and modern meanings of the words within each name were compared with one another. The historical-comparative method makes it possible to study the ancient and present forms of mahalla names and to determine their connection with similar units in other Turkic languages. For example, ethnonyms such as Qipchoq, Nayman, Mang'it, and Qangli occur not only in Khorezm but also in place names in other regions of Central Asia. This shows that these names have a broad historical and ethnic basis. Using the etymological method, the original meaning and origin of the main word within a name were studied. For example, it was established that the name Yangiariq is formed from the units "yangi" (new) and "ariq" (ditch), and the name Qo'shko'pir from "qo'sh" (double/paired) and "ko'pir" (bridge). However, it is not correct to interpret any name solely on the basis of its current form, since some names may have undergone phonetic changes over a long historical development. Through lexical-semantic analysis, the concept underlying the formation of each name was determined. Mahalla names were divided into semantic groups such as clan-tribe, person, occupation, natural-geographic feature, water object, plant name, and others.

In the study, in addition to historical sources, the principle of using oral folk information was also taken into account. Legends about the origin of mahalla names are important for studying local history. However, folk explanations do not always express the true etymology of a name. For this reason, such legends must be compared with written sources, historical maps, archival documents, and linguistic material.

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Analysis and Results. The mahalla names of Khorezm are diverse in terms of their historical formation and lexical meaning. Some of them derive from ancient clan-tribal names, others from personal names, types of occupation, natural-geographic features, water objects, or plant names. Among the mahalla names of Khorezm, names formed on the basis of ethnonyms occupy a special place. Ethnonyms denote the names of peoples, clans, tribes, and ethnic groups. Names such as Qiyot, Qipchoq, Nayman, Mang'it, Qo'ng'irot, and Qangli originally denoted a specific ethnic unit. Later, the territory where the members of that clan or tribe lived also came to be called by their name.

For example, the name "Qiyot" is linked to one of the ancient tribal names. The Qiyots are considered one of the ethnic groups that held an important place in the history of Khorezm. The name "Qipchoq" derives from the name of the Kipchak tribe, widespread in the history of Turkic peoples. The names "Nayman" and "Mang'it" also preserve the names of large clans and tribes that lived in Central Asia. The name "Qo'ng'irot" is connected with the Qongirot clan, which played an important role in the historical and political life of Khorezm. Such mahalla names help to determine the historical-ethnic composition of the oasis population.

Mahalla names formed on the basis of clan-tribal names may sometimes have undergone phonetic or grammatical changes. In some cases, the plural suffix "-lar" was added to an ethnonym, producing the meaning "the place where members of that clan live." For example, names in the form "Qipchoqlar," "Naymanlar," or "Mang'itlar" denote a territory inhabited by people belonging to a particular community. Part of the mahalla names of Khorezm is connected with the names of historical figures, religious leaders, clan chiefs, or people who played a role in the establishment of the mahalla. Such names are called anthroponymic toponyms. Alongside the person's name, they often include titles and honorific units such as "ota" (father), "bobo" (grandfather), "xo'ja," "eshon," "pir," "biy," and "bek."

For example, names containing the component "Xo'ja" may be connected with a person who held religious or social status in the area. The words "bobo" and "ota" often occur within the name of a person respected among the people, a shrine, or a saint. The words "biy" and "bek," in turn, may be connected with people who held administrative or social status in the past.

Folk legends play an important role in explaining mahalla names based on personal names. The local population may connect a name with a famous person who once lived there. However, if there are several legends about a single name, they must be compared with historical documents, since in some cases a name may be connected not to a historical figure but to a clan or occupation name.

Khorezm has long been known as a region where handicrafts flourished. Pottery, blacksmithing, coppersmithing, weaving, woodcarving, tanning, and other crafts influenced the formation of mahallas. Families engaged in the same craft often lived in the same area, and as a result the mahalla came to be named after that craft. Names such as Temirchi (blacksmith), Kulol (potter), Misgar (coppersmith), Ko'nchi (tanner), Degrez (caster), Bo'zchi and To'quvchi (weaver) are examples of toponyms formed on the basis of occupation. The name "Temirchilar" denotes the place where craftsmen who worked with iron lived, while "Kulollar" denotes the mahalla of craftsmen who made pottery. "Misgarlar" denotes the territory inhabited by craftsmen who made copper items, and

"Ko'nchilar" denotes the area where people who processed leather lived.

Word-forming suffixes characteristic of the Uzbek language actively participate in occupational names. For example, the suffix "-chi" is added to the word "temir" (iron) to form the occupational

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name "temirchi" (blacksmith). When the suffix "-lar" is further added, the meaning "temirchilar," i.e., the community where representatives of that occupation live, arises. Such names reflect the historical occupational specialization of Khorezm's mahallas. A large part of mahalla names reflects natural-geographic features. Such names indicate the terrain, soil composition, water supply, plant cover, size, and location relative to other places. Although Khorezm is mainly a flat region, the oasis contains sandy, saline, low-lying, relatively elevated, and water-adjacent lands. These natural differences find expression in mahalla names. Names such as Qum (sand), Qumloq, and Qumtepa indicate that the area is located on sandy soil or that sand dunes existed there. The name "Qumtepa" is formed from the combination of the words "qum" (sand) and "tepa" (hill). It denotes a hillock formed of sand or a location near a sandy hill. However, in the conditions of Khorezm, the word "tepa" sometimes also denotes an artificial elevation formed on the site of an ancient fortress, citadel, or ruin.

Names such as Tepa (hill), Do'ng (mound), Qir (ridge), Pastlik (lowland), and Chuqur (hollow) are connected with the structure of the land surface. "Do'ng" may denote a small elevation, and "Qir" a relatively higher and dry piece of land compared to its surroundings. The names "Pastlik" and "Chuqur," in turn, indicate that the mahalla is located in a low-lying area. In such places, water accumulation or groundwater close to the surface has been observed.

The words "Yuqori" (upper), "O'rta" (middle), "Pastki" (lower), and "Quyi" (lower/downstream) in mahalla names express the relative location of areas. For example, when a village or mahalla expanded, its upper part may have come to be called "Yuqori mahalla" (Upper mahalla), and its lower part "Pastki mahalla" (Lower mahalla). In the conditions of Khorezm, the concepts "yuqori" (upper) and "quyi" (lower) are not always connected with the elevation or lowness of the land. They may also express the direction of flow of a ditch, canal, or river. The area closer to where the water comes from was called "Yuqori" (Upper), and the next part along the flow was called "Quyi" (Lower).

The components Yangi (new), Eski (old), and O'rta (middle) also actively participate in mahalla names. The word "Yangi" denotes newly developed land, a newly dug ditch, or a settlement established later. For example, the name Yangiariq denotes a settlement established next to a newly dug irrigation channel. The component "Eski" (old) distinguishes an earlier-formed area from a settlement that arose later. "O'rta" (middle), in turn, may be applied to a mahalla located between two areas. Color-denoting words such as oq (white), qora (black), and sariq (yellow) also occur within natural-geographic names. It is not correct to interpret such words only in the sense of external color. "Oq" (white) may denote the light color of the soil, flowing water, or an open area. "Qora" (black), in turn, may be connected with dark and fertile soil, dense land, a large territory, or symbolic concepts within ancient Turkic naming traditions. The component "Sariq" (yellow) probably expresses the yellowish color of sand or soil.

The name Yangiariq denotes the area near a newly dug ditch. The name Qo'shko'pir is formed from the words "qo'sh" (double/paired) and "ko'pir" (bridge) and may be connected with two bridges built side by side or close to one another. Names containing the component "Ko'l" (lake) indicate that a natural or artificial body of water once existed there. The word "O'zak" (riverbed/channel) is used to mean the old channel of a river, a waterway, or a low-lying, water-bearing place. "Yop" is one of the geographical terms specific to the Khorezm region, denoting a ditch or small irrigation channel. Mahallas formed along a yop often took the name of that water channel. The component "Band" (dam) is connected with a structure built to dam or regulate water. Such names reflect the ancient irrigation culture and experience of water use among the population of Khorezm.

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Changes in the course of the Amu Darya over the course of history have also affected regional names. Some lakes and riverbeds have dried up, and new farmland or settlements have arisen on the site of old canals. Nevertheless, the names of old water objects have been preserved in mahalla names. In this respect, mahalla names based on hydronyms serve as an important historical-geographic source for reconstructing the region's former water system. Part of the mahalla names is connected with plants. Plant names such as tol (willow), tut (mulberry), terak (poplar), jiyda (oleaster), yulg'un (tamarisk), and qamish (reed) reflect the natural plant cover of the area or the gardening activity of the population. For example, the name Tolzor denotes a place where many willows grew, and Terakzor an area covered with poplars. Names such as Jiydali or Jiydazor indicate that oleaster trees were abundant there.

The mulberry tree has held an important place in the economic life of the population of Khorezm. For this reason, names in the form Tutli, Qo'shtut, or Tutzor may be connected with an abundance of mulberry trees in the mahalla's territory. The name "Qamishzor" denotes a place close to water where reeds grow abundantly. Names containing "Yulg'un" (tamarisk), in turn, are characteristic of areas where the tamarisk plant, which grows in saline and moist soil, is widespread.

The suffix "-zor" added to plant names creates the meaning "a place where a particular plant grows abundantly." For example, the names Tolzor and Qamishzor are formed from the units "tol" (willow) and "-zor," and "qamish" (reed) and "-zor," respectively. The suffix "-li," in turn, denotes the presence of a particular feature or thing. The name "Jiydali" means a place that has oleaster trees or where oleaster grows abundantly. Mahalla names also contain words denoting size or shape, such as katta (big), kichik (small), uzun (long), keng (wide), and tor (narrow). The components "Katta" (Big) and "Kichik" (Small) are used to distinguish two areas with the same base name from one another. For example, when a settlement was divided into two, the part with a larger area or population might be called "Katta" (Big), and the smaller part "Kichik" (Small). The word "Uzun" (Long) indicates that the mahalla stretches along a ditch, road, or canal. "Tor" (Narrow), in turn, may denote a small area formed between two waterways, a wall, or another object.

Mahalla names also contain words denoting historical structures such as qal'a (fortress), qo'rg'on (citadel), darvoza (gate), and rabot (caravanserai/outpost). Since Khorezm was a land of ancient fortresses, settlements formed near a fortress or citadel were often named after that structure. For example, "Yangiqal'a" (New Fortress) may denote the area around a newly built or later restored fortress, while "Eskiqal'a" (Old Fortress) may denote the territory near the ruins of an ancient fortress. Names containing the component "Darvoza" (Gate) are connected with a city's entrance-exit road or the gate of an ancient defensive wall. Even though gates and walls have disappeared over time, their name has been preserved in the name of the mahalla or street. Such names are of great importance for studying the structure of ancient cities and the historical settlement of the population.

Conclusion. The mahalla names of Khorezm are important linguistic monuments that reflect the centuries-long history, ethnic composition, natural conditions, irrigation culture, occupations, and social life of the oasis. The study of mahalla names is of great importance not only for linguistics but also for the fields of history, geography, ethnography, archaeology, and cultural studies.

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