

HISTORICAL AND TOPONYMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF PLACE NAMES IN THE CHIROQCHI REGION

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Abstract: This article analyzes the historical formation of Chiroqchi District, one of the ancient regions of Kashkadarya Province, and examines its stages of development from ancient times to the present day. The study explores the geographical location of the region, its economic potential, information found in historical sources, and the origins of village and settlement names on a scientific basis. In addition, the historical development, toponyms, and ethnographic characteristics of the Chiroqchi region are discussed. The findings of the research contribute to revealing the role and historical significance of Chiroqchi District in regional development.

Keywords: Chiroqchi, Arnabuloq, Arabbandi, Asosan, Davtosh, Oqto'nli, O'ymovut, Kishmishtepa, toponymy, historical heritage, history of villages.

Introduction. The territory of Uzbekistan is distinguished by its rich historical heritage, ancient cities and villages, and numerous archaeological monuments. Each region has passed through unique stages of historical development, and the study of these stages is of great importance for a deeper understanding of the country's history. Chiroqchi District, one of the largest districts of Kashkadarya Province, is among the regions possessing an ancient and remarkable historical past.

According to historical sources, Chiroqchi has been inhabited since ancient times, and its history dates back to antiquity. According to the linguist and ethnographer T. Nafasov, Chiroqchi was a large and prosperous city between the fourth and tenth centuries. However, during the Mongol invasion, the city was devastated and fell into decline. There are also various interpretations regarding the origin of the name "Chiroqchi." Some sources associate the term with a person responsible for lighting lamps and maintaining the shrines of saints in cemeteries or khanqahs. Other interpretations suggest that the name originated from the shrine of "Chiroqchi Ota," which was associated with the craft of lamp-making.

Literature Review and Methods. Various scholarly publications, historical sources, and toponymic studies play an important role in the study of the history of Chiroqchi District. In particular, T. Nafasov's work *Qashqadaryo Qishloqnomasi* provides valuable information on the names of villages and settlements in the region, their origins, and their ethnotoponymic characteristics. Furthermore, the studies conducted by S. Abduraimova on the role of the Chiroqchi Bekdom in the socio-political life of the Emirate of Bukhara serve as important academic sources for understanding the history of the region.

In the field of toponymic research, S. Qarayev's work *Toponyms of the Regions of Uzbekistan* and the *Explanatory Dictionary of Place Names of Uzbekistan* are also significant scholarly sources that help illuminate the historical formation of place names in the region. The research employed historical, comparative, source-critical, and systematic approaches. Through these methods, the stages of historical development of the Chiroqchi region, the origins of village names, and the socio-economic characteristics of the area were scientifically analyzed.

Discussion and Results. By the Late Medieval period, the territory of Chiroqchi had acquired the status of a separate political and administrative unit known as a bekdom (beklik). During the rule of the Manghit dynasty (1753–1920), Chiroqchi functioned as one of the twenty-seven bekdoms of the Emirate of Bukhara. During this period, the region occupied an important place in the socio-political and economic life of the emirate.

The formation of some settlements in the Chiroqchi region dates back to much earlier times. Archaeological monuments dating from the end of the last millennium BCE and the beginning of



the Common Era indicate that the area had been inhabited since ancient times. In particular, the Kishmishtepa archaeological site located near the town of Chiroqchi was one of the major settlements during the Early Middle Ages.

The natural environment of the region also influenced its historical development. Compared with other settled oases of Central Asia, the Chiroqchi oasis possessed distinctive landscape and climatic conditions, with much of its territory consisting of steppes and foothill plains. Consequently, agriculture was less developed here than in many other oasis regions.

Chiroqchi District is one of the ancient regions of Kashkadarya Province, and the names of its villages and settlements serve as important sources for studying the history, natural environment, and ethnic composition of the area. The region's toponyms were primarily formed in connection with geographical conditions, historical events, tribal names, and the lifestyle of the local population. The linguist and ethnographer T. Nafasov examined numerous settlement names in Chiroqchi and analyzed their origins and historical meanings. According to his findings, some village names originated from geographical features, while others were derived from ethnic groups or tribal affiliations.

For example, the name of the village Asosan is associated with the natural and geographical characteristics of the area. The term originates from a designation referring to relatively elevated and flat lands situated in foothill regions. Such place names generally emerged according to the relief and landscape of the territory and reflect the natural environment of local settlements.

The name of Davtosh village is likewise connected with natural features. According to the toponymist T. Nafasov, the words "dav" or "dev" denote something unusually large or massive in size. Since large stones were abundant in the vicinity of the settlement, the area came to be known as Davtosh. The name can be interpreted as "a stony village on the mountainside" or "a settlement located in a mountainous area."

The name Arnabuloq village is also directly related to the natural environment. In foothill and hilly regions, heavy rainfall often erodes the soil, creating long and deep ravines. In local geographical terminology, such ravines are called "arna." Consequently, a settlement located near a spring adjacent to such a ravine came to be known as Arnabuloq, meaning "the spring by the ravine."

Some village names in Chiroqchi are associated with ethnic groups or tribal names. For instance, Oqto'nli village derives its name from the Oqto'nli clan, one of the major branches of the Qangli tribe. In Kashkadarya Province, the Qo'ng'iro't tribe was also divided into two groups known as Qarato'nli and Oqto'nli. Certain historical sources additionally mention sacred figures known as Oqto'nli Ota and Ko'kto'nli Ota. This suggests the existence of traditions related to the veneration of sacred persons and sites among the local population.

There are two villages named O'ymovut in Chiroqchi District, both situated on the left bank of the Kashkadarya River. One of these is an ancient settlement, while the other was established during the 1950s. During that period, residents were relocated to newly developed areas in order to cultivate previously unused fertile lands along the river. As a result, a new settlement was established in the dry-farming zone near the Qumdaryo area. The relocated inhabitants gave the new settlement the same name as their former village, O'ymovut.

Various military invasions also left a significant mark on the history of the Chiroqchi region. This process is reflected in certain place names. For example, the name Arabbandi has survived from the period of Arab rule and means "Arab dam" or "Arab embankment." This suggests that hydraulic structures or dams may have been constructed in the region during the Arab period.

Similarly, the name Juyrat village has an ethnic origin. Historical sources mention the existence of tribes known as Juryat or Jirat among the Mongols. Some researchers believe that the village name originated from one of these tribal names. This indicates that various ethnic groups inhabited the Chiroqchi region at different times and that traces of their presence have been preserved in local toponyms.



In general, the villages and toponyms of the Chiroqchi region provide valuable information about the area's historical development, ethnic composition, natural environment, and social life. Through the study of toponyms, it is possible to draw important scholarly conclusions regarding the ancient history of the region, patterns of settlement, and socio-political processes that occurred during different historical periods. Many place names in Chiroqchi District have preserved their historical roots and have survived to the present day.

Conclusion. The history of Chiroqchi District reflects a complex and continuous process of development extending from ancient times to the present. The region has experienced various historical periods, and its villages, toponyms, and cultural heritage serve as important witnesses to past events. Today, Chiroqchi District continues its path of economic and cultural development as one of the dynamically developing regions of independent Uzbekistan.

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