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# ETHNIC HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF TURKIC PEOPLES IN SOUTHERN UZBEKISTAN

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**Annotation:** The article examines the ethnic history and geographical location of Turkic peoples in Southern Uzbekistan. wide coverage. The article covers the national ethnic culture and origin of groups related to the origin of the Turkic peoples in our country, as well as the evolutionary details of their formation into a single ethnic elite.

**Keywords:** Byzantium, Altai, Turkish, ethnos, nation, ethnicity, migration, people, ethnic group.

**Introduction.** The history of humanity is not only a record of states, great individuals, and ideas, but also a history of peoples. Over thousands of years, humans have established diverse states, produced outstanding figures, developed various cultures and languages, engaged in noble deeds and wars, made significant discoveries, and, at times, carried out both heroic and tragic actions, all while forming communities. One of the most fundamental communities in scholarly terms is referred to as an *ethnos*. The earth we inhabit is home to a wide range of peoples, each distinguished by their unique ethno-national culture and traditions. Every ethnic group has its own specific history of formation and development.

**Object and Methods of Research.** The Turkic peoples include the Avars, Azerbaijanis, Altaians, Astrakhan Tatars, Balkars, Bashkirs, Bulgars, Gagauz, Karluks, Khazars, Kazakhs, Karaites, Karakalpaks, Karachays, Kumyks, Kipchaks, Kyrgyz, Crimean Tatars, Krymchaks, Nogais, Oghuz, Uzbeks, Pechenegs, Salars, Yellow Uyghurs, Siberian Tatars, Tatars, Tofalars, Trukhmen, Tuvans, Turks, Turkmens, Uyghurs, Urums, Khazars, Khakasses, Chuvash, Chulym Tatars, Shors and Yakuts. Some of these peoples have preserved their national languages, while others have either lost them or assimilated into other populations. Studying them is vital for understanding the history of languages and conducting comparative-historical research on Turkic languages. Therefore, possessing knowledge about Turkic peoples is of great importance.

The Avars were a Turkic people who lived in the Middle Ages and established the Avar Khaganate in the Carpathian Basin (present-day Transdanubia, Central Hungary, Transylvania) where they were a dominant political power for two and a half centuries. After the fall of the Khaganate by the Franks in the early 9th century, the Avars gradually merged with other peoples. In Turkic sources, they are referred to as *parapurim*, in Byzantine sources as Avars, and in Russian chronicles as *Obrs*. Some theories link them to the Juan-Juan, while others claim their origins lie in Central Asia. Their precise origin, however, remains uncertain. In the early 20th century, debates emerged among scholars about the possible relation between the ancient Avars and the present-day Avars of Dagestan. Linguistically, the ancient Avars spoke a Turkic language, while the Dagestani Avars speak a Caucasian language. The latter were historically known as *Maarulal*, thus suggesting no direct connection between the two groups.



**Research Results and Discussion.** The anthropological profile of the Central Asian peoples began forming in the first millennium BCE. Most of these populations speak languages and dialects from the Turkic branch of the Altaic language family, including Uzbek, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Karakalpak, Turkmen, Uyghur and Tatar. Turkic-speaking peoples constitute more than 60% of the region's population. In total, over 130 million people speak Turkic languages worldwide. The majority of Central Asia's population resides in cities and villages. The Uzbeks are one of the oldest and most populous ethnic groups in Central Asia. They make up the majority of the population in Uzbekistan and are the largest ethnic group in the region, with a population exceeding 30 million. The Uzbek ethnic community formed in the central regions of Central Asia - specifically, in Movarounnahr, Khorezm, Yettisuv, parts of Eastern Turkestan and Southern Turkestan. The foundation of the Uzbek people consists of ancient settled agricultural communities in what is now Uzbekistan, including ethnic groups such as the Saka-Massagetae, Sogdians, Bactrians, Khwarezmians, Ferghanans and Kangju. In addition, groups migrating from Southern Siberia, the Altai, Yettisuv, Eastern Turkestan, and the Volga-Ural regions also contributed to the Uzbek ethnogenesis. Historical sources note that these communities mostly spoke Turkic or Eastern Iranian languages. Anthropologists suggest that by this time, the physical characteristics typical of modern Uzbeks and oasis Tajiks had already formed among the Sogdians and Kangars of Central Asian valleys and oases.

Moreover, Turkic components that actively influenced Uzbek ethnogenesis arrived in the central regions of Central Asia - Tashkent, Zarafshan, Qashqadarya, Surkhandarya, Fergana Valley and Khorezm - during the Turkic Khaganate period (6th–8th centuries). Over time, these Turkic elements settled and integrated with the local population, forming a significant part of the ethnic and cultural landscape. A synthesis between local cultural and agricultural traditions and incoming Turkic cultural elements occurred. This period marked a decisive stage of Turkic-Sogdian symbiosis. Although the arrival of Arab and Persian peoples in the 8th century introduced some ethnic changes, it did not significantly alter the region's ethnic structure. The settled and semi-settled Turkic-speaking population and the indigenous inhabitants of Sogdiana and Khorezm remained in place, living under the rule of Arabs (7th–8th centuries) and later the Samanids (9th century). From the 9th century onward, a distinct Turkic ethnic layer and linguistic environment began forming in Movarounnahr. The process of Turkicization of local ethnicities, such as the Sogdians, accelerated. According to historian K. Shoniyozov, a dynamic ethnogenetic process during the 9th–10th centuries led to the gradual sedentarization of many Turkic tribes and clans. By this time, a strong Turkic ethnic foundation had emerged in Movarounnahr and Khorezm. Academic A. Asqarov also emphasized that the majority of this foundation consisted of settled Turkic ethnic groups.

The emergence of Turkic dynasties and the establishment of the Qarakhanid state (10th–11th centuries) marked the final stage in the ethnogenesis of the Uzbek people. It was during this period that a unified Turkic ethnic identity formed, along with shared territory, language, culture, historical consciousness, and religion. A common language of the Uzbek people was established. Turkic-speaking tribes such as Karluks, Chigils, Yaghmas, Tukhsi, Khalachs, Argyns, Oghuz, Kipchaks and Kangars began to identify themselves as a single ethnic group. By the early 12th century, the primary features of the Uzbek ethnos were fully established. During the Mongol invasion in the early 13th century, many Turkic ethnic groups accompanied the Mongol armies. By the 15th century, these groups had largely assimilated with the local population, contributing to the continued development of the Uzbek ethnic identity. The



evolution of the Chagatai language and its literary refinement during the reign of Amir Temur and the Timurids led to the emergence of a sophisticated literary language known as “Turki” or “Chagatai”. Under Alisher Navoi, this literary language reached its zenith. Nevertheless, the spoken language remained dialectal and was primarily shaped by Karluk, Kipchak and Oghuz dialects. Ethnic groups such as Barlas, Jalair, Qavchin, Arlat and Kipchak also played a role in the ethnocultural development of the Uzbek people during the Timurid era. The late 15th and early 16th centuries were a significant phase in Uzbek ethnic history, marked by the influx of Manghit, Qongrat, Naiman, Uighur, Saray, Qatagon, Qushchi, Durman, Kenagas, Qirq, Yuz, Ming, Bahrin and Dashti Qipchaq tribes into Central Asia. This migration reinforced some mongoloid features in the ethnic profile of the region. Though these groups expanded the diversity within the Uzbek population, they did not fundamentally alter its ethnic core but became part of its evolving structure.

**Conclusion.** In conclusion, it can be stated that the process of Uzbek national development took on a new and significant dimension with the independence of Uzbekistan. This transition marked the beginning of a fresh chapter in the historical and ethnocultural evolution of the Uzbek nation.

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