



INFORMATION ON THE ETHNOTOPONYMS OF THE FERGANA VALLEY IN MIRIZZATULLA'S TRAVELOGUE AND THEIR ANALYSIS

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Abstract: This article examines the ethnotoponyms of the Fergana Valley recorded in the travel account of Mirizzatulla. Particular attention is paid to the historical and geographical analysis of place names derived from the ethnonyms of various ethnic groups that inhabited the valley and its adjacent regions. Based on the information contained in the travel narrative, ethnotoponyms such as Kara Khitai, Lulikhanah, Kyrgyz, Kalmak, and others are analyzed with regard to their origin, historical development, and geographical localization. The study compares the traveler's observations with data from written sources, historical cartography, and modern research on historical toponymy. The findings contribute to a better understanding of the ethnic history of the Fergana Valley and demonstrate the significance of ethnotoponyms as an important source for reconstructing the historical geography and ethnocultural processes of the region.

Keywords: Mirizzatulla, Fergana Valley, ethnotoponyms, historical toponymy, historical geography, ethnic history, Kara Khitai, Lulikhanah, nomadic peoples, written sources.

Noteworthy information concerning the ethnotoponyms of the Kokand Khanate can also be found in the travel account of the Indian traveler Mir Izzatullah. Detailed biographical information about Mir Izzatullah has not been preserved. According to available sources, he was one of the local figures serving the British colonial administration. In 1812, at the instruction of the prominent British traveler and entrepreneur William Moorcroft, who was active in India, Mir Izzatullah undertook a special journey to the territory of the Kokand Khanate. This fact clearly demonstrates the British interest in establishing commercial relations with Central Asia, particularly with the Kokand Khanate, during that period.

Mir Izzatullah wrote his travel notes in Persian-Tajik. The work was soon translated into English and published, and later appeared in French as well. Unfortunately, the original Persian manuscript has not survived. Nevertheless, Mir Izzatullah's observations regarding the cities and villages of the Kokand Khanate, its administrative system, the socio-economic life of the population, and local ethnotoponyms are of considerable scholarly value. His records constitute an important source for studying the geographical and ethnographic characteristics of the khanate [1].

The first ethnotoponym mentioned in the travelogue is Yomoqiz (Yomonqiz). The author writes:



“Yomoqiz, a journey of nine hours; the first half of the route extends northwestward and the second half westward. Here, for the first time, one encounters a Kyrgyz tribe known as Yomoqiz. The road passes through a valley situated between two mountains, with a stream flowing through its center. Midway along the route, a side valley appeared on the right, where Kyrgyz tents (yurts) were located” [2].

This name is recorded not only as a place name but also as the name of a Kyrgyz tribe. Mir Izzatullah specifically emphasizes it as the first tribal group encountered in the region. It refers to one of the Kyrgyz tribal communities inhabiting the northern and northwestern mountainous areas of the Fergana Valley (around the present-day border between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan). Such names often originated as tribal or clan names and subsequently evolved into geographical place names. The passage confirms the nomadic lifestyle of the Kyrgyz population and their presence in the mountainous parts of the valley. The traveler’s remark that he first encountered them in this locality suggests that the area represented an ethnic boundary or tribal transition zone.

The next ethnotoponym is Chugurchuq, another locality inhabited by Kyrgyz tribes:

“At the foothills of Chugurchuq Mountain, four hours away; the first half of the route extends southwestward and the second half southward. Kyrgyz yurts were erected there. The river flowed northward, and the road passed through a rocky valley where food and fodder were scarce” [3].

Chugurchuq appears to be the name of a mountain and its foothills. The term likely derives from a Turkic-Kyrgyz root related to *chuqur* (“deep” or “depression”), reflecting the topographical features of the mountainous regions bordering the Fergana Valley. Together with Yomoqiz and other nearby localities, it illustrates the geographical distribution of Kyrgyz groups and their role within mountain-valley transition zones.

Another important locality described by the traveler is Ardana:

“Ardana lies to the west, slightly inclined toward the north, at a distance of eight hours. It is a large village inhabited by people known in Badakhshan as ‘Galchas.’ Gardens are located near the settlement. Hills stretch along both sides of the road, which otherwise crosses a flat plain. Numerous Kyrgyz encampments and herds of horses can be seen along the route. The road from Osh to other cities of Fergana is suitable for wheeled carts” [4].

This description is characteristic of nineteenth-century travel and military-geographical observations. Ardana is depicted as a major settlement in the eastern part of the Fergana Valley. The reference to the inhabitants as “Galchas” is particularly noteworthy. In nineteenth-century European and Russian literature, the term *Galcha* was commonly used for Eastern Iranian-speaking populations inhabiting the Pamirs and Badakhshan. This evidence suggests historical ethnic and cultural links between the eastern Fergana Valley and the mountainous regions of Badakhshan and the Pamirs. Overall, Ardana appears to have been a significant agricultural and horticultural center with a diverse ethnic composition and a strategic location along important transportation routes.

The travelogue also mentions Lolikhona (Lo‘lixona), alternatively called Tugurmabosh:

“Lolikhona, or Tugurmabosh, is a village situated three hours to the west. To its north, at a distance of one day’s journey, lies Andijan, while Quva is located further north. One farsakh from the road there is an encampment of Kyrgyz and Kalmyk tribes, and the Kalmyks residing there profess the Muhammadan (Islamic) faith” [5].



This passage is significant for understanding the ethnic geography of the eastern Fergana Valley and the foothills of the Alay region in the nineteenth century. The toponym consists of two elements: *lo'li* (the name applied to Gypsy/Roma-related groups in Central Asia) and *khona* (from Persian-Tajik, meaning “house,” “dwelling,” or “settlement”). Thus, the term literally means “the settlement of the Lo'li people.” The existence of nearby Kyrgyz and Kalmyk communities highlights the ethnic diversity of the region. According to S. Gubayeva, 195 Lo'li individuals were officially registered in Andijan at the end of the nineteenth century [6].

Another noteworthy ethnotoponym is Qora Xitoy (Kara Khitai):

“Qora Xitoy lies to the west-northwest, four hours away. It is inhabited by Muslims. There are two routes from Margilan to Kokand: one passes through densely populated areas, while the other traverses the desert. We followed the latter route” [7].

The name Qora Xitoy possesses a clear ethnotoponymic character and is likely connected with the Kara Khitai (Western Liao), who dominated parts of Central Asia during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The survival of this name into the nineteenth century demonstrates the persistence of historical ethnopolitical memories in regional toponymy. A village bearing this name still exists in the Baghdad district of Fergana Province, while a Kara Khitai neighborhood (MFY) is recorded in Oltiariq district [8; 9].

Mir Izzatullah's journey of 1812–1813 constitutes an important primary source for the study of the ethnotoponymy of the Fergana Valley. Although his principal route extended through Kashmir, Tibet, Yarkand, and Kashgar, he recorded valuable ethnographic and toponymic observations concerning the western and southern regions of the Fergana Valley, including Osh, the environs of Kokand, and mountain-valley transition zones.

The ethnotoponyms documented in the travelogue preserve information not only about geographical locations but also about the ethnic groups inhabiting the region, their settlement patterns, and historical ethnocultural processes. Toponyms such as Arдона, Qora Xitoy, and Lolikhona reveal direct links between place names and the historical presence of specific ethnic communities. Qora Xitoy reflects the enduring memory of the Kara Khitai period in regional history, while Lolikhona indicates the settlement of Lo'li (Jugi/Mughat) groups. Place names associated with Kyrgyz and Kalmyk communities likewise illuminate interactions between sedentary and nomadic populations within the valley.

The historical-geographical analysis of these ethnotoponyms demonstrates that ethnic processes in the Fergana Valley evolved over long periods and that the names of certain ethnic groups have survived through place names up to the present day. This confirms the importance of ethnotoponyms as elements of historical memory and ethnic identity.

In conclusion, the ethnotoponyms recorded in Mir Izzatullah's travelogue constitute a valuable written source for the study of the ethnic history, migration patterns, historical geography, and toponymic heritage of the Fergana Valley. Comparative analysis of these data with other written sources, archival materials, and modern toponymic evidence offers significant opportunities for reconstructing the ethnic-geographical history of the region in greater depth.

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