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# The Formation and Structure of Ethnotoponyms Derived from Clan Names in “Shajarayi Turk”

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**Abstract:** This article analyzes the formation and grammatical structure of ethnotoponyms derived from clan and tribal names found in the work “Shajarayi Turk.” The study highlights the role of onomastic conversion and compounding (syntactic) methods in the formation of ethnotoponyms and reveals their historical-linguistic features. It also examines the functional properties of ancient affixes within ethnonyms, their preservation in ethnotoponyms, and their grammatical models. Based on materials from “Shajarayi Turk,” structural types of ethnotoponyms formed through noun + noun, adjective + noun, numeral + noun, and noun + verb components are identified, and the historical, ethnic, and social factors influencing their formation are analyzed. The results show that ethnotoponyms are an important source for studying the ethnic history, migration processes, and genealogical views of Turkic peoples.

**Keywords:** Shajarayi Turk, Ethnonym, Ethnotoponym, Clan Names, Tribal Names, Onomastic Conversion, Compounding Method, Word Formation, Morphological Analysis, Syntactic Model, Toponymy, Onomastics

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## 1. Introduction

Like all lexical units, ethnotoponyms constitute an integral component of the lexical system of the Uzbek language. Therefore, the general principles governing the lexical development of Uzbek are equally applicable to ethnotoponyms. However, ethnotoponyms possess a number of distinctive characteristics that differentiate them from other lexical units, particularly in terms of their word-formation patterns and grammatical structure. Notably, among the ethnonyms encountered in historical texts, there are forms that are no longer actively used in contemporary Uzbek or have undergone phonetic and graphic transformations over time [1].

The analysis of the grammatical structure of ethnonyms provides deeper insight into their internal linguistic organization and formation mechanisms. The lexical roots, derived elements, and various grammatical markers found within their composition demonstrate that these units possess a complex and multilayered structure. A grammatical examination of the ethnonyms collected from Shajara-i Turk revealed both simple and compound structural forms [2].

With regard to the formation of ethnonyms, the conducted analysis indicates that they emerged on the basis of the internal linguistic resources of the Turkic languages and gradually developed into more complex forms over time. Their formation is closely

associated not only with the natural evolution of language but also with social, political, and cultural factors that have influenced the historical development of Turkic-speaking communities [3].

### Literature Review

Linguist M. Turibekov, in his monograph *Onomastics of Shajara-i Turk*, examined the linguistic structure of ethnonyms and classified them into three groups according to their grammatical form: simple, compound, and mixed-structure ethnonyms. The analysis of ethnonyms collected from Shajara-i Turk likewise demonstrates that they can be categorized into several grammatical groups, including simple, compound, and complex (mixed) forms [4]. Previous studies have examined these units individually, paying particular attention to their structural organization, word-formation mechanisms, as well as their semantic and phonetic characteristics.

The formation of Turkic ethnonyms has long been one of the extensively researched topics in Turkology. In this regard, scholars such as N.A. Baskakov, D.Y. Yeremeyev, A.P. Potapov, and the Turkmen linguist S. Otaniyozov [5] have made significant contributions to the field. These researchers emphasize that morphological factors play a leading role in the formation and development of Turkic ethnonyms [6].

Within Uzbek onomastic studies, A. Otajonova and A. Turobov [7] have investigated the morphological characteristics of ethnonyms, particularly those reflected in ethnotoponyms. According to their findings, many toponyms originate from ethnonyms, and certain derivational affixes belong not directly to the toponym itself but rather to the underlying ethnonym. As a result, such affixes are preserved within the toponymic structure as fixed elements, often without carrying an independent functional meaning.

In discussing the structure of toponyms, it is appropriate to refer to the following observation by A.V. Superanskaya: "When a person adopts a word from another language or revives an obsolete word from their own language, they usually seek associations with familiar words in their native language or attempt to identify corresponding semantic forms. As a result, the word becomes easier to understand and remember" [8]. Within this process, both ethnonyms and toponyms may undergo not only phonetic changes but also morphological transformations.

Two principal mechanisms can be observed in the formation of ethnonyms:

Conversion (onomastic conversion) – a process in which a lexical unit departs from its original lexical meaning and acquires a new meaning, often denoting an ethnic group or community.

Composition (syntactic formation) – a process whereby two or more independent lexical units combine to form compound or multi-component ethnonyms.

Ethnotoponyms formed through these mechanisms constitute an important linguistic source for the study of the historical lexical layers of the Uzbek language. In particular, they provide valuable evidence for investigating the processes of ethnic formation among Turkic peoples, their internal social organization, and their cultural interactions throughout history.

## 2. Materials and Methods

In this study, the analysis of ethnotoponyms found in Shajara-i Turk was primarily conducted through the application of historical-comparative, structural-semantic, and descriptive research methods. The historical-comparative method was employed to compare the ancient forms of ethnonyms and ethnotoponyms with their corresponding variants in other Turkic languages. The structural-semantic approach facilitated the examination of their linguistic structure and semantic content. The descriptive method was used to systematize and classify the collected materials into relevant groups. In addition, morphemic analysis was applied in certain cases to identify the internal composition and

morphological structure of lexical units. Overall, the study is aimed at investigating ethnotoponyms from both historical and linguistic perspectives, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of their formation, development, and significance within the Turkic onomastic tradition.

### 3. Results

It is well known that a language's vocabulary and the process of word formation are closely interconnected phenomena. In this regard, Professor A. G'ulomov emphasizes that "Word formation, regardless of the method or means by which it is carried out, is the creation of a new word" [9]. A similar idea is expressed by A. Hojiyev, who states that "Word formation, by whatever method, essentially means the creation of a new lexical unit" [10].

Thus, word formation serves as one of the principal mechanisms for enriching the lexical system of a language, directly contributing to the emergence of new lexical items. At the same time, the lexical system itself provides the linguistic material necessary for word formation. Every newly derived unit is formed on the basis of an existing lexeme and acquires a new meaning and function.

When analyzing the use of ethnonyms as ethnotoponyms in *Shajara-i Turk*, it is important to compare their original lexical meanings with the meanings they acquire after becoming geographical names. Such a comparison is of considerable scholarly significance because substantial differences often exist between the lexical-semantic content of an ethnonym and its subsequent toponymic function.

For example, ethnonyms such as *Tuyachi*, *Takali*, *O'choqli*, and *Bahrin* were originally formed as *tuya + chi*, *taka + li*, *o'choq + li*, and *bar + in*, respectively. Initially, these forms denoted a particular occupation, characteristic feature, or tribal affiliation. However, once these units became ethnotoponyms, the semantic relationship between their constituent elements gradually weakened, morphemic boundaries became obscured, and the words came to be perceived as indivisible nominative units. Consequently, from the perspective of the modern language, it is not entirely accurate to interpret them as formations derived through the affixes *-chi*, *-li*, or *-in*. In such cases, what is observed is not the operation of an active derivational model but rather the transfer of an already existing name into a new onomastic category.

Such zero-marked names, formed through onomastic conversion, originally denoted groups of people, tribes, or ethnic communities associated with particular historical events or processes and therefore possessed a collective semantic component. Over time, however, these names were transferred to geographical objects, losing their general ethnic meaning and assuming the function of place names referring to specific locations. At the present stage, their primary role is nominative and identificational, namely, to distinguish one geographical object from another.

The ethnotoponyms mentioned above were not created through affixation but rather through a different mechanism of onomastic formation. This process was first identified by A.V. Superanskaya as onomastic conversion. The reason for this designation is that the affixes found within these names were already present before the names acquired their toponymic function. Therefore, it is not methodologically justified to analyze the suffixes occurring in ethnonyms such as *Turkman*, *Mang'it*, *Kerayt*, *Qiyat*, and *Turqaq* in *Shajara-i Turk* as separate derivational affixes. These names did not emerge through affixation; rather, they represent zero-marked formations resulting from onomastic conversion. Consequently, the identification of conversion-based ethnotoponyms requires a clear distinction from ethnonyms that were originally created through affixational processes.

The formation of ethnonyms follows the general principles of word formation characteristic of Turkic languages. In this process, morphological and syntactic methods play particularly significant roles. Ethnonyms formed through morphological means often

belong to the most ancient layers of the lexicon, and their internal structure may appear complex from the perspective of modern linguistics. This complexity can be explained by the gradual loss of the functional significance of derivational affixes or by phonetic changes that have occurred over time. Nevertheless, historical-morphological analysis makes it possible to identify and reconstruct their constituent elements.

According to A. Otajonova, the following *morphemes may be regarded as ethnonym-forming affixes*:

-t (variants: -it, -ut, -gut): Mang'it, Kerayt, Bayat, Qiyat;

-ak (variants: -ek, -ik, -uk, -uq, -q): Qipchoq, Bidjanak, Chulak;

-man: Turkman, Karaman;

-n (variants: -an, -on, -yon): Tokchiyon, Tirgaron, and others.

Although A. Otajonova's explanations concerning these affixes do not constitute a fully systematic classification, they are nevertheless valuable for elucidating important morphological features involved in ethnonym formation. In particular, she emphasizes that appellative-based names often appear, from a synchronic perspective, as indivisible lexical units whose internal structure is no longer readily analyzable. This observation is equally applicable to ethnonyms, as certain forms that appear monolithic in modern usage are, in fact, the result of historical derivational processes.

The morphological method represents one of the principal mechanisms of ethnonym formation in Turkic languages, including Uzbek. The analysis of such formations requires a comprehensive historical, phonetic, and semantic approach. Ethnonyms formed through this process constitute an important layer of the national and cultural heritage of Turkic peoples.

The affixes occurring within ethnonyms may be classified into two functional categories:

#### **Historically Functional Affixes**

These are archaic morphemes that were productive in earlier periods but no longer actively participate in the formation of new ethnonyms. Examples include -chi, -di/-ti, -jin, -r, -s/-z, -t/-d, -boy, -ji, -q/-oq, -man/-mon, -n, -g'a/-g'i, among others. Their archaic status is determined specifically within the sphere of ethnonymy rather than within the language system as a whole. Ethnonyms containing such affixes are frequently encountered in Shajara-i Turk, including Turkman, Mang'it, Kerayt, Qiyat, and Turqaq.

#### **Historically and Synchronically Functional Affixes**

These are morphemes that were productive in the past and continue to function actively in the modern language. They include -li, -chi, -lik, -ma, -v/-uv, and -lar. Although these affixes remain highly productive in contemporary Uzbek word formation, they occur relatively less frequently within ethnonyms. Examples recorded in Shajara-i Turk include Adaqli, Arabachi, Yilqili, Olali, Oltinli, O'choqli, Qaniqli, Qiniqli, Qishliq, Qorluq, and Qo'shchi.

Below, the functional characteristics of several affixes involved in ethnonym formation are discussed in greater detail.

##### **The Affix -chi**

The suffix -chi is one of the most productive derivational affixes in the Uzbek literary language and occupies an important place in the formation of ethnonyms. In Shajara-i Turk, ethnonyms such as Arabachi, Qo'shchi, and Tevachi are formed through this suffix.

According to G. I. Ramstedt, establishing the relationship between the historical meaning of -chi and its present semantic function requires the individual historical-morphological and semantic analysis of each ethnonym. Such an investigation extends beyond derivation alone and encompasses the fields of semasiology and onomasiology.

Furthermore, there is a need for a comparative examination of the meanings and functions of -chi in Old Turkic, Mongolic, and the early developmental stages of Uzbek. Such an approach contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the position and semantic potential of this affix within the ethnonymic system.

The resolution of this issue cannot be confined solely to the study of word formation (derivation); it also involves broader linguistic disciplines, including semasiology (the study of meaning) and onomasiology (the study of naming processes).

It is generally recognized that -chi is one of the ancient derivational morphemes characteristic of the Altaic language family. Various hypotheses concerning its origin have been proposed in linguistic literature. Consequently, determining its etymology and investigating its morphological structure and historical-semantic evolution remain important research questions to this day [11].

#### The Affix -li

A number of ethnonyms formed with the suffix -li occur in *Shajara-i Turk*. Among them are *Adaqli*, *Yilqili*, *Olali*, *Oltinli*, *O'choqli*, *Qaniqli*, and *Qiniqli*.

The suffix -li is one of the oldest derivational affixes in Turkic languages and originally functioned as an adjective-forming morpheme. According to the linguist A. M. Shcherbak, its variants -lu, -lü, and -lo were used in Old Turkic to derive relational nouns and adjectives [12]. N. A. Baskakov explains the development of this suffix through the forms -li // -lik // -lig // -liq // -lig [13]. However, A. N. Kononov disagrees with this interpretation and considers -li to be an independent morpheme.

In Uzbek, the suffix -lik (including its variants -liq and -luq) remains a productive derivational element used to create nouns from nominal, adjectival, and adverbial bases. Historical sources record a variety of phonetic realizations of this affix, including -liq, -lig', -lik, -luk, -luq, and -lug.

For example, the ethnonym *Qarluq* appears in historical records in several forms, including *Qorluq*, *Qarluq*, *Qorlik*, and *Qarlug'*, reflecting different stages of its morphological development. Likewise, *Shajara-i Turk* contains ethnonyms such as *Qorluq* and *Qishliq*, which demonstrate that these names were formed through affixes expressing relational and qualitative meanings in the ancient Turkic languages. Such examples provide valuable evidence for understanding the historical development of ethnonymic derivation and the evolution of Turkic word-formation patterns.

According to the Kazakh scholar T. Jonuzokov, the elements -chin, -shin, -shun, -sin, and -sun found in ethnonyms were originally independent lexical units with their own meanings. Their origins can be traced back to the Altaic period, and remnants of these elements have been preserved in certain modern Tungusic-Manchu languages.

The ethnonym *Uyshin*, formed with this suffix, occurs in *Shajara-i Turk*. In Kazakh, however, the name appears in the form *Uysun*. Furthermore, some sources record the tribal name *Boysun* (*Boysin*) among Uzbek tribal groups. These forms clearly demonstrate the historical alternation of the consonants *ch*, *sh*, and *s*.

Researchers commonly analyze the ethnonym *Uyshin* as consisting of the components *uy/oy* + *sun/sin*. According to this interpretation, the element *uy/oy* denotes "house," "family," or "clan," while *-sun/-sin* expresses plurality or collective membership [14]. A. Otajonova, however, proposes an alternative interpretation, associating *uy/oy* with the meaning "forest" in ancient Turkic languages and *-shin/-sin* with the Mongolic word meaning "person" or "people." Based on this explanation, the ethnonym may be interpreted as "forest people."

The affix -r appears in Turkic ethnonyms in various phonetic forms. Its variants -ar, -ur, and -ir developed in accordance with the phonological evolution of Old Turkic. For instance, vowel alternation can be observed in ethnonyms such as *Salar-Solir*, *Majar-Majir*, and *Yazar-Yazir*. Ethnonyms recorded in *Shajara-i Turk*, including *Salur*, *Majar*,

Tatar, Jalayir, and Ersari, confirm the antiquity and productivity of this affix. It is possible that this morpheme has also been preserved in an archaic form within certain modern ethnotoponyms.

The elements -s and -z constitute important phonetic and morphological markers in the formation of ethnonyms. While A.N. Kononov regarded the phoneme -s as a variant of the ancient -z, S. Otaniyozov connected it genetically with plural suffixes found in Tungusic-Manchu languages. Ethnonyms such as Barlas (Barlos), Nukuz (Nukus), Sulduz, Qurlas, and To'las found in Shajara-i Turk contain these elements. Scholars generally consider -s and -z to be phonetic variants of a single morpheme and associate them with ancient markers of plurality or collectivity.

In Old Turkic, the suffix -n (including its variants -in and -un) functioned as a grammatical marker expressing plurality and collectivity. In *Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk*, Mahmud al-Kashgari cites the forms *er* and *eran*, thereby demonstrating the pluralizing function of this affix [15]. This phenomenon has also been discussed by A.N. Kononov, A.M. Shcherbak, and B.A. Serebrennikov. Ethnonyms occurring in Shajara-i Turk, such as *Barin*, *Nirun*, and *Burchigin*, likewise contain the suffix -n, which played an important role in their historical and morphological development.

Within the system of Turkic ethnonyms, the suffix -man (-mon) possesses a distinctive semantic function. A. G'ulomov regarded it as an independent morpheme. Drawing on the views of A.N. Kononov, S.G. Og'ajonov, Z.Sh. Navshirmonov, and A.A. Roslyakov, A. Otajonova argues that this element served as a marker of ethnic identity. According to Roslyakov, the component *man* conveys the meanings "clan," "tribe," or "people." Ethnonyms such as *Turkman*, *Do'rman*, and *Nayman* occur in Shajara-i Turk. Researchers suggest that the element -man originally denoted "person" or "people." Accordingly, *Nayman* may be interpreted as "eight tribes" or "eight people," *Do'rman* as "four tribes," and *Turkman* as "Turkic people." This model represents one of the most stable and productive patterns of ethnonym formation in ancient Turkic languages. Furthermore, the occurrence of *Nayman* and *Do'rman* in Mongolian historical sources indicates that these ethnonyms emerged through long-standing historical and cultural interactions between Turkic and Mongolic peoples.

### **The Compositional (Syntactic) Method**

Composition, or the syntactic method, occupies an important place in the formation of toponyms, particularly ethnotoponyms. Through this process, new names emerge from combinations of lexical units belonging to different grammatical categories. Historical developments, the integration of tribes and clans, and the natural-geographical characteristics of inhabited territories all contribute to the formation of such names. Examples include *Odoqariq*, *Arabtepa*, *Bahrinsoy*, *Bahrinbayot*, *O'smatbarlos*, *Tozado'rmon*, *Chekjaloyir*, and *Jaloyirobod*.

Ethnotoponyms are geographical names derived from ethnonyms, that is, from the names of tribes, clans, or peoples. They are typically formed through the combination of two or more lexical bases. In most cases, the first component denotes an ethnonym, while the second designates a geographical feature or settlement. Common second components include *tepa* (hill), *ariq* (canal), *soy* (stream), *ovul* (village), *ota* (shrine), *qishloq* (village), *kent* (town), *guzar* (quarter), and *saroy* (settlement).

Ethnotoponyms formed through composition reflect the historical presence of particular tribal or clan groups within a given territory and often provide evidence of settlement patterns and migration processes. In some instances, the coexistence of representatives of multiple tribes within a single locality resulted in the combination of their names, giving rise to new ethnotoponyms.

#### 4. Discussion

The emergence of compositional ethnotoponyms can be explained by several factors:

Settlement of a tribe or clan in a particular territory. Many ethnotoponyms originated to indicate the place inhabited by a specific ethnic group. For example, territories occupied by Kipchaks became known as Qipchoqariq or Qipchoqtepa.

Migration of nomadic tribes. Tribes settling in new regions frequently incorporated their ethnic names into local place names, resulting in forms such as Naymantepa and Qo'ng'irotovul.

The need for geographical differentiation. Since generic place names such as tepa ("hill") or ariq ("canal") were widespread, ethnonyms were added to create more specific designations, such as Naymantepa and Qang'litpepa.

Numerical strength or social prominence of a tribe. In such cases, the territory was named directly after the dominant clan or tribe.

Co-residence of multiple tribes within a single locality. The combination of two ethnonyms often produced new ethnotoponyms.

##### Ethnotoponyms of the Noun + Noun Model

The most productive subtype of compositional ethnotoponyms is the noun + noun model, in which two independent nouns combine to form a new place name. Typically, the first component denotes an ethnonym, while the second refers to a geographical feature or settlement.

Examples include Odoqariq (odoq + ariq), Arabtepa, Arabqishloq, Arabcho'l, Arabguzar, Arabsaroy, Arabband, Arabbobo, Arabota, Arabshayx, Arabxo'ja, Bahrinsoy, Bahrinsaroy, Bahrinobod, Bog'barlos, Jaloyirtepa, Jaloyirsoy, Naymansoy, Naymanariq, Naymanota, Naymanqishloq, Naymansaroy, Naymantepa, Naymanko'l, Naymanovul, Qang'lisoy, Qang'lidara, Qiyotariq, Qiyotovul, Qiyotguzar, Qipchoqovul, Qipchoqariq, Qipchoqsuv, Qipchoqko'l, Qipchoqdaryo, Qipchoqsaroy, Qirg'izbobo, Qirg'izovul, and Qirg'iztepa. Similar formations include Qatag'onsaroy and Qatag'ano'yrat. In these names, the first component indicates ethnic affiliation, whereas the second denotes a natural or social feature.

##### Ethnotoponyms of the Adjective + Noun Model

In this model, the first component functions as an adjective indicating location, size, color, or historical period.

Locational adjectives: Yuqori Juyiodoq, Quyi Bahrin, Yuqori Bahrin, Past Arab, Yuqori Arabxona, etc.

Size-related adjectives: Katta Arablar, Katta Nayman, Kichik Bahrin, Kichik Jaloyir, and Katta Do'rman.

Color adjectives: Qizilqiyot, Qizilbosh, Qoramang'it, Qoranayman, Qoraqipchoq, Qoraxitoy, Oqmang'it, Sariqipchoq, and Sariqang'li.

Temporal adjectives: Yangi Bahrin, Yangi Nayman, Yangi Arab, Eski Jaloyir, Eski Arab, Ko'hna Arabxona, and Yangi Qiyot.

This model serves to differentiate territories, indicate their historical layers, and highlight their spatial characteristics.

##### Other Compositional Models

The Numeral + Noun model includes examples such as Oltmishqang'li, Beshnayman, and Yaksart, where the numeral reflects tribal subdivisions or historical groupings.

The Noun + Verb-Based Component model includes names such as Qalmoqchekkan and Arabqazgansoy, whose second components derive from verbal stems (chekmoq "to draw/pull" and qazmoq "to dig," respectively).

The compositional method has played an important role not only in the formation of ethnotoponyms but also in the development of certain ethnonyms themselves. Examples include Oqmang'it, Qoranayman, Tozanayman, and Yamanuyg'ur. Once such units become ethnotoponyms, however, they should not be regarded merely as compound words but rather as historical onomastic formations preserving ethnic designations within their structure.

Regarding the meaning and origin of ethnonyms, S. Qorayev notes that although every ethnonym possesses a specific meaning, determining its original significance is often difficult because most ethnonyms originated in remote antiquity. The etymology of many ethnonyms denoting peoples, nations, tribes, and major clans remains unresolved. Consequently, the study of ethnonyms and the ethnotoponyms derived from them is of considerable importance for understanding the ethnic history and linguistic development of Turkic peoples. Names such as Uzbek, Kyrgyz, Kazakh, Qo'ng'iro't, Mit'an, Qang'li, Qipchoq, Uyshun, Qorluq, and Xalaj continue to be interpreted differently by linguists and historians, reflecting the complex historical layers, oral traditions, legends, historical figures, and ethnocultural factors involved in their formation.

Therefore, the ethnonyms recorded in *Shajara-i Turk* should be viewed not merely as names of particular peoples, tribes, or clans, but also as valuable historical sources that provide important information about the origins, historical development, genealogical traditions, and social relations of those ethnic groups. In this respect, these ethnonyms constitute a significant source for the study of the ethnic history, genealogical concepts, and cultural heritage of Turkic peoples [16].

## 5. Conclusion

The analysis of ethnotoponyms derived from tribal and clan names recorded in *Shajara-i Turk* demonstrates their close connection with the ethnic history, social organization, and linguistic development of Turkic peoples. The study revealed that onomastic conversion and composition were the principal mechanisms involved in the formation of these ethnotoponyms. Through onomastic conversion, ethnonyms were transferred into the category of place names without the addition of any external grammatical markers, thereby functioning as new nominative units. In contrast, the compositional method involved the combination of ethnonyms with various lexical elements, resulting in the creation of structurally complex ethnotoponyms.

Overall, the ethnonyms documented in *Shajara-i Turk* and the ethnotoponyms derived from them constitute a valuable source for the study of the ethnogenesis, historical geography, and onomastic heritage of Turkic peoples. A comprehensive linguistic analysis of their formation and structure contributes not only to the identification of the historical layers of Uzbek toponymy but also to a deeper understanding of the ethnic and cultural development of Turkic communities. Therefore, the historical-linguistic, etymological, and areal investigation of ethnonyms and ethnotoponyms remains one of the most significant directions for future onomastic research.

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