

## HYDRONYMS OF CENTRAL ASIA IN THE SOURCES OF SHAIBANI PERIOD

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### Abstract:

It is known from history that the earliest civilizations arose along the water and served as an important factor in the development of agriculture, craft culture, architecture and urban planning. Also, in the region of Central Asia, natural and artificial, large and small water bodies and water structures have been abundant since ancient times.

Water bodies also have their own names, proper names, like place names. Toponomists consider hydronyms to be the oldest names, and information about them is also found in rich written sources. The largest lake in the Central Asia - the Caspian Sea, The Lake Balkhash, which is now in Kazakhstan, and Issyk-Kul, which is located in Kyrgyzstan, were mentioned in the 16th century sources and valuable information was given. Also, the names of Amudarya such as Jayhun, Okuz, Vakhsh, Amu, Ob-i Omuya, names of Syrdarya such as Sir, Sayhun, Khojand, its inflows such as Akhsi, Chir, Zarafshan, Kashkadarya, which now belongs to the territory of Uzbekistan, Helmand, Harirud rivers which passes through the territory of Afghanistan are found in sources about. There are also valuable notes on the name by which they were known at that time and what they were called in earlier sources.

Names of relatively small water bodies were researched based on the sources in the section of hydronyms in the eastern part of Central Asia, hydronyms in Mowarounnakh, hydronyms in Dashti Kipchak, hydronyms in the territory of present Afghanistan.

**Keywords:** Toponyms, hydronyms, written sources, Central Asia, seas, lakes, rivers,

### Introduction

The toponyms of the Shaibani period of Central Asia can be divided into two types in terms of content: 1) names of natural objects; 2) names related to administrative-territorial status and economic activity. The names of natural objects in turn include place names related to water features (hydronyms) and toponyms representing the relief of the earth's surface (oronyms).

Primary sources are important in studying the names of waters of this period. The written sources of the 1<sup>st</sup> half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century can be divided into the following groups according to their content:

- a) historical-geographical works: "Tawarihi guzida, Nusratname" by an unknown author, "Zubdat ul-asar" by Abdullah Nasrullahi, "Baburname" by Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur, "Mehmannamei Bukhara" by Fazlullah ibn Ruzbekhan Isfahani, "Habib us-siyar" by Ghiyasiddin Khondamir, "Tarihi Rashidi" by Mirza Muhammad Haydar;
- b) literary works: "Fathname" by Mulla Shadi, "Shaybaniyname" by Muhammad Salih, "Shaybaniyname" by Kamaliddin Binai, "Badoe' ul-waqae" by Zayniddin Vasifi;



c) official documents: “Waqfnama-i Shaybanikhan” No. 5905

In the above sources, the names of waters are mentioned in the description of various historical events, battles, campaigns, as well as place names.

### The names of seas and lakes

*The Caspian Sea.* From the written sources of the first half of the 16th century, in Fadzlullah ibn Ruzbehan Isfahani’s work “Mehman-name-i Bukhara”, the name of this sea is mentioned in the description of Sighnak region as “Bahr al-Muhit” (بحر المحيط). According to source, the river Idil (Volga) joined to the Caspian Sea. “Sighnak is the beginning of the prosperous center of the country for the people of the steppe. The borders of Dasht-i Kipchak to the Adil<sup>1</sup> River are the northern regions of the country, which joins to the shores of Bahr al-Muhit<sup>2</sup>. The merchants of the steppe considered the city of Sighnak to be their warehouse and brought trade goods here” [Mehman-name-i Bukhara 1961, 117].

In “Baburname” the Muhit river is also recorded in the description of the geographical boundaries of India. “Its east and south, and perhaps the west side is bordered with the Muhit River” [Baburname 2002, 270]. But this name does not belong to the Caspian Sea. In early medieval sources, the Muhit sea was considered as the Atlantic Ocean [Beruni, India. 158b].

In “History of Rashidi” by Mirza Muhammed Haydar, The Caspian Sea is mentioned as Qulzum Sea [Baburname 2002, 425]. However, according to research, the Red Sea is meant by the Kulzum Sea [Buriev 2017, 253]. According to toponymic studies, about 70 names of the Caspian Sea have been identified [Khasanov 1965, 5b.]. In most cases, the influence of the names of the regions around the sea, the names of the coastal cities, and the names of the peoples who lived around them can be seen in their naming.

*The Lake Balkhash.* The Balkhash Lake is mentioned as Kokcha Tengiz in “History of Rashidi”. According to it, Mongolia is borderline to the Kokcha Sea in the north [Tarixi Rashidi 1999, 236 b]. “Kokcha Teniz is a lake that separates Mongolia from Uzbekistan. Its length is eight months’ journey, and its width in some places is about thirty farsah. In winter, Kokcha Teniz is covered with ice, Uzbeks come to Mongolia through the ice”. The Karatal River, which flows into the Lake Balkhash from the south, is also mentioned.

*The Lake Issyk-Kul.* This hydronym in “History of Rashidi” often appears in the form of Issyk-Kul, and important geographical information is given about it. “One of the next wonders of Mongolia is Issyk-Kul. The road around Issyk-kul is twenty days, and the water does not flow anywhere. Its water is so hot and salty that it is impossible to even wash” [Tarixi Rashidi 1999, 237 a]. In the Muhammad Salih’s work “Shaybaniname” this name used for the area around the lake:

Whose land was Issykkul

(Qoysining yeri edi Issig’ko’l,)

Whose home was Aksu moghul.

(Qoysining evi edi Oqsu mo’g’ul.) [Shaybani-name 1961, 206 b]

In Zayniddin Vasifi’s work “Badoe’ ul-waqae” it is recorded in the form of Issig’kul – اسڭيگ كول.

<sup>1</sup> آب عادل - Itil river

<sup>2</sup> بحر المحيط - The Caspian sea



### The names of rivers.

*The Amudarya river.* In the work of Muhammed Salih “Shaybani-name”, the names of Jayhun, Okuz, Vakhsh suyī – one of the right tributaries of Amudarya are mentioned.

Passing Jayhun freely this time,  
(Kechib erkin bu zamon Jayhunni,)

Passed that desert

(Ўзди бу ародаги ҳомунни.) [Shaybani-name 1961, 173]

Sultan passed O’kuz with a sol

(Sol ila kechti O’kuzdin Sulton,)

Nobody see such as period

(Solu mah ko’rmadi andoq davron.) [Shaybani-name 1961, 265]

Reached to the river Vakhsh

(Bir qo’nub Vaxsh suyig’a yetti)

It’s fainted who saw it.

(Oni ko’rgonning hushi keti.)

The water overflowed and became great,

(Suv toshib usru ulug’ bo’lub edi,)

Tutoshib usru was great

(Tutoshib usru ulug’ bo’lub edi.) [Shaybani-name 1961, 264]

Jayhun is mentioned under the name Amudarya in the work of an unknown author “Tawarikh guzida, Nusrat-name” [Tawarikh guzida, Nusrat-name 1967].

In Ruzbekhan Isfahani’s “Mehman-name-i Bukhara” Amudarya is mentioned by names of Ob-i Omuya (آب آمويه), Ob-i Jayhun (آب جيحون), Bahri Omuya (بحر آمويه), Bahri Jayhun (بحر جيحون), Nahri Balkh. In 1503-1504-years, in the story of Shaibani Khan’s march to Khorosan it is mentioned that he crossed the Omu River [Mehman-name-i Bukhara 1961, 102]. In most cases, the hydronyms Jayhun and sometimes Omu were used in the work: “A tent was raised along the river Omu or Jayhun with the intention of crossing Jayhun [Mehman-name-i Bukhara 1961, 162].

In the story of going to Marv of the work is given, that the entire army passed through Jayhun and the description of the ships is mentioned. The ships on the river are compared to the mountains of Qaf (the name of a legendary mountain in Persian literature) [Mehman-name-i Bukhara 1961, 162].

Amudarya in the form of the Amu River in the “Boburnoma” is mentioned 9 times in total in the description of various historical events, in the description of the border of a region. “The region from the Amu river to the Hindu Kush mountain, except Badakhshan, belonged to the this” [Babur-name 2002, 28].

In Zayniddin Vasifi’s work “Badoe’ ul-waqae” the forms of Amudarya as Amu, Jayhun, Amudarya can be found [Badoe’ ul-waqae 1979, 14, 15]. In the work “History of Rashidi”, Amudarya hydronyms are recorded such as Jayhun river, Vakhsh river (a tributary of Amudarya), Amu river.

*The Syr Darya river.*

According to Muhammed Salih’s work “Shaybani-name”, Shaybani Khan’s march to Shahruhiya was in the winter of the year when he took Samarkand, that he had to cross the Sir (سير) and the



river was frozen. The forms of Syr Darya, such as Sayhun or Khojand rivers are not mentioned in the work like other sources of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

The cold was effected to the Sir

(Sovuq aylab erdi Sirga ta'sir,)

It was ice over the river

(To'ngub erdi, topo olmay tadbir.)

The river was frozen like a stone

(Tosh kibi muzlab edi ul daryo,)

There was no moisture at all

(Yo'q edi hech nam ando aslo.) [Shaybani-name 1961, 138].

In the work "Fath-name" of Mulla Shadi, the hydronym of Syr Darya is mentioned in the form of آب سيحون Ob-i Sayhun [Fath-name №5369, 75a].

In Muhammed Haydar's "History of Rashidi", Syr Darya is mentioned in most cases in the form of Khojand river and Saykhun. The Aris river, a tributary of the Syr Darya in Mongolia, is also mentioned [History of Rashidi 1999, 71 b].

The Syr Darya river – in Ruzbekhan Isfahani's "Mehman-name-i Bukhara" comes under two different names: "Sayhun" in more than 32 places and "Khojand river" relatively less. Valuable geographical information about Sayhun River is also given in the work. According to it: "The Sayhun River is one of the rivers of the four worlds. By some hadiths, it is said that it comes from the heaven". The source of its clear water is from the fragrant soil of paradise. The inhabitants of that area call this river "Khojand river" in their language. Uzbeks and moghuls call it "The river Sir" [Mehman-name-i Bukhara 1961, 74]. It was also used from the Sayhun River to indicate distances. "The fortress (Arquq) is located in one farsah away from the Sayhun river and on its western bank" [Mehman-name-i Bukhara 1961, 75]. "The Khojand River flows through the fortresses of Turkestan" [Mehman-name-i Bukhara 1961, 74].

In the name of the 39th chapter of the work also mentioned the fact that the Sayhun river is known as Khojand: "The memory of the ruler crossing the Sayhun river, known as the Khojand river" [Mehman-name-i Bukhara 1961, 143].

This information is confirmed by Zahiriddin Babur in his work "Babur-name": "The Sayhun river is famous for Khojand river, coming from the east-north, passing through the interior of this region, it flows to the west, passing from the north of Khojand and south of Fanokat, which is famous for Shahruxhiya now, the river turns to the north again and goes towards Turkestan. Some lower from Turkestan, this river breaks into sand and does not flow into any river [Babur-name 2002, 2a]. The hydronym of Syrdarya appeared in the work in the form of Sayhun river, and in most cases Khojand river. The hydronyms of the tributaries of Syrdarya - Akhsi suyi and Chir suyi are given in the work. The current name of Akhsi suyi is Kosonsoy, and the work contains the information "Akhsi suyi comes from Koson". Chir Suyi is the Chirchik River in the present Tashkent region. This river was mentioned several times in "Babur-name" in connection with the narration of various historical events, it was said that the river flowed 13 km away from the city – "The Chir river is two shar'iy road from Tashkent" [Babur-name 2002, 8 b].

The name of Chir river is also mentioned in Kamoliddin Binai's work "Shaybani-name". In the manuscript of the work, it is given in the form of آب چير – Obi-i Chir [Xidirova 2020, 12]. It is said that Shaybani Khan, who went to Turkestan against Mahmud Sultan, crossed the river and



stopped near Shahrukhiya.

In Zayniddin Vasifi's work "Badoe' ul-waqae" the Chirchik river is given in the form of the Parak river:

The Parak river is like a crystal,  
(Top-toza ziloldek Parak daryosi,)

Its comparison as the Salsabil river. [Badoe' ul-waqae 1979, 63]  
(Salsabil nahriga monand qiyosi.)

In another text "... Sultan Muhammed Bahadir Khan went to the banks of the Parak river with the intention of hunting". That place was one farsah away from the city of Tashkent" [Badoe' ul-waqae 1979, 184].

The work "History of Rashidi" provides more specific information about this: "The people of Tashkent call the Chir river as Ob-i Parak" [History of Rashidi 1999, 65 b]. The river Akhsi is also mentioned in the work.

*The Zeravshan river.*

The hydronym of Zeravshan was recorded in the sources of the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century under the name of Ko'hak. It is given in "Shaybani-name" by Muhammed Salih in following form:

That king passed through the ko'hak river,

(Chun ko'hak suyidin o'tti ul shoh,)

It is reached that letter as ambassador.

(Yeti ul elchi degan noma siyoh.) [Shaybani-name 1961, 192].

In Ruzbekhan Isfahani's work "Mehman-name-i Bukhara" the hydronym Ko'hak is mentioned in the description of various historical events. Describing the region of Konigil, Ibn Ruzbekhan writes that an observatory is located on the Ko'hak river and hill [Mehman-name-i Bukhara 1961, 152].

Mirza Babur's work "Baburname" provides somewhat more accurate information. "Kohak River flows from the north of (Margilan), and from Samarkand becomes two kuruh. There is a bush between this water and Samarkand, called Kohak. This river is called Kohak suyi because it flows from here [Babur-name 2002, 45a]. In the work, Kohak suyi is sometimes mentioned as Kohak river. "We crossed the Kohak river" [Babur-name 2002, 90b]. In the work, it is said that the Dargam river (Dargam suyi in the work) originates from the Kohak river, and important geographical information is given about it. "From this water taken away a big river, maybe a stream, called Dargam suyi. It flows from the south of Samarkand, and one shar'iy (distance) from Samarkand. Samarkand's gardens and neighborhoods and several other districts are prosperous by this water. (45a)

*The Kashkadarya river* in the work "Mehman-name-i Bukhara" is named after the Karshi River and the Nasaf River. "The surroundings and edges of this happy river are covered with trees, buildings, fields and pastures" [Mehman-name-i Bukhara 1961, 161].

### **The names of waters in the eastern part of Central Asia. (Mongolia)**

From the sources of the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century the names of waters related to this region are mentioned the most in the work "History of Rashidi". Relatively large water basins passing through the territory of Mongolia – Idil (Otil), Ili (Ila), Irtysh hydronyms are noted. From smaller water features: Aris – a tributary of Syr Darya; Keryas (Keria) – the name of the river, a tributary



of the Aris river; Ot Boshi – the name of a mountain range, valley and river (the left tributary of the Narin River); Kara Kainlik (Kara Kain) – the left tributary of the Otoboshi river, the current name is Karaquyun; Aisha Khotun – the name of the river; Sharyn (Charyn) – a tributary of the Ili River; Sangkol (Sankol) – the name of the lake; Kochkor – one of the main tributaries of the Chu River, southwest of Issyk-Kol; Yumgol (Jumgol) – the name of a river, mountain, valley in the west of Issyk Kol; Olabuga – the name of a river and a place, the main tributary of the Norin River;

In the territory of East Turkestan: Oksu – the name of a city and river in East Turkestan, a tributary of the Yarken darya; The Tarim River – river flowing through the Koshghar Valley, which currently belongs to the People's Republic of China; Cherchen – the name of the river and the village belonging to the Tarim river basin; Kungat Kuksu – a tributary of Shahardarya; Emil – the name of the river;

**The names of waters in Movarounnahr.** The names of waters related to Mowarounnahr are recorded the most in the work of “Babur-name”. Ilamish (Aylamish, Iramish) river – in the southeast of Andijan region; Andijan suyi (rudi) – current name is Akbura, in the territory of Kyrgyzstan. “Andijan suyi (rudi) goes to Andijan after passing through the neighborhood of Osh” [Babur-name 2002, 3a]. Sang suyi – a river in the present Namangan region. “Sang is two shar’iy (distance) from Akhsi” [Babur-name 2002, 114a]; Abirakhmat – current name is Siyob. In the work, Siyohab and Karasuv forms are also given. “Also, near the Pushtayi Ko’hak, on the Black River of Konigil, this water is also called Obi Rahmat [Babur-name 2002, 46a]”. “Konigil is in the banks of Siyohab, this Kara water is also called Obi Rahmat [Babur-name 2002, 48a]”. There was also a valley named Konigil.

*The Mogiyon lake.* In “Badoe’ ul-waqae” by Zayniddin Vasifi, it is said that the battle between Mirza Babur and Shaybani Ubaydullah Khan took place around Mogiyon Lake [Badoe’ ul-waqae 1979, 15]. In historical works, it is said that this battle took place in 1512, near the Lake Kuli Malik near Bukhara [Mehman-name-i Bukhara 1961, 24b]. In the description of Samarkand in “Babur-name” was recorded that “There is a large lake nearby, and that is why said Kul-i Magok” [Babur-name 2002, 46 b].

### **The names of waters in the territory of present-day Afghanistan.**

The Helmand River – a river in the south of Afghanistan. In “Babur-name” it is mentioned in the form of Hirmand suyi and started from the Bamiyan mountain. Harirud – is the name of a river in Afghanistan and Turkmenistan. In the work “Mehman-name-i Bukhara” was noted that an author crossed the Herot river (Hirotrud, Harirud) before reaching the Sarakhs desert and the inhabitants of that land called it the Tajan river [Mehman-name-i Bukhara 1961, 165]. In the sources of the Timurid period, it is also noted that the name of this river had the forms Hirotrud and Tajan [Buriyev 2017, 256]. The Murgob River – originates from the high mountains between the Safidkokh and Bandi Turkestan mountain ranges belonging to Afghanistan. In “Babur-name” it is mentioned in the form of Murgob river and in “Badoe’ ul-waqae” also as the Murgob river.

In the work “History of Rashidi” were mentioned hydronyms like Ob-i Shur (present Northern Afghanistan), Surkhab River (Kizilsuv – the right tributary of the Panj River), Tilman River (mountain river in Afghanistan, in south-west of Kabul), Bamiyan River (name of the river, valley,



province and city in Afghanistan, in 150 km north-west of Kabul).

In consequence of “Baburname” is written in a memoir style, in the description of Mirzo Babur’s experiences after 1503, the place names related to Afghanistan, including the names of waters are mentioned most often. Alingor Rudi – Alingar river in Afghanistan now. Bangash rudi – there is a district-province of the same name in the Kabul region. It borders Bannu and Dasht provinces. “Bangash river comes out to Bannu, Bannu is prosperous by this water” [Babur-name 2002, 148a]. The Balkhob river – according to the work begins from Bamiyan mountain [Babur-name 2002, 136a]. Its current name is Bandi Amir and it is located in Afghanistan. It mainly irrigates Balkh region [Babur encyclopedia 78 b]. Boron suyī (Obiboron) – “Chagansaray river joins to Boron suyī in Koma district and flows to eastwards” [Babur-name 2002, 134a]. Mirza Babur described Boron as a good place for bird and fish hunting [Babur-name 2002, 142a]. Savod water – “Walking and crossing the Savod water, we came down among the crops of the Afghans” [Babur-name 2002, 243b]. Kabul water – in the work it is said that the Kabul water joins the Sind river. Kunar river – this river still exists. A transboundary river that passes through the territories of Afghanistan and Pakistan. It flows through Kunar and Nangarhar provinces of Afghanistan and is named after Kunar. The part that flows through Pakistan is called the Chitrol River. Dehi Ya’qub suyī – is the name of a town and river near the city of Kabul. “For three years, most of the water was flowed great. It’s impossible crossing across from the river Dehi Ya’qub” [Babur-name 2002, 153b].

In addition, hydronyms such as Gulbahor river, Paravon river, Istalif river, Khoja Khizr river, Chandoval river, Surkh river are listed in the work.

From relatively smaller water bodies Khoja Seyoron, Garm chashma, Bodom chashma, and Zurmat jilgasi are recorded. Khoja Seyoron. “There was a spring at the bottom of the mountain, one or one and a half kuruh lower than the districts. They said Khoja Seyoran [Babur-name 2002, 136b]. It is understood from the work that the area around the spring is also called by this name.

**The names of waters in Khorasan.** In “Baburname” the following water names related to this area are listed. Gurgon suyī – is mentioned in the description of Sultan Husayn Boykara [Babur-name 2002, 165a]. Currently, there is a city named Gurgon in the northern part of Iran. Duoba suyī – there is an information in the work that Duoba suyī also begins from Bamiyan Mountain [Babur-name 2002, 136a]. Juyī Injil – it’s said that there was a madrasah of Badiuzzamon Mirza on the edge of Juyī Injil [Babur-name 2002, 191b]. Kishm suyī. “Kishm suyī was great, they came crossing across this river” [Babur-name 2002, 184a]. Obi Istoda. “After two or three moving, we reached to Obi Istoda. Strange great water came into view” [Babur-name 2002, 153a]. Gazni suyī – there is a river with the same name in the southeastern part of Afghanistan now. Kukcha suyī – nowadays also is the name of a river located in Badakhshan and Tahir regions of Afghanistan. Kamrud rudi and Kamrud gorge is also mentioned in the work (33b).

In conclusion, the names of the waters mentioned in the sources of the 16th century have come down to us in unchanged, partially changed and changed forms. For example, such hydronyms as Ili, Irtysh, Chu River, Issyk-Kol, Aris River, Vakhsh, Murgob, Kabul, Aksu, Tarim are still preserved under this name. The names of some hydronyms are changed, and they often differ from the current ones: Caspian Sea – Bahr al-Mukhit and Qulzum Sea, Balkhash Lake – Ko’kcha Tengiz, Syrdarya – Sayhun and Khojand water, Amudarya – Ob-i Omuya and Jayhun. Some



hydronyms have partially changed over time: Itil – Odil, Harirud – Hirotrud, Helmand River – Hirmand River.

Sometimes one toponym, in addition to the name of a water features, expressed the names of other objects: 1) Aksu – the name of a river, a tributary of the Tarim River; 2) Aksu is the name of a city, one of the big cities of Manglai Sube; 1) Ot Boshi – name of a mountain range, valley; 2) Ot Boshi – the name of the river, the left tributary of the Norin River; 1) Bamiyan – the name of the river, 130 km northwest of Kabul; 2) Bamiyan – the name of the valley, region and city; 1) Yumgol (now Jumgol) – the name of the river west of Issykkol; 2) Yumgol (modern Jumgol) – the name of a mountain, valley; 1) Cherchen – the name of the river belonging to the Tarim river basin; 2)) Cherchen – the name of village near the river.

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