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SCIENTIFIC AND THEORETICAL VIEWS ON THE HISTORY OF HYDRONYMS

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Abstract. This article analyzes the historical formation, scientific-theoretical interpretation, and linguistic features of hydronyms. The names of water bodies are considered one of the most ancient and stable layers of toponymy and are examined from etymological, semantic, and cultural perspectives. The formation of hydronyms based on natural-geographical factors and their reflection in folk perception are illustrated through examples. In addition, the historical development and linguistic layers of major Central Asian hydronyms such as **Amudaryo, Sirdaryo, and Zarafshon** are analyzed. As a result, hydronyms are substantiated as an important object of interdisciplinary research at the intersection of history, geography, ethnology, and linguistics.

Keywords: hydronym, toponymy, hydronymy, Amudaryo, Sirdaryo, Zarafshon, etymology, historical geography, linguistic analysis.

Hydronyms are toponymic units that denote the names of water bodies and are considered one of the key indicators of humanity's ancient geographical thinking, language development, and historical memory. Hydronymy, as a specific branch of toponymy, studies the naming patterns of water objects such as oceans, seas, rivers, lakes, streams, canals, springs, wells, and other water sources. In scientific literature, hydronyms are described as one of the most conservative naming systems, meaning they tend to change very little over long periods of time. The main reason for this is that water bodies are stable elements of the geographical environment, and the names associated with them can be preserved for centuries or even millennia.

Water has played an extremely significant role in the history of human civilization. Ancient cities, agricultural centers, and trade routes were mainly formed around river and lake basins. In this regard, hydronyms serve not only as names of natural objects but also as historical documents of regional development. Archaeological research shows that ancient civilizations such as Mesopotamia, Egypt, the Indus Valley, and China developed along major rivers. This process was also characteristic of Central Asia, where the basins of Amudaryo and Sirdaryo have long served as centers of culture and economy.

The historical roots of hydronyms often date back to periods even before the emergence of writing. Therefore, they are etymologically complex and reflect traces of different linguistic layers and ethnic groups. Some hydronyms may be associated with ancient Indo-Iranian, Turkic, Mongolian, Arabic, or Greek languages. This phenomenon is especially evident in regions located at the crossroads of multiple cultures.

Approximately 71% of the Earth's surface is covered by water, which determines the global significance of hydrological objects. The four major oceans — the Pacific, Atlantic, Indian, and Arctic — play an important role in world geopolitics, climate systems, and the economy. Some of their parts are classified as seas. Lakes, on the other hand, are natural accumulations of water on land and can sometimes be so large that they are referred to as seas, such as the Caspian Sea or historically the Aral Sea. This terminological situation also reflects the historical and functional characteristics of hydronyms.

Natural-geographical features play a crucial role in the formation of hydronyms. Factors such as water color, clarity, salinity, flow speed, temperature, and depth serve as naming criteria. Clear and bluish waters are reflected in names like Ko‘ksuv, Oynako‘l, Oynabuloq, while muddy or yellowish waters are named Sarisuv or Xuanxe ("Yellow River"). Salty or mineral-rich waters are called Sho‘rko‘l, Achchiqko‘l, Sho‘rbuloq. Such names demonstrate people's direct observation of nature and their ability to express it through language.

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Some hydronyms carry figurative meanings related to the nature and movement of water. For example, streams and rivers that flow rapidly during spring floods are named Tentaksoy or Jinnidaryo, reflecting emotional expression. Names such as Ters, Tersoqar, Yugurikariq indicate flow direction or speed. This shows the metaphorical and semantic richness of hydronyms.

Hydronyms related to groundwater are also closely connected with people's ecological knowledge. Springs and wells are often named according to the healing properties, temperature, or chemical composition of water. For example, names like Issiqsuv, Obigarm, Arashon, Obirahmat, Qaynarbuloq, Qo'tirbuloq directly reflect the practical characteristics of water. Such names are often associated with folk medicine and local traditions and represent historical ecological experience.

The names of major rivers in Central Asia are studied as a distinct historical layer. The hydronyms Amudaryo and Sirdaryo have played a key role in the historical and civilizational development of the region. Their ancient names appear in various forms in written sources, reflecting cultural interactions and linguistic influences among the peoples of the region.

Amudaryo is mentioned in the works of ancient Greek historians under the names Araks, Ox, and Oxos. Researchers associate the form *Ox* with the ancient Turkic word *"o'kuz"*, meaning "large river." In the Iranian linguistic layer, forms such as Vakhsh or Vakhshob are recorded. Even today, the Vakhsh River preserves this historical name. The term "Amudaryo" is associated with the medieval city of Amul, and some researchers interpret it as a unit connected to ancient ethnic layers.

Sirdaryo also has numerous historical names. In Greek sources, it appears as Yaksart or Yaxartes, in Arabic sources as Sayxun, and in some ancient writings as Xashart. In the lower reaches of the river, the ancient name ***Sir*** has been preserved. Researchers link this name to certain ancient tribes, indicating that the river's name is connected not only to a natural object but also to ethnic history.

The hydronym Zarafshon is semantically related to economic activity. In Persian, *"Zarafshon"* means "gold-scattering." This name originated due to the presence of gold particles in the river sands. In ancient sources, it is also recorded as Politimet and Obi Ko'hak. The evolution of this hydronym reflects linguistic and cultural changes across historical periods.

The linguistic structure of hydronyms is multilayered. Components typical of Turkic languages such as *-suv, -soy, -ko'l, -buloq*, Persian-Tajik elements like *obi-, rud, nahr*, and forms such as *sayxun, jayhun* introduced through Arabic written tradition demonstrate centuries of linguistic interaction in the region. This makes hydronyms valuable not only as geographical units but also as sources for historical-linguistic research.

In modern scientific studies, hydronyms are analyzed through a multidisciplinary approach. They are examined at the intersection of history, archaeology, geography, ethnology, ecology, and linguistics. Especially in the context of water resource scarcity, climate change, and ecological crises, the study of water body names gains not only historical but also practical significance.

Conclusion. Hydronyms are unique scientific objects that embody humanity's relationship with the natural environment, historical thinking, and cultural memory. Through their in-depth study, it is possible to reconstruct ancient linguistic layers, ethnic history, geographical processes, and cultural connections. Therefore, hydronyms occupy a special place in scientific research as an essential part of historical and geographical heritage.

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