

Avesto Onomastics and its Linguistic Hereditary Problems

*Tillaeva Muyassar Batirovna*¹, *Norbaeva Shukurjon Khayitbaevna, PhD*²

Annotation: This article discusses the linguistic features of the Zoroastrian holy book 'Avesto' that survived in Khorezmian dialects. The issue of onomastic elements in 'Avesto' has been studied basing on the existing linguistic, historical and social facts. The research outcome is the proof of the fact that Khorezm is the birthplace of Zoroastrian religion and its holy book 'Avesto'. The authors studied the the onomastic language units denoting human and place names mentioned in 'Avesto' by classifying the methods of representation of these elements in the modern language. The article gives short and clear description of scientific views about the onomastic elements in the book.

Key words: Avesto, Zoroastrian, onomastic units, linguistic hereditary, language layer, Turkic languages, cultural-literary monument.

A lot has been done in Turkic studies, for instance, Uzbek linguistics in accordance with the diachronic study of language layers. In this research sphere the written monuments belonging to the period before the separation of the Turkic language into diverse ethnic groups and nations are noteworthy. Obviously, the source of texts in archeological foundations in the form of written manuscripts and different letters are acknowledged as the common Turkic or unique to all Turkic linguistic heritages in social science. Yet, there is strong attempt to identify the language of written documents belonging the different periods (7-8th centuries) of Turkic languages to the particular source language. The raising interest to comprehensive study of the language of the Or-hun and Yenisei written monuments by Kirgiz and Kazakh linguists and their attempt to proof that the language of these sources are closer to their languages in the 60-70th of the last century can confirm the point. [1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11] These attempts are observed in relation to the issue of literary works and the authors as well.

Any scholar shouldn't be blamed for searching the fact concerning to his or her language in studying the common Turkic written documents. Though, certain methodology, scientific base and objectivity are required in this issue. Unfortunately, the issue lacks sufficient study, developed objective criteria, authenticity. The most controversial point is the synchronic approach to the point, or consider the language of this or that written source and the its author from the point of view of the present status of language and officially recognized national-administrative territory, namely not in diachronic aspect.

How ancient is written monuments inherited from ancient ancestors to us, so is difficult will be to identify its belonging to a certain language. 'Avesto' is one of these ancient great monuments written 2700 years ago. [12] The history, content, idea, essence, historical fate, language, its status in and importance for people and languages of the present day, most of eastern and western scholars studied and have been studying the issue up to present. The research outcomes are widely analyzed by some linguists. [13,14,15,16]

No matter how much the secrets in 'Avesto' are explored, many aspects remain problematic of this great cultural-literary monument. The language of 'Avesto' and its features, its relation and belonging to exact people are one of the issues under discussion of the topic. The issue of the language, history of creation, essence, ethnography, and mythology are less studied in matters in linguistics. The reason for that is the existence of the complex linguistic obstacles in study.

I.M. Oranskiy wrote that there are several problems and obstacles in scientific study of the Avesto, such as the impossibility of the determination of the period and the historical localization of the events in the written text, oral delivery of created sayings, rules and applauses in the long chain of centuries from generation to generation, later, the fulfillment of the rules and beliefs with diversity of worships, religious motives, traditions and customs, and legal rights, the reach of only quarter of the original manuscript of the written monument belonging to the 13th century up to present, the second edition of the text during Sassanids reign (3rd-4th centuries), and the consideration of the language of 'Avesto' as the dead and out of use language when it was reprinted. [17]

According to I.M. Orlyanskiy, 'Avesto' was written in the ancient Gothic language belonging to the 6th century B.C. and was sung by Zoroaster himself. [18] This assumption was supported by I.S. Braginskiy who studied some language features of 'Avesto'. [19]

There is no information about the period before millennium in some of the research works devoted to the step-by-step periodization of the genesis, formation and development of Turkic languages. [22,23,24,25] The reason is that, the authors studied and dealt with the ancient Turkic language and Turkic language group of the new era only. The authors of the book 'Historical Grammar of the Uzbek Language' used the phrase 'The most ancient Turkic language' considering the language period till the 7th century, but the starting period has not been mentioned about. [26]

¹ Candidate of Philological Sciences, docent of Urganch state university

² Docent of Urganch state university

‘Even the issue of the language of Avesto, its genesis, its proximity to one of the ancient languages, especially relation to the ancient Khorezmian language has not been thoroughly studied in science yet, it is natural that the ethnic groups living in the Central Asia, including, Turkic people(the Uzbeks) are right to claim for inheritance of it. The following bases can confirm the point:

1. Considering Khorezm as the birthplace of ‘Avesto’
2. Ancient legends, events and plots, mythological imaginations meant in Avesto are similar or reflects proximity to the Uzbek folklore, in particular, ethnography, religious beliefs, and folklore of Khorezm oasis.
3. The lexis of Khorezm social dialects, notably, local onomastic resembling language peculiarities of ‘Avesto’ and existence language survivals in the present active vocabulary of the dialects.

Most linguists acknowledged in their research that the birthplace of Avesto is ancient Turan, predominantly, Khorezm region’. Videlicet, E. Zakhau wrote in his book ‘About the chronology and history of Khorezm’(1873) that the toponym ‘Kayrizao’ in ‘Avesto’ actually was Khorezm and consists of the words ‘kayry’- food provision, ‘zao’- earth, land, oasis which meant the oasis rich in food products. [27] Tolstov S.P. claimed that ‘Avesto’ was written in Khorezm by the prophet Zoroastr. [28]

Mary Boyce noted about the creation of Avesto in Khorezm. [29] I.Jabbarov and G. Dresvyanskaya attempted to proof with ethnographic specimens that the birthplace of Zoroastrian religion was in Central Asia, notably, in Khorezm. [30] A. Ahmedov analyzed the views about the state administrative management system in ‘Avesto’ and considered that there a lot of facts supporting the idea of considering Khorezm as the birthplace of ‘Avesto’. Additionally, he wrote the followings:

1. The book was written in ancient Khorezmian language and writing.
2. The existence of place names in Khorezm related to the fire-worshipping (arson) beliefs. [31]

Sh.Bekchanov spoke about the creation of ‘Avesto’ in Khorezm based on V. Bartold and B. Gafurovs ideas and added the followings: ‘The archeological foundations, the place of unquenchable sacred fire, temple found in Khonka Kala, Koy-kirilgan Kala, Jonbos Kala, Tuprok Kala and Ayoza Kala testify this point of view.’ [32] Some research investigators made clear decisions about the founder of Zoroastrian religion claiming that was Spitama(meant ‘camel breeder’) who was born in Khorezm. As the first of 16 countries created by Ahura-Mazda(Zoroaster) was Aryanam Vayja(the land of Ariys) which was believed as Khorezm by Markvart, V. Bartold, then Gamashek, Geyger, Gerthfeld, Andrias, Germany, Tary and others. [33]

We may come across with some facts about the onomastic elements of ‘Avesto’ and the relation of it to the place names in Khorezm in the book ‘ The Great State of Khorezmian-shahs’ by Iso Jabbarov. Accordingly, he claims that the information about ‘Swamp and Aral Massagets’ by Strabo was about the people who dwelt in ancient Khorezm. As well as, the description of the Vurukarta sea and ‘the land of Great lakes’ full of fresh natural water was actually the landscape of Khorezm. [34] The scholar fully supports the abovementioned idea about Aryanam Vayja was actually Khorezm and concluded his point with facts in Chinese chronicles about the Kangkha oasis in Avesto was Kanghyu which was actually meant Khorezm. [35]

Thus, ancient Khorezm has been considered as the birthplace of ‘Avesto’ by the majority of scholars, the population of ancient and present Khorezm has the right to consider this unique written monument as the historical-cultural, spiritual-enlightening as well as linguistic heritage of the folk. In this regard, the term heredity can be explained with archeological, ethnographic, religious-philosophical, historical, lexis-graphics, folkloric and linguistic facts. Hereby, we dwell on the subject concerning to the language feature of ‘Avesto’, and interpret it on basis of onomastic materials.

The advantage of onomastic linguistic elements is that the proper nouns are transferred from one text to another without translation, with stable form, the least case of transformations, living long for centuries, constant in use and represents historical, mythological, ethnographic, geographic, social content and plots while passing them from centuries to centuries and from generation to generation. We are sure that the using the proper nouns is accordingly one of the relevant sources to proof the linguistic heredity. Relying on the base, we state an opinion about the immixture of onomastic units in ‘Avesto’ with Khorezm area and onomastic elements concerning to it. The in-depth study of the issue is the task of further grander linguistic investigations.

Firstly, there are some names in Avesto texts that we come across in the territory of Khorezm even nowadays (with certain phonetic transformations). Namely, the place name Khorezm was used in the form of ‘Hvayrisem’ in ‘Avesto’. Its Babylonian name was ‘Humarri’(Humarizma), in Iranian ‘Mara’(Marazmis), in Arabic Khvar(Kvarizm), and ‘Khwr’(Khwrzm) in metal coins found in Khorezm. There are different opinions about the etymology of the name and we can point out the view by A. Muhammadjonov as the last one in this chain. [36]

The place name ‘Mouru’used in ‘Avesto’ is related to the present day place name ‘Maari’, or the proper noun denoting the name of the city Marv. The name was used in ancient times in the forms of Marv, Marghu, Marvis, Margu, Maryos. Some scholars consider that the territory as the third flourishing land created by Akhura-Mazda (Zoroaster).

There are human names as Asfandiyor, Isfandiyor which are often among people of Khorezm. This name was found in ‘Avesto’ too in the form of Spandudeta. This name can be found in other languages in the form of Spandtot/Spandiyot,

Spandarmoz. The researchers interpret the meaning of the name as 'clear wit, conscious creator' or 'spakta' which means 'benefactor'. The name Asfandiyor in Persian-Tajik –a Holy Spirit, or gift of the God, or 'ispan' local name of medicinal plant (an incense). Sol. Isfandiyor' [37]

Secondly, the present name of the object doesn't coincide with the name in 'Avesto', they are names in different forms. But, the object or territory meant by the name belongs to Khorezm. In this case the name of the object in 'Avesto' can be considered as the historical onomastic element related to Ancient Khorezm. For example, the names which were differently interpreted by the researchers as Ranga//Arangha//Arang// Rankha//Arayhta//Arankha//Araks in 'Avesto' are related to the name of present day Amu-darya river in Khorezm.

Most of the scholars, including S.P. Tolstov, V.V. Bartold, Y. Gulomov and G.P. Snessarev, wrote about it. The linguist M. Jurayev proved the truth of their opinions in number of articles by analyzing the ethnography, mythology, religious beliefs and onomastic materials in Khorezm thoroughly. [38]

'In our opinion, the cult of Ardvissura Anakhita' is closely connected with the Amudarya, it was the representation of the image of beautiful divinity Anakhita in the form of river 'Rankha' in 'Avesto'. Accordingly, the avestian name for the Amudarya-river was toponym 'Arankha//Arangh' and was widely known as the sacred cult of river among people in ancient times. Arangha// Arangni was the mythological image of water sharing great blessing and representing the abundant harvest, prosperity, and plenty of food provision. Aranha//Arang are traditional characters in the mythology of Ancient Khorezm. As a result of subsequent and dynamic development of mythological views over centuries, the cult of Aranja bobo was developed in the oasis. [39]

Thirdly, the name in 'Avesto' doesn't exist in Khorezm onomastic level but the mythological plots existing in Khorezm witness that the object meant by the name in ethnographic and folklore materials belongs to the oasis. Thus, the ancient motif which was the base for the name, and consequently the proper noun itself are related to the oasis. The scientific research investigations by S.P. Tolstov, Y. Gulomov, I. Jabborov, G.P. Snessarev and M. Jurayev indicated that the names of several characters, genetic, mythological roots of toponyms in 'Avesto' can be explained with the mythology and folklore materials of the Khorezmian people.

Forthly, the components and elements within the currently existing toponymy in Khorezm are found in the language of 'Avesto' and they are the means of combining the proper noun with ancient toponymic system. According to M. Jurayev, for example, the water-cult of Aranja bobo was 'Aran' was initially in the form of 'Arang'. [40]

Ahura-Mazda's beloved daughter's name was Ardai(water) Sura(flood) (Anakhita) which meant water-flood or plenty of water. The element ar/ir is connected with the Khorezm word 'arna' which means a large lade, channel. E.g. Kilicharna, Mangitarna, Shovotarna, and etc. There is a word 'yop' which means a large lade, channel with water in 'Avesto'. This word is used as the component of Khorezm compound words Polvonyop, Khonyop. [41]

Fifthly, there are proper nouns in 'Avesto' that it is unclear whether it was name of the object or territory. For instance, the names Vankhai, Datyo, Datya, Danty, Rahna (some scholars consider these names as the previous names of the Amu-darya river), Zarnumat, Khayetumant, Khvastra, Fradata, Khvaspa, Khvariakhvat, Vitankhuat, Frazdan (names of the rivers), Chaychas, Vorukash, Kansava(ko'llar), Kharaty, Zardaz, Ushida, Erzif, Erazuur, Raodita, Mazishva Erzish, Vatiegays, Adarana, Khamankun, Vashan, Vidvan (names of mountains and hills) and other geographical denominations. The opinions differ about the objects denoted by these names. These names may belong to the onomastic level of vast Ancient Khorezm territory which was the birthplace of 'Avesto' and considered as the words of out of use or dead part of the language of today. This issue gets its solutions in further investigations.

Certainly, not all onomastic elements of 'Avesto' are related to Khorezm territory. Certain part of it is the layer of the proper nouns related to the area out of the Ancient Khorezm. And it demands special and in-depth study of the issue.

Reference:

1. Айдаров Г. Орхонских памятников древнетюркских письменности VIII века. - Алма-Ата, 1971.
2. Батманов И.А. Арагачи З.Б. Бабушкин Г.Ф. Современная и древняя Енисеика. - Фрунзе, 1962.
3. Батманов Н.А. Таллаские памятники древнетюркской письменности. -Фрунзе, 1971.
4. Древнетюркские диалекты и их отражение в современных языках. -Фрунзе, 1976.
5. Источники формирования тюркских языков Средней Азии и Южной Сибири. - Фрунзе, 1966.
6. Османалиева Б. Об отражении лексики киргизского языка в словаре Махмуда Кашгарского «Девону лугат-ит турк»//Советская тюркология, 1972. - С.97-99. // Aydarov G. Orkhon Monuments of Ancient Turkic Writing of the VIII century. - Alma-Ata, 1971.
7. Batmanov I.A., Aragachi Z.B. Babushkin G.F. Modern and Ancient Yeniseika. -Frunze, 1962.
8. Batmanov N.A. Tallas Monuments of ancient Türkic writing. - Frunze, 1971.
9. Ancient Turkic Dialects and Their Reflection in Modern Languages. -Frunze, 1976.
10. Sources of the formation of the Turkic Languages of Central Asia and South Siberia. - Frunze, 1966.

11. Osmanalieva B. On the Reflection of the Vocabulary of the Kyrgyz Language in the Dictionary of Mahmud Kashgariy "Devonu lugat-it Turk" // Soviet Turkology, 1972. - Pp. 97-99.
12. "Авесто" ва унинг инсоният тарихидаги ўрни.// Авестонинг 2700 йиллигига бағишланган конференция материаллари. - Тошкент-Урганч, 2001// The Avesto and its Role in Human History.// Proceedings of the Conference Dedicated to the 2700th Anniversary of the Avesto. - Tashkent- Urgench, 2001.
13. Ҳомидов Х. "Авесто"нинг илмий ва адабий қиммати // Ўзбек тили ва адабиёти, 2000, 3-сон, 7-15-бетлар.
14. Исҳоқов М. Сулаймонов Р. Заратуштринг ватани ва унинг яшаган даврига оид мулоҳазалар. // Ўзбекистон тарихи, 1999, 1-сон 43-54-бетлар.
15. Homidov H. Scientific and Literary Value of Avesto. Uzbek Language and Literature, 2000, Issue 3, pages 7-15.
16. Ishakov M., Sulaymonov R. Reflections on the Homeland of Zarathustra and the Period in Which He Lived. History of Uzbekistan, 1999. Issue 1. –Pp. 43-54.
17. Оранский И.М. Иранский язык в историческом освещении. - М. Oransky I.M. Iranian Language in Historical Coverage. M. The same source.
18. Браганский И.С. От Авесто до Аини. - Душанбе, 1981.-С. 20-42.
19. Bragansky I.S. From Avesto to Aini. Dushanbe, 1981.- Pp. 20-42.
20. Малов С. Э. Памятники древнетюркской письменности. -М-Л, 1951. С.221-222.
21. Самойлович А.Н. К истории литературного среднеазиатско-турецкого языка. Мир Али-Шир. - Л., 1928. –С.1-23.
22. Malov S.E. Monuments of Ancient Turkic Writing. –М.-L., 1951. - P. 221-222.
23. Samoilovich A.N. On the History of the Literary Central Asian Turkish language. Mir Ali-Shir. - L. 1928. –P. 1-23.
24. Усмонов О. Ўзбек тилини даврийлаштириш масалаларига доир.// Usmonov O. On the Issues of Periodization of the Uzbek Language; Труды САГУ.Новая серия. Вып. IV. Филологические науки. Кн.2. Ташкент, 1957; //Proceedings of SASU. New series. Issue IV. Philological sciences. Book 2. - Tashkent, 1957.
25. Абдуллаев Ф. Ўзбек тили тарихини даврлаштириш масаласига доир // Ўзбек тили ва адабиёти, 1997, 4-сон, 23-бет. // Abdullaev F. On the Issue of Periodization of the History of the Uzbek language. Uzbek language and literature, 1997. 4, page 23.
26. Абдурахмонов Ғ., Шукуров Ш. Ўзбек тилининг тарихий грамматикаси. -Тошкент, 1973. 19-бет. //Abdurahmonov G., Shukurov Sh. Historical grammar of the Uzbek language. - Tashkent, 1973. - P.19.
27. Абдурахманов Н. Эгамбердиева Н. Жаннатмаконда яратилган асар // Фан ва турмуш, 2001, 4-сон, 4-бет. // Abduraxmanov N. Egamberdieva N. A work created in Paradise. Science and Life, 2001, No. 4. - P.4
28. Толстов С.П. Қадимги Хоразм маданиятини излаб. - Тошкент, 1964. 104-бет. //Tolstov S.P. In search of ancient Khorezm culture. Tashkent, 1964. 104 pages.
29. Мэри Бойс. Зороастрийцы. Верования и обычаи. - М., 1988. –С. 51. // Mary Boyes. Zoroastrians. Beliefs and customs. - М., 1988. - P. 51.
30. Жабборов И., Дресвянская Г. Духи, святые боги Средней Азии. - Ташкент, 1993. - С. 53. // Zhabborov I. Dresvyanskaya G. Spirits, Holy Gods of Central Asia. - Tashkent, 1993.- P. 53.
31. Ахмедов А. «Авесто»да давлатни бошқариш усули // «Авесто» - буюк қомусий асар. - Тошкент, 2001, 7-бет. // Aхmedov A. The Way of Governing the State in the Avesto. The Avesto is a Great Encyclopedia. - Tashkent, 2001. - P.7.
32. Бекчанов Ш. «Авесто» - зардуштийлик динининг муқаддас китоби // «Авесто» - буюк қомусий асар. - Тошкент, 2001, 8-бет.// Bekchanov Sh. The Avesto is the sacred book of Zoroastrianism // Avesto is a Great Encyclopedia. - Tashkent, 2001. - p.8.
33. Матниёзов М. «Авесто» қачон ва қаерда яратилган? // «Авесто» - буюк қомусий асар. - Тошкент, 2001. 22-23-бетлар.// Matniyozov M. When and where was Avesto created? // Avesto is a great encyclopedia. - Tashkent, 2001. -P. 22-23.
34. Жабборов И. Буюк Хоразмшоҳлар давлати. - Тошкент, 1999. 7-бет.// Jabborov I. The State of the Great Khorezmshahs. - Tashkent, 1999. - P. 7.
35. The same source. –Pp.43-51.

36. Мухаммаджонов А. “Хоразм” топонимининг этимологияси// Ўзбек тили ва адабиёти, 2005, 6-сон, 55-59-бетлар// Muxammadjonov A. Etymology of the Toponym "Khorezm". Uzbek Language and Literature, 2005, Issue 6, -Pp.55-59.
37. Бегматов Э. Ўзбек номлари масаласи. - Тошкент, 1998. 37; 173-бетлар// Begmatov E. The Issue of Uzbek Names. Tashkent, 1998. 37; -P.173.
38. Жўраев М., Шомусаров Ш. Ўзбек мифологияси ва араб фольклори. - Тошкент, 2004. 45-46-бетлар.; Жўраев М. Аранжа бобо культининг қадимий илдизларига доир. // Филологик тадқиқотлар. - Тошкент, 2002. 20 –бет. // Joraev M. Shomusarov Sh. Uzbek Mythology and Arabic folklore. Tashkent, 2004. - P.45-46; Joraev M. Aranja is About the Ancient Roots of the Ancestor Cult. Philological Research. Tashkent, 2002. –P. 20.
39. Жўраев М. Шомусаров Ш. Ўзбек мифологияси ва араб фольклори. - Тошкент, 2004. 45-46-бетлар; // Jo'raev M. Shomusarov Sh. Uzbek mythology and Arabic folklore. - Tashkent, 2004. –Pp.45-46.
40. Жўраев М. Аранжа бобо культининг қадимий илдизларига доир // Филологик тадқиқотлар. - Тошкент, 2002. 20 –бет. // Jo'raev M. Is About the Ancient Roots of the Cult of Aranja-bobo. Philological research. - Tashkent, 2002. – P.20.
41. Абдуллаев Ҳ. “Авесто” ва Хоразм воҳаси фольклори // Ўзбекистон тарихи, 2004, 3-сон, 38-40-бетлар; Рўзимбаев С.Хоразм халқ кўшиқларида сув култи // Филологик тадқиқотлар. - Тошкент, 2002, 39-42-бетлар; Дусимов З. Хоразм ономастик тизимида авестовий элементлар // Филологик тадқиқотлар. -Тошкент, 2002, 79-бет ва бошқалар.// Abdullaev H. Avesto and Folklore of Khorezm oasis. History of Uzbekistan, 2004, No. 3. –Pp.38-40; Ruzimbaev S. Water Cult in Khorezm Folk Songs. Philological research. - Tashkent, 2002. –Pp.39-42; Dusimov Z. Avestan Elements in the Khorezm Onomastic System. Philological research. - Tashkent, 2002. - P. 79 and others.