

## LINGUISTIC AND HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE NAMES OF AFRIGHID RULERS IN AL-BIRUNI'S WORKS

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### ABSTRACT:

*This article investigates the linguistic and historical significance of Afrighid dynasty rulers within the Khorezm region, utilizing Al-Biruni's "Chronology" as a central primary source. It employs a multifaceted framework encompassing primary source analysis, a critical literature review, comprehensive linguistic analysis, and in-depth historical analysis. The research elucidates the linguistic and cultural origins of the rulers' names, illuminating the multifaceted influences – including Persian, Turkic, and potentially other regional languages – that shaped this dynasty's reign from 305 to 995 AD.*

**KEYWORDS:** Afrig, Bagra, Sahhasak, Asjakamuk, Shovush, Bozahkar, Mazdak, Khorezm, Xshatra, Chjaowu.

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### INTRUDUCTION

The Afrighid dynasty is considered to have ruled the Khorezm region, located in what is now Central Asia (parts of Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Kazakhstan) from 305 to 995 AD. The analysis of the literature involved in this study shows that there are very few works and written sources dedicated to the early medieval history of Khorezm. As an explanation, we can cite a passage from Abu Rayhan Beruni's "Chronology," where he states: "Qutayba knew the script of Khorezm well, had studied their reports and traditions, and had destroyed those who taught knowledge to others, completely eradicating them" [7; P.122.]. From a historical perspective, the reign of this dynasty is considered complex, continuing against the backdrop of the emergence and strengthening of states such as the Sassanids, Hephthalites, Turkic Khaganate, Arab Caliphate, Tahirids, and Samanids on the international political stage. As a result of the Arab conquest of Khorezm, many historical works that could have illuminated the dark pages of history were completely lost, with only fragments of some surviving to this day. Therefore, the political, socio-economic, and cultural history of the Afrighid era remains one of the least studied and most problematic topics in the history of Khorezm.

### METHODS

This study employs a multi-disciplinary approach to explore the linguistic and historical significance of the Afrighid rulers' names as recorded in Al-Biruni's "Chronology." The methodology is structured as follows:

### 1. Primary Source Analysis:

- *Analysis of Primary Source:* A thorough examination of Al-Biruni's "Chronology" is conducted to extract and analyze the names of Afrighid rulers, which are critical to understanding their historical and cultural contexts.
- *Transliteration of Names:* Careful transliteration of the names from the original texts into the chosen language for this article ensures accuracy and consistency in linguistic analysis.

### 2. Literature Review:

- *Critical Review:* An extensive review of existing literature by scholars such as M. Rajapov, J. Heravi, G. Boboyorov, E. O'zjan, E. Vessyer, and O.I. Smirnova is undertaken to gather insights into the etymology and historical narratives surrounding these names.
- *Etymology and Linguistic origins:* Evaluation of the proposed etymologies and linguistic origins of the rulers' names provides a foundation for further analysis.
- *Historical Contexts:* Identification of historical contexts and connections within the reviewed literature aids in contextualizing the names within broader historical events.

### 3. Linguistic Analysis:

- *Etymological Breakdown:* Employing etymological analysis, each name is dissected to identify potential linguistic roots and their implications.
- *Cross-Referencing Linguistic Sources:* Cross-referencing with dictionaries of relevant ancient languages (e.g., Old Persian, Avestan, Turkic languages) enhances understanding of the name structures and their origins.
- *Phonetic Considerations:* Consideration of phonetic shifts and language change over time is critical to account for the various historical pronunciations or transliterations of names.

### 4. Historical Analysis:

- *Contextualization within Historical Periods:* The names are contextualized within the known historical periods and events of Khorezm during the Afrighid Dynasty, linking them to possible historical narratives or records.
- *Connections to Historical Figures:* Exploration of connections between names and potential historical figures or ruling titles offers insights into the socio-political structure of the era.
- *Examination of Cultural Influences:* An examination of cultural influences (Iranian, Turkic, etc.) reflected in the naming practices of the Afrighid rulers highlights the intercultural interactions and influences prevalent during their reigns.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Abu Rayhan Beruni lists 22 rulers of the Afrighids in his work, which serves as a primary source for researchers since no other source provides a list of Afrighid rulers. These are as follows: 1) Afrig; 2) Bagra; 3) Sahhasak; 4) Askajamuk I; 5) Askajawar I; 6) Sahr I; 7) Shaush; 8) Xamgari (or Xangari or Hangiri); 9) Buzgar; 10) Arsamux (or Artamux); 11) Sahr II; 12) Sabri; 13) Azkajawar II (or Azkahvar); 14) Askajamuq II; 15) Shaushafar; 16) Turksabasa; 17) Abdullah; 18) Mansur; 19) Iroq; 20) Muhammad; 21) Ahmad; 22) Abu-Abdullah Muhammad.

Researcher M. Rajapov, relying on the works of Iranian researchers J. Heravi, J. Mufrad, and P. Azkai, has emphasized that the term "Afrig" originates from "Af/of/ob" meaning water, and "rig/riz" meaning to fill or pour, referring to people living downstream of a river. It is noteworthy that the ancient Iranians used the term Afrighids to collectively refer to the peoples living in the lower reaches of the Amu Darya, denoting those who live where the water flows. M. Rajapov suggested that this term might later have evolved into the name of the dynasty [5; P.331-332.].

Researcher J. Heravi, analyzing the second ruler **Bagra** mentioned in Beruni's work from a linguistic perspective, emphasized that Bagra (Bag'ra) was the son of Afrig and that his name might mean "Given by God"[2; P.9-11]. G. Boboyorov, in his research, suggested that Bag'ra (possibly Bo'g'ra) could be associated with the epithet "male camel", which is characteristic of the title system in the Turkic Khaganate [9; P.50-52]. Researcher E. O'zjan has noted that Siyavush's conquest of Khorezm and subsequent rule by Kay Khusraw and his descendants, who were recognized with the title "shah", marked the end of the Persian family's rule with Afrighid **Bagra** coming to power, and from this ruler onwards, a Turkic dynasty governed Khorezm[4; P.11-13]. According to J. Heravi, the third ruler listed by Beruni, **Sahhasak** (Saksafan), is derived from the words "Sak" and "shek", which could mean "king of the Saka". The author further analyzes the next ruler, Askajamuk I, suggesting the name is formed from Aska (Aškā) and Jamuk, linking Aska to the Parthian Arsacid kings (Aškānīān), with Jamuk possibly meaning "beauty" or "majesty", generally translating to "Ashkan the Beautiful" or "Saka Majesty"[2; P.10-11]. Researcher Vaissière É, on the other hand, interpreted Askajamuk as meaning "Highly Esteemed"[8; P.124].

G. Boboyorov has noted that the names of two rulers listed by Beruni as Aska Jamuk were from the Chjaovu household. According to the author, "Jamuk" in Turkic means "jewel" and was a title for nobles in the Turkic Khaganate during the early medieval period[9; P.50-52]. J. Heravi suggests that the name of the sixth ruler, Sahr, derives from the Persian word "Xshatra", implying meanings like "sovereign", "king", or "ruler of the city". The author proposes that the seventh ruler listed, Shovush (Chovush), is the Arabized form of the legendary hero "Siyavush". Additionally, the ninth ruler, Bo'zgar, might be referenced by the epithet "Bozahkar" ("sinner") given to Yazdgird I during the Sasanian era [2; P.11]. If Bo'zgar's era is considered to correspond with that of Yazdgird I, he might also have been called "Bozahkar" by Zoroastrian clergy due to possible Mazdakite inclinations, as Beruni notes that Mazdak was from the Nisa region of Khorezm. Thus, Bozgar might also have been inclined towards Mazdakism and thus named "Bozahkar" by the clergy. The tenth ruler, Arsamux, has a name that matches one found on coins in Khorezm. The first part of his name, "Art", means "order" and "justice", which is also found in other names from the Sasanian era, while the second part, "mux", means "appearance", "face", or "visage". Combined, these two parts may convey meanings like "Just Face" or "Holy Visage". The author suggests that "...this, unlike his father who might have been called 'Bozahkar', likely gained recognition in the country as a patron of the Zoroastrian religion, with this name possibly given by the Zoroastrian clergy..."[2;P.11] However, there is no information about his reign or governing style. Some studies indicate that Arsamux's name is similar to the toponym "Arsax" in the Azerbaijan region, associated with the name of the ancient Saka tribe, meaning "brave Saka", "valiant Saka", or "Saka man"[3].

Beruni's list includes the 16th ruler, Turkasabos (or Turksabas/Turkasbos), who is considered to have been a member of the ruling family of the Turkic Khaganate that governed the western regions (around the Aral Sea) in 567 AD, identified in Greek sources as Turksanf. O.I. Smirnova proposes that Turkasbos literally means "owner of the Turkic army". Some researchers believe that Turksanf's original name in Turkic was Turk shad, and he was the son of Istami Khan [10; 425-428].

Analyses show that the linguistic examination of the names of Khorezmian rulers recorded in Beruni's data provides valuable information about their origins and meanings. These names offer deep insights into the history, culture, and societal complexities of Khorezm, reflecting changes across various periods. It should be noted that in foreign historiography, efforts have been made to prove that all the names mentioned above have Iranian roots to emphasize the Iranian lineage of the Afrighid rulers. However, in national and Turkic studies, special emphasis is placed on the Turkic origins of these rulers (except Afrig).

## CONCLUSION

Overall, the linguistic and historical analysis of the names of Afrighid rulers recorded in Al-Biruni's "Chronology" reveals a complex and dynamic history of Khorezm during their reign. The diverse interpretations proposed by scholars such as M. Rajapov, J. Heravi, G. Boboyorov, E. O'zjan, E. Vessyer, and O.I. Smirnova highlight the ongoing debate surrounding the linguistic and cultural origins of the Afrighid Dynasty. The names appear to blend linguistic influences from Persian, Turkic, and possibly other ancient regional languages, suggesting a fusion of cultures within the Khorezmian power structure. While the term "Afrig" itself is widely considered to have Persian roots connected to water-based settlements, researchers have proposed various interpretations for subsequent rulers' names. Figures like Bagra, Sahhasak, and Askajamuk I have been linked to Persian, Saka, and even Parthian influences, reflecting Khorezm's historical position at the crossroads of empires. Conversely, names like Buzgar and Turkasabos suggest connections to Turkic rulers, titles, or structures, supporting the theory of a shift in power dynamics towards a Turkic lineage within the Afrighid Dynasty.

The possible connections drawn between some Afrighid rulers and historical figures or epithets, such as the links proposed between Siyavush and Shavush, Yazdgird I and Bozgar, or Turk Shad and Turkasabos, further illuminate the potential interplay of myth, history, and political power within their societal context. However, the lack of additional historical records for corroboration makes it difficult to establish definitive connections beyond the textual analysis of names.

The absence of consensus regarding the interpretations of these names underlines the challenges posed by the limited availability of historical records pertaining to early Khorezm. The loss of texts during the Arab conquest significantly hinders efforts to obtain a complete understanding of the Afrighid era. Despite this, Al-Biruni's work remains an invaluable primary source, and the linguistic investigations conducted on these names shed light on the multi-faceted nature of Khorezmian history.

This study highlights crucial areas for future research. Cross-analysis of Afrighid names with additional sources, such as archaeological discoveries like inscriptions or coins, could potentially provide further clues about the rulers' historical contexts and cultural influences. Comparative studies with names of rulers from the Sassanid and Turkic Khaganate periods may clarify

relationships and reveal shared regional naming conventions or shifts in power. Moreover, a more extensive examination of possible Mazdakite connections within the Afrighid Dynasty could provide a clearer picture of religious and social dynamics.

Despite the inherent limitations, this comprehensive linguistic and historical analysis of the Afrighid rulers' names based on Al-Biruni's records contributes a valuable perspective to the ongoing scholarly exploration of Khorezm's intricate past. This research underscores the significance of interdisciplinary approaches and the critical examination of names as a means of understanding historical societies, cultures, and the complex power dynamics shaping them.

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