

## THE KHOREZMIAN DIALECT

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**Abstract.** This article provides information about the phonetic composition of the Khorezm language, which was widespread in ancient times on the territory of the ancient Khorezm.

**Keywords:** zoroastrians, ancient state, Turkishization, fiqh, fatwas, sharia, dead language.

**Introduction:** In ancient times, on the territory of the ancient state Khorezm, which was referred to in the holy book of the Zoroastrians Avesta as “Ayriana Vaeja” - that is “the promised country”, “a place for the chosen ones”, located in the lower reaches of the Amu Darya River, the Khorezmian dialect was a widely spread language. According to the linguistic classification, it belonged to the eastern group of Iranian languages (currently it is classified as a dead language).

**Main text:** The Khorezmian dialect was the official state language of the Khorezm state starting from the 2<sup>nd</sup> – 1<sup>st</sup> centuries BC until the middle of the 8<sup>th</sup> century AD, though some individual samples of Khorezmian writing are known from written cultural monuments dating back to the 8<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries BC. The main sources of Khorezmian writing and spoken language are Khorezmian words, phrases and expressions found mainly in Arabic manuscripts or manuscripts written in the Arabic script, most of which date back to the 12<sup>th</sup>–14<sup>th</sup> centuries. As historical sources from famous linguists testify, in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, despite the turkification, Khorezmian dialect had not yet died out in Khorezm region.

The scholar of the early Middle Ages, Beyhaki, testifies to the presence of writing in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. The discoveries of the academician S.P. Tolstov push this date back to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD. Discovery of the Arabic work on fiqh (Muslim jurisprudence) by a Khorezmian lawyer of the 13<sup>th</sup> century Najmeddin Abu- r-Raj Mukhtar al-Zahidi alGazmini titled “Kiniyat al-muniya...” (Acquiring of what one desires...), which represents a collection of fatwas (legal decisions based on Sharia- a code of Muslim laws) on marriage, divorce, oath, etc. with phrases in the Khorezmian dialect, and especially the discovery of a dictionary for these phrases, with translations into Arabic, Tajik and Persian - about three thousand words in total - made it possible to create a fairly clear picture of the Khorezmian dialect of that time. The dialect became extinct soon afterwards. A lot of Khorezmian words and terms are found in the work of Abu Reyhan Beruni titled “Elasar el bakiye” - “Monuments of past generations.”

The vowel system of the Khorezmian dialect distinguishes between long, short and nasal types of pronunciation of sounds a, i, u, e, ə. The consonant system consisted of 27 sounds. The Khorezmian dialect was distinguished by its unique morphological and syntactic properties. For example, the noun had three cases, two genders, two numbers. These and other signs indicate that in the Khorezmian dialect the features inherent in ancient Iranian languages were preserved.

To write in the the Khorezmian dialect until the 9<sup>th</sup> century AD, the writing system based on the Aramaic script was used. Since the 10<sup>th</sup> century, they started to use the Arabic script supplemented by five Arabic letters. The Khorezmian version of the manuscript of a famous

Khorezmian linguist Mahmud Zamakhshari named “Mukaddimat al Adab” (1200) was written using precisely this script. In 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Khorezmian dialect fell out of use and was classified as a dead language.

As a result of archaeological excavations carried out on the territory of Khorezm, cultural monuments written in the ancient Khorezmian dialect, dating back to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD were found. According to the scientist, these written monuments are considered to be very important factors indicating the existence of the culture of ancient Khorezmians. Before that, as it was mentioned in the works of Beruni, written in Arabic, the confirmation to that existence was found in the documents of that period in Khorezmian writing on wood and animal skin, inscriptions on coins and household dishes. These documents written in the Khorezmian script date back to the 4<sup>th</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> centuries BC. The origin of the Khorezmian writing goes back to Aramaic, and that in turn leads to the ancient Phoenician writing. Unfortunately, these documents were burned during the Arab conquest, literate people were exterminated or expelled. Subsequently, in Central Asia in particular in Khorezm the influence of Turkic tribes increased. The invasion of Genghis Khan (1220-21) accelerated the process of turkization on this territory.

The fact that the Khorezmian dialect belongs to the group of Iranian languages, doesn't mean that the Khorezmians spoke Persian language. The concept of Iranian languages represents the name of a common group, and only means one branch of the family of IndoEuropean languages. The group of Iranian languages includes dialects of the Persian, Afghan, Tajik, Ossetian, Tat, Pamir languages. All together they are called Iranian languages or Iranian language group. Therefore, the Khorezmian dialect as an independent language should be called by its proper name.

In the linguistic collection of works of At-Tarjumai on fiqh - the science of institutes, rules of religion written in the first half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century-the descriptions regarding marriage, divorce and vows were written in the Khorezmian dialect. Subsequently, these 40 words and 13 phrases from the manuscripts were published in an issue of the *Islamika Journal* in 1927 and were translated using the dictionary of Mahmud al-Zamakhshari. According to A.A. Freiman, in 1936, the linguist S.A. Alimov from Astrakhan, along with other manuscripts, sent the manuscript dating back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century to the Institute of Oriental Studies of the USSR Academy of Sciences, which proves the fact that they used the Khorezmian dialect in this collection and manuscripts until the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

**Conclusion:** The above arguments show that in Khorezm (in particular Khiva) bilingualism continued until the 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> centuries - Zullisonain (Khorezmian and Turkic languages). By the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the Khorezmians as ethnic group joined the Turkic (mainly Oghuz) tribes, and their language also merged with the richness of Turkic (Oghuz) language.

Having carried out deep and thorough analysis of the Khorezmian dialects, especially the composition of the Oghuz dialect, it is possible to identify words and expressions related to the ancient Khorezmian language. Linguists currently studying the Khorezmian dialects of the Uzbek language indicate that some words from the Khorezmian dialect are found in the vocabulary and toponymy of these dialects. For example, words such as “nigirik” – a frame, “balar” – a log, laid to cover the roof of a house, “khodzhik” – a small owner or the owner's son, “patik” - a ceiling, poles for laying roof logs of a house, “kunda” – plow, “yap, yab” (from the word “ob” - water) – a canal, a ditch, “uchak” – the roof of a house, “talak” – a balcony, “zangi” - ladder, “solma” - a

small ditch, as well as the toponyms Indavak, Rofanik, Pishkanik, Arvik, Karvak and others (names of settlements in Khorezm) are still preserved in the vocabulary of the Khorezmians.

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