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Article

Archaic Words in T. Qayipbergenov's Novel *the Karakalpak Epic*

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Abstract: This article examines archaic words in T. Qayıpbergenov's novel *The Karakalpak Epic*, focusing on their historical origins, semantic features, and functions in the literary text. The study is based on the three books of the trilogy and applies continuous sampling together with etymological, comparative-historical, descriptive-semantic, and contextual analysis. Particular attention is paid to Persian loanwords and to lexical items borrowed from Russian and from European languages through Russian. Words related to religious concepts, military affairs, state administration, trade, and everyday life are analysed, including *iyshan, qálender, qorjın, nayza, pashshap, patsha, sawıt, zindan, kámar, knyaz,* and *kópes*. Sixteen archaic lexical items are classified by source language and thematic group: eleven are of Persian origin and five entered through Russian. Examples from the novel illustrate how these items contribute to the reconstruction of the historical setting, the portrayal of characters, and the representation of the social and cultural realities of the period. The findings highlight the significance of archaic vocabulary for understanding the historical development of the Karakalpak language, its lexical structure, and its cultural and linguistic interactions with other peoples.

Keywords: *T. Qayıpbergenov, The Karakalpak Epic, archaic words, historical lexicon, Persian loanwords, Russian borrowings, lexical semantics, Karakalpak language, historical novel, linguistic analysis*.

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1. Introduction

Literature is the artistic history of every nation. Literary works reflect not only the present day but also the historical realities of ancient times through artistic expression. Every author who writes about the history of their people's lives must skillfully employ the linguistic features of the period being portrayed in order to depict its historical setting, way of life, and distinctive characteristics vividly and convincingly. In linguistics, archaisms are defined as words or forms that have dropped out of general use but are retained in particular registers or for special stylistic effect [1]. In fiction they serve as one of the principal means of creating a sense of period and of shaping the voice of narrators and characters [2]. To depict historical events accurately, a literary author must refer to the relevant phenomena and objects using the terms that were current at the time. This enables readers to visualize a clear picture of the historical period.

In Karakalpak literature, the vocabulary of the novel *The Karakalpak Epic* [3] by the renowned writer T. Qayıpbergenov, who made a significant contribution to enriching the vocabulary of the Karakalpak language through his literary works, encompasses a rich lexical stock covering all aspects of human life. The archaic words used in the writer's

historical novels also display considerable diversity in terms of their origins. This diversity is undoubtedly attributable to the economic, military, and political relations that developed between the Karakalpaks and neighbouring peoples over several centuries.

The lexicon of the Turkic languages has long been shaped by contact with Iranian, Arabic, Mongolic, and, later, Slavic languages [4]. Johanson shows that Persian has been one of the most persistent sources of lexical and structural influence on the Turkic languages of Central Asia, while Russian became dominant from the nineteenth century onwards [5]. General theories of language contact explain how such borrowings are adapted phonetically and semantically in the recipient language [6], [7], how the intensity and duration of contact determine what is borrowed [8], and which semantic fields are most open to borrowing [9]. For Karakalpak, the foundational description of its phonetics and morphology also characterised the Arabic-Persian and Russian layers of its vocabulary [10], and the wider role of Russian in the languages of the former Soviet Union has been documented in comparative surveys [11]. Karakalpak scholars have studied the Arabic-Persian lexicon of the heroic epic, the craft vocabulary, and the lexicology of the modern language; however, the archaic loan vocabulary of Qayıpbergenov's historical prose has not yet been examined as a separate object of study.

The aim of this article is therefore to identify and classify the archaic words of Persian origin and those borrowed from Russian and from European languages through Russian in *The Karakalpak Epic*, to describe their meanings in comparison with dictionary data, and to determine their functions in the literary text.

2. Materials and Methods

The material of the study comprises the three books of T. Qayıpbergenov's trilogy *The Karakalpak Epic*: *Maman biy ápsanası* (The Legend of Maman Biy), *Baxıtsızlar* (The Unfortunates), and *Túsiniksizler* (The Bewildered). Archaic lexical items were collected by continuous sampling of the text. A word was classed as archaic if it denotes an object, institution, or concept that has disappeared from modern life (a historicism), or if it has been replaced in modern Karakalpak by another word with the same meaning (an archaism proper), or if explanatory dictionaries mark it as obsolete.

Each selected item was then subjected to the following procedures: (1) etymological analysis, in which the origin of the word was established using explanatory dictionaries of Karakalpak, Uzbek, and Kazakh and the etymological dictionaries of Turkic and of Turkic–Persian lexical relations; (2) comparative-historical analysis, in which the form and meaning of the word in the source language were compared with its form and meaning in Karakalpak in order to reveal phonetic adaptation and semantic change; (3) descriptive-semantic analysis, in which the meaning of the word in the novel was compared with dictionary definitions; and (4) contextual analysis, in which the function of the word in the passage was determined. The items were finally grouped by source language and by thematic field (religion, military affairs, state administration and punishment, everyday life, trade, and socio-political history). Quotations from the novel are given in English translation, with the title of the book and the page number in parentheses.

3. Results

The analysis identified sixteen archaic lexical items in the trilogy that belong to the two loan layers under study. Their origin, meaning in the novel, thematic group, and modern status are summarised in Table 1 [12].

Table 1. Archaic loanwords identified in T. Qayıpbergenov's *The Karakalpak Epic*

No.	Word	Source	Meaning in the novel	Thematic group	Modern status
1	*iyshan*	Persian	spiritual leader of high religious status	Religion	historicism

2	*qálender*	Persian	holder of a high religious rank; in modern use a dervish, *diywana*	Religion	meaning narrowed
3	*payǵambar*	Persian	prophet, messenger of God	Religion	in religious use
4	*qorjın*	Persian	two-compartment woven saddlebag	Everyday life	obsolescent
5	*kámar*	Persian	belt, sash	Everyday life	replaced by *qayıs, belbew*
6	*nayza*	Persian	spear	Military affairs	historicism
7	*pashshap*	Persian	executioner of a punitive detachment	Military affairs	historicism
8	*sawıt*	Persian	armour of iron or steel wire	Military affairs	historicism
9	*patsha*	Persian	king, ruler; tsar	State administration	historicism
10	*zindan*	Persian	underground prison	State administration and punishment	historicism
11	*dar*	Persian	gallows	State administration and punishment	historicism
12	*knyaz*	Russian	prince	State administration	historicism
13	*kópes*	Russian (*kupets*)	merchant, owner of a commercial enterprise	Trade	historicism
14	*dekabrshiler*	Russian	Decembrists, participants in the 1825 uprising	Socio-political history	historicism
15	*katolik*	European via Russian	Catholic	Religion	in specialised use
16	*pravoslavnıy*	Russian	Orthodox (Christian)	Religion	replaced by modern form

As Table 1 shows, the Persian layer (eleven items) is considerably larger than the Russian layer (five items). The Persian words cover the oldest spheres of social life—religion, warfare, power, punishment, and the household—whereas the Russian words relate to political, commercial, and religious realities that the Karakalpaks encountered through contact with the Russian Empire. The distribution of the items across thematic groups is given in Table 2 [13].

Table 2. Distribution of the archaic loanwords by thematic group and source

Thematic group	Persian	Russian / via Russian	Total
Religion	3	2	5
Military affairs	3	–	3
State administration and punishment	3	1	4
Everyday life	2	–	2
Trade	–	1	1
Socio-political history	–	1	1
Total	**11**	**5**	**16**

Words borrowed from Persian

Words borrowed from Persian have long occupied a significant place in the vocabulary of the Karakalpak language, both in spoken and written usage. These words entered Karakalpak directly as well as through the languages of neighbouring peoples, particularly Uzbek and Turkmen.

A comparison of Persian-origin words in modern literary Karakalpak with their counterparts in these languages reveals certain differences in usage. For example, in Persian the word *pir* means “an elderly person” or “an old man,” whereas in Karakalpak it is used in the senses of “religious teacher” and “saint” (*wali*). When words pass from one language into another, they do not necessarily retain their original phonetic structure

unchanged. Some borrowed words, particularly those of Persian origin, entered Karakalpak with modifications to their original phonetic forms. This is especially noticeable when Persian loanwords are compared with words borrowed from Arabic. For example, the Persian words *behesht* and *eshon* are used in Karakalpak in the forms *beyish* and *iyshan*, respectively.

Most Persian loanwords denoting religious concepts entered the Karakalpak language in earlier periods and have been used extensively in everyday life. As a result, many of them have become established elements of the core vocabulary. An examination of religious terms borrowed from Arabic and Persian shows that Persian-origin words are also actively used in Karakalpak. One of the principal reasons for this is the longstanding influence of Persian, both before and after the spread of Arabic. For example, the Arabic word *rasul* can be compared with Persian words such as *payǵambar*, *jáhánnem*, and *dozaq*.

Persian-Tajik words occupy a position comparable to Arabic loanwords in the modern Karakalpak vocabulary in terms of both their scope and frequency of use [14]. Nevertheless, Arabic loanwords occur more frequently than Persian borrowings overall. Although Persian loanwords are fewer in number, some of them, as noted above, are used more productively than certain words borrowed from Arabic. Numerous Persian loanwords occur in the historical novels of T. Qayıpbergenov, including *diywana, iyshan, qálender, qorjın, payǵambar, nayza, pashshap, patsha, kámar, dar,* and *zindan*.

The word *iyshan*, borrowed from Persian, denotes a person of high religious status: “In fact, if Iyshan Töremurat, who had arranged for Allamurat to be educated in order to undermine the khan’s reputation, was a man associated with Suwpı Töremurat, there would be nothing surprising about it” (*Baxıtsızlar*, p. 71); “Iyshan tried to demonstrate his importance to them and asked for two days to think it over” (*Túsiniksizler*, p. 611).

In the novel, the word *qálender* denotes a high religious position characteristic of the period portrayed. In contemporary usage, however, the term generally refers to a *diywana* or a dervish, so its meaning has narrowed: “If you are the qálender of our land…” (*Túsiniksizler*, p. 612); “When I went to Qońırat, I heard that one of the Karakalpak biys, Shabbaz, had been going around as a qálender” (*Maman biy ápsanası*, p. 384).

The word *payǵambar* means a prophet—a person sent by God to convey divine messages to people: “The Prophet Muhammad also arranged the marriage of his daughter-in-law” (*Baxıtsızlar*, p. 148); “I spoke at length with Chief Minister Bestyuzhev. We discussed the Qur’an as well as the Prophet Muhammad” (*Maman biy ápsanası*, p. 265); “The Prophet Muhammad is said to have declared, ‘A servant whose tongue is accustomed to saying alhamdulillah will not remain in hell’” (*Maman biy ápsanası*, p. 493).

The word *qorjın* (saddlebag) is borrowed from Persian. O. Bekbawlov defines it as “a two-compartment item made of woven wool, with its openings tied together; an object designed for carrying loads on donkeys or horses” [15]. Sh. Allaniyazova assigns *qorjın* to the craft vocabulary borrowed from Persian [16], and the explanatory dictionary of the Uzbek language also identifies it as a Persian loanword [17]. In the novel the word is used productively, although it has fallen out of everyday use in contemporary life: “Whenever he mounted his horse and was about to travel forty steps from his home, he would have bread placed in his qorjın” (*Baxıtsızlar*, p. 18); “Had Begdulla not arrived with the black-bearded Nurabılla at that very moment, the fate of the biy who had taken a young wife would have turned into a qorjın” (*Maman biy ápsanası*, p. 399).

Military terms borrowed from Persian also occur frequently in the novel. *Nayza* (spear) is found in many Turkic languages. E. Bekmukhamedov defines it as “a Persian word referring to an ancient weapon consisting of a long shaft with a sharp metal point” [18]: “Asan biy broke his nayza and submitted to the people of Khiva” (*Baxıtsızlar*, p. 197); “Even if he thrusts his nayza from a doorway or across a spacious room, he strikes his target precisely, leaving his opponent frozen with fear” (*Maman biy ápsanası*, p. 50); “After he became convinced that the enemy had retreated and the people could live in peace

again, the wound inflicted by the nayza began to trouble him, and he took to his bed" (*Maman biy ápsanası*, p. 229); "During the Jungar raid, a scar left by a nayza ran across both cheeks of the man" (*Maman biy ápsanası*, p. 103).

Pashshap is a military term of Persian origin that occurs frequently in the novel. The explanatory dictionary of the Karakalpak language defines it as "a soldier serving alongside the khan" [19], whereas O. Bekbawlov explains that the word "refers to executioners belonging to a punitive detachment." In the novel the word is used in the latter sense: "'Let the troublemakers in the streets not dare to raise their hands,' he said as a pretext, and sent one or two of his loyal pashshaps along with the others to bring him back" (*Túsiniksizler*, p. 622).

The word *patsha* (king, ruler), which denotes a person governing a state, is also borrowed from Persian; in the Persian form *pādshāh* the final *h* may be retained or omitted. In the novel it refers both to local rulers and to the Russian tsar: "If I ever set foot in the palace of the Russian tsar, and he were to ask me, I would say: 'The Karakalpaks are like the few fish remaining in an isolated lagoon, separated from a vast sea during the years of a great storm'" (*Baxıtsızlar*, p. 190); "Please advise us on how we should approach the White Tsars and what we should take with us" (*Maman biy ápsanası*, p. 100); "In the end, the merchants who had gone to trade under the Russian tsar returned to their homeland" (*Baxıtsızlar*, p. 6).

The trilogy also contains the word *sawıt*, which denotes protective armour made of iron or woven steel wire and worn in battle to shield warriors from arrows; Bekmukhamedov likewise treats it among the Persian loanwords. The word has fallen out of current use: "The armoured pursuer looked towards the water for a while, then turned back" (*Maman biy ápsanası*, p. 314); "One of the pursuers, a moustached man wearing sawıt, rushed up, thrust his spear at the old man, and lifted it high" (*Maman biy ápsanası*, p. 334).

The words *dar* (gallows) and *zindan* also belong to the Persian loanwords. A *zindan* is a pit dug deep into the ground to imprison offenders; Bekmukhamedov describes it as "an underground prison dug deep into the earth": "Although he had received many reprimands and heard numerous threats from previous khans over tax matters, none of them had ever led him to the entrance of a zindan" (*Baxıtsızlar*, p. 9); "After the accusation of taking bribes was brought against him, the khan had no choice but to send him to the zindan" (*Baxıtsızlar*, p. 188).

The word *kámar* is likewise of Persian origin and, according to Bekbawlov, means "belt" or "sash": "Although Yakov's reply felt as though a kámar had been tightened around Aydos's waist, it did not reassure him" (*Baxıtsızlar*, p. 319); "Angrily raising his kámar, Esengeldi biy took two steps forward" (*Maman biy ápsanası*, p. 447). In contemporary usage, *qayıs* and *belbew* are used in its place.

Words borrowed from Russian and from European languages through Russian

The entry of words from Russian, and from European languages through Russian, into Karakalpak began in the late nineteenth century as a result of the expansionist policy of Tsarist Russia. The process gained momentum after 1873, when the Khiva Khanate came under the control of the Russian Empire. In the second half of the nineteenth century, Russian loanwords were mainly related to trade, military affairs, politics, culture, and state administration, as well as to objects of everyday life, and they generally entered the language in phonetically adapted forms, as Baskakov's description of Karakalpak also shows.

Among the archaic words in the trilogy are *knyaz* (prince), *kópes* (merchant), *dekabrshiler* (Decembrists), *katolik* (Catholic), and *pravoslavnıy* (Orthodox). *Knyaz* appears in passages on Russian history: "They made peace with the Russian knyazes, uniting in such a way that the enemy of one became the enemy of the other, while the friend of one became

the friend of the other" (*Maman biy ápsanası*, p. 30); "By citing the names of Russian knyazes, he concluded his speech with an appeal for unity" (*Maman biy ápsanası*, p. 109).

The word *kópes* (from Russian *kupets*) refers to "a capitalist who owns a private commercial enterprise or a merchant who exploits others": "'Merchant Timofeev has moved away, hasn't he?' he said" (*Baxıtsızlar*, p. 22); "Someone exposed the wrongful deeds of merchant Timofeev" (*Baxıtsızlar*, p. 245). The adaptation *kupets* > *kópes* illustrates the substitution of Russian sounds with native Karakalpak ones.

The term *dekabrshiler* (Decembrists) refers to the participants in the uprising against the Tsarist system: "Mikhailov understood what they were expecting and proceeded to explain the uprising led by Kondraty Bulavin, followed by the Decembrist uprising, which had occurred more recently" (*Túsiniksizler*, p. 212); "According to what you say, the dekabrshiler were exiled for opposing the tsar" (*Túsiniksizler*, p. 547). Here a Russian stem combines with the Karakalpak suffixes *-shi* and *-ler*, which shows the grammatical integration of the borrowing.

The words *katolik* (Catholic) and *pravoslavnıy* (Orthodox) refer to branches of Christianity and are used in this religious sense: "The reason was that a conflict had erupted between the Catholics and the Orthodox believers of our faith over the 'holy places' in a land called Palestine" (*Túsiniksizler*, p. 548).

4. Discussion

The results show that the two loan layers differ in age, degree of integration, and function in the novel. The Persian words entered Karakalpak over several centuries, directly and through Uzbek and Turkmen, and therefore show deep phonetic adaptation (*eshon* > *iyshan*, *behesht* > *beyish*) and semantic change (*pir* "old man" > "religious teacher, saint"; *qálender* "high religious rank" > "dervish"). Most of them have become archaic not because they were displaced by other loanwords but because the realities they name—armour, spears, underground prisons, the khan's executioners—disappeared from life. They are thus mainly historicisms. Only *kámar* is an archaism proper, since its meaning is now expressed by the native words *qayıs* and *belbew*.

The Russian words, by contrast, are relatively recent and reflect the period of colonial contact. They name realities that were external to traditional Karakalpak society—the Russian nobility, merchants, the Decembrists, and the Christian confessions—and in the novel they are mostly found in the speech of characters who travel to Russia or deal with Russian officials. Their phonetic adaptation (*kupets* > *kópes*) and the addition of Karakalpak affixes (*dekabr-shi-ler*) show that even in the nineteenth century these words were being integrated into the grammatical system of the language.

In the literary text, the archaic words perform three main functions. First, they create the historical setting of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by naming objects and institutions exactly as they were called at the time. Second, they characterise the figures of the novel: religious terms mark the world of the *iyshans* and *qálenders*, military terms accompany the biys and warriors, and Russian words mark the characters who mediate between the Karakalpaks and Russia. Third, they reflect the social hierarchy and the relations between peoples—the khan and his *pashshaps*, the *zindan* as a tool of power, and the *patsha* of Russia to whom the Karakalpak envoys appeal. In this way the author uses archaic vocabulary not as decoration but as a structural element of the historical narrative.

5. Conclusion

The archaic words used in T. Qayıpbergenov's trilogy *The Karakalpak Epic* are distinguished by the diversity of their historical origins. Of the sixteen items analysed, eleven are of Persian origin and five entered through Russian. The Persian words belong mainly to the spheres of religion, military affairs, state administration, punishment, and

everyday life, show deep phonetic and semantic adaptation, and are mostly historicisms. The Russian words are connected with trade, the nobility, socio-political history, and Christian confessions, and reflect the period of contact with the Russian Empire. In the novel these words are used effectively and appropriately to create literary characters, reveal their personalities, and portray the historical setting of the period. Studying their linguistic characteristics is of considerable importance for research into the history, historical dialectology, and lexicology of the Karakalpak language. Further research could compare the archaic vocabulary of *The Karakalpak Epic* with that of other Karakalpak historical novels and quantify the frequency of these items in the text.

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