

The Genesis, Historical-Cultural Formation of the Concept *Axi* and *Aki/Aqi* and its Poetic Interpretation in the Works of Alisher Navoi

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ABSTRACT

*This article investigates the genesis and historical-cultural formation of the Arabic term *axi* and the Turkic *aki/aqi*, as well as the poetic interpretation of this concept in the works of Alisher Navoi, through an interdisciplinary lens combining linguistics and literary studies. Rather than strictly determining whether the form *axi* originates from the Arabic *akhī* (my brother) or the ancient Turkic *aki/aqi* (generous, open-handed, benevolent), the study employs linguopoetic criteria to analyze how these two independent linguistic units merged formally and semantically within a shared historical-cultural environment, and what poetic significance they acquired by Navoi's era. In ancient Turkic written sources, the semantics of generosity, benevolence, and nobility are consistently attached to the word *aqi*. Meanwhile, in the Islamic-cultural context, the Arabic *akhī* expands beyond biological kinship to encompass spiritual brotherhood and collective solidarity. The research interprets the institution of *akhi* (chivalry, *futuwwa*) as the historical intersection of these two layers: the Arabic notion of "brotherhood" was enriched by the Turkic ideals of generosity and nobility, thereby broadening the moral and cultural scope of the concept.*

*The usage of *axiy* in Alisher Navoi's epic *Sab'ai Sayyor* (The Seven Planets) and his poetic work *Nazm ul-Javohir* (The String of Pearls) allows for tracking the artistic expression of this synthesis in the 15th century. While the vocative form *axiy* in *Nazm ul-Javohir* demonstrates a functional-typological*

affinity with the ancient Turkic form of address ay aqi, the character of Akhi in Sab'ai Sayyor artistically unifies the virtues of generosity, chivalry (futuwwa), and human perfection. Consequently, the article concludes that the historical-semantic evolution of axiy transcends a mere linguistic phenomenon, elevating it to the level of a literary archetype and an ethical-aesthetic concept.

Keywords: *Axi; aki/aqi, futuwwa*, concept, Alisher Navoi, *Sab'ai Sayyor*, *Nazm ul-Javohir*, linguopoetics.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of *axi* and *aki/aqi* constitutes an important, historically institutionalized component of the doctrine of *futuwwa*. Its historical-semantic nature remains one of the complex issues arising at the intersection of Turkology, Islamic cultural studies, and literary studies. This complexity is determined, above all, by the fact that the units *akhī* and *aqi*, though formally close to one another, possess independent semantic histories within different languages and cultural environments. The Arabic *akhī* (أخي, - my brother) conveys the meaning indicated, while the Old Turkic *aqi* was applied to a person who was generous, open-handed, magnanimous, and noble (Bayram 1991: 3-4, 6; Taeschner 1953: 3-32).

It should be emphasized that in the Old Turkic socio-ethical system, the concepts of valor and generosity stood in an organic dialectical relationship with one another. In particular, the criteria of *alplik* (bravery, heroism) and *aqilik* (generosity, open-handedness), formed within the pre-Islamic military-democratic worldview, together constituted a single, mutually complementary conception of the ideal person. The great eleventh-century encyclopedic scholar Mahmud Koshg'ariy, in his *Devonu lug'otit turk* (1072-1074), demonstrates the place of these two values in the popular consciousness through ancient proverbs. The living linguistic evidence cited in the work – such as *Alp er yag'ida*, *aqi er tog'uda* (A brave man is known in battle, a generous man in feasting/almsgiving) and *Aqilig' bilsa*,

elig keng bo'lur (When generosity is practiced, the hand becomes wide and open) – shows that, according to Old Turkic tradition, a true leader of the people or hero was required not only to display courage on the battlefield (to be *alp*), but also to be open-handed (*aqi*) to the extent of distributing his own wealth among the people selflessly. Consequently, the value of *fütüvvet* (Islamic valor/chivalry) within the *Akhilik* (Ahiylik) movement that took shape in Anatolia from the thirteenth century onward represents precisely the legitimate and logical continuation, within an Islamic environment, of this ancient Turkic system of *alplik* and *aqilik*.

Jasurbek Mahmudov links the origin of this word to the name of Harun (a.s.), the close companion of Musa (a.s.) in the Holy Qur'an. In the Holy Qur'an, Musa refers to his companion Harun as *akhi* four times (Mahmudov 2022: 167). On this basis, Mahmudov rejects the Turkic *aqi* theory and firmly defends the sole – Arabic – origin of the term; however, in doing so, he commits a significant methodological inconsistency: he applies the principle that “the origin of a term cannot be established on the basis of a change in a root letter” solely to the Turkic *aqi*, whereas this very principle applies, first and foremost, to the Arabic word *akhiy* (أخي) itself (Mahmudov 2022: 167). This is because the latter is not a root word but a morphological form derived by adding the first-person possessive suffix (-i) to the root *akh* (أخ, brother) (my brother). The Turkic *aki/aqi* (generosity, noble, magnanimous) contrast, is a root word that has existed independently, without any suffix or alteration. Consequently, comparing the two units as though they were structurally equivalent, and evaluating one as an altered form of the other, contradicts their respective grammatical natures.

It follows, therefore, that approaching the issue solely from the standpoint of phonetic similarity, or of determining which language a single word was borrowed from, is insufficient. This is because it is more appropriate to regard the Arabic *akhī* and the Turkic *aki/aqi* not as a lexical unit originally derived one from the other, but as two historically independent concepts. In their subsequent historical development, a formal convergence and semantic intertwining may have occurred as a result of the

mutual contact of the Islamic, Persian, and Turkic cultural environments. In particular, the *Akhīlik* (Ahiylik) tradition served as an important historical-cultural space for the merging of these two semantic layers, and it is within this process that the formation and development of the *axi*; *aki/aqi* concepts can be observed. This dual relationship is likewise fully confirmed by V. V. Radloff's work *Versuch eines Wörterbuches der Türk-Dialecte*. On page 96 of the dictionary, the author, drawing on Old Uyghur-Turfan texts as well as on examples from the later Qarakhanid-period works *Devoni lug'otit-turk* and *Qutadg'u bilig*, cites the purely Turkic lexeme *aqı* (in Radloff's transcription: *aqı/aki*) and records its meaning of "generosity, open-handedness" in the distribution of rewards (*freigebig beim Belohnen*) (Radlov 1893: 90-96). On page 90 of the dictionary, however, the word *axı*, pertaining to the Ottoman Turkish environment, is given in an entirely separate entry, where it is linked to the root *akh* (brother), described as "undoubtedly Arabic" (*gewiss arab*), and identified as a title borne by members of dervish communities. This lexical differentiation is likewise reflected in J. Wilkens's *Handwörterbuch des Altuigurischen* (2021), where, based on the lexicon of the Turfan texts, the form appears as *aki* while in Mahmud Koshg'ariy's *Devonu lug'otit turk* it is fixed in the hard-sound form *aqı* (Wilkens 2021: 23). It follows, then, that the originally independent Arabic *axī* and Turkic *aqı/aki* did not merely converge formally within the medieval environment, but became interlinked at a profound semantic level, subsequently forming the basis for the name of the unified *Akhīlik* movement.

According to this evidence, the Arabic Sufi title (*axī* – my brother) and the Turkic practical value (*aqı* – generosity) each existed independently in their own time, but underwent phonetic and semantic convergence within popular socio-linguistic consciousness, becoming intertwined in the vernacular.

Another important aspect of the issue is that the concept of *axi*; *aki/aqi* did not remain merely a lexical unit. Over time, it developed into a cultural concept expressing particular ethical virtues, collective relationships, and, ultimately, a literary image. For this reason, in explaining the historical development of *axiy*,

it is necessary to take into account, alongside its lexical meaning, its social, ethical, and artistic content as well.

The genesis of the formation of this concept has been interpreted differently in the research of Western and Eastern scholars (Taeschner 1953; Cahen 1959; Köprülü 1976; Bayram 1991; Gölpınarlı 2011; Küçük 2000; Karasoy 2003). Franz Taeschner studied *Akhilik* (Ahiylik) in connection with the Islamic futuwwa tradition and the social life of Anatolia (Taeschner 1953). Turkologists such as C. E. Bosworth and G. Clauson focused on interpreting these terms of the Muslim East on the basis of their historical-lexical layers (Bosworth 1963; Clauson 1972). Mohsen Zakeri examined the formation of the traditions of futuwwa, javanmardi, and Islamic chivalry within a broader historical-cultural context, revealing the complex connections of this phenomenon among the Iranian, Islamic, and Turkic environments (Zakeri 1995). The Turkish scholar Yakup Karasoy, systematically analyzing these materials, advances the theory of a connection between the word *axi* and the Turkic *aqi* the most important piece of evidence in his approach is that in Old Turkic sources, *aqi* is used not in the sense of (brother), but within the semantic range of generosity and magnanimity (Karasoy 2003: 3-23).

It follows, then, that the issue of *axi* should be viewed not merely as an internal phenomenon of a single language, but as a universal literary-philosophical phenomenon situated at the intersection of the Arabic, Persian, and Turkic cultural layers, one that underwent ideological-aesthetic transformation over time. However, the later institutional content of *axi* in historical sources further complicates the matter: by the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, *Akhilik* (Ahiylik) had emerged in the Anatolian region as an important social institution in the life of artisans, merchants, and urban communities. While Gölpınarlı views this process as closely bound up with the *futuwwa* tradition, Kocatürk focuses on the historical-institutional connections between futuwwa and *Akhilik* (Kocatürk 1986: 26-30). Such perspectives demonstrate that studying the origin of the word *axiy* in isolation from its later social function is not always sufficient.

Each of these perspectives makes it possible to explain a particular layer of the concept of *axiy*; however, reducing them to a simple bipolar opposition of “Arabic or Turkic” does not fully reveal the complex historical nature of the phenomenon.

The most important linguistic and didactic evidence for the question of Turkic genesis is clearly visible in the ancient Turfan sources and in the written monuments of the Qarakhanid period (Wilkens 2021: 23-25). In particular, usages of the form *aqi* connected with the semantics of generosity, open-handedness, magnanimity, and nobility are recorded in Mahmud Koshg'ariy's *Devonu lug'atit-turk*, in Yusuf Xos Hojib's epic *Qutadg'u bilig*, and in Ahmad Yugnakiy's *Atabat ul-haqoyiq*. However, whereas in these ancient Turkic monuments *aqi* bore, from the eighth to the twelfth centuries, primarily a didactic-ethical (admonitory) character, by the thirteenth century *aki/aqi*, and in the subsequent period within the Islamic cultural environment, the concept of brother expanded beyond the boundary of biological kinship to encompass the meanings of spiritual closeness, collective solidarity, and mutual assistance.

In the literature of the fifteenth-century Timurid period, and particularly in the work of Alisher Navoi, this concept rose to an entirely new aesthetic stage. In his epic *Sab'ai Sayyor*, Navoi deeply conceptualizes the ancient semantic layers of *Akhilik* (Ahiylik), transforming the lexical boundary of the word into a fully developed poetic model of *muruwwa* + *futuwwa* + *ukhuwwa* that drives the plot of the epic forward.

Alisher Navoi's work is especially important for observing this historical-semantic process. The vocative *axiy* in the poet's *Nazm ul-Javohir* and the image of Axiy in *Sab'ai Sayyor* reveal, on the one hand, the historical-semantic layers of the word, and, on the other, its artistic-aesthetic transformation. For this reason, the article treats linguistics and literary studies as two mutually complementary lines of analysis: linguistic material reveals the historical-semantic foundations of the word, while the literary text manifests its aesthetic and ethical content within Navoi's thought.

The central issue of this article is not to resolve, in a simple manner, from which language the word *axiy* originated, but

rather to determine the historical-semantic relationship between the Turkic form *aqi* and the Arabic form *akhī*. On this basis, the article aims to connect the etymological debate in linguistics with textual analysis in literary studies, and to introduce Navoi's work into scholarly discourse as historical-linguistic evidence.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The principal sources of this research can be divided into two groups.

The first group consists of ancient and medieval Turkic written sources, including texts pertaining to the ancient Turfan sources, Mahmud Koshg'ariy's *Devonu lug'atit-turk*, Yusuf Xos Hojib's *Qutadg'u bilig*, and Ahmad Yugnakiy's *Atabat ul-haqoyiq*. These sources serve as an important basis for revealing the semantic layers of the lexeme *aqi* connected with generosity, open-heartedness, magnanimity, and nobility.

The second group is constituted by the usages of *axiy* in Alisher Navoi's *Mahbub ul-qulub*, in the epic *Sab'ai Sayyor*, and in the 139th hikmat of *Nazm ul-Javohir*.

As theoretical-critical material, the works of F. Taeschner, A. Gölpınarlı, S. Kocatürk, M. Zakeri, R. R. Arat, and Y. Karasoy on futuwwa and *Akhilik* (Ahiylik), as well as on *axiy/aqi*, were taken as the theoretical foundation.

The following methods were employed in the research:

1. **The historical-comparative method:** to compare the Turkic and Arabic semantic layers across historical periods;
2. **Semantic-componential analysis:** to distinguish the semantic composition of the lexemes *axiy* and *ukhuwwa*;
3. **Contextual-philological analysis:** to interpret the instances of usage in Navoi's texts within their broader textual context;
4. **Typological comparison:** to compare the address form *ay aqi* in *Qutadg'u bilig* with the vocative *axiy* in *Nazm ul-Javohir*;
5. **The poetics of imagery:** to reveal the artistic-philosophical layers of the image of *Axiy* in the tale *Farrux va Axiy*.

The central principle of this methodological approach is that the question of the word's etymological origin is not conflated with its subsequent institutional or artistic content – the two are pursued as separate, though mutually related, objects of investigation.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

1. *The Arabic genesis of the term axiy: Scholarly perspectives and problematic aspects*

In evaluating the view concerning the Arabic genesis of the term *axiy*, it is first necessary to establish the grammatical nature of the form *akhī* within Arabic itself. The Arabic *akh* means (brother), while *akhī* is a first-person possessive form meaning (my brother). It follows, then, that *akhī* was not originally an independent occupational or social designation, but rather a grammatical form expressing a relation of kinship or closeness. This distinction can later serve as an important methodological basis for explaining the process by which *axiy* came to designate the *Akhīlik* (Ahiylik) organization.

In studies that connect the Arabic etymology with the historical content of *Akhīlik*, the semantics of brotherhood occupies a central place. In the course of the development of the *futuwwa* tradition, the fact that the concept of brother came to express, beyond biological kinship, spiritual closeness, mutual assistance, and collective solidarity laid an important foundation for the later social content of the term *axiy*. In F. Taeschner's research on *Akhīlik* as well, the connection of this institution with the traditions of *futuwwa* and Islamic chivalry occupies an important place (Taeschner 1953: 201-211). M. Zakeri's research on *futuwwa* and *javanmardi*, in turn, makes it possible to view the matter within a still broader historical framework: rather than equating *futuwwa* solely with the later Anatolian *Akhīlik*, he traces its roots to the broader Eastern traditions of *javanmardi* and chivalry (Zakeri 1995: 13-22). This approach explains the likelihood that the term *axiy* was reinterpreted, within the Arabic-Islamic environment, in connection with spiritual brotherhood; however, this circumstance alone does not yet prove that the original etymological source of the form *ahi* was the Arabic *akhī*.

It is precisely at this point that etymology and institutional history must be distinguished from one another. The fact that a term later became semantically close to an Arabic religious concept does not automatically indicate that its original form was likewise borrowed from that language. This aspect brings to light the most significant problem of the Arabic theory: given that *akhī* means (my brother), through what historical and phonetic process did it come to acquire, within the Turkic environment, the meaning of a generous, magnanimous person Ibn Battuta, during his fourteenth-century journey to Anatolia in Asia Minor, understood the word *axiy* as having an Arabic basis. In his account, he described *Akhīlik* as follows: the singular of *Axiyya* (*Akhīlik*) is *axiy*, which derives from the (Arabic) word *al-akh*, to which the first-person possessive pronoun has been added (Ibragimov 1988: 21-22). This information, however, shows only how the term was understood by the fourteenth century – it does not prove its original etymology. S. Kocatürk's research likewise demonstrates that explaining Anatolian *Akhīlik* solely on the basis of a Turkic lexeme meaning generous person is insufficient, since by the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the name *axi* was already bound up with a particular ethical code, collective relations, and institutional structure (Kocatürk 1995). It follows, then, that the form *akhī* explains well the Islamic-cultural foundation of the semantics of brotherhood, but its ability to account for the generosity semantics of the Turkic form *aqi* remains a separate, unresolved problem.

2. *The theory of Turkic genesis: The historical-semantic foundations of the lexeme aki/aqi*

The most important support for the view concerning the Turkic genesis of the word *axiy* lies not in its formal resemblance, but in the fact that *aqi* displays an independent and consistent semantic function in ancient Turkic written sources. In Mahmud Koshg'ariy's *Devonu lug'atit-turk*, *aqi* is glossed as follows: *aqi* – (open-handed, generous) (Koshg'ariy 1960: 116). From *aqi* is derived *aqiladi* – considered [someone] generous; *Ol meni aqiladi* – (he considered me generous); *aqilar*, *aqilamaq* (Koshg'ariy 1960: 302). [The verse reads:] “*Qozg'il menga*

aqiliq bo'lsun manga oyog'o, / Izg'il mani to'qishg'a, yuvgil manga ulag'a" (transl.: Leave me be, do not hinder me, so that the name of generosity, which benefits others, may remain mine. Give me a horse to carry me into battle. Let it carry me into battle) (Koshg'ariy 1960: 187).

In Yusuf Xos Hojib's *Qutadg'u bilig*, this unit is used actively and is elevated to the status of an ethical quality expressing a person's generous disposition toward others, one that exceeds mere material capacity (Arat 1988). According to R. R. Arat, who has conducted research on this matter, the word and its combinations – *aqi*, *aqilik*, *aqi bo'l*, *ey aqi* – occur in 61 places in *Qutadg'u bilig*, in various meanings:

aqi: generous, open-handed, noble
tüzün erdi alçaq kılınçı silig
*uvutluğ bağırsaq **aqi** king elig* (line 43)

aqi bol:- to be generous, open-handed
*saran bolma ilig **aqi bol** aqi*
qalır mengü ölmez aqılık atı (line 1402)

ay aqi: O generous one, O magnanimous one
kişi bar qalın bođ boğuz ağırukı
*köni çın bağırsaq yok ol **ay aqi*** (line 5095)

aqılık: generosity, nobility
aqılık kişilik asıg edgülik
bu edgü kişidin kelir belgülig (line 934)

In Ahmad Yugnakiy's *Atabat ul-haqoyiq*, the word *aqi* is used in 14 places, in forms such as *aqi bo'l*, *aqi er*, and *aqilik*:

aqi bol:- be generous
aqi bol sata söz sökünç kelmesün
sökünç kelgü yolı aqılık tıyur (lines 231-232)

aqi er: a generous person
aqi er biligni yete bildi kör
anın sattı malın ına' aldı kör (lines 237-238)

akılık: generosity

bu budun talısı akı er turur

akılık şereḫ cah cermal arturur

(lines 257-258)

(Arat 1988)

The significance of these sources lies not merely in their chronological antiquity: what matters is that, across these monuments, *aqi* consistently retains a particular semantic core – generosity and open-handedness. It is precisely on this evidentiary basis that Mustafa Karasoy links the origin of the word *ahi* to the ancient Turkic *aqi*. In Karasoy's approach, the primary focus is placed not on phonetic resemblance but on semantic continuity. At the same time, the fact that, in the later historical-cultural environment, the concepts of brotherhood and generosity came to stand side by side within a single system of communal ethics may have created the conditions for a semantic convergence of the two lexemes (Karasoy 2003: 3-23).

If *ahi* were derived directly from the Arabic form *akhī* (my brother) then the consistent use of *aqi* in the sense of generosity in Turkic sources would require separate explanation, since no evidence is found in these sources of *aqi* being used in the sense of brother. At the same time, it would also be imprudent to oversimplify the theory of Turkic genesis by concluding decisively that the form *ahi* derives directly from *aqi*: from the standpoint of historical phonetics, the relationship between *q* and *x/h* requires separate substantiation, and intermediate sources demonstrating the transformation of *aqi* into the form *ahi* within the Anatolian environment must likewise be identified. From this standpoint, the distinction between the two theories may be formulated as follows: the Arabic theory explains the semantics of brotherhood through *akhī*, while the Turkic theory explains the ancient roots of the semantics of generosity through *aqi*. What is striking is that, in the subsequent *Akhīlik* tradition, these very two concepts brotherhood and generosity – coexist side by side within the ethical foundations of a single institution. This circumstance points to the historical possibility of a convergence of two semantic layers around a single term.

3. *The semantic essence of axiy in the texts of Alisher Navoi*

In order to determine which of the etymological views discussed above corresponds more closely to the historical linguistic material, it is necessary to turn to actual usages in the later Turkic written literature. In this respect, the work of Alisher Navoi is of particular scholarly significance, since, alongside creating supreme examples of the fifteenth-century Turkic literary language, he actively employed numerous units of the ancient Turkic lexical layer in his works.

In the tale *Farrux va Axiy* within the epic *Sab'ai Sayyor* (Navoi 2013c). *Axiy* first appears as a personal name. The linguistic significance of this observation becomes especially evident in the use of the lexeme *ukhuwwa*: when it becomes necessary, in the course of the tale, to express the ultimate relationship of brotherhood between *Farrux* and *Axiy*, Navoi employs not the form *axiy*, but a separate Arabic lexeme, *ukhuwwa* – meaning (brotherhood). It follows, then, that in Navoi's language, *axiy* and *ukhuwwa* appear not as two variants of a single semantic unit, but as two separate units with distinct functions. Had *Axiy*, in Navoi's conception, been a direct continuation of the Arabic form *akhī* – (my brother) – one would not expect to observe such a strict functional differentiation between its brother semantics and the concept of *ukhuwwa*. This usage within a single text does not, by itself, resolve the etymological question conclusively; however, it constitutes important internal textual evidence indicating that, in the fifteenth-century literary language of Khurasan, *axiy* did not function actively as a simple Arabic grammatical form meaning (my brother).

The second piece of evidence in Navoi's texts is that, in the 139th hikmat of *Nazm ul-Javohir*, the word *axiy* is repeated several times as a vocative:

Dunyo sori kim mayl o'qin otti, axiy,
 Aning vahlig'a belicha botti, axiy,
 Gumroh ulus ichra o'zin qotti, axiy,
 Dunyog'a birovki dunyoni sotti, axiy.

(Navoiy 2013b: 32)

In this passage, the grammatical function of *axiy* merits particular attention: within the sentence, it is used not as a subject, object, or modifier, but as a form of address, a vocative. It is especially productive to compare this usage with the form *ay aqi* in *Qutadg'ū bilig*: whereas in the Qarakhanid-period text *aqi* is used in addressing a generous, open-handed person, in Navoi *axiy* likewise appears as the final element of an address. This parallel alone cannot prove that the two forms arose from one and the same historical development; nevertheless, the similarity of their address function and their ethical-semantic content is noteworthy from a historical-typological standpoint.

Table 1. *Comparative correspondence between the address form ay aqi in Yusuf Khas Hajib's Qutadgu Bilig and the vocative axiy in Alisher Navoi's Nazm ul-Javohir, 139th hikmat*

<i>Qutadg'ū Bilig</i> (line)	Meaning	<i>Nazm ul-Javohir</i> (line)	Meaning	Semantic layer
3407: “ <i>bu yalnguz yoriglu kishi kiyçaki, kishike tusulmaz bolur ay aqa</i> ”	O generous one, this solitary, wild wanderer is of no benefit to others.	Line 1: “ <i>Dunyo sori kim mayl o'qin otti, axiy,</i> ”	The person is displaying an inclination toward the world.	A call to vigilance
4924: “ <i>küdelim körelim yime ay aqa, negü ol ahır hal öd ödle takı</i> ”	O generous one, let us wait and see what the final outcome will be.	Line 2: “ <i>Aning vahlig'a belicha botti, axiy,</i> ”	The person is sinking into terror.	Regret-lament (close to “alas”)
5095: “ <i>köni çın bagırsak yok ol ay aqa</i> ”	O generous person, there is no one who is true, sincere, and loyal.	Line 3: “ <i>Gumroh ulus ichra o'zin qotti, axiy,</i> ”	The person conceals himself among the misguided multitude.	Exposure-testimony
5098: “ <i>mungar mengzer emdi bu beyt ay aqa, uqayın tise sen munuqi oқи</i> ”	O generous one, this verse now resembles that; if you wish to understand it, read it.	Line 4: “ <i>Dunyog'a birovki dunyoni sotti, axiy.</i> ”	A generalizing concluding maxim.	Brotherhood-admonition (closest to “O my brother”)

6413: “ <i>negü erse arzu töleking taqı, tökel birsü tengri sanga ay aqr</i> ”	O generous one, whatever further wishes and desires you may have, may God grant them to you in full.			
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As Table 1 demonstrates, the address form *ay aqr*, occurring at five points across *Qutadgu Bilig* (lines 3407, 4924, 5095, 5098, 6413), consistently retains a single referential content an appeal to a generous, magnanimous individual irrespective of the surrounding didactic context. In Navoi’s *Nazm ul-Javohir*, by contrast, the vocative *axiy*, while formally analogous, is distributed across a four-line semantic progression: from an initial call to vigilance (line 1), through a deepening register of regret (line 2) and moral exposure (line 3), toward a concluding admonitory generalization in which the sense of (O my brother) becomes most pronounced (line 4). This distribution indicates that, whereas in Yusuf Khas Hajib’s text the address form functions as a semantically stable marker of generosity, in Navoi’s text the same formal unit has been redeployed as a structurally load-bearing refrain whose semantic layer shifts in step with the unfolding argument of the hikmat. This internal differentiation constitutes further evidence that, by the fifteenth century, *axiy* in Navoi’s poetic system operated not as a fixed lexical carrier of a single etymological meaning, but as a poetically flexible unit capable of absorbing successive shades of ethical content.

Thus, the usages of *axiy* in Navoi’s work lead to two important conclusions. First, in the fifteenth-century literary language of Khurasan, *axiy* and the concept of brotherhood were not semantically identified with one another: for brotherhood, a separate unit, *ukhuwwa*, was actively employed. Second, the vocative function of *axiy* in *Nazm ul-Javohir* provides a basis for typological comparison with *ay aqr* in *Qutadg’u bilig*. Taken together, these two pieces of evidence call for the Turkic-semantic layer of *axiy* to be seriously reconsidered from a

historical standpoint. It is important to note, however, that this Navoi material does not constitute a final etymological verdict, but should instead be evaluated as internal historical-linguistic evidence that tests the existing theories.

4. *From Futuwwa to Anatolian Akhīlik: The acquisition of institutional content by the term*

Tracing the historical development of the term *axiy* solely within the bounds of its lexical-etymological origin is not sufficient, since by the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries this unit had come to denote, beyond an ethical quality, the name of a social institution operating within Anatolian urban life. The formation of *Akhīlik* is generally explained in connection with the Eastern tradition of *futuwwa*: *futuwwa* took shape, within the framework of Islamic culture, as an ethical-social phenomenon that united into a single system such virtues as valor, generosity, hospitality, fidelity to one's word, and the protection of the weak. It would be incorrect, however, to equate *futuwwa* directly with Anatolian *Akhīlik*: whereas *futuwwa* was a broader spiritual-ethical tradition, *Akhīlik* manifested itself as the institutional form in which certain of its principles were combined with the life of artisanship, trade, and urban communities.

In F. Taeschner's works, the Anatolian *akhis* are interpreted not as a religious or Sufi group, but as a community that performed particular functions within urban life (Taeschner 1960). A. Gölpınarlı devotes particular attention to the relationship of *futuwwa* with the Sufi environment, and to its ethical codes and communal forms. M. Zakeri, for his part, does not confine the roots of *futuwwa* to the Anatolian or Turkic environment alone, but examines them in connection with the traditions of valor and *javanmardi* in Iran and the Islamic East (Zakeri 1995: 20-30). For this reason, it is appropriate to conceive of the relationship *futuwwa* → *Akhīlik* not as a linear genealogical model, but as a historical transformation: the ethical norms of *futuwwa* merged with the economic and social organizations of the Anatolian setting and thereby acquired a new institutional form.

Drawing on S. Kocatürk's research, the semantic development of the term may be conceived in three stages: in the first stage, a unit such as *aqi* expresses an ethical quality denoting a person's generosity and magnanimity; in the second stage, such qualities become a moral identifier within a particular community; and in the third stage, *ahi* is established as a socio-institutional term denoting a specific organization and its member. This model is not a rigid chronological scheme, but rather a semantic model explaining the expansion of the word's meaning. Within this process, the intensification of the concept of brotherhood also renders historically comprehensible those interpretations connected with the Arabic *akhī*: the fact that members belonging to a single community came to conceive of one another as brothers may have created the conditions for a semantic convergence between the term *ahi* and the Arabic *akhī*. It follows, then, that it is appropriate to view the Arabic and Turkic layers not as mutually exclusive phenomena, but as semantic layers that interacted with one another within the framework of a single historical institution.

5. *The poetic semantics of the image of axiy in the tale Farrux va Axiy*

The tale *Farrux va Axiy* in Alisher Navoi's epic *Sab'ai Sayyor* (Navoi 2013c) offers a particular opportunity to trace the historical-semantic layers of the term *axiy* within the domain of artistic thought. In this tale, *Axiy* is not a mere plot character, but is shaped into the embodied symbol of generosity, magnanimity, munificence, and the capacity for self-sacrifice. The image of *Axiy* created by Navoi connects directly with the ancient meaning of *aqi* (generous, open-handed) yet the poet does not simply reproduce this historical-semantic layer in ready-made form; rather, he expands it with ethical-aesthetic and Sufi content. At the center of the tale stands the relationship between *Axiy* and *Farrux*. For Navoi, generosity is not merely the giving of a material good to another; its highest form consists in a person's capacity to place the interests of others above even what he himself holds most dear. One of the most significant episodes in the tale the situation in which *Axiy* consents to give his own wife

to Farrux puts the concept of generosity to the test as the highest degree of *iysar* (self-sacrificial altruism). Whereas ordinary generosity may be limited to giving another what is superfluous to oneself, *iysar* signifies sacrificing, for the benefit of others, even that which is most precious to oneself. For this reason, the image of Axiy is considerably broader than the notion of a generous person within Navoi's artistic system, it approaches the model of a person who has mastered his own base desires (*nafs*).

This aspect makes it possible to connect the image of Axiy with the tradition of *futuwwa* and *javanmardi*: in *futuwwa* thought, perfect valor is defined by a person's restraint of his own base desires and his placing of the guest and the needy above himself. In Navoi's tale, however, the author does not depict the structure or professional functions of the historical *Akhlik* organization; instead, he transforms the semantics of generosity, magnanimity, and munificence embodied in the name Axiy into the very foundation of the literary character's nature. As a result, an onomastic-motivational unity arises between the name and the character: Axiy is Axiy because he is generous and his generosity transforms the lexical history of the name into an artistic character.

The true test of the image of Axiy emerges in the events connected with Farrux's love. Farrux's passion first manifests itself in the outward form of human love, and subsequently, through the motifs of journey, separation, Jerusalem, and dream, moves beyond the bounds of ordinary love and begins to acquire spiritual content. As a result, the tale's two heroes are led, by different paths, to the question of human perfection: Axiy is tested through giving up his beloved to another, while Farrux is tested through undertaking a journey in pursuit of love. In this way, the images of Axiy and Farrux do not stand in opposition to one another but form a mutually complementary poetic system: Farrux's love becomes the testing ground for Axiy's generosity, while Axiy's generosity becomes the cause of Farrux's subsequent spiritual transformation. It is at this point that the Sufi-gnostic content of the image of Axiy comes to light. Through his renunciation of what is most precious to him, Axiy weakens the desire centered on the self and this makes it possible

to interpret *iysar* not merely as generosity, but as a practice of renouncing the base self (*nafs*). The poetic function of the image of Axiy may therefore be considered on three levels:

1. The socio-ethical level – generosity, magnanimity, hospitality, and munificence;
2. The level of *futuwwa/javanmardi* – placing the interests of others above one's own;
3. The gnostic (*irfoni*) level – spiritual elevation through the renunciation of the base self and personal desires.

These three layers together present the image of Axiy as a complex cultural concept: one that began with the historical word *aqi*, developed through the ethical model of *Akhīlik*, and acquired new philosophical content within Navoi's poetics.

DISCUSSION

The critical analysis conducted above shows that each of the theories of Arabic and Turkic genesis for the term *axiy* possesses its own body of evidence, yet neither is able, by itself, to resolve the question fully. The Arabic theory convincingly explains the semantics of brotherhood through *akhī* and its subsequent Islamic-institutional content, but it cannot account for the generosity semantics of *aqi* found in Turkic sources. The Turkic theory, in turn, demonstrates the ancient and consistent semantic function of the lexeme *aqi* with strong evidence, yet the intermediate stages of phonetic reconstruction (the transition from q to x/h, and the identification of clear intermediate sources) have not yet been fully substantiated.

The scholarly novelty of this research lies in the fact that the question is not reduced to a bipolar choice between Arabic or Turkic, but is instead interpreted as the gradual, phased development of a historical process: in the ancient Turkic environment, *aqi* existed as an independent lexeme carrying the semantics of generosity; in the subsequent Islamic-cultural environment, the concept of brotherhood became one of the ethical foundations of *futuwwa* and *Akhīlik*; and within the

Anatolian setting, these two strands of meaning converged around the name of a single social institution. Navoi's text makes it possible to observe the semantic state of this process as it stood in the fifteenth century, and it is precisely at this point that the methodological value of the study – uniting linguistics with literary studies – becomes evident: the etymology of the word is sought in dictionaries and historical sources, while its actual fifteenth-century semantic life is observed within the literary text.

At the same time, the findings of this research should not be absolutized. The fact that *axiy* is used by Navoi separately from *ukhuwwa*, or that it functions as a vocative in *Nazm ul-Javohir*, does not by itself resolve the question of its etymological origin; this evidence must be assessed together with other historical sources. Likewise, the poetic-gnostic interpretation of the image of *Axiy* cannot be equated with the historical-linguistic meaning of the term, since the semantic load carried by a literary image obeys laws of its own, distinct from historical lexical meaning. Among the questions that remain open are the search for intermediate sources demonstrating the precise stages of the phonetic change, as well as a separate analysis of the process by which Farrux's outward love is transformed into spiritual love through the motifs of his journey, Jerusalem, and the dream. These questions constitute the subject of future research.

CONCLUSION

The research conducted has led to the following conclusions:

1. With regard to the question of the origin of the term *axiy*, the theories of Arabic (*akhī*) and Turkic (*aki/aqi*) genesis do not exclude one another, but rather explain different layers of the historical process: the Arabic layer accounts for the semantics of brotherhood, while the Turkic layer accounts for the semantics of generosity.
2. Ancient Turkic written monuments (*Devonu lug'atit-turk*, *Qutadgu Bilig*, *Atabat ul-haqoyiq*) demonstrate that the lexeme *aqi* possesses a stable and independent semantics of

generosity, which provides a serious evidentiary foundation for the theory of Turkic genesis.

3. In the texts of Alisher Navoi, *axiy* is consistently distinguished from the lexeme *ukhuwwa*, which carries the meaning of brotherhood; this demonstrates that *axiy* functioned, in the fifteenth-century literary language of Khurasan, as an independent naming-address unit.
4. The vocative *axiy* in *Nazm ul-Javohir* forms a typological parallel with the address *ay aqi* in *Qutadgu Bilig*, which constitutes additional evidence pointing to the historical continuity of the Turkic semantic layer.
5. The historical process from *futuwwa* to Anatolian *Akhilik* is not linear; rather, it should be interpreted as the gradual, phased convergence of distinct cultural-semantic layers – Turkic generosity and Arabic brotherhood.
6. In the tale *Farrux va Axiy* within *Sab'ai Sayyor*, the image of Axiy carries a three-tiered poetic content: the socio-ethical level (generosity, magnanimity), the *futuwwa-javanmardi* level (placing the interests of others above one's own, in the highest degree of *iysar*), and the gnostic (*irfoniy*) level (spiritual elevation through the renunciation of the base self). This demonstrates that Navoi did not simply reproduce the historical-cultural tradition, but enriched it with new philosophical-aesthetic content.

In conclusion, it may be said that the historical development of the term *axiy* does not admit of a single, linear etymological solution; the texts of Alisher Navoi, for their part, acquire scholarly significance as important linguistic and literary testimony reflecting the fifteenth-century state of this complex historical-semantic process.

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