

**INTERPRETATION OF THE TOPONYMS AND HYDRONYMS
USED IN ALISHER NAVOI'S "LAYLI AND MAJNUN" EPIC**

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Annotation: *This article analyzes the toponyms and hydronyms used in the 3rd epic of Hazrat Mir Alisher Navoi's masterpiece "Khamsa," namely the work "Layli and Majnun." The role of these onomastic units in the plot and composition of the work is highlighted.*

Keywords: *toponym, hydronym, Kashmir, Babul, Medina, Mecca, Jayhun, Yemen, Rum, Najd, Oman.*

Toponymics (from Greek *topos* — place and *onyma* — name) is the branch of onomastics that studies place names (geographical proper names), the laws of their emergence or creation, their development and changes, their historical-etymological sources and grammatical features, their structure, distribution areas, and reasons for naming. The collection of place names in a particular region is called toponymy, while an individual place name is called a toponym. Toponymy is a specific field of onomastics, and it has several subtypes. One of these is hydronymy. Hydronymy (from Greek *hydro* — water) is the branch that studies the names of rivers, lakes, seas, streams, canals, bays, straits, and waterfalls.

"Layli and Majnun" is the third epic of Alisher Navoi's "Khamsa," written in 1484. In one of the introductory chapters of the epic, Navoi continues the tradition by mentioning with deep respect and honor his predecessors who wrote on this theme. Unlike them, he specifically emphasizes that he wrote his work in Turkic. Navoi compares Nizami's epic to a "fortress" and Dehlavi's to a well-decorated "palace," while he likens his own epic to the cities and gardens surrounding a "fortress" and "palace." The poet also refers to his work as "Firoqnama" and "Nomai Dard."

As we know, our ancestor Navoi, in the words of Maqsud Shaykhzoda, is considered the sultan of the realm of words. Considering that every word he used in his works is a priceless gem and that he paid great attention to the magic of words in general, we witness that he made fruitful use of every word. We can see this, for example, in how harmoniously the toponyms and hydronyms in the work are integrated with the plot.



Har sahfada nazmi gohi tahrir,
Fitna aro bir savodi Kashmir.

On every page, the verse sometimes flows,
Among the strife lies the knowledge of Kashmir.

This couplet is taken from the 5th chapter of the work and is dedicated to the value of words as gems. The term Kashmir in this couplet is a toponym, referring to a historical region in Asia located between the Himalayas and Tibet. The earliest information about Kashmir appears in sources dating back to the 6th century BCE. Today, Kashmir is located in the northwestern part of the Indian subcontinent and is a historically disputed region that was formerly a province in the Himalayan mountains. The division of Kashmir has not been officially confirmed by border agreements. Kashmir itself is a source of conflict between the countries that control it, especially India and Pakistan.

Ham xatlari shohrohi Bobul,
Ham kilkada javf chohi Bobul.

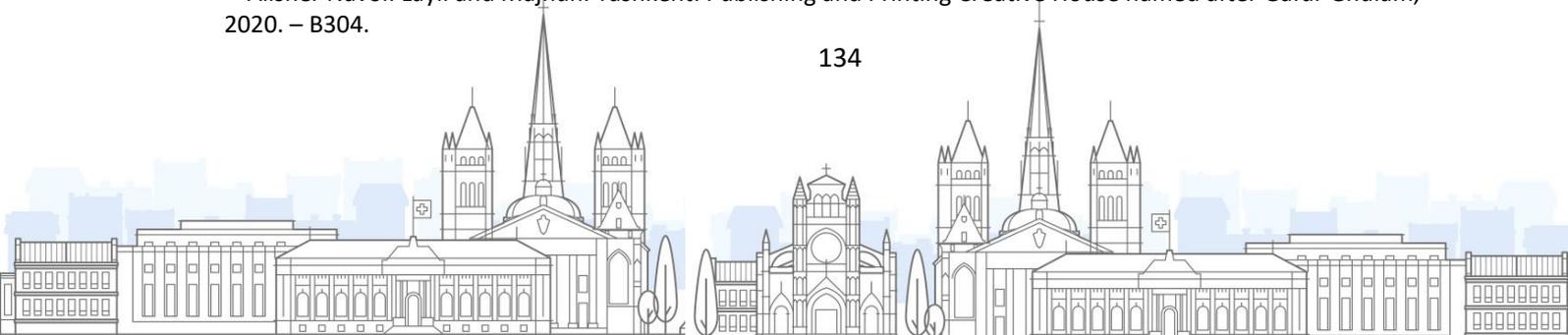
Both in the streets lies the thoroughfare Babul,
And in every hollow, the cavity well Babul.

This couplet is also included in the 5th chapter of the work. Its meaning is: “The writings in it are like the great road of the land of Babylon, and the inside of the reed pen is like the well of Babylon.” Babylon — according to legend, in the city called Babylon there was a well in which two angels who descended from the sky to commit sinful deeds rested; this well was also considered a source of magic. Here, the work of Khusraw Dehlavi is compared to the great road of Babylon, and the hollow of the pen is likened to this well.¹³

Babylon (Babylonia) — an ancient state that existed in the southern part of Mesopotamia from the beginning of the 2nd millennium BCE until 538 BCE. Its central city was named Babylon. In the 3rd millennium BCE, city-states emerged in Mesopotamia. Before the city of Babylon was established, the lands between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers were occupied by the states of Sumer and Akkad. At the end of the 21st century BCE, one of the nomadic Semitic tribes, the Amorites, captured a large part of Akkad, established a powerful state, and made the city of Babylon its center.

Gah Yasrib uza bu barq inib tez,
Zulmatqa ashi'asi ziyorez.
Sometimes the lightning strikes swiftly from Yasrib,
Its light brings brightness into the darkness.

¹³ Alisher Navoi. Layli and Majnun. Tashkent: Publishing and Printing Creative House named after Gafur Ghulam, 2020. – B304.



This couplet is taken from the 9th chapter of the work. The word Yasrib is a toponym, referring to the city of Madinah. Madinah is considered the “cradle of Islamic culture and civilization.” In Islamic tradition, the city is the second holiest of the three main sacred cities, serving as the third holiest city after Mecca and Jerusalem.

Al-Masjid an-Nabawi (literally, “the Prophet’s Mosque”) holds special significance in Islam, as it is the burial place of the Prophet Muhammad. The mosque was built in 622 CE (the first year of the Hijra). Muslims usually visit his tomb or shrine at least once in their lifetime during a pilgrimage called Ziyarat, although this is not obligatory.

Before the emergence of Islam, the city’s original name was Yasrib (Arabic: يَثْرِب), which is mentioned in the 33rd chapter of the Qur’an. Later, it was renamed Madinat an-Nabi. After the death of Muhammad, it became known as al-Madinah al-Munawwarah (literally, “the Enlightened City”) and its modern name is Madinah (literally, “the City”). On Saudi road signs, Madinah and al-Madina al-Munawwara are used interchangeably.

Har lahza ayon bo'lub Yamandin,

Tashlar edi otashin kamandin.

Every moment becomes evident from Yemen,

The stones were like fiery arrows.

This couplet is also taken from the 9th chapter of the work. The word Yemen is a toponym. Yemen, or the Republic of Yemen, is currently the name of a country located in the southern part of the Arabian Peninsula.

Ey vodiya Ayman ichra qo'ychi,

Itmen sanga o'z qoshingda qo'y-chi!

O valley of Ayman, put it inside,

I am a dog before you, place me before you!

This couplet is taken from the 29th chapter of the work. The Ayman Valley is a toponym. It is a valley located in Arabia and is considered a place name.

Najd etagidin chiqib bulog'i-

Kim, toza bo'lub bu nav' bog'i.

Emerging from the foothills of Najd is the spring—

Since one drinks, they become pure in this fresh garden.

This couplet is included in the 12th chapter of the work. The word Najd is a toponym. Najd is a region in Saudi Arabia. In the mid-5th–6th centuries, it was under the control of the Kinda tribe of the Arabs. From the 7th to 9th centuries, it was part of the Arab Caliphate and later belonged to the states existing on the Arabian Peninsula. In the 18th century, it became the center of the Wahhabi movement, and they established the Emirate of Najd there. After the First World War, the Emirate of Najd led the unification of



Northern and Central Arabia, resulting in the formation of the Kingdom of Hijaz, Najd, and the united provinces, which became Saudi Arabia in 1932.

Kim, Rum aro chekib manori,
Boqturdi ani Farang sori.

Since one passed through Rum,
He shone his light toward him to the west (French).

This couplet is taken from the 36th chapter of the work, and the words Rum and Farang are toponyms. Rum—in ancient times in some Eastern countries, it referred to Rome, and later became the widespread name of the Roman Empire. After the division of the Roman Empire, the name Rum was used only in reference to Byzantium. During the period when the Seljuks of Anatolia conquered the region, it was called Rum. After the Ottoman Turks captured Byzantium, the province in the Balkan Peninsula began to be known by this name.

France or Farangistan—its official name is the French Republic—a country in Western Europe. To the west and north, it is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean and the English Channel, and to the south by the Mediterranean Sea.

In addition, the work also uses toponymic units such as Mecca, Sham, the Arabian Desert, the Arab and Ajam states, and the Garden of Eram.

Now, let us turn to the discussion of hydronyms in the work.

Oy bordi-yu keldi mehri raxshon,
Dur bordi-yu keldi bahri Ummon.

The moon appeared, and its radiant light came,
The pearl appeared, and the sea of Oman arrived.

This couplet is included in the 4th chapter of the work. The Sea of Oman is a hydronym. The literal meaning of the word bahr is “river.” The Gulf of Oman is a gulf in the Arabian Sea, connected to the Persian Gulf through the Strait of Hormuz.

Ernim g‘ami ashkin etsa Jayhun,
Borurmi ekin ul ashki maygun?

If my lips are troubled by love’s sorrow in the Jayhun,
Will that love-bearing wine reach the crop?

This couplet is included in the 19th chapter of the work. The word Jayhun is a hydronym. Jayhun is one of the ancient names of the present-day Amu Darya. It originates from the ancient Turkic words Joy and Xun, meaning “the place where the Xuns lived.” The name was widely used during the periods of the Hephthalite (White Hun) state and the Turkic Khaganate.

In conclusion, toponyms refer to proper place names, while hydronyms refer to the names of water bodies. In Layli and Majnun, these hold special significance. Toponyms

such as Madinah, Babylon, Yemen, Kashmir, and India, along with hydronyms like Jayhun and the Sea of Oman, help to further reveal the essence of that era and give a unique meaning in reflecting reality.

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