



Article

Analysis of Genres, Themes, and Imagery in Turkic Poetry of the Late 14th and First Half of the 15th Centuries

Ibragimova Shaxnoza*¹

1. Graduate Student (Master's Candidate), Samarkand State University, Uzbekistan
* Correspondence: ibragimovashaxnoza287@gmail.com

Abstract: This article contains detailed information on the changes of poetic kinds, thematic diversity and level of architectonics of images in the Turkic poetry of late 14th-the first half of the 15th centuries. With the help of a number of concrete historical materials and literary citations, it discusses the dynamic development process of these traditional genres and explains their creative functions in the Mongolian literary life at that time. Particular focus is placed on the transfer of Turkish literature to a new qualitative stage of development, when traditional literature forms (Persian-Arabic literature) interacted with indigenous Turkic creative principles. The study concludes that these poetic developments were a precursor to the Khorezmiy "Golden Age" of Turkish literature, in particular Husayn's contemporary Alisher Navoiy works.

Keywords: Tajnis, Tuyuq, Noma (Epistolary Genre), Tazkirachilik (Hagiographic/Biographical Tradition), Tarkibband (Composite Stanzaic Poem), Qasida (Ode/Panegyric), Poetic Debate/Disputation, Doston (Epic Poem), Fard (Single Couplet), Voqeaband G'Azal (Narrative-Based Ghazal), Metaphorical Love

1. Introduction

It is well known that the 14th and 15th centuries entered history as a period that left a profound and lasting legacy. It is no secret that this era bequeathed a rich cultural heritage to future generations. During this time, significant progress was achieved not only in literature but across various fields of science; specifically, disciplines such as history, literary studies, translation studies, literary criticism, geography, and astronomy flourished, leaving behind a wealth of knowledge. Undoubtedly, state policy played a pivotal role in this development. For instance, in the 14th century, the Golden Horde reached its peak in all aspects, and a unique literary environment was established within the court.

The literary milieu of the Golden Horde is particularly noteworthy for the emergence of a new genre in Uzbek literature the noma (epistolary poem). Furthermore, for the first time in the Uzbek language, major works regarding the history of the prophets were created, such as Rabghuzi's "Qissasi Rabghuzi" and Mahmud ibn Ali as-Sarayi's "Nahjul-Faradis". Special attention was also paid to the art of translation. These achievements were not incidental but were the result of the policies pursued by Genghis Khan and his successors. The intended goals were more than realized: Islam spread widely, and socio-economic ties with other nations were strengthened. Later, even after the decline of the Golden Horde, the emphasis on literature and science continued during the Mamluk

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period. Thus, the 14th and 15th centuries cultivated numerous unique works and talented individuals for the garden of our literature [1].

In this regard, the foreign scholar P. Chari notes:

"From the end of the 14th century until the first half of the 15th century, Chagatay literature achieved a new level of development, and many secular works began to appear. Some of the authors of these works include Sakkoki, Lutfi, Atoyi, Yusuf Amiri, Khorazmi, Ahmad Mirza, Gadayi, Yaqini, and others... These poets were famous figures who wrote in their mother tongue long before Navoi and made significant contributions to the progress of language and literature."

In their lyrics, these poets sang of the pure and sincere love between humans. They sharply criticized pessimistic and ascetic sheikhs and ascetics (zahid). They created images of the "garden of life" as opposed to "paradise," the "beloved" as opposed to the "hourii," and "wine" as opposed to the "Kavsar" (heavenly fountain). By transferring the attributes of religious-mythological figures like Khizr and the Messiah to the earthly beloved, they depicted her as more powerful than Khizr or the Messiah. Furthermore, they extensively utilized folklore, folk songs, proverbs, and popular idioms [2].

In addition to the advancements in literary studies during this period, significant achievements were also realized in translated literature. Furthermore, the groundwork was laid for the emergence of several new branches and genres within the literary landscape. Notably, literary criticism known as the "science of na'qada" which holds a prominent position in literature today, emerged during this specific era. Consequently, several works addressing the urgent issues of literature were successfully produced. The creation of the tuyug, considered a purely Turkic genre, was equally favored by poetry lovers.

Moreover, prolific creative work was carried out in various lyrical genres, including musaddas, musamman, mustazod, tarje'band, tarkiband, qasida, marsiya, ghazal, chiston, muammo, noma, munozara, doston, soqiynoma, lug'z, short stories, and fables. While the primary theme of the ghazal had previously been secular love and romance, its thematic scope now matured significantly to encompass socio-political issues, as well as interpretations of divine and metaphorical love [3].

2. Materials and Methods

This study uses a historical-comparative and structural-poetic method of analysis to examine the genres, themes and imagery in Turkic verse of the late 14th and early 15th centuries. Philological analysis, genre theory and observations on palimpsestic intertextuality are bound in a methodological approach to expose the inner artistic system of the texts as well as their historic-cultural function.

In the first place, a corpus-driven approach was adopted to select. Selected works of leading poets of the period - Sakkoki, Lutfi, Atoyi, Sayfi Sarayi, Khorezmi, Durbek, Amiri and others - were taken from reliable editions of diwans, nomas, tazkiras, epic poetry. The corpus consists of lyric (ghazal, tuyug, fard), narrative (doston), epistolary (noma), panegyric qasida) and dialogic genres (munozara). The selection was influenced by the existence of genre markers and the feasibility to trace thematic as well as Imagological change from a historically restricted period in time.

And second, the impact of Golden Horde and early Timurid cultural context on emergence of poetic creativity. Socio-political factors, Islamization trends, translation, as well as inter-cultural literary exchanges between the neo-Persian and neo-Arabic traditions were discussed to be the extrinsic factors favoring esthetic development. This made it possible to interpret poetic texts both as aesthetic phenomena and records of intellectual-ideological change.

A third level of investigation was structural-semantic. For every poem the following parameters were analysed: – Genre structure (metrical form, rhyme pattern,

compositional architecture) – Thematic layer (love as an occasional motive; social criticism; ethical-didactic ideas; mystical symbolism) – Imagery system (metaphors; symbols and Sufi motives along with folkloric masques).

Specific emphasis was placed on how conventional images as wine, beloved, garden, ascetic and master worked; also their translating peculiarities from a religious-symbolic to a humanistal-earthly means.

Four, a comparative-typological approach was taken to trace both continuity and change. The Turkic texts were contrasted with Persian-Tajik poetic patterns, which enabled the author to single out adaptational schemes and the development of original Turkic poetic laws. Attention was focused on genre evolution (e.g., the formation of *tuyug* and *noma*), and on the interplay between borrowed literary conventions and native linguistic expression.

Intertextual approach, in the end, shed light on borrowing: poems/nazira/tazmin; translation practices and poetical debates. This then allowed us to establish the position of the period as the transitional phase before the proper flourishing of Chagatai literature was revealed in Navoiy's literary heritage.

In this way, the historical structural comparative nature of the methods made possible a systemic study of that poetic system and an analysis of traditional continuity versus innovative development within the Turkic literary culture.

3. Results and Discussion

When examining the poetry of the 14th and 15th centuries, the dominance of the ghazal genre is evident in the artistry of numerous creators. While the primary theme of the ghazal had been love until this point, its thematic range expanded to include the problems of social life. Narrative-based (*voqeaband*) ghazals also began to gradually enter literature during this period; such ghazals first appeared in Khorazmi's "Muhabbatnoma" and later reached a state of perfection in Lutfi's poetic works. Among creators whose creative heritage largely consists of ghazals, Sayfi Sarayi primarily focused on the theme of love; however, while describing the cruelty of the beloved, he also expresses grievances. Perhaps these were not merely the complaints of a lover, but the sufferings and sorrows of the entire people. We can clearly see this in the following lines:

*Odati budur hamisha bu bevafo ma'shuqaning
Kim aning vaslin tilasa, ul firoqinda tutar,
Bu falak javri bekin Sayfi Saroyi bag'rini,
Ul yuzi oy hajr o'tining ixtiroqinda tutar*

It is well known that the era in which creators live inevitably influences their work. According to certain sources, poverty and oppression intensified in Khwarazm during the lifetime of Sayfi Sarayi. The reason for this was the fierce struggle for the throne and the increasing chaos among the sons of Uzbeg Khan. In such a situation, Sayfi Sarayi was forced to leave his homeland.

Atoyi occupies a unique place in the ghazal poetry of classical Uzbek literature as well. In the Poetry of Atoyi, Romanticism is very strong; both human love and metaphoric Love are sung there with equal intensity. The poet often married his ghazals' poetic images and metaphors (such as the garden, wine, and music) with religious-Sufi ideas. There are many instances where he praises divine love. He has rendered a direct exultation of true spiritual love through Sufistic symbols such as wine (*may*), goblet (*qadah*); tavern (*mayxona*); monk's belt (*zunnor*) and idol (*sanam*). He believes that the way of a human is love and devotion; sees himself, as a lover on the path to Allah and calls himself therefore Sufi or Sheikh [4].

*To podshoh bo'lgali sen husn Misrida,
Afsona bo'ldi Yusufi Kan'on hikoyati.*

*So'fi Atoyi holatini o'tkanur, vale,
Ishq ishidur kishiga azaldin hidoyati.*

As we have previously mentioned, the emergence of the tuyug genre during this period provided the impetus for a unique style in poetry. Built upon the foundation of the art of tajnis (homonymy), this genre served to enhance the artistic pleasure of readers through its playfulness and rhythmic diversity. In a tuyug, the lines follow an a-a-b-a rhyme scheme and are composed in a strict meter specifically, the *ramali musaddasi maqsur* weight. According to the literary scholar N. Mallayev, the earliest examples of the tuyug in Turkic literature are found in the diwan of the 14th-century poet Burhoniddin Sivosiy. Subsequently, during the period of Uzbek literature leading up to Navoi, this genre held a significant place in the lyrics of Lutfi. The presence of 16 *tuyugs* in Lutfi's *diwan* alone serves as proof of this assertion.

Translated literature also helped to increase literary relations, and much work was done in this area. Qutb Khorazmi's rendering into Turkish of Nizami Ganjavi's epic "Khusraw and Shirin" as well as Sayfi Sarayi's translation of Saadi Shirazi's "Gulistan" (compiled as a collection of verses under the name "Gulistan bit-Turki") were, by all accounts unprecedented in the history of free translations. Besides, Masud ibn Ahmad made a Turkish version of the "Bustan" of Saadi and Lutfi translated the "Zafarnama" of Sharafuddin Ali Yazdi into Turkic [5].

The "*Khusraw and Shirin*" is an example of a free translation. Not free translations, but quite the contrary were Qutb's epics. The names of people are the same as those in the original story written by Nizami, Qutb has added to or deleted some traditional descriptions while others he created anew. Qutb wrote in the middle of the 14th c., at a time when the Golden Horde held sway. It was dedicated to Tinibek, a sovereign of the Golden Horde, and his consort.

In the epic "Khusraw and Shirin," Qutb also expresses views formed from his observations of his own era. He altered the characters' personalities from Nizami's original and infused the epic with elements of folklore and traditional customs. Simultaneously, Qutb's work contains passages that were shortened or removed from the original text, as well as modified geographical names. The lyrical digressions at the end of the chapters testify to Qutb's ability to create refined ghazals.

Khorazmi laid the foundation for the *noma* (epistolary) genre in Turkic literature with his work "*Muhabbatnoma*". Several other "nomas" were created as responses to this work, notably Khojandi's "*Latofatnoma*", Said Ahmad's "*Taashshuqnoma*", and Amiri's "*Dahnoma*". In these works, the "noma" is the leading genre, consisting of poetic letters addressed by a lover to his beloved. The achievements of Uzbek poets in the field of "nomachilik" (the art of writing nomas) influenced the Azerbaijani poet Khatai to write his own "*Dahnoma*". Similarly, the poetic debates (*munozara*) of Amiri, Yaqini, Ahmadi, and others inspired Fuzuli to write several works in that genre. Poets from different nations wrote responses (*nazira*) to each other's works, composed quintets (*taxmis*) based on each other's ghazals, and integrated verses from one another's poetry (*tazmin*). While poets like Maulana Lutfi and Alisher Navoiy composed works in the Persian-Tajik language, the Tajik poet Binayi wrote works in the Uzbek language [6].

Account of Khorazmi and his masterpiece "Muhabbatnoma" Po'latjon Qayumov writes in his work "Tazkirayi Qayumi":

He is named Oozim Khorazmi, and known by his extensive work of Valentine," a great classic monument of the 14th century. His very name, not to mention his life story, is lost to us still. But the book is still a worthy one. It was composed in the time of the Golden Horde (d. 1502). Khwarazmi Uzbek by nationality Active in the Golden Horde [7].

"Muhabbatnoma" has been researched by Uzbek, Russian, Tatar, and Turkmen scientists too. For further details on this matter see the book *History of Tatar Literature*.

Khorazmi is capable to make not only in Uzbek, but also in Persian, what can be seen by adopting it such genres as masnavi, ghazal, qit'a and fard into "Muhabbatnoma". Another key to his being a Sufi poet can be found in the symbolism he uses, e.g., wine (may), cupbearer (soqiy), Huma bird (Xumo), tavern (Xarobot) and the wandering dervish.

There are distinct differences among the nomas (epistolary poems) written in subsequent periods. For instance, in Khojandi's "*Latofatnoma*," a *ghazal* does not follow every single *noma* (letter), and genres such as the *fard*, *qit'a*, and *munojot* (supplications) are absent. Khojandi explicitly states that he composed this work as a response (*javob*) to "*Muhabbatnoma*":

*Muhabbat Jomidin Ichsang Sharobe,
"Muhabbatnoma'ga aytsang javobe.*

Amiri's "*Dahnoma*" also exhibits a unique structure not found in other *nomas*. Specifically, in "*Dahnoma*," each letter from the lover and the beloved is followed first by a *ghazal* and then by a *fard*; furthermore, the beloved's reply is presented immediately after the lover's letter. This method allows each "noma" (letter) to be viewed as an independent work [8].

The 15th century marked a distinct stage in the development of biographical literature (*tazkirachilik*). During this period, the first Turkic *tazkira*, titled "*Funun ul-balog'a*" ("Sciences of Eloquence"), was produced by Sheikh Ahmad ibn Khudaydad Tarazi (dated 840 AH / 1436-1437 AD). Earlier literary scholars, when writing on literary theory, often focused only on types of poetry, meter, artistic devices, or the characteristics of a single poetic genre. Sheikh Ahmad, however, aimed to create a comprehensive manual, intending to explain and analyze all theoretical issues in his treatise so that readers could gain as much theoretical knowledge and benefit as possible [9].

The *munozara* (poetic debate) is another genre that rose to a new level during this period. In a *Munozara*, various objects, phenomena, states, or concepts enter into mutual conflict. Characters often appear in a symbolic sense to conduct their debate. This genre developed extensively in written classical Uzbek literature from the late 14th century and the first half of the 15th century. The influence of Persian-Tajik debates is evident in the *munozaras* written during this time. In classical Uzbek literature, the *munozara* was established as a specific genre in the first half of the 15th century. Its formation was influenced, on the one hand, by elements of debate that reached Turkic literature through myths and traditions, and, on the other, by the Persian-Tajik *munozara* tradition. Yusuf Amiri's "*Chog'ir va Bang*" (Wine and Bang), Ahmadi's "*Debate of the Musical Instruments*," and Yaqini's "*The Bow and the Arrow*" are vivid examples of the *munozara* in classical Uzbek literature [10].

Ahmadi's work, "*Debate and Discussion Between Musical Instruments*," narrates the arguments among musical instruments. The disputes between the Tambura, Oud, Chang, Qobuz, and Kungura are depicted throughout the debate. The Tambura begins the argument, claiming its voice is pleasant and comforting. Simultaneously, it accuses the Oud of being a "fat-bellied master" and the Chang of being "shallow-minded, ignorant, and unable to understand speech."

*Bo'lmadi hargiz fuqaro hamdame,
Tamburatek nokasu noodami.
Boshdin-oyoq qomati talbis erur,
Balki o'zi modari iblis erur.*

It is evident from the aforementioned details that in Ahmadi's debate (*munozara*), various types of people encountered in life and their character traits are depicted in an allegorical form, while behaviors such as arrogance, vanity, and selfishness are condemned.

The epics (*dostons*) written in this period were also characterized by the variety of themes. In particular, *Suhayl* and *Guldursun* by Sayfi Sarayi, *Yusuf* and *Zulaykho* by Durbek, and *Makhzanul-Asror* of Haydar Khorazmi occupy definite places in the Uzbek heroic poem. The masterpiece "*Yusuf and Zulaikha*", written by Durbek on the base of surah "Joseph" from the Quran, was one of progressive artistic works in his epoch and received positive feedback from general readership [11].

Yusuf and Zulaikha is the poet's epic work composed at amore amandi, which as will be clear anon, also provided an artistic mirror for the ethical-educational and socio-political ideas of the poet. includes some of his views on the just king and important comments about the worldliness of Islamic power.

Furthermore, the epic "*Gulshanul-Asror*," written by another creator of that period Haydar Khorazmi is a work of great importance. This epic by Khorazmi stands very close to Nizami Ganjavi's *Masnavi* titled "*Makhzanul-Asror*". During that era, the tradition of writing responses (*javob*) to certain epics within Ganjavi's "*Khamsa*" was being established, and Haydar Khorazmi contributed significantly to the prosperity of this tradition. Both works possess a philosophical-educational essence and are written in the *sari* meter of *aruz*. Khorazmi's epic is distinguished from Ganjavi's *Masnavi* by its smaller volume, its structure of presenting a story (*hikoyat*) followed by an analytical discourse (*maqolat*) that summarizes the conclusions, and the novelty of some of the discourses and stories contained within it [12].

In the discourses (*maqolat*) of the epic, the poet expresses specific socio-political and ethical-educational views through concise, highly meaningful verses. He clarifies and reinforces the ideas put forward in these discourses through the accompanying stories (*hikoyat*). In these sections, the poet presents significant reflections on justice, governance, the treatment of the people, grievances against tyrannical kings, the importance and benefit of labor, performing kindness for others, remaining undeterred by hardships, the harmful nature of jealousy and envy, the benefits of generosity, and the negative consequences of stinginess.

The initial established examples of the *qasida* (ode) in classical Uzbek literature emerged during the 14th and 15th centuries. This genre is characterized by the ceremonial depiction of famous historical figures and significant events. Nearly all creators active in the 15th century produced works in the *qasida* genre. Among them, the most prominent representatives are Sakkoki, Maulana Lutfi, Hafiz Khorazmi, Sheikh Ahmad Tarazi, Haydar Khorazmi, and Gadai.

Sakkoki is one of the founders of the Uzbek *qasida* tradition. Although the core of his creative work consists of *ghazals*, he also produced a prolific body of work in the *qasida* genre. A total of ten odes are included in his *diwan*, which are closely aligned with the panegyric odes dedicated to kings that were widespread during the Middle Ages. Within the poet's *diwan*:

- One ode is dedicated to Khoja Muhammad Parsa.
- One ode is dedicated to Khalil Sultan.
- Four odes are dedicated to Mirza Ulugbek.
- The final four odes are dedicated to Arslonkhoja Tarkhan.

Sakkoki's odes are not composed solely of exaggerations and praise; the creator's primary goal was to illuminate historical truth, which he successfully achieved [13]. This is evident in the odes he wrote for Mirza Ulugbek. While it cannot be said that the odes are entirely free of hyperbolic descriptions, the instances where he excessively magnifies

Ulugbek reflect the poet's boundless respect and love for him. Sakkoki includes the following verses in his ode "In Praise of Ulugbek":

*Jahondin ketti tashvishu mabodiyi amon keldi,
Xaloyiq aysh eting bu kun, sururi qovidan keldi.
Tan erdi bu ulus barcha aningtek joni boro yo'q,
Bihamdillah, o'g'on fazli bila ul tanga jon keldi.*

As is well known, the tarkibband (from the Arabic tarkib, meaning structure, and the Persian band, meaning to tie/bind) genre began to be written in Persian-Tajik literature from the 10th 11th centuries and in Uzbek literature from the 15th century. This genre is considered relatively complex; it is written in a single meter with stanzas rhymed in the style of a *ghazal* (without including a pen name or *takhallus*), where each stanza contains an equal number of couplets, and a separate, uniquely rhymed couplet follows the end of each stanza. Notably, the famous tarkibband "*Tokim ko'rindi*" by Hafiz Khorazmi, written in the 15th century, holds a special status as one of the earliest examples of this genre in Uzbek literature [14].

Another genre that took shape during the 14th -15th centuries (referred to in some sources as a poetic art) is the ta'rix (chronogram). At first glance, this genre resembles the *muammo* (logogram/riddle). The difference between them is as follows: while a specific word is hidden within a *muammo*, a number or a date is concealed within a ta'rix [15]. In the introduction to the epic "*Yusuf and Zulaikha*" written by Durbek during this period, the date of the work's composition was provided using Arabic letters; the numerical value of these letters corresponds to the year 1409.

*"Zot" edi ta'rix taqi "he" yu "dol",
Muddatin xijratidin o'tub mohu sol*

4. Conclusion

Hence, a lot of the work created during this period was also focused on the sins and weaknesses of the age. Within the internal couplets of genres such as the *ghazal*, dissatisfaction with the times was expressed, while ideas of justice and fairness for the sovereign, as well as themes of generosity, courage, fidelity, and loyalty, were put forward. In large-scale works like the *munozara* (poetic debate) and *doston* (epic), the arrogance and moral corruption of officials and the nobility were criticized. Literature increasingly drew closer to the people, acquiring a populist significance. The prominent figures who emerged during this period played a vital role in the growth of the literary language and the development of various types and genres of literature.

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