

KHOREZM AND ITS CLASSICAL TURKISH POETS: RESEARCH TRENDS AND METHODOLOGIES

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Annotation. The works of many talented poets, historians, and translators who created immortal masterpieces in the Turkish language, such as Sulayman Boqirgoniy (12th century), Rabghuzi (early 13th-14th century), Khafiz Khorezmi (14th century), Qutb Khorezmi (14th century), Haydar Khorezmi (late 14th-early 15th century), Abulghazi Bahodirkhan (1603-1664), Andalib (1710-1770), Munis (1778-1829), Ogahi (1809-1874), Kamil Khorezmi (1825-1899), Muhammadrasul Mirzo (1840-1922), Muhammad Rahimkhon Feruz (1844-1910), Ahmad Tabibiy (1869-1911), Mutrib Khonakharobi (1870-1925), Avaz Utar (1884-1919), and Muhammad Yusuf Bayoni (1840-1923), has been of interest and studied since their time. In this context, we find it necessary to briefly express the scientific foundations for researching the creative activities of some Khorezmian Turkish poets and their poetic masterpieces.

Key words: lyric, epic, literature, poem, genre, manuscript, Uzbek, education, Turkic, Persian.

Saifi Saroyi (1321-1396), a lyric and epic poet as well as a translator of 14th-century Uzbek literature, received his initial education in his homeland, and later in the city of Saray, which was the center of the Golden Horde. He continued his work in Iran and Turkey and passed away in Egypt. Saifi Saroyi's creative legacy includes lyric poems, the epic Suhail and Guldursun, and a translation of Sheikh Saadi's Gulistan. In the poetry of Saifi Saroyi, love and loyalty are exalted, the beauty of the beloved and spiritual purity are honored. The epic Suhail and Guldursun is a notable work of 14th-century epic poetry. In this epic, the love and loyalty, courage and bravery between the main characters, Guldursun and Suhail, are expressed. One of Saifi Saroyi's great contributions is his translation of the Persian-Tajik poet Saadi's Gulistan into Turkish, under the title Gulistani Bit-Turkī. This work holds significant importance in world didactic literature. An excellent example of artistic prose in Uzbek classical literature is reflected in the work Qissai Rabguzī by the Khorazmian writer Rabguzī (late 13th century and early 14th century). This work consists of 72 short and long fascinating stories, tales, and poetic gems based on the content of the Qur'an and



hadiths. It is also the first known instance of Turkic ghazals. Qissai Rabguzī is a high example of both religious and secular artistic thought and is valued worldwide as a bright symbol of humanism. Rabguzī's works are also of great importance in the study of 14th-century Uzbek literary language, including the Khwarazmian dialect.

Khorazmi (14th century) is one of the first bilingual (two-language) poets of Uzbek classical literature. In his work Muhabbatnama (The Book of Love), he created remarkable examples of both Turkic and Persian poetry. The main information about Khorazmi's life and activity is presented in his own work. Muhabbatnama was written between 1353 and 1354 and consists of 317 verses in Turkic and 156 verses in Persian-Tajik. The work includes various poetic genres such as elegy, masnavi, ghazal, qita, and madhiya (praise poetry).

Muhabbatnama is an extremely high-quality work, a reflection of human emotions and a call to live with noble feelings and high spirituality. While depicting the feelings of love and longing, the poet effectively employs artistic imagery, creating timeless and vivid images. One of the first representatives of Uzbek translation literature, Qutb Khorazmi (14th century), has left no detailed information about his life and activities. Scholars know that he had a good relationship with the ruler of the Golden Horde, Tanibek, and received support from him. The only work of the poet that has come down to us is the epic Khosrow and Shirin, which was actually written as a dedication to this ruler. The epic Khosrow and Shirin is considered a free translation of Nizami Ganjavi's work and is the first masterful example of the "Khamsa" tradition. Through his translation of the work, Qutb aimed not only to bring this great masterpiece to his people but also to address the events of his time and contemporary life issues. Therefore, while the essence of the original work is preserved, certain changes and innovations have been introduced, making it a rare and valuable moral gem. In particular, the work includes references to the life of the Golden Horde, such as hunting, feasts, weddings, and other everyday scenes. Qutb omitted some sections from the original text, such as those related to Kalīla and Dimna, Khosrow and Shirin, and the advice given by Prophet Muhammad to his son. Instead, he incorporated new themes, praising the rulers Tanibek and Malikani, thus taking a creative approach to the translation. Qutb's creative activity is of great significance, as it paved the way for later translations and made a substantial contribution to the literary relations between Uzbek and Azerbaijani literature.



One of the prominent figures in Uzbek classical literature, whose work was acknowledged by Alisher Navoi, is Haidar Khorazmi (late 14th century – early 15th century). His creative activity is discussed in Navoi's *Majolis al-Nafa'is*, *Muhokamat al-Lughatayn*, and in the *Tazkirat al-Shu'ara* by Davlatshah Samarqandi. Haidar Khorazmi's epic *Mahzan al-Asrar* has come down to us, and it is dedicated to the Timurid ruler Sultan Iskandar. This work was inspired by the same-named epic by the Azerbaijani poet Nizami. In this work, Haidar Khorazmi emerges as a progressive individual and a talented poet, expressing his aesthetic and educational views with high artistic quality. The work remains particularly relevant today, as it promotes the idea of the ideal human and calls for people to strive for goodness, faith, and honesty. Recent studies have proven that the author of the epic *Gul va Navruz*, previously attributed to Lutfi, is actually Haidar Khorazmi. This work, too, holds significant importance in the history of literature due to its plot and artistic brilliance.

Hafiz Khorazmi (late 14th century – early 15th century) is another great poet of Uzbek classical literature who lived and worked in Khorazm. The role of literary scholar H. Sulaymonov in making the poet's works known to science is pivotal, as it was through his efforts that the poet's works were published in 1981. Hafiz Khorazmi, before Navoi, was the poet who wrote the most ghazals in Uzbek literature and pioneered the *muštahzod* genre. The poems in his *divan* are diverse in subject matter and are considered a high example of artistic skill in terms of content and the expression of social-philosophical ideas. One of the talented poets from Khorezm in Uzbek literature is Majlisi (late 15th – 16th century). He spent most of his life in Bukhara, serving at the court of Ubaydullah Khan and his son Abdulaziz Khan. The only surviving work of the writer is the romantic-adventurous epic “**Qissai Sayfulmulk**”. The plot of this work creatively draws from traditional oral folk narratives, the Persian prose version of “*Qissai Sayfulmulk*,” the poem “*Gul va Navruz*,” and the collection “*One Thousand and One Nights*.”

One of the prominent figures of Uzbek literature in the 15th–16th centuries was **Muhammad Salih** (1455–1535), who left a distinctive mark in the history of literature as both a lyrical and epic poet. He lived and worked during the period of conflict between the Timurid and Shaybanid dynasties in Central Asia. His father, the ruler of Khorezm, Amir Nursa'id, was executed by Sultan Husayn Bayqara. After this, Muhammad Salih aligned himself with Shaybani Khan and participated in his military campaigns. According to historical sources, the poet also served as governor in the cities of Bukhara, Charjuy (present-day



Turkmenabat), and Niso. From Muhammad Salih, we have inherited a multifaceted work titled **“Shayboniynoma.”** This epic is recognized as the **first historical poem** in Uzbek literature and is dedicated to Shaybani Khan. The poem consists of **76 chapters** and **8,902 lines**. It is valued for its detailed depiction of historical events and authentic portrayal of life during the wars between the Timurids and the Shaybanids. Moreover, the poem emphasizes the **ideal of a just ruler**, a concept that remains relevant even today. One of the notable, though not yet thoroughly studied, figures of 17th-century classical Uzbek literature is **Mawlana Vafo Vafoyi**. Most information about his life and work comes from the book “Firdavs ul-Iqbol” by Munis and Ogahiy. Vafoyi was not only a talented poet but also a skilled artist (naqqosh). Known for his quick wit, he composed poems that exposed corrupt officials of his time. In his poetry, along with traditional themes like **love and loyalty, spirituality, and humanism**, he also addressed **social injustice**, making his work both artistically rich and socially conscious.

Nurmuhammad Gharib Andalib (1710–1770) was another talented poet from Khorezm who studied in the madrasas of Khiva and Bukhara. He wrote in **Turkmen, Uzbek, and Persian**, and as a progressive intellectual of his time, he composed both **lyrical and epic** works. Over **40 of his ghazals** are still sung among the Uzbek and Turkmen peoples today.

Andalib made a significant contribution to the development of **Uzbek classical epic poetry**. His works such as “Yusuf and Zulaykho,” “Layli and Majnun,” and “Gharib and Shokhsanam” are distinguished by their high artistic quality and became widely popular as **“folk books.”** **Muhammadniyoz Nishotiy** (18th century) was a lyrical and epic poet born in Khorezm who spent most of his life in Bukhara. His surviving works include the epic “Husni Dil” and the divan “Ghazaliyot va Muammosoti Nishotiy.” He also composed several **mukhammases** (five-line stanzas) in response to the works of **Navoi and Fuzuli**. Nishotiy's most acclaimed work is “Husni Dil,” in which he demonstrates his mastery of the **debate genre**, earning him recognition as a skilled literary artist. The literary environment of Khorezm in the 18th–19th centuries was renowned for its talented poets, historians, and translators such as Umar Boqiy, Roqim (1742–1825), Pahlavonquli Ravnaq (1725–1805), Munis (1778–1829), Ogahiy (1809–1874), and Komil Khorezmi (1825–1899). These figures significantly enriched Uzbek literature with their poetic and scholarly contributions.



The early 20th century marked a flourishing period for classical Khorezm poetry, often referred to as the "Feruz era" of literary revival. Muhammad Rahimkhan Feruz (1844–1910), a ruler remembered as an enlightened and culturally supportive leader, played a pivotal role in this renaissance. During his 47-year reign, the literary atmosphere in Khorezm thrived: manuscript production increased, writers received generous patronage, and many talented authors gathered at the royal court. Under Feruz's initiative and guidance, several important poetry collections were compiled, including:

- Bayoz-i Musaddasot (Collection of Six-Line Poems),
- Bayoz-i Mukhammasot (Collection of Five-Line Stanza Poems),
- Bayoz-i Majmuai Ash'or (General Collection of Poems),

These anthologies included works by both well-known and lesser-known poets, preserving a rich spectrum of literary voices. The Russian scholar A. Samoylovich, in one of his articles, documented the literary activities of poets who worked at the Feruz court, further highlighting the cultural vibrancy of this period. Most poets of Khorezm were deeply inspired by the works of **Alisher Navoi**. As noted by literary scholar **S. Matkarimova**, who is specifically studying this subject, poets such as **Nishotiy, Munis, Ogahiy, Komil, and Niyoziy** were considered true followers of Navoi. While expressing deep respect for their mentor, each of them maintained **their own voice, unique creative style, and poetic mastery**, and they consistently continued Navoi's literary traditions.

They drew richly from the **artistic treasures** of Navoi's legacy and created a significant body of work that glorified the **true essence of humanity**—praising pure emotions, aspirations, inner beauty, grace, and moral excellence. Their poetry reflected a desire to protect human dignity from the turmoil of fate and the instability of the times. Through their verses, they explored themes like **spiritual perfection, societal harmony, national happiness, and the future of the homeland**.

Approaching Navoi's traditions **creatively**, they absorbed his profound poetic insight, **philosophical depth**, and **engagement with pressing social issues**. They carried forward these traditions, adapting them to their own **historical realities and cultural environment**, and produced works that were beloved by the people and respected by fellow poets. Their contribution helped preserve and evolve the classical heritage of Uzbek literature, making it resonate with both their contemporaries and future generations.

In general, the works of classical Turkic-speaking poets of Khorezm can be categorized into three main groups:





1. Poetic works – lyrical and epic poems that showcase the artistic depth, emotional subtlety, and philosophical insights of the authors.
2. Historical-literary works – narrative compositions that combine historical facts with literary artistry, often reflecting the political, social, and cultural life of their times.
3. Translated works – literary translations from Persian, Arabic, and other languages that demonstrate the poets' linguistic mastery and their efforts to make world literature accessible to Turkic-speaking readers.

Each of these categories reflects the high level and broad scope of classical Khorezm writers' creativity. Studying the works within each category requires separate scholarly research, as each genre carries its own unique style, structure, and cultural significance. The scientific foundations for studying the creative legacy of the above-mentioned and other Khorezm classical authors are based on the following:

- A deep understanding of historical, cultural, and linguistic context;
- Comparative analysis with other classical Eastern literatures, particularly Persian, Arabic, and Chagatai traditions;
- Consideration of the influence of Alisher Navoi and how Khorezm poets developed and reinterpreted his legacy;
- Use of manuscript sources, anthologies, and bayoz (collections) compiled in the Khiva court and literary circles;
- Application of interdisciplinary approaches, involving literature, history, philology, and cultural studies;
- Emphasis on preservation and digitization of rare manuscripts for broader academic access;
- Recognition of these works as a valuable part of the Turkic-Islamic literary heritage.

Together, these foundations provide a rich and promising framework for future research into the literary and cultural legacy of classical Khorezm literature.

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