

The Linguacultural Aspect Of Female Images In The Uzbek Lyric-Epic Tradition

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the linguocultural features of female images in the Uzbek lyric-epic tradition, with particular attention to the image of Shirin in Alisher Navoi's poem Farhad and Shirin. Shirin is analyzed in comparison with the works of Ferdowsi, Nizami Ganjavi, and Amir Khusrau Dihlavi, which makes it possible to trace the historical and literary evolution of the image, its mythological origins, and its moral-aesthetic semantics. Special attention is paid to the fact that, in Navoi's artistic system, Shirin functions not only as a participant in the love plot, but also as a bearer of cultural values: fidelity, spiritual purity, moral choice, and the ideal of perfect love.

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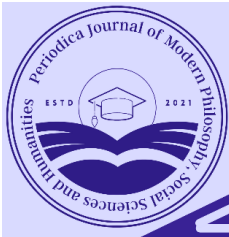
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Introduction. In Uzbek classical literature, a significant body of research has been devoted to the analysis of the images of Khosrow, Farhad, and Shirin in the works of Alisher Navoi. The legacy of the great poet has been studied by Czech, Azerbaijani, Russian, and Uzbek scholars, including H. Duda, G. Aliyev, E. Bertels, K. Trever, S. Erkinov, and other researchers.

Female images in epic and lyric-epic works perform not only a plot-forming function, but also a linguocultural one. Thus, the image of Shirin in the poem Farhad and Shirin is one of the significant symbols that played an important role in the development and enrichment of the literary ties among the peoples of the East. This image is represented in different versions of the Eastern Khamsa tradition: in Nizami Ganjavi's Khosrow and Shirin, Amir Khusrau Dihlavi's Shirin and Khusrau, and Alisher Navoi's Farhad and Shirin [4; 5; 6]. In Ferdowsi's Shahnameh, moreover, the story of Khosrow and Shirin is presented against the background of historical events of the Sasanian period [7].

Main Discussion. The image of Shirin in Alisher Navoi's Khamsa is depicted with particular poetic expressiveness and semantic depth. Before analyzing the artistic function of this image, it is necessary to consider the etymology of the name. As K. Trever noted (cited in S. Erkinov), the words Sura and Sira, which denote water in the Avestan tradition, are close to the word Shirin; on this basis, the scholar suggested a possible connection between the beautiful image of Shirin and the mythological image of Ardisura [2, p. 22].

According to G. Aliyev, the Persian word shirin is associated with the meanings "sweet" and "pleasant-tasting," as well as with the word shir, meaning "milk" [3, p. 128]. Studies of Eastern literature emphasize that Shirin may have had a historical prototype and probably lived in the sixth or seventh century. At the same time, information about her origin is not unambiguous: in some sources she is presented as a Christian woman associated with the Byzantine-Sasanian cultural sphere, whereas in others she appears as a heroine with Turkic or Iranian features [1; 10].



A number of studies on Eastern literature identify Shirin as a historical figure, although this question remains debatable. Trever's hypothesis is especially important in this regard, since it relates the name and image of Shirin to Avestan concepts connected with water. This interpretation makes it possible to view Shirin not only as a historical or literary heroine, but also as a figure rooted in more ancient mythological ideas.

The question of the genesis of Shirin's image is revealed particularly clearly in Nizami Ganjavi's poem. The poet creates a complex artistic picture of the heroine's origin: her image is associated with a nomadic way of life, with the traditions of the Turkic world, and with motifs of beauty, freedom, and dignity. This is reflected in the speech of Mehinbonu, who is proud of her affiliation with the Turkic people, as well as in Shirin's own utterances. In the chapter "Shirin's Answer to Khosrow," the heroine emphasizes spiritual independence and inner strength, which allows her to be perceived not only as a beloved woman, but also as the bearer of a particular cultural code.

A reading of the works of Ferdowsi, Nizami Ganjavi, Amir Khusrau Dihlavi, and Alisher Navoi shows that Shirin is depicted as a beautiful and morally perfect heroine who is worthy of genuine human love. For Shirin, wealth and royal lineage are not the decisive values; what matters to her are moral purity, nobility, and the spiritual elevation of the human being. For this reason, in Navoi's version she is connected above all with Farhad - a hardworking, strong, and noble hero who embodies the finest human qualities.

The finale of the poem is tragic: upon learning of Farhad's death, Shirin demonstrates fidelity to her love and leaves this world, thereby becoming a symbol of devotion and spiritual integrity. In this episode, the love plot acquires not only emotional, but also ethical and philosophical significance: love is understood as the highest form of moral choice.

Unlike his predecessors, Alisher Navoi reinterprets the traditional story of Khosrow, Shirin, and Farhad. The poet introduces new events and motifs that are absent from the poems of Nizami Ganjavi and Amir Khusrau Dihlavi. As N. D. Kholikova notes, Navoi was well acquainted with historical and legendary sources about Shirin; however, when creating his own work, he did not limit himself to their direct reproduction [1]. In *Tarikhi muluki Ajam*, Navoi uses traditional information, legends, and myths, whereas in *Farhad and Shirin* he creates a new ideological and aesthetic conception of the plot and its characters.

Navoi's image of Shirin differs substantially not only from mythological and legendary representations, but also from the traditional image established in the Eastern Khamsa tradition. She is not the bride or wife of Khosrow, but the beloved of Farhad - a man of labor who cuts through rock, creates a canal, and brings water to an arid valley. Many folk legends likewise connect Shirin's activity with water and with the opening of an irrigation system.

It should be noted that the image of Shirin in Alisher Navoi's poem differs from the images bearing the same name created by other poets and writers. She is not cruel or excessively demanding; on the contrary, Shirin is boundlessly devoted to her beloved and treats Farhad's labor with profound respect. In her messages to Farhad she writes: "May I be as close to you as the sun is by day" and "May I walk beside you like your shadow at night." The poet sacralizes the love of Farhad and Shirin, emphasizing that no flawless love comparable to theirs had ever existed.

Thus, Shirin in Navoi's work differs significantly not only from mythological and legendary images, but also from the traditional image fixed in the Eastern Khamsa. She is not represented as Khosrow's bride or wife, but as the beloved of Farhad - a figure of labor, strength, fidelity, and high morality. As a result, the female image acquires an active linguocultural function: it expresses the values of Uzbek classical literature and unites the motifs of love, labor, fidelity, and spiritual perfection.



Conclusion. The image of Shirin in the Uzbek lyric-epic context is not a static romantic character, but a complex cultural sign. It combines mythological notions of water and female beauty, historical information about a Christian queen, the traditions of the Persian-Turkic Khamsa, and Navoi's humanistic poetics. In Alisher Navoi's version, Shirin becomes the embodiment of moral purity, fidelity, conscious choice in love, and spiritual beauty. Consequently, the female image in the Uzbek lyric epic performs not only an artistic function, but also a value-based and cultural one.

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