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TURKIC-LANGUAGE LITERATURE IN IRAN: A CASE STUDY FROM THE 17TH CENTURY

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ABSTRACT

In this article, thoughts are expressed regarding the Turkish-speaking literary atmosphere in the 17th century in the world, particularly, in Iran, and brief information is given about some of the authors of the period.

KEYWORDS

Turkish language, poetry, Tabriz, Asri.

Introduction

After independence was achieved, many of our people's longstanding dreams were fulfilled, and our national identity began to be understood more profoundly. A vital resource in this journey has been the spiritual heritage created in the Turkic language by our ancestors over the centuries, which has provided invaluable insight. Through deeper study of these cultural treasures, we have gained a better understanding of our past and are now able to give a more comprehensive

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assessment of our ancestors' scientific and literary legacies. Significant efforts have been made, particularly to repatriate the works of Turkic creators who lived abroad or whose works remained in other countries. It is essential to remember that these efforts remain relevant to the present day. However, many Turkic creators whose lives and works are still unknown to us remain to be discovered. studied. and reintegrated into our cultural heritage, making this an urgent issue of today.

METHODS

In particular, the shared literary relations between the regions of Mawarannahr and Iran have not, in our opinion, been sufficiently researched. Based on these observations, this article presents some brief reflections on the Turkic literary environment in 17th-century Iran.

Literature transcends both time and place, and the true power of artistic expression lies in this characteristic. Since its inception, literature has always centered on the human experience, which remains one of the most captivating themes. Consequently, genuine artistic works capture the essence of human life, including emotions,

sentiments, desires, and experiences, which is particularly prominent in lyrical poetry.

It is evident that lyricism has been a dominant genre in the works of classical figures, as the poetic depiction of human emotions is more accessible in poetry. In lyric poetry, themes are diverse, ranging from love and mysticism to introspective and nature-inspired works, with one often emerging as the principal theme in a poet's body of work. This phenomenon is common among poets not only from our region but also for those who wrote in Turkic, even from far-off lands.

Despite the broad geographic reach of Turkic language and literature since ancient times, it has historically crossed state, regional, and even continental borders due to various political events, economic, and cultural exchanges, often integrating into new areas. Historically, the geographical span of the Turkic languages has included regions such as Central Asia, Altai, Kashgar, the Caucasus, Iran, Afghanistan, India, Siberia, and the southern Tien Shan. The ancestors of today's Turkic-speaking peoples used various scripts, including runic, ancient Uighur, Khorezmian, and Arabic scripts. Although the relationship between the Orkhon-Yenisei and

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ancient Uighur inscriptions remains a significant area of interest, it has not yet been fully resolved.

Literature Review

The Russian Turkologist I.G. Kondratvev studied the grammatical structure of both scripts, concluding that the Orkhon-Yenisei and ancient Uighur scripts represent the same language and were used over several centuries. It is also essential to emphasize that what we refer to as the ancient Uvghur script should not, by any means, be associated with the present-day Uyghur people. Likewise, discussing these inscriptions from the perspective of the ancient Uyghur or Old Uzbek scripts is completely erroneous. In fact, Mahmud al-Kashgari, the leading Turkic linguist of the 11th century, called this script "Turkic" and never once referred to it as the "Uyghur script" in his works [1: 17].

By the early 17th century, Iran under the Safavid dynasty had strengthened economically and politically. This progress accelerated further under the reign of Shah Abbas I. Although Persian remained the primary language of the country, the Turkic language held a significant position, and a considerable number of poets composed works in Turkic or were bilingual. In particular,

Tabriz—a city near Azerbaijan—became the cultural capital of the country. Scholars, poets, artists, and other cultural figures from various regions began moving to this city. During the Safavid period, including the 17th century, notable achievements were observed across various fields within the cultural life of the Turkic-Oghuz-Turkmen peoples, especially in literature and the arts. Collections such as Sadiq Bey Sadiqi Afshari's Majmu'a al-Havas, Valiquli Bey Shamlu's Qisas al-Khaqani, and Muhammad Tadhkirat Tahir Nasrabadi's al-Nasrabadi document poets from the latter half of the 16th century and the early 17th century, celebrating their contributions. In the prominent works of Turkic lyricism from this period, deep human emotions and expressions of love were celebrated, along with the courage to critique the injustices and inequalities faced in society.

Various scholars have studied specific issues in 17th-century Turkic lyricism and the lives and works of its significant figures. In his 1956 book 17th-18th Century Azerbaijani Literature. academician Hamid Arasli systematically analyzed the literature of the period for the first time. identifying its typical features in the development of poetry and its role in the general

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history of Turkic literature based on medieval manuscripts and biographical collections (tazkiras). He wrote portrait essays on poets such as Fedayi, Amani, Abbas Tufarqanli, Sari Ashiq, Masihi, Tarzi Afshar, Sa'ib Tabrizi, and Qawsi Tabrizi. After this book was published, the works of some representatives of Turkic poetry from this period were published and studied in their entirety. A. Safarli wrote a valuable monograph on Masihi's life and works, published his poem Varga and Gulsha, and edited Amani's Turkic Divan. Although the prominent Azerbaijani scholar Ahmad Jafar Oghli Malik Bey Avji published a concise Turkic Divan with an introduction, it has only recently become accessible to Turkic peoples. Recently, A. Bagirov published a study on the Turkic poetry of Rahmat Tabrizi, a poet who passed away in 1616 in India. Although H. Arasli published some of Qawsi's works in a limited edition in 1958, we now see the publication of a complete 4,700-verse Turkic Divan based on the most comprehensive manuscript copies in 2005 [4: 12].

Discussion

In the 17th century, the influence of Fuzuli was highly pronounced in Turkic poetry within the

Iranian region. His works became a true school of artistic mastery for poets within the Fuzuli tradition, such as Masihi, Sa'ib, Asri, Qawsi, Vahid Qazvini, Murtazaquli Khan Shamlu, Mirza Salih Tabrizi, Malik Bey Avji, Murtazaguli Sultan Shamlu, and others. The great Uzbek poet Alisher Navoi also had a notable influence on the development of Turkic poetry in this period. In her research, Dr. Jannat Nagieva writes about Navoi's influence on Qawsi Tabrizi's poetry, stating: "Qawsi Tabrizi's works clearly demonstrate that he was inspired by several of Navoi's ghazals, especially in terms of content. This influence is openly evident in his ghazals with repeated phrases such as Qildilar, Koshki, Qaraz, Koʻz, and Topilmasmish..." [2: 12].

Navoi's influence on Turkic poetry of this period was also mediated by Fuzuli's works. It is known that Fuzuli wrote his Koʻrgach ghazal in response to one of Navoi's ghazals, and Qawsi Tabrizi later composed a ghazal with the same refrain as a reply to Fuzuli's. Due to the seemingly endless Ottoman-Safavid military conflicts during this period, Azerbaijan lost its status as the political and economic center of the Safavid state in the 17th century. In 1598, Shah Abbas I moved the capital from Qazvin to Isfahan. However, despite

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this. the Turkish language retained its significance in the palace of Isfahan. The ideas of patriotism found a bright expression in the poetry of the era. Qovsiy Tabriziy, who moved from Tabriz to Isfahan with his family, expressed in his poems that even though he lived in the new capital, he still favored Tabriz and found solace only there. One of the 17th-century poets whose work reflects the influence of Fuzuliy is Masihiy. Researchers indicate that the Turkish work of the poet we have in hand—his poem "Varga va Gulsha"—was written under the influence of Fuzuliy's "Layli va Majnun" [2: 13].

Conclusion

Another prominent poet of the period we are discussing is Muhammadali Soib Tabriziy. This thinker and artist was already famous during his lifetime in Iran, India, Afghanistan, and Turkey, significantly influencing the literature of these nations. Soib Tabriziy spent his early years in his birthplace, Tabriz, and later traveled to the regions mentioned above, where he lived and created before finally returning to Isfahan, where he lived until the end of his life [3:6].

The new style called "Sabki Hindi" was created by poets who migrated from Iran to India at the end of the 16th century and the beginning of the 17th century. Soib, who lived in India for six years, was a major representative of this style, playing a key role in its true stylistic formation [4:9].

One of the less studied representatives of the Turkish literary environment in 17th-century Iran is Asriv Tabriziv. There is limited information about Asriy Tabriziy, who lived and created in the 17th century. We can only learn about him through some tazkirah. Iranian scholar Dr. H.M. Sadig mentions him as one of the Turkish poets who lived and worked in Iran in his research on "Contemporary Turkish Poets of Soib Tabriziy." This study consists of three parts: the first on Ta'sir Tabriziy, the second on Asriy Tabriziy, and the third on Qovsiy Tabriziy. He is respectfully mentioned in works such as Muhammad Tohir Nasrobodiy's tazkirah, "Majma" ul-fusaho" ("Collection of the Wise") and "Natovij ul-afkor" ("Summary of Thoughts"). He is noted to be one of the Turkish poets living in Iran during the 17th century. He reached maturity in Yazd and, on his way to Tabriz, stopped for a while in Isfahan, where he engaged in jewelry making in a Abbosobod. Vola Dogʻistoniy place called

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mentions that he was born in Yazd in his work "Rivoz ush-shuaro": "Mullo Asriv Tabrizlik. He grew up in Yazd and lived in Isfahan." Asriy lived in Yazd, Isfahan, and Shiraz, but he always took pride in being from Tabriz. For instance, in a ghazal consisting of seven couplets with the refrain "Voz kech," he writes:

"Na shirin so'zlu shoirlar yetishtirmish bu yer, Asriv!

Gelib Tabrez tavofin qil, hala Sherozdin voz kech." [5: 6, 7]

From a linguistic point of view, considering the poets we mentioned are Turkish language speakers, it would be incorrect to assume they only created in that language, as they are all zullisonayn poets and have also successfully written in Persian.

In conclusion, we should note that the poets we have mentioned must be regarded as part of the studied period; this is not the end of our thoughts, as there are still many Turkish-speaking creators

who resided in the region of Iran during the 17th century. Recognizing that our ideas about them cannot be contained within a single article, we will take the period as the subject of our future research.

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