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SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE ARTISTIC INTERPRETATION OF THE KING AND POET IMAGES IN THE NOVEL "KHOREZM FOJIASI" ("THE TRAGEDY OF KHOREZM")

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the life and contributions of Muhammad Rahim Khan II, also known as Feruz (1844–1910), who ruled the Khiva Khanate for nearly 47 years. Feruz was an enlightened ruler, a patron of literature and the arts, and the founder of the translation school in Khiva. The article delves into his achievements as a statesman, poet, musician, and patron of various cultural and artistic endeavors. It highlights Feruz's role in promoting the six-and-a-half makom system, establishing the first printing house in Turkestan, and his efforts in the flourishing of Khorezm's miniature art school. The article also discusses the portrayal of Feruz in historical and literary works, focusing on the novella "The Tragedy of Khorezm" by Erkin Zohidov, which provides a detailed depiction of key events during Feruz's reign and his enduring cultural and spiritual legacy.

KEY WORDS: *Muhammad Rahim Khan II, Feruz, Khiva Khanate, Literary Patron, Translation School, Makom System, Miniature Art School, Cultural Legacy, Historical Literature, Erkin Zohidov.*

Muhammad Rahim Khan II — Feruz (1844–1910): An Enlightened Ruler, Literary Patron, and Founder of Translation School Muhammad Rahim Khan II, widely known by his pen name Feruz, ruled the Khiva Khanate for nearly 47 years (1863–1910). He was a remarkable statesman, a patron of the literary and artistic community of Khiva, and the founder of its translation school.

Renowned literary scholar N.Jumakhodja described Feruz as follows: "Alongside being a statesman and military leader, Feruz was a talented poet, an astute musicologist, an art connoisseur, and a skilled musician. He was a unique patron of science, culture, literature, and art. Not only did he master the art of playing musical instruments, but he also led and participated in refining Khorezm's famous six-and-a-half makom system. He facilitated the creation of treatises on the history and theory of music. Under his initiative, the Khorezm miniature art school flourished. Thanks to Feruz's patronage, Khiva became home to more than forty poets, writers, historians, translators, calligraphers, physicians, scientists, musicians, and artists whose talents thrived under his guidance. He established the first printing house in Turkestan and the first hospital in Khorezm. During his era, Khiva rose to the level of Herat as a significant cultural and literary center".

This assessment truly encapsulates the essence of Feruz's creative achievements and his progressive, enlightenment-driven contributions. The illustrious history of ancient Khorezm and its great figures has inspired numerous historical, scholarly, and literary works. Among them, Erkin Zohidov, a native of Khorezm, has written several captivating stories and novellas that vividly portray the region's history and its heroic figures. His novella "The Tragedy of Khorezm" sheds light on the life of Muhammad Rahim Khan Feruz (1845–1910) and key events during his reign.

In works dedicated to historical figures, the narrative typically emphasizes broader interpretations of events and characters, shaped by the chosen theme and material. Historical literature often highlights renowned personalities and monumental events that have left an indelible mark on their nation and people. These works occupy a special place within this genre. As noted by scholars, "Every historical figure, particularly those who are also creators, embodies the three intertwined dimensions of history: its past, present, and future, all harmoniously coexisting [2]".

Feruz's life exemplifies selfless dedication to his people and homeland, while his poetic creations reflect ideals of goodness and moral integrity. Even today, his contributions remain of great cultural and spiritual significance. Earlier historical and literary accounts often distorted the truth, portraying Feruz as a tyrannical ruler. However, works produced in the post-independence era began presenting a more accurate portrayal, shedding light on his role with a balanced approach to historical truth and artistic interpretation.

The relationship between historical facts and artistic imagination is one of the primary challenges in studying artistic interpretation. In crafting literary characters, these two aspects—fact and imagination—must complement each other, creating a cohesive whole to convey the work's essence and literary depth. Transforming a historical figure into a literary character inevitably involves elements of artistic imagination

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and creativity. This is because historical records alone may not fully capture the nuances, gradual developments, and transformations in a person's life under various circumstances.

In genuine historical literature, "historical figures are portrayed truthfully in line with their social status, roles in life, and alignment with historical realities, while being intricately connected to fictional characters created through imagination" [3].

This delicate balance ensures the authenticity and depth of historical fiction, allowing readers to grasp the essence of both the individual and the era they represent.

The novella "The Tragedy of Khorezm" possesses a unique compositional structure, divided into separate sections, each titled and narrating specific events. The story begins in late autumn with scenes of Feruz going hunting and depicting nature. In the work, Feruz is portrayed as a brave, strong, and heroic figure. During the hunt, a tiger suddenly attacks the khan, causing his rifle to fly in one direction and his sword in another. Amidst the chaos and panic of his guards, Feruz, pushing aside the tiger weighing over 25 botman, rises to his feet. In another instance, King Feruz is depicted lifting his horse out of the Korp Lake, showcasing his mighty, lion-hearted character. Feruz is also portrayed as a patron of literature and the arts, a lover of melodies and unique music, true to historical facts. Returning from the hunt, Feruz unexpectedly hears mysterious music and gallops towards the sound: "Melody... the noises of nature do not bring such pleasure to a person! Just now, the tunes emanating from two silk strings stretched on a wooden bow have enchanted him with their melodies. Under the influence of this tune, one could even renounce the world. Someone has played this melody! A girl's dance. For many years, he has hosted grand feasts, inviting artists from every region, but has never witnessed such a miracle. This is not a dance. It is the display of the mysterious tunes within a human soul [4]..." From this description, it is evident that Feruz's character is artistically interpreted as someone deeply enamored with music. Therefore, the novella extensively describes the musical evenings at the palace and the poetry recitals with poets.

In the section titled "The Feast of Melody" from the novella, the story unfolds about how Feruz brings the dancer Onajon, whom he encountered in the village of Gash, to his palace. Returning from the hunt, Feruz was captivated by a woman playing the dutar and her daughter, who was dancing miraculously. He then had this girl brought to his palace: "Onajon's arrival in the harem deeply upset the khan's favorite dancer, Rano. She was tormented as if she were engulfed in flames [4]." Subsequently, Rano devises a plan and, under the pretext of showing Onajon around the palace and the citadel, takes her out and leads her up a broken staircase, causing Onajon to fall and break her leg. Despite her injury, Onajon dances at the palace feast that evening, astonishing everyone with her performance. Bayoniy, Rojiy, Komil Khorezmi, and King Feruz immediately compose poems in admiration of Onajon's dance. Feruz takes up the dutar and sings:

"None who see your dance will feel regret,
In your moves, the ill find their cure yet.
The law of our circle, so proud and supreme:
To bow to the beauty of her graceful theme!"

At that moment, they presented gifts to Onajon, but she collapsed, unable to accept them. Only then did the khan hear from the chief minister about the incident with the dancer and consulted with his advisors on how to punish Rano. Consequently, Rano was given to Onajon as a servant and was banned from dancing for life.

Feruz, during his time, paid great attention to art and music and also imposed severe punishments on those who distorted or performed music incorrectly. Such a punishment is depicted in the novella when Feruz punishes the musician Khudak Bulamanchi. He sends four guards to Bulamanchi's house to remove the roof. When Khudak Bulamanchi comes to the khan to complain and ask for the reason, Feruz responds, "When the melody reached its peak, you buried the bulaman in the ground and exposed the melody... Did we say anything to you?" Regretting his actions deeply and promising never to do it again, the khan ordered his guards to go and restore the roof of his house.

The author artistically interprets the spiritual and educational landscape of the era by depicting the reflections and discussions about the unique ghazals of poets who flourished in the literary environment of Khiva during Feruz's reign. During this period, Feruz's court included prominent poets and historians like Ogahiy, Bayoniy, Komil, Tabibiy, Mirzo, and Khadim, as well as the creative brothers Sultaniy, Sadiy, Kamyab, Farrukh, and Muradiy, who were part of Feruz's lineage. Each gathering involved discussions on newly written ghazals and debates about knowledge, art, and music.

In the section titled "Feruz", the dialogue between Feruz and Ogahiy is presented. The khan visits his mentor Ogahiy, plays the melody he composed, and beautifully depicts the creation of Feruz I, II, and III music pieces. Ogahiy names the music "Feruz", and the khan requests his mentor to compose a ghazal for this melody, vividly portrayed through live scenes.

"Everyone's heart is entangled in various desires. If the pleasures of the court, hunting, and travels are rejected, what remains? Lamentation, blood, and curses [4]." Amid this tumultuous life, the khan Feruz is always drawn to poetry and music.

In the section titled "Mushoira" (Poetry Gathering) of the novella, the events of music and ghazal writing, and the creation and performance of new melodies in the khan's palace are depicted. Historical figures such as Ogahiy, Komil Khorezmi, and Muhammad Yusuf Bayoniy are artistically portrayed in this section. Ogahiy is especially described as the "master of poets" and his mentor-student relationship with Feruz is emphasized. During the mushoira, Feruz performs the "Segoh" maqam so skillfully that after the performance, Bayoniy states, "...if I could exchange all my writings for this melody you performed, I would die feeling that my life was not in vain." The novella narrates the fascinating events that showcase Khan Feruz as an

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exceptional poet, a wonderful composer, and a connoisseur of music.

In the "Mushoira" section, information about the works of the prominent poet of the era, Bayoniy, is also provided. His poems are recognized for their artistic strength and receive high praise from Ogahiy: "Master, I sincerely congratulate you on another star beginning to shine in the Khorezm sky. From today, Muhammad Yusuf Bayoniy has joined the ranks of distinguished poets", says Ogahiy.

Feruz's image as a khan is also skillfully highlighted in the novella. In sections such as "The Hunt," "The Slave Market," "The Russian Ambassador," "The Court," and "The Secret Council," Feruz's wisdom in governing, his intellect, and his talents are artistically depicted. Feruz carefully considers the advice of scholars in every matter, acting with justice and wisdom. In front of the court where people present their petitions, he has the following couplets by his mentor Ogahiy carved on a marble stone:

"Do not shed the tears of the poor like a river, oh my king, your power will not last, nor will the time that humiliates them..."
Every time he visits the court, he reads these couplets repeatedly. The subsequent sections of the novella also illuminate Feruz's prudent rulership through various events.

In conclusion, the novella "The Tragedy of Khorezm" fully portrays the image of Muhammad Rahim Khan Feruz as both a king and a poet. The language of the work is simple and fluent, effectively utilizing words specific to the Khorezm dialect. Although E.Zohidov's work was written in 1992, during the years of independence, traces of Soviet-era politics are evident in it. Analyzing the work reveals several instances where the historical accuracy of the character's traits deviates, and Feruz is primarily interpreted as a tyrannical khan.

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