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ARTISTIC INTERPRETATIONS OF MUHAMMAD RAHIMKHAN FERUZ'S IMAGE IN UZBEK PROSE: AN ANALYSIS OF *KHORAZM FOJIASI* AND *TEMURGOZI TORA*

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the socio-political context of the Khiva Khanate and the prominent role of Muhammad Rahimkhan Feruz within its literary environment. It provides an artistic interpretation of Feruz's image as depicted in the stories Khorazm fojiasi and Temurgozi to'ra, analyzing how different authors portray this historical figure. Special attention is given to the narrative structure, artistic techniques, and the reflection of historical truth in these works.

KEYWORDS: *Artistic Interpretation, Story, Historical Image, Historical Truth, Subject, Artistic Texture, Khiva Literary Environment.*

Muhammad Rahimkhan Feruz was a distinguished statesman, patron of art and culture, a skilled poet, and a historical figure with a unique place in history. He played a crucial role in advancing science, art, and literature. Muhammad Rahimkhan II (1864–1910), known as Feruz, ascended the throne during a complex historical period. Unlike some other khans, he did not seize power through bloodshed and strife. His accession to the throne was notably democratic — he was chosen by the vote of state officials, which was a rare phenomenon for that time.

The historical work *Shajarayi Khorezmshohiy* by Muhammad Yusuf Bayoniy, which contains valuable information about the amirs, officials, famous figures, and poets of the Khiva Khanate, provides numerous details about Feruz. It describes him as a compassionate and generous ruler:

"The Khan was very merciful to his people and a great benefactor. He built many madrasahs and mosques."

Feruz's efforts to promote science, education, and culture — such as the construction of educational institutions, libraries, and architectural projects — demonstrate his crucial role in the development of the khanate. He also supported jadid schools and actively fostered literary circles, guiding and encouraging poets.

Feruz's image appears in several literary works, notably Erkin Zohidov's *Khorazm fojiasi* and Sotim Avaz's *Temurgozi to'ra*. Both works portray events from his reign, depicting him as both a ruler and a poet. *Khorazm fojiasi* is compositionally structured into distinct sections with titles, each narrating different events.

In the section titled "Ustoz" ("The Master"), Feruz personally examines musicians and singers, granting them licenses to perform at ceremonies. Through conversations with episodic characters such as Boyjon, Solay, and Komil Khorazmiy, the author highlights Feruz's refined artistic sensibility. Feruz's dialogue emphasizes that true artistry requires dedication and talent, not mere technical skill. He praises Solay's musical ability and entrusts him to Komil Khorazmiy, the spiritual mentor of musicians. Out of seven participants, only Solay receives the license. Feruz defends the purity of musical traditions, stressing the cultural value of the ancient twelve maqoms of Khorezm and the responsibility to preserve them.

Furthermore, upon hearing from a merchant named Yusuf that music can be notated like writing, Feruz instructs Komil Khorazmiy, who knows Russian, to bring this notation system to Khorezm. These episodes reveal Feruz's genuine passion for art without relying on fictional embellishments.

As historical evidence of these depictions, Begali Qosimov and others in their textbook *Milliy uyg'onish davri o'zbek adabiyoti* describe Feruz as a progressive intellectual, musicologist, and patron of young musicians. He personally issued certificates to musicians and singers, punished those who distorted folk maqoms, and even issued a special decree in 1299 AH (1882 CE) regarding musical standards.

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Other sections of *Khorazm fojiasi* such as “Ovda” (“Hunting”), “Qul bozori” (“Slave Market”), “Rus elchisi” (“Russian Envoy”), “Arzxonada” (“Reception Hall”), and “Maxfiy kengash” (“Secret Council”) portray Feruz’s wisdom and leadership skills. However, the final sections reflect Soviet ideological interpretations, depicting Feruz as powerless against Russian colonial forces. Historically, the khanate was indeed militarily weaker, which explains this portrayal.

In Sotim Avaz’s *Temurgozi to‘ra*, Feruz’s image is interpreted differently. This story, which recounts the life of Feruz’s grandson Temurgozi To‘ra, focuses on events in the early 19th century. Feruz is shown in his final days, often lost in thought. In the section “So‘nggi ilinj” (“The Last Hope”), the ailing khan cries in despair, lamenting his sons’ flaws and placing his final hope on Temurgozi To‘ra, whose intellect and upbringing impressed him deeply. Even in his final moments, Feruz’s concern for his country reveals him as a just and conscientious ruler.

In conclusion, *Khorazm fojiasi* approaches Feruz’s image through a partially socialist lens, while *Temurgozi to‘ra* portrays him more artistically, emphasizing his justice and wisdom. In Uzbek literary studies, historical figures are often depicted through a blend of factual representation and artistic interpretation. Through the creative efforts of these authors, Feruz emerges as a just ruler, patron of art and literature, and a figure of cultural enlightenment.

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