



## Historical Issues in Uzbek Historical Folklore Genres

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.18415/ijmmu.v8i4.2557>

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### **Abstract**

This article addresses the issue of specificity in certain genres of Uzbek historical folklore, in particular, historical epics, historical narratives and historical songs.

**Keywords:** *Historical Folklore; Folklore History; Genre; Epic; Historical Principles; Baxshi-Poet; Epic Repertoire*

### **Introduction**

There are a number of works on the history of Uzbek folklore and the study of historical folklore [1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6; 8; 11; 12; 17; 18; 21; 22]. This is probably the reason why in many articles and books the concept of “historical folklore” is interpreted as something similar to the concept of “historical folklore”. However, these two concepts are completely independent, and at the same time they cannot occur without each other.

In our view, these two concepts, which are closely related to each other, are the product of two perspectives. Indeed, by “historical folklore” we mean the relation of folklore to real reality, that is, the degree to which the events reflected in it correspond to real reality. In other words, “historicity” refers to this image principle. In this sense, the whole treasury of Uzbek folklore has always been subject to the principle of historicity: no genre, no work can be outside the principles of history. For example, from the most ancient myths of the Turkic peoples to folk proverbs that reflect our modern life, they all reflect the real reality within their capabilities, and therefore they are subject to history.

The history of folklore is constantly changing in connection with the growth of human consciousness, worldview. Hence, the principles of historicity are a concept that changes within each genre as well as on the whole folklore scale. This notion can arise, develop, and change in connection with folklore genres, and can be directly related to these genres. Therefore, a work created in two historical periods cannot be measured by the same historical principles. Because each period has its own genres that meet the aesthetic requirements, and they have the principles of archetype that can meet the requirements of each period. For example, the level of historicity in the epic “Alpomish” can not be compared with the epic “Mamatkarim polvon”. In fact, what has led to a sharp difference is the level of

historicity. The product of this direct norm gives rise to a second concept. This is the concept of “historical folklore.”

### ***The Main Findings and Results***

Historical folklore has existed since ancient times in the oral tradition of all peoples. Excerpts from Mahmud Kashgri's “Devonu “Lugotit-Turk”, which reflect the events of the tribal system, as well as from the short epic Oysuluv to the historical song Namaz, are examples of Uzbek folklore [13].

Epic fragments preserved in the monuments of the XII century - historical folklore confirms that from ancient times the Turkic peoples have occupied a leading position in the oral tradition. It would be more accurate to explain that many ancient specimens of historical folklore genres have not come down to us in connection with the absence of historical folklore in the distant past, but the lack of a tradition of recording and preserving works as heritage.

Of course, the difference in the level of historicity between the ancient specimens of historical folklore and later specimens is very large. However, this does not mean that historical folklore was not created in ancient times. Historical folklore has been created all the time, but their level of historicity is not the same. With this in mind, the specific historical level of a particular genre at different times constitutes historical folklore within that genre. Because the difference in the idea of the work, the events that make up the plot, the characters involved, the depicted environment, ethnonyms, toponyms and so on, the importance of the event for the history of the people, the ideological and aesthetic needs of folk artists to reflect it. The level of reflection of real historical reality is related to the pictorial and expressive possibilities of the genre, the artistic experiences of the creators.

For example, historical reality is very important, there is a great ideological and aesthetic need to reflect it, but there may be a lack of skill of the creators in the reflection. In such cases, the work loses a certain artistic character. In addition, there is a great ideological and aesthetic need for the perception of reality, but the possibilities of the genre in the full reflection of this reality in its entirety may be limited, even in such cases the work loses to a certain extent the historical and at the same time artistic nature.

Even in genres that specialize in historical folklore, the level of reflection of historical events, the position is not always the same, on the same level. For example, there will be times when a historical reality requires a historical song, and there will be times when a historical epic or narrative will require it. Depending on such a demand and need, the development of specialized genres adapted to it at different stages of development of Uzbek historical folklore took place differently. Concrete historicity is a defining criterion of historical folklore.

It should be noted that the toponymy of a folk epic or historical song, if the names of the characters are specific, they may not be considered historical folklore. This is because the components mentioned may not represent an idea that is relevant to a particular historical period, but rather may be involved in events of a completely artistic texture nature. Thus, the leading criterion that concretizes the historicity of the epic is that the idea put forward in the work corresponds to a certain historical period, in other words, the idea expressed in the work must correspond to a specific chrono-tope. Indeed, as B.N.Putilov wrote, the life of the people, the consciousness of the people is as historical as its social existence [20: 165].

It turns out that the idea of the people, expressed in a particular work, is the main criterion that determines whether the work is historical or not. The concreteness of the chronotope, the character, etc., increases the historicity of the work, making it closer to reality.

It is no secret that the composition of genres of Uzbek folklore is diverse. But of all the genres that exist, we cannot demand historical folklore. The "specialization" of folklore genres to a specific historical event - historical folklore - varies. For example, ceremonial folklore, lyrical songs, labor songs, all kinds of fairy tale genres, riddles, proverbs and sayings can never be historical folklore without being subject to certain historicity.

B.N.Putilov explains the specific historical significance of each genre in two ways. The first is that folklore genres have different functions in the field of history, that is, they combine many historical problems. The second is the development of historical (including artistic-historical) consciousness [20: 165].

Of course, the above aspects are fully relevant to the composition of genres of Uzbek folklore. However, there is another important aspect that determines the attitude of folklore genres to specific historicity at all times within certain genres. This aspect is the origin of the genre as a historical necessity and its ideological and artistic function. From this point of view, in Uzbek folklore, only the genre of historical song and the genres of legend, legend, and epic, such as historical legend, historical legend, and historical epic have a specific historical significance.

No matter what genre Uzbek historical folklore belongs to, it reflects the real historical reality on the basis of the laws of art. For example, consider the issue of the Uzbek historical epic. The tradition of creativity in the Uzbek folk epic and, in general, the harmony of the epic with the historical reality lasted until the sixties of the twentieth century. Therefore, the direct participation of folk bakhshis in the events that are the object of the image, at least well aware of them, as well as changes in the level of artistic perception of reality in connection with the historical period, created a realistic epic type of Uzbek folk historical epics .

In the monograph "Uzbek folk heroic epic" by V.M. Jirmunsky and H.T. Zarifov it is necessary to call such works "New epics", they have a realistic character. It was shown to be inferior to traditional epics in terms of art, and even one chapter of the book was called New Epics. These considerations were further developed in the monographs of J. Kabulniyozov. Later, these issues were further specified in the articles of B. Sarimsakov, in the pamphlet of A. Qahhorov.

Indeed, in relation to folk epics and historical reality, Uzbek folklore has achieved a new type of historical epics - realistic epics - with the survival of epic traditions and the survival of a new type of historical epic traditions. This event took place only in the epics of the peoples whose traditions live on in the epics. Consequently, the principles of realistic folk epic reflection of reality, the factors that led to the realistic image, the issues of art require serious research.

The study of historiography in Uzbek historical epics shows that in the later stages of development of the historical epic, the historicity is extremely strong, gaining clear boundaries, and they are artistically more vulnerable. The reasons for this are quite complex, some of which are:

*First*, in addition to the general tradition that ensures continuity in the development of folk epics, there is also a tradition specific to each school of epic poetry, a tradition specific to the school of epic poetry, which has undergone certain changes with the exchange of leading representatives of epic schools. These changes also took place within the general framework of epic poetry. Consequently, any newly created epic has become more and more polished, first of all, within the framework of epic traditions, through repeated creative and performance acts. This bleaching continued to the extent that the epic met the requirements of the all-epic tradition. The historical epics, which we now call realistic epics, were created by a representative of this or that school of epic poetry, and even within the traditions of that school they did not experience creative and executive acts again. In short, they were left with only the performance of their creators. That's why they're artistically lame, no matter how concrete the epic world is. If the epic "Komsomol Oytoti" created by the Polkan poet was transferred to the repertoire of Fozil or

Abdulla, or “Ochildov” created by Fozil to the repertoire of the Polkan poet or Islamic poet, they would undoubtedly have matured not only ideologically but also artistically. The fact that this process took place is reflected in the artistic aspects of a new type of historical epics.

*Second*, new types of historical epics form new artistic-pictorial principles that are unique to them. This is in the psychology of the images, in their behavior; is expressed in the forms and means of expression of psychologism. The use of the musajjam method in the prose of historical epics, as well as in traditional epics, and the reference to traditional stylistic formulas in poetic monologue speech, failed to ensure a balance between the new reality and the artistic image.

*Thirdly*, the continuing artistic development of new historical epics and the process of extinction in all-Uzbek epics greatly hindered the achievement of a highly original poetic form. When it comes to the process of extinction in epic traditions, many epic researchers disagree. Then why weren't realistic historical epics later developed by other living poets? In fact, none of the bakhshis who can now play the dombra (*musical instrument*) with a drum could re-perform any of the epics of Fazil poet, Polkan poet, or Islam poet, which were based on new events, and give them an artistic design. All this shows that the living traditions of Uzbek folk poetry have been gradually disappearing since the 1960s.

So, this fact shows that there are typological features specific to each stage of development of the folk epic. In this context, if we look at the history of Uzbek folk historical epics, we see a remarkable situation. For example, the historical level of the historical epics of the ancient Turkic peoples was directly measured by the ideological program of the tribal system. That is why they glorified the chiefs of a particular tribe or the heroism of the Alps in that tribe. They are not described at all in terms of a specific name, a specific appearance, and a character. Thus, the historicity of the development of historical epics, which is typical for the period of the tribal system, is determined only by the ideological demands and needs in the context of tribal life. The peaceful coexistence of the tribe, its protection from the aggression of other tribes is directly a leading historical principle for the historical epics of the ancient Turkic peoples.

During the period of feudalism, the historical principles of the historical epic also changed. Because the emergence of large feudal states, the intensification of class conflicts changed the historical principles of historical epics. During this period, strengthening the state, protecting the country from foreign enemies became the leading criterion of historical principles. Now the struggle for the interests of a separate people, not a separate tribe, has become a defining feature of historical epics. Given this and their closeness to traditional epics, it is expedient to consider the historical epics created during this period as conditionally classical examples of historical epics.

An important feature of the historical character of the classical examples of historical epics of the feudal period is that the epic world and some of its components are concrete historical, while part consists of pure artistic fabric. For example, if an event and the chronotope in which it takes place are real, the characters may not be real historical. On the contrary, when the characters are real, the events take on an artistic texture. Thus, in both cases, the specific historical nature of a particular part of the components of the epic world can provide a basis for considering and evaluating such works as historical epics. This is especially the case in small oral prose genres.

The historical principles of the small prose genres of oral have not been seriously studied. However, in the following years, the issue of the history of genres such as myth and legend began to be discussed in some studies and articles [12; 18; 19; 10; 14]. They have a tendency to consider works related to historical figures and real ethnonyms in folk myths and legends as historical folklore from the historical point of view. Indeed, the plot of the work is semi-historical, even in general, of an artistic texture, but when it comes to a historical figure or a real ethnonym and ethnotoponym, it is expedient to consider them as historical folklore. Because the loss of real historical events about such great historical figures as Alexander the Great, Amir Temur or Alisher Navoi is increasingly wrapped in an epic shell.

But that's not the point. In our opinion, the most important thing is that these myths and legends reflect the concrete life of the real people, the consciousness and worldview of the real people. And the plot is just a means of expressing this consciousness, everyday life. Therefore, we have the right to consider the legends about real historical figures, ethnotoponyms and ethnonyms as historical folklore.

The principles of historicity in historical folklore genres range from small epic genres to large epic genres. This process is conditioned by the scope and means of each genre to reflect the real historical reality. Because historically, a small epic structure is primitive and primitive, while a large epic structure is a complex and relatively later phenomenon. From this point of view, the principles of historicity in the major structural historical folklore genres are relatively clear, closer to reality. The conclusion to be drawn from this is that historicity in historical myths and legends do not acquire specificity until historicity in historical songs and historical epics. Given these aspects of the issue, in our study we did not go the way of detailed analysis of the plot of historical myths and legends. Because the detailed analysis of the plot of this type of small oral prose genres is not based on concrete historicity, but on the contrary. Quasi-history, on the other hand, does not allow us to reveal all the features of historical folklore.

Two words about the historical principles of historical songs. It is well known that historical songs differ from other genres of historical folklore in their functional features in that they are created in response to real historical reality. In Uzbek folklore, the historical principles inherent in historical songs were first described in our PhD dissertation [11]. However, our subsequent research on the historical principles of this genre shows that in the course of its historical development, there have been significant shifts in the historical level of this genre. These changes were directly related to the work of professional bakhshis. For example, historical songs about the first victims of the liberation struggle, such as Nurkhan and Tursunoy, as well as historical figures such as the 1916 national liberation movement, Isfandiarkhan or Said Ahmad, have a relatively broad history, describing the people's reaction to the tragedy or activity of specific historical figures [9; 15]. Consequently, they give a detailed image, a description of the images, a description. Such a character of historicity is explained not by a lack of concreteness in reality, but, on the one hand, by the historical-typological feature of the genre structure, and, on the other hand, by the collective character of songwriters. This is because historical songs of this type are dominated by the ideological and aesthetic assessment of the working people about this reality, rather than the epic depiction of reality.

The various events that take place in real life are not only in the spotlight of the collective, but also in the attention of the relatively talented creators of this collective. Their ideological assessment of each event, as well as their aesthetic way of depicting them, will be different. Consequently, every work created by professional artists in a compact lyric-epic structure, created in response to historical events that have taken place or are taking place in real history, is a historical song. Thus, in addition to small-scale historical songs, mainly lyrical songs, which are the product of collective creativity in Uzbek folklore, there are also large lyric-epic historical songs, which are characterized by their specificity, specific historical character, chronotope.

## ***Conclusion***

To sum up, the specificity of each of the genres of historical folklore is not rigid, stable phenomena. As long as real life is in constant motion, as long as the creators who breathe life into this life are in constant search, the historicity of each genre is also growing and changing. This is true for both oral prose genres and historical song and epic genres. That is why it is necessary to correctly understand that the change of historical specificity of this or that genre of historical folklore directly affects the structure of these genres, to accept them as legitimate phenomena.

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