

# Classification Of Agiographic Works And Specificity Of Plot Construction In Them

 Javokhirbek B. Sayidolimov

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Philological Sciences, Lecturer, Department of Literary Studies, Faculty of Philology, Fergana State University, Fergana, Uzbekistan

Farangiz Q. Azimjonova

Student of Uzbek Language Program, Faculty of Philology, Fergana State University, Fergana, Uzbekistan

**Received:** 23 April 2025; **Accepted:** 19 May 2025; **Published:** 21 June 2025

**Abstract:** In this article, agiographic works of great interest in world and Uzbek literature in recent years are classified based on specific aspects of East – Muslim agiographic literature. For the classification, the composition construction of the sources of this type, the content-essence and the scope of the topic were taken into account.

**Keywords:** Agiographic literature, Muslim agiography, Christian agiography, Buddhist agiography, classification, large agiographic works, middle agiographic works, small agiographic works.

**Introduction:** In scholarly and historical texts, the features of the period in which a work was produced are distinctly manifested. In particular, artistic and literary works reflect the spiritual condition of individuals, their internal experiences, aesthetic sensibilities, and perceptions of faith characteristic of that era. Hagiographic literature, as a genre closely tied to historical and religious traditions, is no exception to this phenomenon. Human lifestyles, aspirations, worldviews, interests, joys, and sorrows are more vividly and authentically represented in literary narratives. A literary work composed during a specific historical context can serve as a social and moral program, offering models for ethical conduct and spiritual guidance. In times of spiritual crisis, economic hardship, or socio-political instability, such works often function as a beacon of hope, fostering resilience and reflection. This leads us to a critical question: Why did hagiographic works emerge during a period when Arabic was already established as the official language and people had widespread access to the Qur'an and collections of hadith? Historically, such narratives often arose when society was deviating from monotheistic

beliefs, prompting divine intervention through prophetic messages and stories. These prophetic narratives, later compiled into Islamic literary tradition under the name *Qisas al-Anbiya*, played a pivotal role in shaping religious consciousness and ethical conduct. Among these, the term narrative occupies a unique place. Texts such as *Qissai Yusuf*, *Qissai Ya'qub*, and *Qissai Mashrab* are representative of this genre, wherein literary narration is combined with moral instruction. While it shares similarities with narrative-related genres such as adventure tale and short story, it is distinguished by its didactic intent and thematic complexity.

## METHODOLOGY

In the religious and agiographic literary tradition, the genre known as the narrative occupies a significant place in terms of both volume and thematic content. For instance, works such as *Qissai Yusuf*, *Qissai Yaqub*, and *Qissai Ibrahim* (peace be upon him) exemplify the narrative form in which specific events are artistically rendered. These stories generally depict the dramatic tensions between opposing forces—truth versus falsehood, faith versus disbelief—alongside spiritual and

emotional trials. Ultimately, the triumph of the righteous and the victory of prophetic figures are underscored. Each narrative is rooted in historical truth and serves as a literary representation of a nation's aspirations, ideals, and collective imagination. Through these narratives, the reader encounters the moral and spiritual maturation of humankind, as well as the harmonious relationships among humans, animals, and nature. Eastern agiography, in particular, focuses on the lives and missions of the 25 prophets mentioned in the Qur'an. It is important to note that although these prophets are named in hadith literature, their life stories are not ignored but rather explored extensively. From the life of Adam (peace be upon him) to the mission of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), these works present comprehensive accounts of prophetic activity. The Qur'an and hadiths serve as the primary sources for this information. Moreover, agiographic texts provide valuable agiographical accounts of prophets not explicitly named in the Qur'an but referenced in hadiths, ensuring a fuller understanding of their lives and legacies. One of the early contributors to Islamic hagiography, Abu Dharr al-Ghifari (may Allah be pleased with him), emphasized the importance of knowing the exact number of prophets, reportedly asking the Prophet Muhammad: "O Messenger of Allah, how many prophets were there?" The Prophet replied, "One hundred and twenty-four thousand." [2.34]. This illustrates the profound role hadiths play in expanding our understanding of prophetic traditions. In addition to qissa-style narratives, the agiographic genre also encompasses texts such as *manāqib* (virtues), *halāt* (conditions), and *tadhkira* (agiographical memoirs), which focus on the lives of prophets, saints, sheikhs, and other revered figures. These works elaborate on their teachings, spiritual paths, and miracles, thereby enriching Islamic intellectual and literary heritage.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Throughout all periods, it has been difficult for people to read and understand the lives of prophets and spiritual guides through written sources. Due to the fact that the majority of the population engaged in agriculture, trade, handicrafts, and animal husbandry, and because society mostly consisted of people involved in these professions, works written in a simple and colloquial language and based on artistic expression served as an effective means to convey religious and scientific ideas to the general public. It is noted that, regardless of the similar content of the works, the key distinguishing feature is creative talent. The following idea confirms this: "In order to analyze agiographic works from a literary perspective, the stories and legends about prophets and saints must be

considered as artistic narratives" [4.21]. Therefore, in order to study agiographic sources in a structured way, we believe it is appropriate to classify them by their thematic content and analyze them accordingly. Major agiographic works: "Qisas Rabguzi" by Nasiruddin Burhanuddin Rabguzi, "Najh ul faradis" (The Keys to Paradise) by Mahmud ibn Ali as-Saroy, "Tarihiyanbiyyahvahukamo" by Alisher Navoi, "Nur ul-yaqin" by Muhammad Huzayri, "Qisas ul-anbiyyah" ("History of the Prophets"). Works with a predominant artistic aspect included in the category of "People's Books". Works about "chahoriyor" included in the category of "People's Books", among which the most widespread are the story about Hazrati Ali and "Me'rojnoma", can also be included in the list of major agiographic works. Along with this, works created in recent times such as "Tarihi Muhammadi" by Alikhantora Soguni and "Saodatasriqissalari" by Ahmad Lutfi Kazanchi can also be included in the list of major hagiographic works. In some sources, the above-mentioned ones are also referred to as "pure agiographic works". The Quran serves as the basis for major agiographic works. In such works, the author cites examples from the Quran, regardless of who and what event he describes. Therefore, the art of quotation is often used in major agiographic works. Through this, the creator, firstly, increases the impact of the work, and secondly, seeks to explain the essence of events through the quotation. For this reason, the history of humanity in the "Holy Quran" is presented on three levels:

- cool;
- today;
- the future

(even the existence before the creation of man, the final abode) is included. The essence of divine wisdom is embedded in concise but poignant stories." [5.15]. Creators rework the stories given in the Quran concisely based on the needs of the time. For example, Rabguziy described the events in the past and present, Navoiy in the present and the future, and Alikhantora Soguniy and Ahmad Lutfiy Kazanchily in the present. We can clearly see this in the reading of the work. Although there are many more sources in addition to those mentioned, we preferred to cite the above works because of their artistic attention to the subject. A distinctive feature of this type of work is that in almost all works, the creators move from the general to the specific, leading the events to the events of Muhammad (peace be upon him). The image of Muhammad (peace be upon him) unites all the events, that is, the history of each prophet is known. is related to a people, while the history of Muhammad is related to humanity. The most complete history among the

prophets is the history of Muhammad. Therefore, authors sometimes describe how the history before him was described as follows: "But Mawlana Sharaf-ul Millatiwaddin Ali Yazdialayhi-rahmah said in the introduction to "Zafarnama" that Adam alayhis-salamualayhi-salamualaikum was bathed by Shis, prayed and was buried in India" [6.540]. In addition to the Quran, books such as hadith and tafsir are also referred to as the main sources. In this regard, the author describes events as they were described in his time. In some places, he partially expresses his views in the form of explanations and commentary. We can see this in the questions and answers in "Qisas-e-Rabguzi", in the explanation of the kunya and nicknames of the prophets in "Tarihianbiyyahwahukamo", and in the author's commentaries on certain events in "TarihiMuhammadi". Therefore, the main attention is paid to conveying to the reader the reasons for the origin of religious concepts and rulings on the basis of fiction. "Now you are prostrate (prostrate), and Adam is the one who is prostrated. The angels prostrated... The angels raised their heads and saw Iblis and prostrated again in gratitude. Therefore, the first prostration in prayer became obligatory, and the second prostration became obligatory." [7.22-23]. Clarifying the essence of events serves the correct formation of religious views, because the reader who understands the essence can correctly evaluate reality. The essence of concepts related to faith is shown through the lives and activities of prophets, saints, and religious leaders, who are considered the main characters of hagiographic works. In this way, they, along with being role models, first of all fulfill religious rules themselves and convey their essence to the public. "...If you refuse, then know that the Messenger (was) only entrusted with the clear conveyance..." [8.123]. This type of work had long been neglected, but after independence, as a result of the widespread concept of tolerance (freedom of thought, harmony between religions), interest in studying this type of literary samples has increased. As a result, interest in studying this type of literary examples is growing.

Middle hagiographic works: "Silsilat ul-arifin" - Muhammad Qazi, "Tazkirat ul-aulyo" by Fariduddin Attar, "Nafahot ul-uns min hazarotil-quds" by Abdurahmon Jami, "Hamsat ul-mutahayyirin", "Holoti Sayyid Hasan Ardasher", "HolotiPahlavon Muhammad", "Majalis un-nafais", "Nasayim ul-muhabbat min shamayim ul-futuvvat" by Alisher Navoi, "Tazkirat ul-aulyoTurki Muhammad Siddiq Rushdi, "Rashohatayn ul-hayot Fakhruddin Ali Safi, "Tanbeh ul-ulam" by Ahmad HojagiKasani, "Hikoyati Sultan UwaisQarani" by Sabir Sayqali, "ManaqibiUwaisQarani" by Ahmad Ummati, such as holat, manaqib, maqamat,

tazkiras.

Forms a series. Unlike large hagiographic works, the creator is much freer. Because in such sources, religious-theological views are combined with ideological-philosophical, artistic-aesthetic views. Even if the reader knows that some events are not related to the plot or the person in question, the aesthetic power derived from the work increases the interest in reading the work. Plots are often repeated, but in some episodes they also affect our religious views because they can illuminate universal ideas. The author freely describes the events he saw, knew, and heard, supports someone and condemns someone. In medium agiographic works, the presence of a certain plot in different religions occurs as a result of ecumenism (interfaith rapprochement). The actions of the heroes of this type of work are described in harmony with their religious views. The difference between medium agiographic works and large agiographic works is that they are nourished by the philosophical ideas of works created on the basis of other religious views, without being denied by readers with different religious views. In works of this classification, if the author follows a certain sect, he emphasizes this sect in the process of creation. Medium agiographic works served to widely spread Sufism and, in turn, developed under the influence of Sufism literature. The reason for this is the disclosure of the essence. Those who understood the essence of a certain sect tried to prove the superiority of their sect over other sects through agiographic events. They describe the lives of the leaders of the sect they follow as if they were immersed in divine events. For this reason, agiographic works have been studied in our classical literature against the background of Sufism, but recent studies show that hagiographic sources, unlike other types of works, have created a unique literature due to their unique structure, forms and content. In medieval hagiographic works, "reality is not simply "reflected", but the author's ideological and emotional assessment is also added to it (even when the author strives to be extremely "objective", when viewed from his point of view, the creative subject is reflected in the presented artistic reality)" [9.152]. We can also see this situation in the second chapter in Alisher Navoi's attitude to MawlanaMukimi in his works "Nasoyim ul-muhabbat" and "Majolis un-nafois". That is, two different attitudes are seen towards one person in two works, since there is freedom in the creative approach. In addition, works in this category rarely use the art of quotation. As a result, the author's own interpretation of events is more important than their commentary and explanation. It even incorporates exaggerated images from folk oral literature. This is clearly evident in the case of tazkira, manaqib, holat,

and maqamat.

Minor agiographic works stand in sharp contrast to the major and medium agiographic narratives previously discussed. In these texts, the author often inserts short stories or narratives of agiographic nature with the aim of enhancing the impact of the main work, providing commentary on specific events, or offering lyrical digressions. Such insertions serve a complementary or explanatory function. Examples of minor hagiographic genres include aphorisms, anecdotes, testaments, and sermons. A distinguishing feature of these works, as opposed to major and medium agiographies, is their expression in both written and oral forms. Initially, minor agiographic elements were widely embedded within the structure of major and medium narratives. However, over time, they began to emerge as independent genres, gradually developing unique formal and thematic characteristics. Hikmat (or hikmatnama)—a form found in both prose and verse—presents ideas in a concise and impactful manner. It conveys deep and often complex philosophical or spiritual content in a compact and accessible format. Since the 10th century, the term hikmat has been used in reference to religious and Sufi writings [10.64]. As an independent genre, hikmat is defined by the following features: metrical structure, syncretic nature, performative quality, and ethnocultural-ritual specificity [10.64]. The presentation of thoughts grounded in life experience enhances both the emotional appeal and the hagiographic nature of these texts. A representative example is the following didactic verse:

“His claim to be virtuous holds no truth for the people,  
For his burden and affliction are harsh upon them.  
If his cure lies in their suffering,  
Then truly, his enmity stems not from faith but from  
misguidance.”

The poet emphasizes that people are not fond of duties, as these are perceived as burdensome. Nevertheless, the solution lies in the fulfillment of one's obligations, as true adherence to duty is grounded in the strength of religious commitment [11.293]. Alisher Navoi's *Nazm al-Javahir* also belongs to the category of minor hagiographic works. This text offers a versified rendition of the wise sayings (*ḥikam*) found in Hazrat Ali's *Nahj al-Balāgha* (also referenced as *Nasr al-Lawāli*), and can be seen as a poetic interpretation of early Islamic aphorisms. Given that Hazrat Ali's original work emerged during the formative period of Islamic hagiography, the roots of hagiographic wisdom can be traced directly to that early era. In addition, works such as *Qisas al-Rabghuzi* include moral and philosophical reflections attributed

to great religious figures, such as in the story of Prophet Yusuf (Joseph). For example, the following maxim is offered: “Whoever restrains themselves for the sake of God, God will raise their rank. Arrogance is a trait of the ignorant, whose pride aims to conceal their own faults—yet in their ignorance, they expose their flaws even more through pride. Humility beautifies a person, and even more so those in positions of power, for humility is the ornament of greatness” [7.124]. Individuals capable of resolving people's difficulties and answering complex questions through wise speech are referred to as *ḥakīm*—a sage. One such story relates to Sulaymon, a disciple of Khwaja Ahmad Yassawi (q.s.). On one occasion, Khwaja commanded that food be prepared, but there was no firewood. He instructed his companions to collect it, even though it was raining at the time. By the time the companions returned, the wood was soaked—except for that gathered by the sage Sulaymon, who had wrapped it in his cloak to keep it dry. Upon seeing this, Khwaja remarked, “O my son, you have acted wisely,” and from that moment he was given the title *Hakim Ata* and became known for his language of wisdom [6.434]. For this reason, Alisher Navoi mentions various sages in his work *Tārikh-i anbiyā wa ḥukamā'* (“The History of Prophets and Sages”). These wise sayings often begin with exhortative phrases such as “O dear one!” or “O my son!”—expressions that evoke the well-known advice of Luqman the Wise to his son, as recorded in both the Qur'an and in larger hagiographic texts. Such formulaic addresses reflect a dialogic structure, indicating a speaker (mentor or sage) addressing a listener (disciple or reader), a common stylistic feature of both major and medium hagiographic texts. Moreover, major hagiographic works are typically grounded in Qur'anic verses and Prophetic traditions (*ḥadīths*), with wisdom sayings often used to elaborate on their meanings. The interpretive function of *ḥikma* is underscored through reference to verses such as:

“These are the verses of the Book of wisdom” (Surah Luqman, 31:2),

“Indeed, Allah is Almighty and Wise” (Surah Luqman, 31:27).

While major hagiographies tend to cite Qur'anic verses and then explain them through stories and parables, minor hagiographic texts employ wisdom sayings as a means of affirming key ideas or drawing moral conclusions. The *wasiyya* (testament or spiritual counsel) holds a distinctive place in hagiographic literature, often reflecting the aspirations, beliefs, and ethical ideals of the person delivering it. In major and medium-scale hagiographic works, special attention is devoted to such texts due to their ethical and doctrinal significance. In early *Qisas al-Anbiya*-type narratives,

testaments appear in brief forms. For instance: "When forty-five years had passed since prophethood, [Adam] bequeathed to his sons the rites of warfare and burial belonging to the descendants of Qabil (Cain)" [6.541]

A similar example is found in *Qisas al-Rabghuzi*, in which the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) delivers a testament through the words of the angel Jibril (Gabriel):

"Jibril stands before me, speaking to me: 'Convey greetings to your community. May they never remove faith from their hearts because of hatred... Let them prepare for the Day of Judgment'" [7.193–194].

These words are emphasized as a divine admonition to the Muslim ummah, thus taking on the function of a sacred testament. Over time, *wasiiyatnamas* began to be compiled as independent works. One prominent example is *Wasiyyatnama* by Abdulkhaliq Ghijduvani, which includes the following counsel:

"O my child... Never withdraw your feet from the path of knowledge-seeking... Beware of the company of wicked men and of base, greedy paupers" [12.74–48]. The hagiographic quality of testaments lies in the fact that, regardless of whether they are delivered orally or in writing, they are perceived as a religious obligation by the recipient. The performance of a testament is not merely a social or moral act—it is carried out from a foundation of deep faith, making its execution an expression of spiritual devotion. This aspect reveals the spiritual-hagiographic core of testamentary literature. In fact, throughout sacred history, each prophet was succeeded by a designated executor of their testament:

"Harun (Aaron) was the executor of Moses (peace be upon him); the apostle Peter of Jesus (peace be upon him); and Ali ibn Abi Talib (may God ennoble his face) was the executor of the Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) testament" [13.121]. The *latifa*, considered one of the minor hagiographic forms, occupies a unique place in classical literature. The term *latifa* as used in classical sources differs significantly from the contemporary understanding of the word, which is often associated with humor or jokes. In early literary tradition, a *latifa* was primarily an instructive narrative or moral tale that often included miraculous elements and conveyed religious or ethical lessons. Because the word *latif* literally means "pleasant" or "delicate," such stories were eagerly anticipated and well-received by audiences.

Notable examples of such works include Sayf al-Din 'Ali Safi's *Latifas* about Various Social Groups, in which the content should not be interpreted through the lens of satire or humor, and Zayn al-Din Vosefi's *Bada'i' al-Waqa'i* ("Wondrous Events"). These works incorporate

*latifas* that blend historical events and everyday occurrences with instructive and spiritually resonant narratives. As scholars have noted,

"Each *latifa* is based on a historical or social event that gained recognition during a specific period" [14.216].

In classical literature, *latifas* often recount miraculous events and offer wisdom or advice, thereby demonstrating their hagiographic character. For instance, in *Qisas al-Rabghuzi*, two significant *latifas* are embedded within the narrative of Prophet Yusuf (Joseph). The first recounts how Malik Za'r approached Yusuf to request a prayer for a child. After some time, the text notes: "The prayer of Yusuf was answered during Malik Za'r's lifetime" [7.128], followed by a narrative on the birth of his child. The second *latifa* centers on the story of Yusuf and Zulaykha, in which Zulaykha falsely accuses Yusuf. A miraculous intervention occurs when a four-month-old infant proclaims:

"If Yusuf's shirt is torn from the front, he is guilty; if torn from the back, then Zulaykha is to blame" [7.115].

Although these *latifas* contain subtle elements of humor, their primary function is moral instruction and spiritual reflection. The humor, when present, arises not from overt comic scenes, but from deeper contemplation of the narrative's implications. For example:

"Satan's deceit is weakened by the remembrance of God. If Satan hears the name of the Almighty, he flees; but when it comes to women's cunning, even a thousand verses of scripture cannot repel it" [7.128].

This passage illustrates how wit and religious instruction intertwine in *latifas*, providing insight with a smile rather than laughter. Additional examples can be found in Shaykh Akbarabadi's „*Nadir al-Me'roj*." Another form of minor hagiographic writing is the *maw'izah* (sermon), which is delivered by preachers to a wide audience in a persuasive and emotionally compelling manner. In his work *Mahbub ul-qulub*, Alisher Navoi provides a description of the ideal preacher, stating: "A preacher should be one who speaks the words of God ('qalallah'), refrains from deviating from the words of the Prophet, follows the path of God and His Messenger, and, having entered this path himself, encourages others to do the same through admonition" [15, p. 141]. The distinct feature of this form lies in its oral transmission, which differentiates it from other similar works. Events presented in major and medium-sized hagiographic texts are narrated by preachers with consideration of the context, including time, place, and audience. The events may be exaggerated, presented with hyperbole, or briefly summarized with an emphasis on the moral

lesson. Generally, minor hagiographic texts differ from medium and major ones in several key aspects:

1. In major hagiographic works, wisdom and admonitions (testaments) are expressed from the first-person point of view and addressed to the second person, yet their messages are directed toward humanity as a whole. In contrast, minor hagiographic works contain wisdom and testaments intended for a specific individual or group and are perceived as such by their recipients. For instance, Ahmad Yassawi's *Hikmats* served as a spiritual guide for members of the Yassawiyya order, while Khoja Abdulkhaliq Ghijduwani's *Wasiyatnama* was of great importance to the adherents of the Naqshbandiyya tradition.

2. Expressions such as "Eyaziz" (O dear), "Eyfarzand" (O child), or "Eybiroddar" (O brother) found in the testaments and wisdom literature of minor hagiographic works are often directed toward the education of the second person based on the content of the text. In medium hagiographic works, the repeated use of phrases like "EyAbulqasim" or "Eynafsim" (O my soul) by the protagonist during each action reflects their journey toward spiritual perfection. In major hagiographic texts, phrases such as "Eyoğilcham" (O my son) are addressed more broadly to all of humanity. The use of second-person addresses in minor texts highlights the influence of the first person on the recipient's spiritual growth and also contributes to the emergence of the *maqamat*, which are considered medium hagiographic works. Thus, while minor hagiographic works primarily aim to provide moral guidance, medium texts focus on achieving spiritual perfection.

3. The hardships encountered by the executor of a testament—viewed as a "divine duty" in minor hagiographic literature—can serve as the basis for developing the plotlines typical of major hagiographic narratives. For example, events experienced by Harun (A.S.) while fulfilling Moses' (A.S.) will, or by Hazrat Ali during the execution of Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) testament, form the narrative foundation for major hagiographic works.

4. Minor hagiographic works are often nourished by major and medium hagiographic sources and develop accordingly. However, they are not always documented in written form and are frequently transmitted orally. As a result, hagiographic events often blend with legends and folklore under the influence of oral tradition.

5. Moreover, events associated with historical figures in major and medium hagiographic works may be adapted to a specific context by narrators under the

influence of minor texts. Consequently, such events may be presented with personalization, as in expressions like "Solomon died, and the jinn were freed" or "The prophets honored the grooms," thereby reinterpreting traditional accounts. At the same time, a similar distinction can also be observed within major and medium hagiographic works.

1. In major hagiographic texts, the events described may not occur in the same time or place as the figure being portrayed. However, they are unified through a connecting spiritual concept—namely, the "Light of Muhammad" (Nūr-iMuḥammadī). In contrast, in medium hagiographic texts, the narrative details evolve within the course of events directly related to the central figure. Because these events are connected to a specific protagonist, they typically unfold within a single time and space, rather than being dispersed across various temporal and spatial contexts. This, in turn, requires the reader to engage with the work in a holistic and continuous manner in order to fully grasp its meaning.

2. While structural unity is of paramount importance in major hagiographic works, in medium ones, comprehensibility tends to take precedence over strict narrative unity. This is because major hagiographic texts are generally constructed around a chronological (linear) plot, whereas medium texts are often shaped by a concentric (cyclical or thematic) plot structure. As a result, a comparative and analytical study of major and medium hagiographic works reveals significant differences in their compositional frameworks. Nevertheless, these works also share several common features. In terms of compositional structure, hagiographic literature differs from other genres. Almost all major and medium hagiographic works follow a uniform structural pattern, typically beginning with a prologue and concluding with an epilogue. This is due to the fact that key narrative elements such as exposition, climax, and resolution are presented from the perspective of the narrator—who, in hagiographic literature, is often the author himself.

Indeed, unless the author explains the underlying purpose of the work, a disconnect may arise between the reader and the writer. As one scholar notes, "Every literary work is original in its content, because the creator is an individual who perceives and evaluates the world in their own unique way" [9, p. 193]. Although the events with hagiographic character are described in various ways depending on the author's creative intent, it is the author who interprets and explains their own narrative choices. This approach parallels the way in which the stories in the Qur'an were revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) through the angel Jibreel (Gabriel), along

with divine explanations from God. Similarly, in hagiographic literature, the author offers interpretive commentary to the reader in order to clarify the message and purpose of the narrative. In medium-length hagiographic works, a concentric plot structure—based on the principle of cause-and-effect relationship—tends to dominate. This is especially evident in *tazkiras* (biographical collections). For instance:

“The reason for his repentance was as follows: he was the son of a merchant and engaged in trade. On one occasion, he traveled to the land of infidels for business. While walking through the streets, he passed a temple and saw a polytheist worshipping an idol in deep agony, tearing at his hair and beard. This sight became the turning point; he renounced the world entirely and turned to God” [18, pp. 211–212].

“The cause of his repentance was this: one day, he cooked a meal with great effort. A beggar came and said, ‘For the sake of Allah.’ He became angry and scolded the beggar, saying, ‘This food is precious and not for you.’ But when his wife removed the lid of the pot to serve the meal, they saw that the food had turned into blood. ... He then sought the guidance of Shaykh Hasan al-Basri and repented” [19, p. 19]. In these examples, the author first presents event “B” and then retrospectively reveals event “A.” This inversion leads the reader to more naturally accept the exaggerations or idealizations surrounding the protagonist’s life and actions, as they are embedded within a believable emotional and spiritual trajectory.

In *tazkiras*, *manaqibs*, *maqāmats*, and other medium hagiographic works, the author typically begins by portraying the inner spiritual state of the protagonist. However, these psychological descriptions are not reiterated in later sections of the text; rather, they are organically integrated into the unfolding of events. The emotional state conveyed at the beginning enables the reader to form a conceptual image of the character, while the remainder of the text focuses primarily on the protagonist’s deeds and actions. This narrative strategy highlights the importance of depicting spiritual states in such genres.

For example:

“He was a leader among the steadfast, an exemplar among the penitent, a spring cloud of generosity and benevolence, a master of piety and contemplation, a renouncer of worldly life, the spiritual pole of his era, distinguished among his contemporaries for his devotion, asceticism, and miracles. In matters of humility and modesty, he had no equal” [18, pp. 211–212].

This manner of characterization emphasizes the

protagonist’s moral and spiritual excellence from the outset, allowing the reader to interpret subsequent actions through the lens of that initial inner disposition, thereby reinforcing the didactic and exemplary function of the hagiographic text. Alongside character development, the depiction of literary images (*obraz*) in large hagiographic works also demonstrates unique features. The extensive use of portraiture in these texts led to the emergence of works classified as *Shamā’il* (Arabic: qualities, virtues, appearance, structure; form or figure). One of the finest examples of this genre is *Ash-Shamā’il al-Muḥammadiyya* by Imām al-Tirmidhī (Abū’Īsā al-Tirmidhī) [13, p. 643]. Although *Shamā’il*-type texts were originally created as commentaries on comprehensive (pure) hagiographic works, the fact that numerous commentaries were written on *Ash-Shamā’il al-Muḥammadiyya* itself attests to the depth and richness of Eastern hagiography.

In *Shamā’il* literature, aesthetic expression takes precedence over scientific analysis. This is because it is only through the art of language that the inner and outer worlds of a person—their thoughts, emotions, pains, and aspirations—can be effectively portrayed. The comprehensive and vivid depiction of characters in hagiographic texts also inspired the development of other branches of art, particularly sculpture and visual arts.

However, within the Eastern worldview, where word is given elevated importance, portraiture through verbal imagery takes on a distinct quality. As one scholar notes:

“The character’s externally described features (appearance, stature, clothing, facial expressions, body posture and movements, and habits) are revived in the reader’s imagination through language” [20, p. 226].

A critical nuance of portraiture in such works lies in the cultural-religious difference between East and West. In Eastern tradition, verbal description is emphasized for theological reasons, while in Western thought, visual representations and painting-based reconstructions of the protagonist’s portrait are of greater interest. In Eastern hagiography—especially in large-scale texts—it is forbidden to depict the prophet’s image visually. This distinction is made explicit in Rabghūzī’s narrative regarding the interaction between Prophet Sulaymān (Solomon) and a figure named Kunna:

“He listed all the messengers from Adam to Sulaymān, yet did not mention Sulaymān by name” [7, p. 42].

The reason is that Kunna had created a statue and worshipped it, which led to Sulaymān being omitted from the list of prophets mentioned from the pulpit. Thus, visual representation becomes problematic, even if the textual description is profoundly detailed.

In Ash-Shamā'il al-Muḥammadiyya, Imam al-Tirmidhī pays extraordinary attention to the portrait of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), describing him from his hair and nails to both his external and internal states. Despite this, it is explicitly stated that his likeness cannot be painted. Such intricate verbal depictions are unique to hagiographic literature. The author conveys this portrait primarily through hadiths narrated by the Prophet's companions, such as:

"Imām Ḥasan (may Allah be pleased with him) said: ... His feet were so smooth that water would not remain upon them. Whenever he walked, he would lift his feet with great vigor" [21,8].

This exceptionally detailed portrayal, conveyed through language rather than imagery, illustrates the central role of verbal art in Eastern hagiography. The representation of such complete and elevated images is considered a hallmark of this genre. Each unit within major hagiographic works contributed to the emergence of various new literary genres in classical literature. For instance, in texts such as *Qīṣaṣ al-Anbiyā'*, the climax is typically represented through scenes surrounding the birth of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). In contrast, works like *Shamā'il al-Muḥammadiyya* and *Tārīkh-iMuḥammadiy* present the climactic moment through the narration of the *Mi'rāj* (Ascension) episode.

Writers and compilers paid special attention to the *Isrā'* and *Mi'rāj* segments, as these served not only as the climax of the work, but also provided the resolution to the tensions developed in preceding episodes or allegorical sub-narratives. During this celestial journey, the Prophet was informed of the purpose of human creation, the types of deeds that lead humanity toward spiritual decline and their consequences, as well as the actions that lead to salvation and their divine rewards. Over time, this episode was elevated to a distinct literary genre, becoming a hallmark of classical literature in the Islamic world.

A defining feature of the *Mi'rājnāma* tradition is that even when separated from the broader narrative, it retains the qualities of a self-contained, independent work. Among the most distinguished examples in Persian hagiography is *Nādir al-Mi'rāj* by Shaykh Akbarābādī. This work was translated into Turkic by a scholar named Yusuf in 1910 and published in Tashkent under the title *Nādir al-Mi'rāj-iTurkī* [22, p. 8].

In Turkic literature as well, numerous authors contributed to this genre. Ahmad Yassawī's *Ḥikāyat-iMi'rāj*, SulaymānBāqirghānī's *Mi'rājnāma*, as well as contributions from literary figures such as Alisher Navā'i, BābārāhimMashrab, and Sufi Olloyor, demonstrate the continuity of this tradition.

An illustrative poetic excerpt from this tradition reads:

"The Lord granted him the ascension (*mi'rāj*),

As the sea of mercy overflowed with waves.

He was crowned upon his head with the diadem of 'la 'amruka',

O true followers—upon hearing this, send blessings, O friends."

This excerpt not only highlights the poetic and spiritual elevation of the Prophet's ascension but also reinforces the religious and cultural centrality of the *Mi'rāj* in Turkic-Islamic literature.

## CONCLUSION

When extracted from a larger hagiographic composition or composed as an independent work, a single unit may evolve into a fully autonomous hagiographic narrative. Such structural independence, while maintaining internal compositional unity, is a defining characteristic unique to hagiographic literature. Among these narratives, the episode of *Isrā'* and *Mi'rāj*, as described in the Qur'an, occupies a central position within all major works related to the life of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

For instance, to the question: "Why was the Prophet (peace be upon him) ascended to the *Mi'rāj*?" the answer provided is: "He was shown the Throne, the celestial spheres, Paradise, and Hell, and it was revealed: 'O Muhammad, all of creation was brought into being for your sake.'" [7, p.147]

When portraying the events of *Isrā'* and *Mi'rāj*, almost all authors face significant creative limitations. While they are free to offer poetic and narrative embellishments in the earlier segments of the plot, their freedom becomes constrained at this pivotal episode. This is primarily because the events occur not on Earth but in the heavenly realm—beyond space and time, or as described in Sufi terminology, *lāmākān* (the placeless). Authors, being well-versed in Sufi metaphysics, accept that *lāmākān* is the exclusive domain of the Divine, and as such, its depiction lies beyond human capacity. Consequently, literary accounts rely heavily on Qur'anic and hadith sources during this portion of the narrative.

In contrast, the pre- and post-*Mi'rāj* events are expressed more freely and in diverse styles by various authors. The *Mi'rāj* episode continues to serve as a rich subject for scholarly research and literary inspiration, providing both analytical depth and artistic stimulus [22, p.6].

At the same time, the concept of chronotope—a key topic of debate in contemporary literary studies—is clearly observable in *Mi'rājnāma* texts. The journey of

the Prophet from Mecca (Masjid al-Ḥarām) to Jerusalem (Masjid al-Aqṣā) represents a movement through physical space. His ascension from Earth through the heavens involves encounters with prophets at each level of the celestial hierarchy. These interactions, in turn, inspired the evolution of the maqāmāt genre. The Prophet's dialogue with God on the Throne, his tour of Paradise and Hell, and the spiritual meanings attached to these experiences require extended time. Yet, paradoxically, upon his return, it is stated that "the latch of the door was still trembling," indicating that in Earthly time, no measurable duration had passed. This effectively demonstrates the coexistence of multiple temporal layers.

Given that hagiographic works focus on the lives and missions of prophets, it becomes necessary to understand the moral and didactic intentions behind Qur'anic stories. It is noted that the Qur'anic chapters (sūrahs) describing historical events are predominantly Makki [8, p.613], and that some narratives appear repeatedly throughout the Qur'an, each time with nuanced meanings and didactic purposes. The stories of the prophets, for example, are meant to reflect the long and persistent struggle on the path of faith. Learning how such struggles unfolded in the lives of past communities serves as a moral example for future generations [2, p.31].

This pedagogical function is explicitly articulated in SūratYūsuf, verse 111:

"Indeed, in their stories is a lesson for those of understanding. Never was it [the Qur'an] a narration invented, but a confirmation of what was before it and a detailed explanation of all things and guidance and mercy for a people who believe." [8, p.248] As Shaykh Abdulaziz Mansur explains, this verse illustrates the profound instructive value embedded in prophetic narratives—such as the story of Prophet Yusuf (Joseph): his abandonment in a well, his rise from slavery to power, the themes of patience, deceit, and reconciliation among brothers [8, p.248]. Attention to the phrase "a lesson for those of understanding" reveals that Qur'anic stories are not only spiritually enriching but also aesthetically profound, thereby elevating the artistic dimension of hagiographic literature.

Ultimately, each narrative plot is born anew within its own historical context, regardless of how similar it may seem to earlier story structures. While shaped by its specific historical framework, the narrative often integrates seamlessly with prior traditions. As such, literary history can be regarded as the history of human character, with each era producing a distinct

conception of humanity. Thus, the artistic complexity and character depth of a given work are determined by its historical and ideological circumstances [23, p.13]. Rather than being reinvented from scratch, narrative elements are adapted and redeployed in response to new intellectual and cultural demands, ensuring both continuity and innovation in the tradition of classical Islamic literature.

## REFERENCES

- Karomatov, X. (1998). *Xo'rlangan payg'ambarlar g'alabasi*. Toshkent: Adabiyot va san'at nashriyoti.
- Shayx Muhammad Sodik Muhammad Yusuf. (2021). *Hadis va hayot (Anbiyo qisqasi)*. Toshkent: Hilol-Nashr.
- Abdullaeva, D. (2020). *Mumtoz adabiy asarlar tarkibidagi "masal"lar genezisi, tipologiyasi, funksional tahlili (Monografiya)*. Toshkent: Muharrir.
- Hatamov, N., & Sarimsoqov, B. (1979). *Adabiyotshunoslik terminlarining ruscha-o'zbekcha izohli lug'ati*. Toshkent: O'qituvchi.
- Rasulova, U. (2020). *XX asr o'zbek qissachiligi (poetik izlanishlar va taraqqiyot tamoyillari) (D.Sc. dissertatsiyasi)*. Toshkent.
- Navoiy, A. (2013). *Tarixi anbiyo va hukamo. To'la asarlar to'plami (10 jildlik, 8-jild)*. Toshkent: G'afur G'ulom nomidagi nashriyot-matbaa ijodiy uyi.
- Rabg'uziy, N. (2018). *Qisasi Rabg'uziy*. Toshkent: Yoshlar nashriyot uyi.
- Mansur, A. (2004). *Qur'oni karim ma'nolarining tarjima va tafsiri (Moida surasi, 92-oyat)*. Toshkent: Toshkent islom instituti.
- Qurbonov, D. (2018). *Adabiyot nazariyasi asoslari*. Toshkent: Akademyanashr.
- Mannopov, I. (2019). *O'zbek mumtoz adabiyotida hikmatnavislik an'anasi va tadrigi (PhD dissertatsiyasi)*. Farg'ona.
- Tilavov, A., & Saydullaev, I. (2021). *Ibratli hikoyatlar va xislatli hikmatlar (nashrga tayyorlovchilar)*. Toshkent: Qamar media.
- G'ijduvoni, A. (2018). *Maqomoti Yusuf Hamadoni. Vasiyatnoma*. Toshkent: Movarounnahr.
- Islom ensiklopediyasi. (2017). Toshkent: O'zbekiston Milliy ensiklopediyasi.
- Imomov, K., et al. (1990). *O'zbek xalq og'zaki poetik ijodi*. Toshkent: O'qituvchi.
- Navoiy, A. (2018). *Mahbub ul-qulub*. Toshkent: Sano-standart.
- Navoiy, A. (2000). *Tarixi anbiyo va hukamo. To'la asarlar to'plami (20 jildlik, 16-jild)*. Toshkent: Fan.
- Sog'uniy, A. (2019). *Tarixi Muhammadiy*. Toshkent:

Movarounnahr.

Attor, F. (2017). Tazkirat ul-avliyo. Toshkent: G'afur G'ulom nashriyoti.

Navoiy, A. (2000). Nasoyim ul-muhabbat. To'la asarlar to'plami (20 jildlik, 17-jild). Toshkent: Fan.

Quronov, D., Mamajanov, Z., & Sheralieva, M. (2013). Adabiyotshunoslik lug'ati. Toshkent: Akademnashr.

At-Termiziy, I. (1991). Shamoil Muhammadiya. Toshkent: Mehnat.

Me'rojnoma. (n.d.). Nashrga tayyorlovchi, so'zboshi va izoh mualliflari: Ibrohim Haqqul, Sayfiddin Rafiuddin. Toshkent: Yozuvchi.

Alimov, P. (1991). Tarix, shaxs, badi'a. Toshkent: O'zbekiston.