

# A Comparative Study Of Khorezm Folklore And The Folklore Of Turkish People

Makhsuda Yusupboyevna Karimova

Associate Professor, Department of Uzbek and Foreign Languages, Doctor of Philosophy in Philology (PhD), Urgench RANCH University of technology, Uzbekistan

**Received:** 16 September 2025; **Accepted:** 09 October 2025; **Published:** 13 November 2025

**Abstract:** The article discusses Uzbek folklore scholarship, particularly the establishment of Uzbek folklore studies and Professor Safarboy Ruzimbaev's contribution to its development. The author emphasizes the importance of preserving Uzbek folklore and written literature as a unique part of the nation's intangible cultural heritage.

**Keywords:** Uzbek folklore studies; Professor Safarboy Ruzimbaev; written literature; intangible cultural heritage; oral traditions.

**Introduction:** From a historical perspective, a truly progressive policy is one that fosters understanding and eases tensions between peoples. At present, there is no more urgent or responsible task in the world. Humanity risks destruction unless it learns to live a civilized and peaceful life. Mutual distrust, dangerous conflicts, and an atmosphere of political tension remain absolute obstacles to the peaceful and happy existence of humankind.

The dozens of epics, fairy tales, and folk songs famous in Khorezm—such as G'orogli, Oshiq G'arib, Edigo, and Sayyod va Hamro—fully confirm these ideas, as they are remarkable works interwoven with the wise philosophy of life and deeply humanistic ideals.

Analyzing materials from all genres of Uzbek oral literary creativity—produced by a people who have made a significant contribution to world civilization—from a contemporary perspective and recognizing their importance for the spiritual development of the younger generation remains one of the most vital tasks for folklore researchers.

The human heart is extremely complex, and its reflection in the form of artistic creation is even more intricate. To achieve any significant results in this field, a researcher must devote their entire life to the work. Through persistent scholarly inquiry, such individuals dedicate themselves to the spiritual enrichment of society, and in doing so, they earn the respect of the

people. The difficult yet noble experience of a scholar striving to elevate the nation's spirituality provides an invaluable example for future generations.

As a translator, Professor Safarboy Ro'zimboyev translated nine scientific and literary works from Russian and Karakalpak into Uzbek. As a result of his extensive research, he presented valuable insights not only in Uzbek folklore studies but also in ethnography, toponymy, and the etymology of place names in his memoir Shalola and the anthology Saylanma.

## METHODOLOGY

In this study, historical-comparative, linguistic, biographical, ethnofolkloristic, comparative-typological, and textual analysis methods were employed. In the modern era, when some nations and peoples are losing their history, language, and traditions, becoming detached from their spiritual heritage, and falling under the influence of so-called "popular culture," this book highlights the vast historical depth and rich ethnographic heritage of the Uzbek people.

The monograph Pre-Islamic Rituals and Customs of the Khorezm by G. P. Snesarev holds great value in the academic world for its comprehensiveness, abundance of unique evidence, and solid foundation in rigorous scholarly analysis. The work contains extensive information about the origins and development of Khwarezm folklore. Recognizing the significance of

these materials for Uzbek folklore studies, Professor Safarboy Ro'zimboyev made effective use of the scientific works and articles of G. P. Snesev, as well as those of S. P. Tolstov and V. M. Zhirmunsky, in his own research.

## RESULTS

In some riddles created in the Khorezm region, explanations are provided that reveal the etymology of certain traditional dishes prepared in the area. For example, consider the riddle about the Khorezm dish go'mma: "double-layered, sweet in the middle" (Khorezm Treasure, p. 83). In this riddle, minced meat is placed in a piece of flattened dough shaped into a circle, which is then folded twice—corresponding to the phrase "double-layered." The minced filling, hidden inside, is symbolized by the phrase "sweet in the middle." A person unfamiliar with this traditional dish would be unable to decipher the riddle embedded in the food's description. Similar riddles have also been composed about Uzbek pilaf (palov).

The folklorist and scholar Professor Safarboy Ro'zimboyev demonstrates exceptional translation skill and a deep folkloristic interpretation in his historical novels. Combining his extensive historical knowledge with philological insight, Ro'zimboyev, who began his creative career as a translator, also turned to fiction, artistically depicting the history of the Khiva Khanate in his historical tetralogy —Langar, Mezon, Bo'hron, and Arosat [17, 7].

These novels occupy an honorable place in the hearts of readers who appreciate historical fiction, as evidenced by numerous letters from his readership [13, 212]. Each novel complements the others, forming a unified artistic portrayal of history. The information contained within these works attains a sense of historical precision and documentary value through its faithful reflection of time and events.

The scholarly and artistic value of Professor Safarboy Ro'zimboyev's works lies in their wide range of historical content, their focus on the spiritual and cultural life of the Khiva Khanate, and their exploration of enlightenment ideas. His creative works also demonstrate a deep engagement with the historical roots of national spirituality, the literary environment of Khorezm, and the art of translation.

The historical reality depicted in the novel Mezon continues in Bo'hron, which reflects the crisis that occurred in the territory of the Khiva Khanate during the reigns of Abdullah Khan, Qutlug'murod Khan, and Sayyid Muhammad Khan, as well as the impact of these events on the socio-economic, cultural, and everyday life of the people. The author's historical novels are especially valuable because they contain rich

information about the region's unique nature, climate, ethnography, and the etymology of place names. Ro'zimboyev's storytelling captivates readers, skillfully weaving short episodes that lead to profound insights and conclusions.

In his historical novels, Ro'zimboyev includes such narratives as Rashid Effendi—about the famous orientalist Ármín Vámbéry (known in the East as Rashid Effendi)—and Mullah Is'hak, which tells the story of Vámbéry's loyal assistant from Khorezm. Posing as a Turk named Rashid Effendi, the Hungarian scholar Vámbéry traveled through Central Asia and was fluent in more than twenty languages. His Chigatai Language Textbook, consisting of twelve sections, includes Uzbek–German and Uzbek–French dictionaries. Judging by the annotations and commentaries in the dictionary, it is evident that Vámbéry worked closely with a native speaker highly proficient in Uzbek.

In the preface to the dictionary, Vámbéry noted that sources such as Abushka, Dictionary of the Turkish Language, Badoe ul-Lugat, and Conclusion of Abbasi served as "living dictionaries" for him. Professor Safarboy Ro'zimboyev, assessing this situation objectively, emphasized that Mullah Is'hak should rightfully have been recognized as a co-author of Vámbéry's work [13, p. 121].

In the stories Rashid Effendi and Mullah Is'hak, Professor Safarboy Ro'zimboyev artistically presents some of the earliest explorations into the study of national values, folklore, and customs of Khorezm. The novel includes many short stories that reflect the rich spiritual heritage of the Uzbek people. For example, the story The Reader discusses educational innovations in the Khiva Khanate and provides valuable information about the role of books and reading culture. In A Letter from a Brothel, the author portrays the image of a courageous young man who, despite difficult circumstances, seeks and attains a happy and dignified life. The story inspires readers to look toward the future with optimism and faith in human resilience.

In the historical novel Langar, a series of dramatic and tragic events is depicted through vivid artistic imagery set against a background of historical reality. Among the historical figures—Muhammad Rahim Khan, Yusuf Mehtar, Shahniyoz Otalik, Qutlug'murod Inoq, and Amir Haydar—Ro'zimboyev introduces fictional characters such as Murad, Pano Buva, Omad, Gulummat, Muslim, and Gulgun, whose stories help convey the political, economic, cultural, and everyday life of the time. The ethnographic materials integrated into the narrative, reflecting folk traditions and art, lend the novel authenticity and emotional depth.

The author provides detailed descriptions of wedding

ceremonies in Hazarasp (pp. 58–61), including traditional songs, performances of epic storytellers (bakhshi), jesters (maskharaboz), and folk games such as Kumpishik, Chog'ollok, Bangi, and Sulgun tutish. He also depicts the famous Kairak Lazgi dance, halfa performances, wrestling contests, horse races, and competitions involving rams and roosters.

Particular attention is given to Khorezm cuisine: the preparation of fried cucumbers, paxta qoplama (cotton covering), yorma bulam (oat porridge), and lamb dishes—all of which add naturalistic color and ethnographic realism to the narrative. The author also provides information on the production of military weapons and the secret practices of the khanate's craftsmen, further enriching the historical background of the series.

In describing the Khiva market, Ro'zimboyev highlights the slave market, which evokes deep emotional reflection in the reader. The tragic destinies and moral struggles of several central characters are closely intertwined with this market, symbolizing the broader human suffering and moral complexities of that era.

The use of folklorism in Professor Safarboy Ro'zimboyev's historical tetralogy—Langar, Mezon, Bo'hron, and Arosat—is extensive and artistically purposeful. The author skillfully integrates proverbs, sayings, idioms, and folk expressions to enrich his narratives with cultural authenticity and national color.

In the novel Langar, numerous examples of folk wisdom appear, such as:

"A Thousand Workers and One Boss" (p. 9), "Sand Finds in the Dark" (p. 73), "The Head of a Man is the Stone of God" (p. 101), "How the Widow Gave Him to Her Husband" (p. 130), "The Rain Stretches, Thinly Breaks" (p. 114), and "The Dog Does Not Know the Owner" (p. 220).

In Mezon, folkloric expressions are even more numerous and varied. Among them are: "The Enemy of the Poor Becomes Poor Himself" (p. 8), "The Head of a Man is the Stone of God" (p. 31), "Hope for Your Soul — Hope for the Soul That Has Not Departed" (p. 36), "The Wall Has Mice, and the Mice Have Ears" (p. 37), "The Torment of the Road Is Grief" (p. 41), "The Hopeless Devil" (p. 50), "Man Receives Forgiveness" (p. 76), "Even After Forty Years of Oppression, He Will Die as Fated" (p. 76), "Patience Brings Joy" (p. 79), "It Is Better to Be a Fool Than to Be Too Wise" (p. 111), "Equal Shadows and a Bag of Manure" (p. 113), "Roses from Ice" (p. 114), "The Khan Is Still a Khan: He Has One Mouth for Water and One for Grass" (p. 156), "If a Person Is a King One Day, He May Be Poor the Next" (p. 154), "If a Bullet Misses Its Target, It Cries Every Day" (p. 159), "What Can I Say? What Does a Sheep Say?" (p.

161), and the Karakalpak proverb "Two Goats Plowing Can Destroy the World" (p. 166). Other sayings include "The Hen Died" (p. 202), "A Bad Wife Is Worse Than a Poisonous Snake" (p. 205), "A Head with a Soft Tongue" (p. 233), "It Is Good to Have a Future Deal; It Is Good That the Dying Man Has Died" (p. 246), "The Misfortune of the Day Is the Misfortune of the Soul" (p. 279), "The Moon Is a Fish, the Year Is the Head" (p. 309), and "The River Flows" (p. 329).

In Bo'hron, folkloric expressions such as "Trouble Comes from Oneself" (p. 24), "People Have No Homeland" (p. 83), "The Death of a Horse Is a Dog's Holiday" (p. 100), "A Child Who Fell Does Not Cry" (p. 115), "Khvoraligim – Mangaylag'oligim" (p. 121), "In a Carefree Household" (p. 122), and "In a Man, in the Teeth of an Animal" (p. 141) appear frequently, reflecting the people's philosophical worldview and moral codes.

In Arosat, proverbs such as "Lying Like a Bird" (p. 197) and "The Wolf Does Not Tear the Wolf" (p. 210) illustrate folk wisdom about loyalty, deceit, and survival. Across the tetralogy, Ro'zimboyev also incorporates yor-yorlar (bridal farewell songs), kelinsalomalar (songs of greeting for the bride), and other wedding-related folk songs, enhancing the authenticity of scenes depicting traditional Khorezm ceremonies. References to famous Khorezm bakhshi (epic performers), their performance styles, and even biographical details are woven into the narrative.

The author provides detailed ethnographic descriptions of wedding customs, table settings, and cooking techniques, enabling the modern reader to visualize the full cultural context and even learn traditional recipes, complete with their preparation order. Many of these dishes—such as quyoshli yog' (sunflower oil in yogurt) and barrak (dumplings prepared by the bride)—are still served at weddings today, preserving a living link between the past and present.

The novels Langar, Mezon, Bukhron, and Arosat form a tetralogy. In the fourth novel, Arosat, the territory of Khorezm is depicted as being divided into two parts — the right bank of the river coming under Russian control [17, 216]. The author emphasizes that during the reign of Muhammad Rahimhan II, the region was freed from wars, and significant attention was paid to the development of literature and art. However, after the death of Muhammad Rahimhan II, the throne was taken by Isfandiyar Khan, whose indecisiveness and lack of firm leadership led to the deepening of the national crisis and social unrest.

In the preface to Arosat, Professor Safarboy Ruzimbaev highlights the importance of the novel for the modern

reader, noting:

“Readers should know the artistic history of their people. Anyone who is familiar with the history and difficulties of yesterday will learn to appreciate them and fully understand the value of an independent and prosperous life” [18, 203].

Professor S. Ruzimbaev’s scientific research is closely related to the ethnography and folklore of Khorezm. His studies, particularly those concerning Khorezmian epics and folk songs, serve as strong evidence of his deep ethnographic insight. As an outstanding specialist in Khorezm folklore and ethnography, Ruzimbaev skillfully incorporated traditional cultural elements and oral heritage into his literary works, effectively translating the intangible cultural heritage of the region into artistic form.

## CONCLUSION

A significant contribution to the creation and development of the Khorezm folklore school was made through the research of the prominent folklorist Professor Safarboy Ruzimbaev. His extensive and fundamental studies on the local features of Uzbek folklore, based on materials collected from different regions, greatly enriched the national treasury of oral literature. The devoted scholar, who dedicated his entire life to collecting, publishing, and analyzing the oral poetry of the Khorezm oasis, provided invaluable sources for the study of folklore. In particular, his contributions to the investigation of the epic traditions of the Khorezm epic school and his research on Khorezm folk songs and epic narratives established him as one of the leading figures in Uzbek folklore studies.

Safarboy Ruzimbaev’s profound research into the local characteristics of Uzbek folk creativity—especially concerning the historical formation of the Khorezm epic, the artistic originality of the oasis, and the poetics of epic plots—played a crucial role in shaping the scientific foundation of Uzbek folklore research. His analytical studies not only defined the regional distinctiveness of Khorezm’s oral heritage but also deepened the understanding of its historical development and thematic diversity.

Among his most influential works are the methodological manual “Khorezm Traditions of Bakhshi” and the scientific treatises “Specificity, Typology and Poetics of Khorezm Epics” and “Khorezm Traditions of the Epic.” These works present a scientific justification that the folklore of Khorezm represents an integral part of the masterpieces of world artistic heritage. Through these monographs, Ruzimbaev demonstrated the cultural and aesthetic value of Khorezm’s oral traditions and their contribution to the global history of epic creativity.

In addition to his scholarly research, Ruzimbaev’s artistic works—including the historical novels Langar, Meson, Bukhron, and Arosat—form a unified tetralogy that artistically complements and enriches historical reality. The information in these novels is based on documentary accuracy and precise chronology. These works are distinguished not only by their reflection of historical events but also by their attention to the spiritual and cultural life of the Khiva Khanate, as well as their deep philosophical analysis of the historical roots of national spirituality. Through his novels, Ruzimbaev successfully integrated folklore into artistic creation, thus demonstrating that folklore serves as a fundamental source for the birth and development of all cultural and spiritual values. His historical novels ensured the continuity and vitality of folklore in modern Uzbek literature. Furthermore, Ruzimbaev’s tetralogy provides detailed information about the unique nature, climate, ethnography, and etymology of the place names within the Khorezm oasis. The author skillfully employed folklorisms throughout the novels, enriching their artistic texture and national color. These works not only enhance readers’ understanding of the historical and cultural heritage of Khorezm but also play an important educational role in increasing the younger generation’s knowledge of their national history, ethnography, and folklore traditions.

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