

## Interpretation of Artistic Images in Khorezm Epics (Based on The Views of Omonilla Madayev)

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**Abstract:** This article discusses the views of the scholar Omonilla Madayev on the Khorezm epics. The images in these epics and their specific aspects are analyzed separately. Explained with examples.

**Keywords:** Epic, folklore, love, image, women.

**Introduction:** Folkloral literature is a means that reflects the customs, traditions, and distinctive features of a particular people. All genres of folklore differ from each other by their unique artistic aesthetics. Among them, folk epics occupy a special place. The word *doston* originates from Persian and means “story,” “narrative,” or “history.” It refers to an epic work about folk heroes narrated in both verse and prose. This genre is one of the most extensively studied genres by folklorists. According to Omonilla Madayev, the epic genre “has caused numerous debates and, at the same time, has made the heritage of Uzbek folk oral creativity known and famous throughout the world.”

Folklorist Omonilla Madayev also conducted systematic and in-depth research on Khorezm epics. In 1973, under the supervision of M.S. Saidov, he defended his candidate dissertation titled “Khorezm Epics and Their Specific Features.” In this research, the scholar clearly demonstrated the similarities and differences between Khorezm and Samarkand epics with concrete evidence. In this article, the scholar’s views and scientific arguments on the “artistic principles of creating images in Khorezm epics,” which were particularly emphasized in his research, are discussed.

According to the scholar, “Khorezm epics are immortal monuments reflecting the life, struggles, and aspirations of the people of Khorezm, who possess a centuries-old cultural history.” In Madayev’s view, the method of depicting life in Khorezm epics gradually developed to the point of reflecting the laws of social development. Indeed, realism lies at the foundation of

every folklore work.

The scholar also pays special attention to the images found in epics. Speaking about the image of Go’ro’g’li, he emphasizes the vivid realism embodied in this character. In epics such as “Bozirgon,” “Qirq Ming,” and “The Bringing of Avazkhan to Chambil,” Go’ro’g’li is portrayed not only as a heroic figure but also as a remarkable person, a protector of working people, and a compassionate father. Even in situations where a battle seems inevitable, Go’ro’g’li is able to resolve conflicts peacefully through wisdom and his ability to play music.

However, in the epic “Bozirgon,” he is depicted in a situation not found in other epics: he kills his close friend and sworn brother with his own hands. Afterwards, he deeply regrets his action and declares that he is ready to accept any punishment. Omonilla Madayev notes that in the epic “Bozirgon,” Go’ro’g’li is portrayed in a highly realistic manner. The scholar also emphasizes that the Khorezm epics in which this character appears belong to the genre of heroic epics, since heroic qualities are strongly emphasized in them.

The scholar also discusses negative characters, noting that the people created them based on the cruel and immoral individuals they encountered in real life, such as Surxayl, Toychaxon, and Azbarxo’ja. Positive characters, on the other hand, are portrayed as a generalization of the people’s ideals and aspirations, such as Alpomish, Qorajon, Barchinoy, Qaldirg’och, Go’ro’g’li, Avazxon, and Hasanxon.

Omonilla Madayev also points out that elements of

feudalism and information about the period of khanates are reflected in folk epics. In the epic “Zavriyo,” Zavriyo’s parents lament deeply after being separated from their beautiful daughter. During the period of the khanates that ruled Central Asia, the disappearance of beautiful girls was not an uncommon phenomenon. In the epic “Bozirgon,” the scholar also interprets the elements typical of feudal society—such as intrigues, slander, and conspiracies within the palace—as factors that lead even a noble person astray, which eventually forces Go’ro’g’li to kill his close friend.

At this point, the scholar cites Go’ro’g’li’s monologue:

Go’ro’g’li says, you left me in sorrow,  
What did you accomplish in this world?  
Today you gave your life with a sigh,  
O false and transient world.

In the second chapter of his research, the scholar focuses specifically on the analysis of positive heroes and the methods of creating images in Khorezm epics. According to him, in Uzbek epics, particularly in Khorezm epics, positive heroes often belong to the higher social strata. Even if they originate from among the common people, they eventually rise to the level of rulers.

Although Go’ro’g’li is a positive hero in Khorezm epics, the people do not portray him as a flawless figure. This indicates the closeness of the heroes to the people themselves. According to the scholar, in the people’s imagination, none of the national heroes are completely free from faults. The main issue lies in correcting these mistakes. Madayev notes that it is natural for Go’ro’g’li to make certain mistakes. In the epic “Bozirgon,” Go’ro’g’li believes the words of a witch and kills Bozirgon, whom he considered a brother. However, this does not turn him into a negative hero. He realizes his mistake and deeply regrets it:

I trusted the words of the enemy,  
I became the bloodthirsty Go’ro’g’li.  
I cannot look into your face,  
I became the dishonorable Go’ro’g’li.

The following lines also reflect his deep remorse:

Go’ro’g’li says, I have also renounced my life,  
Strike with the sword, let the earth be filled with my blood,  
Take my life from this delicate body,  
For me the end of the world has come, Bozirgon.

According to the scholar, Go’ro’g’li’s words addressed to Bozirgon express deep human psychology. This is clearly seen when he openly confesses his guilt to

Bozirgon’s sister Oysulton and tries to justify himself until the end of the epic.

Omonilla Madayev also discusses the epic “Sayyod and Hamro,” describing the unique features of Hamro’s character. He explains that Hamro often behaves in ways unworthy of a true lover: throughout the epic he changes his decisions regarding love several times, sometimes betrays Salbiniyoz and even Sayyodkhan, and frequently resorts to lies. This demonstrates the complexity of his character. Such depiction indicates that the expectations placed on the main hero are expressed through irony.

In the epic, Hamro’s image is contrasted with that of Sayyod. Through Sayyod’s character, the people generalize their understanding of love and loyalty and express their aspirations. The scholar also emphasizes that the fact that the main heroes of Khorezm epics are depicted as musicians and singers is not accidental. The people of Khorezm were not only skilled in architecture, carving, and ornamentation but were also masters of musical art. Therefore, Go’ro’g’li in “Bozirgon” and Hamro in “Sayyod and Hamro” are portrayed as talented singers and musicians.

The scholar also notes that the portraits of beloved female characters in Khorezm epics are depicted with special affection, and their beauty is described as incomparable. In describing the portrait of Sayyodkhan in “Sayyod and Hamro,” the scholar highlights qualities such as courage and determination. In some situations, she even becomes an example for Hamro in defending herself.

The scholar states that emphasizing physical strength in female characters is not typical; rather, when women are described, the listener should imagine “the most delicate, graceful, and elegant woman.” Therefore, their portraits are expressed through various similes and epithets. Descriptions of their clothing, beauty marks on their faces, and various ornaments help the listener form a clearer image of the characters.

Red suits you well,  
Why do you wear black?  
 (“Sayyod and Hamro”)

These lines reflect not only Salbiniyoz’s appearance but also her emotional state. Such lines are frequently found in Khorezm epics. In this research, Omonilla Madayev provides comprehensive information about the characters in Khorezm epics, their role and significance within the narrative, the external appearance and psychological states of the heroes, as well as positive and negative characters. He also presents examples from various epics. This research is one of the important sources providing extensive

information about Khorezm epics.

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