

THE NOMA GENRE IN CLASSICAL LITERATURE: TRADITION AND
INNOVATION

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<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.21973522>**Аннотация**

Статья посвящена истории литературных связей таджикско-персидской литературы с другими странами Востока. В ней анализируется влияние произведений персидской и таджикской литературы на литературные среды Центральной Азии, Индии, Турции и других восточных стран, а также традиции перевода, подражания и культурного обмена. Авторы стремятся показать интеллектуальное и эстетическое воздействие среди народов Востока через эти литературные связи. Исследование подчеркивает значение таджикско-персидской литературы в восточных литературных процессах и её ценность как части культурного наследия.

Ключевые слова: таджикская литература, персидская литература, Восток, литературные связи, перевод и подражание, культурный обмен

Abstract

This article is dedicated to the history of the literary connections of Tajik-Persian literature with other countries of the East. It analyzes the influence of Persian and Tajik literary works on the literary environments of Central Asia, India, Turkey, and other Eastern countries, as well as the traditions of translation, imitation, and cultural exchange. The authors aim to demonstrate the intellectual and aesthetic impacts among Eastern peoples through these literary connections. The study highlights the significance of Tajik-Persian literature in Eastern literary processes and its value as a part of cultural heritage.

Keywords: Tajik literature, Persian literature, the East, literary connections, translation and imitation, cultural exchange

Introduction

Among the literary cultures of the East, Tajik-Persian literature occupies a special position due to its ancient origins, artistic richness, and broad cultural influence. Over many centuries, this literature affected not only the intellectual life of Persian-speaking societies but also the literary development of neighboring Eastern peoples. Literary interaction emerged through translation activities, artistic imitation, intercultural communication, and shared aesthetic traditions. As a result, strong spiritual and literary ties were formed among Eastern nations. The present study examines the role of Tajik-Persian literature in the development of Eastern literary relations and investigates the evolution of the noma tradition within Persian-Tajik and Turkic literary environments.

In Eastern literary culture, correspondence and epistolary writing were considered an important component of artistic creativity. Within the munshaot tradition, authors paid particular attention to stylistic elegance, rhetorical mastery, and artistic expressiveness. Such texts were not intended merely to transmit information; rather, they demonstrated the literary competence and creative abilities of the writer. For this reason, literary devices such as metaphor, simile, allegory, hyperbole, and saj' (rhymed prose) frequently appeared in letters.

References to Qur'anic verses, hadiths, and poetic excerpts also became an inseparable part of literary correspondence, enriching the ideological and aesthetic value of the text.

The munshaot genre generally represents collections of prose or poetic letters created by one or several authors. In classical Eastern literature, these collections gradually developed into an independent artistic phenomenon associated with the art of refined composition. In literary terminology, munshaot was also described through concepts such as “ruq'aot” and “maktubot” [O'zbekiston milliy ensiklopediyasi, 2000, p. 821].

The tradition of nomanavislik occupied an important place in both Persian-Tajik and Turkic literary cultures. Scholarly interest in this tradition developed over a long historical period and mainly focused on two directions:

1. Research devoted to theoretical and literary aspects of nomanavislik.
2. Publication of literary monuments and textual studies connected with noma works. [Ўзбек эпик поэзияси тарихидан, 1974, p. 8-20].

Methods

The research is based on comparative-historical and textual analysis methods. Classical Persian-Tajik and Turkic literary works associated with the noma tradition were comparatively studied in order to identify common literary features and distinctive characteristics. Academic monographs, literary histories, encyclopedic materials, and scientific interpretations served as the principal theoretical foundation of the study.

The analysis was conducted according to:

- genre classification;
- thematic structure;
- artistic composition;
- literary influence across Eastern cultures;
- evolution of poetic forms within the noma tradition.

Special attention was given to the development of the genre from early epistolary elements within epic literature to the formation of independent literary works.

Results

The term “noma” appears extensively in Eastern literary history and embraces a broad spectrum of literary forms. In academician B. Valikhojaev's monograph devoted to Uzbek epic poetry, noma works are classified according to their compositional structure, literary purpose, and thematic orientation. The scholar categorizes them into prose, poetic, and mixed forms, while their content ranges from artistic and historical works to memoirs, scientific writings, and social narratives [Ўзбек эпик поэзияси тарихидан, 1974, p. 8-20].

Poetic nomas are mainly divided into two categories:

1. Noma in the form of epic cycles and poetic narratives.
2. Noma composed as a masnavi-type literary work. [Ўзбек эпик поэзияси тарихидан, 1974, p. 8-20].

Researchers emphasize that noma works differ significantly in both structure and thematic scope. Because of this diversity, scholars consider it difficult to evaluate all examples through one universal genre standard. In literary studies, the concept of noma is therefore primarily applied to poetic letters possessing independent artistic and compositional value.

The literary significance of this genre was also recognized by Alisher Navoi. In *Mezon ul-avzon*, the poet discusses *Muhabbatnoma* as a special poetic form within Turkic literary culture and provides an illustrative example:

Meni og'zing uchun shaydo qilibsen,

Manga yo'q qayg'uni paydo qilibsen [Алишер Навоий, МАТ, 2000, p. 93].

Navoi's interpretation demonstrates that *Muhabbatnoma* was perceived not only as lyrical correspondence but also as a distinct artistic genre. Consequently, Navoi may be regarded as one of the earliest scholars who theoretically acknowledged the literary status of *noma* works.

In literary tradition, the concept of *noma* also referred to letters exchanged between characters in epic compositions. According to N. Rahmonov, some of the earliest examples can be traced to works such as *Alpomish*, *O'g'uznoma*, and *Qutadg'u bilig*, where letters function as an essential narrative element [Ўзбек мумтоз адабиёти намуналари, 2007, p. 94].

Early forms of literary correspondence are also observed in the famous Persian epics *Vis and Ramin* by Fakhridin Gurgani, *Khosrow and Shirin* by Nizami Ganjavi, and *Shirin and Khosrow* by Khosrow Dehlavi. These works became important sources for the later development of the *noma* tradition and received considerable attention in world literary scholarship [O'zbek adabiyoti tarixi, 2017, p. 321].

The development of the *noma* genre in Persian-Tajik literature reveals that the term originally denoted written correspondence or epistles. Over time, however, literary letters evolved into poetic expressions associated mainly with themes of love and emotional communication.

From the 10th to the 15th centuries, numerous important *noma* works appeared in Persian-Tajik literature. These literary monuments can generally be divided into two principal groups:

- *nomas* incorporated into large epic narratives;
- independent *masnavi* works devoted to romantic and lyrical themes.

Among the most influential examples are Avhadiy's *Dahnama*, Khoja Imomiddin Faqih Kirmoni's *Muhabbatnoma*, and Ibn Imod's *Dahnama* [Ўзбек адабиётида нома жанри, 1992, p. 8].

During the 12th–14th centuries, Persian-Tajik *nomas* acquired increasingly independent literary features. What initially functioned as a structural element inside broader literary compositions gradually transformed into a separate artistic genre.

The thematic core of the *noma* tradition centered primarily on love and romantic experience. Literary scholars particularly emphasize the contribution of Avhadiy and Ibn Imod to the artistic maturity of the genre. Discussing Avhadiy's *Dahnama*, G. Begdeli stated that the work represented an innovative and original contribution to the *noma* tradition due to its composition, imagery, and artistic qualities.

According to studies in Azerbaijani literary history, Davlatshoh Samarqandiy noted that Avhadiy possessed a *divan* containing fifteen thousand couplets. Later literary sources preserve fragments of his *ghazals* and *qasidas*. By the late 14th century, Ibn Imod further advanced the genre through his own *Dahnama*, elevating *noma* writing to the level of an independent literary phenomenon under the influence of Avhadiy's artistic school.

As a result, three successive Dahnamas created in Persian-Tajik literature played a decisive role in establishing noma as an independent literary genre.

The influence of Persian-Tajik literary traditions became especially visible in the literature of Turkic peoples. Significant examples include Khorezmiy's Muhabbatnoma, Khojandi's Latofatnoma, Sayid Ahmad ibn Mironshoh's Taashshuqnoma, and Yusuf Amiri's Dahnama [Азарбайджанская литература с древнейших времен до начала XIX в. 1943, с. 338].

Khorezmiy's Muhabbatnoma preserves the compositional principles characteristic of Persian-Tajik nomanavislik while simultaneously demonstrating structural originality. Besides nomas, the work incorporates ghazals, qasidas, munajats, qit'as, fards, masnavis, and narrative episodes. Initially conceived as ten nomas, the work was later expanded to include eleven.

Khojandi's Latofatnoma directly reflects the influence of Muhabbatnoma. Nevertheless, the author introduced independent artistic features through characterization, composition, and depictions of nature. Sayid Ahmad ibn Mironshoh also contributed to the evolution of the genre by dividing each noma into three interconnected parts consisting of a letter, a ghazal, and a summary.

Yusuf Amiri further enriched the literary possibilities of the genre by integrating letters into a broader narrative framework. His Dahnama, completed in 1420 (Hijri 823), consists of forty-six chapters and contains nomas, ghazals, fards, and separate stories. Compared with earlier examples, the work demonstrates a more systematic compositional structure [Ўзбек адабиётида нома жанри, 1992, р. 33].

Research devoted to lyric genres during the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries also paid considerable attention to the noma tradition. In particular, the studies of R. Orzibekov, Odiljon Avaznazarov, and Maqsud Asadov explored the artistic significance of lyrical forms within nomalar.

In his article "Noma and Soqiynoma," published in Sharq Yulduzi journal in 2012, Maqsud Asadov concluded that the interpretation of wine gatherings, cupbearers, and related imagery in nomalar reveals philosophical reflections on love, society, and human destiny. According to the scholar, such artistic features allow the soqiynoma elements found in nomalar to be recognized as early manifestations of that lyrical genre.

Discussion

The conducted analysis demonstrates that Tajik-Persian literature played a decisive role in shaping literary interaction throughout the East. Through the tradition of nomanavislik, Persian-Tajik literary culture significantly influenced Turkic literature and contributed to the emergence of new artistic forms and literary structures.

The comparative study of works such as Muhabbatnoma, Latofatnoma, Taashshuqnoma, and Dahnama reveals both continuity and innovation within Eastern literary traditions. Authors inherited compositional principles from earlier Persian-Tajik models while adapting them creatively according to the cultural and linguistic environment of their own societies.

The evolution of noma from ordinary correspondence into a sophisticated literary genre also demonstrates the flexibility of Eastern poetic culture. The inclusion of ghazals, masnavis, qasidas, and philosophical motifs within nomalar expanded the artistic possibilities of the genre and increased its literary prestige.

Modern scholarly interest in nomads confirms their enduring significance for the study of classical Eastern literature, intercultural literary relations, and the history of poetic genres.

Conclusion

The study confirms that Tajik-Persian literature maintained strong and multidimensional connections with the literary traditions of other Eastern peoples. These interactions developed through translation, artistic influence, literary imitation, and shared cultural values. As a result, Tajik-Persian literature became one of the major sources influencing the literary processes of the East.

The evolution of the noma tradition illustrates the close relationship between Persian-Tajik and Turkic literary cultures and demonstrates how literary genres developed through intercultural dialogue. Today, these works continue to occupy an important position in literary scholarship as valuable monuments of Eastern cultural heritage.

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