

Artistic Interpretation and Transformations of the Image of Historical Figures in Literature

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Abstract. *This article examines the literary interpretation of three prominent historical figures - Amir Temur, Alisher Navoi, and Zahiriddin Babur - in Eastern, Russian, and Western literature. It explores how literary portraits are formed in works of different eras and cultures: Temur appears as a powerful ruler, strategist, and a symbol of strength and state unity; Navoi - as a prominent poet, reformer of Turkic poetry, and philosopher-humanist; Babur is a conqueror, poet, and exile who united the traditions of Central Asia and India. The purpose of this research is to identify the peculiarities of the literary interpretation of these historical figures in literature of different traditions and to analyze how historical memory influences the formation of cultural identity. The research objectives include: analyzing primary sources, including the works of historical figures themselves ("Baburnama", "Khamsa"); studying classical and contemporary artistic works where their images are present; comparing literary interpretations in various cultural contexts; identifying key motives and changes in the perception of these figures over time. The research was conducted using methods such as comparative analysis, historical-literary method, and intertextual approach. As a result of the research, the peculiarities of the literary image of Amir Temur, Navoi, and Babur in the literary traditions of different peoples were revealed, and the influence of national and cultural factors on their interpretation was shown. In conclusion, it is emphasized that studying these images contributes to understanding the processes of historical memory and cultural identity formation in various societies.*

Key words: *Amir Temur, Alisher Navoi, Zahiriddin Babur, literary interpretation, historical figure, Eastern literature, Uzbek literature, Russian literature, Western literature, national identity, cultural heritage, historical memory, comparative analysis.*

Introduction. Historical figures play a key role in shaping national self-awareness and cultural identity. Their images, captured in written sources, folklore, and literature, become part of the collective memory of the people. Literary interpretations of such figures not only bring the past to life but also adapt it to modern readers' perceptions, reflecting changing ideological, social, and cultural contexts.

Among the most significant historical figures who had a profound influence on the development of Eastern culture, politics, and literature are Amir Temur, Alisher Navoi, and Zahiriddin Babur. Each of these figures played an important role in the formation of statehood, literary traditions, and philosophical thought of their time. Amir Temur is remembered by descendants as a great commander, strategist, and founder of a powerful empire whose image in literature embodies the ideas of strength, unity, and state power. Alisher Navoi is a prominent poet, thinker, and reformer of Turkic poetry, whose work has had a profound impact on subsequent generations of writers and philosophers. Zahiriddin Babur, the founder of the Mughal Empire, was not only a conqueror but also

a talented writer who left behind “Baburnama”, a unique work combining memoirism, historical chronicles, and literary style.

The purpose of this article is to explore the literary interpretation of these historical figures in Eastern, Russian, and Western literature, to identify key motives and characteristics of their images, and to analyze how historical memory shapes the cultural identity of various nations. The study examines their own works, as well as classical and contemporary literary sources where their images are captured. Analysis allows us to trace the evolution of these individuals' perceptions, as well as to identify similarities and differences in their interpretation in different cultural traditions.

Methods. To analyze the artistic interpretation and transformation of historical figures such as Amir Temur, Alisher Navoi, and Babur, an interdisciplinary approach combining historical, literary, and cultural methodology will be used in the proposed research. The main methodological principles used in the work are as follows:

Historical-literary approach. Through this method, the analysis of works depicting historical figures is carried out in the context of their historical era, taking into account how ideas about Amir Temur, Alisher Navoi, and Babur have changed over time, as well as how fiction influenced the perception of these figures.

Theory of cultural transformations. In the context of this work, special attention will be paid to the cultural and symbolic transformations of historical figures. According to this theory, historical figures in literary works can acquire new meanings and meanings depending on the socio-cultural conditions and the needs of the time. Image transformation can be caused by a change in the political and ideological situation, as well as the functioning of mythologemes and archetypes.

Phenomenology of historical image. The phenomenological approach will allow us to consider the historical personality as a multilayered image perceived in the context of specific historical and cultural processes.

Comparative-historical method. An important element of the research is the comparison of the images of Amir Temur, Alisher Navoi, and Babur in different cultural traditions and literary genres. The comparison method will reveal common and unique features of their artistic interpretation in different historical contexts.

Ideological analysis. Within the framework of the study, an ideological analysis will be conducted, which will allow for the study of how historical figures were used in different eras to express political, cultural ideas. This will help reveal how the image of Amir Temur, Alisher Navoi, and Babur was adapted in various ideological contexts, from medieval to modern times.

Results and discussion. Historical figures have always attracted the attention of researchers, creative people. When it comes to such historical figures - great people as Amir Temur, Alisher Navoi, and Babur, it is necessary to consider the above-mentioned issue in a historical-cultural-literary aspect and, as noted by Thomas Carlyle - a British writer, publicist, and historian of the 19th century, “One comfort is, that Great Men, taken up in any way, are profitable company. We cannot look, however imperfectly, upon a great man, without gaining something by him”¹, - he writes in his book “On Heroes, Hero Worship, and the Heroic in History”. Indeed, this gives us enormous material for reflection.

Amir Temur is an outstanding commander and statesman whose figure acquired symbolic significance in the literature of the East and West. In the works of Eastern authors, he is depicted as a wise ruler and strategist with outstanding organizational abilities. In Western literature, however, his image is often romanticized or, conversely, demonized. In Uzbek and Russian literature, it appears as a symbol of strength and state unity.

¹ Carlyle T., On Heroes, Hero Worship, and the Heroic in History, New York Longmans, Green, and CO. London and Bombay, 1906. - 39. - Available at: <https://ia601608.us.archive.org/28/items/thomascarlyleson00carl/thomascarlyleson00carl.pdf>

One of the main sources about Amir Temur is the book of the historian and poet of the Temurid era, Sharaf ad-Din Ali Yazdi “Zafarnama” (“Book of Victories”). In his work written in 1424-1425, he presents Amir Temur not only as an ideal ruler, military genius, and just conqueror but also as a far-sighted statesman. He emphasizes that Temur built his empire on the principles of justice, strict governance, and wise legislation. In the text, there are descriptions of how he punished unjust officials and rewarded devoted servants: “He conquered the hearts of peoples not only with his sword, but also with the justice of his laws”².

Along with this, Temur is presented as an unparalleled strategist who meticulously planned his military campaigns, used the tactics of dividing and ruling, and knew no defeat. Yazdi admires his military campaigns against Persia, the Ottoman Empire, and the Golden Horde, especially his victory over Bayazid I in 1402 in the Battle of Ankara.

The poet also emphasizes that Temur highly valued knowledge and surrounded himself with scholars, poets, and philosophers. He speaks of Temur as a ruler acting with divine blessing. The poet compares him to Alexander the Great and asserts that Temur's victories were predestined from above, making him not merely a conqueror, but a “chosen one of fate”.

Paying attention to the fact that Temur was known for his ruthlessness towards enemies, Yazdi justifies his cruelty by the need to maintain order. The text describes how he devastated cities to prevent uprisings, but also actively restored the destroyed territories and involved local rulers in governance.

The outstanding poet and thinker of the 15th century, Alisher Navoi, also repeatedly mentioned Amir Temur in his works, emphasizing his significance as a ruler and patron of Turkic culture. These references can be found in his works such as: “Majolis un-nafois” (“Collection of the chosen ones”): in this biographical collection, Navoi describes the life and work of prominent poets and scholars of his time. In one of the sections, he mentions Amir Temur, noting his contribution to the development of science and culture, as well as his support of talented individuals; “Tarixi muluki Ajam” (“History of the Rulers of Ajam”) - in this historical work, Navoi discusses the rulers of Iran, including Amir Temur. He emphasizes his military achievements and administrative reforms that contributed to the strengthening of the state; “Khamsa” (“Quintet”) This cycle of five poems includes works in which Navoi touches upon various aspects of life and philosophy. In the poem “Garden of Truth”, he mentions Amir Temur as an example of a just and wise ruler whose deeds serve as an example for future generations, and in the treatise “Muhokamat al-lug'atayn” (“Comparison of the Two Languages”) Navoi defends the virtues of the Turkic language and mentions Amir Temur as one of those who contributed to its spread and development. He notes that in Temur's court, the Turkic language was used alongside Persian, which contributed to his prestige and the development of Turkic literature.

These works demonstrate Navoi's deep respect for Amir Temur and recognition of his role in the development of culture and statehood.

In Western literature, the image of Temur often acquired dual significance. For example, in Christopher Marlowe's play “Tamerlane the Great” (1590), he is portrayed as a ruthless conqueror, yet endowed with great spiritual strength:

From jiggling veins of riming mother wits,
And such conceits as clownage keeps in pay,
We'll lead you to the stately tent of war,
Where you shall hear the Scythian Tamburlaine
Threatening the world with high astounding terms

² Sharaf ad-Din Ali Yazdi. Zafarnama. //Prepared for publication, preface, notes, indexes by A. Urunbayev. - Tashkent, 1972. - P.215.

And scourging kingdoms with his conquering sword.³

Modern Uzbek literature also actively interprets the image of Temur. In the works of Uzbek writers of the 20th-21st centuries, it is presented as a symbol of the revival of national consciousness. In novels and historical essays such as Muhammad Ali's "Temuriys" (2001), the author reveals Temur as a great reformer who laid the foundations of a strong centralized state.

As G. W. F. Hegel writes in his work "Encyclopedia of Philosophical Sciences": "In particular, the so-called 'pragmatic' historiography, by fallaciously separating the inner from the outer, has sinned in the modern era in a variety of ways with respect to great historical characters, clouding and distorting an unadulterated construal of them. Instead of satisfy Ying themselves with simply narrating the great deeds accomplished by world-historical heroes and recognizing their inner make-up as corresponding to the content of these deeds, they considered themselves justified and obligated to sniff out allegedly secret motives behind what lies out in the open and then thought that historical research is all the more profound, the more it succeeds in stripping away the aura of what, until then, was celebrated and praised, putting it down, as far as its origin and genuine meaning is concerned, to the level of common mediocrity"⁴ In this passage, the scholar criticizes the so-called pragmatic historiography for its tendency to distort the true image of great historical figures. He indicates that such historians separate external manifestations from internal essence, trying to reveal hidden motives behind obvious facts.

Alisher Navoi, as one of the greatest poets and thinkers of the Turkic world, whose work had a great influence on the development of Uzbek literature and culture, also attracted the attention of researchers, writers, and poets. In literary works, he is presented not only as a prominent writer but also as a reformer of Turkic poetry, a statesman, and a humanist.

The image of Navoi was actively embodied both in classical literature and in the works of contemporary authors. He was depicted as an enlightener, defender of justice, spiritual mentor, and symbol of cultural heritage.

Contemporary Uzbek writers view Navoiy not only as a poet but also as a cultural symbol of the era. In Oybek's novel "Navoi" (1944), the author shows him as a person leading a struggle for the development of his native language and culture: "The wonderful pen of young Navoi revealed the inexhaustible treasures of the Turkic language"; draws attention to his external appearance corresponding to his inner state: "Navoi's appearance, along with humility, showed true great pride free from arrogance and self-importance; hand movements were filled with grace, the poet's smile and voice charmed with their softness"; indicates that Navoi was a champion of justice: "Navoi expressed the thought that all positions - from the sender to the quarter guard - should be filled with people who think only about the benefit of the state, are just, and care about the fate of the people"⁵.

This work became one of the most significant attempts to literally interpret the poet's life.

The drama "Alisher Navoi" (1945) by Uygun and Izzat Sultan holds an important place in Uzbek literature. This work is dedicated to the life and work of the great poet and thinker Alisher Navoi and reflects his spiritual world.

The drama depicts Navoi's socio-political activities, his relationship with King Hussein Boyqaro, as well as his creative pursuits and personal life, and in each scene of the drama, they subject the main character to new trials.

This drama helps to understand Navoi's personality more deeply.

³ Marlowe C., Tamburlaine The Great, Gordian Press, INC. New York, MCMLXVI, 1966.-p 68. -Available at: <https://users.pfw.edu/stapletm/msa/docs/CaseMarlowev2Tam.pdf>

⁴ Hegel G. W. F., Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Basic Outline, Cambridge University Press, -p 119. Available at : https://timothydavidson.com/Library/Books/Hegel-The%20Science%20of%20Logic/georg-wilhelm-friedrich-hegel-encyclopaedia-of-the-philosophical-sciences-in-basic-outline_-part.pdf

⁵ Aybek. Navoi. - Tashkent, 1983. - Available at: <https://libking.ru/books/prose-/prose-history/165327-14-aybek-navoi.html#book//Trans>.

Thus, in 20th-century literature, Navoiy is interpreted as a defender of culture and national consciousness.

In Russian literature, interest in Alisher Navoi manifested itself in the works of Yevgeny Bertels, who called him the “golden bridge” between the Turkic and Persian poetic tradition.⁶

It should be noted that the image of Navoi did not receive a broad literary reflection in Russian and Western European literature, but despite this, his work and contribution to world culture have been the subject of study and recognition among researchers and orientalists.

Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur (1483-1530) - an outstanding military leader, poet, and founder of the Mughal Empire. His personality, combining military genius, profound intellect, and literary talent, has inspired writers and historians for centuries. In literature, Babur is portrayed from different angles: as a wise ruler, as a person who found himself between two worlds (Central Asia and India), and as a poet who delicately feels nature and human soul.

The most important source for studying Babur's image is his autobiographical work “Baburnama”, one of the few memoirs of the medieval East that has survived to the present day. In it, Babur not only describes his life and military campaigns but also shares personal reflections, revealing his philosophy of governance and worldview.

Very often in his works, Babur expresses feelings of loneliness and searching, which may be connected with his life circumstances, having lost his native lands and being forced to wander, often expressed in his works nostalgia and longing for the lost homeland.

A foreign land is a cell, everything in it has grown cold, unpleasant,
My soul, like a bird, has long been saddened.

What I've endured here, it's difficult for me to describe:

The ink washes away tears from the face of the letter.

And in one of his ghazals he writes:

‘I have found no confidant but my soul.

He found no friends more selfless than his heart’⁷

All these lines indicate that Babur was not only a military commander but also a subtle lyricist who possessed an artistic perception of the world.

The renowned Uzbek writer Pirimkul Qodirov, in his book “Starry Nights”, depicts the image of Babur in a multifaceted manner, showing that he, like any person, is characterized by various feelings: kindness, anger, justice, resentment, and so on. “What happened between Alisher Navoiy and Husayn Boyqaro, raged in Babur's heart - the same heart of one person”⁸. Most importantly, he emphasizes Babur's internal conflict between his duties as ruler and his pursuit of creativity.

The image of Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur attracted the attention of both Russian and Western researchers and writers. In Russian literature and historiography, Babur is considered an outstanding commander, poet, and founder of the Mughal Empire. His autobiographical work “Baburnama” is a valuable source on the history and culture of Central Asia and India.

Researcher Sultonova U. in her article devoted to the study of Babur's image, provides the following thoughts of the famous English writer of the 20th century, Rumer Godden: “Although the state created by Babur did not spread to vast territories like his ancestors, he rose to the level of a sultan and great

⁶ Bertels, E. E. Navoi and Jami / E. E. Bertels. - M.: Nauka, 1965. - 174 p. // Trans

⁷ Selected Lyrics of the East. Babur. - T.: Sharq, 2006. Available at:
https://n.ziyouz.com/books/uzbeklib_ru/uzbekskaja_klassicheskaja_literatura/Izbrannaja%20lirika%20Vostoka.%20Babur.pdf //Trans.

⁸ Qodirov P. Babur (Starry Nights). - M.: Art Literature, 1988. Available at:
https://royallib.com/book/kadirov_pirimkul/babur_zvezdnie_nochi.html. //Trans.

emperor of his kingdom. He firmly held the management system in his hands and skillfully managed it. He founded a great dynasty that ruled the country for 332 years”⁹.

Conclusion. Thus, the image of Amir Temur in literature varies from the idealized wise ruler in Eastern sources to the contradictory yet great commander in Western interpretations. However, its influence on literary and historical tradition remains unchanged.

The image of Alisher Navoi in fiction is multifaceted: he appears as a philosopher, reformer, poet, and defender of justice. In Uzbek and Russian literature, his figure symbolizes cultural revival, while in Western studies, his contribution to world literature is emphasized. Navoi remains an important figure for national identity and historical heritage.

The image of Babur in literature is diverse: he appears as a conqueror, a suffering exile, a reformer, and a poet. His autobiographical notes in “Baburnama” became the basis for many interpretations in Uzbek, Russian, and Western literature. As a figure connecting East and West, Babur continues to inspire writers to create new literary interpretations of his personality.

We think that the following thoughts of the world-renowned philosopher Hegel are very suitable for the topic of our research: “... it must be explicitly maintained that, were it a matter merely of subjective and formal interests of the historical heroes, they would not have accomplished what they did and that, in view of the unity of inner and outer, it should be recognized that great men willed what they did and did what they willed”¹⁰. Where he asserts that great historical figures achieve outstanding results because their inner aspirations and external actions are in complete harmony. They do not simply follow subjective or formal interests, but realize their deep inner intentions through specific actions. Thus, their achievements are a direct expression of their will and intentions.

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¹⁰ Hegel G. W. F., Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Basic Outline, Cambridge University Press, -p 119. Available at : https://timothydavidson.com/Library/Books/Hegel-The%20Science%20of%20Logic/georg-wilhelm-friedrich-hegel-encyclopaedia-of-the-philosophical-sciences-in-basic-outline_-part.pdf

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