

A Study of the Chaghatay Literature "The Poetry of Meshreb"

Aynur Yasin^{1,*}

¹Northwest Minzu University, Lanzhou, Gansu 730030, China.

*Corresponding author. Email:841800593@qq.com

ABSTRACT

This article will take "The Poetry of Meshreb" as the research object, mainly discussing and analyzing its literary characteristics. "The Poetry of Meshreb" is a document composed of poems by the famous 17th century poet Baba Rahim Meshreb and stories about him. This article will analyze and discuss the characteristics of the type, form, and language of poetry in the literature. This article will also analyze its literary characteristics by comparing it with the poetry genres existing in modern Uyghur language. Through the interpretation, collation, translation and annotation of manuscript documents, this article will summarize and conclude the special meaning and usage of its vocabulary and phrases. Through preliminary research on the literary characteristics of this document, this article aims at finding the general characteristics of Uyghur poetry in the 17 poem collections and the subsequent development rules, and analyzing the prototypes and development process of the types and genres of poetry commonly used in some modern Uyghur literature.

Keywords: *Baba Rahim Meshreb, "The Poetry of Meshreb", literature*

I. INTRODUCTION

This paper takes Baba Rahim Meshreb, a poet who lived in the 17th and 18th centuries and one of the most representative and famous poets in Chaghatay Uyghur literature, and his poetry anthology "The Poetry of Meshreb" as the research object, the most important reason of which is that it is a valuable cultural heritage left to future generations. At the same time, the research of this literature also provides an important theoretical basis for understanding and studying the language and literature, religious belief, history and culture at that time. The characteristics of "The Poetry of Meshreb" are embodied in the following three aspects: first, the integrity of the structure; second, the rich content; third, unique artistic features. These remarkable features make "The Poetry of Meshreb" strongly resonate with people, so it is of great academic significance to conduct an in-depth study of this literature.

"The Poetry of Meshreb" is written in the way of long classical narrative poetry, which is a cross arrangement between prose and poetry. The prose part and the poetry part are closely related and inseparable in this work. They complement each other. The prose part of the work reproduces the life of Meshreb through the mysterious and interesting story; the poetry part

enriches the content of the prose part with the elegant poetry. In order to make a comprehensive analysis and study of the structure of "The Poetry of Meshreb", the author makes separate analysis of prose and poetry.

II. RESEARCH ON THE PROSE PART

Before analyzing the prose part of "The Poetry of Meshreb", it is necessary to understand the general meaning it.

When he was a seven-month-old fetus, Meshreb's mother went to the bazaar with two coils of thread one day and saw someone selling grapes on the street. Two grapes fell from the vendor's jar, and his mother put them into her mouth. Hardly had she gone off when she heard a voice in her stomach: "Mom, you ate the grapes without permission. Aren't you afraid of God and the people around you? You'll lose me if you don't make amends." When his mother heard these words, she fainted. She went home in tears she came to. Seeing this, her husband asked her, "Why are you crying so sad? His mother told him exactly what had happened in the street..."

When he was fifteen years old, his father sent him to study with the then famous Ishan Mullah Bazar Agong, and he later sent him to the largest Ishan sect in Kashgar, hidāyet-ul lāh āfāk hācem as a disciple. When he first met with Afaq Khoja in Kashgar, Khoja liked his poems so much that he named him "Meshreb". From then on, Baba Rahim lived by this name and won

*This paper is the result of the National Social Science Foundation Project (Project No.: 16XY035); the Key Project Results of Central Universities of Northwest Minzu University (Project No.: 100106020380).

endless honors. During the seven years that he lived with Khoja, Baba Rahim gathered firewood and carried water leading a hard life. Afaq Khoja didn't notice him nor asked him about his life except for his grace at their first meet. To attract the attention of Afaq Khoja, Meshreb made some deliberate mistakes and was thus severely punished and exiled by him. Since then, Meshreb began his vagabondage.

After leaving Kashgar, he went to Shache, Hetian and other places, where he was warmly welcomed by the people. He did not like the people's worship of him, so in order it, he behaved rudely in front of them.

Maxilaifu has also been to Ili. At that time, the king of Ili was Hunteji. Meshreb fell in love with Hunteji's daughter. The princess asked him to be a herdsman on the grassland, and Meshreb lived a herding life for three years. His goal of grazing on the grassland was not to win the love of the princess, but to convert the father and daughter to Islam and become Muslims. In the end, the king and his daughter converted to Islam and became Muslims. Later, Meshreb dreamed that Afaq Khoja's wife interceded with Khoja on behalf of him, asking for the forgiveness of his sin. He immediately returned to Afaq Khoja. As expected, he pardoned him and sent him to Tashkent on an important mission. When he had finished his task, Khoja let him go home. When he returned home, he met his mother and sister, whom he had not seen for eighteen years. When he returned, he learned that his mother was blind. When his mother heard of his son's return, she rubbed her eyes with the edge of his coat, and her sight returned to normal. The mother died shortly after meeting her son.

After the death of his mother, Meshreb continued his vagabondage. He went to Khujand, Tashkent and so on. He was popular everywhere he went. People liked and venerated him. Meshreb heard that Afaq Khoja had gone to India. In order to meet him, Meshreb also went to India. In India, he met the king of India abulgāzi bahadırhan, and mocked him. In order to punish him for his rude behavior, abulgāzi bahadırhan let him race against the elephant. He was venerated all the more after beating the elephant. He also went to the city of necāra, where the emperor Abdallah respected him and praised his justice and prayed for him.

He also went to ķebād with the famous poet, sōfi ālla yar. Then he went to the Blue City, where the king Mahmud kataghani sent him to the gallows for defecating on the throne of the emperor.

The prose part of "The Poetry of Meshreb" is described briefly. This part reproduces the interesting stories of Meshreb in every city he went to. Through these stories it can be clearly seen the humor, brave personality and his willingness to sacrifice for the people and the religion. Everything that happens to

Meshreb gives some inspiration to people's philosophical thinking.

The prose part of "The Poetry of Meshreb" has the following characteristics.

A. "The Poetry of Meshreb" presents various miracles that happened to Meshreb

These stories describe the immortals' behavior of Meshreb, whom the people reverently call "the immortals' ascetic monk". These miracles of Meshreb are mentioned in several places in "The Poetry of Meshreb". For example,

When Meshreb was a seven-month-old fetus, his mother took two coils of thread to bazar one day. She saw someone selling grapes in the street. Two grapes fell from his jar, and Meshreb's mother ate them. She heard a voice in her belly before leaving. "Mom, aren't you afraid of god and the people around you that you ate grapes without their permission? You'll lose me if you don't make amends". She fainted at his words.

A seven-month-old fetus talking to its mother is not something that happens between normal people. This description shows us that Meshreb is not an ordinary person, but a deified figure. At the same time, it teaches people not to take other people's things without their permission. This is social etiquette. For another instance,

The disciples said to him regretfully, "We have come so far with you from Kashgar and Shache. Can't we go to Mekka?" "Look at my hands", he said to them, and they saw a picture of Mekka on two of his hands.

Showing a picture of Mekka on the palms is a mythological act, and it shows again that Meshreb is not an ordinary person in this work.

The above example shows that Meshreb is not just an ordinary ascetic, but an image of a god. These stories show the lofty position of Meshreb in the hearts of the people.

B. Meshreb was disgusted with the excessive worship of people

Meshreb believed that the cult of the individuals would make them pagans. Therefore, in order to avoid people's worship of him, Meshreb deliberately made various rude behaviors in front of them. For example,

Everyone thought Meshreb was a god and rubbed their eyes with his hands. Meshreb thought that he should avoid people's excessive worship. He tells people, "my urine is better than your worship," and then he undid his pants and urinated in front of them. Seeing this, people said, "How can we worship someone who is so impolite?" Their worship of Meshreb gradually

subsided. "My urine has reduced the admiration of the people of Tashkent for me," he said, thanking god.

From the above example, we can learn that the only reason for the impolite behavior of Meshreb to the people is the excessive reverence of the people for him. Macillaby saw the people's excessive adoration of himself, and immediately tried to cool it.

C. The stories in "The Poetry of Meshreb" show Meshreb's reverence for Afaq Khoja

In order to attract the attention of Khoja, Meshreb deliberately made some mistakes, for which Khoja punished him. Meshreb had to leave Kashgar because of this, but he missed him all the time. No matter how Afaq Khoja treated him, Meshreb revered him and wrote many poems for him. Afaq Khoja dreamed that Afaq Khoja had forgiven him and immediately returned to him. As mentioned above, Meshreb hated the people's worship of him, but why did he worship Afaq Khoja? Here, readers can see the reputation that Afaq Khoja had at that time in profile. For instance,

Meshreb came to India and knelt before Afaq Khoja.

For another instance,

"If I had a presbyter like you," he said, "I would not be afraid even at the end of the world," he told Afaq Khoja .

As can be seen from the above example, people at that time held a deep reverence for Afaq Khoja, which existed not only in the areas where Uighur people lived. Even throughout central Asia, he was regarded by many as a presbyter, willing to serve him until he died.

D. The stories in "The Poetry of Meshreb" shows the humor of Meshreb

This is the most vivid character of Meshreb, who mocked the hypocritical sōfi and some corrupt ruling class with his humorous personality. For example,

Sōfi asked, "Why did you tie your donkey to the altar?" Meshreb said, "You put your sixpenny slippers in front of you while worshipping lest they be stolen; Am I not afraid of having my donkey, worth fifteen pennies, stolen? It's a mindless animal, so it went to the altar."

As can be seen from the above example, Meshreb satirizes the hypocritical sōfi and mullahs with his sharp and humorous language. No matter how high the social status of these people was, he could use ironic language and humorous behavior to expose the ugly faces of some people who extract the people's hard-earned money and imprison their minds.

III. RESEARCH ON THE POETRY PART

Although "The Poetry of Meshreb" is written according to the classical long narrative poems, the prose and the poetry appear interleaved, but the main part is still the poetry. The prose part of "The Poetry of Meshreb" was not written by Meshreb himself, but by later generations according to the story about his life passed on orally. The poetry part is all the creation of Meshreb himself. Here are 213 poems in "The Poetry of Meshreb". Meshreb used a variety of stylistic techniques to create these poems. In "The Poetry of Meshreb", there are *gezel*, *muḥemmes*, *mustehzad*, *museddes* and other genres of poems. So the formal characteristics of the poems can be analyzed through these genres.

A. *Gezel*

"Gezel" is a common form in Uyghur classical poetry creation. The word comes from Arabic and originally meant "to talk as lovers", but is now literally translated as "love poetry". Poetry in the form of *gezel* generally have rhymes. The first two lines follow the same rhythm. From the second piece, the second line in every piece uses the rhythm of the first two lines, with five to fifteen couplets per piece. Mostly used to praise love and beautiful things, the form of *gezel* has become one of the important forms of Uyghur traditional poetry since its early development. Under the cultivation of Atay, Rutifei, Navai, Meshreb and other famous poets, *gezel* poetry tends to be rich and complete from content to form, and becomes the main genre of Uyghur classical poets' lyrical poems in successive dynasties. All the classical poets showed their talent in the style of *gezel*, and Meshreb was one of them.

In "The Poetry of Meshreb", *gezel* poems have the greatest number, which is 117 out of 213 poems. In order to facilitate the transcription and collection of examples, the author has numbered all the poems in "The Poetry of Meshreb".

In terms of both quantity and length, *gezel* is the most important genre in "The Poetry of Meshreb".

B. *Kit'a*

Derived from Arabic, *kit'a* originally meant "part of things, a piece". The genre of *Kit'a* is one of the lyric poems in Uyghur traditional poetry, with every two lines making one couplet. They are similar to *gezel* in terms of form, but the numbers of their couplets are not as standard as the former. While a *gezel* poem should have 5 to 15 couplets, there are one-couplet, two-couplet *kit'as* as well as three-couplet and four-couplet ones. So they can't be included in the scope of *gezel*. According to the theoretical knowledge in the book "KLASİK EDEBİYAT BİLGİSİ BİÇİM-ÖLÇÜ-KAFİYA" by PROF·DR·M·A·YEKTA SARAÇ, given

the *kit'a* has the same name with Arruz metrical poetry, the author divides *kit'a* into four categories:

1) *One-couplet kit'a* : There are 12 poems in "The Poetry of Meshreb" that belong to the category of one-couplet *kit'a*.

2) *Two-couplet kit'a*: There are 10 poems in "The Poetry of Meshreb" that belong to the category of two-couplet *kit'a*.

3) *Three-couplet kit'a*: There are 16 poems in "The Poetry of Meshreb" that belong to the category of three-couplet *kit'a*.

4) *Four-couplet kit'a*: There are 18 poems in "The Poetry of Meshreb" that belong to the category of four-couplet *kit'a*.

The above examples, which have similar rhyme as the *gezel*, yet unqualified number of couplets are called *kit'a*.

C. *Muħemmes*

Muħemmes is a five-line poem in Uyghur traditional poetry. The structure of the poem is characterized by the fact that each piece consists of five lines; the five lines of the first piece all rhyme at the end; in the following pieces the lines from the first to fourth rhyme with each other, and the fifth line uses the same line as the first piece. This form of poetry is mainly used to eulogize, praise and allegorical content, with an elegant form.

"*Muħemmes*" has more than 20 rhyme forms, of which the most common rhyme forms are the following three:

- *muħemmes-i muzdevic*: aaaaa, bbba, ccca
- *muħemmes-i mutekerir*: aaaaA, bbbA, cccA
- *muħemmes-i mutekerir*: aaaAA, bbbAA, cccAA

There are 28 *muħemmes* in "The Poetry of Meshreb", ranks third in number after *gezel* and *kit'a*.

28 poems in "The Poetry of Meshreb" belong to the category of *muħemmes*. Among the 28 pieces, 23 belong to the first category, 4 belong to the second, and only one belongs to the third.

D. *Mustehzad*

"*Mustehzad*" means "to increase", that is, to add a little line after each line (*misra*), which also has its own verse. The form of "*mustehzad*" is characterized by a piece consisting of one long and one short couplet, four lines all together, also known as "the short and long sentences".

There are four common rhymes in "*mustehzad*":

- aa aa, bb aa, cc aa

- aa aa, bx aa, cx aa
- ab ab, cc ab, dd ab
- ab ab, cx ab, dx ab

There are 8 "*mustehzad*" in the "The Poetry of Meshreb", namely number 27, 63, 156, 169, 193, 194, 202 and 203. The "*mustehzad*" in "The Poetry of Meshreb" is written in the fourth rhyming form.

E. *Museddes*

"*Museddes*" is a six-line poem in traditional Uyghur poetry. The first six lines are rhymed the same. From the second piece, the last two lines or one line use the same rhyme with the first six lines. The common rhyming forms of "*museddes*" are as follows:

- *Museddes-i mutekkerir*

① aaaaaA, bbbbaA, ccccaA; ② aaaaAA, bbbAA, cccAA

- *Museddes-i muzdevic*

① aaaaaa, bbbcc, dddde; ② aaaaa, bbbba, cccca

There is only one "*museddes*" in "The Poetry of Meshreb", which is poem No. 206. It is written in the second form of *museddes-i mutekkerir*.

F. *Murebbe*

"*Murebbe*" is the most ancient and widely used four-line poem in traditional Uyghur poetry. Uyghur folk songs and folk songs are basically represented by *murebbe*. "*Murebbe*" mainly has the following two rhymes:

- *murebbe-i muzdevic*: aaaa, bbba, ccca
- *murebbe-i mutekkerir*: aaaA, bbbA, cccA

There is only one "*murebbe*" poem in "The Poetry of Meshreb", which is No. 82. It was written in the second form of *murebbe*.

IV. CONCLUSION

As a literary work with rich artistic achievements, "The Poetry of Meshreb" has more to be appreciated. "The Poetry of Meshreb" not only has many pioneering and innovative aspects in poetry writing, but also shows the picture scroll of the broad social life at that time for later generations. This poem lively, vividly and delicately describes the social features of various regions in the era of Meshreb. "The Poetry of Meshreb" reflects the social and cultural life at that time and has high cultural value lively.

Chaghatay Uyghur literature research has a very unique academic value and status. In terms of literature,

Chaghatay period is an age of synthesis, as well as one connecting the past and the future. It is the end of the classical Uyghur literature and the prologue of the modern Uyghur literature. "The Poetry of Meshreb" is a work of this period. It is a medium for scholars to understand the society then. Many cultural materials retained in it are invaluable for scholars to better understand the culture of the time.

References

- [1] Babarehim Meshreb. The Poetry of Meshreb. Slate printed in Tashkent, 1917. (in Chinese)
- [2] Alishir Nevayi. A manuscript of the "Mähbubul qulub" (Lover of the heart). (in Chinese)
- [3] Mujizi. A Manuscript of the "History of Musicians". (in Chinese)
- [4] Yimin Turson. Poetry and Poets. The Ethnic Publishing House, 2007. (in Chinese)
- [5] Hamit Tömü. Collection of Research Papers on Hamiti Timur. The Ethnic Publishing House, 2006. (in Chinese)
- [6] Zhu Chongxian, Li Shengfu, Zhang Tieshan: classical philology of China's ethnic minorities. The Ethnic Publishing House, 2005. (in Chinese)
- [7] Geng Shimin. A Study on the Book of "Maitrisimit" in the Hami Version of Uighur, China Minzu University Press, 2008. (in Chinese)
- [8] Guo Yingde, Yu Xuetang. Theory and Methods of Chinese Classical Philology. Beijing Normal University Publishing Group, 2008. (in Chinese)
- [9] Abduraop Polat. Introduction to the Chagatay Uyghur Language. ethnic publishing house, 2017. (in Chinese)
- [10] Eysajan Musa. The Poetry of Meshreb. Ili River, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th issue, 1999. (in Chinese)
- [11] Hoja Ahmed Ynus. Meshreb and the Humor of His Works. Journal of Xinjiang Normal University, 2nd issue, 1986. (in Chinese)