

## “NOMA” GENRE AND ITS FORMATION AS A GENRE IN UZBEK CLASSIC LITERATURE

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**Abstract:** The article describes epistolary genre and its development as genre in Uzbek classical literature. The works of the nomadic genre from the end of the XIV century and the first half of the XV century are listed. Moreover, the life of their time, the aspirations of the people, the glorification of patriotism, justice and equality, love and devotion and other issues of these epistolary works have been analyzed.

**Keywords:** classical literature, epistolary genre, epistle, letter, message, poetic writing, epic.

### Introduction

In the late 14th and early 15th centuries, the genres of *noma* (epistolary works) and *munozara* (debate) developed widely in Uzbek classical literature. As is well known, the *noma* genre in classical literature was initially formed in Persian literature. Its earliest examples appeared in the 10th–12th centuries. As examples, we can mention religious-historical works such as “**Xudoyнома**” and “**Shohnoma.**” Later, the *noma* genre began to be widely used in Uzbek classical literature as well. One of the earliest examples is Ishoq Khorazmi’s “**Muhabbatnoma,**” which celebrates secular lyricism. Subsequently, a number of works appeared one after another, including Khojandiy’s “**Latofatnoma,**” Said Ahmad’s “**Taashshuqnoma,**” Yusuf Amiriy’s “**Dahnoma,**” and Said Qosimiy’s “**Haqiqatnoma**” and “**Sadoqatnoma.**”

In the works created in the *noma* genre from the late 14th century and the first half of the 15th century, the life of the period and people’s dreams and aspirations found vivid expression. These works glorify patriotism, justice and equality, love and fidelity.

Khorazmi’s “*Muhabbatnoma*” consists of ten love letters written in the form of ghazals and sent by the lover to the beloved. Later, in works created under the influence of Khorazmi’s “*Muhabbatnoma*”—such as Khojandiy’s “*Latofatnoma,*” Said Ahmad’s “*Taashshuqnoma,*” and Yusuf Amiriy’s “*Dahnoma*”—the traditions of the *noma* genre were also carefully observed. All of them were written in the same metre, namely **hazaji musaddasi mahzuf**, in the **masnavi** form, and all consist of ten letters (“*Muhabbatnoma*” being the exception). In “*Muhabbatnoma,*” “*Latofatnoma,*” and “*Taashshuqnoma,*” the letters are written from the lover’s perspective, asking the

messenger (*safo*) to deliver them to the beloved, whereas in “*Dahnoma*” the letters are sent both in the name of the lover and the beloved.

Khorazmi’s “*Muhabbatnoma*” has attracted the attention of many Orientalist scholars. In particular, foreign researchers such as A. M. Samoylovich, M. F. Köprülüzade, and A. M. Shcherbak conducted noteworthy scholarly studies in this field. In Eastern, especially Uzbek classical literature, there exist various *noma* (letters, epistles) written for different purposes. They differ from one another in terms of theme and subject matter. For example, in literary history there are works referred to as “*noma*” that describe history, memoirs, travels, or battles, such as “*Zafarnoma*,” “*Boburnoma*,” and “*Shayboniynoma*.” However, in these works the term “*noma*” serves a somewhat different function. For instance, “*Zafarnoma*” is a work about victorious military campaigns; “*Shohnoma*” is a literary work about the history of kings; “*Sayohatnoma*” describes various journeys and adventures; “*Pandnoma*” is a collection of moral advice, and so on. In essence, the term “*noma*” was applied because these works were written in the form of letters sent by the lover to the beloved [1].

At the same time, *noma* is also a lyric-epic genre that holds a significant place in classical literature. The works that constitute the sources of our research—“*Muhabbatnoma*,” “*Latofatnoma*,” “*Dahnoma*,” and “*Taashshuqnoma*”—are all examples of this genre. According to literary scholar O. Jo‘raboyev, “In the history of classical literature, there is another type of poem known as *mug‘anniy noma* (*mug‘anniy* meaning musician, composer, or singer)” [2].

In the “*Dictionary of Navoi’s Works*,” the term “*noma*” is defined as follows: “*Noma*—a letter, an epistle; a treatise; *Nomai iqbol*—a letter of kindness or congratulation; *noma sabt etmak*—to write a letter; *nomai a‘mol*—a record of deeds (good and bad—sins and virtues—committed during one’s lifetime)” [3].

*Noma* literally means a letter. As a literary system, a *noma* is a literary work written in the form of a letter. In Uzbek and Persian-Tajik literature, *noma* works were mainly created in poetic form. In Uzbek classical literature, the earliest example of this genre is the poet Khorazmi’s “*Muhabbatnoma*.” “*Muhabbatnoma*” is a lyric-epic work that incorporates various poetic genres, including *noma*, *masnavi*, *ghazal*, *qit‘a*, and *madh*. However, the dominant genre within it is the *noma*. The *noma* is rhymed according to the **masnavi** method. For example:

Soching bir torina ming hur yetmas, - a  
Yuzungning nurina ming nur yetmas. -a  
Agar bersa suyurg ‘ab haq taolo, - b  
Kerakmas sensizin Jirdavsi a’lo. – b[4]

A *noma* can exist as an independent work, but it may also form part of the plot of another literary work and be included in its structure. In independent *noma* works, this genre either plays a leading role or the entire work consists solely of this genre

from beginning to end. For example, Khorazmi's "*Muhabbatnoma*," Alisher Navoi's poetic letter to Said Hasan Ardasher—his "*Masnavi*," and Muqimi's "*Sayohatnoma*." . For example:

Yorur ko'zlar savodidin bitisa.  
Salomimni tegur ul dilsitong 'a,  
Rahmsiz bevafo joni jahong 'a.  
Salomimni tegur ul xushliqog 'a,  
Qamug' boshdin - oyoq obi baqog'a.[5]

(from the 2nd letter of "*Muhabbatnoma*").

Letters (*nomas*) that form part of a literary plot are found in larger works. Such letters are written on behalf of the characters of those works and are addressed to one another. They also express the characters' inner experiences, emotions, and aspirations. A distinctive feature of such letters is that, regardless of the work in which they appear, they are composed in the same metre and rhyme scheme as the main text of that work. Some of the most beautiful examples of such letters can be found in Navoi's epics "*Farhod and Shirin*" and "*Layli and Majnun*."

In later periods, the types of *noma* became more diverse. In particular, the *sayohatnomas* (travel letters) written by poets such as Muqimiy, Furqat, Zavqiy, and Tajalliy emerged as a new type of the *noma* genre. The formal and poetic features of these letters also differ from those found in "*Muhabbatnoma*" or in Navoi's epics.

For instance, Muqimiy's "*Sayohatnoma*" is written in the **murabba'** poetic form and follows the rhyme scheme **a-a-a-b, v-v-v-b, ...**, employing the **rajaz musamman salim** metre of the **aruz** prosodic system.

Faryodkim, garduni d m – a  
Aylar yurak-bag 'rimni xun, - a  
Ko 'rdiki, bir ahli funun, - a  
Charx anga kajraftar ekan. - b  
Qolmay shaharda toqatim, - v  
Qishloq chiqardim odatim, - v  
Ilohi yayov, bo 'Isun otim, - v  
Gar sayr ham darkor ekan ... - b .[6]

*A lyric-epic work is a type of literary work that has certain plot characteristics. For example, in "Muhabbatnoma", the emotional experiences of the lyrical hero are depicted progressively, whereas in "Sayohatnoma", the events and sights witnessed by the lyrical hero are narrated.*

Ayo zebo sanam shohi qaboyil,  
Taoilloh zihi shakl-u shamoyil.  
Shakar eming qachon so 'z qilsa og 'oz,  
Qilur jon to 'tisi tanlarda pardoz.

Shakarmu emingizyo qand, yo jon,  
Uyolur la'lingizdan obi hayvon.[7]

*For example:*

Ko'rdim chuqur «Chimyon» erur,  
Er ostida zindan erur.  
Dushmanlari mehmon erur,  
Bog'i uning tutzor ekan. («Sayohatnoma»).

A lyric epistle is most often written by poets and addressed to their friends, mentors, or to a beloved. One of the finest examples of such epistles was created by Alisher Navoi. In these works, the poet's personality merges with that of the lyrical hero. The depiction of emotions is vivid, realistic, and concrete.

... Azaldin ishq ekan bo'Isa sirishtim,  
Qazodin dardu mehnat samavishtim.  
Bu ishda kimda tig'i ta'n uroyin,  
O 'zumni yoqsa kimni yozg'urayin?[8]

(“*Farhod and Shirin.*” From *Farhod's letter to Shirin.*)

The *soqiynoma* is one of the poetic forms in classical Eastern literature. Like poetic forms such as *tarje'band* and *tarkibband*, a *soqiynoma* consists of several stanzas. Each stanza is rhymed in the *masnavi* form. A *soqiynoma* begins with an address to the *soqi* (cupbearer); therefore, it is called *soqiynoma*. This genre entered Uzbek literature through Persian-Tajik literature.

Letter-epistles (*maktub-nomalar*) also developed as an independent genre. The most advanced period of Uzbek epistolary literature dates back to the 14th–15th centuries. During this period, such works as Khwarazmi's “*Muhabbatnoma*”, Khojandi's “*Latofatnoma*”, Yusuf Amiri's “*Dahnoma*”, and Sayyid Ahmad's “*Taashshuqnoma*” were created. A comparative analysis of these works makes it possible to discuss the history of Uzbek epistolary literature, its formation process, and its distinctive genre characteristics.

In the mid-14th century and the first half of the 15th century, the *noma*, which was formed and developed in Uzbek literature as an independent genre devoted to the theme of love, traces its origins back to ancient oral and written literature. In this regard, it is appropriate to recall the traces of *vasf-noma* motifs in ancient lyrical songs, extending up to the epic “*Alpomish*”, and in written literature up to the work “*Qutadg'u Bilig.*” In this sense, remembering the *vasf* motifs found in inscriptions carved on a woman's gravestone during archaeological excavations conducted in the Zarafshan Valley takes the roots of this phenomenon back to even more ancient times.

While writing his epic “*Farhod and Shirin,*” Alisher Navoi, in creating the letters exchanged between Farhod and Shirin and in describing the ten learned women poets of Mehinbonu's palace, was naturally inspired—along with other sources—by

Khwarazmi's "Muhabbatnoma" and Yusuf Amiri's "Dahnoma." This demonstrates that epistles represented an important stage in the development of Uzbek epic poetry and made a significant contribution to its progress.

It is well known that a letter is, first and foremost, a means of communication between people. Through letters, writers turn to literature as a way to express the diverse and vivid manifestations of emotional experiences in the human heart.

In the history of literature, the emergence of letters dates back to ancient times. In the early stages of the development of Uzbek literature, letters were also used, as evidenced by various sources that have come down to us. Later, the letter form was employed in artistic literature as well, with the emergence of epistles serving as a clear example. Letters became an effective means for writers to truthfully express the thoughts and feelings of their hearts.

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