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Nizami Ganjavi's Poetry in Turkish Literature

Abstract

Nizami's creativity, which has played a significant role in the development of Eastern epic poetry, also influenced Turkish artistic literature. He played an important role in the widespread dissemination of humanist ideas, the praise of high moral qualities, and topics such as love and heroism. Like Nizami's poems, which were translated and spread into Turkish, *Khamsa* imitations also began to appear in Turkish language. The tradition of responding to Nizami's *Khamsa* and writing on Nizami's themes has become a creative challenge in Turkish literature, as it was among Persian, Uzbek, and Indian peoples. Turkish poets have also tested their pens in this field once again, continuing Nizami's traditions.

Keywords: world culture, artistic creativity, artistic language, legends, folk tales

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Nizami Gəncəvinin türk ədəbiyyatında poeziyası

Xülasə

Şərq epik şeirinin inkişafında əhəmiyyət kəsb edən Nizami yaradıcılığı türk bədii ədəbiyyatına da öz təsirini göstərmişdir. Humanist ideyalar, yüksək mənəvi sifətlərin tərənnümü, məhəbbət və qəhrəmanlıq kimi mövzuların geniş yayılmasında mühüm rol oynamışdır. Türk dilinə tərcümə olunaraq yayılan Nizami poemaları kimi türk dilində *Xəmsə* nəzirələri də meydana çıxmağa başlamışdır.

Nizami *Xəmsə*sinə cavab vermək, Nizami mövzularını qələmə almaq ənənəsi fars, özbək, hind xalqlarında olduğu kimi türk ədəbiyyatında da yaradıcılıq imtahanına çevrilmişdir. Türk şairləri qələmlərini bir də bu sahədə sınımışlar, Nizami ənənələrini davam etdirmişlər.

Açar sözlər: *Şərq epik şeiri, Xəmsə, yüksək mənəvi sifətlər, ənənə, türk ədəbiyyatı*

Introduction

Nizami is a rare talent that the Azerbaijani people have presented to world culture. He constitutes one of the brightest stages of our rich literature. Nizami's art, which stands at the highest peak of 12th-century Azerbaijani poetry, is renowned not only in his homeland but also far away from its borders. The great poet has mastered the artistic creativity of those who came before him, comprehended its thought-provoking content and philosophical meaning. Unlike many of his contemporaries, he left behind a magnificent legacy. He has created an immortal work known as *Khamsa*. In Nizami's art, the achievements of 12th-century Middle Eastern culture and humanistic ideas that make humanity think are depicted. The ideas he illustrated have lived for centuries and have influenced the creativity of many poets (Alpay, 1970).

Research

The great poet expressed his immortal ideals through a highly artistic language and tried to confirm his humanistic worldview with wise stories drawn from folk literature. He made abundant use of legends and folk tales and referred to proverbs and sayings that reflect the sharp wit of the people. All these are stylistic qualities of Nizami's poetry, which make the instructive content and social significance clearer to the reader. This poetic style in Nizami's verses was constantly continued by his followers. Enriched by his successors, this tradition led to the formation of the Nizami school. The creation of the Nizami literary school became famous not only in his native land but also worldwide. This fame inspired the creative work of many outstanding artists. Therefore, continuing Nizami's creative legacy and responding to his *Khamsa* was a difficult challenge and a test of artistic ability. The most famous word masters of the East wanted to test themselves in this field. In various languages of Eastern peoples, imitations of the *Khamsa* verses were composed (Ağayev, 1964).

The influence of the Nizami literary school has been especially widespread in Turkish literature. In his *Khamsa*, Nizami spoke with love of his native land, its customs, and traditions. Even Turkish literary critic Ali Genceli, who has spoken extensively on this subject, notes in his introduction to the translation of the Turkish poet M.F.Gürtünçan's *Leyli and Majnun* that he encountered the following couplet in an ancient manuscript of Nizami's works found in Hagia Sophia:

“My ancestors were Turks. Each of them was like a wolf in intelligence and wisdom” (Araslı, 1947).

Furthermore, a clearer understanding of Nizami and his works can be obtained from the preface that Ali Genceli wrote for M.F.Gürtünca’s translation. This preface, titled “Nizami Ganjavi”, attracts our attention as a good example of research conducted on the poet. Here, Nizami Ganjavi is introduced as a great and celebrated poet who is rarely encountered in Eastern literature. In his research, Nizami’s works are studied in comparison with other famous Eastern artists, including Ferdowsi’s works. In his *Shahnameh*, Ferdowsi did not provide detailed information like Nizami’s works; he beautifully brought legendary history to life (Gürtünca, 1966).

In the section titled “The Name, Homeland, and Family of Nizami”, the author provides information about the poet’s father and mother, noting that Nizami’s mother was the daughter of a Kurdish tribe.

He mentions he encountered the following couplet by Nizami in Hagia Sophia:

“My grandfather and father were Turks,
They were as courageous as a fur coat.”

The author states that the poet was born in Ganja and also passed away there and gives detailed information about the city of Ganja and its history. In the introduction, he even discusses aspects of the poet’s life, his marriage, and his son separately. He highly values Nizami’s advice to his son Muhammad in the work *Layla and Majnun* and points out that this counsel has versions and imitations in Persian, Turkish, as well as Punjabi languages (Araslı, 1958).

In general, Turkish life, the lifestyle of the Turkish people, Turkish thought, Turkish mentality, and the Turkish way are clearly visible in the poems of Nizami. In his poems, the poet also benefited from the oral creativity of his native people. The poet’s wide use of oral folk creativity stems from his love for his people and their customs and traditions.

“Nizami thought in Turkish but wrote in Persian.” That is why Persian writers who read the works of Nizami and Khaghani Shirvani said, “the Turkish scent is coming through.” This Turkish scent has had a special influence on the works of Turkish peoples (Araslı, 1979).

All of this shows that the widespread spread of Nizami traditions in Turkish literary art and their continuation up to the present day is related to the Turkish spirit distinctly felt in the great poet’s work. In Turkish literary art, many poets have taken Nizami as their pen name. Nizami’s creativity, as well as on other Eastern peoples, has also influenced Turkish poetry in terms of form. During this period, the tradition of writing *Khamsa* became exemplary. In addition, the tradition of writing *Khamsa* in Turkish literature is distinguished by the diversity of its themes. However, despite this, the socio-political issues raised reflect the strong influence of Nizami’s creativity from a literary and artistic point of view (Araslı, 1980).

Nizami’s creative work has enriched Turkish artistic literature in terms of ideas, broadened its social motifs, and stimulated the extensive development of themes such as love, labor, and heroism. Nizami’s influence played a significant role in the emergence of Turkish masnavi poetry and became a particular object of research. Studies about Nizami have been more clearly reflected in scientific articles written by various scholars. In Turkey, a number of scientific research articles have been published in journals such as “Turkish Language”, “Turkish Language Studies”, and “Orientalism”, concerning the Azerbaijani poet Nizami and the works of Turkish poets who deal with his themes.

Nizami’s creativity, which has played a significant role in the development of Eastern epic poetry, also influenced Turkish artistic literature. He played an important role in the widespread dissemination of humanist ideas and the praise of high moral qualities and topics such as love and heroism. Like Nizami’s poems, which were translated and spread into Turkish, *Khamsa* imitations also began to appear in the Turkish language.

The tradition of responding to Nizami's *Khamsa* and writing Nizami's themes has become a creative challenge in Turkish literature, as it was among Persian, Uzbek, and Indian peoples. Turkish poets have also tested their pens in this field, continuing Nizami's traditions.

Representatives of Turkish literature such as Həmdullah Həmdi, Taşlıcalı Yahya, Nəvizadə Ətayi, Feyzi, Behiştî, and Çakəri are also authors of *Khamsa*. However, it should be noted that the tradition of writing *Khamsa* in the Turkish world developed somewhat differently from Nizami. For example, the *Khamsa* of Behiştî, a prominent figure of 16th-century Turkish literature, consists of the following poems: *Bamiq and Azra*, *Yusuf and Zuleikha*, *Husn and Nigar*, *Suheyl and Novbahar*, and *Layli and Majnun*. Or let us take the prominent Turkish poet of the 16th century, Həmdullah Həmdi. Həmdi's *Khamsa* contains poems that differ from Nizami's works: *Yusuf and Zuleikha*, *Kifayatname*, *Layli and Majnun*, *Tohvatul Asheqin*, and *Tavalludi Amim* (Araslı, 1947).

Other *Khamsa* themes written in Turkish are also distinguished by their variety. This shows that the tradition of writing *Khamsa* in Turkish was not continued merely through imitation. However, the tradition of writing *Khamsa* as a literary genre was associated with the name of Nizami. Turkish poets remembered their predecessors with great reverence in their works and made the powerful influence of Nizami's immortal creativity felt in their work. Therefore, the Nizami literary school emerged in Turkish literature. The disciples of this school were also proud of being followers of the Nizami literary tradition. They spoke with pride about addressing Nizami's themes in their writings.

As can be seen, Nizami's *Khamsa* has served as a source for Turkish poets. However, the tradition of creating *Khamsa* was continued through prose. From Turkish literature, we can mention Bursali Jalili and Nergisi as examples. Nergisi called his own work, which consists of five parts, a poem. However, these parts are not dedicated to separate themes; they form a single unified work (Hüseyn, 1942).

Nizami's creativity has manifested itself in various artistic trends in Turkish literary art. His work has also influenced Turkish folk epics.

Translating Nizami's poems into Turkish languages is a task that requires both scholarly expertise and poetic mastery. At the same time, it is important to consider the level of development of poetic art. *With all this in mind, let us look at Sheykhi's translation:*

Deger yüz cana şol saat ki, dilber
Gərəkməz der, veli gönlündən ister.

When we compare the translation of this couplet, we see that although Sheykhi keeps the meaning, he is not able to preserve the same level of artistic beauty as Nizami. The benefit of such translations is that they acquaint the Turkish reader with Nizami's ideas and the aesthetic beauty of his poetry.

The complete translations of Nizami's poems belong to later periods. Among them, we can mention the translation by M.F.Gürtünçan. However, this translation was not made from the poet's original text but directly from Samad Vurghun's Azerbaijani translation. He deeply studied Nizami's art and works, analyzed the research conducted on Nizami's writings, and translated while being closely acquainted with the originals of Nizami's couplets (Mübariz, 1947).

The translator, who wants to convey Nizami's art to the reader in full depth, sometimes deviates from the text and renders certain lines differently.

Başka dil yaramaz şah neslimize
Eskiklik getirer başka dil bize
Biz mahmut Qaznevi gibi deyiliz
Dururuq verilen sözümüzde biz.

In this couplet, since the word "Leyli" was adapted into Turkish as "Leyla", the translator sometimes made changes related to this name.

In the Turkish edition, the couplet is given as follows:

Məcnunun dilinde Leyla ve sevgi
Başka hiç bir sözü duymazdı ilgi.

Gürtuncan compared his translations with Samad Vurgun's translation and changed some lines to make the adaptation more accurate.

The following verse is given in Samad Vurgun's translation:

Ucalmaq istəsən bir kamala çat
Kamala ehtiram göstərir həyat.

The second line of the translated couplet is reflected more accurately in Turkish publications as follows (Rüstəmov, 1975):

Ucalmaq istesen büyüklük öğren
Yükselmiş görsünler seni gün-günden.

It appears that the translator, in addition to referring to the original, also benefited from Ali Nihat Tarlan's line-by-line translations. In this way, he brought his translation closer to the main text.

Countless such examples can be presented. Sometimes, when a verse could not be fully rendered in a single couplet, he translated each line separately and created a new quatrain without relying on Samad Vurgun's version.

We can multiply such examples indefinitely. However, it should be noted that the Turkish spirit in Nizami's works and his connection with Turkish thinkers since the Middle Ages created favorable conditions for the extensive and high-quality translation of his works into Turkish. H.Araslı noted that Nizami was a poet who wrote in Persian but thought in Turkish and emphasized that one of the reasons for the successful translation of his poems into Turkish was his deep connection with Turkish literary heritage, folklore, and language (Ələkbərov, 1948).

Conclusion

Translations like these are truly the product of laborious work. Even though the study of Nizami's creativity is considered a literary necessity, these translations have played a major role in presenting Nizami's works to Turkish readers in a wide and detailed manner.

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