

# Traces of Folk Literature in the “Maqtal” of Yusuf Maddah in the 14<sup>th</sup> Century (The Sample of “Maqtali-Hussein” Masnavi)

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## Abstract

Literary genre “maqtal” came to literature from the Arabs. Then it passed to the Persians, and then to Turkish literature. During the time of the prophet and after him, wars and tragedies were called as “maqtal.” The Arabic word maqtal means “the place where a person is killed”.

The 14th century specimens are rich and give some materials for research. Yusuf Maddah's masnavi of “Maqtali-Hussein”, which disappeared in the darkness of history, has special importance in terms of studying the literary language and historical grammar of the 14<sup>th</sup> century of Azerbaijan, as well as the richness of themes, forms and genres of the history of epic poetry. The work also provides rich material for studying the development of poetry in our literary history. Poetic works of classical literature has always been the object of research with the capacity for meaning, the diversity of genres, and the poetic landscapes.

The masnavi of “Maqtali-Hussein”, one of the native language examples of the 14th century is written in a language that everyone can understand. In this example of poetry, the words of Azerbaijani Turkish are developed with Arabic and Persian words, and helps to make the idea more understandable. It should also be noted that the Azerbaijani-Turkic words in the masnavi are more numerous than the derived words.

**Keywords:** Azerbaijani-Turkic literature, folk literature, maqtal, middle age, masnavi, epic poetry, analysis

## XIV. YÜZYILDA YUSUF MEDDAH “MAKTAL”INDA HALK EDEBİYATININ İZLERİ (“MAKTAL-I HÜSEYİN” MESNEVİSİ ÖRNEĞİ)

### Öz

Edebiyatta maktal ilk olarak Araplar tarafından kullanılmaya başlandı. Sonra Perslere, ardından Türk edebiyatına geçti. Peygamberin yaşadığı zaman ve ondan sonraki savaşlar ve trajediler “maktal” olarak adlandırıldı. Arapça maktal kelimesi, “bir kişinin öldürüldüğü yer” anlamına geliyor.

XIV. yüzyıl örnekleri zengindir ve araştırma için bazı malzemeler sağlar. Yusuf Meddah'ın tarihin karanlığında kaybolan mesnevisi “Maktal-ı Hüseyin”, gerek Azerbaycan'ın XIV. Yüzyıl'daki edebî dilini ve tarihî gramerini incelemek gerekse epik şiir tarihinin temalarını, biçimlerini ve türlerini tanımak açısından özel bir önem taşır. Eser aynı zamanda şiir türünün edebiyat tarihimizdeki gelişimini incelemek için zengin materyal sağlar. Klasik edebiyatın poetik eserleri anlam kapasitesi, türlerin çeşitliliği ve şiirsel manzaralarıyla her zaman araştırma konusu olmuştur.

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XIV. yüzyıl ana dili örneklerinden olan "Maktal-ı Hüseyin" mesnevisi herkesin anlayabileceği bir dilde yazılmıştır. Bu şiir örneğinde Azerbaycan Türkçesinin kelimeleri, Arapça ve Farsça kelimelerle geliştirilerek fikrin daha anlaşılır olmasına yardımcı olmaktadır. Şunu da belirtmek gerekir ki mesnevi'deki Azerbaycan Türkçesi kelimeleri, türemiş kelimelerden daha fazladır.

**Anahtar sözcükler:** Azerbaycan-Türk edebiyatı, halk edebiyatı, maktal, orta çağ, mesnevi, epik şiir, tahlil

## INTRODUCTION

**T**he study and involvement of classical literature is an interesting contribution both for our time and for future generations. In particular, works that cover our historical period and reflect all the subtleties of this period must be examined to the last detail, and the hidden subtext must be investigated and compared. Examples of creativity are written in this language and presented to readers to make them more understandable. The combination of expressions of different origins within such works, written in a simple, laconic style, makes the line of thought fully meaningful. That is, when referring to any classic work, it is easy feel the understanding meaning of couplets and lines.

As we know, oral folk literature originated before written literature and has a general character, becoming a daily use in our lives. There are many rich genres of Azerbaijani folklore. The folk materials, for example, proverbs, parables, applause, and curses have shown their influence in classical literature throughout history. Folk examples have survived to the present day, preserving their functionality in the language from time to time, preserving their nationality, subtlety of meaning and conciseness of thought. This has been the case throughout history. For example, proverbs, sayings, parables and others create a concrete idea about the historical past of our people, their way of life and thinking, and evaluate its value with a set of wise words. No matter what, when looking at the works of poets and philosophers, it is impossible not to come across folk examples. Because, every thinker is a representative of the nation to which he belongs, and this, in a way, reflects the visible side of the environment in which it belongs.

Since classical works of art are mostly in the vernacular, in the way of life of the people, it is possible to come across examples of folk art in both lyrical and epic works that have appeared throughout history. It manifests itself in a way, depending on the way of thinking of the creative poet, his ability to achieve the goal set before it. If the work of the creator is the subject of advice, it will refer to the folk examples with the most reminders and exhortations, not, if it is about patriotism, then references to courage, bravery, valour will show itself.

The reason for the creation of each work is an event. No work can be created without events. The features of the development of examples of folk literature and their poetic meanings in the work of the famous poet of the 14<sup>th</sup> century Yusuf Maddah's "Maqtali-Hussein" are different. Apparently, Yusuf Maddah is our writer who gave valuable works of art to classical oriental literature. Religious and philosophical themes are more prominent in his works. It is dedicated to the martyrdom of Imam Hussein, the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad, in Karbala on the 10<sup>th</sup> of Muharram, 61 AH. It is no coincidence that the works written on this topic are better known as "Maqtali-Hussein".

One of the "maqtal"s written in Azerbaijani-Turkic literature belongs to Yusuf Maddah, who lived in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Very little is known about his life and work. Sheykhoglu gave the first information about the poet in his commentaries "Kanzul-Kubara" and "Mahaqqul-Ulema", which he completed in 1401, and named him "Yusif-Maddah". It should be noted that there are a number of opinions about the name of Yusuf Maddah (Ataemi, 2016, p.85). Although Yusuf Maddah is best known in our literary history as the author of "Varaqa and Gulshah" recently, a number of his poems, including "Maqtali-Hussein", have been found and delivered to the literary community. It is true that there are those who doubt that the masnavi belongs to Yusuf Maddah. However, his comparison with "Varaqa and Gulshah" shows that both examples were written by the same author. Also, the nickname "maddah" found in different copies of "Maqtali-Hussein" once again confirms that it belongs to Yusuf Maddah. Turkish researcher, dr. Kenan Ozcelik prepared a scientific-critical text of the work on the basis of existing manuscripts in 2008, and involved it in linguistic research. It is clear from Yusuf Maddah's notes in the work (Yedi yüz altmış üçüneydi tamām, Oldı yekşenbi güninde ve`sselām)- (It was seven hundred and sixty-three ok, It happened on Sunday) that he wrote the work in 763 AH (1362 CE), and dedicated it to Jalaeddin Bayazid, nicknamed Koturum, the ruler of the Jandarogulları Beyli.

The titles of the work, which consists of 3313 verses, are named in Persian. The work, written in the form of assemblies and consists of ten assemblies. It is not accidental that the work was written both in the form of assemblies and in the number of ten assemblies. According to the medieval tradition of epic poetry, religious works were written in the form of assemblies. From this point of view, it is enough to mention only the masnavi "Dastani-Ahmad Harami". It is also known that the maqtals were usually recited by the rovezkhans, a man who reads elegy (a story about the death of Muslim apostles) in the first ten days of the month of Muharram at the annual condolence ceremonies held on the occasion of the assassination of Imam Hussein. Therefore, works written in the genre of maqtal often consisted of ten chapters. The work written in the form of a masnavi, in an intelligible style close to the vernacular, in the rhythm aruz, and form of the ramal bahr. The masnavi describes the bloody tragedy that befell Imam Hussein and his followers. The eighth meeting of the maqtal also discusses the revolt of the Mukhtar in 687. Traditionally, on the first ten days of the month of Muharram, mourning ceremonies held in homes, mourning the martyrdom of Imam Hussein and reciting aloud. These gatherings continue until the Day of Ashura (the day of the assassination of Imam Hussein and the Ehl al-Bayt).

In this masnavi, Yusuf Maddah used the possibilities of the vernacular in a broad sense, as well as used the words applause, curse, parable and wisdom in their place. For example: "Didiler kim cān fidī kılamak gerek, Haq yolını bellüce bulmak gerek"(Kenan, 2008, p.126). The meaning of the parable is as follows: "They said that in order to find the right path, you must sacrifice your life". The writer used this example in preparation for the struggle for truth. Abu Turkha said: "In order for the truth to be protected, it is necessary to be ready for war". It is stated in verse 117 of surat "al-An`am" in the Holy Quran: "Muhakkak ki senin rabbin, evet O, kendi yolundan sapanları da, doğru yola gidenleri de iyi bilmektedir" (Surely your Lord knows best those who go astray. And He is the best knower of those who are guided) (Qur`ani-Kerim, 2013, p.141).

The issue of God's attitude towards people is described in more detail in the masnavi of Maqtali-Hussein. For example: "Didi çäre yoğ buña yā ibn-i am, Her ne kim taqdīr-ise oldur qalem" (He said: "There is no way out of this, o, Ibn. Everything is destiny") (Kenan, 2008, p.131). "Qādir oldur çünki yazdı ol qalem, Andan artıq eksik olmaz, iy hümām" (He is the Almighty, because he pen is wrote, there is no shortage of it, o humam) (Kenan, 2008, p.133). In the examples we have mentioned, destiny, and fate are described as having a certain meaning in a person's life. The appeal in the example shows that the inscription "divine destiny" fate of person is inevitable. Even in our present life, when we step into certain vital and important issues, sometimes the result is not what we want. Even in our present life, when we step into certain vital and important issues, sometimes the result is not what we want.

It is very easy to see examples of folklore in the works of Nizami Ganjavi, Imadeddin Nasimi, Mohammad Fuzuli and other such great poets. However, such examples have been developed in the works not for the same purpose, but depending on the point of view of each poet. Mohammad Fuzuli's "Eylesen tûtıye ta'līm-i edâ-yı kelimât, Sözü insân olur ammâ özü insân olmâz" (If you teach a parrot to speak, it will speak like a human, but its body will not be human)" (Fuzuli, I v., 2005, p.357) is an example of this. In this verse, Fuzuli explains the connection between language and thinking in a simpler and clearer way. The poetic translation of the example is as follows: "If you teach a parrot a sentence, it is very easy for him to speak like a human, but the body is not human." As we have seen, there is an exhortation here. That is, everyone should know what belongs to him and not go beyond it. There is an example of this in the proverb: "To see the eye, to know the mind." Another example of Fuzuli's native language has a poetic meaning based on the folk saying: "Refikın olsa dilsiz cânver hem sakla râz andan, Sakın sırrın düşürme dillere Mecnûn-i rüsvâ tek" (Fuzuli, I v., 2005, p.192). Saying that man is superior to all other living beings created by God, the poet advises in the verse to keep the personal problems of everyone secret: "Even if a dumb wolf be friends you, still keep your secret, or your secret will fall into tongues like Majnun". When reading this verse, we inevitably remember the folk sayings: "Don't give your secret to a friend, a friend has a friend", and so on. Such expressions are common in classical literature. If we refer to the work of almost any classical writer, we can easily see such references.

Applause from the examples of oral folk literature was also developed in the "Maqtali-Hussein" masnavi: "İlerü geldi duâ kıldı kamu, Hâk yarı kıl sun saña, iy baht ulu" ( Everyone came forward and prayed: "May God help you, o lucky one") (Kenan, 2008, p.137). In the sense of the example, everyone prays and applauds with one voice. This popular expression emphasizes that God is the means of every success. The idea expressed in the example is still "God bless you!" is used in the same sense in the vernacular.

"Ol Ubeydullâh işitdi hem bunı, Qorqusundan gevdeden kaçdı canı." (When Ubeydullah heard this, he was terrified) (Kenan, 2008, p.169). When we look closely to the example, we can easily imagine the situation that a person experiences when he or she experiences and experiences events that are or may occur. In this example, Yusuf Maddah described the psychological state of the situation in which the image fell, and was able to skillfully describe human feelings that could not be seen in two lines. Thus, in different situations (stress, fear, anxiety), human emotions are very similar. That is, only in special circumstances (if he is afraid, excited, etc.) can an individual

appear with his true face, or rather, at these moments, his subconscious thoughts are revealed. Today the phrase "a coward is afraid of his own shadow" that we use in our language sounds like an example. Mohammad Fuzuli says in his poem "Seven Glass": "Like a coward, they are like a flower out of grief" (Fuzuli, I v., 2005, p.151).

Using the poetics of the word, Fuzuli explains cowardice as a weak quality. "İt vefâ şaqladı sen itden alu, Şaqlayumaduñ vefâ, iy kayğulu" (Kenan, 2008, p.320). The meaning of the parable is as follows: "The dog was faithful, but you could not be faithful, because you were higher than the dog in the sight of God, sorrowful one!", "Bir qapuda bir süñücek bula it, Öldürür iseñ unutmaz key işit" (Kenan, 2008, p.320). Both samples were written in the form of an appeal. If we pay attention to the structure of the words in the examples, all the remaining words, except for the word "vefa", belong to the Azerbaijani language. Studies show that, indeed, until the XIII century, that is, at the stage of oral development of our literary language derivations from Arabic and Persian in the ancient literary language of Azerbaijan and its separate folklore genres, which developed on the basis of the Azerbaijani oral literary language. It is much less than our written literary language, which developed more intensively after the XIII century.

The word "Sünücek" is used as a term in the example. The word literally means "little bone". The meaning of the second example is, "If a dog finds a small bone in a door, even if you kill it, it will not forget it!" in the form. In both cases, the animals are more loyal than humans and never forget their goodness. Such similar ideas can be found in the works of art created by the Nizami Ganjavi. For example, in the poem "Leyli and Majnun" we can give an example of the unrelated story "King keeping a dog", which stays outside the main theme. At the end of the story, it is shown that animals are more loyal than humans. Yusuf Maddah was able to use such folk examples in the local context in accordance with the situation of the heroes he described in the masnavi and the events that took place.

Our great classics have always considered the fact that everyone should be scientific and educated to be the main criterion in their works. Yusuf Maddah, in keeping with this tradition in his "Maqtali-Hussein" masnavi, tries to emphasize that the way out of oppression and hardship is in science and knowledge, using verses and the opportunities of all three languages. For example, "İlmi rehber eyler-iseñ menzile, Dînü imân cân u gönül kenz ola" (If you are guided by science, religion and faith will be a treasure), "Cehd qıl aqluñ kemäle irişe, Tâ ki cânuñ ol maqâma irişe" (Until you say goodbye to your soul, try to come to your senses), "Aqlı rehber eylegil kendüzüñe, Evliyâyı yoldaş eyle özüñe" (Guide your mind and be friends with the saint), "Çündürür aqluñ kulağuzı azîz, Onuñ-ıla hayr u şer olur temîz" (The mind is dear to man, because good and evil happen with the mind) (Kenan, 2008, p.325). In the examples, Yusuf Maddah describes a man of knowledge as intelligent. He used words in the masnavi, with the same logic, without compromising the meaning, substituting words such as "science" and "mind" without repeating them, and treated words and expressions like a professional master. "Science is the lamp of the mind", "To see the eye, to know the mind", "Power breaks everything, the mind breaks power", "Beyond the mind, there is no, there is no close friend of the mind" such folk sayings are one of the most common expressions of our daily life. If we look at any classic example, we can easily come across this topic. This proves once again the superiority of knowledge and science, and that victory. In the Azerbaijani film "The Secret of a Fortress" the conversation of the main character

Elshan with the books, the words of the books are: "... Elshan, always prevails, and that good is the key to victory over evil. Elshan, if you don't read us, you can't wear a belt ..." once again show scientific and literate way out of difficulties. In this example, which has an instructive effect in the "Hussein's Poem" section of the masnavi "Maqtali-Hussein" it is easy to understand that every wise thought is a science. The meaning of the parable is as follows: "This world has not been faithful to anyone, nor will it be to you, this is knowledge!"

## RESULT

It should be noted that the more we study the classical examples, the more we become aware of the historical past of our people. In our opinion, the examples of folklore developed in the "Maqtali-Hussein" masnavi were selected in accordance with the nature of the images along the plot line and were given in their language. In his religious-philosophical work "Maqtali-Hussein", Yusuf Maddah often used folk examples, sayings, or rather oral literature, in a language that the people could understand, in a more coherent form, and he achieved this. Although it is difficult to read and understand Masnavi at first, when we come across folk examples in the later stages, the difficulty is forgotten. Because, the vernacular is a delicate, quiet, easy understanding language. It was possible to determine the existence of specific expressions in the poetic language of Yusuf Maddah by comparing them with the works of other classical poets.

In addition, the use of folk expressions in the masnavi once again confirms that the poet is closer to the people. The simplicity, wording, and subtlety of the language of the work make it easier to understand. This masnavi, which has a wide meaning, consists of a mixture of words and expressions belonging to all three languages - Azerbaijani-Turkish, Arabic and Persian. Yusuf Maddah used more poetic means and metaphors in the Masnavi. It is clear from the comparison of the examples with the means of folk art (applause, words of wisdom, advice) that the poet, despite the difficulties of the time, still did not complain, and advised to overcome every difficulty with patience, science and wisdom.

From all this it is clear that the examples of folk literature and the examples of written literature are interrelated. In other words, in classical art it is possible to come across the diversity and versatility of these relations step by step.

Yusuf Maddah enriched his examples with poetic colors by referring to the verses in the Holy Quran.

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