

RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Issues of Meter and Rhyme in The Structure of The Ode and Praise Poem Genres

H. Sh. Djangabaeva

3rd-Year Doctoral Student, Nukus State Pedagogical Institute named after Ajiniyaz, Nukus, Karakalpakstan, Uzbekistan

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## Abstract

The article provides a comparative analysis of the artistic forms of European and Karakalpak lyric poetry based on the works of the Russian classical representative G.R. Derzhavin and the Karakalpak classical poet Ajiniyaz. It examines the role of meter and rhyme in defining the poetic stanza in the genres of ode and praise poem, as well as their function in ensuring both internal and external rhyme and in expressing the lyrical object in an artistic manner.

## KEYWORDS

Ode, praise poem, syllabo-tonic meter, barmaq (syllabic) meter, rhyme, stanza, radif, stress.

## INTRODUCTION

The theme of praise, glorification, and eulogy in literature occupies one of the central places in the verbal art of any nation. Although the praise poem established in classical Karakalpak literature and the European ode that emerged in ancient literature are similar in their functional purpose, they differ in their artistic forms and aesthetic principles. Nevertheless, by studying the formal characteristics of these two genres — rhyme, meter, and stanza — it is possible to identify the poetics, literary traditions, and craftsmanship inherent in both European and Karakalpak literature. The genres of ode and praise poem have their own leading figures and masterful creators in both Russian and Karakalpak literature.

If Derzhavin is considered the poet who developed the ode genre thematically, generically, and formally in 18th–19th century Russian poetry, then Ajiniyaz was the one who enriched and developed the praise poem genre in 19th century Karakalpak lyric poetry, reflecting the models of Eastern classical poetry in his praise songs. Derzhavin also attempted to break free from the strict, traditional ten-line ode structure

of European literature. "In his works, one also encounters odes of twelve to fourteen lines written in four-foot iambic meter" [1.277]. Ajiniyaz, meanwhile, was able to masterfully adopt not only the national song form and the four-line verse, but also the forms found in Eastern classical literature.

While the European ode aimed primarily at glorifying statehood, emperors, or high-ranking individuals — and through that, expressing artistic ideas, philosophical and aesthetic views — in the praise poem genre, the focus is less on the social origin of the lyrical subject and more on their personal qualities. Therefore, representatives of the upper, middle, and lower social classes alike are celebrated. Such distinctions can be illustrated by comparing Derzhavin's ode "To the Ataman and the Don Cossack Army" with Ajiniyaz's praise poem "Qiz Oraz."

G. Derzhavin's ode "To the Ataman and the Don Cossack Army" is dedicated to M.I. Platov — a high-ranking figure in Russian society, a general, and a hero of the patriotic war — and celebrates his acts of bravery against Napoleon. The poem depicts human qualities such as courage and endurance

through the example of Platov. In the opening stanza:

Платов! Европе уж известно,  
Что сил Донских ты страшный вождь.  
Врасплох, как бы колдун, всеместно  
Падешь как снег ты с туч иль дождь.  
По черных воронов полету,  
По дыму, гулу, мхам, звездам,  
По рыску волчью, видя мету,  
Подходишь к вражьи́м вдруг носам;  
И, зря на туск, на блеск червонца,  
По солнцу, иль против солнца,  
Свой учреждаешь ертаул  
И тайный ставишь караул! [2.268].

(In this opening stanza, Derzhavin celebrates General Platov as a legendary and almost superhuman military commander who is feared and respected across all of Europe. The poet portrays him as a swift, unpredictable, and instinctive warrior who strikes the enemy without warning and navigates the battlefield by reading the signs of nature around him. Platov is presented not merely as a skilled soldier but as a force of nature himself — one who uses every element of his environment to gain advantage over his enemies. The stanza concludes by showing that despite his almost mythical presence, Platov is also a disciplined and calculating commander who organizes his forces with great precision. Overall, the tone is one of admiration and grandeur, which reflects the elevated and celebratory spirit characteristic of the European ode tradition).[2.268]

The poem follows the syllabic-tonic meter characteristic of Russian poetry and is written in four-foot iambic. The twelve-line ode employs both alternating and paired rhymes. Although it is an ode consisting of twelve stanzas of twelve lines each, since all stanzas are based on the same meter and rhyme scheme, the formal characteristics of the poem can be demonstrated using the first stanza as an example. First, it is necessary to clarify the concept of a foot. "A foot — in ancient poetry, refers to the repeated sequence of long and short syllables in a specific order; in syllabic-tonic structure, it is the combination of one stressed syllable and one or more unstressed syllables that recur multiple times. This is close to

the aruz meter of verse structure in Uzbek poetry" [3.203-204]. That is, feet derive from the relationship of syllables within the lines of a poem. In the stanza we have taken as an example, the lines consist of 8 to 9 syllables. Lines 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9 have 9 syllables, while the remaining lines have 8 syllables. The first eight lines of the stanza follow an alternating rhyme scheme, forming the pattern ababcbcd, and the syllable counts correspondingly alternate as 9-8 in line with this pattern. The final four lines follow a paired rhyme scheme, forming the pattern eeff. This rhyming scheme continues in the same order throughout the subsequent stanzas. Since the stress in the lines follows iambic meter, the stress falls only on the second syllable of each word. For example: Пла-то́в! Ев-ро́-пе ўж из-вѣст-но. Regardless of how many syllables a word contains, the second syllable carries the stress. If a word consists of only one syllable, the stress shifts to the first syllable of the following word. Since the lines contain 8 to 9 syllables, four stressed and four or five unstressed syllables are present. In Russian poetry, stress serves not only to define the meter and form of a poem, but also to shape its intonation and delivery.

As for Ajiniyaz's lyric poetry:

Atasi Ábil kátquda, molla Tájidur aǵası,  
Zárbaraǵ altın qıyılmısh taqqan anıń sıǵası,  
Kiygeni jánnet ishik, qundız tutılmısh yaǵası,  
Hayt-mereke, toyǵa shıqsa bárshe qızdıń aǵlası,  
Bársheden aǵla seniń húsni-jamalıń qız Oraz [4.20].

(In this stanza, Ajiniyaz celebrates a young woman named Oraz by highlighting her noble family background, her exquisite appearance, and her captivating presence at social gatherings. The poet portrays her as a figure of exceptional beauty and grace who naturally stands out among all other women. By introducing her respected family first and concluding with a direct personal address, Ajiniyaz creates a sense of both social honor and intimate admiration. The stanza conveys that Oraz's beauty is not only physical but is also reflected in her dignified origins and the impression she leaves on everyone around her. The overall tone is one of sincere and heartfelt praise, which is the defining characteristic of the Karakalpak praise poem tradition). [4.20]

Ajiniyaz's praise poem, meanwhile, follows the barmaq (syllabic) meter, which is considered the national meter of Turkic peoples, including Karakalpak lyric poetry. The poet

attempted to write the poem in the style of the muhammas genre. Although it consists of five lines, it does not fully conform to the classical muhammas. This is because it does not fully preserve the rhyme scheme of the classical muhammas. "In the muhammas verse structure, all lines of the first stanza rhyme with one another (a-a-a-a-a), the first four lines of each subsequent stanza rhyme with one another, and the final line rhymes with the preceding stanza (b-b-b-b-a, c-c-c-c-a, and so on)" [5.196]. In Ajiniyaz's praise poem, the first two stanzas follow the rhyme scheme AaaaB, ccccB, and the subsequent stanzas continue in the same manner. Although the first stanza does not fully conform to the classical muhammas, the following stanzas follow the muhammas pattern.

Ajiniyaz employs a distinctive approach in enriching the poetics of the praise poem both formally and in terms of content. That is, in each stanza, the first four lines are rhymed together, and the final line features a radif ("Qiz Oraz" / "girl Oraz"). This radif holds the emotional center of the poem together. In Eastern poetry, the radif serves as a device in genres such as the praise poem and the qasida, dedicating the conclusion of each stanza to a consistent image. Although there is no phonetic stress in the praise poem, there is a logical stress. This is because in each stanza, the praise of the lyrical subject is expressed, and in the final line of each stanza, the lyrical subject herself — girl Oraz — is named, and all the tools of praise and embellishment are directed toward this word.

Derzhavin also skillfully made use of the rules of the Russian language in constructing rhymes within the ode. In accordance with the first eight lines of the opening stanza, the rhymes are used alternately as masculine and feminine rhymes. This can be explained as follows:

1. Платов! Европе уж извЕст-но (9 syllables – feminine rhyme)
2. Что сил Донских ты страшный вОждь (8 syllables – masculine rhyme)
3. Врасплох, как бы колдун, всемЕст-но (9 syllables – feminine rhyme)
4. Падешь как снег ты с туч иль дОждь (8 syllables – masculine rhyme)
5. По черных воронов полЕ-ту (9 syllables – feminine rhyme)
6. По дыму, гулу, мхам, звездАм (8 syllables – masculine rhyme)

7. По рыску волчью, видя мЕ-ту (9 syllables – feminine rhyme)

8. Подходишь к вражЬим вдруг носАм [2.268]. (8 syllables – masculine rhyme)

In the alternating rhyme scheme — arranged as ababcdcd — the lines are conditionally divided into feminine and masculine. The feminine or masculine nature of the rhymes is not solely dependent on the concept of grammatical gender, but is also related to the intonation and delivery of the poem. In masculine rhyme (мужская рифма) — the stress falls on the very last syllable of the line. This rhyme is read and heard as firm, sharp, and strong. In feminine rhyme (женская рифма) — the stress falls on the second-to-last syllable, meaning that after the stressed syllable, one more unstressed syllable remains. This rhyme produces a sense of softness and a drawn-out, flowing sound.

However, in the final four lines of the stanza, we can observe that the above rhyme scheme is broken:

9. И, зря на туск, на блеск червОн-ца (9 syllables – feminine rhyme)

10. По солнцу, иль против сОлн-ца (8 syllables – feminine rhyme)

11. Свой учреждаешь ертаУл (8 syllables – masculine rhyme)

12. И тайный ставишь караУл [2.268]. (8 syllables – masculine rhyme)

In the second line of the given example (the 10th line of the first stanza), we can observe that the rhyme system of the four-foot iambic meter is broken. According to the four-foot iambic system, stress should fall on every second syllable of an 8-syllable line, that is, on syllables 2-4-6-8. However, here we encounter the characteristic "external regularity" of iambic meter — the phenomenon of pyrrhic. The term pyrrhic is defined as: "(Greek: pyrrhichios) — the omission of a schematic stress in trochaic and iambic meters in syllabic-tonic verse structure" [6.746]. First, in Russian and other polysyllabic languages, it is difficult to place stress on every second syllable in poetry, because the language contains many three-, four-, or five-syllable words. For this reason, in order to preserve the rhythm, the stress "drops out" at positions where iambic stress should fall (for example, on the 4th or 6th syllable). This theory is called pyrrhic. Second, in the 10th line, the word "Иль" (or "или" — meaning "or") — which should carry stress but does not, thus disrupting the

scheme — is a function word, and in natural speech, strong stress is never placed on it. If Derzhavin had stressed the 4th syllable in this line, he would have had to pronounce the word "иль" in a loud and artificial tone, which would have disrupted the natural reading (intonation) of the poem.

Ajiniyaz's praise poem also has its own distinctive complexity. Although the poem is not read with phonetic stress as in G.R. Derzhavin's poetry, reading it in rhythmic segments (caesuras) is required in order to achieve a natural intonation. "...it is impossible to read a line of verse without rhythm, as one would read prose. Therefore, depending on the number of syllables in a line, we divide a single line of verse into two, three, or four pauses. This phenomenon is as follows:

Atası / Ábil kátquda, / molla Tájidur / aǵası,  
Zárbaraǵ / altın qıyılmış / taqqan / anıń sırǵası,  
Kiygeni / jánnet ishik, / qundız tutılmış / yaǵası,  
Hayt-mereke, / toyǵa shıqsa / bárshe qızdıń / aǵlası,  
Bársheden / aǵla seniń / húsni-jamalıń / qız Oraz [4.20].

When we analyzed G.R. Derzhavin's ode in terms of its rhyme and syllabic characteristics, we observed that words related to stress are divided, and the syllables of words split into two or three parts can be read in an elongated and elevated tone individually. However, since Karakalpak poetry is based on the barmaq meter, an entirely different set of rules governs the provision of rhythm in reading poetry. On this matter, literary scholar Q. Orazimbetov states: "The emergence of rhythm in the barmaq meter has a fundamentally distinctive character compared to, say, the aruz meter or the tonic meter. This distinctiveness is defined first and foremost by the fact that the boundary of a rhythmic segment does not come in the middle of a single word, as it does in the aruz meter, but rather at the boundary between two words. Therefore, when reading Karakalpak poetry or singing it to a melody, a single word cannot be split in two. This is the primary reason why the number of syllables in the rhythmic segments within each line undergoes change" [7.220].

Based on these characteristics, the stanzas of Ajiniyaz's praise poem are divided into rhythmic segments. Each line of the stanza we analyzed consists of four rhythmic segments. However, some segments consist of one word, and others of two words. Since each line of the poem contains 15 to 16 syllables, the number of rhythmic segments is also considerable. It is impossible to read such a multi-syllabic line

in one breath, at a fast pace. Reading it by dividing it into rhythmic segments ensures beautiful intonation and creates a rhythm suited to music. This in turn reflects the distinctive nature of Karakalpak poetry.

### CONCLUSION

In conclusion, comparing Derzhavin's ode and Ajiniyaz's praise poem from the perspective of poetic meter and form not only illuminates the artistic characteristics of two distinct genres, but also provides an opportunity to study the literary process in 19th century Russian and Karakalpak literature, the development of literary genres, and the formal explorations in the works of the two classical poets of both literatures. While G.R. Derzhavin's ode demands strict order and lofty grandeur in terms of form, Ajiniyaz's praise poem stands out for its musicality and graceful rhythm. This in turn demonstrates the typological characteristics of the aforementioned genres.

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