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# THEMATIC CLASSIFICATION OF OGAHIY'S POEMS IN THE MUAMMA GENRE

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**Abstract** This article examines the muamma genre, which occupies a significant place in the literary heritage of the prominent nineteenth-century Uzbek classical poet Muhammad Rizo Ogahiy. In particular, the study provides a thematic classification of the eighty muamma poems included in the poet's divan Ta'viz ul-Oshiqin and analyzes their thematic content and artistic features. The research explores the range of themes, the system of images, poetic devices, and the influence of the traditions of classical Uzbek literature reflected in Ogahiy's muammas.

The article also discusses the distinctive nature of the muamma genre in classical poetry, emphasizing that it is a sophisticated poetic form demonstrating the poet's intellectual capacity, profound knowledge, and artistic mastery. Furthermore, it argues that composing works in such a complex genre requires not only literary talent, but also a thorough command of aruz prosody, the science of rhetoric (ilm al-badi'), the abjad numerical system, and the science of letters, all of which constituted essential components of the classical literary tradition. The findings reveal that Ogahiy's muamma poems are remarkable for their broad thematic scope, artistic perfection, and faithful continuation of the traditions of classical literature. Through this genre, the poet creatively developed the legacy of his predecessors and made a significant contribution to the advancement of the muamma genre in Uzbek classical poetry.

**Keywords:** Ogahiy, Ta'viz ul-Oshiqin, literary environment, muamma genre, classical Uzbek literature, poetics, thematic classification, letter-based poetic devices, artistic mastery.

**Introduction** Muhammadrizo Ogahiy (1809–1874) was an outstanding poet, historian, distinguished translator, and statesman whose multifaceted literary legacy occupies a unique place in nineteenth-century Uzbek literature. The period in which he lived and created is regarded as one of the most productive stages in the development of the Khorezm literary environment.

During this period, literary activity in Khorezm was mainly represented by three major directions:

1.Original literature (lyric and epic poetry);

2.Translated literature, primarily based on masterpieces of Eastern literature;

3. Historiography.

Ogahiy made an invaluable contribution to each of these fields and established his own distinctive literary school [1:11]. The more thoroughly his works are studied, the more clearly his exceptional literary talent becomes evident.

A comprehensive study of Ogahiy's creative heritage demonstrates that he was highly productive not only in major lyrical genres such as the ghazal, qasida, and mustazad, but also in shorter poetic forms including the rubai, tuyuq, qit'a, ta'rikh, and muamma. In particular, he composed eighty poems in the **muamma** genre, a sophisticated poetic form based on concealing

the name of a person or an object. All of these poems are included in his divan Ta'viz ul-Oshiqin ("The Amulet of Lovers") and are written in the form of fard (single-couplet poems). The number of these works itself demonstrates Ogahiy's remarkable intellectual ability, extensive scholarly knowledge, and profound poetic thinking, since composing muammas required exceptional literary skill [2:35].

The word muamma originates from the Arabic word a'mā, meaning "blind," and metaphorically signifies something "hidden," "concealed," or "encrypted." As a poetic genre, muamma possesses its own principles of composition and a specific methodology for discovering its solution. Similar to mathematical problems, where the answer exists but the method of reaching it requires logical reasoning, a muamma presents the hidden answer within the poem, leaving its discovery to the reader's intellect. Unlike mathematical equations, however, a muamma may be solved through different interpretative approaches, requiring creativity, intuition, and deep literary knowledge [3:6].

Although the muamma genre first appeared in Arabic literature during the tenth and eleventh centuries, it became an independent literary genre in Persian literature in the fourteenth century. Owing to the close relationship between Persian and Turkic literary traditions, the genre rapidly developed in Turkic literature as well. The literary heritage of Alisher Navoi and Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur played a decisive role in its development [3:5]. As a worthy successor to these great masters, Muhammadrizo Ogahiy composed outstanding muammas that inspired many nineteenth-century Khorezm poets to cultivate this complex poetic form and contributed significantly to its further development and refinement in Turkic literature.

**Research Methodology** This study employs qualitative and comparative literary analysis to examine the muamma poems included in Ogahiy's Ta'viz ul-Oshiqin. The research is based on the complete text of the divan, from which eighty muammas were identified and analyzed. Each muamma was examined according to its thematic content, semantic features, and artistic characteristics. Based on these criteria, the poems were classified into four major thematic groups: religious and educational, socio-political, everyday-life, and female-name muammas. Descriptive, classification, and comparative methods were applied throughout the research to identify common thematic patterns and distinctive literary features. The findings were interpreted with reference to the traditions of Uzbek classical literature and previous scholarly studies on the muamma genre.

**Analysis and Results** A thematic analysis of the muamma poems included in Ogahiy's divan Ta'viz ul-Oshiqin demonstrates the remarkable diversity of their thematic content. The study reveals that the poet addressed a wide range of subjects, concealing names associated with various aspects of human life through the artistic conventions of the muamma genre. In particular, Ogahiy's muammas contain hidden names related to religious and educational themes, socio-political figures, everyday life, and many other spheres. Therefore, these poems may be classified into several thematic categories.

The thematic classification of Ogahiy's muamma poems indicates that the poet did not limit himself to a single thematic field. Instead, he employed the genre as an artistic medium to reflect diverse dimensions of social, cultural, and spiritual life. The concealed names found in the poems belong to religious personalities, historical figures, rulers, scholars, members of the literary community, and ordinary individuals. This diversity clearly demonstrates the richness of the poet's artistic imagination and his profound knowledge of the intellectual and cultural life of his period.

Religious and educational names constitute one of the largest thematic groups in Ogahiy's muammas. These poems reveal the poet's respect for Islamic scholarship, moral values, and

spiritual traditions. By concealing such names through sophisticated poetic techniques, Ogahiy not only displays his literary mastery, but also encourages readers to engage in intellectual reflection while solving the poetic riddles.

Another significant group consists of names connected with rulers, statesmen, and influential social figures. Through these muammas, the poet reflects the political and social atmosphere of nineteenth-century Khorezm and demonstrates his close association with the royal court and the cultural elite of his time.

The analysis also shows that many muammas are devoted to ordinary personal names and everyday life. Such poems illustrate that the genre was not confined exclusively to religious or political themes, but was also used to portray various aspects of human relationships and daily experiences. Consequently, Ogahiy considerably expanded the thematic scope of the muamma genre. The research findings indicate that the thematic diversity of Ogahiy's muammas reflects both the richness of his worldview and the high level of his artistic craftsmanship. Each concealed name serves not merely as the solution to a poetic riddle, but also as an important semantic element contributing to the aesthetic value of the poem. Therefore, the thematic classification of these works provides a deeper understanding of Ogahiy's creative individuality and the development of the muamma genre in Uzbek classical literature. For the purpose of this study, the muamma poems included in Ta'viz ul-Oshiqin are classified into thematic groups, as presented in the following table.

**Table 1. Thematic Classification of Muamma Poems in Ogahiy's Ta'viz ul-Oshiqin**

**Group I. Muammas Dedicated to Religious and Educational Themes**

**1. Muammas Concealing the Beautiful Names of Allah**

| Concealed Name | Number of Muammas |
|---|---|
| Allah | 5 |
| Rahman | 1 |
| Rahim | 1 |
| Nur | 1 |
| Salam | 1 |

**2. Muammas Concealing the Names of Prophets, Companions, Saints, Scholars, Imams, and Poets**

| Concealed Name | Number of Muammas |
|---|---|
| Muhammad | 2 |
| Ahmad | 2 |
| Rasul | 1 |
| Nabiy | 1 |
| Adam | 1 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Ya'qub | 1 |
| Ilyas | 1 |
| Nuh | 1 |
| Yusuf | 1 |
| Ibrahim | 1 |
| Umar | 1 |
| Hasan | 1 |
| Safo | 1 |
| Malik | 1 |
| Sayyid\| | 1 |
| Gharib | 1 |
| Abdol | 1 |
| Taqiy | 1 |
| Habash | 1 |
| Roziy | 1 |
| Tolib | 1 |
| Sodiq | 1 |
| Valad | 1 |
| Kamol | 1 |
| Qosim | 1 |
| G'oyib | 1 |
| Jafoye | 1 |
| Salmiy | 1 |
| Komil, Kamol and Malik (combined) | 1 |
| Baba and Imam (combined) | 1 |
| Qosim and Muayyan (combined) | 1 |

| Group II. Muammas on Socio-Political Themes | |
|---|---|
| **1. Muammas Concealing the Names of Kings and Khans** | |
| Concealed Name | Number of Muammas |
| Feruz | 1 |
| Muhammad | 1 |
| Rahim | 1 |
| Bahodir | 1 |
| Khan | 1 |
| Khallada | 1 |
| Mulkahu | 1 |
| Abadan | 1 |
| Shahzoda | 1 |
| Pahlavon | 1 |
| Komron | 1 |
| Qosim | 1 |
| Husayin | 1 |

| **2. Muammas Concealing Socio-Political Titles** | |
|---|---|
| Concealed Name | Number of Muammas |
| To‘ra | 1 |
| Sadr | 2 |

| Group III. Muammas Devoted to Everyday Life | |
|---|---|
| **1. Muammas Related to Daily Life** | |
| Concealed Name | Number of Muammas |
| Qand (Sugar) | 1 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Soat (Clock/Timepiece) | 1 |
| Sovuq (Cold) | 1 |
| Ayoz (Frost) | 2 |
| Muammo (Riddle) | 2 |
| Dom (Trap) | 1 |
| **2. Muammas Containing the Names of Festivals** | |
| Concealed Name | Number of Muammas |
| Eid | 4 |
| Navruz | 1 |
| Eid al-Adha (Qurbon) | 1 |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Group IV. Muammas Containing Female Names** | |
| **1. Muammas Related to Daily Life** | |
| Concealed Name | Number of Muammas |
| Iqbola | 1 |
| Layli | 1 |
| Muborak | 2 |
| Saxiy | 1 |

In this study, we attempted to classify the muamma poems contained in Ogahiy's Ta'viz ul-Oshiqin divan into four major thematic groups. The findings indicate that, following the well-established tradition of classical Eastern literature, Ogahiy begins his muammas with poems dedicated to the glorious names of Allah, the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, and with verses praising the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Accordingly, the first category has been identified as muammas devoted to religious and educational themes.

Remaining faithful to the literary traditions established by Alisher Navoi and Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur, Ogahiy also composed muammas concealing the names of prophets, saints, eminent religious figures, and poets, including Adam, Yusuf (Joseph), Ya'qub (Jacob), Ibrahim (Abraham), Nuh (Noah), Ilyas (Elijah), Umar, Hasan, and Husayn. This clearly demonstrates that Ogahiy was a worthy successor to the rich literary heritage of his distinguished predecessors.

The second major thematic group consists of socio-political muammas, in which the poet concealed the names of khans, rulers, and official state positions that were significant during his lifetime.

The muammas containing the names Muhammad, Rahim, Bahodir, Khan, Khallada, Mulkahu, and Abadan are, in terms of their content, dedicated to the Khorezm ruler Feruz [2:37]. This reflects Ogahiy's close engagement with the socio-political realities of his era and demonstrates his concern for both the ruler and the welfare of the people.

The third thematic group includes everyday-life muammas, which can be further subdivided into poems concealing the names of household objects and those referring to traditional festivals.

The fourth group comprises muammas concealing female personal names, illustrating that the thematic range of Ogahiy's muammas extended beyond religious and political issues to include various aspects of social and everyday life.

The analysis confirms that Ogahiy thoroughly prepared himself for composing works in this sophisticated genre. By combining profound knowledge, exceptional intelligence, and remarkable poetic talent, he created artistically refined and intellectually rich masterpieces. His muammas attract attention through their thematic diversity, philosophical depth, realistic character, and artistic perfection. Moreover, many of them reflect important social issues of their time, encouraging readers to think critically, analyze deeply, engage in discussion, and appreciate the aesthetic beauty of classical literature.

Another significant characteristic of Ogahiy's muammas is that the concealed names were selected deliberately rather than randomly. Through these names, the poet reflected the religious, educational, social, and cultural values of his age. Consequently, these poems should be regarded not only as remarkable examples of poetic artistry, but also as valuable historical and literary sources for studying the intellectual and cultural life of nineteenth-century Khorezm. The findings further reveal that Ogahiy's choice of themes was systematic and purposeful. The predominance of religious and educational muammas demonstrates the poet's strong commitment to Islamic values and the traditions of classical literature. The frequent appearance of the Beautiful Names of Allah, the names of prophets, companions, and saints further highlights the educational and spiritual function of the muamma genre.

Likewise, the socio-political muammas mirror the historical realities of Ogahiy's lifetime. The concealment of the names of rulers, princes, and government officials reflects the poet's close connection with the royal court and his active engagement with the political life of his period. The muammas devoted to everyday life and female names, in turn, illustrate the remarkable breadth of Ogahiy's artistic vision. Therefore, the proposed thematic classification demonstrates that Ogahiy's muammas represent not only literary achievements, but also valuable historical, cultural, and spiritual documents.

**Conclusion and Recommendations** The present study provides the first systematic thematic classification of the eighty muamma poems contained in Ogahiy's Ta'viz ul-Oshiqin. The analysis reveals that muammas devoted to religious and educational themes constitute the largest group, indicating the central place of spiritual and religious values in Ogahiy's poetic worldview. At the same time, the socio-political, everyday-life, and female-name muammas demonstrate the diversity and richness of the poet's artistic imagination.

The proposed classification may serve as a methodological basis for future research on Ogahiy's muammas from the perspectives of poetic techniques, letter-based literary devices, the abjad numerical system, and methods of solving muammas. Furthermore, the findings of this research may contribute to future comparative studies of the muamma genre in Uzbek classical literature and the literary heritage of other classical poets. Since this study represents an initial attempt to classify Ogahiy's muammas thematically, certain shortcomings may still remain.

Therefore, constructive criticism and scholarly suggestions regarding this classification will be welcomed and appreciated.

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