

## **Folk foundations in Badi al-Zamannameh**

*Mahboubeh Alihoury*<sup>1</sup>

*Recived:3/2/2021*

*Accepted: 15/5/2021*

### **Abstract**

Badi al-Zamannameh is an almost forgotten collection of poems by an anonymous poet that represents the writing style of the Safavid era and consists of 3287 verses. It is a romantic epic narrating the adventures of Badi al-Zaman, an Iranian prince, in marriage with Ghamarchehr, daughter of the Khagan of China.

The current study aimed to investigate the folk foundations of Badi al-Zamannameh by adopting a descriptive-analytical methodology and conducting library research. The theme is represented by the two major fields: influences of the oral tradition and the works of previous generations and the basic themes of folktales. The old and popular texts of Persian literature like Shahnameh, Eskandarnameh Nghali, and Hamzehnameh influenced the language used in Badi al-Zamannameh. Moreover, characteristics like having a cyclical narration, applying folksy words and phrases, referring to customs and rituals, highlighting religious themes, making characterizations similar to folktales, illustrating miracles and surprises, using special numbers, using happy endings, and leaving the narration open indicate that it has been influenced by ancient folk literary works.

Reflecting on a native culture illustrates the culture of a society and makes the collective identity known. Looking at the literary works of a nation as a clear reflection of its culture is a way to achieve this goal, which may lead the researcher to the processes of cultural transformation in society and know the audience of such works.

**Keywords:** *Badi al-zamannameh, folk foundations, oral tradition, the basic themes of folktales.*

---

<sup>1</sup> Ph.D. in Persian language and literature, epic orientation and university lecturer  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0054-9979>    [ma.alihoury@mail.um.ac.ir](mailto:ma.alihoury@mail.um.ac.ir)

### ***Extended Abstract***

#### **1. Introduction**

Folk tales are an important genre in Persian literature. The cultural and social attributes of any society have a great presence in these stories and form their narratives, or they could have a considerable role in creating stories in other genres. Popular culture is a cultural value of any society and pondering upon any country's indigenous and national culture creates a familiarity with that particular society alongside its collective and historical identity. Literary works mirror any land's culture while showing the cultural changes of that society with the passage of time. This important subject can be studied in literary texts to maintain and strengthen ancient cultural roots and use such findings to compile a rich literary history. This paper studies the effects of the quotation tradition, earlier popular works, and folk tale themes over the Badi' al-Zaman Name verse novel using the findings of this paper to emphasize the impact of societal culture and folk foundations as an important trend-making element in the creation of texts alongside the importance of cultural studies of artistic works.

This paper answers two important questions:

1. Which written or oral Persian literary works have affected the formation of the Badi' al-Zaman Name?
2. The Badi' al-Zaman Name narrative is based on which themes of folk tales?

#### **2. Literature Review**

The Badi' al-Zaman Name narrative forms with a romantic motif. It intends to describe the themes of love alongside all of its ups and downs in the path of reaching the beloved. Therefore, the poet's first action was selecting a popular subject. The folk foundations of this narrative can be explained by two major elements: the effects of the quotation tradition and earlier popular works alongside folk tale themes. When it comes to the quotation tradition, the poet uses direction allusion to quote a verse narrative from Ferdowsi; the poet begins some sections of this narrative following the same statement template as Ferdowsi; two events in this narrative are imitations of famous events from the Shahnameh; many parts of this verse presents reminders to names, metaphors, and descriptions from Shahnameh; "Eskandar" is a main character in the narrative; "Mehtar Nasim Ayar" is an important and pivotal character in this narrative with every adjective of Mehtar Nasim Ayar from Eskandar-Nâme; the character descriptions of Badi' al-

Zaman share similarities with descriptions of a character with the same name from Qese Hamzeh. The circular narrative design, usage of common words and phrases, references to customs and ethics, marriage ethics, code of modesty and chivalry, the religious aspect of the narrative, characterizations similar to folk tales, breaking habits, creating amazement, usage of special numbers, having a good ending with an open and unfinished narrative are some constructive elements of the Badi' al-Zaman narrative similar to folk tales.

### **3. Methodology**

To answer the research questions, the researcher has first extracted the constructive features of the narrative by comprehensively studying of Badi-al-Zamannameh narration and Case study, After that, With genre-based approach, the obtained information has been compared to folk tales, and finally in a descriptive-analytical method, the results have been obtained.

### **4. Results**

Folklore literature is rather rich and important in Iran. This importance is soo significant that some themes of these stories have entered other literary genres to affect their literary definitions, but this important subject has not received proper attention in analyzing these works. Analyzing the folk foundations of fiction discovers many original and lasting features of Persian literary texts, and these studies increase the historical richness of Persian literature.

Being affected by the quotation tradition, earlier popular works and folk tale themes are the most important formation elements of some popular Persian literary works. Many ever-lasting Persian works have folk foundations. This feature reflects Persian culture and literature in the Badi' al-Zaman Name verse novel. The effectiveness of Iranian national epic poetry such as Shahnameh, Eskandar-Nâme, and Qese Hamzeh on the Badi' al-Zaman Name verse novel shows its closeness with folk literature. The significant presence of folk foundations in Badi' al-Zaman Name defines folklore literature ad the foundation of many official literary works. These ancient stories are a tradition of Persian literature and should be analyzed based on Western criteria. Therefore, they could be studied as a part of Indigenous Iranian literature to achieve an accurate audience analysis of these works.

## References

- Avesta, Mehrdad. (1992). *Avesta: The oldest Iranian songs and texts*. To try Jalil Dostkhah. 2 volumes. Tehran: Morvarid.
- Babasafari, Ali Asghar. (2010). "Love and epic stories in Persian literature". Journal: Iranian Studies. autumn. No. 16. pp. 132-113.
- Bahrami, Iraj. (2009). *The story of old lovers: A perspective on how folk tales and storytelling in Iran from the beginning to today*. First Edition. Tehran: Varjavand.
- Hassanzadeh, Amina. (2008). "The place of numbers in the culture of the Iranian people with emphasis on the numbers seven and forty." *Culture of the Iranian people*. No. 10. Autumn. pp. 190-165.
- Ismailzadeh, Yousef. (2011). "Two lyrical poems, a critical look at the two Masnavi of Hosn and Del and Badi al-Zamanameh". Journal: Ayeneh pazhoohesh. April and May. No. 121. pp. 91-87.
- Jafari Qanavati, Mohammad. (2016). *An Introduction to Iranian Folklore*. First Edition. Tehran: Jami.
- Kashi, Abdul Razzaq (1973). *Tohfah ol- ikhvan in expressing the principles of fotovat and the customs of fatiyan*. Corrected by Mohammad Damadi. Tehran: Iran Culture Foundation Publications.
- Kazemini, Kazem. (1967). *Iran's global position in founding the spirit of heroism and developing a great sporting character*. second edition. Ettelaat printing.
- Keywani, Mehdi. (2014). *Craftsmen and their guild life in the Safavid era*. Translated by: Yazdan Farokhi. First Edition. Tehran: Amirkabir.
- Mahjoub, Mohammad Jaafar. (2015). *Iranian Folk Literature*. To try Hassan Zolfaghari. Fifth Edition. Tehran: Cheshmeh Publishing.
- Manouchehr Khan Hakim. (2010). *Alexander the Great (from Persia to India): Reconstruction of the oldest version of Alexander the Great*. To try Alireza Zakavati Qaragazlu. Tehran: Sokhan.
- Mirsadeghi, Jamal. (1986). *Story elements*. Tehran: Shafa.
- Mousavi Bojnourdi, Kazem. (2013). "Fiction". *Encyclopedia of Iranian People's Culture*. first volume. pp. 334-314. Tehran: The Great Islamic Encyclopedia Center.
- Nafisi, Saeed. (2007). *History of poetry and prose in Iran and in Persian language*. first volume. Foroughi Publications: Tahoori.
- Nezami Ganjavi, Elias bin Yusuf .(2010). *Iqbalnameh*. Correction of Qader Fazeli. Tehran: Al-Huda International
- Onsor ol-maali keykavus Ibn Iskander Ibn Qaboos Ibn Vashmgir Ibn Ziyar (1974). *Qaboosnameh*. Corrected by: Gholam Hossein Yousefi. second edition. Tehran: Book Translation and Publishing Company.
- Parishani, Ziba and shirbacheh, Masoud. (2010). *Basics and elements of Iranian folk tales*. First Edition. Najafabad: Islamic Azad University Press.
- Plovsky, An. (1986). *The world of storytelling*. Translated by Mohammad Ibrahim Eghlidi. First Edition. Soroush Publications.

- Saadat, Ismail. (2013). "Safavieh". *Encyclopedia of Persian Language and Literature*. Volume Four. Tehran: Academy of Persian Language and Literature.
- Sajjadi, Seyed Sadegh. (1995). "Abu Muslim Nameh". *The Great Islamic Encyclopedia*. Volume six. Tehran: Center of the Great Islamic Encyclopedia. p247.
- Sayyid Arab, Hassan. (2008). "Fatwa". *Shiite Encyclopedia*. Volume Twelve. Tehran: Published by Shahid Saeed Mohebbi.
- Sedaghatnejad, Jamshid. (1996). *Ancient scroll of Ferdowsi Shahnameh*. Tehran: Book World.
- Shoaa, Jafar. (1965 & 1969). *The story of Hamzah(Hamzehnameh)*. Two volumes. Tehran: University of Tehran Press.
- Unknown. (2008). *Badi al-Zamannameh: Badi al-Zaman and Qamar*. Edited by: Hassan Zolfaghari and Parviz Aristotle. First Edition. Tehran: Cheshmeh.
- Zakavati Qaragazlu, Ali Reza. (2009). *Iranian folk tales*. Tehran: Sokhan.
- Zolfaghari, Hassan. (1992). "Brides and lovers". *Kayhan Andisheh Magazine*. August and September. No. 37. pp. 187-177.
- (1970). *Masterpieces of Iranian heroic legends*. Mihan Publications.
- (2021). *One hundred Persian love poems*. Tehran: Cheshmeh.