

Meter and rhyme of Kurmanji Se-Kheshtis

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Abstract

The Se-Kheshtis are the identity certificate of Kurmanji poetry; the poems of the three hemistich and rhymed that sometimes have an identical ending syllable. The basis of meter in this type of poetry is the equality of the number of syllables; so its meter is "syllabic". The main focus of the Se-Kheshtis was the areas west of the Iranian plateau that, after the great migration of the Kurmanj tribes during the Safavid period, transferred their literary heritage with them to Khorasan. The original origins of the Se-Kheshtis are traced back to pre-Islamic Persian poetry syllabic meter such as the Khosrowanis and Oramans. The purpose of this article is to show the syllabic meter and the specific rules of rhyme in these poems. The main questions of the present study are that despite some of the Kurmanji poets, test in prosodic meters and forms of quatrain, Couplet-poem, Sonnet and etc. which of the form and meter are suitable for the speaker of this language? And do rhyme rules in the Se-Kheshtis the same as the rules formal poetry or other forms? The results of the study show that syllabic Se-Kheshtis, often sung by a song or a combination of musical instrument and song are more compatible with the essence of the Kurmanji language and the musical instrument of the speakers' minds; even non-Kurmanj listeners, find them with the help of syllabic stretches that the singer creates while sung. The rhyme-making rules in the Se-Kheshtis are also different from the formal poetry and subject to the taste of the poets.

Keywords: *folk literature, Iranian poetry, Kurmanji poetry, Se-Kheshti poetry, syllabic meter in Se-Kheshti poetry.*

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1. Introduction

Kurmanji is a prominent dialect within the Kurdish language, which itself belongs to the category of modern western Iranian languages. Se-kheshti represents a genre of Kurmanji's poems that predominantly circulate through oral tradition among Kurmanji speakers. In essence, these three-stanza poems are characterized by their syllabic structure and frequently explore themes of romance. They serve as remnants of ancient Iranian poetry from the pre-Islamic era, maintaining their distinct Iranian essence by preserving a limited influence from Persian and Arabic literature. Notably, the usage of an eight-syllable structure in Kurmanji's three-line verses holds significance.

In addition to deviating from prosodic norms, the defining feature of these songs is their folkloric nature, often performed through singing or accompanied by music. This characteristic, along with the prevailing lyrical context, serves as a distinguishing factor observed in the folk songs of pre-Islamic Iran during the Pahlavi era and beyond. While the influence of Islamic themes is also evident, what primarily unites these poems with Se-kheshti is their shared three-stanza structure and syllabic weight.

Research Question(s)

1. Despite the experimentation of some Kurmanj poets in prosodic weights and Couplets/Quatrains, Masnavis, Ghazals, etc., which poetic form and what kind of weight is more familiar to the speakers of this language?
2. Are the rhyming rules in the Se-Kheshti different from the rules of prosaic poetry or not? And if so, in what way?

2. Literature Review

There are two views about the origin of the weight of Kurmanji's Se-Kheshti: the first group believes that the weight of these poems is syllabic. The first researcher who pointed out the syllabic nature of these poems is MohammadTaqi Bahar who called Se-Kheshti eight-syllable Ghazal. Another group of researchers consider the weight of Se-Kheshti to be prosody. One believes that "from the point of view of prosody, Se-Kheshti was written in Bahr-e Hazaj" (Sepahi Laein, 1376: 158) and the other says that "the poem that has remained for Kurmanji of Khorasan since ancient times is Mosammat-e Mokhammas" (Mahroo, 1389: 41).

It seems that the weight of Se-Kheshti is subject to the prosody musical system because of their singing or a combination of music and singing; Otherwise if we are going to syllabify the stanzas of the Se-Kheshti and then want to include them in the form of one of the prosody weights we will have to justify it non-scientifically with a large number of poetic licences. In addition, since in syllabic poems the criterion of the rhythm of the stanzas is the equality of the number of syllables and the shortness and length of the syllables do not differ one should not use the authority of the poet regarding the shortness and length of the syllables.

Rhyme is not the exclusive feature of prosaic poetry. There are examples that show the presence of rhyme in the poems of pre-Islamic Iran. "One of the outstanding works of Sasanian literature which is written in syllabic order with respect to rhyme is the Song of Karkoy... This piece is a six-syllable poem" (Bahar, 1351: 88). Christian Sen also believes that "in another part of his Iranian servant, who is in the biography of a child of KeyGhobad, he found five eight-syllable stanzas in which the third and fourth stanzas have rhymes" (Khanlaree, 1327: 17). Also "among the Pahlavi edicts... there are also sometimes rhyming poems" (Zarghani, 1388: 261). Se-Kheshtis also have rhymes. It means that all three stanzas of the same stanza rhyme with each other.

Se-Kheshtis are often sung with a song or a combination of song and music, and they are oral before they are a written text; Therefore, when recording them in writing we come across different patterns of rhyme. The measure of rhyme in Kurmanji Se-Kheshtis is the phonetic form of the words, not their written form. The reason for that is the oral nature of these songs and the rules governing folk literature; Because they are often unwritten and their singing or accompanying them with music is the criterion of acceptance by the linguistic community or the target audience. For example, even though the phonemes "z" and "zh" have the same phonetic origin, it is true that they rhyme. Sometimes we come across examples where a consonant alone is the basis of rhyme and the vowel before it is not considered as a rhyme letter. In some examples, only a short vowel is the main letter of the rhyme. There are also examples where a consonant is removed from the end of a rhyming word so that the word can rhyme with other words.

3. methodology

The compilation of Se-Kheshtis and some research information has been done based on written sources and field research and interviews. The method of investigation and inference is also descriptive-

analytical. In this essay firstly it is tried to draw the structure of the Se-Kheshtis, then it is introduced as a literary genre and finally the syllabic weight and its common weight patterns are explained. In the last part the different rules governing rhyming in these poems are explained in the light of the special rules of folk poetry.

5. Results

Se-Kheshtis hold significant syllabic weight and adhere to the musical system of pre-Islamic Iranian compositions. Amongst the various syllabic configurations eight-syllable triplets are the most commonly used preserving the lineage of these poems from the pre-Islamic era while aligning harmoniously with the essence of the Kurmanji language, literary devices, and musical elements. Two primary prosodic factors shape their structure: the presence of rhyme and meter, and the affinity of syllabic weight with Bahr-e Hazaj. However, attempting to categorize and assign these triplets to specific prosodic patterns serves more as a justification rather than a persuasive argument. When exploring the hypothesis through syllabic intersections we encounter a multitude of poetic possibilities lacking scientific and logical support. It is not the poet's authority alone that determines the harmony of syllabic weight within words but rather the phonetic tension created by the singer during performance which forms an integral part of the musical fabric of these songs. The same principle applies to the rhyming of the Se-Kheshtis. In Se-Kheshtis the criterion for rhyme lies in their phonetic form rather than their written form. This explains why, contrary to the rules of rhyme in traditional prosody poetry not only words that differ in writing can rhyme with each other but sometimes even phonemes with similar phonetic origins can serve as the main elements of rhyme. Additionally it is worth noting that the short vowel "ê/ é" can also function as a significant contributor to the rhyme in Se-Kheshtis structures.

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