

## **THE QASIDA GENRE IN ARABIC AND UZBEK LITERATURE: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SIMILARITIES**

**Abdukarimova Barno**

O'zbekiston davlat jahon tillari universiteti

O'qituvchi

Elektron pochta: barno112abdukarimova@gmail.com

The qasida is one of the oldest and most influential poetic genres in Eastern literature, particularly in Arabic and later in Persian and Turkic literary traditions, including Uzbek literature. Originating in pre-Islamic Arabia, the qasida developed as a sophisticated poetic form that served various social, political, and aesthetic purposes. This article aims to examine the qasida genre in both Arabic and Uzbek literature, focusing on its origins, structural features, thematic scope, and artistic functions. Through a comparative analysis, the study highlights the shared characteristics of the qasida in these two literary traditions and explains how Arabic classical poetry significantly influenced the formation and development of the qasida in Uzbek literature. The article also emphasizes the role of the qasida as a medium of praise, moral reflection, and cultural expression.

Keywords: Qasida, Arabic literature, Uzbek literature, classical poetry, comparative literature, genre studies

### **INTRODUCTION**

Classical Eastern literature is characterized by a rich system of poetic genres, among which the qasida occupies a special place. The qasida is not merely a poetic form but also a cultural phenomenon that reflects social values, ethical ideals, and historical realities. It first appeared in Arabic literature during the pre-Islamic (Jahiliyyah) period and later spread to Persian and Turkic literary traditions, including Uzbek literature.

The influence of Arabic literature on Uzbek classical poetry is undeniable, particularly through Islamic culture, education, and literary transmission. As a result, many poetic genres, including the qasida, were adopted and creatively reinterpreted by Uzbek poets. Despite differences in language, historical context, and local traditions, the qasida in Arabic and Uzbek literature shares many common features in structure, themes, and artistic purpose.

This article seeks to explore these similarities through a comparative approach. By analyzing the origins, compositional structure, thematic content, and social functions

of the qasida in both traditions, the study aims to demonstrate the continuity and adaptability of this classical genre.

#### The Origin and Development of the Qasida in Arabic Literature

The qasida originated in pre-Islamic Arabic society as a long, mono-rhymed poem composed in classical Arabic. It was traditionally recited orally and played a significant role in tribal life. Poets were regarded as spokesmen of their tribes, and qasidas were used to praise one's own tribe, criticize enemies, commemorate events, and express personal emotions.

A classical Arabic qasida usually consists of three main parts:

1. Nasib (amatory prelude) – a nostalgic introduction in which the poet recalls lost love or abandoned campsites.
2. Rahil (journey section) – a description of travel, desert life, camels, or nature.
3. Madih (praise section) – the central part of the poem, devoted to praising a patron, tribe, or ruler.

This tripartite structure became a canonical model in Arabic poetry and influenced later literary traditions. Famous pre-Islamic qasidas, such as the “Mu‘allaqat”, exemplify the artistic perfection of this genre. Poets like Imru’ al-Qays, Antara ibn Shaddad, and Zuhayr ibn Abi Sulma elevated the qasida to a high artistic level.

With the advent of Islam, the thematic scope of the qasida expanded. In the Umayyad and Abbasid periods, qasidas were composed not only for tribal praise but also for religious devotion, philosophical reflection, satire, and political commentary. Poets such as Al-Farazdaq, Jarir, and Al-Mutanabbi played a crucial role in shaping the classical Arabic qasida.

#### The Introduction of the Qasida into Uzbek Literature

The qasida entered Uzbek literature primarily through Persian-Arab cultural and literary influence during the Islamic Golden Age. Uzbek classical literature developed within the broader context of Turkic-Islamic civilization, where Arabic was the language of religion and science, and Persian served as a major literary medium.

Uzbek poets adopted the qasida form through Persian models, which themselves were heavily influenced by Arabic poetry. Over time, the qasida became an important genre in Turkic literature, including Chagatai (Old Uzbek) literature.

Prominent Uzbek poets such as Alisher Navoi, Lutfiy, Sakkokiy, and later Bobur, composed qasidas in which they praised rulers, expressed moral and philosophical ideas, and demonstrated their poetic mastery. Although the Uzbek qasida did not always strictly follow the Arabic tripartite structure, it preserved the essential characteristics of the genre.

The qasida in Uzbek literature was often associated with court poetry. Poets used it to gain patronage, express loyalty to rulers, and convey ethical advice. At the same time, Uzbek qasidas frequently included Sufi ideas, reflecting the strong influence of Islamic mysticism on Central Asian literature.

#### Structural Similarities Between Arabic and Uzbek Qasidas

One of the most striking similarities between Arabic and Uzbek qasidas is their “formal structure”. Both traditions favor long poems written in a single meter and a single rhyme scheme throughout the entire composition. This monorhyme system requires a high level of poetic skill and demonstrates the poet’s mastery of language.

In both Arabic and Uzbek qasidas:

- The poem is usually long and elaborate.
- A single rhyme is maintained from beginning to end.
- Classical poetic meters are strictly observed.

Although Uzbek poets sometimes adapted the structure to suit local tastes, the general principle of unity in form remained unchanged. Like their Arabic counterparts, Uzbek qasidas often begin with an introductory section before moving on to the main theme, usually praise or moral reflection.

#### Thematic Parallels in Arabic and Uzbek Qasidas

Thematically, Arabic and Uzbek qasidas share several common elements:

##### 1. Praise (Madih)

Praise is the central theme of the qasida in both traditions. In Arabic literature, poets praised tribal leaders, caliphs, and patrons. Similarly, Uzbek poets composed qasidas in honor of kings, governors, and influential figures.

The language of praise in both traditions is highly elevated, using metaphors, hyperbole, and symbolic imagery. Rulers are often compared to the sun, lions, or legendary heroes, emphasizing their power, justice, and generosity.

##### 2. Moral and Didactic Elements

Many qasidas in both Arabic and Uzbek literature contain moral advice and ethical reflections. Poets use the genre to discuss virtues such as justice, generosity, wisdom, and humility. This didactic function reflects the close relationship between literature and social values in traditional Eastern societies.

##### 3. Religious and Philosophical Themes

With the spread of Islam, religious themes became prominent in qasida poetry. Arabic qasidas praising the Prophet Muhammad (\*qasidat al-madiah al-nabawi\*) influenced similar works in Uzbek literature. Uzbek poets often incorporated Islamic teachings, Qur’anic references, and Sufi philosophy into their qasidas.

#### Artistic Devices and Language

Both Arabic and Uzbek qasidas make extensive use of classical rhetorical devices, such as:

- Metaphor and simile
- Hyperbole
- Symbolism
- Allusion

In Arabic poetry, the richness of vocabulary and intricate imagery are key features of the qasida. Uzbek poets, writing in a Turkic language enriched with Arabic and Persian loanwords, adopted similar stylistic techniques.

The elevated and formal language of the qasida in both traditions distinguishes it from other poetic genres such as the ghazal. The qasida is often more solemn and grand in tone, reflecting its social and ceremonial functions.

#### The Social and Cultural Function of the Qasida

In both Arabic and Uzbek societies, the qasida served important social functions. It was a means of preserving historical memory, reinforcing social hierarchies, and promoting cultural ideals.

Arabic qasidas documented tribal conflicts, political events, and personal achievements. Uzbek qasidas played a similar role in recording historical realities of courts and dynasties. In both cases, poetry functioned as a form of cultural documentation.

Moreover, the qasida strengthened the relationship between poets and patrons. This patronage system encouraged the development of high literary standards and ensured the survival of classical poetic traditions.

#### Differences Despite Similarities

Despite many similarities, it is important to note certain differences. Arabic qasidas are more closely tied to desert life and tribal culture, especially in their early stages. Uzbek qasidas, on the other hand, reflect settled urban culture, court life, and Sufi spirituality.

Additionally, while Arabic qasidas often strictly follow the traditional tripartite structure, Uzbek poets were more flexible in adapting the form.

#### Conclusion

The qasida genre represents a shared literary heritage between Arabic and Uzbek literature. Originating in pre-Islamic Arabia, the qasida was transmitted across cultures and languages, becoming an integral part of Uzbek classical poetry. Despite differences in historical and cultural contexts, the qasida in both traditions exhibits remarkable similarities in structure, themes, artistic devices, and social function.

The comparative analysis demonstrates that Uzbek poets did not merely imitate Arabic models but creatively adapted them to their own cultural environment. As a result, the qasida became a powerful medium for artistic expression, moral reflection, and cultural continuity.

The study of the qasida in Arabic and Uzbek literature not only deepens our understanding of classical poetry but also highlights the interconnectedness of Eastern literary traditions.

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