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ARTISTIC FUNCTIONS OF POETIC ELEMENTS IN “THE KHATTAK CHRONICLE”

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The corpus of “The Khattaks’ Chronicle” (finished in 1724), the first original historiographical work in Pashto, contains over seventy poetical quotations in Pashto and Persian which perform literary functions as rhetorical tools. The article offers systematical analysis of the contents, contextual meaning, artistic tasks and ideological implications of these quotations classified according to their formal and thematic characteristics as *ad hoc* verses referring to historical realities, emphatic ornamentations of prose, wise sayings and advices, aphorisms and proverbs. The study proves that “The Khattaks’ Chronicle,” having its roots in the national Afghan folklore as well as in the Persian literary traditions, combines features of both learned and entertaining writings which pertain to documented historiography and chronicles, on the one hand, and to the genres of memoirs and diaries, on the other. Refs 14.

Keywords: classical Pashto literature, tribal chronicles, functionality of text, criteria of narrative artistry, genres.

ХУДОЖЕСТВЕННЫЕ ФУНКЦИИ СТИХОТВОРНЫХ ЦИТАТ В «ХАТАКСКОЙ ХРОНИКЕ»

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В корпусе «Хатакской хроники» (закончена в 1724 г.), первом оригинальном историографическом сочинении на пашто, насчитывается более семидесяти стихотворных цитат на афганском и персидском языках, которые использованы в риторических целях как средства художественной выразительности. В статье представлен системный анализ содержания, контекстного значения и идейно-художественных функций этих цитат, классифицированных по формальным и тематическим признакам как реплики *ad hoc* с упоминанием исторических реалий, эмфатические украшения прозы, мудрые изречения и советы, афоризмы и пословицы. Исследованный материал свидетельствует о том, что «Хатакская хроника», опираясь на традиции национального афганского фольклора и персидской книжности, сочетает в себе признаки как ученой литературы хроникально-исторического жанра, так и занимательных произведений дневникового и мемуарного жанров. Библиогр. 14 назв.

Ключевые слова: классическая литература пашто, племенные хроники, функциональность текста, критерии художественности, жанры.

As rightly pointed out by B. Fagner, historiographic writings recorded in the Persian language, as of the time of their emergence in the second half of the 10th century AD, developed predominantly along the line of *Geschichtenerzählen* rather than *Geschichtswissenschaft*, i.e. those texts were functionally marked as belonging to the genre of historical narrative, rather than to the genre of proper historical scholarship [1, pp. 52–58]. The tendency towards such development was partly due to a degree of proximity appearing between Persian historiography and Persian literary memoirs, following completion of Bayhaqi’s “History” (supposedly some time around 1059) [1, p. 56]. The Persian textual tradition thereafter exerted strong formative influence on historiographic writings in various other Western, Central and South Asian languages, particularly Turkic, meaning that similar features started surfacing in those texts also. It was not accidental then that

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the Memoirs of Babur (1483–1530), the first of the Great Mughals, written in the Chagatai language, were almost immediately translated into Persian, largely for the reasons of their captivating content and remarkable rhetoric, rather than entirely due to political expediency [2, p. 83–87]¹.

«The Khattak Chronicle» (completed in 1724) [4, pp. 254–266] — the first original (*i.e.* not translated from another language) historiographic composition written in the Pashto language — in terms of its content, style, and functional features is thoroughly concordant with traditions of Persian historical literature of the said type, primarily the literature of the Mughals, which was engendered by the above-mentioned Memoirs of Babur. Comprising texts which belong to various genres, «The Khattak Chronicle» is predominantly based on diary entries and memoirs written by the rulers of the Khattak tribe, namely Khushhal Khan (d. 1689) and his grandson Afzal Khan (d. circa 1740/41) [5]. In point of fact, «The Chronicle» consists of a collection of narrative tales (*i.e.* precisely «Geschichtenerzählen», as mentioned above), containing fragmentary treatment of Khattak genealogy along with certain events of tribal history spanning the period from the late 16-th to the first quarter of the 18th century. Multiple texts contained in «The Chronicle» possess entertaining qualities, which manifest not only in the content but also in the use of various artistic elements, including those pertaining to the language and style employed in the narrative [6; 7].

Among the artistic elements of «The Khattak Chronicle» a prominent position is taken by pieces of poetry in the Pashto and Persian languages. The functions of the pieces in question are different to those of the other poetic texts included in «The Chronicle» as additional sources of history. The latter include complete poetic compositions, given either in their entirety or mentioned as referential quotations. The authorship of those poems, in contrast to the pieces inserted for artistic purposes, is always precisely designated; what is more, they are normally textually marked, *i.e.* specially identified by being preceded for example with some introductory annotations or even crossheadings. By far, the majority of these pieces belong to Khushhal Khan.

«The Chronicle» contains complete texts of larger poetic compositions — a *mathnavi*-poem by Khushhal entitled *Swat-nama* («The Book of Swat») (1675; 391 *baits*) [4, pp. 327–343] (*cf.* [9]) and a *qasida* of his elder son Ashraf «All this world, created but for woes...» (1689; 49 *baits*) [4, pp. 511–513] (*cf.* [8, 142–148]). Fully quoted are also four *ghazals*, four fragments (*qit'a*) and three quatrains (*ruba'i*) by Khushhal Khan [4, p. 293, 327, 345–348, 350, 495, 496, 498–499, 507]. Referential quotations mainly point to larger poems by Khushhal — eight *qasidas* and two poems in the forms of *qit'a* and *tarkib-band* [4, pp. 271–272, 291, 294, 299, 301, 325, 346, 349, 494]. All those compositions contain unique record of historical and biographical nature, which quality permits of seeing them as additional documentary materials of «The Chronicle». A separate subgroup of poetic documents consists of chronograms, *i.e.* short poems containing a dating of certain events. «The Chronicle» contains more than twenty chronograms; Khushhal Khan being the author of sixteen of them [4, pp. 257–260, 270, 292, 295 *passim*]. The majority of those poems also provide dates of births and deaths of Khattak tribal rulers. To a large extent, owing to technical reasons — the necessity to encode dates in words and phrases by means of numerical values of Arabic letters, — the majority of chronogram-poems in

¹ A more thorough treatment of language, pragmatics and style of the Memoirs of Babur is given in the monograph by G. F. Blagova [3].

«The Chronicle» are written in the Persian language. It is to be specifically noted that none of those poems are found in other literary sources.

«The Chronicle» contains more than seventy poetic fragments inserted for artistic purposes (discounting repetitions). Embellishing prose with poetic pieces as a stylistic device comes down from a long-standing tradition in New Persian literature, tracing its roots to its very beginning (10–11th centuries), and thus in the late Middle Ages it can be considered as being conventional, unrelated to direct borrowing. Considering Pashto literature of 16th-17th centuries, this device was used by Khushhal Khan in his ethico-didactic treatise *Dastar-nama* («A Book of Turban») (1665) [11], as well as in his historiographic writings, diaries and memoirs, subsequently included into «The Khattak Chronicle» corpus. Considering Afzal Khan, it is obvious, that when composing diaries and memoirs of his own, the ones which make up the other section of «The Chronicle», he was primarily guided by the narrative style of his grandfather, although some parallel features can be found also in Moghul historiographic compositions of the time, e.g. in the afore-mentioned *Memoirs of Babur* (regarding functions and variety of poetic quotes in *Babur-nama* see: [3, pp. 107–111]).

In terms of their function, content and, to some extent, form, the poetic quotations of «The Chronicle» pertaining to its artistic elements, are dividable into four groups: 1) *ad hoc* utterances mentioning historical realities, 2) emphatic embellishments to the prose, 3) wise sayings and advice 4) aphorisms and proverbs. All those quotations represent poetry composed in the Afghan and Persian languages.

The improvised *ad hoc* utterances, or situational verse, were composed in the process of live communication, either spoken or written, and it is for this reason that their authorship is always designated. Out of six such utterances four belong to Khushhal, two are attributed to Afzal and one to a certain Mullah Adam. All those poems point to some historical realities, i.e. contain references to specific events or people's names.

Two utterances of Khushhal are addressed to Mahabat Khan, the Mughal governor of Kabul Province (not a Pashtun), and therefore are written in Persian. One *bait* was pronounced by Khushhal in 1669 in respect of construction of Langar Kot fortress by the Mughals in the area belonging to the Yusufzay tribe: «Thou art making a fragile wall of clay and straw; / If thou wishest [to construct] Langar Kot, [first] make strong [the fort of] Damgar» [4, p.295]. Somewhat later Khushhal wrote Mahabat Khan a letter in which he expressed his final refusal to enter vassal service with the Mughals. The letter contained a *ruba'i* quatrain: «...Yet I am now firmly decided. The thread of servicing the Moghuls is torn in my heart. That is exactly what I wrote to him. And I also wrote to him this *ruba'i* in Persian: "I said I would become a Mughal in the matters of the sword, / For I have already severed heads of many an Afghan. // But, nay, that I have never become, that selfsame Afghan am I! / Pity be unto him who wasteth his strength in vain"» [4, p.299].

It was about the same time that Khushhal pronounced a *bait* in Pashto while talking to an Afghan chief Shamsir Khan Tarin, warning him of complications a prolonged armed conflict with the Yusufzays might entail: «I shall explain to thee what it is like waging war against the Yusufzays: / It is like gelding a donkey — thy hands are dirty and thy collar is torn» [4, p.295]. Yet another distich was uttered by Khushhal around the year 1677, when, following termination of a big war between the Mughals and Pashtun tribes, the Mughal administration honoured him with gifts for his official con-

firmation of loyalty to the empire. According to Afzal, his grandfather conveyed the gifts to his relatives and friends, accompanying this action with the following verse in Pashto: «Yet two friends I possess in this world: / Shayista-Pari and Nusrat-Qadam²» [4, p. 348].

Both *ad hoc* utterances composed by Afzal Khan in Pashto belong to the genre of satirical vilification (*hajv*) and contain animadversions directed at his uncles, Bahram Khan, 'Abd al-Qadir and Shahbaz Khan, who also happened to be his main political opponents. In a *ruba'i*-quatrain dated 1694/95, Afzal describes Bahram Khan in this manner: «Bahram — an ugly wench, / with lots of jewellery on her. // But should you strip her of the jewellery, / She ain't worth a ha'penny.» [4, p. 488]. His other utterance, in the form of *qit'a* fragment, was composed in 1712 as a brief response to a letter from 'Abd al-Qadir and Shahbaz. In that verse Afzal exposes falsehood of his uncles, who had offered him to conclude a peace treaty: «All your shenanigans are all too clear to me. / What need is there then to clarify what is clear? // A confluence of currents of hate, / Like the Landay³, flowing into the Indus. // When the mirror is polished of its tarnish, / It shows a black-skinned fellow with farded face.» [4, p. 403]. The obscene verse by Mullah Adam in which the said 'Abd al-Qadir is branded as a pervert for failing to present himself for a previously arranged parley also dates from the time when that letter was written [4].

The contexts wherein the *ad hoc* verse fragments are contained, clearly point to a possibility the authors had to express the same meaning by means of common prose; yet they decided on poetic forms in order to imbue their utterances with more emotional expressivity, for all such texts possess figurative imagery specific first and foremost to poetry. The fact that such verse was improvised in the capacity of stylistic embellishment is confirmed on two occasions by Afzal Khan: «This *bait* in Pashto he (Khushhal Khan. — *M. P.*) uttered as an improvisation (*fi-l-badiha*)» [4, p. 295]; «...these two or three *bait*s which sprang up in me on the instant, those I wrote to them» [4, p. 403].

Emphatic embellishments to prose consist in several poetic fragments which either replace prose, when it is the author's discretion to highlight a desired shade of meaning, or complement prose in order to enhance its emotive grip. In contrast to the utterances, such poems contain no facts in any way related to historical realities of «The Khattak Chronicle», and may be either original compositions by the author, or borrowed quotations⁴. Examples of emphatic embellishments employed to accentuate certain ideas are found in letters written by Afzal Khan, specifically in his letter to Muhiballah, an official in the service of Peshawar Moghul administration. This communication, penned in the Persian language in the spring of 1724, addressing a conflict with some Khattak sheikhs, is concluded with a *qit'a*-quatrain, calling not so much upon the addressee but more upon his opponents in the conflict. What that poem does is this: it summarizes and accentuates the general meaning of the message: «Shouldst thou desire peace, it is not war that we want, / But if thou lookest for war, we shall not delay.// Speak either of love or send messenger carrying tidings of enmity; / Here the story endeth, peace be with you!» [4, p. 473].

² Shayista-Pari (Beautiful, like a Peri) and Nusrat-Qadam (A Step of Victory) — names of Khushhal's hunting gyrfalcon and horse.

³ The Landay is a local Pashto name for the Kabul River.

⁴ The issue of exact attribution of anonymous quotations and the degree of their exactitude requires independent research and has not been treated in detail in the present study. It is perhaps revealing that the publisher of *Tarikh-i murassa'* D. M. Kamil, having supplied extensive commentary to his critical edition of «The Chronicle», left unsolved the task of identifying the authors of poetic quotations.

The brightest example of quoting Persian classics for the purposes of embellishing prosaic narrative with vivid and emotive lines of poetry is Afzal Khan's story of a defeat suffered by a Khattak posse in a skirmish with superior numbers of Pashtun tribes near a borough of Valey in 1711. In telling the tale Afzal uses a colourful quotation from the inception of Chapter Five of *Bustan* by Sa'di Shirazi (d. 1292), not mentioning its authorship, as is his wont. The quotation serves to reinforce the reader's emotive response to the prose text, which relates vehemence and reckless gallantry of Khattak warriors that got killed, the youths wet behind the ears, who dashed forward for glory but were quickly put to flight: «It was not that the blades of [our] swordsmen were blunt, / But vengeance was [upon us] from a fell star. // None of our troops left the fight, / Except wearing a kaftan smeared with blood. // Like unto a hundred seeds held in one ear of grain, / Thus scattered about we were one by one» [4, p. 394] (cf. [12, pp. 308–309]). In a similar vein, recounting a skirmish between the Khattaks and the Kahtars in 1717/18, when the enemy fell on them suddenly causing panic among several Khattak clans, Afzal Khan, to emphatically relate to his psychological state quotes a verse which textually resembles a distich from a *ghazal* by a Persian poet Sa'ib Tabrizi (d. 1677/78): «Neither can I move on⁵, nor walk back; / [Trans-fixed] am I in awe, as if with a smile on [her] lips mourning came [to me]» [4, p. 415].

The majority of poetic quotes in «The Khattak Chronicle» belongs to the classical genre of wise sayings (*hikmat*) and advice (*nasihat*, *pand*). Such quotes are used entirely for the purposes of rhetoric enhancement to strengthen the ideas, expressed or implied in the prose text. Quite often they are syntactically blended with prose, and to some extent it is for that reason that their most preferred form is a distich-*bait* (known as *fard*). Those fragments are predominantly in Persian, with the number of Pashto poems not exceeding ten.

Authorship of the wise sayings and advice is only marked in a few individual cases. In two instances the text mentions the Persian classical poet Nizami Ganjavi (d. 1203), referred to as Sheikh Nizami. One quote from Nizami's poem *Makhzan al-Asrar* («The Treasury of Mysteries») is given in the passage recounting perfidy of a Yusufzay chieftain called Bahagu Khan: «When Bahagu Khan gained independence he [wilfully] started abusing the power of a khan. Owing to his folly he forgot the kindness of Shahbaz Khan⁶. In the words of Sheikh Nizami: “Seek not friendship from thy sworn enemy, / Seek not water of life in the breath of an adder”» [4, p. 269]⁷. Another quote contains two *bait*s from the first part of Nizami's poem *Iskandar-nama* («The Book of Alexander»). These verses are quoted by Afzal Khan in his treatment of the demise of a Mughal prince Rafi' al-Qadr in 1712 in consequence of his war of succession against his brothers: «In order to obtain a short-lived eminence and power, brother riseth against brother and murdereth him. Oh, how many a man dieth in this [sedition] without number! Is this fairness? Is this piety? Is this fortitude? Sheikh Nizami put it well: “If the track of an onager is hidden from guardians of the field, / It is only owing to faint-heartedness of those people. // Inside the eye the pupil has a cap. / It has turned black for loss of humanity”» [4, p. 405]⁸.

⁵ In the *ghazal* by Sa'ib: «Neither passion...» (cf. The online resource of Classical Persian Literature «Ganjoor» [ganjoor.net/saeb/divan-saeb/ghazalkasa/sh5739; date of query 05.11.2016]).

⁶ Shahbaz Khan (1591/92–1641) — Khushhal Khan's father.

⁷ cf.: [ganjoor.net/nezami/5ganj/makhzanolasrar/sh50; date of query 05.11.2016].

⁸ cf.: [ganjoor.net/nezami/5ganj/sharafname/sh26; date of query 05.11.2016].

Authorship of two gnomes in Pashto is attributed to Khushhal Khan. One such *rubai*-quatrain is given by Afzal to excuse his own position in one particular episode of inter-tribal war of succession in 1709/10: «My heart was pure to the Muslims, as the great Khan willed to say: “Men war today, and get reconciled tomorrow. / Once they have sat down together they strike a peace agreement. // However much they wail, so much they laugh; / However much perfidy they have, so much faithfulness”» [4, p. 389] (*cf.* [10, p. 634]). The other dictum, which has the form of a *qit'a*-quatrain, for some reasons was not included into the poet's *divan*. Khushhal Khan composed that verse in relation to the victory the Khattaks won against the afore-mentioned Yuzufsay chieftain Bahagu Khan in March 1660: «On the second day of victory, when Bahagu Khan's troops were defeated at Djilbey, [Khushhal] Khan uttered the following verse: “May everyone fly as they will, / Be they a crow or a pigeon. // But the one who turneth his skill into villainy, / Only ruineth his cause”» [4, p. 289].

The regular absence of references to sources of poetic quotes to some extent may be due to a high level of education of the target readership which the authors of «The Chronicle» had in mind. «The Chronicle» was aimed first and foremost at representatives of Khattak upper class for whom literacy and education entered their everyday lives since the time Khushhal Khan assumed power (after 1641). For Pashtun tribal aristocracy such famous classical Persian works as *Gulistan* and *Bustan* by Sa'di featured not just as popular books but as iconic reference texts, taken apart into proverbs and quotations (*cf.* also: [13]). A literate and educated Pashtun would not have found it hard to recognize a popular, nearly proverbial, phrase from the fourth tale of the first chapter of *Gulistan*, which Afzal Khan mentions to help describe morality of his younger brother Namdar Khan at the time of yet another upsurge of inter-tribal fights for succession in 1712: «Finally his matter was disclosed. I cuffed and pinioned him. He spent several days in confinement. [After that] he knelt before me and repented with much over-exaggeration. He swore a pledge on the Quran. I gave him a gift of a robe and set him free, but all this was in vain: “In the end a wolf-cub will grow into a wolf, / Even if he was raised amongst people”» [4, p. 406] (*cf.* [12, p. 42]). Another almost aphoristic quotation comes from the same text: «It often [happens], that a face is beautiful [only] under the veil, / But once it is lifted — thou wilt find it is being worn by the mamma's mamma.» [4, p. 256] (*cf.* [12, p. 166]). This *bait* is evidently rife with misogynistic motifs popular in mediaeval gnostic and carnivalesque literatures, both Oriental and Occidental. It is quoted by Khushhal Khan when he recounts a popular legend of how the forefather of the Khattaks Luqman accidentally chose an unattractive young lady for his wife.

Similar ease of recognition among Khattak aristocracy was evidently accorded to the first *bait* from the warrior *qasida* by Khushhal Khan entitled «Until [he] avengeth himself ...» (1680) [10, p. 554–559], which subsequently became a national classic. Afzal uses this poetic maxim to render his feelings at the time of the armed conflict against 'Izzat Kahtar in late 1717: «I spent the night in Nizampur. It was a time of war but my troops and my tribe scurried off to their homes, they did not attend to me. From Nizampur to Totkay, [and then] from Totkay to Jinakur I departed in accordance with the following verse: “Until [he] avengeth himself on the enemy, / A man of dignity will neither sleep, nor eat, nor rest”» [4, p. 416].

Nevertheless, poetic quotations in «The Khattak Chronicle» were obviously not included there for the purposes of gauging erudition and reading prowess of potential

readers. The wisdom and advice contained in the poems did not convey information so important as to require confirmation of their authenticity by quoting their sources. Besides, in mediaeval learned Muslim literature it was not considered mandatory to identify authorship of poetic texts which have entered the domain of rhetorical embellishment and aphorism. The same custom was observed by Khushhal Khan in his *Dastar-nama*, where numerous poetic quotations were likewise left anonymous.

It is to be noted that identifying the author remains a laborious task when the matter concerns anonymous poetry in the Persian language. Considering the unattributed poems written in Pashto, definition of their authorship is a matter of course, as almost all of them are taken from the poetry of Khushhal Khan. Apart from the afore-mentioned prelusory *bait* of the *qasida* «Until [he] avengeth himself...» «The Chronicle» contains at least five other quotations from Khushhal's poems. On two occasions, to denounce moral integrity of his uncles, Afzal Khan quotes the following *ruba'i*-quatrain of Khushhal: «A debased man is like unto a heap of dung, / Power and riches are as rain for him. // As long as it raineth not, the smell lingereth [in one place]; / As soon as it hath rained, the smell spreadeth everywhere» [4, p. 383, 486] (*cf.* [10, p. 779]). Another quatrain composed in the form of *qit'a* is a figurative eulogy to gallantry and liberality of Malik Akoray, Khushhal's great-grandfather and in effect the founder of the Khattak fiefdom: «Whoever unsheatheth a shining blade, / Obtaineth and spendeth creature comforts, // Unless he will come to resemble Timur⁹, / He will come to resemble ambergris» [4, p. 264] (*cf.* [10, p. 880]).

One *bait* from Khushhal's *qasida* «Who enjoyeth wine in springtime...» was used by Afzal without any reference to the author in order to extoll his 15-year old son Muhammad 'Ali Khan, who had displayed his bravery and martial prowess in a skirmish with a posse of Namdar Khan in November 1718: «How much else could I have written about his feats! This *bait* is a testimony of his accomplishments: "No sooner than [he] had flown [his] nest, his talons [at once] were red [with blood]; / A falcon-fledgling is [by nature] trained to fight"» [4, p. 418] (*cf.* [10, p. 607]). Two more quotations were borrowed by Afzal Khan from Khushhal's *mathnavi*-poem entitled *Firaq-nama* («The Book of Separation»). On one occasion a quote from «The Book of Separation» is used by Afzal to illustrate the conduct of a Khattak sheikh Sarfaraz-Gul and his supporters in 1724, when an inter-tribal conflict engulfed both administrative and religious powers of Peshawar: «[They] use Sharia to shield themselves, / Hiding their «skills» behind it» [4, p. 473] (*cf.* [14, p. 67]). The other quotation is given by Afzal in his «Edification» (*Pand-nama*) (1719) by way of rhetorical ejaculation in the vein of «O tempora, o mores!»: «Remove the scales from your eyes, and look, / What is being perpetrated by people everywhere!» [4, p. 424] (*cf.* [14, p. 58]).

On the whole the content of wise thoughts and advice in poetic fragments of «The Khattak Chronicle» is in full agreement with the main topics of philosophical and admonitory-sermonic lyrical poetry of those areas of the Muslim Orient where classical Persian booklore held sway. The entire range of the most popular themes and motifs of this lyrical poetry as found in the written corpus of Pashto literature is contained to variable extent in poetry of Khushhal Khan. Thus one may say that the ideology of poetic quotes expressing wisdom and advice in «The Khattak Chronicle» reiterates philosophico-didactic content of Khushhal's verse to a large extent.

⁹ Timur (Tamerlane) (approx. 1336–1405) — a renowned military commander of Mongolian provenance, conqueror of Central Asia and of Eastern Iran, founder of the Timurid dynasty (1370–1507).

Philosophizing gnomes are replete with the classical themes of transience and brevity of life, impermanence of the world and fate, the primordial essence of things. The theme of frailty is served by the so-called «Khayyamesque» motifs, in particular by that of dust (or clay), which is the base whereupon many a standard image is constructed, including those which allude to names of mythical longevity-kings (Jamshid, Bahram Gur, Sulayman *etc.*). A number of verse containing those motifs is quoted in the section on fratricidal war of succession among the sons of a Moghul emperor Bahadur Shah (ruled in 1707–1712): «Whosoever passionately craveth worldly riches, [let him be vary:] // Have they ever been true unto anyone, so that they will be true unto us?»; «At times it will make you the ruler of all living, / at times it will make you potter's clay»; «Into dust hath turned the head, which lived on this dust. / Doth dust know what is in this dust itself?»; «Every leaf is a countenance of a nobleman, / [Under] every step is a skull of a kingly scion»; «I heard that the blessed Jamshid / approached the spring [of life] and inscribed on the stone: // “Many, who were like us, praised themselves near this spring, / But once they had closed their eyes, they were gone”» [4, pp. 404–405].

Poems dealing with transience of the world and fate are usually quoted in tales of sudden calamities of life, often linked with military action. For example, relating an unlooked-for defeat of Yusufzay clans in their military engagement with Khattaks in the month of May 1713, Afzal Khan, deliberating on unpredictability and outrageousness of fortune, elaborates on his thought quoting the following verse: «Fortune taketh the boat wheresoever she willeth, / Even if the cap'n be tearing his clothes [in despair]» [4, p. 410].

The theoretical background for poetic philosophizing on the subject of the true nature of things consisted in religious and philosophical ideas on the eternal and immutable divine essence, for it was the understanding of the true essential nature of being that was seen as authentic wisdom. The main accent, naturally, was placed on ethical problems, for the reason that the living practice of social interaction required a profound knowledge of human psychology, first and foremost — genetic properties of human character. It was held as a universal conviction that the essential nature of human beings enclosed in them by God was as immutable as God's nature itself, and therefore predestined both a person's behaviour and his position in the network of social affiliations. In poetry, the idea of the true essence was usually expressed in the form of allegorical exposition. In view of the fact that the authors of «The Chronicle» saw their primary ideological task as denouncing their political opponents and the latter's unlawful power claims, the verses they quoted were mostly those containing allegorical commentary on people's evil nature: «Even if thou givest up thy life, a black stone shall not turn into a ruby. / What is to be done with [its] true nature, if the evil essence has entered it!» [4, p. 384] or «Iblis¹⁰ shall never have veneration, / As a bad [man] shall never have a good mind» [4, p. 407].

Ethical utterances which hold forth on the theme of profound essence are generally related to the idea of legitimacy of power which boils down to the following simple thought — bad people (for which read «political opponents of the authors of «The Chronicle») are devoid of a lawful claim to power as they are unable to wield it, owing to their innate negativity. On two occasions Afzal Khan quotes a quatrain, in which allegorical wisdom is attributed to none other than Plato (Filatun) himself: «When a lowly man hath obtained a high rank, silver and gold, / What his head needeth is a good clap behind the

¹⁰ Iblis (Shaytan) — in the Quran, a fallen angel, denounced by God for having refused His command to prostrate to Adam.

ear. // Hast thou heard what Filatun said? — / “A good ant is the one that hath no wings”» [4, p. 369, 414]. In the first instance Afzal uses this poem to hurl another invective against ‘Abd al-Qadir and Shahbaz, in the second — to berate «upstart» ‘Izzat Kahtar, whom the Mughals had appointed in 1717/18 to command the garrison of fortress-town Attok.

Historical realities exemplified by the Mughal state, as well as literary traditions reflected in the extremely popular «Book of Kings» by Ferdowsi (d. circa 1020), were conducive to the authors of «The Chronicle» conceiving of nearly divine provenance of supreme political authority based on the principles of primogeniture. Any other claim to such authority they saw not only as criminal mutinous insurgency with ulterior motives, but also as an attempt at violating the foundations of the very fabric of the world. It is no accident then that Afzal Khan’s account of Prince Farrukhsiyar usurping the throne of the Mughals in January 1713 by staging a coup and having the previously proclaimed emperor his uncle Mu‘iz ad-Din executed, is concluded with a quote alluding to the death of Prince Siyavush, the famous ill-fated character of *Shahnama*: «Think not that blood of kings / Leaveth not a trace like that [left by] blood of Siyavush»¹¹ [4, p. 406]. For Afzal Khan, who trusted himself to be the only lawful ruler of the Khattaks by right of primogeniture, the patriarchal hierarchy of social relations was of prime importance, and it was for that reason that he commented on the usurping actions of his younger brother Namdar in 1714 using this poetic edification: «Whosoever is young and yet confronts his elder, / Will fall down so badly that rising again shall never be» [4, p. 411].

Endless instances of confrontation related to power-mongering were reflected in «The Chronicle» not so much as the stories relating the events as such, but mostly as numerous ethico-didactic passages holding forth on treachery, perfidy, and ingratitude as being the most shameful qualities of human nature. Blaming his uncles for their insidious scheming which had led to the capture and ransacking of the princely residence of Saray-Akora (present day Akora Khattak) by hostile Pashtun tribes in 1710/11, Afzal Khan quotes a verse wherein contained is dark irony which proclaims treachery as being worse than infidelity: «If this (treachery. — *M. P.*) is the “sweetness” of Islam in the world, / Infidels have the right to reproach Islam a thousand times» [4, p. 393].

Poetic quotations comment also on other negative traits inadmissible for an honorable man aspiring for power. For instance, in one *bait*, uttered in relation to ambitions of ‘Izzat Kahtar, Afzal Khan singles out conceit as a definite trait of ignoble men: «If thou speakest to a slob with kindness and amiability, / The latter’s arrogance and conceit will only grow» [4, p. 415]. Another verse denouncing Bahram, speaks of vanity which will inevitably lead a lowly person to disgrace; it is not devoid of scoffing: «May not a single one who is unworthy possess two things: / A big wealth and a beautiful wife. // For the former he will doubtless squander, / whereas the latter he will expose to be seen [by everyone]» [4, p. 487].

A good many poetic edification and advice in «The Chronicle» deal with the code of behaviour when relating to an enemy, which yet again reinforces our understanding of the

¹¹ In *Shahnama* Siyavush in the aftermath of palatial backroom deals is compelled to flee his native Iran and seek refuge in Turan (present day Central Asia) with King Afrasiab, the archenemy of the Iranians. However, even there, having earned universal esteem and respect in the capacity of the ruler of one of the myriarchies he eventually falls prey to a tissue of envy and calumny and gets assassinated under the passive eye of Afrasiab. Legend has it, flowers blossomed on the barren and deserted place in the steppe where Siyavush’s blood was spilt.

key role played by the subject of conflict and power-mongering in the overall ideology of the text. From the point of view of Khattak chieftains the core principle whereby a warlord guides himself in the policy of his engagement with the enemy is imbued with pragmatism and actually defines the well-known tactics of deterrence. Afzal Khan repeats this principle on three occasions using one distich: «Although thy enemy may be begging thee for mercy, // Think not thyself safe, and yet chase him not away [from thee]» [4, p. 371, 389, 467]. In all three cases of its use the subject matter is tribal war: against Bahram in 1704/05, against 'Abd al-Qadir and Shahbaz in 1709/10 and against the Khattak sheiks in 1724. Other quotations treat the matter of usefulness of bloodless diplomatic methods in political struggle. However, it is to be noted that the ethics of the Pashtun code of honour (*pashtunwali*) is predicated on the idea of equal recompense: damage of any kind requires reciprocation, which practically is expressed in the duty of vengeance. A chieftain's social status is based to a large extent on his military power and reputation of a skilful battle commander and gallant warrior abiding by the code of conduct. For that reason the authors of «The Chronicle» are of the opinion that diplomatic tactics of deterrence should necessarily be combined with determination of using force against the enemy. Such thoughts Khushhal Khan expresses for example in a distich which acts as an ornament of a brief account of his grandfather Yusuf Khan's retaliation for the death of his great-grandfather Akoray: «As soon an opportunity presents itself beat the brains out of thy enemy, / For this luck will wash away the dust [of grief] from thy heart!» [4, p. 257]. Inevitability of using force in dealing with the enemy is treated by Afzal Khan also in the allegorical verse when he speaks of his readiness to quash the mutiny of the Khattak sheikhs in the spring of 1724: «Unless thou lashest them with a whip, / The cattle shall not be tamed» [4, p. 463].

Entirely on the basis of formal considerations a separate cluster of gnomic utterances and advice should include about ten abbreviated quotes in the Persian language of which each takes a half-*bait* (*misra*). Such quotes constitute a *sui generis* transitional stage towards phraseological units — aphorisms and proverbs — and, as a rule, are more fully imbedded into prosaic context. In many cases, syntactically speaking, these quotes are subordinate clauses and begin with the subordinating conjunction *ki* [*for*], which expresses causal connection. In actuality this grammatical marker implies that something is being quoted: «...For a bad temper hath lots of pretexts» [4, p. 384], «...For kindness [shown] to an enemy is a mistake» [4, p. 405], «...For sweet things should not be eaten in solitude» [4, p. 417], «...For no soul of man might be free from blemish» [4, p. 425], «...For his bad temper is [like] the enemy behind his back» [4, p. 510] *passim*. As shown by the above examples the authors of «The Chronicle» employed poetic aphorisms and proverbs to buttress their reasoning regarding morality and ethics in the matter of how one should relate to one's next man.

To distinguish between poetic «quasiphraseological» quotations and phraseology proper a good example is a passage where Afzal Khan simultaneously adduces both the complete poetic quotation containing a well-known proverb and one variant of this proverb where it has already become a phraseological unit and is grammatically integrated with the context. The passage relates the intrigues plotted by his uncles 'Abd al-Qadir (Kadi) and Shahbaz (Badi) in 1709/10: «I understood then that all those deeds had been perpetrated by [the hands of] those wretched ones. I called the brothers to my side: “What will ye of me?” When they have recounted all their requests big and small, I said: “I am the ruler [here]. Do not plot against my cause!» In that respect I specifically singled out those

wretched ones Kadi and Badi. They understood: “The one who diggeth a pit, shall himself fall therein”. [Verse:] “Hast thou not heard from the sweeper of this road / That whosoever diggeth a pit, falleth therein?” Here they were overwhelmed by such fear and terror that they were keen to save their hides...» [4, p. 389].

The systemic analysis of functional attribution and topicality of the numerous poetic quotations in the prose text of «The Khattak Chronicle» confirms the conclusion that this first original literary composition in Pashto, resting mainly on traditions of national folklore and Persian booklore, combines in itself scholarly and literary traits of both a historiographic chronicle and an entertaining composition, such as a diary or a memoir. The majority of poetic quotations of «The Chronicle» imbues its text with literary and artistic effects embellishing the documentary chronological material and rendering it more emotionally charged and convincing to an audience used to the reality of spoken transmission. On the other hand, the poetic quotes possess considerable ideological properties, as they highlight and reinforce the key aspects of the overall ideology of the text, related to a declaration of the principles of legitimacy of supreme political authority, first and foremost the principle of primogeniture. Multiple quotations in «The Chronicle» possess the qualities of phraseological units (pithy sayings, maxims, aphorisms, proverbial expressions), they have literary provenance but lack exact attribution. However, in respect of most of them it cannot yet be said with absolute confidence whether they enjoyed relatively wide circulation in the Pashto language environment in the 17th–18th centuries or their incidence was constrained to being used in certain written texts only.

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