

THE ROLE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF EPISODIC CHARACTERS IN CREATING THE IMAGE OF IBN SINO

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Abstract It is well known that creating images of historical figures in fiction is a rather complex process. This complexity increases when the historical figure in question has traversed a distinctive life path and left a unique mark on history. In this process, authors frequently turn to the personalities and images of numerous other historical figures closely associated with the life and work of the central figure, thereby creating a multitude of episodic characters. This article examines the many historical figures and their episodic images that authors have drawn upon in creating the image of Ibn Sino.

In literary works devoted to the portrayal of historical figures, readers typically encounter not only the protagonist but also a series of episodic characters or personages. Through these figures, authors strive to fully reveal the central idea of the work, to comprehensively illuminate the protagonist's character, and to ensure that the narrative of the work remains engaging.

The genre of the dastan (epic poem) based on internal narrative development proves extremely useful to authors — alongside prose and dramatic works — in creating diverse forms of episodic characters. Through the dastan genre, writers are able to create dozens of episodic characters within the confines of a single work, thereby fully achieving the goals they have set for themselves.

The dastan "Sino's Cradle" by Tajik poet Mo'min Qanoat and the episodic characters employed within it offer compelling evidence for this point.

"Sino's Cradle" is a dastan on a historical subject. The work narrates the life journey and scholarly activities of the great physician Abu Ali ibn Sino. For this reason, the dastan features the episodic images of more than ten diverse historical figures. They can be divided into two groups:

First group: Amirs and heads of state such as Nuh Somoniy, Ali Ma'mun, Mahmud Ghaznavi, Sayida Malika, Majidudduyla, Shamsudduyla, Samaudduyla, Alaudduyla, and Ma'sul Ghaznavi.

Second group: Scholars, thinkers, and religious figures such as Beruni, Abu Nasr Iraqi, Abusahl Masihi, Abu Ubayd Juzjani, and Shaykh Maykhani.

The poet makes these episodic images of historical figures serve the direct purpose of developing the protagonist's character. This can be fully appreciated by examining the role that the image of Beruni plays in the work. These two great scholars, who first met and became acquainted in Khorezm, maintained a constant creative connection, engaging in scholarly debates in the field of science and knowledge. For this reason, the images of these two thinkers are always interpreted together — not only in historical sources but also in works of fiction. For example, in Odil Yoqubov's novel "The Ancient World," the qualities characteristic of one figure's personality complement and complete those of the other. "Sino's Cradle" follows this same tradition, making use of the image of Beruni — albeit in an episodic capacity.

In the dastan, the image of Beruni serves to reveal Ibn Sino's sharp powers of observation and profound erudition. The poet draws upon a scientific debate between Ibn Sino and Beruni for this

purpose. Beruni raises various scientific problems, and Ibn Sino skillfully finds the solution to each one. In this way, the poet masterfully demonstrates that Ibn Sino possessed exceptional knowledge.

The image of Shaykh Abusaid Maykhani, on the other hand, was introduced into the dastan to show Ibn Sino's attitude toward religion. For this purpose, the poet drew upon the famous meeting between the Hakim and the Shaykh. According to historical sources, following this encounter, the celebrated Sufi master and the great physician of medicine acknowledged each other's worth. Ibn Sino told his disciples: "What I comprehend, Abusaid feels," while Abusaid said: "What I feel, Ibn Sino understands." In short, both scholars were among the first to recognize the equal validity of rational-logical and sensory-symbolic paths to understanding the material world and the spiritual realm of the human being.

Regrettably, in this dialogue and in certain other passages, Ibn Sino's attitude toward religion is not rendered with full historical accuracy. In some places, as a reflection of the influence of the years of stagnation, the great Hakim is portrayed as an atheist. In the dastan, Ibn Sino even argues with God and attempts to expose Him. Yet in the work of Uzbek poet Abdulla Oripov — "The Hakim and Death," written during that same period — Ibn Sino's attitude toward religion finds a considerably more truthful expression. The poet does not deepen this aspect unduly (the times did not permit it — A.T.), nor does he distort it (he was unwilling to violate historical truth — A.T.). In the dastan, the Hakim is ever cautious about doubting God. He conducts himself with great care. He regards God as the creator of all blessings, and sees His reflection in every particle of existence:

From between the pages, questions arose before him —
Why? For what reason?
If man must die, why is he born?
Am I also living only in order to die?
What is the purpose of creation? At such moments, the Hakim
Would bow his head in repentance, saying: I have harbored doubt.
You have commanded Your servants to do a servant's work,
In every particle You are present — undoubtedly, You exist.

The Hakim, too, strives toward God without doubt. Yet he believes that one can reach God only through resolving immediate, practical problems of life — through overcoming difficulties:

If I find a cure for death, I would reach the Truth,
"Then," the Hakim would say, "all questions would be resolved."

It is clear that even during the Soviet era, not all writers went equally against religion — in those times too there were courageous authors like A. Oripov.

M. Qanoat also introduced the image of Mahmud Ghaznavi into his dastan. By placing this figure in contrast to the character of Ibn Sino, the poet sought to reveal the protagonist's character more fully. In general, the poet endeavored to make the most productive use possible of the possibilities offered by the dastan genre, and this effort contributed greatly to the overall excellence of the work.

In conclusion, authors in the genre of the dastan (epic poem) based on internal narrative development also turn to a variety of episodic characters. When a work is devoted to a historical subject, the images of several historical figures directly connected with the life and activities of the protagonist are created, and these images, in turn, are made to serve the purpose of illuminating the

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protagonist's character. In this regard, the episodic characters employed in Tajik poet Mo'min Qanoat's dastan "Sino's Cradle" stand as a vivid example.

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