

CONTEXTUAL COMPARISON OF “BABURNAMA” AND “KING-ERRANT”: PROBLEMS OF ORIGINALITY AND ARTISTIC TEXTURE

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Annotation: This article examines the problems of originality and artistic texture on the context of “Baburnama” and “King-errant”. In the analysis of these two books, clear differentiations are made and appropriate examples are provided. Author of this article draws attention fictional additions in Flora Annie Steel’s book and discusses importance of integration on historical truth and fictional approach.

Keywords: Baburnama, original context, historical events, contextual difference, author’s approach.

Zahir-ud-din Muhammad Babur is known not only for his great empire in Hindustan in the XVI century, but also his great literary works such as “Baburnama”, “Mubayyin”, rubaiyat and also “Baburi calligraphy”. Because of his immeasurable contribution to the world literature all his works are studied deeply around the world. Scholars from different countries are not only interested in his literary works and biography, but also some of them dedicated their whole life studies on him. In Uzbekistan many scholars such as Vahob Rahmonov, Porso Shamsiyev, Aziz Kayumov, Pirimkul Kodirov, Kamchibek Kenja, Karomat Mullakhodjayeva, Ziyodakhon Teshaboyeva, from other countries John Leyden, William Erskine, Annette Susannah Beveridge, Wheeler Thackston and others have written literary and critical articles in various journals and published Babur’s works. A.S.Beveridge and W.Thackston translated “Baburnama” into English language in the XX century and this is the most famous book of Babur which is written by Babur. “Baburnama” is written in Chagatai Turkish, it provides a detailed and personal account of Babur's life, covering his early years, his struggles to maintain his kingdom, and his conquests that led to the establishment of Baburiden Empire. The memoir offers a vivid portrayal of the political, social, and cultural landscape of Central and South Asia during Babur's time. The memoir as we have mentioned above is translated into different languages and many writers have written novels about him. In this article, we will focus mainly on the book “King-errant” which is the dramatized version of “Baburnama” written by Flora Annie Steel.

Flora Annie Steel was a British writer who was born in England and lived in Punjab for 22 years as a wife of ICS (Indian Civil Service) officer. She was interested in Indian culture, local life, especially, local women’s life and worked as an Inspectress of Government. She spent most of her time to learn Indian tales, Indian culture and customs to connect with local people and wrote numerous books. Flora Annie Steel was known mostly for her novel “On the Face of the Waters” and described Indian Mutiny. She collected Indian folk tales and published them in 1894. She was not only a writer, she dedicated her works on the aspects of education, encouraging local handicrafts, history, books which help British women to adopt Indian local life and even cooking. She was interested in Indian history, that is why, she learned it deeply. Her interest resulted her series of novels, which are “King-errant”, “Prince of Dreamers”, “Mistress of Men”, and “The Builder”. In these novels, author tried to give detailed information and descriptions of historical events, people and places in the Baburiden Dynasty. “King-

errant” was dedicated to portray Babur and focused on the adventurous and heroic aspects of Babur’s life.

When Steel wrote about Babur, she tried to rely on the true historical events and resources, but in some points, she approached him on her own way. In this case, we can notice some differentiations between original text of “Baburnama” and Steel’s “King-errant”. Before indicating contextual differences, we would like to focus on the structure of these books. Firstly, “Baburnama” was written as a memoir, the daily journal of Babur and written in the first person. “King-Errant”, on the other hand, is a historical novel with a third-person narrative. Secondly, “Baburnama” was written during the early 16th century by a ruler, but “King-Errant” was written in the early 20th century during the British Raj in India by a writer who lived in colonial country. The next difference is the purpose. Babur wrote his book to document his life and experiences for posterity, offering an unvarnished and authentic account. Steel’s goal was to write a captivating tale that would appeal to her audience, even if it meant compromising historical accuracy in favor of dramatic effect at times. These two books are different in terms of chronology. For example, “Baburnama” follows a chronological account of Babur’s life, often in a straightforward and detailed manner. The narrative is interspersed with poetry, anecdotes, and observations. In contrast, “King-errant” was structured to fit the conventions of a novel, with a focus on plot development, dramatic scenes, and character arcs. Steel uses descriptive language and literary techniques to create an engaging and coherent story.

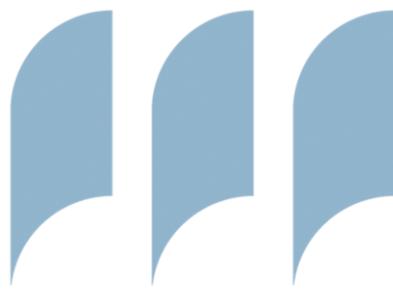
In the critical analysis of two books, there are some portrayals of events and people which are different from original text. As an example, we can discuss about the description of one of the Babur’s cousins whose name was Baisanghar. Prince Baisanghar was the second son of the King of Samarkand Sultan Mahmud Mirza. After his father’s death, he fought for the throne with his brothers. As a result of brothers’ rivalry, he died at the hands of Khusrau Shah. In some cases, he was the enemy of Babur in fights for Samarkand. Because both of the princes wanted to conquer the capital city of their great-great-great-grandfather, Amir Temur’s Empire. In his work, Babur gave a clear and honest description about him such as “a kind, honest and cheerful prince” (p.98) and also admitted that Baisanghar had a good taste of poetry and calligraphy, and “his poems were very popular in Samarkand and there were a few families which did not have his poems” (p.99). In “Baburnama” Babur only focused on Baisanghar’s battles, his appearance, behavior, inheritance and soldiers. Babur shows good attitude toward Baisanghar, but accepts him as his competitor. In Flora Annie Steel’s “King-errant” we can see Babur’s sympathy for Baisanghar. Even, there are some details which were added by Steel that Mirza Baisanghar and Babur’s sister Khanzada Begum were in love. Steel described them as a couples who could not be together. In the novel there is a clear description of Mirza Baisanghar’s visit to Ferghana and meeting with his cousins, Babur and Khanzada Begum. In this scene, Baisanghar and Khanzada Begum talked to each other with Babur’s witness. When Baisanghar tells that they cannot be together even in the future, and his struggles with his brothers, Khanzada Begum cries and shows that she really cares about Baisanghar. In historical context, Babur did not mention this situation in his memoir. In addition, in Uzbek fictional novels, such as Pirimkul Kadirov’s book “Starry nights” (“Yulduzli tunlar”) Khanzada Begum described in love with another man whose name was Fazliddin was an architect. The next difference is about Babur’s and great poet Ali-Shir Navoi’s meeting. In

historical context, Babur had a great intention to meet with Ali-Shir Navoi, but could not meet with him because of Navoi's death. But Steel gave a chance to Babur to meet with Navoi in her novel (p.41). This means authors can add extra details to enrich their novels.

As a result of the comparison of two books, the integration of original context and fictional approach can make artistic works to live longer in various fields such as literature, history, sociology, culturology and others. Flora Annie Steel approached "Baburnama" on her own way and gave a great contribution to the world literature. "King-errant" helps us to understand Babur's thoughts, struggles, actions and historical incidents in easy way with dramatized context.

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