



Article

Thematic Scope of the Work “Nahjul Farodis” and Textual Research of its Manuscript Copies

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Abstract: This article discusses the textual research conducted on the manuscript Inv 879 of Mahmud ibn Ali as-Saroyi's work "Nahjul Farodis" ("The Open Way to the Gardens"), which is kept in Istanbul, as well as the manuscript copies Inv 316 available at the Abu Rayhan Beruni Institute of Oriental Studies. Information was provided regarding the text history of the work, textual research and the scope of the topic. It was noted that the complete study of this work, which falls under the genre of biographies, is one of the important tasks of today.

Keywords: “Nahjul Farodis”, Text History, Manuscript Copy, Siyarnoma, Mahmud Ibn Ali As-Saroyi.

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1. Introduction

In world textual studies, the ongoing research on translating and publishing the works of classical authors into foreign languages, preparing critical texts of manuscript sources related to their творчество, and revealing their linguistic features serves to strengthen the position and status of national languages on a global scale [1]. In textual criticism, the analysis of meanings and profound ideas reflected in the works of writers, poets, translators, and historians contributes to improving theoretical knowledge about the value of these manuscript sources and the distinctive aspects of perceptions concerning them [2].

Due to the particular attention paid by the leadership of our country to reading culture and book appreciation, public interest in literature has significantly increased. At the same time, ensuring that books published today are profound in content and stylistically refined has become more important than ever [3]. This, in turn, makes it possible to draw accurate conclusions regarding changes in manuscripts and to eliminate errors and ambiguities related to sentences and textual structures. Ultimately, the quality and significance of research devoted to manuscripts written in past centuries continue to grow [4]. Addressing these shortcomings has become one of the most pressing issues of the present day. In this regard, the problems of the textual history of written sources belonging to the “Siyarnoma” cycle and the determination of the scientific and theoretical foundations of these texts define the relevance of the present study [5], [6].

2. Materials and Methods

Today, numerous studies on historical works and manuscripts have been conducted within Uzbek textual scholarship. A number of studies in Uzbek textual criticism have

highlighted the linguistic features characteristic of specific historical periods through the study of written monuments. One of the main aims of the present research is to compare the currently published versions of the written sources belonging to the “Siyarnoma” cycle with the original manuscripts of the work and to eliminate existing shortcomings.

The work “Nahj ul-Farodis” (“The Clear Path to Paradise”) is one of the literary heritages in Uzbek textual studies that has not yet been thoroughly investigated, transliterated into the modern script, or fully published. The work contains rare and valuable information related to literary studies, linguistics, and the history of Islam. It belongs to the literary environment of Khorezm, and its language demonstrates a mixed use of Oghuz and Kipchak elements.

The Khorezm literary monuments do not possess a single unified literary norm. Therefore, differences can be observed in both their place of origin and lexical composition. For instance, in “Muhabbatnoma” and “Nahj ul-Farodis,” Oghuz and Kipchak elements are used simultaneously in a mixed form. The events in the work are presented through various stories and narrations, while certain issues are substantiated on the basis of Qur’anic verses and hadiths, regarded as the sacred sources of Islam.

3. Results and Discussion

The principal sources of the research consist of the copies of Mahmud ibn Ali as-Saroyi’s work “Nahjul Farodis” (“The Clear Path to Paradise”). Among them is the manuscript copied in 761 Hijri (1360 CE) by bin Khusrav al-Khorezmi, currently preserved in the Süleymaniye Library under inventory number 879 [7]. In addition, the study relies on manuscripts preserved in the main collection of the Abu Rayhan Beruni Institute of Oriental Studies under inventory numbers 316 and B2590, as well as two copies kept in Kazan and two copies preserved in Saint Petersburg [8].

The objectives of the research include investigating the principal factors behind the creation of Mahmud ibn Ali as-Saroyi’s “Nahjul Farodis” (“The Clear Path to Paradise”), conducting a textual study of the work, examining the history of the text, and carrying out a comparative analysis of its manuscript copies. Furthermore, the study seeks to deepen previous scholarly work in this field, correct existing errors and shortcomings, address overlooked issues, and provide a systematic and comprehensive interpretation of the topic [9].

In addition, tazkiras related to the study, along with manuscript and lithographic copies preserved in the treasury of the Abu Rayhan Beruni Institute of Oriental Studies, serve as important primary sources for the research [10].

Although a number of linguistic and Turkological materials have been selected and studied from this manuscript preserved in the Süleymaniye Library, the work itself has not yet been comprehensively examined from the perspectives of textual criticism or literary studies. The “Yangi Jome” manuscript, preserved in the library under inventory number 879, was created in Khorezm in the mid-fourteenth century. Extensive studies on the work and its manuscript copies have been conducted by Turkologists [11]. Among the studies devoted to the work, the scholarly research of János Eckmann occupies a special place. The scholar prepared for publication a facsimile edition of the unique manuscript with diacritical marks preserved in the Istanbul Yeni Jami Library. However, he passed away before completing the preparation of the transliterated edition of the work. This task was later continued and completed by Semih Tezcan and Hamza Zülfikar. As a result, the complete text of “Nahjul Farodis” was finally published in its entirety [12].

The Yeni Jami manuscript, which constitutes the main focus of our study, was discovered by Ahmet Zeki Velidi Togan, and the wider scholarly community became aware of this copy through his article entitled “Old Turkic Works Written in Khorezm.” Prior to the discovery of this manuscript, only brief information about the work had been

available in Shihabuddin Marjani's historical work "Kitabu Mustafedi al-Akhbar fi Ahvali Qozon va Bulg'or." In his account, Marjani states that the manuscript was copied in 759 Hijri (1358 CE) in the city of Sarai, the capital of the Golden Horde State, and that the name indicated at the end of the manuscript — "Mahmud bin Ali as-Saroyi menşeen va al-Bulg'oriy mevlevi..." — belongs to the author himself [13]. According to Marjani, the work was created in the city of Sarai, the capital of the Golden Horde, and became widespread among the Volga Turks, while its language was identified as Bulgar Turkic. From this, it may be concluded that the work was written considerably earlier than the mid-fourteenth century. The manuscript described by Marjani may, therefore, represent a Bulgar translation of the original text, since Marjani himself regarded this language as substantially different from other Turkic languages. This, in turn, indicates the considerable popularity of the work in its own period and its broad circulation among Turkic peoples [14].

The manuscript consists of a total of 222 folios, with seventeen lines of text on each page. In the original manuscript, the main text was copied in black ink, while the titles of chapters and sections, certain proper names, important dates, and significant phrases were written in red ink. The text was inscribed in large script accompanied by diacritical marks. The main sentences appear in black ink, whereas the vocalization marks are written in red. These features considerably facilitate the reading of the source and attest to the high quality of its transcription. In addition, certain sentences were copied entirely in red ink, while Qur'anic verses and hadiths were distinguished from the rest of the text through the careful insertion of vocalization marks [15]. Another important copy of the work is the manuscript preserved under inventory number 316 in the main collection of the Abu Rayhan Beruni Institute of Oriental Studies. This manuscript comprises a total of 405 pages and is written in Turkic. At the end of the manuscript, two seals are stamped, each accompanied by a date beneath it. The first seal, placed on the left side, bears the Hijri date 1285, while the second seal beneath it is dated 1284 Hijri. Both seals appear after the colophon of the manuscript. The final part of the same page contains no additional text except for a single date, namely 1294 Hijri.

The initial pages of the manuscript contain Persian poetic verses. Pagination begins from the main body of the text, and the first page of the principal text is decorated with an elegant ornamentation composed of blue, red, and golden inks, together with ten lines of calligraphy. Following the phrase "Bismillah," the text continues with Persian prose and masnavi verses.

The work is written in a didactic spirit. Its introduction follows the traditional pattern of praise (hamd) and subsequently continues with a eulogy (na't) dedicated to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The composition consists of four main chapters, each containing ten sections. The first chapter presents information concerning the life of the Prophet Muhammad, while the second chapter is devoted to the Companions and the founders of the four legal schools of Islam. In the third chapter, virtuous deeds that bring a person closer to Allah are presented in the spirit of moral instruction, whereas the final chapter discusses sinful deeds that distance a person from Allah. Mahmud ibn Ali as-Saroyi's arrangement of good and bad deeds into separate sections within the final two chapters represents a distinctive stylistic feature of the work.

Within the framework of works belonging to the "Siyarnoma" tradition, particular attention has been devoted to the problems related to the textual history of the written sources of Mahmud ibn Ali as-Saroyi's "Nahjul Farodis" ("The Clear Path to Paradise"), as well as to the improvement of its scholarly critical edition, the contemporary significance of its manuscripts, and issues concerning their study. Moreover, special emphasis has been placed on the historical origins of works within this tradition, their ideological and thematic development, the textual-comparative analysis of published

versions, and their poetic features. In this context, the position of the author, regarded as a continuer of classical literary traditions, within Uzbek literature is also determined.

4. Conclusion

In carrying out the textual study of Mahmud ibn Ali as-Saroyi's "Nahjul Farodis," it is considered appropriate to address the following principal issues:

- To determine the scientific and theoretical foundations of the concept of textual history and to evaluate existing scholarly views on this matter;
- To provide a scientific justification for the necessity of introducing and further improving the practice of preparing scholarly critical editions within textual studies;
- To identify the distinctive features related to the interpretation of the manuscript texts of Mahmud ibn Ali as-Saroyi's "nahjul farodis" ("the clear path to paradise").

In conclusion, it may be stated that conducting a textual study of Mahmud ibn Ali as-Saroyi's "Nahjul Farodis," developing its literary analysis, and carrying out a textual-comparative investigation of the existing manuscript sources preserved in foreign libraries as well as in national manuscript collections constitute important tasks for contemporary textual scholars and literary researchers.

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