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# The Mention of Navoiy's Followers in Usmonli Tazkiras

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**Abstract:** Alisher Navoiy's tazkira, "Majolis un-nafois", holds significant importance as the first comprehensive tazkira written in a Turkic language. This work provides information on 459 poets who lived and created in Khorasan and Transoxiana. The school of tazkira writing established by Navoiy was later continued in Ottoman Turkish literature. Alisher Navoiy's influence is clearly reflected in Ottoman literature through Sehibey's "Hasht Behisht" and Latifi's "Tazkirat ush-shuaro va tabsirat un-nuzamo". This article reveals the interpretation of Navoiy's followers, the poets Sehibey and Latifi, as presented in their 16th-century Ottoman Turkish tazkiras.

**Keywords:** Tazkira, Tazkira Tradition, Poets, Literary Influence, Ottoman Literary Environment, Tatabbu, Imitation

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## 1. Introduction

The tradition of tazkira writing in Eastern literary history has undergone a long process of historical development. The term tazkira is derived from Arabic and means "to remind" or "to mention." It is regarded as one of the significant genres of medieval Persian and Turkic literary studies [1]. In another definition, the term is explained as originating from the Arabic word zikr, meaning "memoir" or "book of remembrance." From this perspective, a tazkira appears as a literary-historical source that records events of a particular period, the author's personal observations and impressions, as well as information concerning the lives and activities of historical figures and literary creators [2].

Alisher Navoiy's Majolis un-nafois ("Assemblies of the Refined") serves as a mirror of the literary life of its age. This tazkira-anthology holds considerable scholarly significance as a valuable source of information about the cultural and literary environment of Herat and the entire Timurid state during Navoiy's lifetime. Its importance lies primarily in the fact that, unlike earlier tazkira writers such as Avfiy and his contemporaries Jami and Davlatshah, Navoiy devoted his work exclusively to his contemporaries [3, 4].

## 2. Materials and Methods

In the literature of the Turkic peoples, Majolis un-nafois occupies an important place as a source illuminating the literary, spiritual, and political life of fifteenth-century Movarounnahr, Khorasan, and neighboring regions. The creation of this work also inspired the emergence of similar tazkiras in the literatures of other nations. In particular, more than ten tazkiras were produced in Ottoman Turkish literature under the influence of Majolis un-nafois. Among them, Sehī Bey's Hasht Bihisht and Latifi's Tazkirat ush-

shuaro—which constitute the object of the present study—adopted Navoiy’s tazkira model as a literary criterion, and special attention was devoted to poets inspired by Navoiy.

While discussing Navoiy, Sehī Bey portrays him as the great master who elevated the Turkic language to perfection in poetry. He emphasizes that Navoiy’s творчество exerted both direct and indirect influence on Ottoman poets. Although Sehī Bey does not explicitly describe poets as “disciples of Navoiy,” he demonstrates that they all belonged to the literary school established by Navoiy through their commitment to producing refined poetry in the Turkic language.

### 3. Results and Discussion

When discussing the influence of one poet upon another, particular attention is paid to “individual style.” This aspect is especially evident in Latifi’s tazkira. For instance, the following poets are distinguished by their proximity to Navoiy’s literary style [5]:

- Hofiz-i Ajam and Muhiy are described as possessing “pleasant expressions close to Navoiy’s style”;
- The poems of Shohiy Sharqiy are said to “resemble Navoiy’s manner”;
- Jamiliy’s poetry is characterized as “largely following the path of Navoiy”;
- Niyoziy is noted for “composing poetry in the spirit of Navoiy”;
- Piri Chalabiy and Azmiy Afandi are recognized for writing in the “Navoiyan style”;
- Fuzuliy is praised for having “a captivating and unique style close to Navoiy” and for composing “Navoiyana” poems [6];
- Ahdiy Fayziy Chalabiy is described as being “widely admired in Navoiyan interpretation”;
- Faroghiy is acknowledged for his “joy-bringing expression in the manner of Navoiy” [7];
- Shuhudiy, Saboiy, Zoyimiy, and Zuhdiy are all considered “skilled in Navoiy’s style”;
- Ghiyosiy and Ulumiy are particularly commended for their “efforts in the Navoiyan manner.”

Such literary connections among Ottoman court poets in the sixteenth century stimulated other poets’ interest in Navoiy’s works as well [8].

In Hasht Bihisht, Sehī Bey highly praises Alisher Navoiy’s literary heritage and recognizes him as one of the greatest representatives of Turkic poetry. He particularly commends poets who wrote under Navoiy’s influence and demonstrates their contribution to the development of Turkic literature. The tazkira emphasizes several defining characteristics of Navoiy’s followers [9]:

- The broad demonstration of the artistic possibilities of the Turkic language;
- The composition of naziras to the epics of the Khamsa;
- The continuation of Navoiy’s school of ghazal composition and his mastery in organizing divans [10];
- Greater attention to ethical and mystical themes;
- The simultaneous development of Turkic poetry alongside Persian-Tajik literary traditions;
- Creative activity carried out in Navoiy’s stylistic manner.

While providing information about Mawlana Hizr Chalabiy, Sehī Bey emphasizes the elegance and beauty of his ghazals and notes that he composed poetry in Arabic, Persian, and Turkic. At the same time, he particularly acknowledges that the poet primarily created works in the Turkic language. Sehī Bey further underlines the inexhaustible richness of his Turkish ghazals and verses: “Türki ğazeliyyatı ve münteha ğarra ebyatı bî-nihayedür [11].”

One of the most significant features of Latifi’s tazkira is its extensive discussion of Alisher Navoiy’s literary heritage and the broad scope of his influence. The work

demonstrates that Navoiy was recognized not only within Turkestan literature but also in the Ottoman literary milieu. His poetic style, mastery of ghazal composition, and spiritual influence left a profound mark upon the literary culture of Rum through various poets [12].

In Latifi's tazkira, particular attention is devoted to several distinctive characteristics of poets who followed the literary tradition of Alisher Navoiy:

- The study of divans and the promotion of Navoiy's works;
- Adherence to Navoiy's literary tradition while introducing a renewed artistic spirit;
- The continuation of Navoiy's style in the Turkic language;
- Receiving Navoiy's direct spiritual and moral influence;
- Composing naziras and following Navoiy in the tradition of khamsa writing [13].

According to Latifi, the poet Basiriy originally came from regions near the borders of Persia (Ajam) and is believed to have arrived in the Ottoman Empire through Baghdad. During the early years of Sultan Bayezid II's reign (1481–1512), he entered the scholarly and literary milieu of the Ottoman realm under the educational influence and spiritual guidance of Hazrat Jami and Mir Alisher Navoiy. Most importantly, Basiriy was the first person to bring Navoiy's divan to the land of Rum [14].

Thus, Basiriy's greatest contribution lies in introducing Navoiy's literary heritage to Anatolia and the Ottoman courtly environment. While composing poetry in the Turkic language, he also incorporated Persian vocabulary into his works. The influence of Navoiy's poetic style is likewise evident throughout his poetry.

In the tazkira Hasht Bihisht, attention is also given to Ahmad Dā'ī, one of the poets associated with Sultan Suleiman. His literary heritage is described as exceptionally refined and elegant, and it is emphasized that he composed primarily in the genres of qasida, masnavi, and ghazal. At the same time, he is acknowledged for compiling a divan that became renowned throughout the land of Rum. From this perspective, Ahmad Dā'ī appears as a successor to Navoiy's mastery in ghazal composition and divan arrangement [15].

When discussing Sehī Bey's tazkira, special recognition should be given to Atoyī Chalabiy, since he was among the earliest poets in Rum to compose ghazals in the Turkish language ("Memleket-i Rumda Türki gazelde emsal irad itmeği evvel ol eylemişdür"). Sehī Bey describes the young poet as the author of pleasant and graceful verses and ghazals. Consequently, Atoyī Chalabiy's significance lies in the fact that he pioneered Navoiy's idea of artistic creation in the Turkic language within the literary environment of Rum.

Likewise, while writing about Najotiy, whose original name was Isa, Sehī Bey emphasizes his refined taste and poetic mastery, noting that he brought Turkic poetry closer to the spirit of the common people and that his divan enjoyed widespread popularity among readers. These features may be regarded as being in harmony with Navoiy's literary traditions. Moreover, Mawlana Shaykh's glorification of Najotiy as the "Khusraw of Rum" in the sixth volume of *The History of the Ottomans* further demonstrates the poet's stature as one of the leading literary figures of his age.

While discussing Hayoliy, a representative of the Haydariyya Sufi order, Sehī Bey portrays him as an extraordinarily talented writer of ghazals. He particularly emphasizes Hayoliy's artistic skill and popularity among the people. Acknowledging the poet's great fame in the ghazal genre, Sehī Bey further notes that mystical themes and motifs of love occupied a central place in his творчество, and he supports his observations by providing examples from Hayoliy's poetry:

*Kim ki bu çarh-ı pîre-zene mayil olmadı,  
Merdaneler içinde 'aceb erlik eyledi.  
Dilden Hayalî suret-i idraki kazıyup,  
Dîvane-meşreb oldı kalenderlik eyledi [8:164 b] .*

These lines demonstrate that mystical spirit, refined artistic imagery, and lyrical themes of love are vividly manifested in Hayoliy's poetry. In this respect, the influence of Alisher Navoiy's literary school can clearly be perceived in the composition of delicate ghazals in the Turkic language.

Throughout his *tazkira*, *Sehī Bey* also refers to *Mawlana Niyozī*, emphasizing his mastery in every branch of knowledge and his success in various arts. Particularly noteworthy is the statement in the *tazkira* that *Niyozī's* poems were composed in the Chagatai language in the style of *Navoiy* ("Ve eş'arı Mir Nevayî üslubında Çagatay dilinedür").

The *tazkira* *Hasht Bihisht* also contains information about *Bāqī* (1526–1600), one of the major representatives of classical Turkish literature. His father, *Nabiy Khalifa*, served as a preacher at the *Sultan Muhammad Mosque* and supported his son's education from an early age. *Bāqī* worked as a professor at the *Sulaymaniya madrasa*, as *qadi* of *Mecca*, and later as *qadi* of *Istanbul*. Widely recognized in the *Ottoman Empire* as the "Sultan of Poets," *Abdul Bāqī* achieved fame not only within *Ottoman lands* but also in other Eastern countries. His ghazals were recited in the courts of *Arabia*, *Iran*, and *India*. The *divan* that has survived to the present day mainly consists of ghazals and *qasidas*. In his poetry, *Bāqī* approached traditional images found in classical ghazals with innovative artistic interpretations, while his works also retained a distinct mystical spirit. *Sehī Bey* acknowledges the poet's exceptional talent in composing ghazals and cites the following lines as an example:

"Nergis gözünüñ cana hayranı vü meftýnidur,  
Leyli saçunuñ sünbül sevda-zede mecnýnidur."

Similarly, *Ahmad Qaboqli* highly praises *Bāqī's* creativity, stating that "*Bāqī's* art, in a word, is perfect art; his poetry possesses an extraordinary degree of inspiration, enthusiasm, and artistic beauty." Thus, *Bāqī* demonstrated remarkable mastery in the ghazal genre and, like *Navoiy*, broadly revealed the artistic possibilities of the Turkic language.

*Latifi* records the following regarding *Jamiliy*: *Jamiliy* was one of the poets of *Turkistan* who composed in the Turkic language, and his "manner of expression and poetic style entirely belonged to the tradition of *Navoiy*." The most significant aspect of *Jamiliy's* creativity was that he wrote complete *naziras* to the ghazals contained in *Navoiy's* *divan*. *Latifi* notes this by stating: "*Nevâyî dîvânında olan eş'ârına külliyyen kâfiye-ber-kâfiye nazîre dimişdür.*"

*Hafiz-i Ajam*, mentioned on folio 61a of *Latifi's* *tazkira*, was among the learned and mystical figures of his time and was associated with the *Mawlavi* order. He authored numerous scholarly commentaries and interpretations while also remaining active in poetry. *Latifi* evaluates his poetic style as "pleasant and close to *Navoiy's* manner."

*Hafiz-i Ajam's* works were mainly written in *Persian* and *Arabic*. The poetic examples cited from his works contain philosophical meanings and *Sufi* symbolism. For instance, his comparison of human life to a bubble upon water, or his search for spiritual tranquility through the symbol of the tavern, closely resembles the mystical imagery found in *Navoiy's* poetry. Moreover, *Latifi's* observations demonstrate that *Navoiy's* influence within the *Ottoman milieu* was not limited solely to Turkic poets, but also extended to poets writing in *Persian* and *Arabic*.

The *tazkira* *Hasht Bihisht* likewise provides information about *Yahyo Tashlajali*, who is recognized as a *khamsa* writer. Although *Sehī Bey* does not explicitly state that he followed *Navoiy*, *Yahyo Tashlajali* may nevertheless be regarded as a continuator of *Navoiy's* literary tradition through his extensive use of the artistic possibilities of the Turkic language and his composition of *naziras* to the *Khamsa*.

“Tashlajali Yahyo’s *Khamsa* consists of the following epics: *Ganjinai Roz*, *Usulnoma*, *Shoh va Gado*, *Yusuf va Zulayho*, and *Gulshani Anvor*. Although these epics do not entirely resemble Navoiy’s *Khamsa*, the author T. Yahyo praises Navoiy as a great master of *khamsa* writing, leaving no doubt that he was inspired by his works.”

In *Hasht Bihisht*, *Sehī Bey* also mentions *Lāmi’ī Chalabiy*, the son of *Usman Chalabiy*, whose original name was *Mahmud* and who served as a state secretary (*daftardar*). Besides possessing secular knowledge, he was also deeply learned in religious sciences. Devoted to *Amir Bukhari* and affiliated with the *Naqshbandi* order, he was inclined toward worship and committed to piety. *Sehī Bey* further notes that *Lāmi’ī Chalabiy* composed the epic *Farhodnoma* as a response to the *Khamsa*, in addition to works such as *Vomiq va Azro* and *Husni Dil*. In this sense, the influence of Navoiy’s literary tradition can also be observed in *Lāmi’ī Chalabiy*’s works.

*Latifi* also discusses the Azerbaijani poet *Fuzuliy* of *Baghdad*. According to the author, *Fuzuliy* achieved an exceptionally high level of literary creativity not only in *Turkic* but also in *Persian* and *Arabic*. *Fuzuliy*’s poetic style strongly recalls the influence of *Navoiy*: “He continued *Navoiy*’s path while adding his own new color to it.”

*Latifi* identifies two principal dimensions of *Fuzuliy*’s creative power:

- the influence of *Navoiy*, which is evident in his mastery of *Turkic* poetry, semantic richness, and mystical allusions;
- *Fuzuliy*’s personal style, particularly his unique ability to express “the torment of love through the pain of the heart,” which distinguished him from *Navoiy* while simultaneously harmonizing with his literary tradition.

*Latifi* recognizes *Fuzuliy* as a master poet equally skilled in composing in multiple languages within both the *Persian* and *Ottoman* literary environments. It is therefore evident that *Fuzuliy* became both a worthy successor and an innovator within the literary school of *Hazrat Navoiy*.

In his *tazkira*, *Sehī Bey* also notes that *Qandiy Bursaviy* wrote masterfully in the *Turkic* language. His poetry in *Turkic* and *Persian* is described as being close to *Navoiy*’s style. The cited examples from his *ghazals* vividly display the motifs characteristic of *Navoiy*: images of love, spiritual suffering, and symbols of divine affection.

*Latifi* likewise provides information about *Qandiy Bursaviy*, who composed in *Turkic* and spent many years in *Khurasan* and *Persia*. According to the *tazkira*, he acquired the pen name “*Qandiy*” because he worked as a confectioner and sugar-maker. *Qandiy* spent time in the circles of *Jami* and *Navoiy*, absorbing both their creative and spiritual influence. At the same time, *Latifi* points out that the traditions of the literary environment of *Rum* were also reflected in *Qandiy*’s poetry: although he accepted *Navoiy*’s influence, he also studied the style of local *Turkish* poets and harmonized the two literary paths. In this respect, *Qandiy Bursaviy* occupies an important place as one of the mediators who transmitted *Navoiy*’s influence into the literary culture of *Rum*.

According to *Latifi*, *Lāmi’ī*’s style did not attain the same level of artistic perfection as *Navoiy*’s, but rather remained closer to imitation. Nevertheless, *Lāmi’ī Chalabiy* deserves recognition in *Turkic* literature as a representative of epic poetry created under the influence of *Navoiy*’s literary school. In this regard, the themes of love and fidelity occupying a central place in his works further reveal *Navoiy*’s influence. Thus, *Chalabiy* may also be considered among the poets who belonged directly to *Navoiy*’s literary sphere of influence.

It becomes evident from *Sehī Bey*’s *Hasht Bihisht* and *Latifi*’s *Tazkirat ush-shuaro* that *Alisher Navoiy* possessed a wide sphere of influence in sixteenth-century *Ottoman* literature. His literary heritage served not only as a source of inspiration within the literary life of *Movarounnahr* and *Khurasan*, but also for accomplished poets in the land of *Rum*. Although the author of *Hasht Bihisht* did not always explicitly describe *Ottoman* poets as

“followers of Navoiy,” he nevertheless demonstrated Navoiy’s influence through the manner in which Ottoman poets elevated the Turkic language to the level of a refined literary medium and achieved delicacy and artistic perfection in poetic style.

#### 4. Conclusion

Sehī Bey’s tazkira *Hasht Bihisht*, the issue of following Alisher Navoiy is evaluated through the following aspects:

1. Continuing the school of ghazal composition and the mastery of compiling divans (Hizr Chalabiy, Ahmad Dā’ī, Najotiy);
2. Broadly demonstrating the artistic possibilities of the Turkic language (Atoyī Chalabiy, Bāqī, Jamiliy);
3. Promoting Navoiy’s works (Basiriy);
4. Giving greater emphasis to ethical and mystical themes (Hayoliy);
5. Creating literary works in the Turkic language in the style of Navoiy (Niyozī);
6. Writing naziras to the epics of the *Khamsa* (Yahyo Tashlajali, Lāmi’ī Chalabiy);
7. Harmoniously developing both Persian-Tajik literature and Turkic poetry (Qandiy Bursaviy).

In Latifi’s tazkira, however, Navoiy’s influence appears in a broader and more explicit form. Latifi emphasizes that Navoiy established an entire literary school within Turkic literature and opened new stylistic and thematic paths for numerous poets.

The modes of literary succession among the poets mentioned in Latifi’s tazkira may be classified as follows:

1. Through the study of Navoiy’s divan (Sultan Salim);
2. Through introducing Navoiy’s works into Rum (Basiriy);
3. Through receiving Navoiy’s direct spiritual guidance and patronage (Behishtiy);
4. Through composing naziras and stylistic proximity to Navoiy (Jamiliy, Hafiz-i Ajam);
5. Through continuing Navoiy’s literary path in the Turkic style (Shohiy-i Sharqiy, Zuhuriy);
6. Through reinterpreting Navoiy’s tradition in an innovative manner (Fuzuliy Baghdadi);
7. Through harmonizing two literary environments (Qandiy Bursaviy);
8. Through following Navoiy’s path in epic poetry and dastan composition (Lāmi’ī Chalabiy and Yahyo Tashlajali).

In general, both tazkiras demonstrate that the issue of literary succession to Navoiy was interpreted on two distinct levels:

1. External imitation (formal succession) — the repetition of meter, rhyme, and genre;
2. Internal succession (genuine continuity) — the development of ideas, artistic thinking, and the expressive possibilities of language.

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