

THE ISSUE OF AUTHORIAL REVISION IN THE WORKS OF ALISHER NAVOI: THEORETICAL AND HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS

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The creative legacy of Alisher Navoi represents not only a masterpiece of Uzbek classical literature but also a distinguished contribution to world literary heritage. Through his extensive scholarly, literary, and political activities, he rendered unparalleled service to the formation, development, and elevation of the Uzbek language. In particular, his divans and the prefaces written to them constitute important sources for understanding the cultural life of his time as well as the poet's creative principles.

The issue of textual revision is of particular importance, as it may have been carried out either by the author himself or, in some cases, by scribes. Therefore, it is essential first to clarify the concept of revision and then to examine how this matter manifests itself in Navoi's oeuvre, especially with regard to revisions undertaken by the author on his ghazals.

The well-known textual scholar A.Erkinov defines revision as follows: "A revision variant is a version of a text deliberately reworked by the author or another person. The reworking of a text may be caused by the necessity to remove, add, or modify certain elements of the work's ideological content, artistic form, style, or factual material." As examples, the scholar refers to the authorial revisions of Abu Mansur as-Saolibi's "*Yatimat ad-dahr fi mahosin ahl al-asr*" (961–1038) and Alisher Navoi's "*Majolis un-nafois*", both of which were revised by their authors and enriched with factual materials.

From this definition and the cited examples, it becomes evident that the primary focus lies on features characteristic of the tazkira genre. Nevertheless, certain aspects applicable to lyrical works are also taken into account. Specifically, revision carried out by the author or another individual often affects the ideological content and artistic structure of the work. Elements related to factual material are more commonly observed in revisions of tazkiras. However, in large-scale narrative works such as epics and masnavis, there are dimensions of revision not fully encompassed by this definition. This point may be clarified through specific examples.

Before proceeding, it is appropriate to consider the reflections of scholars concerning revisions of tazkiras. Literary scholar S.G'aniyeva devoted many years to studying "*Majolis un-nafois*." Naturally, the issue of its authorial revision did not escape her attention. She identifies several functions performed by Navoi in preparing the revised edition of his tazkira:

1. In order to further elevate the prestige of Sultan Husayn Bayqara within his social milieu, Navoi reworked the eighth majlis dedicated to the ruler and expanded the samples of his poetry;
2. Closely observing the literary process, Navoi paid special attention to emerging young talents and enriched the new version with additional names;
3. The conclusion of the third majlis, beginning with the name of Jami (who passed away on November 8, 1492), underwent certain modifications;
4. Information about twenty-three poets from Mashhad was collected and incorporated.

These conclusions demonstrate that Navoi deliberately reworked his tazkira. Alongside enriching it with factual material, he expanded its analytical and interpretative dimensions. The generic nature of the tazkira allowed the author to increase information about specific poets and to add new analytical observations. When structuring the tazkira into majlises (sections), Navoi took into account their distinctive features. For instance, since reflections on Sultan Husayn Bayqara were presented in the eighth majlis, newly obtained information about him was included in that same section.

Similarly, authorial revisions were undertaken in the epistolary work “*Munshaot*.” It has been established that during his lifetime Navoi revised the manuscripts of “*Munshaot*” three times before 1499, adding new letters. The first version contains 94 letters, while the third includes more than 100. Given that “*Munshaot*” is a prose work composed of letters, its structure facilitated such revisions.

Naturally, revisions conducted in works such as tazkiras and “*Munshaot*” differ significantly from those applied to poetic texts – whether narrative masnavis, epics, or lyrical compositions. The distinguished Navoi scholar A.Hayitmetov examined the issue of authorial revision in Navoi’s famous masnavi written as a poetic letter to Sayyid Hasan Ardasher and offered detailed reflections on the revision of lyrical works. He emphasizes that Navoi consistently monitored and revised his texts. According to Hayitmetov, Navoi occasionally re-edited manuscript copies of his works, introduced changes to certain poems in his divans, reworked lines, replaced words, and adjusted the number of verses. This testifies to his high level of textual competence.

Hayitmetov also notes that substantial editorial work was carried out in the preparation of Navoi’s lyrical collection “*Xazoyin ul-maoniy*.” When incorporating poems from his earlier divans into this collection, Navoi not only corrected scribal errors but also re-edited many poems. As a result, new variants of several poems from the “*Ilk Devon*” emerged, later forming the basis of “*Badoyi ul-bidoya*.” The differences between versions of the same ghazals across these collections clearly demonstrate the scope of authorial revision.

Revisions in lyrical works, particularly ghazals, may involve individual words, lines, or couplets, as well as combinations thereof. A.Erkinov notes that the mere quantity of corrections does not necessarily indicate a new revision variant. Even if corrections are few in number, if they significantly alter the meaning, the text may be considered a new revision variant. In comparison with Hayitmetov’s observations, it becomes evident that in some of Navoi’s ghazals revisions were extensive, while in others they were relatively limited. The defining factor lies not in quantity but in semantic impact.

It should be emphasized that the success of an authorial revision is ultimately measured by the enhancement of the ghazal’s ideological and artistic value. Understanding the principles of revision employed by the author is therefore of great importance. The recognition of editorial mastery also depends on the literary environment in which the author lived, particularly the degree of attention paid to textual refinement.

An examination of remarks concerning revision in Navoi’s works indicates that in fifteenth-century Khurasan – especially in Herat – considerable attention was devoted to editorial practices. From the early stages of his creative development until the end of his life, Navoi actively engaged in the revision of both his contemporaries’ works and his own poetry.

The literary gatherings frequently organized in Khurasan and Mavarounnahr during the Timurid era played a crucial role in shaping Navoi’s genius. He not only participated in these assemblies but also led them, guiding and supporting emerging talents. As scholars rightly note, the second half of the fifteenth century marked the peak of Uzbek literary development, associated with the reign of Sultan Husayn Bayqara (1469-1506) and the luminous figure of Alisher Navoi.

In “*Munshaot*,” the literary assemblies conducted under Sultan Husayn Bayqara are referred to as “the supreme majlis.” Navoi modestly remarks that nothing arising from his “scattered state” could be worthy of being heard by the members of that exalted gathering. This statement reflects the exceptionally high standards applied to literary creation and the critical discussions that characterized such assemblies.

Navoi’s role as an active participant and leader of the literary environment, his articulation of literary-critical views in his works, and his consistent authorial revisions – particularly of his ghazals – have been thoroughly studied. His recorded revisions of contemporaries’ poetry further illustrate the breadth of his engagement within the literary milieu of his time. A scholarly

examination of these notes allows us to more precisely determine Navoi's rigorous standards toward artistic creation and his enduring commitment to guiding and supporting young talents.

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