

FEATURES OF 17TH–18TH CENTURY TAZKIRA WRITING (ON THE EXAMPLE OF MUTRIBIY’S “TAZKIRAT USH-SHUARO”)**Qodirjon Ergashev**Leading Researcher, Doctor of Philological Sciences
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This article examines the distinctive features of 17th–18th century tazkira writing through the example of Tazkirat ush-Shuaro by Mutribiy. Particular attention is given to the structure of the tazkira, the nature and arrangement of the information it contains, and its geographical scope. The study also highlights how the literary characteristics of the period are reflected in tazkiras, as well as the preservation and development of tazkira-writing traditions.

Keywords

tazkira writing, structure, “Tasmiyah,” “Ism,” data, tazkira geography, authors, period literature, traditions.

Mutribiy’s Tazkirat ush-Shuaro was completed in 1604. The tazkira contains information on more than 320 poets and writers who were active in the second half of the sixteenth century and the early seventeenth century. In the introduction, the author explicitly emphasizes two primary aims behind composing this work. The first was to immortalize the names of his contemporaries—poets and literary figures—by including them in the tazkira. The second was to continue the tradition of tazkira writing in Eastern literature, which had been developed by Davlatshoh Samarqandiy, Alisher Navoiy, and Hasanxoja Nisariy.

On this matter, the author writes:

“In every century, one of the learned compiles the names of contemporary poets within a certain classification and leaves behind a lasting work. Among such esteemed books is the tazkira of Davlatshah Samarqandi, followed by the ‘Majolis un-nafois’ of the noble Amir Alisher Navoiy. Another is the eloquent work ‘Muzakkir al-ahbob’ by our master and teacher Hasanxoja Nisariy. Following the virtuous and their deeds is a meritorious act. Therefore, this sinful servant, within the limits of his ability, endeavored to record the distinguished names of contemporary poets... and thus created this book.”

When discussing tazkiras, it is first necessary to consider their structure, as the uniqueness of each work is reflected in the way its material is presented to the reader. In this regard, Mutribiy’s tazkira stands out. The materials are arranged alphabetically according to the initial letters of the poets’ pen names. Before the main section, referred to as the “Alphabet,” there is an introductory part, which the author calls “Tasmiyah.” This section is devoted to rulers; thus, Mutribiy’s tazkira does not begin with professional poets.

In the “Tasmiyah,” the author divides ruler-poets into three categories: those whom he personally saw and served; those whom he saw but did not serve; and those whom he never saw and only heard about from others. Beginning literary tazkiras with ruler-poets was not an innovation. This approach can also be observed in one of the earliest examples of tazkira writing, Lubab ul-albab by Muhammad Avfiy. After four introductory chapters devoted to general and theoretical issues of literary studies, the main section begins with a chapter entitled “On the Beautiful Poems of Sultans, Amirs, and Kings.” The following chapters are titled “The Elegant Poetry of Ministers and Dignitaries” and “The Subtle Poetry of Imams, Scholars, and Leaders.” The discussion of professional poets begins only in the eighth chapter, where they are grouped according to dynasties or periods of rule.

The principle of arranging information about authors according to their position within the social hierarchy is also characteristic of the tazkira by Hasanxoja Nisariy. The initial chapters of his Muzakkir al-ahbob are devoted to rulers engaged in poetic activity. As correctly noted by the late literary scholar Ismoil Bekjon, each chapter begins with figures of high religious or social status, followed by representatives of other social strata.

In this respect, the approach adopted by Alisher Navoiy is particularly noteworthy. In his Majolis un-nafois, he also dedicates special sections to ruler-poets; however, these are not placed at the beginning of the work. Instead, rulers are discussed in the seventh section, while the eighth is entirely devoted to the творчество of Sultan Husayn Bayqara.

In the initial section of Tazkirat ush-Shuaro (which the author refers to as "Ism"), information is provided about rulers belonging to the Shaybanid, Timurid, Ashtarkhanid, and Baburid dynasties. Their lives, their attitudes toward literature and poetry, and their creative works are discussed, with examples from their poetry included.

Among these figures, the information about Abdullah Khan is particularly noteworthy. Historically, he is known as the ruler who reunited the fragmented Shaybanid state after the death of Ubaydullah Khan, expanded its territories, and established a powerful state, as well as a talented military commander. He is also recognized as a great builder of his time. However, his image as a creative, knowledgeable, and refined individual is less widely known.

In Tazkirat ush-Shuaro, it is noted that he composed poetry in both Uzbek and Persian under the pen name "Khan," and examples of his ghazals and individual couplets are provided. In another passage, Mutribiy recounts a meeting with the ruler, during which the latter questioned him on matters of literary theory. The detailed account of this exchange demonstrates the ruler's broad intellectual outlook and deep knowledge.

One of Abdullah Khan's Persian ghazals included in the tazkira is devoted to the description of Samarkand, expressing his deep affection for this ancient city. In the poem, locations such as Juvozi Kogaz, Bogi Maydon, and Pushti Rasad are praised, and the city is compared to paradise.

Bo'ru, bar taxt xush binshin, Sulaymonvor ishrat kun,
Ki jonro toza medorad havoyi Bog'i Maydonash.

Juvozi Kog'azu Pushti Rasad fasli bahor, ey dil,
Dihad yod az harimi jannatu firdavsu rizvonash.

Hamisha orzuyi Xon hamin boshad dar olam.
Ravad suyi Mazori Shohu gardad az g'ulomonash[1 - 24].

Meaning:

Kel, xushlik bilan taxtga o'tir, Sulaymon kabi ishrat qil,
Bog'i Maydon havosi tanga yangi jon beradi.

Ey dil, Juvozi Kog'az, Pushti Rasad ko'klam paytida,
Jannat harimiyu firdavs bog'ini yodga soladi.

Bu olamda Xon hamisha shuni orzu qiladiki,
Shoh mazori tomon borsa va uning qullaridan bo'lsa.

Mutribiy also cites a couplet by the Khan in the Uzbek language and emphasizes its popularity among the people. This couplet, built upon wordplay, reveals the author's subtle sensitivity to the nuances of the native language, as well as his poetic mastery and playful wit:

Bir ayoq ichtuk o‘shal Navro‘zi mishkin qoshdin,
Qo‘sh ayoq ichmay turib, chiqmas xumorlar boshdin[1 - 25].

The information presented in the “Tasmiyah” section of the tazkira about certain ruler-poets is particularly valuable, as it is not found in other sources.

Following the completion of the “Tasmiyah,” the main section, entitled “Alphabet,” begins. It first presents poets whose pen names begin with the letter *alif*, followed sequentially by those beginning with *ba*, *jim*, *dal*, and so on, in accordance with the alphabetical order. Each section includes both biographical information about the poets and selected examples of their творчество.

For instance, the section devoted to the letter *alif* begins with the entry on Abu Muhammad Khoja Dahbediy, who wrote under the pen name Amini, and continues with poets such as Akhsiy, another Amini (Qazi Muhammad Amin), Ashrafiy, Afzaliy, Ashkiy Samarqandi, Asvadiy Bukhari, Alfiy Shami, and others. This section concludes with the mention of Aqdasi. The section for the letter *ba* begins with information about Badrī, namely Fūlodkhoja ibn Devonakhjoja, a Shaykh al-Islam, and includes a total of thirteen authors. The sections devoted to other letters are arranged in a similar manner.

Each alphabetical section of the tazkira also possesses its own internal structure. Poets whose pen names begin with the same letter are divided into three categories: those whom the author personally knew and served; those whom he knew but did not serve; and those whom he did not meet and whose names and works he learned from others.

Like his teacher Hasanxoja Nisariy, Mutribiy pays particular attention to social hierarchy and subordination. Even within alphabetical groupings, priority is given to individuals of high social status, noble lineage, and close association with rulers. Among them are representatives of Uzbek tribal aristocracy. Notably, many rare Uzbek-language poetic works of significance for literary history belong to such authors.

For example, Tazkirat ush-Shuaro includes two rubā‘īs written in Uzbek by Amir Dūstafobiy ibn Hojimbey Oталиq, a representative of the Dormon tribe. One begins with the line “*Chog‘ir ichibon gul rukhi tobon o‘ldi*”, and the other with “*Ko‘nglumni o‘shal sarvi hiromon opporur.*”

Among the noblemen of the Toma tribe, Mirzo Farhod—an Ashtarkhanid courtier of Wali Muhammad Khan—also composed poetry under the pen name “Farhod.” One of his poetic fragments (qit‘a) reads as follows:

Ey, surohiyning turfa yori sen,
Quldur ozodalar sening mulingga.
Yo‘qtur haddim sening quling degali.
Qulman ixlos birla qulinga[1 - 462].

The interest in literature and poetry among ordinary people and representatives of various professions and crafts was also remarkably strong. Among the poets mentioned in Tazkirat ush-Shuaro are individuals such as the baker Yormuhammad Hujumiy, the shoemaker Usta Holatiy Nasafiy, the well-digger Tashtiy Bukhari, the cook Tabkhiy Balkhi, the calligrapher Mulla Bobo Yomliy, the bookbinder Yusuf Samarqandi, the tailor Latifiy Jomabof Bukhari, the leatherworker Usta Shahidiy, the craftsman Tarkashiy Tashkandi, the tent-maker Davlatbek Qoraquliy, and the butcher Ghazi Qalandar. This demonstrates the broad social base of literary engagement in the period.

At this point, it is also appropriate to consider the geographical scope of the tazkira. The work encompasses poets who lived and created across a vast region. The largest groups are those

from Samarkand and Bukhara, while poets from Khorasan and Iraq also constitute a significant portion. A considerable number of poets from Balkh, Kabul, Badakhshan, and Hisar are likewise included. In contrast, relatively fewer authors originate from Khorezm and the Fergana Valley. From Khorezm, only Rahimiy Khorezmiy and Sharafiddin Husayn Khorezmiy are mentioned, while from the Fergana region, only figures such as Vajihiddin Akhsikatiy, Uburiy Marg'inoniy, Mehnatiy Marg'inoniy, Mirzo Mahmud Siyoqi, and Doiy Andijoniy are recorded.

Tazkirat ush-Shuaro also provides valuable insight into the literary life of the period. It becomes evident, first and foremost, that educated representatives of the ruling elite played a crucial role in the development of literature and the flourishing of literary culture. They acted as organizers and patrons of literary life. Literary gatherings, discussions, poetic assemblies (*mushairas*), and competitions were held in the courts of khans and sultans, as well as in the residences of high-ranking elites.

The tazkira also reflects the preservation and development of literary traditions during this period. In many cases, patrons encouraged participants of literary gatherings to compose *tatabbu'*—responses or imitative works—based on famous poems of earlier poets. For example, Sultan Sa'id Khan (the son of Kuchkunji Khan) instructed poets to compose responses to a well-known ghazal associated with the following famous couplet by Asafiy:

Narext durdi may va muhtasib zi dayr guzasht,
Rasida bud baloye vale baxayr guzasht.

Meaning: The market inspector passed through the tavern but did not spill its remains. A misfortune had occurred, yet it passed safely.

Among those who composed responses were many writers, including the famous poet Mushfiqiy. However, the victory went to the Samarkand poet Boqiy Kaffosh. His ghazal begins with the following couplet:

Sabo zi kuyi tu jonam ba rasmi sayr guzasht.
Z-rashk jon ba lab omad maroki g'ayr guzasht.

Meaning:

My soul, the morning breeze passed through your street as if on a gentle stroll; out of jealousy, my life rose to my lips, for a stranger had passed by.

Explaining why Kaffosh's poem was regarded as the best response, Mutribiy notes that learned scholars considered one of its couplets to surpass not only the verses of other responding poets but even the original couplet by Asafiy. According to them, it was the following couplet:

Ba yuzu boz guzashtu az on shudem xushdil.
Ki shohi man chu Sulaymon ba vahshu tayr guzasht.

Meaning:

The meaning of the couplet: "He passed with gazelle and falcon, and I rejoiced, for my king passed as if like Solomon with animals and birds."

Mutribiy notes regarding this couplet: "The use of the words '*vahshu tayr*' ('wild animals and birds') in this line, our scholars considered superior to the same phrase in Khoja Osafiy's verse."

As in previous centuries, interest in *masnu'* (artificially composed) poetry remained strong during this period. Mutribiy provides numerous examples from contemporary poets. In the entry on Ashrafiy, he mentions that Ashrafiy composed a *masnu'* poem on the occasion of Abulkhon's

campaign to Khorasan and his occupation of Herat. Regarding the uniqueness of this *masnu'* work and the poet's mastery, he writes:

“This work consists of ten couplets, and in each section of the ghazal, written in red, a complete historical account of the province's conquest is provided. By connecting the sections, many additional couplets can also be generated.” While discussing poets' works, the author of the *tazkira* pays attention not only to the artistry of the poems but also to their ideas and thematic content.

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