

"FUNUN UL-BALOGH" - the first theoretical source on Turkic poetics

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Abstract: This article discusses the views of an American scholar who studied "Funun ul-Balogha" by Sheikh Ahmad Tarazi, the first Turkish treatise on poetics in the history of literary studies, created during the Timurid era, and its only existing manuscript copy.

Keywords: "Funun ul-baloga," Devin DeWeese, manuscript, fann, ilmi badi', aruz, rhyme.

Introduction: The end of Mongol rule in Central Asia in the second half of the 14th century and the emergence of the Timurid state in its place played a significant role in the history of the Turkic peoples in this region, who later became known as Uzbeks, and in their political, economic, and cultural unification. During this period, along with science, literature also reached great heights. As attention to scholars increased, the literary process intensified as well. Notably, treatises on the science of poetics were created not only in Persian but also in Turkic languages.

One of the important sources providing information about the literary and cultural development of Central Asian peoples in the 15th century, created during the Timurid period and devoted to poetry studies, is the work "Funun ul-balogha" by Ahmad Tarazi. During this period, along with science, literature also reached a high level. As attention to scholars increased, the literary process also intensified.

One of the important sources providing information about the literary and cultural development of the peoples of Central Asia in the 15th century, created during the Timurid period and devoted to poetry studies, is the work "Funun ul-balogha" by Ahmad Tarazi.

Devin DeWeese, a professor at Indiana University in the USA and an Oriental scholar, presents important insights on a unique monument of literary studies in his research titled "The Predecessors of Nava'i in the 'Funun al-balaghah' of Shaykh Ahmad b. Khudaydad

Tarazi: A Neglected Source on Central Asian Literary Culture from the Fifteenth Century" ("Navoi's predecessors in the work of Sheikh Ahmad ibn Khudoydod Tarazi: A forgotten source in Central Asian cultural studies since the 15th century"). As evident from the research topic, this study is dedicated to the Western scholar's views on the literature and culture of the medieval Muslim East and Sheikh Ahmad Tarazi's work "Funun ul-balogha."

In his research, DeWeese evaluates the work as an ancient Turkic text on the history and culture of the Timurid era that has survived to our time but has not yet been fully studied. In the introduction to the work, the author introduces himself as "Sheikh Ahmad ibn Khudoydod Tarozi, may God elevate his status in both worlds, who is the engineer of this edifice and the teacher of this expression." Tarazi's friends and companions also called the work "Funun ul-balogha" by the name "Latoifi Tarazi." Tarazi says about this: "We compiled Persian and Turkic words and arranged a treatise. We named it 'Fununul-balogha.' And some friends also called it 'Latoyifi Tarozi.'" Additionally, in the preface to the work, Tarazi offers endless praise in honor of Mirzo Ulugbek, who patronized him, using epithets such as "the greatest of kings, the most learned of rulers, the mine of kindness and generosity." In the introduction, the author states that the work consists of five parts covering poetic varieties, the science of rhyme, the science of rhetoric, the science of prosody, and the science of riddles.

In the chapter titled "The Manuscript, the Author, and the Work," Devin DeWeese provides detailed information about the manuscript. Information about the treatise was initially published by the orientalist scholar Hermann Ethé in the second volume of the catalog of Islamic manuscripts in the Bodleian Library. Ethé briefly mentions the author of the work, its two different titles, its dedication to Mirzo Ulugbek, and its preservation under number 127 in column 1225. He describes the treatise as "an interesting work on rhetoric and metrics, various fields of poetry."

The manuscript is also mentioned in the fourth part of Eleazar Birnbaum's 1984 work "Turkish Manuscripts: Registered and Unregistered Manuscripts Since 1960." Later, in 2003, based on Hermann Ethé's catalog, Gunay Kut also limited herself to providing general information about the treatise.

DeWeese writes that the only copy of the manuscript is currently kept in London, in the Bodleian Library of Oxford University, under the number Elliott 127. However, he notes that the manuscript has been severely damaged by water, and some passages are difficult or impossible to read (the first and last few pages are damaged).

The manuscript consists of 139 pages, with the text beginning with a decorated frontispiece on f.1b. According to the colophon (f.139a), the manuscript was copied in Bukhara in 989 AH (1581 AD) by the calligrapher Mir Husayn Kulangi Bukhari. Professor DeWeese became acquainted with this manuscript in 1992 through a microfilm prepared by the Bodleian Library of Oxford University at the Institute for Inner Asian Studies at Indiana University. Devin DeWeese also notes that "Funun ul-balogha" has been published by Uzbek scholars. Although we note that the work was dedicated to Mirzo Ulugbek, neither Navoi nor Babur mentions Tarozi as a scholar. However, in his work "Risolai aruz," Babur cites a verse by a poet named Tarozi and writes that this verse appears in "Funun ul-balogha" (page 1146), but the author's name is not mentioned.

In the study, the orientalist scholar examines the works "Badoye' ul-lug'at" by Tole' Hiravi, "Abushqa" by an unknown author, "Sangloh" by Mahdi Khan, and "Kashf uz-zunnu" by Haji Khalifa, questioning whether Tarozi's name is mentioned in sources from his time or later. However, he reports that these works also do not contain information about Tarozi and his work "Funun ul-balogha."

De Weiss notes that Tarozi was knowledgeable in Persian and Arabic literary studies, emphasizing that he utilized works such as "Aruzi Qistos" and "Aruzi Andalus" in Arabic, and "Me'yor ul-ash'or" in Persian.

He points out that quotations from Arabic and Persian poetry in the work serve as evidence of this. The following sentences from "Funun ul-balogha" also confirm these observations: "This enthusiast studied many manuscripts, and indeed, delved deeply into the meters of 'Aruzi Qistos,' 'Aruzi Undulusiy,' 'Me'yor-ul-ash'or,' and similar works."

Overall, as a result of Devin de Weiss's research, he offers valuable insights about the period when "Funun ul-balogha" was written, its language, and the manuscript copy, attempting to reveal the scientific value of the treatise.

Additionally, scholar A. Hayitmetov made significant contributions to introducing "Funun ul-balog'a" to the scholarly community in Uzbek literary studies. He provided the first scientific information about the treatise in the 1st issue of the "Science and Life" journal in 1994 under the title "Tarazi Encyclopedia." This information was later published in the March 18th issue of the "O'zbekiston adabiyoti va san'ati" newspaper under the title "Sheikh Ahmad Taroziy: 'Funun ul-balog'a'." The only adapted edition of the work in 1994 was also carried out under the leadership of A. Hayitmetov.

The work "Funun ul-balogha" was created based on the needs and requirements of the literary life of its time. This was because, until then, there was no scientific-theoretical source that writers in the Turkic language could rely upon. Sheikh Ahmad clearly expressed the form in which he wanted to create "Funun ul-balogha" and the main purpose he had in mind for it. In his view, when literary scholars of the past wrote books on literary theory, they often focused on a single issue - either the types of poetry, meter, artistic techniques, or they illuminated the features of a specific poetic genre. Sheikh Ahmad, however, intended to create a comprehensive manual in this field, illuminating and analyzing all theoretical issues in his "treatise" - so that readers could gain as complete information and benefit from the theory as possible.

Recognizing the shortcomings in the literary environment of his time, Tarazi says: "Many people have compiled works in this manner. However, no one has gathered all the fundamentals of poetry in one place. For this reason, driven by the air of desire, and with the beloved of passion emerging from the veil of the heart, I decided to bring forth a work that would encompass all the principles and aspects of both prose and poetry, so that whoever is inclined towards rhetoric and capable of eloquence may benefit from it."

The work "Funun ul-balogha" traditionally begins with sections praising Allah and offering na't (eulogy) to the Prophet. Subsequently, it discusses the reasons for

writing the work. The introduction concludes by stating that the work consists of five parts, referred to as "fann."

In the first fann, the author explains the types and varieties of poetry. In this section, Sheikh Ahmad Tarozi focuses on poetic genres, analyzing them in terms of form and theme, and provides definitions for ten poetic forms (qasida, ghazal, qit'a, rubai, masnavi, tarje', musammat, mastazod, mutavval, fard).

The second fann explains the rules of rhyme and radif. In this section, the author theoretically examines rhyme and radif, providing an in-depth and thorough explanation of these poetic elements. He describes five types of rhyme (mutavotir, mutarodif, mutarokib, mutadorik, and mutakovis), as well as three additional types (mutasoviy, mutarajih, mutazjiyd) later added by Persian scholars - totaling eight types. Tarozi states the following about rhyme: "Know that in the school of thought of all scholars and intellectuals, it is essential for people of talent to understand the science of rhyme. For poetry is the result of talent. And rhyme is the foundation of poetry."

In the third section, he discusses the rhetorical devices and poetic techniques of language. This part of the work examines the poetic arts related to the field known as "ilm al-badi" (science of rhetoric) in classical Muslim Eastern literature. A total of 97 literary devices are explained, with examples provided from poems written in Arabic, Persian, and Turkic languages.

In the fourth section, he explains the prosody and meters of poetry. This part of the treatise studies the meters of aruz (Arabic and Persian prosody). The author pays serious attention to the study of aruz and writes about it as follows: "Know that by consensus of Arab scholars, there are sixteen meters. Later, Persian scholars stood apart and made it twenty-four. However, this humble one wished to write down the meters created by those venerable ones, explain them in Turkic language, and provide examples from Turkic verses for each meter."

In the fifth section, he examines the methods and principles of the problem. The fifth part of the work, which was dedicated to the problem, has not survived to the present day. According to Devin de Weis, this section of the manuscript copy of the treatise "Funun ul-balogha" was severely damaged, along with many other manuscripts, during a powerful storm and heavy rainfall."

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Sheikh Ahmad Tarazi's work "Funun ul-balogha" is considered a rare and valuable example of 15th-century classical Turkic poetics. First and

foremost, the most significant feature of this treatise is that it was written in the Turkic language. In this regard, "Funun ul-balogha" serves as the foundation for numerous literary and theoretical sources in Turkic that were created after it. This treatise discusses the "ilmi segona" - the triad of sciences.

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