

“Boburnoma” As A Literary Source

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Abstract: Zahiriddin Muhammad Bobur, as one of the enlightened Timurid rulers, left an indelible mark on world history. Having faced life's cruel trials since childhood and encountered numerous hardships along his life's journey, he also achieved excellence in artistic creation thanks to his God-given talent. In particular, his work “Boburnoma” is considered a highly important source for literary studies, among other disciplines. This article examines the connection of “Boburnoma” with the history of our literature and its significance as a literary source.

Keywords: Timurid literature, Bobur, Davlatshah Samarkandi, poets, Jomiy, Navoi, Suhayli, Osafi.

Introduction: During the reign of the Timurids, culture, art, and literature flourished. Great poets reached their pinnacle. In particular, during the reign of Husayn Bayqaro, a significant literary environment emerged in Herat. Bayqaro himself wrote under the pseudonym “Husayni”. In his “Treatise”, Husayn Bayqaro, discussing the literary environment that emerged in Herat during his reign, notes that the work of nearly a thousand creative individuals in Herat was “to string the pearls of poetry onto the silk thread of verse” [Bayqaro 1991, 12]. Although these words of Husayn Bayqaro might seem boastful, they were indeed the absolute truth. Zahiriddin Muhammad Bobur confirms this in his “Boburnoma” and writes: “The time of Sultan Husayn Mirza was a remarkable era; Xuroson, especially the city of Herat, was full of noble and unparalleled individuals. Whoever was engaged in a task, their aspiration and purpose were too perfect that task” [Bobur 2002, 136 - 137].

Bobur does not limit himself to reporting only about this literary environment, but also briefly discusses important literary figures who contributed to its creation, including Abdurrahman Jomiy, Alisher Navoi, Shaykhim Suhayli, Abdullah Marvarid, and Osafi. As a younger contemporary of Alisher Navoi, Bobur's information about these poets is quite valuable, and comparing this information with other sources of the same nature is of scientific importance. In particular, Davlatshah Samarkandi, who knew the literary environment of Herat well and was a direct contemporary of Alisher Navoi, wrote in detail about these poets. Comparing the information from these

two sources leads to interesting conclusions.

The mention of Abdurrahman Jomiy. Bobur mentions Abdurrahman Jomiy among the scholars and poets of Husayn Bayqara's time. Although “Boburnoma” addresses various issues regarding Jomiy, it primarily mentions him in the context of the intellectuals of his time: “Bu jumladin bir Mavlono Abdurrahmon Jomiy edikim, zohir va botin ulumida ul zamonda ul miqdor kishi yo'q edi. She'ri xud ma'lumdur. Mulloning janobi andin oliyroqdurkim, ta'rifka ehtiyoji bulg'ay. G'oyatash xotirg'a kechtikim, bu muhaqqar ajzoda tayammun va tabarruk jihatidin alarning otlari mazkur va shammae sifatlaridin mastur bulgay” [Bobur 2002, 137]. When writing about the poets of Husayn Bayqaro's time, Bobur first mentions Jomiy, saying “Shuarodin: bu jam'ning saromad va sardaftari Mavlono Abdurrahmon Jomiy edi” [Bobur 2002, 138]. The information about Jomiy in “Boburnoma” mainly consists of these mentions. When Bobur writes about Jomiy, he emphasizes two aspects - his uniqueness in “exoteric and esoteric knowledge” (in the sciences of Sharia and Truth) and that he is the foremost among the poets of his time. He also honors him, saying that his status doesn't need praise.

Davlatshah Samarkandi also dedicated a special chapter to Abdurrahman Jomiy in “Tazkirat ush-shuaro”. Since the work is a specialized anthology devoted to the lives and works of poets, the information in it is quite detailed. One can read important information about Jomiy's life from birth to death, as well as thoughts on his works: “Jomiy mayxonasining eshigi ochilgach, nomdor rindlar majlisi shikast yedi va fikrning bokira

keliniga bu ma'no mardī xaridor bo'lgach, da'vo hujralarining pardanishin ayollari bebahra va o'jiz goldilar. Devon-u munshoatining savodi Hindning shirinsuxan to'ltarini xomush qildi va Fors maydonining shirinzabonlari-yu chavondoqlari ash'ori bolidan tatib ko'rgach, boshqa shirinsuxanlar kalominiy namakdoniga qo'l cho'zmadilar" [Samarkandi 2015, 446] (translations ours - I.I.). If observed closely, Davlatshah also initially emphasizes Jomiy's poetic talent and creativity. However, the essence of the above description also reflects Jomiy's poetic expression of mystical truths. That is, Davlatshah, like Bobur, presents poetry and spiritual enlightenment as the most important aspects of Abdurahman Jomiy's personality. There is also a subtle difference between the two descriptions given to Jomiy. Bobur describes Jomiy, first and foremost, as a virtuous person, a connoisseur of both exoteric and esoteric sciences, and then as a poet, while Davlatshah portrays Jomiy more as a great poet, and simultaneously as a person whose "mind is fragrant with the basil of the garden of truth and knowledge".

The mention of Alisher Navoi. In his account of Alisher Navoi, Bobur touched upon several aspects that he considered most important. These include issues such as Alisher's relationship with Husayn Bayqara, his life, character, the reason for his visit to Samarkand, his works, virtues, mentorship of skilled artisans, and his death. Davlatshah also left much more detailed information about most of these, especially about Navoi's works. Here it is appropriate to pay attention to some differences.

One of these issues is the matter of "Xamsa". Bobur states: "He composed six masnavi books in verse, five of which are in response to "Xamsa" [Bobur 2002, 132]. Davlatshah, also addressing this matter, writes: "Bugunga kelib u latif tab'dan orif shayx Nizomiy (Oloah rahmat qilsin) "Xamsa" siga turkiy tilda javob yuzaga keldi, hech kim bu ulug' amirdan avval bunday yaxshi ishga sa'y qilmagan edi. Darhaqiqat, u dostonda ma'nolar dodini berdi" [Samarkandi 2015, 456]. It is noteworthy that Davlatshah specifically mentions that Navoi's "Xamsa" was written in response to Nizami's "Xamsa". This information is significant in two aspects: firstly, it confirms that during Alisher Navoi's time, Nizami's five epics were recognized as "Xamsa" and acknowledged as the primary foundation of the Xamsa-writing tradition. Secondly, it clarifies the question of to whom Navoi wrote his "Xamsa" in response. Although Navoi himself states that each of the five poems in his "Xamsa" is a tatabbu to separate poems, both Navoi's own work and the works that Navoi emulated are essentially responses to Nizami's "Xamsa". In this sense, it is most accurate to call Navoi's "Xamsa" a

response to Nizami's "Xamsa", and it is advisable to begin research on Navoi's "Xamsa" at least with the study of Nizami's epics.

Another aspect of Davlatshah's information about Alisher Navoi's "Xamsa" deserves attention. To support his thoughts, Davlatshah cites two spring verses from the epic "Layli and Majnun" within Navoi's "Xamsa", stating that they embody the lofty metaphors and imagination characteristic of Navoi:

Marz uzra bisyor zebarga javshan,
Shashpar ko'tarur boshig'a savsan.

Lola varaqin berib sabog'a,

Bag'ri qarodek uchar havog'a [Самарқандӣ 2015, 456].

Indeed, this is a quote from Chapter XII of the epic "Layli and Majnun". Notably, the first of these two couplets are presented identically in both the twenty-volume and the latest ten-volume editions of Alisher Navoi's works. However, the second couplet differs from the version provided by Davlatshah in both editions. In both modern publications, this couplet is rendered as follows:

Dasht uzraki sayr o'lur sabog'a,

Bag'ri qoralar uchar havog'a [Navoiy 1992, 77; 2011, 68].

The origin of this verse requires special investigation. However, for now, it can be said that this verse should be more accurate in the version provided by Davlatshah. This is because Davlatshah created his biographical anthology during Navoi's lifetime, with his knowledge, not long after "Xamsa" was written. It should be noted that among the existing copies of "Layli and Majnun", whichever manuscript contains the version of the verse given by Davlatshah should be relatively older and closer to the original. We hope our textual scholars will pay attention to this matter.

Another point of difference in Bobur's and Davlatshah's views on Alisher Navoi is evident in the issue of bilingualism. Bobur highly valued Navoi's works and creativity in the Turkic language but did not praise his Persian poetry [Bobur 2002, 133]. Openness and sharpness characterize Bobur's style of expression. We see the opposite in Davlatshah. Emphasizing that Navoi became a bilingual poet in his youth, creating equally in both Turkic and Persian languages, Davlatshah writes: "In his youth, he became bilingual and became a master (sohibfan) in the Turkic language and a person of virtue (sohibfazl) in the Persian language" [Samarkandi 2015, 455]. Davlatshah seems to partially confirm Bobur's assessment, but Davlatshah's opinion can be understood in two ways. Firstly, Davlatshah appears to have used his opinion not to mean "his Turkic is good, his Persian is weak", but rather in the sense that "his

Turkic poems are better than his Persian ones". This is because the quality of *sohibfan* (one who resolves difficulties, a master) and the quality of *sohibfazi* (one possessing virtue) have partially different meanings in terms of rank, but do not have a sharp contrast. Secondly, both qualities also express the general meaning of "good, worthy of recognition".

In "Tazkirat ush-shuaro", there is additional evidence confirming Davlatshah's belief that Navoi's Persian poems were not weak. Specifically, in his biographical dictionary, Davlatshah describes Navoi's *qasida* "Tuhfat ul-abror" as "gharra" (passionate, brilliant, exceptional). This is the highest praise given to *qasidas*. He also emphasizes that this *qasida* is the most superior among the responses written to Xusrav Dehlavi's *qasida* "Bahr ul-abror". These two assessments alone serve as convincing evidence of the high quality of Navoi's Persian poetry.

Bobur writes that Alisher Navoi made great efforts to construct charitable buildings, and few people were destined to achieve what he did [Bobur 2002, 133]. Davlatshah, besides mentioning that Navoi built many charitable structures, also lists the names of several of them. Another interesting piece of information provided by Davlatshah relates to the maintenance of these constructed buildings. Davlatshah noted that the endowments made by Alisher Navoi for charitable buildings amounted to approximately 500 *tumans* of *kepaki*. Although Bobur states that Navoi "would present substantial funds to the *mirza* every year" [Bobur 2002, 133], he did not provide exact figures.

Bobur also discussed the relationship between Navoi and Binoi. However, Davlatshah does not address this topic in his biography.

The mention of Shaykhim Suhayli. In the "Boburnoma", there is very little mention of Suhayli. Bobur only states that Suhayli had a *divan* and a *masnavi*. Noting that Suhayli creates in the same style, Bobur mentions that he expresses "fearsome words and meanings", and recounts that once, upon hearing one of his verses, Abdurahman Jomiy jokingly asked, "Mirzo, are you reciting poetry or scaring people?" [Bobur 2002, 134]. Davlatshah does not write about this incident. However, he provides some different information. According to Davlatshah, Suhayli had two *divans*: one in Turkic and another in Persian. He also cites a nine-verse *ghazal* from the Turkic *divan*. Another noteworthy aspect in Davlatshah's notes relates to the adoption of the pseudonym Suhayli. According to him, Suhayli studied under the enlightened Sheikh Azari in his youth, and it was Sheikh Azari who gave him the pen name "Suhayli" [Samarkandi 2015, 465]. It is known from "Majolis un-nafois" that Navoi also acknowledged

his contemporary Shaykhim Suhayli.

The mention of Khoja Osafi. The "Boburnoma" provides brief but characteristic information about Osafi. Particularly, regarding his poetry: "She'ri rang va ma'nidin xoli emastur. Agarchi ishq va holdin bebaxradur... g'azaliyotini inisi yo aqrabosi jam qilibtur. G'azaldin o'zga nav she'r kam aytibdur" [Bobur 2002, 138]. This assessment by Bobur is also confirmed by Davlatshah's perspective. Davlatshah's style in "Tazkirat ush-shuaro" is as follows: he pays more attention to the creativity of the figures he describes, striving to showcase their poetic abilities. Only in the account of Khoja Osafi does he deviate somewhat from this style, focusing mainly on Osafi's lineage and personality. He limits himself to saying only once that "Khoja Osafi holds a high rank in poetry" [Samarkandi 2015, 465]. Such an expression also seems formulaic. In this sense, there are grounds to consider Bobur's criticisms of Osafi as appropriate.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the "Boburnoma" can serve as a very important source for studying the history of 15th-century literature. Although the information it contains is forthright, concise, and incisive, it is explained by the author's style and is of great importance in researching the past of our literature and literary studies. Davlatshah Samarkandi's "Tazkirat ush-shuaro" is also valuable in this regard. Indeed, the reliability of the aforementioned information cited in this work is significant because he was a direct witness to the events.

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