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Alisher Navoi's Prose Heritage and Ottoman Turkish Literature: An Analysis of Literary and Cultural Relations

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Abstract: This article provides a scholarly analysis of the influence of Alisher Navoi's prose heritage on the development of Ottoman Turkish literature. The study comparatively examines Navoi's works such as "Muhokamat ul-lug'atayn," "Majolis un-nafois," "Nasoyim ul-muhabbat," "Mahbub ul-qulub," and "Munshaot" within the context of the Ottoman literary environment. It also explores the impact of Navoi's prose writings on the development of Ottoman biographical writing (tazkirachilik), linguistics, Sufi prose tradition, and moral-didactic literature. The research concludes that Navoi's prose heritage played a significant role in the literary and cultural integration of Turkic peoples.

Keywords: Alisher Navoi, prose heritage, Ottoman Turkish literature, tazkira tradition, Sufism, Turkic language, literary relations, Mahbub ul-qulub, Muhokamat ul-lug'atayn.

Introduction: In the development of Turkic intellectual and literary thought, Alisher Navoi occupies a distinguished place. He is recognized not only as a great representative of classical poetry but also as a prominent prose writer, linguist, literary scholar, and statesman of his time, who left a profound mark on history. Navoi's prose works are considered important sources reflecting the scientific, spiritual, and cultural development of the 15th-century Turkic literary environment [1].

The influence of Navoi's legacy was not limited to Movarounnahr and Khorasan. His works became widely known in Azerbaijan, India, Iran, and the Ottoman Empire. In particular, they served as one of the key scholarly and literary sources in the formation and development of Ottoman Turkish literature [2].

During the 15th–16th centuries, the Ottoman Empire emerged as one of the most powerful political and cultural centers of the Islamic world. Istanbul became a major hub of science, literature, and art. Manuscripts brought from various regions of the East, including the works of Alisher Navoi, attracted significant attention within Ottoman scholarly circles. As a result, processes such as the study of the Chagatai language, the development of tazkira tradition, and the exploration of Sufi thought intensified based on Navoi's works [3].

The aim of this article is to scientifically analyze the influence of Alisher Navoi's prose heritage on the development of Ottoman Turkish literature.

METHODOLOGY

This study is aimed at identifying and scientifically evaluating the influence of Alisher Navoi's prose heritage on Ottoman Turkish literature, applying modern methodological approaches in philological research. The theoretical framework of the study is based on comparative literary studies, historical literary analysis, source studies, and principles of comparative literature.

During the research process, Navoi's prose works—"Muhokamat ul-lug'atayn," "Majolis un-nafois," "Nasoyim ul-muhabbat," "Mahbub ul-qulub," "Munshaot," and "Vaqfiya"—were analyzed in terms of their content and meaning. The linguistic, literary, Sufi, ethical, and administrative ideas presented in these

works were identified, and their reflection in the Ottoman literary environment was examined.

One of the main methods of the study is the historical-comparative method. Using this approach, the literary environment of the Timurid period (15th–16th centuries) was compared with the cultural and literary environment of the Ottoman Empire. This approach made it possible to identify the factors influencing Navoi's impact on Ottoman literary thought. In addition, historical sources were used to analyze cultural relations between the two regions, manuscript transmission, and the continuity of literary traditions.

Through comparative analysis, the theoretical ideas presented in Navoi's works were compared with those found in the works of Ottoman writers and scholars. In particular, linguistic ideas in "Muhokamat ul-lug'atayn" were compared with Ottoman philological thought, while the principles of biographical writing in "Majolis un-nafois" were compared with Ottoman tazkira traditions. As a result, similarities and differences were identified, allowing an assessment of the degree of literary influence.

A descriptive-analytical method was also widely applied. This method was used to study the genre features, compositional structure, stylistic aspects, and ideological direction of Navoi's prose heritage. Each work was analyzed individually in terms of content and aesthetic characteristics, and its relation to corresponding genres in Ottoman literature was highlighted.

The source-studies approach was another important component of the research. Various editions of Navoi's works, manuscript copies, scholarly studies on Navoi studies, Turkological sources, and academic works on Ottoman literature were examined. In addition, studies conducted by Turkish scholars were incorporated into the scientific analysis, allowing for a comprehensive and comparative interpretation of the subject.

Textological analysis was used to compare selected passages from Navoi's works with information found in Ottoman sources. This method was particularly important in identifying connections between "Majolis un-nafois" and Ottoman tazkiras, as well as between "Nasoyim ul-muhabbat" and Sufi hagiographic literature.

A systematic approach was also applied in the study. In this framework, Navoi's prose heritage was examined not as an isolated literary phenomenon but as a complex and multidimensional cultural system that contributed to the development of Turkic civilization. Accordingly, his views on linguistics, literature, Sufism, ethics, and governance were analyzed as an interconnected system.

The scientific novelty of the study lies in its comprehensive approach to analyzing the influence of Navoi's prose heritage on Ottoman Turkish literature. While previous studies have mainly focused on Navoi's poetry and its influence on Ottoman poets, this research specifically examines the role and significance of his prose works in Ottoman literary thought.

As a result, it is concluded that Alisher Navoi's prose heritage played a significant role in the development of Ottoman Turkish literary traditions, particularly in tazkira writing, linguistics, Sufi prose, moral-didactic literature, and official correspondence traditions.

RESULTS

General Overview of Alisher Navoi's Prose Heritage. Alisher Navoi's prose heritage is regarded as one of the richest and most diverse scholarly and literary legacies in the history of Turkic literature. His prose works encompass a wide range of disciplines, including linguistics, literary studies, Sufism, history, ethics, and governance [4].

A key feature of Navoi's prose legacy is the harmonious integration of scientific and artistic expression. He succeeded in presenting complex scholarly ideas in a clear, accessible, and elegant style for readers. This quality contributed to the wide dissemination of his works and their study across different cultural contexts.

Navoi's prose writings place central emphasis on issues such as human society, governance and justice, knowledge and enlightenment, as well as language and literature. These themes made his works valuable sources for Ottoman intellectuals as well.

"Muhokamat ul-lug'atayn" and Ottoman Linguistics. Alisher Navoi's "Muhokamat ul-lug'atayn" is considered one of the most significant theoretical works in the history of the Turkic language. The work provides a comparative analysis of Turkic and Persian languages, substantiating the lexical and stylistic richness of Turkic with scholarly evidence [5].

Written at the end of the 15th century, this work marked an important stage in the development of Turkic linguistic thought. Navoi demonstrated the richness of the Turkic vocabulary while emphasizing the necessity of its development as an independent literary language.

In the Ottoman literary environment, Arabic and Persian exerted a strong influence. Therefore, "Muhokamat ul-lug'atayn" was received with great interest by Ottoman philologists and writers. Some Turkish scholars regard this work as an intellectual defense of the Turkic language [6].

Manuscripts preserved in Ottoman libraries indicate the wide circulation of this work. Furthermore, several Chagatai–Turkish dictionaries were later compiled based on Navoi's linguistic heritage, demonstrating his significant influence on Ottoman philological thought.

"Majolis un-nafois" and Ottoman Tazkira Tradition. "Majolis un-nafois" is considered one of the earliest and most complete tazkiras in Turkic literary history. The work provides biographical information about hundreds of poets and writers of the 15th century [7].

Its significance goes beyond mere biographical compilation. Navoi evaluates each author's literary legacy, analyzes stylistic features, and provides valuable insights into the literary environment of his time.

From the 16th century onwards, tazkira writing developed as an independent genre in Ottoman literature. Researchers note that certain methodological principles of Ottoman tazkiras are connected to Navoi's tazkira tradition [8].

In particular, systematic presentation of poets' lives, evaluation of their literary contributions, and description of literary environments demonstrate strong similarities between "Majolis un-nafois" and Ottoman tazkiras.

Thus, Navoi's tazkira tradition contributed to the development of Ottoman biographical literature in subsequent centuries.

"Nasoyim ul-muhabbat" and Ottoman Sufi Prose. A significant part of Navoi's prose heritage is associated with Sufism. "Nasoyim ul-muhabbat" is one such work, containing information about Sufi figures and their spiritual activities [9].

Sufism was also an integral part of Ottoman culture. Orders such as Naqshbandiyya, Qadiriyya, and Mevleviyya played an important role in Ottoman society. Therefore, Sufi-oriented works were widely read.

The circulation of "Nasoyim ul-muhabbat" in the Ottoman world contributed to the development of Sufi literature. Its discussions of saints' lives, spiritual perfection, the relationship between guide and disciple, and moral virtues were reflected in Ottoman Sufi prose.

The work was highly valued by Ottoman intellectuals and copied in numerous manuscripts as an important part of the Eastern Sufi tradition.

"Mahbub ul-qulub" and Ottoman Moral-Didactic Literature. "Mahbub ul-qulub" is regarded as one of the most outstanding works of Navoi's prose heritage. It extensively discusses human morality, social development, governance, knowledge, and the concept of the perfect human being [10].

The first section describes various social classes. The second section analyzes ethical issues, while the third consists of aphorisms and moral advice.

Ottoman literature also developed a strong tradition of moral-didactic writing. Statesmen, scholars, and thinkers produced numerous works aimed at moral education.

The ideas of justice, honesty, respect for knowledge, humanism, and humility found in "Mahbub ul-qulub" are closely aligned with ethical concepts in Ottoman literature. Therefore, some scholars regard this work as a remarkable example of Turkic moral philosophy [11].

"Munshaot" and Ottoman Insha Tradition. Another important work in Navoi's prose heritage is "Munshaot". It consists of letters and correspondence with various individuals and represents a remarkable example of both official and artistic prose [12].

Through "Munshaot", valuable insights can be gained into 15th-century diplomatic writing styles, governance practices, and court culture. The work is also highly significant from a stylistic perspective.

In the Ottoman Empire, the art of official correspondence (insha) was highly developed, with strict rules governing the composition of state documents and letters. Researchers note that Navoi's

stylistic precision and logical coherence share many similarities with Ottoman insha traditions.

This demonstrates that Navoi's prose heritage had not only literary but also practical and diplomatic significance.

DISCUSSION

The analysis shows that Alisher Navoi's prose heritage had a multifaceted influence on Ottoman Turkish literature. This influence is evident in linguistics, literary studies, tazkira tradition, Sufi literature, moral-philosophical thought, and official correspondence practices.

The wide circulation of Navoi's works in Ottoman libraries, the existence of commentaries on his writings, and the study of the Chagatai language indicate the high regard in which his legacy was held.

In particular, "Muhokamat ul-lug'atayn" contributed to elevating the status of the Turkic language, "Majolis un-nafois" influenced the development of tazkira writing, while "Nasoyim ul-muhabbat" and "Mahbub ul-qulub" served as important sources in the development of Sufi and ethical thought.

CONCLUSION

Alisher Navoi's prose heritage occupies a significant place in the literary and cultural development of Turkic peoples. His scholarly, literary, and moral ideas attracted great interest not only in Movarounnahr and Khorasan but also in the Ottoman Empire.

The results of the study show that Navoi's prose works significantly contributed to the development of Ottoman Turkish literature, particularly in the fields of linguistics, tazkira writing, Sufi prose, moral-didactic literature, and the tradition of official correspondence. Therefore, Navoi's legacy remains an important component of the common Turkic cultural heritage and retains its scholarly significance today.

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