BRIDGING CENTURIES: SUYIMA GANIYEVA'S TEXTOLOGICAL LEGACY IN PRESERVING ALISHER NAVOIY'S LITERARY HERITAGE

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Abstract

This paper examines the role of textology (matnshunoslik) in preserving the literary heritage of Alisher Navoiy through the scholarly contributions of Professor Suyima Ganiyeva. Focusing on her critical editions of works such as "Majolis un-Nafais" and "Mahbub ul-Qulub", the study highlights how textual criticism helps restore original meanings affected by centuries of manuscript transmission, copying errors, and editorial alterations. Ganiyeva's research demonstrates the importance of comparing multiple manuscript versions to reconstruct reliable critical texts. The paper argues that her work serves as a bridge between the original intent of Navoiy's 15th-century writings and modern readers, ensuring the preservation of both linguistic and cultural authenticity.

Introduction: The Role of Textology in Literary Preservation

Textology is a branch of philology that studies the history, transmission, and restoration of written texts. In classical literature, especially before printing technology, texts were copied manually, which often led to errors, omissions, or intentional modifications.

Alisher Navoiy (1441–1501), one of the most influential figures in Turkic literature, wrote his works in Chagatai Turkic using Arabic script. Over centuries, his manuscripts were repeatedly copied in different regions, which naturally introduced variations in wording and structure.

Even minor changes in script—such as a missing diacritical dot—could alter the meaning of a word significantly. Therefore, establishing a reliable text of Navoiy's works requires careful comparison of multiple manuscript sources.

In this context, Professor Suyima Ganiyeva (1932–2018) made a significant contribution to Uzbek literary studies. Her work focused on producing scientifically grounded critical editions of Navoiy's texts based on manuscript comparison and textual analysis.

Textological Analysis of "Majolis un-Nafais"

One of Ganiyeva's important research areas was "Majolis un-Nafais", the first known biographical anthology of poets in Turkic literature.

During her research, she worked with manuscript copies preserved in different archives, including libraries in Uzbekistan and abroad. These versions often contained variations caused by copying practices over centuries.

Her approach involved comparing these manuscripts line by line to identify differences and determine the most authentic version of the text. In some cases, she demonstrated that certain passages had been simplified or altered in later copies, which affected the original stylistic meaning intended by Navoiy.

This method shows that textology is not only a technical discipline but also an interpretative one, requiring attention to historical context, language structure, and authorial style.

Textual Restoration and Semantic Accuracy

In classical manuscripts, small orthographic differences often lead to changes in meaning. For example, similar-looking Arabic-script words may be confused during copying, resulting in semantic distortion.

Ganiyeva's research emphasizes the importance of identifying such variations and restoring the most contextually appropriate reading based on earlier and more reliable sources.

In Navoiy's poetic and prose works, such corrections are especially important because his language often contains wordplay, symbolism, and layered meanings. Without careful restoration, these artistic features may be lost or simplified in later versions.

Analysis of "Mahbub ul-Qulub"

Another significant contribution of Suyima Ganiyeva was her work on "Mahbub ul-Qulub", one of Navoiy's final philosophical works written in 1500.

This text contains reflections on ethics, society, and governance. Over time, manuscript copies of this work also underwent changes, sometimes softening the author's critical tone or modifying expressions.

By comparing different manuscript traditions, Ganiyeva aimed to reconstruct a more accurate version of the text closer to Navoiy's original voice. Her work helped restore the philosophical and critical depth of the text, making it more faithful to its historical context.

Key Principles of Ganiyeva's Textological Method

Ganiyeva's scholarly approach can be summarized through several key principles:

Comparison of multiple manuscript sources

Identification of textual variations and copying errors

Reconstruction of the most authentic version based on historical evidence

Preservation of stylistic and semantic integrity

Attention to linguistic and cultural context

These principles remain fundamental in modern Uzbek textology and philological studies.

Conclusion

Suyima Ganiyeva's contribution to Uzbek textology is significant not only for academic research but also for cultural preservation. Her work ensured that Alisher Navoiy's literary heritage could be studied in a more accurate and reliable form.

Textology, as demonstrated through her research, plays a crucial role in connecting modern readers with classical texts. It combines linguistic analysis, historical knowledge, and critical thinking to preserve the integrity of written heritage.

Ganiyeva's legacy continues to influence contemporary scholarship, showing that preserving literature is as important as creating it.

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