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TEXTUAL, SEMANTIC, AND METRICAL ANALYSIS OF VARIANTS IN THE MANUSCRIPTS OF SAB'AI SAYYOR

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Abstract. This thesis presents a comparative study of textual variants found in the Abduljamil, Sultonali, and Muhammadbek manuscript copies of Alisher Navoi's Sab'ai Sayyor, one of the epics included in his Khamsa. The study analyzes lexical discrepancies, variation in grammatical suffixes, omissions of individual words, and changes related to the aruz metre. In selecting among textual variants, meaning, poetic logic, grammatical structure, Navoi's individual style, and conformity with the aruz metre are taken as the principal criteria. The findings demonstrate that manuscript variants should not merely be mechanically compiled; rather, they require comprehensive textological analysis.

Keywords: Alisher Navoi, Sab'ai Sayyor, manuscript, Abduljamil, Sultonali, Muhammadbek, textual scholarship, textual criticism, textual variant, aruz, critical text.

Alisher Navoi's Sab'ai Sayyor, one of the epics included in his Khamsa, is an important monument of Uzbek classical literature. Since the autograph manuscript of the epic has not survived, the comparative study of early manuscript copies is of particular importance for reconstructing a reliable text. In preparing the critical text of Sab'ai Sayyor, Porso Shamsiyev compared early manuscripts and selected the Abduljamil, Sultonali, and Muhammadbek copies as the principal textual sources. Differences among these manuscripts are manifested in word choice, grammatical forms, omissions of words, and variations related to the aruz metre.

In the course of the study, comparative-textual, textological, and contextual methods of analysis were applied in evaluating manuscript variants. The reliability of a particular variant was determined not merely by the number of manuscripts in which it occurs, but also by its correspondence to the meaning of the couplet, poetic logic, grammatical structure, and the aruz metre.

For example, in Chapter I, line 13a, the word kavkab occurs identically in the Abduljamil and Sultonali manuscripts, whereas the Muhammadbek manuscript contains the variant gavhar:

Yeti gardun demayki, yetti lagan,
Har biri ichra sham' nurafgan.
Har lagan durji kavkabafruzi,
Kavkabi gavhari shabafruzi.

These lines depict the stars as jewels illuminating the night. Therefore, the variant kavkab is more consistent with the poetic logic of the passage as a whole.

In Chapter I, line 41a, the variants nuring and yuzung are attested:



Chunki ul subh nuring etti zuhur,
Uylakim, tiyra shom jabhayi hur.

The couplet presents a contrast between the light of dawn and the darkness of night. From this perspective, the form *nuring* is more appropriate both semantically and figuratively. The variant *yuzung*, by contrast, weakens the semantic coherence of the couplet.

In Chapter I, line 61a, the forms *o'rtamak* and *o'rtagan* occur:

Ham anga o'rtamak buyurg'on ishq,
Ham munung jonig'a o't urg'on ishq.

The form *o'rtamak* in manuscript A is semantically compatible with the phrase *o't urg'on* and conveys the burning nature of love. Therefore, the semantic and grammatical structure of the couplet serves as the principal criterion in selecting this variant.

An example of differences involving grammatical suffixes can be seen in Chapter V, line 12b, where the variants *ahlida* and *ahlig'a* occur:

Angla ul so'zni nuktai tavid,
Vahdat ahlida yo'q munga tardid.

Here, the form *ahlida* corresponds to both the syntactic structure and the meaning of the couplet. The form *ahlig'a*, by contrast, introduces a directional meaning and consequently changes the grammatical relationship within the sentence.

The omission of individual words is also observed in the manuscripts. For example, in Chapter VIII, line 108a, the word *bu* is omitted in manuscript S:

Chun tuzub bu bisot o'tmishlar,
Qilmayin ehtiyot o'tmishlar.

The omission of such units may affect not only semantic coherence but also the rhythmic structure of the line. For this reason, a textual scholar must also evaluate such passages in accordance with the requirements of the *aruz* metre.

Since *Sab'ai Sayyor* was composed in the *khafif* metre, *aruz* constitutes one of the major criteria for textual reconstruction. The omission of a word or the addition of an unnecessary element may alter the syllabic sequence of a line and lead to metrical disruption. Thus, the unity of semantic, grammatical, and metrical criteria is essential when selecting among textual variants.

The study demonstrates that the differences found in the manuscripts of *Sab'ai Sayyor* can be classified into three principal groups: lexical variants, grammatical variants, and variants associated with omission or addition. While some of these differences are merely formal, others significantly affect the meaning and poetic expression of the couplet.



A contextual approach is therefore of particular importance in selecting among manuscript variants. The meaning of a word should be examined not only within an individual line but also in relation to the couplet, the chapter, and the overall semantic structure of the epic. In addition, the aruz metre and Navoi's individual poetic style should be regarded as fundamental criteria.

Conclusion. A comparative study of the manuscripts of Sab'ai Sayyor demonstrates that the preparation of a critical text is a complex textological process in which manuscript evidence must be considered alongside meaning, poetic logic, grammar, authorial style, and the aruz metre. A comparison of variants found in the Abduljamil, Sultonali, and Muhammadbek manuscripts makes it possible to gain a deeper understanding of the textual transmission and formation of the epic and to reconstruct a more reliable version of the text. Therefore, a broader and more systematic investigation of the surviving manuscripts of Sab'ai Sayyor remains one of the important objectives of future research in textual scholarship.

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