

# The Role of Textologist Hamid Sulaymon In the Study of Navoi's Lyric Poetry

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## Abstract

*This article examines the textual and source-critical study of Alisher Navoi's lyrical heritage, which became a central issue in Navoi studies in the 1960s. It focuses on the scholarly contributions of H. Sulaymon, who conducted extensive manuscript research, organized scientific expeditions, and applied historical-comparative methods to establish reliable texts. Special attention is given to the preparation of the critical edition of Xazoyin ul-maoniy, its structure, genre system, and chronological principles. The study also evaluates the role of composite (selection) divans and lithographic editions in preserving Navoi's poetry, emphasizing their significance for the development of modern Navoi studies.*

**Keywords:** Alisher Navoi, Hamid Sulaymon, Navoi lyric poetry, textology, manuscript studies, scholarly-critical edition, Xazoyin ul-maoniy, terma divans, chronological classification, Uzbek literary studies, classical Eastern poetry, philological analysis.

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## 1. Introduction

The in-depth study of Navoi's legacy and the challenge of presenting accurate and coherent texts became a pressing issue in Navoi scholarship during the 1960s. The dedicated scholar H. Sulaymon, aiming to prepare academic editions of the poet's works, conducted a series of studies in both theoretical and practical textology.

Although critical and comparative editions of prose works such as the three epics of the Khamsa, Mezon ul-avzon, Mahbub ul-qulub, Holoti Pahlavon Muhammad, Holoti Sayyid Hasan Ardasher, and Majolis un-nafois had been compiled, the textological study of Navoi's lyrics had not yet been undertaken in literary scholarship.

H.Sulaymon began this complex work in 1955 under the guidance of one of the world-renowned Orientalists, Y. E. Bertels, starting with the collection of primary

sources. He organized scientific expeditions, identifying rare manuscripts preserved in various national and international institutions and private collections, and brought back their photocopies and negatives. Comparing over 200 diwans, he selected 20 unique copies dating from the 15th to the 19th centuries. Z. Namozova, who studied the scholar's work, emphasizes that the selected sources were examined line by line using the historical-comparative method, which made it possible to determine the five-century preservation history of Navoi's lyrical works.

## 2. Methods

The present study employed a combination of historical-comparative, textual, and philological approaches to examine Alisher Navoi's lyrical works. Primary sources included manuscripts of Navoi's divans preserved from

the 15th to the 19th centuries, as well as selected printed editions (terma and lithographic diwans). The methodological framework comprised the following key components:

**Manuscript Collection and Verification:** Over 200 diwans were collected and analyzed from national and international repositories, including libraries in Tashkent, Saint Petersburg, London, Paris, Berlin, Munich, Rome, New York, Istanbul, Beijing, Dushanbe, and Tbilisi. Manuscripts were verified for authenticity, chronological relevance, and textual completeness.

**Comparative Textual Analysis:** Manuscripts and printed copies were compared line by line to identify textual variants, omissions, and orthographic differences. This allowed the reconstruction of a text closest to the authorial version, while also noting historical modifications and scribal errors.

**Chronological Classification:** Poems were classified according to the approximate period of composition – youth, young adulthood, middle age, and old age – based on manuscript dating and internal textual evidence. This approach facilitated the study of the poet's ideological and artistic evolution.

**Critical-Editorial Principles:** The scholarly-critical edition was prepared in accordance with standard principles of textology, ensuring that the reconstructed text reflects both authenticity and coherence. Decisions regarding inclusion, exclusion, and annotation of poems were guided by rigorous academic standards.

**Evaluation of Secondary Sources:** Printed editions (terma diwans and lithographs) and bayoz copies were examined for historical and literary context, although only those meeting textual reliability criteria were incorporated into the final critical edition.

This methodological framework allowed for a comprehensive, textually accurate, and historically informed presentation of Navoi's lyrical corpus, setting a precedent for subsequent scholarship in Uzbek textology and classical literary studies.

### 3. Results

The study of the poet's lyrical heritage undoubtedly enriched Navoi scholarship with new sources. In particular, the composition, content, and structural principles of the poet's first official divan, Badoye' ul-bidoya, and his second divan, Navodir un-nihoya, were clarified. The authorial edition of Xazoyin ul-maoniy

was reconstructed and published in 1959 as a four-volume collection. While all previously published printed editions consisted of 11 genres and 736 lyrical pieces arranged according to the structure of the collected diwans, this edition represented a groundbreaking achievement by systematizing 3,132 poems across 16 genres. Furthermore, the volumes clearly indicated the size, genres, and metrical patterns of the four diwans. In addition, 32 poems by Navoi that were not included in Xazoyin ul-maoniy were added as an appendix at the end of the fourth volume.

The scholar also paid serious attention to the chronological classification of the poems in the diwans. Indeed, determining the period – youth, young adulthood, middle age, or old age – during which the poems were composed is of crucial scientific importance for studying the ideological and artistic evolution of the poet's work. The division according to the history of ancient manuscripts was considered an effective method. Y. E. Bertels and A. Sa'diy had also noted the importance and extreme difficulty of this task. As A. Hayitmetov emphasized, such work had never been undertaken for any Oriental lyricist, representing a significant innovation in Uzbek textology.

Although a large number of copies were made during Navoi's lifetime, the authorial manuscripts have not been preserved. Considerable attention is therefore given to issues such as the comparative study of manuscripts to reconstruct texts close to the authorial version, the textual examination and characterization of manuscripts, and the principles of compiling a scholarly-critical edition. The author also explains the reasons why certain sources, despite their historical significance, were not included in the scope of the study.

In particular, it is noted that, while textual scholars of classical Eastern works often used lithographic editions to prepare critical texts, this approach was not applied to the study of Navoi's texts. As explained: "At the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, Alisher Navoi's lyrics were almost always published in a collected divan form under a general title in Khiva, Kokand, Samarkand, and Tashkent. Such divans were mainly intended for school use, small in anthology format, and incomplete in content. It is known that Muhammad Rahim Khan II in Khiva printed the four diwans of 'Xazoyin ul-maoniy' under the title چهار ديوان امير عيشير نوايي. However, due to a negligent scribe, each page contained more than ten gross copying errors." [Sulaymonov X. 1961:76]

For this reason, the scholar did not include these copies in the preparation of a scholarly edition. Indeed, the Chahor Divan contains many omitted lines and orthographic errors. On the other hand, H. Sulaymon's goal was to produce a relatively complete and chronologically reliable text of the poet's lyrical heritage and to compile a scholarly-critical edition of Xazoyin ul-maoniy. Preparing such a text requires adherence to strict principles, namely restoring a version as close as possible to the authorial text.

Accordingly, the majority of the selected manuscripts were copied during the poet's lifetime, including: the Ilk Divan copied by the calligrapher Sulton Ali Mashhadi in 870/1465, preserved in the Saltikov-Shchedrin Library in Saint Petersburg (inv. №564); a copy of Xazoyin ul-maoniy from 904/1498–99 in the same library (inv. №55); the Badoye' ul-bidoya copied in 887/1482–83, preserved in the British Museum, London (inv. №401); the Baku copy of the same divan dated 889/1484; the Tashkent copy dated 891/1486; and the XV-century copies of Navodir un-nihoya copied by Mashhadi, preserved in Tashkent (Uzbekistan Academy of Sciences, FAShI inv. №1995).

Naturally, the sufficiency of reliable sources eliminated the need for printed divans. Indeed, textual scholar R. Zohidov's work on the scholarly-critical edition of Sufi Alloyor's Sabot-ul-ojizin, which analyzed 15 manuscripts and 10 printed copies, demonstrates that such editions also possess a certain scientific significance. Furthermore, the majority of printed editions of Navoi's works consisted of compact collected divans. In his research, H. Sulaymon also addressed collected divans when creating an overall picture of the lyrical heritage. Notably, the term *terma divan* was first applied by the scholar specifically to Navoi's lyrical works.

#### 4. Discussion

Considering that 146 copies of the poet's divans from the 15th to 19th centuries are preserved in the main fund of the Uzbekistan Academy of Sciences, Oriental institute, and that 16 out of 26 manuscripts prepared in the 19th–20th centuries are of a compilative (*terma*) structure, it is clear that this type of work warrants serious scholarly attention. These works are generally smaller in volume than Xazoyin ul-maoniy. The tradition of compiling *terma* divans, which began during Navoi's lifetime, subsequently continued into printed editions. Except for the Chor Divan printed in the Khiva press, all more than

forty lithographic editions were published in the form of *terma* divans, indicating the continuation of the literary tradition.

At the same time, printed editions, like manuscript divans, exhibited originality in the selection of poems and the diversity of genres. Moreover, each *terma* divan arranged in a particular period reflected the literary mirror of its time, as it clearly embodied the leading aesthetic characteristics of the contemporary literary environment. The carefully selected content and thematic composition of the poems further confirm this. In particular, it is evident from the printed *terma* divans of Navoi that, alongside themes of enlightenment, patriotism, and critical-satirical directions, which were prominent in 19th–20th century literature, love and romantic lyrics held a leading position. Another characteristic of the *terma* divans is that they facilitated the preservation of “unknown poems by famous classical poets (including their variants and revisions)” that were not included in the official divans. The presence of ghazals omitted from Navoi's official divans in manuscripts later identified and described scientifically further underscores the significance of these sources. Poems attributed to the poet reflect the practice of following Navoi and composing under his pseudonym, while also indicating that the notion of authorship had not yet fully developed.

It is well known that the practice of compiling *bayo*z (notebooks) was widespread in the 19th–20th centuries. Since the poems in these *bayo*z did not meet the required textual quality standards, the scholar did not include them in the scope of his research.

Overall, the edition of Xazoyin ul-maoniy published in 1956–1960 provided a comprehensive presentation of Navoi's lyrical heritage. However, as the first attempt at preparing a complete scholarly edition, certain shortcomings were inevitable. In particular, literary scholar A. Hayitmetov notes that 13 ghazals from the four divans were omitted with some commentary, and several errors occurred during the transliteration into modern script. He evaluates the collection as a scholarly edition rather than a mass-published one due to the use of an academic apparatus. Some of these shortcomings were later addressed in the 3rd–6th volumes of the 20-volume Complete Works of Alisher Navoi and in the 1st–4th volumes of the 10-volume Collected Works. Significantly, this edition of Xazoyin ul-maoniy became a primary source for subsequent studies of the poet's lyrics.

Another practical contribution of textual scholar H. Sulaymon was the facsimile edition of the *Ilk Divan* (copy preserved in the Saltikov-Shchedrin State Public Library, Saint Petersburg), which he published in 1968.

## 5. Conclusion

The scholarly study of Alisher Navoi's lyrical heritage, particularly through the work of H. Sulaymon, represents a major advancement in Navoi studies and Uzbek textology. By systematically collecting, comparing, and analyzing manuscripts from the 15th to 19th centuries, Sulaymon was able to reconstruct a text as close as possible to the authorial versions, providing both a chronologically reliable and comprehensive scholarly-critical edition of *Xazoyin ul-maoniy*. His methodology combined theoretical and practical textological approaches, including careful examination of over 200 diwans, selection of the most authoritative copies, and consideration of historical, orthographic, and textual variants. The study also highlighted the importance of collected (*terma*) diwans, which preserved both canonical and previously unknown lyrical works, offering insight into the broader literary landscape of Navoi's time. By differentiating between manuscripts of varying reliability and avoiding lower-quality printed and bayoz editions, Sulaymon ensured the scholarly rigor of his critical edition. Despite minor shortcomings inherent in the first full-scale publication, the 1956–1960 edition of *Xazoyin ul-maoniy* laid a solid foundation for subsequent research and became a primary source for later comprehensive collections of Navoi's works.

In sum, Sulaymon's pioneering efforts not only facilitated a more accurate and complete understanding of Navoi's lyrical corpus but also established methodological standards for textual criticism and scholarly editions in Uzbek literary studies, providing an enduring model for future generations of researchers.

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