Asian Journal of Technology and Applied Sciences
ISSN: 2301-xxxx (online) | IF: 10.01 | Vol: 1, issue 1
Available: http://asiansciencejournal.org

A BRIEF HISTORY OF CONTEMPORARY MASHRAB STUDIES

Erkin Rabbimovich Musurmanov
Doctor of Philological Sciences,
Head of the Department of Comparative Literary Studies,
Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages

Annotation: The first information about Rahimbobo Mashrab was reflected in the works of writers who were the poet's contemporaries. Several tazkirats (literary works) created in the XVII-XIX centuries contain extensive information about Mashrab's life and work. Similar information is found in the tazkiras of Muhammad Bade Malekho "Muzakkir-ul ashab", Abdul Mutallibhoja Fahmi "Tazkiray Fahmi", Majzub Namangani "Tazkirat ul-avliyo", Abdushukur Ziya "Musavvaday Abdushukur Ziyo" as well as in the works of Muhammad Hakimkhan Tora and Mirza Alim. Mushrif, Mir Haladdin Kotib Yorkendi, Muhammad Sadiq Kashkari, Muhammad Emin Sadr Kashkari, Fazil Choras, Mullah Musa Sayrami, and others. Mashrab's life and work have also been the subject of scholarly study in the XX and XXI centuries; this article briefly reviews such scholarly works.

Keywords: Mashrab studies, scholarly sources, articles.

Studies on Mashrab: A History of Research

From the 1890s onward, information about Mashrab's biography and work began appearing in local and Russian daily press, and his works were translated into Russian. The first samples of the poet's verses were published in 1889 in the *Turkiston viloyatining gazeti* (Turkestan Provincial Gazette), issues 26, 28, 34, and 39.

Gradually, in the tsarist press, ideas began to emerge about the need to more widely introduce Russian citizens to this fiery poet a destroyer of heresy and tyranny and his work. In particular, Professor Nikolai Ivanovich Veselovsky (1848-1918), in his 1895 book *Vostochnye zametki* (Notes on the East), wrote: *"The satirist and quick-witted dervish Mashrab is very famous in Central Asia; in our opinion, Mashrab, who demonstrated free thinking across various religious views, is a person worthy of deep study… The dervish constantly debated with the clergy and came out on top"*.

The contributions of orientalist scholar Nil Sergeyevich Likoshin to the history of Mashrab studies were immense. N. S. Likoshin, who translated the story *Devonai Mashrab* into Russian, wrote a preface to the book and published important information about Mashrab's life, his teachers Bozor Oxun and Ofoq Xo'ja. In 1910, *"Divana-i-Mashrab"* was published in the journal *Srednyaya Aziya* (Central Asia), and in 1915 it was printed in Russian by the Samarkand Regional Statistical Committee. Eighty-one years later, this remarkable work was republished in the journal *Zvezda Vostoka* thanks to the efforts of Muhsin Zokirov.

In the eleven-volume work *Russia: A Complete Geographical Description of Our Homeland*, published between 1899 and 1913 under the editorship of Pyotr Petrovich Semyonov-Tyan-Shansky, the eleventh volume (published in 1913) provided important information about Mashrab. It states: *"Devonai Mashrab, born in Namangan in 1640, is considered one of the most famous Sufi authors of Turkestan. His works are familiar to most local people, and his name is known to virtually everyone. His poems (ghazals) are performed by storytellers and singers"* (translation ours E. M.).

During the Soviet era, the first article about Mashrab was published in 1923 by the Russian and Uzbek archaeologist and historian-orientalist Vasily Lavrentyevich Vyatkin

(1869-1932) in the *Collection of the Turkestan Institute of Oriental Studies*. It noted that Mashrab was quite popular among the people, especially among women, analyzed some of his poems and their meanings. According to Vyatkin, the author of the work *Mabdai Nur* replaced his real name with the pen name Shoh Mashrab.

According to Abdurauf Fitrat, V. L. Vyatkin made an error in his article on Mashrab: he attributed the work *Mabdai Nur*, which belongs to Rahimbobo Mashrab, to another Mashrab. In 1926, Sadriddin Ayni's *Namunai adabiyoti tojik* (Samples of Tajik Literature) included examples from Mashrab's Tajik-language writings. Abdurauf Fitrat (1886-1938) laid the groundwork for the study of the poet's life and legacy in Uzbek literary scholarship with his 1930 article titled "Mashrab," published in the journal *Ilmiy fikr*.

On March 17, 1937, the newspaper *Qizil O'zbekiston* published an article by I. Sulton and I. Ahmedov titled "The Real Mashrab," and in 1939, Olim Sharafitdinov shared his views on Mashrab in an article published in the collection *15 Years of Uzbek Soviet Literature*.

In the years following World War II, a number of significant works in Mashrab studies were produced. Excerpts from Mashrab's poetry were included in the *Anthology of Uzbek Literature* (Tashkent, 1945), the third volume of the multi-volume anthology titled *Uzbek Literature* (Tashkent, 1959), and various other anthologies. In 1958, Abduqodir Hayitmetov and Porso Shamsiyev jointly published a *Selected Works* of Mashrab with a preface the first attempt at a separate publication of his poems. The book was reprinted in.

In 1959, G'afur G'ulom's article "Two Mashrabs" was published. Reflecting the spirit of the era, it comparatively analyzed the works of Rahimbobo Mashrab and Mashrabi Soniy, presenting interesting reflections on the poets' ideological worldviews.

In 1963, a collection of the poet's selected poems was published by Abdurashid Abdug'afurov (1931-2005). This edition covered nearly twice as many of Mashrab's poems as the 1958 publication by Hayitmetov and Shamsiyev. The third collection, published in 1979, was supplemented with three new ghazals and one new muxammas [10;127]. This collection was reissued with additional poems in 1971 and 1979. In 2004, Abdurashid Abdug'afurov and Jonibek Subhon jointly published a collection of Mashrab's poems titled *Agar oshiqligim aytsam* (If I Were to Tell of My Love).

Researcher Muhsin Zokiriy (Zokirov) conducted a scholarly study of Mashrab's life and work and defended his candidate's dissertation. In his 1966 literary-critical essay titled "Mashrab," he elaborated extensively on the history of studying the poet's life and legac.

In 1971, Zaynal Rizayev's book *Индийский стиль в поэзии на фарси конца XVI-XVII вв.* (The Indian Style in Persian Poetry of the Late 16th-17th Centuries) was published. The author included Rahimbobo Mashrab among the poets who wrote in the Indian style, compared him and his work with poets bearing the same pen name, and sought to reveal the poet's philosophy and worldview.

Literary scholars A. Abdug'afurov and A. Hayitmetov made significant contributions to the study of Mashrab's activity and literary legacy. Two works by Professor A. Abdug'afurov deserve special attention: one is the third volume of the five-volume *History of Uzbek Literature*, published in 1978, and the other is the 1979 collection of scholarly-critical articles titled *Erk va ezgulik kuychilari* (Singers of Freedom and Goodness).

In 1980, Academician V. Abdullayev's textbook *History of Uzbek Literature*, intended for university students, was reprinted. In it, the author devoted a separate subsection to the history of studying Mashrab's activity and literary legacy, also touching on the poet's contemporaries previously unknown to scholarship.

Also in 1980, Vahob Rahmonov and Komiljon Isroilov published Mashrab's poems in the form of a *Divan*. Prior to this *Divan*, Mashrab's poems had never been published in such a complete form.

The 1984 treatise by Muhsin Zokirov, *Erk va ma'rifat kuychilari* (Singers of Freedom and Enlightenment), provided information about Is'hoq Bog'istoniy's work *Tazkirai qalandaron*, whose existence had previously been unknown.

Zokirov's 1990 article in the newspaper *Turkiston*, titled "My Guilt Before Mashrab", marked a qualitatively new development in Mashrab studies of that era. This frank confession by Zokirov pertained not only to himself but also, in a meaningful sense, to the literary scholars of the period who had studied Mashrab's life and work under the influence of the prevailing ideology.

In Zokirov's 1990 article "Men ham inson naslidan" (I Too Am of Human Descent), Rahimbobo Mashrab's birthplace is identified as Andijan, though no convincing supporting evidence is provided. That same year, the work *Tazkirai qalandaron*, prepared for publication by Zokirov and which gave rise to numerous misunderstandings, was published in abridged form in the journal *Sharq yulduzi*.

In 1990, preparations began for the celebration of the 350th anniversary of Rahimbobo Mashrab's birth. Scholars such as Abdurashid Abdug'afurov, Muhsin Zokirov, Najmiddin Komilov, Jamol Kamol, Ergashali Shodiyev, Ismatulla Abdullayev, and Jaloliddin Yusupov made numerous public appearances in the press, on television, and on radio.

When discussing research conducted in Mashrab studies in the final years of the 20th century, the work of Jaloliddin Yusupov, Ibrohim Haqqul, and Ismatulla Abdullayev deserves special mention. The collection of Mashrab's poems prepared by textual scholar J. Yusupov and published in 1990 under the title *Mehribonim qaydasan* (Where Are You, My Dear?) was the finest compilation produced up to that point. The book comprised a preface written by G'aybulla Salomov and Najmiddin Komilov, Mashrab's ghazals, mustazods, murabbas, muxammases, musaddases, and one musabba in Uzbek, as well as the compiler's afterword and a glossary.

In this collection, created through immense labor and effort, J. Yusupov studied no fewer and no more than exactly 23 manuscripts and lithographs, as well as 4 published sources, and collated the texts.

Mashrab scholar Ismatulla Abdullayev, in his 1991 article "Mashrab and Mabdai Nur," devoted special attention to the history of research on the work *Mabdai Nur*. The work *Mabdai Nur* was prepared for publication by I. Abdullayev and first published in abridged form in 1992 in the journal *Sharq yulduzi* (pp. 125-130). The publisher presents three stories and three ghazals from the work and provides general information about *Mabdai Nur*. In 1994, I. Abdullayev published the work as a book, which was undoubtedly a major event in Mashrab studies.

Two editions of the story *Devonai Mashrab* have been published. The first was prepared by Mahmud Hasaniy and published in 1991 under the title *Shoh Mashrab qissasi* (The Story of Shoh Mashrab) [26;56], based on a copy printed in Tashkent on November 15, 1886. The book consists of a brief introduction by Hasaniy, the story itself, and a glossary compiled by Mahkam Mahmudov. The second book was published in 1992 by Sayfiddin Raf'iddin, Muhammad Yaqub Salim o'g'li, and Sharofxon Jamolxon under the title *Qissai Mashrab*, consisting of a preface and glossary authored by M. Jo'rayev and S. Raf'iddin.

In 1995, the author of this article defended a candidate's dissertation on the topic *"Rahimbobo Mashrab and His Interpretation in Belles-Lettres."* In 2015, I published two

monographs titled *"New Information on Rahimbobo Mashrab"* and *"Interpretation of Mashrab's Spirituality and Artistry,"* and in 2025, my next monograph, *"Rahimbobo Mashrab: Truth and Legends,"* was published.

In 2004, Dilorom Hamroyeva successfully defended a candidate's dissertation dedicated to the poetics of Boborahim Mashrab's ghazals.

Such research is being conducted not only in philology but in other social fields as well. For instance, Mo'min Hoshimxonov from Jizzakh conducted research on the topic *"The Social and Philosophical Views of Boborahim Mashrab"* and defended a candidate's dissertation in philosophy in 1995.

This article has discussed scholarly works created in the 20th and 21st centuries on the life and work of Rahimbobo Mashrab. It is appropriate to divide this process into three relatively distinct periods: the era of tsarist colonialism, the Soviet era, and the independence-era Mashrab studies. The research examined in the article has been carried out on this principle, in chronological order.

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