

Linguistic Features and Source Studies Analysis of the *Bahrom and Gulandom* Epic Preserved at the Bukhara State Museum-Reserve

SULTONOVA DILOVAR NEMATILLO QIZI
*Alisher Navoiy Tashkent State University of Uzbek
Language and Literature, Tashkent, Uzbekistan*

ABSTRACT

This article classifies more than ten manuscript copies of Sobir Sayqaliy's epic Bahrom and Gulandom preserved in the collection of the Bukhara State Museum. These manuscripts are comprehensively analyzed from the perspectives of textual criticism and source studies. Until now, scholarly research has mainly focused on the manuscript and lithographic copies preserved at the Abu Rayhon Beruniy Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The manuscript copies preserved in the collection of the Bukhara State Museum are introduced into academic circulation and subjected to detailed scholarly analysis.

Keywords: *Bahrom and Gulandom*, manuscript, collection, lithograph, author, calligrapher, codicology, textual criticism, source studies, Bukhara State Museum, manuscript condition.

INTRODUCTION

Sobir Sayqaliy's epic *Bahrom and Gulandom* occupies a prominent place among his romantic-adventure works. The poem combines the masnavi and lyrical poetic forms. In its introduction, the author refers to more than twenty famous love stories, thereby placing his work within the broader tradition of classical Eastern romance literature. The protagonist of the epic

is Bahrom, a well-known hero of Turkic oral tradition. The central plot narrates the love of Prince Bahrom of Rum for Gulandom, the princess of China, and recounts the numerous adventures they experience. Throughout the work, the author glorifies such noble human qualities as courage, patriotism, loyalty, perseverance, and steadfast dedication to one's goals [1].

Sayqaliy's works were widely disseminated throughout Central Asia, Kazakhstan, Tatarstan, and other regions, and were published on several occasions. Manuscript copies of his works are preserved in the manuscript collections of Saint Petersburg, Tashkent, Ashgabat, Dushanbe, Samarkand, and other cultural centers. The preparation of a manuscript book was a highly complex and responsible process requiring the collaboration of several specialists. Among the most important were the papermaker, calligrapher, illuminator, ornamental artist, rubricator, gilder, miniature painter, and book binder. The primary objective of this article is to describe the manuscripts preserved in the Bukhara State Museum by examining their authorship, scribes, dates and places of copying, physical condition, and the opening and closing sections of each manuscript [2: 9].

A MANUSCRIPT OF A COMPOSITE NATURE NO. 9835

Title: The Story of "Bahrom and Gulandom". Author: Sobir Sayqaliy. Scribe: Unknown. Date of copying: 19th century (approx). Place of copying: Not preserved. Script: Nasta'liq, copied in black and red ink. Language: Uzbek. Dimensions: 13 × 23 cm. Number of folios: 101.

The manuscript begins with the following lines:

دیدي اي نازنين کيم سوزله باري که سن کيم سن بو ير کيمنی ديارى
بياردی کيم منگا بو ناز نعمت که سن منگا بيان ايله بو فرصت...

It ends with the following lines:

جفا برله رفيق غاردين (عزيرين) دور من لکن کوب بوکولى دوار
دور من ...

The manuscript contains an incomplete copy of the epic Bahrom and Gulandom, occupying folios 1–100. The final folio differs from the rest of the manuscript and contains a short text on Islamic jurisprudence concerning the rulings and disliked acts of fasting (*Ro'za*). Following restoration, this folio was mistakenly attached in reverse order to the manuscript.

The physical condition of the manuscript requires conservation. Several folios are damaged, and in many places the black ink has spread, making the text difficult to read. Brown and black stains, dirt, and signs of aging are also visible. The front cover is not original and was attached in a later period to protect the manuscript from moisture, dust, and light. The original back cover has survived and contains two decorative *turunj* ornaments together with a central *shamsa*. Although the original green cover remains, its surface has faded and shows cracks and other signs of deterioration [3: 94].

MANUSCRIPT COLLECTION NO. 10572/11

Scribe: Unknown. Script: Nasta'liq, written in black ink. Languages: Uzbek and Persian. Date of copying: Unknown. Place of copying: Unknown. Dimensions: 14.5 × 26 cm. Number of folios: 195.

The manuscript begins with the following lines:

تماشا قيل الار كيلگان ده مونده...

It ends with the following lines:

باز ايکي کليمه سوز حضرت شاه مردان دين ايشيتينگ کيم حضرت
شاه مردان اوشلوقت باريب املاق...

This manuscript collection consists of four independent sections. The first section contains the epic 'Bahrom and Gulandom,' extending from folio 1a to folios 79b. Although the author's name is not mentioned in the manuscript, textual examination confirms that it belongs to Sobir Sayqaliy. The second section contains the narrative 'Akhtamnoma', copied on folios 80-91. The third

section includes 'Hikoyati Nuh Manzar,' occupying folios 92b-153b. The fourth section contains 'Zayn al-Arab,' extending from folio 154a to folios 195b. Except for the second section, all parts of the collection are incomplete.

The manuscript is in poor physical condition and requires restoration. The opening folios are missing, while the surviving text has become faded because of ink corrosion. Numerous folios are stained, detached from the binding, or folded at the corners. The original front cover has not survived, whereas the remaining cover is made of cardboard with traces of green and yellow coloring. Decorative elements have partially disappeared because of wear, and only part of the inscription *Amali Mullo...* remains legible. The manuscript also preserves a single ornamental shamsa [3: 141].

MANUSCRIPT COLLECTION NO. 12519/11

Scribe: Unknown. Date of copying: 19th century (approx.). Place of copying: Unknown. Script: Nasta'liq, written in black and red ink. Language: Uzbek. Dimensions: 15 × 26 cm. Number of folios: 62.

This manuscript collection consists of two sections. The first section contains Sobir Sayqaliy's epic 'Bahrom and Gulandom,' extending from folio 1a to folio 23b. The second section includes selected passages from 'Boborahim Mashrab's Mabdayi Nur,' occupying folios 24a-61b. Although the main text is copied in fourteen to fifteen lines per page, the final folio contains only four lines of text and is partially damaged.

The manuscript opens with the traditional Islamic invocation:

که بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم ديب خدانی یاد ایتائین یا کریم ديب

The final lines conclude with verses referring to the transience of human life.

مولوي که حادثات دكري توشتی انوار ولایت لنكري بولدی مرکدین
انکه ناگه حادثات ادمی
نی عمریکه یوقتور ثبات گرچه ایرور

The manuscript requires conservation. In several folios the ink has spread, making the text difficult to read. Brown and black stains, dust, and physical deterioration are evident throughout the manuscript. The volume has two different covers attached during different periods. The front cover is yellowish-green with a decorative turunj, whereas the back cover is brownish-green and bears the engraved inscription "Mulla Muhammad Iso Sahhof", indicating the name of the bookbinder. Both covers include decorative *shamsa* ornaments. The surface of the covers has faded, and parts of the cardboard and leather binding have been damaged over time [3: 99].

Other manuscripts preserved in the Bukhara State Museum besides the above-mentioned manuscripts and collections, the Bukhara State Museum preserves several additional manuscripts associated with Sobir Sayqaliy under inventory numbers 23727/11, 22346/11, 25253/11, 28051/11, 12382/11, 11262/11, 22347/11, 12173/11, 27630/11, and 31032/11.

MANUSCRIPT NO. 23727/11

Author: Muhammad Sobir Sayqaliy. Scribe: عوض محمد (Avaz Muhammad). Script: Nasta'liq. Language: Uzbek. Date of transcription: 1260 AH/1844 CE. Dimensions: 14 × 26 cm. Number of folios: 249. Condition: Several folios at the beginning of the work are missing.

The work is known by the titles *Devoni Sayqaliy* and, in some cases, *Payg'ambarning vafoti kitobi* ("The Book of the Prophet's Death"). It is related to Islamic history and contains a collection of poems concerning the lives and history of Muhammad (peace be upon him), Ali, Fatima, and their descendants (may Allah be pleased with them). The work was translated poetically from Persian into Uzbek by Sayqaliy in 1211 AH/1796 CE. Its Persian original, *Rawzat al-Shuhada* ("The Garden of the Martyrs"), was written by Husayn Val'iz Kashifi.

MANUSCRIPT NO. 22346/11

The same work. Author: Sobir Sayqaliy. Scribe: ملا حسين بن غائب نظرشيخ (Mulla Husayn ibn G'oyibnazar Shaykh). Script: Nasta'liq. Language: The main text is in Uzbek, with some Persian phrases also present. Date of transcription: Not specified. Dimensions: 15 × 26 cm. Number of folios: 343. Condition: The manuscript is complete and contains a simple title page (*unwan*).

MANUSCRIPT NO. 25253/11

The same work. Author: Muhammad Sobir Sayqaliy. Scribe: Unknown. Script: Nasta'liq. Language: The main text is in Uzbek, with some Persian phrases also present. Date of transcription: 1265 AH/1849 CE. Dimensions: 14.5 × 26.5 cm. Number of folios: 270. Condition: The manuscript is complete and contains a title page (*unwan*).

MANUSCRIPT NO. 28051/11

The same work. Author: Sayqaliy. Scribe: Unknown. Script: Nasta'liq. Language: Uzbek. Date of transcription: 1269 AH/1853 CE. Dimensions: 14.5 × 25.5 cm. Number of folios: 170. Condition: The manuscript is incomplete.

MANUSCRIPT NO. 12382/11

The same work. Author: Sayqaliy. Scribe: ملا عبد الحامد سمرقندي (Mulla Abdulhamid Samarqandi). Script: Nasta'liq. Language: Uzbek. Date of transcription: 1286AH/1869 CE. Dimensions: 15 × 25.5 cm. Number of folios: 115. Condition: The manuscript is incomplete. The manuscript is divided into two parts. Folios 1-107 of the first part contain a collection of Sayqaliy's ghazals related to Islamic history. The second part consists of eight folios containing Sayqaliy's work *Qiyomatnoma* ("The Book of the Day of Judgment").

MANUSCRIPT NO. 11262/11

The same work. Author: Sobir Sayqaliy. Scribe: Unknown. Script: Nasta'liq. Language: The main text is in Uzbek, with some Persian phrases also present. Date of transcription: 19th century (approx.). Dimensions: 15 × 25.5 cm. Number of folios: 205. Condition: The manuscript is incomplete.

MANUSCRIPT NO. 22347/11

The same work. Author: Sayqaliy. Scribe: Unknown (not preserved). Script: Nasta'liq. Language: Uzbek. Date of transcription: Not preserved; 19th century (approx.). Dimensions: 15 × 26 cm. Number of folios: 104. Condition: The manuscript is incomplete.

MANUSCRIPT NO. 12173/11

The same work. Author: Not specified. Scribe: Unknown. Script: Nasta'liq. Language: Uzbek. Date of transcription: 19th century (approx.). Dimensions: 15 × 26 cm. Number of folios: 193. The main part of the manuscript consists of Sayqaliy's work related to Islamic history. The final six folios contain brief information concerning the life and activities of Boborahim Mashrab. Both parts are incomplete and unfinished.

MANUSCRIPT NO. 27630/11

The same work. Author: Sayqaliy; the author of the *Devoni Hikmat* in the final two folios is Ahmad Yasawi. Scribe: Unknown. Script: Nasta'liq. Language: Uzbek. Date of transcription: 19th century (approx.). Dimensions: 14 × 25 cm. Number of folios: 119.

Manuscript No. 31032/11

The same work. Author: Sayqaliy. Scribe: Unknown. Script: Nasta'liq. Language: Uzbek. Date of transcription: 1290

AH/1873 CE. Dimensions: 13 × 23.5 cm. Number of folios: 302. Condition: Several folios at both the beginning and the end of the manuscript are missing [3: 62].

These manuscripts were copied between the mid-nineteenth century and the late nineteenth century, primarily in the Nasta'liq script. Most are written in the Uzbek language, while some also contain Persian passages. Their physical condition varies considerably: some manuscripts are complete, whereas others have missing folios, damaged bindings, faded ink, or detached pages. Several volumes preserve valuable information concerning the history of Islam, poetic translations by Sayqaliy, and works such as *Qiyomatnoma*, *Devoni Sayqaliy*, and poetic adaptations of *Ravzat ash-Shuhada*.

TEXTOLOGICAL COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THREE MANUSCRIPTS OF *BAHROM AND GULANDOM*

The following comparative table is based strictly on the manuscript descriptions and textual excerpts provided in the submitted article. It presents the beginning and ending passages of manuscript Nos. 9835, 10572/11, and 12519/11 and identifies their observable textual differences.

Table 1

No.	Textological criterion	MS No. 9835	MS No. 10572/11	MS No. 12519/11
1	Form of the beginning	<i>Didi ey nāzanīn...</i>	<i>Tamāshā qil...</i>	<i>Bismillāh al-Rahmān al-Rahīm...</i>
2	Difference in the beginning	Begins with an address or direct appeal.	Begins with a passage related to the narrative /content.	Begins with the traditional Islamic invocation (<i>basmala</i>).
3	Form of the ending	<i>Jafā birla rafiq...</i>	<i>...Hazrat Shohi Mardon...</i>	A passage concerning the transience of human life.
4	Textual condition	An incomplete	The first section of a composite	The first section of a composite

		copy of the epic.	manuscript containing other works.	manuscript; the second section contains selections from Mashrab's Mabdayi Nur.
5	Textological significance	Useful for identifying the individual textual form of the epic.	Demonstrates the circulation of the epic within a composite manuscript.	Demonstrates a variant manuscript context in which the epic is transmitted together with another literary work.
6	Manuscript-specific difference	The beginning and ending passages have their own textual form.	The beginning and ending passages differ from those of MS No. 9835.	The beginning is distinguished by the use of the basmala formula.
7	Research value	Useful for further comparison of textual variants.	Useful for studying the manuscript transmission and compilation history of the epic.	Useful for studying the transmission of the epic in a composite manuscript context.

The present study demonstrates that the manuscript copies of *Bahrom and Gulandom* preserved in the Bukhara State Museum significantly expand the source base for the study of the epic. The research focuses specifically on the manuscript copies preserved in the Bukhara State Museum and provides a detailed examination of their codicological, textual, and physical characteristics. The identified features of these manuscripts provide new evidence for reconstructing the transmission history of the epic and establish a reliable foundation for preparing a future critical edition.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that the manuscript copies of *Bahrom and Gulandom* constitute an invaluable source for the study of Uzbek literary heritage. The present research has identified and described eleven individual manuscripts and two composite manuscript collections attributed to Sobir Sayqaliy preserved in the Bukhara State Museum.

The study was conducted through an integrated application of textual criticism and source-study methodologies. This approach made it possible not only to examine the physical characteristics of the manuscripts but also to investigate questions of authorship, scribal activity, manuscript transmission, and textual variation. Codicological features such as the names of scribes, ink colors, page dimensions, bindings, decorative shamsa and turunj ornaments further enhance the historical and artistic significance of these manuscripts.

The analysis confirms that the manuscript collection preserved in the Bukhara State Museum provides a rich documentary basis for preparing a comprehensive critical edition of *Bahrom and Gulandom*. Future research should focus on the comparative examination of all extant manuscript copies, the identification of textual variants, and the preparation of a scholarly critical edition accompanied by philological commentary. Such work will make a significant contribution not only to the preservation of Sayqaliy's literary heritage but also to the further development of Uzbek textual criticism and manuscript studies.

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4. Bukhara State Museum. *Manuscript Collection*. Inventory No. 12519/11.

SULTONOVA DILOVAR NEMATILLO QIZI

DOCTORAL STUDENT,
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY OF UZBEK
LITERATURE AND TEXTUAL STUDIES,
ALISHER NAVOIY TASHKENT STATE UNIVERSITY
OF UZBEK LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE,
TASHKENT, UZBEKISTAN.
E-MAIL: <SULTONOVADILOVAR0@GMAIL.COM>