

Article

# The Formation and Stages of Development of Uzbek Literary Scholarship

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**Abstract:** Literature and literary scholarship are significant concepts that embody both practical and theoretical principles. The emergence of the term “literary scholarship” dates back to the early twentieth century. Although this term appeared at the beginning of the twentieth century, its historical roots are connected with the principles of literary theory that existed in both Eastern and Western traditions under various names. The emergence of these principles, in turn, is associated with the formation of artistic literature as a unified system, which has served to integrate world literature and literary scholarship.

**Keywords:** literary scholarship, genre, literary type, periodization, epoch, genesis

## 1. Introduction

The discipline of literary scholarship is characterized by its study of the essence and content of artistic literature, its origins, the factors underlying its emergence and development, its stages of evolution, its social significance, and its connections with the literary process. The study of processes related to the principles of artistic literature within literary scholarship has led to the emergence of several branches, such as literary history, literary theory, and literary criticism. Through the investigation of various aspects of artistic literature, these branches have provided literary scholarship with essential material and sources [1].

Thus, since literary scholarship is inherently connected with the study of artistic literature, this function existed even before the early twentieth century, although it manifested itself in different forms across various historical periods. The development and evolution of artistic literature significantly influenced this process [2]. In ancient monuments, such as the Orkhon-Yenisey inscriptions, the potential of “refined and eloquent expression” emerged as an early form of literary-theoretical reflection. By the eleventh century, based on Mahmud Kashgari’s “*Devonu lug’otit turk*”, the first comparative-typological and scientific-textological observations were formed concerning folklore traditions, their genre-specific principles, evolution, differentiation, and broader theoretical issues related to oral literature. In subsequent periods, initial analytical approaches and observations related to literary scholarship began to appear, and the discipline gradually took shape under the term “poetics [3].”

In the works of Abu Nasr al-Farabi’s “*The Art of Poetry*” (10th century), Abdulqadir Jurjani’s “*Asrar al-Balagha fi ‘Ilm al-Bayan*” (“The Secrets of Eloquence in the Science of Rhetoric”) (11th century), and Shamsiddin Qays al-Razi’s “*Kitab al-Mu’jam fi Ma’ayir Ash’ar al-‘Ajam*” (“A Compendium of the Standards of Persian Poetry”) (13th century), such issues as the nature of literary works, language, and authorial mastery were elucidated [4].

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In the history of literary scholarship, the works of Mahmud al-Zamakhshari (1075–1144), the 12th-century poet and literary scholar Nizami Aruzi ibn Umar Samarqandi, Rashididdin Vatvat, Nasiriddin Tusi, Vahid Tabrizi, as well as 14th-century figures such as Abdurahman Jami, Ataullah Husayni, Khandamir, Zayniddin Vasifi, and Husayn Vaiz Kashifi occupy an important place [5].

In the development of Turkic literary scholarship, particular significance is attached to Shaykh Ahmad ibn Khudoydad Tarazi's *"Funun al-Balagha"*, as well as to the works of the great master of words Alisher Navoi, including *"Majalis un-nafa'is"*, *"Mezan al-avzan"*, *"Halat-i Pahlavan Muhammad"*, *"Halat-i Sayyid Hasan Ardasher"*, and *"Khamosat al-mutahayyirin"*. In these works, issues such as artistic expression, the nature of creative activity, the responsibility of the author before the word, and the theoretical as well as practical aspects of the aruz (quantitative) poetic system are addressed. Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur's *"Mukhtasar"* and Zokirjon Kholmuhammad ogli Furqat's *"Treatise on Aruz"* (*"The Rules of Prosodic Weights in the Science of Poetry"*) are also important sources in Uzbek literary scholarship [6].

In the history of literary scholarship, the study of poetry (ilm al-shi'r / poetics) held a position of high authority and traditionally consisted of three main branches: *'ilm al-'aruz* (prosody), *'ilm al-badi'* (figures of speech and embellishment), and *'ilm al-qafiya* (rhyme). By the beginning of the twentieth century, with the transformation of the poetic system, this field had gradually evolved and came to be conceptualized under the broader term "literary scholarship."

In the research of European scholars such as A.N. Veselovsky, N.D. Tamarchenko, M.Yu. Lotman, L. Timofeyev, M. Alekseev, I. Vinogradov, G. Pospelov, N.I. Konrad, and V. Khalizev, new directions and branches of poetics gradually began to emerge. The renewal of twentieth-century literature and the transformation of the literary process created the basis for the formation of a new type of literary theory through the analysis of literary developments and their results [7].

## 2. Materials and Methods

It may be argued that this theory did not arise as a rupture from the established laws of traditional poetics; rather, it emerged within a historical continuity, through a modern methodological approach grounded in the principle of historicism. Consequently, schools such as historical poetics, theoretical poetics, and structural poetics developed within literary studies.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, the term "poetics" had become semantically narrowed and began to denote two distinct meanings:

1. literary theory;
2. a subfield of literary theory.

Prior to the twentieth century, the term "poetics" broadly referred to the essence of literary scholarship as a whole, whereas from the early twentieth century onward it came to denote the poetic layer of a specific literary object. In this respect, the broader term "literary scholarship" gradually replaced "literary theory" in usage.

Thus, Uzbek literary scholarship has undergone several stages of development parallel to artistic literature and is rooted in Eastern poetic tradition. If literary materials produced before the twentieth century are examined primarily through the principles of Eastern poetics, then the study of twentieth-century and later sources is conducted through an integrated application of both Eastern and Western literary theory.

The emerging principles, analytical frameworks, and research methods in literary studies are applied not only to contemporary texts but also to materials from different historical periods. Naturally, the scientific and theoretical conclusions derived from such

analyses may vary depending on the dynamics of the literary process and the socio-cultural environment.

### 3. Results and Discussion

**The study of the history of Uzbek literary scholarship.** Uzbek literary scholarship has a long historical background, and the study of its historical roots makes it possible to draw precise scientific and theoretical conclusions about the literary process of each period. In this regard, investigating the formation and development trends of Uzbek literary scholarship is of great importance in defining the specific laws of Turkic literature. No national tradition of literary scholarship has emerged as an isolated phenomenon; rather, literary scholarship, as the theoretical foundation of literary influence, has a common root. In this sense, the history of Uzbek literary scholarship is also studied within the broader context of world literary scholarship [8].

In the study of sources and theoretical principles related to the history of Uzbek literary scholarship, both modern and historical methodological approaches are employed. Taking these aspects into account, the following objectives and tasks have been defined for the study of the history of Uzbek literary scholarship:

- to determine the historical stages of Uzbek literary scholarship;
- to study the formation stage of Uzbek literary scholarship within the framework of Eastern poetics;
- to identify and substantiate the specific features of Eastern and Western literary scholarship;
- to develop the source-based classification of Uzbek literary scholarship;
- to reveal the developmental trends of Uzbek literary scholarship;
- to study the earliest sources of Central Asian literary scholarship;
- to determine the place of theoretical ideas in written sources and issues of Ancient Greek and Roman literary scholarship within the history of Uzbek literary scholarship;
- to study the sources and issues of 10th–11th century literary scholarship;
- to substantiate that treatises and anthologies of the 11th–12th centuries are important sources of Uzbek literary scholarship;
- to examine medieval literary scholarship and the influence of Islamic Renaissance literary thought on world literary aesthetics;
- to show that the literary scholarship of the Amir Timur and Timurid period represents a stage of development in Uzbek literary scholarship;
- to study the literary-critical views of Alisher Navoi and thereby examine the literary thought of his time;
- to demonstrate that Babur’s theoretical ideas on poetics form the basis of Turkic aruz studies;
- to study the literary scholarship of the 16th–19th centuries and its sources;
- to define the specific features of the literary environment of Khiva in the early 20th century;
- to systematize the structure of tazkiras compiled in the Bukhara literary environment and the literary issues they contain;
- to reveal innovations in the literary process of the early 20th century through the study of sources on literary theory of that period;
- to systematically study the history of Soviet criticism and Enlightenment-period literary scholarship;

- to define the specific features of Soviet-era literary scholarship;
- to analyze the literary scholarship of the independence period based on literary and scholarly process laws.[9]

The science of Uzbek literary scholarship is directly connected with several philological disciplines, such as Introduction to Literary Studies, Literary Theory, History of Uzbek Literature, History of Literary Criticism, Textual Criticism, Science of Literature (Adab ilmi), Aruz and Classical Poetics, Navai Studies, and History of Jadid Literature. However, unlike these disciplines, the History of Uzbek Literary Scholarship works directly with historical sources of Uzbek literary scholarship, analyzing them on the basis of data from the aforementioned fields and drawing scientific and theoretical conclusions [10-13].

**The periodic principles and periodization approaches in the history of Uzbek literary scholarship.** The study of periodical regularities and principles of periodization in the history of Uzbek literary scholarship allows for a comprehensive examination of several interrelated scholarly-literary categories, such as period-specific characteristics, the formation of sources, and transformations and renewal processes within the literary flow. Similarly, the periodization of the history of literary scholarship, as a branch of the theoretical laws emerging from the study of literary history, provides an opportunity to draw well-grounded conclusions regarding periodic generalizations and literary phenomena [14].

A key question arises: are the history of literature and the history of literary scholarship periodized on the basis of identical categories? The answer is, of course, negative. The periodization of literary history is not merely a methodological tool facilitating the study of a rich cultural heritage; it also serves as a theoretical framework for determining the position of authors in literary history, the significance of their works in the development of national culture, and for the theoretical analysis of literary processes. Therefore, scholars engaged in literary history have consistently addressed the issue of periodization without exception [15].

Various classifications of Uzbek literary history have been proposed by scholars such as Abdurauf Fitrat, M. Solihov, V. Zohidov, N. Mallayev, A. Qayumov, B. Qosimov, Q. Yo'ldoshev, N. Rahmonov, H. Boltaboyev, and D. Quronov. Most of these classifications are based on literary processes and socio-political principles. Accordingly, each classification possesses a valid foundation depending on the principle upon which it is constructed.

Do these same principles also serve as the basis for the periodization of literary scholarship? In the periodization of literary scholarship, theoretical and critical ideas concerning the literary process function as the primary criterion. Thus, this process is directly interconnected with literary history. Literary history, in turn, serves as the primary source in the formation of literary criticism.

Literary scholar H. Boltaboyev emphasizes that in the periodization of literary history and literary scholarship, it is necessary to distinguish between the terms "period," "stage," and "epoch," which are often used synonymously, and to clarify their specific semantic differences. Unfortunately, in many Russian and other foreign theoretical sources, these terms, when translated into Uzbek, are frequently rendered uniformly as "davr" (period), which leads to conceptual ambiguity. In fact, these three terms differ semantically: "period" refers to relatively smaller temporal segments; "epoch" denotes a much broader historical span encompassing several centuries; and "stage" is used to indicate a specific phase within the development of world literary history.

These three concepts are distinguished on the basis of different characteristics: one primarily reflects spatial scope, while the other is defined by temporal duration. Therefore, selecting the most appropriate term requires careful consideration of these distinctions. It

should be particularly noted that, given the rich historical development of Uzbek literary scholarship, both the concepts of “epoch” and “stage” may also be appropriately employed as scientific terms to express its periodic and developmental dimensions.

Uzbek literary scholarship is intrinsically interconnected with literary history and has constituted the fundamental basis for the formation of its scientific and theoretical principles. From this perspective, the history of Uzbek literary scholarship can be systematically divided into the following developmental stages:

1. The period of mythopoetic thinking;
2. Classical poetics: the formation and development of Turkic literary scholarship:
  - a) 10th–12th century literary scholarship;
  - b) Medieval classical poetics;
  - c) Literary scholarship of the Amir Timur and Timurid period;
  - d) Literary scholarship of the 16th–19th centuries;
3. Twentieth-century literary scholarship:
  - a) Early twentieth-century literary scholarship;
  - b) Jadid literary scholarship;
4. Literary scholarship of the independence period.

Although the term “literary scholarship” began to be used in the early twentieth century, in Eastern—particularly Turkic—traditions, the term “poetics” was predominantly employed instead. Consequently, works on literary scholarship produced before the twentieth century were generally classified as works on poetics.

The earliest stage of Uzbek literary scholarship, like literature itself, emerged in close connection with the formation of early literary fragments and the mythopoetic cognition of humanity. Written literature developed under the influence of oral folklore traditions as a manifestation of human belief-based and mythological modes of thinking. During this period, the fundamental theoretical categories of literary history, literary theory, and literary criticism had not yet been systematized. These principles and artistic-theoretical frameworks were subsequently elaborated in the later stage of literary scholarship, namely the period of classical literature and the formation and development of Turkic poetics.

This early stage of Uzbek literary scholarship, as identified above, is also characterized by the same universal regularities observed in the history of world literary scholarship. In other words, the initial phase of literary scholarship demonstrates a typological commonality across all national literary traditions. The primary sources representing the mythopoetic stage include the literary fragments embedded in Mahmud Kashgari’s *“Devonu lug’otit turk”*, the elegy of Alp Er Tunga, as well as early inscriptions such as the Orkhon-Yenisey monuments, including *“Kultegin”*, *“Tonyukuk”*, and *“Bilga Khagan”*, all of which are essentially rooted in oral folklore traditions.

One of the major developmental stages of Uzbek literary scholarship, the second period, is associated with the formation and evolution of Turkic literary scholarship. If Yusuf Khos Hojib’s *“Qutadg’u Bilig”* is taken as the foundational source of this stage, then in subsequent centuries, under the influence of Arabic and Persian literary traditions, a distinctly Turkic system of poetics (*poetics science*) emerged and developed.

Literary-aesthetic reflections on literature, the literary process, and the expressive possibilities of the artistic word laid the groundwork for the emergence of clearly defined scientific-theoretical systems. This stage is characterized by the formation of literary genres, their further refinement, and the creation of scholarly treatises. The establishment of *adab ilmi* (the science of literature) and the theoretical foundation of the “three sciences”—*aruz* (prosody), *qafiya* (rhyme), and *badi’* (rhetorical artistry)—led to the formation of specialized Turkic disciplines such as Turkic *aruz* studies, Turkic rhyme

studies, and Turkic poetics. These developments contributed to the recognition of this period as the classical stage of literary scholarship.

The subsequent stage of literary scholarship is characterized by profound socio-political and literary transformations. The literary process of the early twentieth century underwent significant changes, which in turn reshaped the directions and theoretical foundations of literary scholarship in parallel with literary developments. The early twentieth century witnessed the following literary transformations:

1. The system of literary genres and their structure changed: drama emerged, and genres within prose and poetry expanded;
2. The expressive scope of literary forms broadened: prose, previously not recognized as an independent artistic form, became fully established as a literary genre;
3. Significant changes occurred in poetic systems: the aruz metrical system was replaced by the revival of the syllabic (*barmoq*) system, which subsequently led to the reconstruction of its theoretical foundations;
4. Criteria for evaluating literary works and poetic mastery were renewed;
5. Literary themes and imagery underwent transformation;
6. Structural composition and plot construction experienced significant changes.

Such literary developments directly contributed to the renewal of literary scholarship itself. Its genres, methodological approaches, and attitudes toward artistic literature evolved in accordance with the literary process. The emergence of research on classical texts and manuscripts led to the formation of source studies and textual criticism as independent scientific disciplines. Most importantly, twentieth-century literary scholarship laid the foundation for the emergence of various scholarly schools and approaches, including historical poetics and theoretical poetics.

The subsequent stage, "Literary scholarship of the independence period", represents a new phase in the study of literary history, literary theory, and literary criticism. The production of numerous dissertations and scholarly monographs devoted to specific literary phenomena led to the emergence of specialized "-studies" schools within literary scholarship, such as Navai studies, Babur studies, Mashrab studies, Fitrat studies, and many others. It was also substantiated that literary history should be re-examined based on source studies and textual criticism. Furthermore, it was confirmed that literature and literary scholarship do not emerge or develop as isolated phenomena; accordingly, comparative literary scholarship was revitalized as an important field of literary studies.

#### 4. Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be stated that Uzbek literary scholarship has undergone several historical stages and has developed in parallel with literary history, demonstrating a consistent and interdependent evolutionary process.

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