



EXTUAL CRITICISM AND PREPARATION FOR PUBLICATION IN UZBEK TEXTUAL SCHOLARSHIP OF THE FIRST HALF OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

O'ngalova Guldasta Amiriddin kizi,

Independent Researcher of the Department of Classical
Literature,

Institute of Languages and Cultures of Central Asian Peoples,
Samarkand State University named after Sharof Rashidov

Tel.: +998 (97) 910-10-69; E-mail:

ungalovaguldasta@gmail.com

Abstract. *This article examines textual criticism and preparation for publication in Uzbek textual scholarship of the first half of the twentieth century. It analyzes how manuscript heritage, early printed editions, Jadid textbooks, classical Uzbek literary texts, Navoi studies, editorial practice, source comparison, scholarly annotation, and publication projects shaped a new philological culture. The study argues that preparing a text for publication was not a merely technical act: it involved identifying sources, comparing copies, correcting variants, adapting scripts, adding commentary, and placing the text within literary history. The article shows that Uzbek textual scholarship developed through the interaction of manuscript study, editorial philology, Jadid intellectual heritage, Soviet-era institutions, and the canonization of national literary heritage.*

Keywords: *Uzbek textual scholarship; textual criticism; manuscript heritage; preparation for publication; source studies; classical Uzbek literature; editorial philology; scholarly annotation; Navoi studies; literary history.*

Annotatsiya. *Maqolada XX asr birinchi yarmi o'zbek matnshunosligida matn tanqidi va nashrga tayyorlash masalalari tahlil qilinadi. Unda qo'lyozma meros, ilk bosma nashrlar, jadid darsliklari, mumtoz o'zbek adabiyoti matnlari, navoiyshunoslik, tahrir amaliyoti, manbalarni qiyoslash, ilmiy izoh va nashr loyihalari yangi filologik madaniyatni shakllantirgan jarayon sifatida yoritiladi. Tadqiqotda matnni nashrga tayyorlash oddiy texnik amal emas, balki manbani*

aniqlash, nusxalarni solishtirish, variantlarni tuzatish, yozuvni moslashtirish, sharh berish va matnni adabiyot tarixi doirasida talqin qilish jarayoni ekani asoslanadi.

***Kalit soʻzlar:** oʻzbek matnshunosligi; matn tanqidi; qoʻlyozma meros; nashrga tayyorlash; manbashunoslik; mumtoz oʻzbek adabiyoti; tahrir filologiyasi; ilmiy izoh; navoiyshunoslik; adabiyot tarixi.*

***Аннотация.** В статье анализируются проблемы текстологической критики и подготовки к изданию в узбекской текстологии первой половины XX века. Рассматривается, как рукописное наследие, ранние печатные издания, джадидские учебники, тексты классической узбекской литературы, навоиведение, редакционная практика, сопоставление источников, научный комментарий и издательские проекты сформировали новую филологическую культуру. Доказывается, что подготовка текста к публикации была не технической операцией, а процессом выявления источников, сравнения списков, исправления вариантов, адаптации письменности, комментирования и включения текста в историю литературы.*

***Ключевые слова:** узбекская текстология; текстологическая критика; рукописное наследие; подготовка к изданию; источниковедение; классическая узбекская литература; редакционная филология; научный комментарий; навоиведение; история литературы.*

INTRODUCTION. In the first half of the twentieth century, Uzbek textual scholarship moved from scattered manuscript interest and educational publishing toward a more self-conscious philological discipline. The central problem was not simply how to print old texts, but how to determine which text should be printed, which manuscript or printed version should be trusted, how variants should be compared, how orthography should be normalized or preserved, and how commentary should guide the reader. A published literary text was therefore never neutral. It selected a version of heritage, stabilized it, explained it, and placed it into the emerging history of Uzbek literature.

The source base shows that Uzbek textual scholarship developed at the intersection of several forces: Jadid educational reform, classical manuscript culture, early twentieth-century publishing, Soviet-era academic institutions, Navoi studies, and broader principles of editorial philology. In this setting, textual criticism meant more than correcting scribal mistakes. It included identifying sources, comparing manuscript and printed witnesses, evaluating variants, reconstructing reliable readings, preparing texts for different audiences, and supporting publication with introductions, glossaries, explanatory notes, and literary-historical interpretation.

The problem is especially clear in three connected fields. First, Jadid educational publishing produced new alphabet books, textbooks, and practical written materials, forcing reformers to confront orthography, genre, accessibility, and public circulation. Saidrasul Azizi's "Ustodi avval", prepared in 1900 on a phonetic principle and reprinted seventeen times, demonstrates how early educational texts became part of a broader editorial and orthographic transformation [Kurbanova, 2024, p. 3]. Second, scholars such as Abdurauf Fitrat began to rely directly on manuscript sources when preparing literary collections, including "O'zbek adabiyoti namunalari" [Xongeldiyeva, 2024, p. 681]. Third, the publication of Alisher Navoi's works, especially the "Khamsa", required planned institutional editing, script adaptation, prose explanation, and later critical publication [Shokirova, 2025, p. 76–77].

Existing studies often discuss individual scholars, specific editions, or manuscript traditions separately. This article treats textual criticism and preparation for publication as a unified methodological problem. It argues that in the first half of the twentieth century Uzbek textual scholarship emerged through the transformation of literary heritage into verified, edited, annotated, and publishable texts.

MATERIALS AND METHODS. The materials used in this study include scholarly articles on Jadid educational publishing, studies of Fitrat's textual work, publications on Navoi editions, research on twentieth-century Uzbek textual

scholarship, and selected theoretical works on textual criticism. The evidence covers alphabet books, textbooks, manuscript-based anthologies, classical literary editions, Navoi publication projects, critical textual principles, and later methodological reflections. The article relies particularly on studies that document Saidrasul Azizi's "Ustodi avval", Behbudiy's schoolbooks, Fitrat's manuscript-based editions, Navoi publication history, and the theoretical vocabulary of textual criticism represented by Paul Maas and W. W. Greg [Kurbanova, 2024, p. 3–4; Xongeldiyeva, 2024, p. 680–681; Shokirova, 2025, p. 76–77; Maas, 1958, p. 1–3; Greg, 1950, p. 21–31].

The method is source-critical and textual-analytical. Source criticism is used to distinguish between manuscript evidence, printed editions, periodical circulation, later summaries, and theoretical statements. Textual criticism is used to analyze such operations as copy selection, variant comparison, authorial reconstruction, correction of scribal errors, and preparation of critical apparatus. Philological analysis is applied to questions of script, orthography, glossary, translation, and reader-oriented explanation. Historical-comparative analysis helps relate Uzbek practice to broader editorial concepts such as "constitutio textus", "copy-text", "archetype", "interpolation", and "apparatus criticus" [Maas, 1958, p. 1–3, 22; Greg, 1950, p. 21, 26, 29, 31].

The article also uses institutional and literary-historical analysis. Preparation for publication is examined not merely as an editorial technique but as part of canon formation: a text selected for publication enters school, scholarship, national literary memory, and public reading. This approach is especially important for Navoi's works, where publication from the late 1930s onward became linked to anniversary planning, script reform, prose explanation, and the creation of a reliable national literary canon [Shokirova, 2025, p. 76; Sintez, 2024, b. 3].

RESULTS. 1. Jadid educational publishing and the problem of textual accessibility. One of the earliest contexts in which Uzbek textual scholarship developed was Jadid educational publishing. The new-method schools required new texts: alphabet books, reading materials, manuals, and practical writing guides.

Saidrasul Azizi's "Ustodi avval", compiled in 1900 on a phonetic principle, illustrates the movement toward practical orthographic reform [Kurbanova, 2024, p. 3]. Its seventeen reprints show that a didactic text could become widely circulated and therefore subject to questions of textual stability, reprinting, and reception [Kurbanova, 2024, p. 3].

The phonetic principle was not isolated. S. Vasli Samarqandiy published the Tajik alphabet book "Bayon-ul-khuruf" in 1903, showing that bilingual and multilingual pedagogical environments shaped early textual practice in Turkestan [Kurbanova, 2024, p. 3]. M. Behbudiy's "Alifboi maktabi islomiya" was advertised in "Oyina", demonstrating that periodical culture helped school texts enter broader public circulation [Kurbanova, 2024, p. 3]. The publication and advertisement of textbooks were therefore not merely educational events. They formed an infrastructure for the dissemination, normalization, and evaluation of texts.

The "Kitobat-ul-atfol" textbook is another important example, since it included practical official writing and correspondence models [Kurbanova, 2024, p. 4]. Such texts expanded the meaning of publication: a printed book did not only transmit literary content but also taught written genres, documentary language, and everyday textual competence. Jadid publication practice thus prepared the ground for later textual scholarship by encouraging attention to script, form, clarity, readership, and repeatable written models.

2. From preservation to textual criticism: the manuscript as a scholarly object. The move from manuscript preservation to textual criticism becomes clearer in Fitrat's work. His "O'zbek adabiyoti namunalari" was prepared on the basis of manuscript sources [Xongeldiyeva, 2024, p. 681]. This is a crucial point: the text was not simply reproduced from memory or later printed tradition, but selected from earlier sources. In textual scholarship, this shift marks the transformation of the manuscript from a cultural relic into a critical witness.

Fitrat's work with Bobur's ghazals further shows the emergence of classification and source comparison. He used A. N. Samoylovich's classification

when selecting Bobur's poems [Xongeldiyeva, 2024, p. 681]. He also took into account Ottoman Turkish printed variants when comparing manuscript material [Xongeldiyeva, 2024, p. 681]. This practice widened the textual field beyond local copies. It suggested that Uzbek textual scholarship had to consider regional transmission, printed witnesses, and scholarly classifications already developed elsewhere.

The same source base notes that Fitrat directly presented texts in the original in "Eng eski turk adabiyoti namunalari" and copied texts from written monuments [Hamroyeva, 2019, p. 681]. His editions also included manuscript fragments with scholarly commentary [Hamroyeva, 2019, p. 681]. These details show that publication was becoming a philological act: it involved the reproduction of the text, respect for the source, commentary, and historical framing.

3. Textual comparison and the search for a reliable text. Textual criticism becomes a discipline when comparison begins to matter. The available materials repeatedly emphasize comparison, variants, and reconstruction. Fitrat's work is described as an early model for the comparison of variants in Uzbek textual scholarship [Sintez, 2024, b. 2]. His work on Bobur's ghazals is described as an attempt to reconstruct reliable texts [Sintez, 2024, b. 2]. He also used Ottoman Turkish editions as comparative sources, showing that a reliable text could not always be established from one local witness alone [Sintez, 2024, b. 2].

Vadud Mahmud is also associated with comparison of manuscript and lithographic materials in the study of Navoi [Xongeldiyeva, 2024, p. 681]. This detail is important because lithographs occupy an intermediate position between manuscript culture and modern print culture. A lithographic edition may preserve older readings, introduce editorial changes, or reproduce errors. Comparing manuscript and lithographic witnesses therefore required a critical awareness of textual transmission.

The theoretical significance of comparison is supported by broader textual-critical concepts. Paul Maas described textual criticism as the art of restoring the text

– “constitutio textus” [Maas, 1958, p. 1]. He emphasized that the available copies are often unreliable and that the task is to move toward the archetype [Maas, 1958, p. 1–3]. Although Maas wrote outside the Uzbek context, these principles clarify the methodological logic behind Uzbek practices: a printed text should not be assumed to be reliable simply because it is printed, and a manuscript should not be accepted uncritically simply because it is old.

4. Scribal error, interpolation, conjecture, and editorial decision. The first half of the twentieth century did not always use modern technical terminology consistently, but the practices described in the source base correspond to key categories of textual criticism. A later synthesis notes the use of conjecture for logically restoring lost parts of a text [Sintez, 2024, b. 2]. It also notes that manuscript analysis involved attention to physical and graphic features, such as the use of three red dots as punctuation in a manuscript [Sintez, 2024, b. 2]. Such evidence indicates that textual criticism had to address both semantic and material features.

Modern editorial theory helps name these problems. Interpolation refers to the insertion of explanatory or new material into a text [Textual criticism, 2026, p. 1]. Homoioteleuton describes omission caused by the scribe’s eye skipping between similar endings [Textual criticism, 2026, p. 5]. Stemmatology, popularized by Karl Lachmann, studies the genealogical relationship between witnesses [Textual criticism, 2026, p. 5]. These categories are not mechanically imposed on Uzbek material, but they clarify the types of problems encountered when scholars compared manuscripts and prepared editions.

W. W. Greg’s distinction between “substantive” and “accidental” variants is also useful. He separated changes affecting meaning from changes concerning form, spelling, or other surface features [Greg, 1950, p. 21]. His argument that the copy-text should be the basis for accidentals, while substantive readings require freer editorial judgment, helps explain the complexity of preparing Uzbek classical texts for publication [Greg, 1950, p. 26–29]. The editor must decide not only what the

manuscript says, but which differences matter for meaning and which concern orthography, punctuation, or transmission.

5. Preparation for publication: from copy to edition. Preparation for publication differs from textual preservation. Preservation keeps a manuscript; publication transforms it into a readable, citable, and often authoritative text. In Uzbek textual scholarship, this transformation required several steps: selecting a text, determining its source basis, correcting or preserving variants, adapting script, providing explanatory material, and deciding whether the edition was popular, educational, or scholarly.

The publication history of Navoi's "Khamsa" demonstrates this process particularly well. Preparation of Navoi's works for publication began in 1938, on the eve of the 500th anniversary [Shokirova, 2025, p. 76]. In 1939–1940, the "Khamsa" poems were published in the new Latin alphabet together with prose summaries [Shokirova, 2025, p. 76]. This was not merely a change of script. It changed the reading public, the mode of access, and the explanatory structure surrounding the text.

The same publication history records that Abdujamil the scribe had already begun copying Navoi's works during the poet's lifetime [Shokirova, 2025, p. 76]. Such information matters for textual criticism because manuscripts close to the author's lifetime may carry special evidentiary value. Later, Solih Mutallibov defended a dissertation on the critical text of "Hayrat ul-abror" in 1944 [Shokirova, 2025, p. 76]. This shows the emergence of trained textual scholars and the institutionalization of critical text preparation.

6. Navoi studies and canon formation through publication. Navoi studies became one of the central fields through which Uzbek textual scholarship matured. The 1938 plan to create a single reliable version of Navoi's works shows that editorial work was also canon-building [Sintez, 2024, b. 3]. The publication of "Khamsa" in 1939–1940 by the Institute of Language and Literature, with responsibility assigned to figures such as G'afur G'ulom and Solih Mutallibov,

demonstrates cooperation between poets, philologists, and institutions [Sintez, 2024, b. 3].

The involvement of Russian Orientalists such as E. E. Bertels and A. N. Boldirev during the war years also indicates that Uzbek textual scholarship developed in contact with broader Soviet Oriental studies [Sintez, 2024, b. 3]. This cooperation could enrich philological method, but it also placed textual work within Soviet institutional frameworks. The evidence allows a cautious conclusion: Soviet-era institutions provided resources, academic structures, and publication possibilities, but they also shaped editorial priorities and the canonization of texts.

Later, Porso Shamsiyev published the full text of the “Khamsa” in 1960 [Shokirova, 2025, p. 77]. Although this falls after the first half of the twentieth century, it represents the continuation of processes that began earlier: manuscript comparison, reliable text formation, glossary work, and scholarly publication. Shamsiyev’s 1953 “O‘zbek klassik adabiyoti lug‘ati” and his later “Navoiy asarlarining lug‘ati” show how textual publication required lexical support [Sintez, 2024, b. 4]. Glossaries were not accessories; they were philological tools that helped readers enter the semantic world of classical texts.

7. Annotation, glossary, commentary, and the reader. A text prepared for publication must mediate between the manuscript and the reader. This mediation is performed through introduction, commentary, notes, glossary, prose summary, and editorial explanation. The early Navoi editions in the new Latin alphabet with prose summaries illustrate this reader-oriented function [Shokirova, 2025, p. 76]. They did not merely reproduce the poem; they made it accessible to a changed reading public.

Fitrat’s editions also reveal the role of commentary. His presentation of manuscript fragments with scholarly explanation demonstrates that the editor was responsible for contextualizing the text [Hamroyeva, 2019, p. 681]. Similarly, the idea that dictionaries helped prevent transcription errors shows that lexical tools were central to textual work [Sintez, 2024, b. 4]. If the editor misunderstands an

archaic word, a phrase, or a grammatical form, the published text may distort the original meaning.

The critical apparatus is another important form of scholarly transparency. In Western textual theory, apparatus criticus records variants and evidence related to the text [Textual criticism, 2026, p. 2]. Maas emphasized the placement of apparatus criticus at the foot of the page rather than in the margin as part of publication design [Maas, 1958, p. 22]. Uzbek editions of the first half of the twentieth century did not always follow a single formal apparatus model, but the underlying problem was similar: a scholarly edition must show, explain, or at least responsibly manage the textual evidence behind its readings.

8. Ideology, accessibility, and editorial adaptation. The first half of the twentieth century was also an age of ideological pressure and script reform. Jadid literature was a textual expression of social and cultural transformation [Isabaeva, 2025, p. 241]. By the 1920s, Soviet authorities began to prohibit certain Jadid literary texts [Isabaeva, 2025, p. 243]. This means that textual publication was not only a philological process but also a cultural and political act. What was printed, omitted, explained, or adapted could affect the survival of literary heritage.

The publication of classical works in new scripts also changed textual transmission. The “Khamsa” publications of 1939–1940 in the new Latin alphabet with prose explanation illustrate how script reform and popularization shaped editorial practice [Shokirova, 2025, p. 76]. Later, To‘xtasin Jalolov’s 1958 preparation of “Layli va Majnun” relied on the 1949 edition, omitted chapters unrelated to the plot, restored missing verses from other copies, and considered translations by Amin Umariy and Husaynzoda [Jalolov, 1958, p. 77]. Although this example is slightly later, it clarifies the editorial logic inherited from the earlier period: publication could involve abridgement, restoration, comparison, translation awareness, and audience selection.

This raises a central methodological tension. A popular edition may be necessary for broad readership, but it may simplify or abridge the text. A scholarly

edition may preserve textual complexity, but it may be less accessible. Uzbek textual scholarship had to navigate these choices while also serving national literary heritage, education, and institutional publication plans.

9. Classical textual heritage and the ethics of restoration. Textual criticism also carries an ethical dimension: the editor must respect the authorial text, the transmission history, and the cultural value of the manuscript. Boltaboev's discussion of Fitrat's interpretation of Babur emphasizes that Fitrat relied on strict textual facts in presenting Bobur [Boltaboev, 2004, p. 681]. Fitrat's priority of national identity in presenting Bobur indicates that textual editing was connected to cultural self-understanding [Boltaboev, 2004, p. 681]. Yet the same evidence suggests that rigorous textual facts were necessary to prevent national interpretation from becoming unsupported rhetoric.

Khandamir's "Makorim ul-akhlaq" is important as an external witness for Navoi's reception. It records that Navoi's poems spread widely in a short time, that rulers sent envoys to obtain rare copies, and that his writings were admired for clarity, simplicity, and artistic refinement [Khandamir, 1967, p. 76]. For textual scholarship, such evidence matters because reception history helps explain why manuscripts circulated, why copies multiplied, and why later editors faced complex textual traditions.

The history of Navoi's manuscript transmission also shows that copying began early. Abdujamil the scribe copied Navoi's works during the poet's lifetime [Shokirova, 2025, p. 76]. In textual criticism, copies close to the author's lifetime may be especially valuable, though they still require critical examination. This demonstrates again that reverence for heritage must be accompanied by philological caution.

DISCUSSION. The evidence shows that textual criticism and preparation for publication became methodological problems in Uzbek textual scholarship because literary heritage could not enter modern literary history without editorial mediation. A manuscript preserved in a library remains a cultural object. It becomes a scholarly

source only when it is identified, described, compared, interpreted, and prepared for use. A printed edition becomes authoritative only when its editorial basis is clear enough to support scholarly trust.

The first major tension is between preservation and reconstruction. Manuscript preservation protects the physical witness, while textual criticism attempts to move from surviving witnesses toward a more reliable text. Fitrat's reliance on manuscripts, comparison with Ottoman printed variants, and presentation of texts with scholarly comments show that Uzbek scholars were already confronting this problem [Xongeldiyeva, 2024, p. 681; Hamroyeva, 2019, p. 681]. Later syntheses describe this in more explicit terms: textual variants, collation, conjecture, and authorial reconstruction became central to the field [Sintez, 2024, b. 2].

The second tension is between authenticity and accessibility. The "Khamsa" editions of 1939–1940 in Latin script with prose summaries widened access but also required editorial transformation [Shokirova, 2025, p. 76]. Such editions helped introduce classical heritage to new readers, but they also mediated the text through modern script, explanation, and sometimes simplification. A similar issue appears in later popular editions such as Jalolov's "Layli va Majnun", where certain chapters were omitted for narrative focus and missing verses were restored from other copies [Jalolov, 1958, p. 77]. These practices show that publication always interprets.

The third tension is between editorial authority and textual evidence. Greg's criticism of the "tyranny of the copy-text" is relevant here: no single base text should dominate mechanically when other witnesses preserve better substantive readings [Greg, 1950, p. 26]. At the same time, if two readings are indifferent, the copy-text may be preserved [Greg, 1950, p. 31]. Uzbek editors faced analogous problems when comparing manuscripts, lithographs, later editions, and translations. Editorial judgment was therefore unavoidable, but it had to be disciplined by evidence.

The fourth issue is canonization. Publication is a form of literary-historical selection. The 1938 plan to create a reliable version of Navoi's works and the institutional publication of "Khamsa" in 1939–1940 helped stabilize Navoi's place

in the modern Uzbek literary canon [Sintez, 2024, b. 3; Shokirova, 2025, p. 76]. This does not mean that textual scholarship merely followed ideology. Rather, textual criticism gave national literary heritage a scholarly form: a text could be cited, taught, translated, commented upon, and placed into literary history.

The fifth issue is institutionalization. Jadid publishing created early educational and orthographic frameworks; Soviet-era institutes, dissertations, and planned publications created larger scholarly infrastructure. Solih Mutallibov's 1944 dissertation on the critical text of "Hayrat ul-abror" shows the emergence of specialized textual scholarship as academic work [Shokirova, 2025, p. 76]. Cooperation with Orientalists during the war years further indicates that Uzbek textual scholarship developed in dialogue with broader philological institutions [Sintez, 2024, b. 3].

The available evidence therefore allows a cautious but firm conclusion: in the first half of the twentieth century, Uzbek textual scholarship did not simply inherit manuscripts; it learned how to make them function as scholarly texts. This required identifying sources, comparing witnesses, making editorial decisions, adding explanatory tools, and preparing editions for public and academic circulation. The result was not only the preservation of literary heritage, but its transformation into a structured component of Uzbek literary history.

CONCLUSION. In the first half of the twentieth century, Uzbek textual scholarship took shape through the interaction of Jadid educational publishing, manuscript studies, editorial philology, Navoi studies, and the academic institutions of the Soviet period. Within this context, textual criticism meant far more than the mere correction of errors, for it encompassed source identification, the comparison of manuscripts, the evaluation of variants, the reconstruction of reliable readings, scholarly annotation, and literary-historical interpretation. The Jadid textbooks – among them "Ustodi avval", "Bayon-ul-khuruf", "Alifboi maktabi islomiya", and "Kitobat-ul-atfol" – gave early expression to concerns with script, orthography, accessibility, and the circulation of texts, while Fitrat's manuscript-based editions,

with their reliance on classification, comparison, and commentary, reveal an early professional movement toward a genuinely source-based Uzbek scholarship. The preparation of Navoi's works for publication, and in particular the “Khamasa” editions of 1939–1940 together with the critical labour surrounding “Hayrat ul-abror”, made Navoi studies a central field for the development of textual criticism in Uzbek. Yet such preparation was never a neutral technical act: the choice of script, prose explanation, abridgement, restoration, glossary work, and commentary all shaped how readers came to understand the classical texts. Editorial theory, in turn, clarifies the methodological problems these scholars confronted – copy-text selection, substantive and accidental variants, conjecture, archetype, interpolation, and the apparatus criticus all illuminate the difficulty of establishing reliable texts. In the end, Uzbek textual scholarship transformed the manuscript heritage into an academically interpreted and publicly circulated component of the national literary history, and its principal achievement lay not in the printing of texts alone but in the creation of a philological culture capable of selecting, verifying, explaining, and canonizing that heritage.

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