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Keywords: “Rabi’-ul-abror” by Zamakhshari, translation, codicology, manuscript, library, source, history of literature, Tajik literature

The given article is devoted to the consideration of the valuable work of Arabic and Persian literature - “Rabe’-ul-abror” by Zamakhshari. It is noted that brief information was written on its source and copies, which are preserved in libraries around the world. An attempt was made to explain the reason for the various mentions of the title of the work relying on reliable sources. The literary production under study is a collection of proverbs, sayings and parables containing wisdom, and is very famous and well-known in the Islamic world. It is worth mentioning that “Rabe’-ul-abror” by Zamakhshari fully embodies the most elegant literary points, the most interesting historical information, and should be translated into Tajik as soon as possible and gain a respected position among Tajik science and literature, and become a beacon for hundreds of clubs.

Калидвожаҳо: “Рабеъ-ул-аброр”-и Замахшарӣ, тарҷума, нусха, дастхат, китобхона, сарчаиша, таърихи адабиёт, адабиёти тоҷик.

Мақолаи мазкур ба баррасии асари пураарзиши адабиёти арабу аҷам - “Рабеъ-ул-аброр”-Замахшарӣ бахшида шудааст. Қайд карда мешавад, ки онд ба сарчаиша ва нусхаҳои он, ки дар китобхонаҳои ҷаҳон маҳфуз мебошад, маълумоти мухтасар инио шудааст. Кӯшиши ба ҳарч дода шудааст, ки сабаби гуногунзикрии унвони асарро таъа ба сарчаишаҳои муътамад матраҳ намояд. Асари мавриди омӯзиши маҷмуи панду амсол, мақолу зарбулмасалҳо ҳикматро дарбар гирифта, дар олами ислом хеле маъруфу машҳур мебошад. Бояд гуфт, ки “Рабеъ-ул-аброр”-и Замахшарӣ зарифтарин нуқоти адабӣ, ҷолибтарин ахборӣ таърихӣ комилан таҷассум намудааст ва ҳар чи зудтар ба забони тоҷикӣ тарҷума шавад ва дар байни илму адаби тоҷик мақоми арҷманд пайдо намояд ва ҷароғи садҳо маҳфилҳо гардад.

Ключевые слова: «Раб-ул-аброр» Замахшари, перевод, кодикология, рукопись, библиотека, источник, история литературы, таджикская литература.

Данная статья посвящена рассмотрению ценного произведения арабской и персидской литературы — «Раб-ул-аброр» Замахшари. Отмечено, что краткие сведения были написаны об его источнике и копиях, которые хранятся в библиотеках по всему миру. Была сделана попытка объяснить причину различных упоминаний названия произведения, опираясь на достоверные источники. Исследуемое литературное произведение представляет собой сборник пословиц, поговорок и притч, содержащих мудрость, и является очень известным и известным в исламском мире. Стоит отметить, что «Раб-ул-аброр» Замахшари в полной мере воплощает в себе самые изящные литературные положения, самые интересные исторические сведения и должен быть переведен на таджикский язык как можно скорее и занять почетное место среди таджикской науки и литературы, стать маяком для сотен клубов.

1. Introduction

The author's full name is Abul Qasim Mahmud ibn Muhammad (born 467/1075 – died 538/1144), and Zamakhshari is his pen-name derived from his birthplace being Zamakhshar village in Khwarazm. He penned most of his works in Mecca, hence his other appellation, Jarullah (neighbor of God). He authored over 50 works spanning lexicography, morphology, syntax, prosody, hadith, tafsir (Quranic exegesis), and general cultural studies [9, 166; 10, 232; 11, 163].

One of Zamakhshari's notable works is “Rabi' al-abrar wa nusūs al-akhbār” (ذصوص الابرار ربيع الاخبار) (The Spring of the Righteous and Narratives of Reports) also known as “Rabi' al-abrar fī mā yasurru al-khawātir wa-l-afkār” (The Spring of the Righteous: Concerning That Which Gladdens Hearts and Minds). The relevant literary production contains proverbs, maxims, and wisdom literature, and enjoys considerable renown within the Islamic world.

Rashid al-Din Vatvat, in his work “Latā'if al-amsāl” (Elegant Proverbs) references this work by Zamakhshari offering the following commentary on a specific proverb: “Jarullah Mahmud ibn Umar al-Zamakhshari, may God have mercy on him, in his book “Nusus al-Akhbar”, which he compiled, brings together these two sayings, narrating from Abdullah ibn al-Abbas, may God be pleased with him” [2, 55].

The mentioned book was written in Arabic during the author's intellectual maturity, in the last decade of his life. The preface indicates that he composed it after completing his “al-Kashshaf” (The Unveiler) in 528/1133. He asserts: “This is a book I decided to write so that the anxieties of those scrutinizing “al-Kashshaf 'an haqā'iq al-tanzīl” (The Unveiler of the Truths of Revelation) may find tranquility and solace, and the hearts wearied in their pursuit of its hidden points may find comfort and respite” [3, 1, 19].

“Rabi' al-abrar” distinguishes itself stylistically from Zamakhshari's other works, adhering to the “ilm al-muḥāḍarāt” (the science of lectures) style. The specific type or category within this lecture style is not explicitly mentioned within the work. Through research on “Rabi' al-abrar”, it has been determined that the work employs the “muḥāḍara” (lecture) style.

2. Main results and discussion

Hundreds of valuable works globally are written in “muḥāḍara” (lecture) style, including “Munis al-Wāḥid wa nuzhat al-mustafid fī al-muḥāḍarāt” (The Companion of the Solitary and the Delight of the Beneficiary in Lectures), “Ḥilyat al-muḥāḍara” (The Ornament of Lectures), and “al-Tamsīl wa al-muḥāḍara” (Representation and Lectures) by Abu Mansur al-Tha'alibi; “al-Mu'jaliz wa jawāhir al-'ilm” (The Concise and the Jewels of Knowledge) by Ibn al-Marwan al-Dinawari; “Muḥāḍarāt al-abrār wa musāmīrāt al-akhayār” (Lectures of the Righteous and Conversations of the Noble) by Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi; and “Simṭ al-awraq fī al-muḥāḍarāt” (Gathering of Leaves in Lectures) by Ibn Hajar al-Hamawi and so on.

The title of Zamakhshari's work appears variously in catalogs, manuscripts, and translations. The British Museum's Arabic manuscript catalog lists it as “Rabi' al-abrar” (الابرار ربيع) [16, 714]; the Chester Beatty Library catalog as “Rabi' al-abrar fīmā yasurru al-khawātir wa-l-afkār” [15, 16]; the German National Library's Arabic manuscript catalog as “Kitāb Rabi' al-abrār” and the Tashkent branch of the Uzbekistan Academy of Sciences' Institute of Oriental Studies catalog also as “Rabi' al-abrar”.

Muhyiddin Muhammad ibn Qasim ibn Ya'qub ibn Ahmad Asami Rumi abridged the work entitled as “Rawḍ al-akhbār al-muntakhab min Rabi' al-abrar” (The Garden of Narratives: Selections from The Spring of the Righteous). Yaqut al-Hamawi in “Mu'jam al-udabā” (The Dictionary of Literati), al-Dhahabi, Zirikli, and several other scholars also recognize the work as “Rabi' al-abrar”. However, the complete title is “Rabi' al-abrar wa nusūs al-akhbār”. Ḥājī Khalifa and Ismail Pasha al-Baghdadi cite the full title in their works. Ibn Khallikan, al-Dawudi, and Carl Brockelmann recorded it as “Rabi' al-abrar wa fusūs al-akhbār” (The Spring of the Righteous and Axes of Narratives).

“Rabi' al-abrar” comprises 98 chapters. Scholarly opinions differ regarding the exact number. Ḥājī Khalifa, in his “Kashf al-zunūn” (Removing the Doubts) mentions 92 chapters, and considered the original manuscripts in Iran, Turkey, Germany, and the Netherlands confirms 98 chapters. Calculating the numerical value of “Mahmud” (محمود) using the Arabic “abjad” system yields:

Mīm (م) - 40; Ḥā' (ح) - 8; Mīm (م) - 40; Wāw (و) - 6; Dāl (د) - 4; Total = 98

Zamakhshari's work served as one of the sources for “Latā'if al-tawā'if” (Subtleties of Groups) by Fakhr al-Din Ali al-Safī, a 15th-16th century writer [4, 35]. Manuscripts of “Rabi' al-abrar” are housed in various collections: St. Petersburg branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences' Institute of Oriental Studies holds a 1339 copy (No. 676); Dār al-Kutub wa-l-ādāb (The House of Books and Literature) in

Egypt has a copy (No. 155); and the Tashkent Institute of Oriental Studies possesses a 1589 copy (No. 2484). Copies are also preserved in the libraries of Leiden and Berlin.

Hundreds of manuscript copies remain in libraries worldwide. This is evidenced by the presence of exquisite examples in renowned manuscript collections such as Aya Sofia (No. 3985), the British Museum (Nos. 1134, 1135), Fatih (Nos. 3893-3896), Bankipur (Nos. 2614-2616), the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (Nos. 3499, 3500, 6742), Dār al-Kutub in Cairo (No. 3/157), and others. The existence of numerous abridgments of “Rabi' al-abrar” further underscores the work's significance. Zamakhshari himself produced the first abridgment entitled as “al-Mukhtār” (The Chosen). Manuscript copies of this abridged version are held in the British Museum (No. 729), the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (No. 5038), and the Kılıç Ali Paşa Library (No. 623) [5, 5, 234].

One manuscript copy of “Rabi' al-abrar” is preserved in Uzbekistan at the Tashkent branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies, Uzbekistan Academy of Sciences, under the catalogue number 2384. This version comprises five volumes and 77 chapters.

Scholar Jarullah Mahmud Zamakhshari conducted research to identify and establish the provenance of manuscript copies held in libraries globally confirming the existence of numerous manuscripts of this work. The original Arabic version of “Rabi' al-abrar” contains 98 chapters. Some sources mention a higher number of chapters, but lack supporting evidence. Extant manuscripts consistently contain 98 chapters. The original manuscript of “Rabi' al-abrar” is preserved in the Baghdad library under catalogue number 934; the date of its transcription is unknown. Information regarding the number of volumes and chapters varies across different sources and manuscripts.

The catalogue number for “Rabi' al-abrar” is recorded on the book's cover. This particular copy has been preserved for centuries. The manuscript comprises 371 folios (742 pages). Each page contains 25 lines written in black Naskh script. The dimensions are 28x18 centimeters. The cover is made of processed leather and is liver-colored.

This specific manuscript preserves 77 chapters of the work. The manuscript begins with a table of contents compiled by the scribe followed by the chapters themselves. This manuscript commences with the chapter “al-Awqāt wa dhikr al-dunyā wa-l-ākhirā” (Times and Mention of This World and the Hereafter) and concludes with chapter 77, “al-'alāl wa-l-amrād wa-l-'ahāt wa-l-ṭibb, wa-l-dawā', wa-l-iyāda, wa naḥw dhālik” (Ailments, Illnesses, Infirmities, Medicine, Remedies, Recovery, and Related Matters) [2, 89].

The table of contents in this manuscript states: “The author of this work, the author of “al-Kashshaf” is the Imam, scholar, pride of Khwarazm, Jarullah Qasim Abul Mahmud, the honorable sheikh”.

The manuscript's organization is outlined as follows:

- Volume 1: Chapters 1-15
- Volume 2: Chapters 16-32
- Volume 3: Chapters 33-58
- Volume 4: Chapters 59-75
- Volume 5: Chapters 76-98

Numerous scholars subsequently produced abridgments of “Rabi' al-abrar”, among the most renowned being Muhyiddin Muhammad ibn Khatib (died 940/1533), who titled his abridgment “Rawḍ al-Akḥbār” (The Garden of Narratives) or “Rawḍ al-Akhyār” (The Garden of the Noble) [7, 212]. A valuable edition of “Rabi' al-abrar” annotated by Abdul Amir Ali Muhanna was published by Mu'assasat al-'Alami li-l-Matbu'at (Beirut, 1412) in five volumes.

Commenting on this work, Dr. of Philology N. Hamroboev writes: “Rabi' al-abrar wa nusūs al-akhyār” by Jarullah Zamakhshari is among the most important literary and ethical productions in Arabic, holding a special place and status in Persian and Tajik literature due to its literary and historical value. The significance of the relevant literary production lies primarily in the fact that most of the protagonists in its narratives are kings and individuals of Iranian origin, whose commendable qualities and wise counsel are presented within historical tales and accounts. Moreover, most of its stories and narratives have Persian origins drawing heavily from valuable Persian and Tajik works, including “Khudāynāma” (Book of Kings), “Kalila wa Dimna”, “Tarikh-i Tabari” (The History of

Tabari), and “Pandnāma” (Book of Counsel) and “Andarznāma” (Book of Admonitions) by Iranian rulers and princes, which are recognized as primary sources for “Rabi' al-abrar”. Furthermore, “Nasim al-Rabi'” by Sufi Samarqandi is a translation of “Rabi' al-abrar” by Zamakhshari. Therefore, the linguistic features, grammatical characteristics, and stylistic and literary qualities of this translation, on the one hand, inform us about the literary and historical value of “Rabi' al-abrar”, and on the other hand, broaden the scope of research for investigating other aspects of the works of both Jarullah Zamakhshari and Sufi Samarqandi” [7, 213].

This work incorporates patterns and anecdotes from renowned figures like Jahiz, Umar ibn al-Khattab, Ibn Abbas, Ali ibn Abi Talib, al-Khudri, al-Hasan al-Basri, Anas ibn Malik, Zahab ibn Muni, Ahmad ibn Yusuf, al-Sanawbari, al-Ma'mun, al-Farazdaq, Ibn Mas'ud, Ibn Rumi, al-Asma'i, al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf, Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan, Badi' al-Zaman al-Hamadani, Sahl ibn Harun, Anushirvan, and others, alongside folktales and narratives.

The original Arabic version of “Rabi' al-abrar” consists of 98 chapters. The work compiles articles on literature, history, geography, social issues, and the lives of prophets, kings, and ordinary people, incorporating numerous concrete examples and precise quotations from various sources.

Thematic content of the work includes:

- *Time, the world, and the afterlife;*
- *The sky, stars, celestial space, and the Throne;*
- *Air, wind, hot and cold winds, and their various forms;*
- *Hellfire, flames of hell, lamps, and candles;*
- *Earth, mountains, rocks, earthly treasures, and beneficial minerals;*
- *Earthquakes and eclipses;*
- *Water and seas, valleys and rivers, springs, and wells;*
- *Boats and floating objects;*
- *Trees, plants, gardens, flowers, and paradise;*
- *Cities, buildings and houses, construction and development, destruction, and love for one's homeland;*
- *Foolishness, ignorance, idleness, grief, and impatience;*
- *Friendship and human relationships, meetings, gatherings, social interactions, and polite greetings;*
- *Poetry, eloquence, perfection, and refinement;*
- *Sermons, illogical and weak speech, slowness, stuttering, reticence and verbosity, and conciseness;*
- *Women, marriage and divorce, weddings, praise and criticism, etc.* [5, 108].

Chapter 25, entitled as “Friendship and Human Relationships, Meetings, Gatherings, Social Interactions, and Polite Greetings”, and Luqman said: “If you wish to establish a bond of friendship with someone, first test their anger. If their behavior towards you remains consistent, establish a brotherly bond with them. If the opposite occurs, distance yourself from them” [2, 95].

The literary production under study belonging to the pen of Zamakhshari has been published in abridged form several times and translated into Persian, Turkish, and Uzbek. Notably, Ashiqi Chalabi (died 979/1571) translated an abridgment into Turkish [12]. This translator also compiled a separate abridgment.

The first complete Persian translation of “Rabi' al-abrar” was undertaken by Nur al-Din Ahmad ibn Ni'mat Allah al-Musawi al-Shushtari. This translation was published in Tabriz in 1301 [5, 5, 235]. The second one abridged Persian translation was completed by Mulla Qivam al-Din, titled “Nasim al-Rabi'” (The Breeze of Spring) encompassing 82 chapters.

Uzbek researcher Pirmat Shermukhamedov [14] translated the work into Uzbek entitling as “Yaxshilar bahori” (The Spring of the Righteous) published in Tashkent in 2010. The translator, himself a fellow Khwarazmian drew inspiration from this connection writing in the introduction: “Kamina khorazmlik buyuk vatandoshim Mahmud Zamakhshariyning xalqaro shon-shuxratini o'z vatanida ham qayta tiklash orzusida allomaning asarlari bilan tanishib, o'zimni yana bir yangi universitetni tugatganday his etdim” - I, a humble Khwarazmian, with the desire to restore the international renown of my great compatriot Mahmud Zamakhshari in his homeland, familiarized myself with the scholar's works and felt as though I had graduated from another university) [1; 8; 7; 13].

Currently, Professor Nasriddinov Fakhridin is translating the relevant work into Tajik. Installments of the translation are being serially published in the journal “Kamol Khujandi”.

Published sections include:

- *Love for one's homeland;*
- *Friendship, love, companionship, and intimacy;*
- *Education, teaching, and mention of teachers and mentors* [15];
- *Fortune and misfortune, deprivation and prosperity, good and bad omens, sustenance and hardship;*

- *Changing circumstances, shifts in power and authority, and the occurrence of trials and tribulations* [16];
- *Goodness, remembrance of companions and righteous individuals, and their qualities and stories;*
- *Character and attributes, mention of beauty and ugliness, tall and short stature, and greatness and smallness* [17];
- *Good and bad manners;*
- *Condemnation, mockery, discord, and backbiting;*
- *Humiliation, weakness, helplessness, cowardice, foolishness, and negligence, etc.* [18].

“Rabi' al-abrar” stands out among Zamakhshari’s hundreds of literary productions, which include “al-Kashf fī qirā’āt al-’ashr” (The Exposition on the Ten Recitations), “al-Nasā’ih al-sighār” (Brief Counsels), “al-Nasīha” (The Counsel), and others.

3. Conclusion

Thus, “Rabi' al-abrar” by Zamakhshari occupies an influential role in the development of Arabic and Persian literature and scholarship. “Rabi' al-abrar” with its captivating literary nuances and compelling historical accounts, fully embodies these qualities. It is recommended that the relevant literary production should be translated into Tajik as soon as possible to attain a prominent place within Tajik literature and scholarship enriching countless gatherings with its wisdom.

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