

TRANSLATION EDITIONS OF ABDURAUUF FITRAT'S WORKS: A SURVEY OF FOREIGN-LANGUAGE RECEPTION IN THE TWENTIETH AND TWENTY-FIRST CENTURIES

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Abstract

This article examines the translation editions of works by Abdurauf Fitrat (1886–1938), one of the central figures of the Central Asian Jadid movement, as they have circulated in Russian, English, German, Turkish, Tajik, Uyghur, Kazakh and Chinese over the past century. Drawing on Uzbek-language secondary scholarship and on the publication record of Fitrat's writings abroad, the study reconstructs how individual texts — the Persian-Tajik dialogue Munozara (1909), the travelogue Bayonoti sayyohi hindi (1912), the verse drama Shaytonning Tangriga isyoni, the historical tragedy Abulfayzkhan, the short story Qiyomat, and the political drama Hind Ikhtilolchilari — entered non-Uzbek reading publics through specific translators, journals and publishing houses. Particular attention is given to the contributions of Edward Allworth, William Hanaway, Adeeb Khalid, Shawn T. Lyons, Ingeborg Baldauf and Zaynobidin Abdirashidov. The paper argues that the foreign-language afterlife of Fitrat's writings is neither uniform nor complete: it is fragmented across languages, mediated by ideological framings of each period, and still contains substantial gaps that warrant fresh translation-studies research.

Keywords: Abdurauf Fitrat; Jadidism; Uzbek literature; literary translation; reception studies; Bukhara; Ingeborg Baldauf; Edward Allworth; Adeeb Khalid.

1. Introduction

Abdurauf Fitrat (1886–1938) occupies a foundational place in modern Uzbek literary, intellectual and political history. As one of the leading voices of the Bukharan and Turkestani Jadid movement, he wrote prolifically across genres — poetry, fiction, drama, philological scholarship and political journalism — in both Uzbek (Chagatay) and Persian-Tajik. After his execution in 1938 during the Stalinist terror, his writings remained banned in the Soviet Union for decades; this delayed and distorted reception inside his homeland coincided, however, with a parallel circulation of his texts outside the Soviet space, beginning already during his lifetime with Istanbul, Tashkent, Berlin and Moscow editions and continuing into the post-1991 period of renewed scholarly attention.

The present study addresses a relatively under-systematised aspect of Fitrat studies (fitratshunoslik): the inventory and interpretation of translation editions of his works in foreign languages. While individual translations have been described in passing in monographs and journal articles, no recent synoptic account in English has brought these data together. The most recent dedicated study of the English-language translations of Fitrat is now more than a decade old, and during that interval Uzbek translation studies as a discipline has matured considerably.

Two research questions guide the article: (1) In which foreign languages, by which translators, and through which publication channels have Fitrat's principal works appeared? (2) What patterns — of selection, framing and scholarly commentary — emerge from this body of translation

activity, and what do they reveal about the international reception of Jadid literature more generally?

2. Materials and Methods

The study draws on three categories of sources. First, the primary translation editions themselves — Istanbul (1909, 1911–1912, 1912), Tashkent (1911, 1913), Samarkand (1913), Moscow (1923, 1924, 1936, 1965), Dushanbe (1964, 1988), Berlin (1987) and others — are identified through their bibliographic descriptions in Uzbek and Russian secondary literature. Second, scholarly commentary on these editions, including prefaces by Mahmudkhoja Behbudiy and Nazir To'raqulov, reviews such as V. B. Andreev's 1916 notice in *Turkestanskiya Vedomosti*, and monographic treatments by Ingeborg Baldauf, Edward Allworth, Adeeb Khalid, Shawn T. Lyons and Zaynobodin Abdirashidov, provides interpretive framing. Third, recent Uzbek scholarship — the doctoral research of Z. Mirzayeva on Russian and English translations of Fitrat's ghazals, and contributions by H. Boltaboyev, B. Qosimov, U. Jo'raqulov and others — is used to assess the philological quality of existing translations.

Methodologically, the paper combines a historical-bibliographic survey with elements of descriptive translation studies. For each work, where evidence permits, four parameters are recorded: source-language version, target language and date, translator and publishing institution, and the interpretive frame supplied by translator or commentator. No new translation comparison is conducted; rather, the article consolidates scattered data into a coherent map of Fitrat's foreign-language circulation.

3. Results

3.1. The Munozara and its early multilingual life

Fitrat's first published work, *Munozarai mudarrisi Bukhoroyi bo yak nafari farangi dar Hinduston dar borai makotibi jadida* ('The Debate of a Bukharan Teacher with a European in India on the New-Method Schools'), was written in Persian-Tajik and printed in Istanbul in 1909 (1328 AH), after the Emir of Bukhara forbade its publication at home. Hoji Muin and Shukrullo translated the text into Uzbek as *Hindistonda bir farangi ila Bukhoroli bir mudarrising bir necha masalalar hamda usuli jadida xususida qilgan munozarasi* and serialised it in *Turkiston viloyatining gazetisi* in 1911; a separate Tashkent book edition followed in 1913, with an afterword by Mahmudkhoja Behbudiy.

A Russian translation by Colonel I. Yagello, made from the Persian, appeared the same year as a limited, classified edition: *Fitret (Fitrat) bukharets. Spor bukharskogo mudarrisa s evropeytsem iz Indii o novometodnykh shkolakh* ('Istinnyi rezul'tat obmena myslei'). *Pervoe izdanie. Napechatano v Stambule, v musul'manskoi tipografii. S persidskogo perevel polkovnik Yagello. Ne podlezhit oglasneniyu*. Tashkent, 1911. V. B. Andreev published a review in *Turkestanskiya Vedomosti* on 13, 15 and 20 October 1916. The play was subsequently staged in Samarkand and Tashkent as a two-act satirical drama.

Two English-language translations are documented. William Hanaway is credited with rendering the Istanbul edition as *Debate between a Teacher from Bukhara and a European*, with a publication date variously given as 1911–1912. Adeeb Khalid later produced his own English version under the same title, in the context of his work on the Jadid movement.

3.2. Bayonoti sayyohi hindi: Persian, Russian and Uzbek editions

Bayonoti sayyohi hindi ('Tales of an Indian Traveller'), signed 'Abd ar-Rauf', appeared in Persian-Tajik in Istanbul in 1912 (1330 AH). A Russian translation by A. N. Kondrat'eva — *Rasskazy indiiskogo puteshestvennika. Bukhara kak ona est* — was published in Samarkand in 1913 by Mahmudkhoja Behbudiy's press, only one year after the original. A second wave of editions followed in the late Soviet thaw: the Persian-Tajik text, slightly abridged, was reprinted in *Sadoi Sharq*, no. 6 (1988), Dushanbe, and a condensed Russian version based on the 1913

translation appeared in Tashkent the same year. The first Uzbek translation, by Hasan Qudratullaev, was prepared in 1988 from the Dushanbe edition and published in 1991. H. Boltaboyev's collation with the original 1912 Istanbul imprint, however, revealed substantial abridgements; a re-translation was subsequently undertaken in which Qur'anic ayat and hadith citations were rendered both in transcription and with their literal meaning.

3.3. Drama and poetry: Abulfayzkhan, Hind Ikhtilolchilari, Sayha, Qiyomat

The historical tragedy Abulfayzkhan was issued in Moscow in 1924 and has since received scholarly analysis from Shawn T. Lyons and Salih Bishakchi. The political drama Hind Ikhtilolchilari ('Indian Revolutionaries') was first printed in Berlin by Uzbek students studying in Germany; Vadud Mahmud subsequently devoted an article to it. Fitrat's Persian-language poetry collection Sayha ('The Cry'), also published in Istanbul in 1910, belongs to the same early phase of his foreign-language publication activity.

The short story Qiyomat ('Doomsday'/'The Day of Judgement') had the most complex translation history of all of Fitrat's prose. A Moscow edition with a preface by Nazir To'raqulov appeared in 1923; To'raqulov compared the work to Dante's Divine Comedy. In 1936, L. Sdserdotova rendered it into Russian as Strashnyi sud in O'zbekiston adabiyoti, no. 2. Fitrat himself republished a Tajik version seven times during those years. In 1937 separate Uyghur and Kazakh editions appeared. L. Kandipova produced a fresh Russian translation from the Tajik in Dushanbe in 1964, followed by S. Vasil'eva's Moscow Russian version, also from the Tajik, in 1965. More than thirty articles, studies and prefaces have been devoted to Qiyomat, with contributions by E. Allworth, L. Klimovich and G. Rahimova standing out.

3.4. German-language reception: Ingeborg Baldauf and the Berlin verse drama

The German Turkologist Ingeborg Baldauf (Humboldt University of Berlin) is responsible for one of the most consequential foreign-language editions of Fitrat. Her translation and commentary on the verse drama Shaytonning Tangriga isyoni ('Satan's Rebellion against God') appeared in 1987 in Türkische Sprachen und Literaturen: Materialien der ersten deutschen Turkologen-Konferenz (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz), prepared in collaboration with Klaus Kreiser and Samih Tezcan. Baldauf framed the translation explicitly as an attempt to give scholars access to a text until then unavailable, and to integrate Fitrat into the international discussion of emancipatory literature beyond the narrower frame of Uzbek atheist writing.

Baldauf's accompanying essay, 'Abdurauf Fitrat: Shaytonning Tangriga isyoni', interprets the play as a structural identification between Satan and Fitrat himself. As U. Amonov has noted, Baldauf pairs the two names deliberately: 'The opposition of Satan (Fitrat) and God is demonstrated through the antithesis of "true knowledge" (bilim) and "false knowledge" (hikmat, ma'rifat) ... Fitrat employs the antonyms of light (i.e. consciousness — knowledge) and darkness (i.e. ignorance) that are dear to all Central Asian enlighteners.' For Baldauf, Satan as 'master-teacher' of the angels corresponds to Fitrat as People's Commissar of Education and 'principal teacher' of the Bukharan People's Republic, choosing freedom when faced with the same alternative as his protagonist.

Baldauf's earlier paper 'Haqiqat axtarib' ('In Search of Truth'), prepared for the 1990 Bamberg conference of orientalists, and her later collection XX asr o'zbek adabiyotiga chizgilar ('Sketches on Twentieth-Century Uzbek Literature'), reinforce the centrality of Fitrat alongside Behbudiy, Hamza, Cho'lpon, Shokir Sulaymon and Qodiriy in German-language Central Asian studies, and trace how the concept of 'truth' shifts across Jadid, revolutionary, nationalist and secularist registers.

3.5. English-language scholarship: Allworth, Hanaway, Khalid, Lyons

Edward Allworth, of Columbia University, is widely credited as the first scholar to make Fitrat's writings accessible to an Anglophone readership. His Modern Uzbeks placed Jadid

intellectuals at the centre of the emergence of modern Uzbek identity and included English translations of selected passages. Adeeb Khalid's broader work on the Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform extended this engagement, including his English version of the Munozara as 'The Debate between a Teacher from Bukhara and a European'. Shawn T. Lyons has produced detailed studies of Abulfayzkhan and of Fitrat's bilingual (zullisonayn) status as a writer in both Turkic and Persian.

In 2017–2018, Professor Zaynobidin Abdirashidov published Abdurra'uf Fitrat in Istanbul: Quest for Freedom as volume 22 of the ANOR monograph series of the Department of Asian and African Studies at Humboldt University of Berlin. The monograph reconstructs Fitrat's pre-revolutionary political and social thought, his education and publicistic activity in Istanbul, and devotes its third chapter — 'Being Bukharayi but Turkestani' — to the categories of millat, davlat and vatan as constituents of Jadid identity. Further references to Fitrat appear in the work of A. Bennigsen and L. Lemercier-Quelquejay, M. Buttino, Rakowska-Harmstone, J. Benzing, J. Souper, and in Turkish-language scholarship by Çağatay Koçar, Ertuğrul Yaman, Yusuf Avcı and Ayhan Çelikbay.

A separate strand of Berlin-based reception deserves mention. From March 1923, the Bukharan National Government supported the journal *Uchqun* ('Spark') for the seventy Bukharan students Fitrat had sent to Germany for higher studies. These young writers issued Uzbek-language editions of works by both Cho'lpon and Fitrat in Berlin during the 1920s. Later, Mustafa Chokay's Paris-based *Yosh Turkistan* (1929–1939) carried Turkestan-related cultural-historical material; a piece by Chokay's son responded to a 1931 article in the Paris journal *Le Mois* that had presented poems by Fitrat, Cho'lpon, Botu and Elbek from the 1922 O'zbek yosh shoirlari anthology under the rubric 'Poetry in Turkestani literature'.

4. Discussion

Three observations follow from this mapping. First, Fitrat's foreign circulation is heavily front-loaded into two historical moments: the late imperial / early Soviet decade (1909–1924), when Istanbul, Tashkent, Samarkand, Moscow and Berlin all hosted editions of his work; and the long Western Sovietological engagement from the 1970s onwards, in which Allworth, Baldauf, Khalid and later Abdirashidov re-anchored Fitrat in international scholarship. The intervening Stalinist decades represent a near-total publication blackout in Russian and a corresponding silence in Western translation activity.

Second, translation choices have been governed by genre and ideology. The Russian colonial state was first interested in the Munozara as political intelligence — hence the 1911 classified translation 'not for publication'. Soviet-era translations of *Qiyomat* foregrounded its anticlerical satire; Baldauf's German translation of *Shaytonning Tangriga isyoni* recast the same anti-clerical surface as a philosophical drama of emancipation, an emphasis that aligns with U. Jo'raqulov's observation that the chaotic figures of Fitrat's realist works (jinn, devils) serve a humanistic interpretation. B. Qosimov's verdict that the play 'is not directed against religion but against irreligion, faithlessness, and loss of conviction' indicates how contested the framing of even a single Fitrat work remains.

Third, the translation record is uneven in quality and completeness. The Uzbek 1991 translation of *Bayonoti sayyohi hindi*, made from a Tajik intermediary that was itself abridged, illustrates how a serial chain of indirect translations can erode a text — a problem only corrected when H. Boltaboyev's collation with the 1912 Istanbul original prompted a fresh rendering. Z. Mirzayeva's doctoral analysis of Fitrat's ghazals in Russian and English likewise foregrounds the difficulty of re-creating Fitrat's poetic devices across genetically near and distant languages. The international reception of Fitrat, in short, is not a settled body of knowledge but an active translation problem.

Several limitations should be acknowledged. The survey relies on Uzbek-language secondary literature and does not include direct archival verification of every cited imprint, particularly for the early Istanbul and Berlin editions. Factual confusions and references to unreliable interwar press accounts persist in parts of the existing scholarship, and additional unpublished or under-catalogued translations may yet come to light.

5. Conclusion

Abdurauf Fitrat's writings have travelled, in successive waves and through multiple intermediaries, into Russian, English, German, Turkish, Tajik, Uyghur, Kazakh and Chinese. The translators who shaped this afterlife — Hoji Muin and Shukrullo, Colonel Yagello, A. N. Kondrat'eva, L. Sdserdotova, L. Kandipova, S. Vasil'eva, William Hanaway, Adeeb Khalid, Edward Allworth, Shawn T. Lyons, Ingeborg Baldauf, Klaus Kreiser, Samih Tezcan, Hasan Qudratullaev, H. Boltaboyev — worked under very different political and philological conditions. A renewed Fitrat translation studies, equipped with the methodological gains of the past decade and operating directly from the Uzbek and Persian-Tajik originals, is now both possible and overdue. Such work would not only complete the international scholarly portrait of one of the principal Jadid intellectuals; it would also model how the wider corpus of Central Asian modernist literature might be made accessible to a global readership.

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