

PUBLICATIONS OF AHMAD JAFAROGHLU ABOUT THE FOLKLORE OF AZERBAIJAN IN EUROPE

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В статье исследуются произведения известного ученого - тюрколога и литературоведа Ахмеда Джафароглу об Азербайджанском фольклоре – “75 Aserbaidtschanische Lieder “Bayaty” in der Mundart von Gandscha nebst einer sprachlichen Erklärung” (“75 Азербайджанские баяты на Гянджинском диалекте с предисловием о языке”), опубликованный в Берлине в 1930 году отдельной брошюрой и “La Canzone del “Sayagi” nella letteratura popolare dell’ Azerbaigian” (“Песни саячы в Азербайджанском народном творчестве”), опубликованный в Италии в сборнике “Annali del Regio Istituto Superiore Orientale di Napoli” (IX, Dicembre 1936-XV).

Данные произведения рассматриваются автором в контексте многогранной творческой деятельности Ахмеда Джафароглу и оцениваются как весомый вклад великого ученого в европейской тюркологической науке.

Ключевые слова: Ахмед Джафароглы, Азербайджанский фольклор, баяты, песня саячы

This article makes an attempt for the first time to

study the works of Jafaroghlu about Azerbaijani folklore published in Germany, “75 Aserbaidtschanische Lieder ‘Bayaty’ in der Mundart von Gandscha nebst einer sprachlichen Erklärung” (An introduction to 75 Azeri bayatis in the Ganja dialect and their language analysis), and in Italy, “La Canzone del ‘Sayagi’ nella letteratura popolare dell’ Azerbaigian” (Counting Songs in Azerbaijani Folk Literature). Neither Azerbaijani nor Turkish scholars have subjected these articles of Jafaroghlu to investigation while studying his creative heritage. While studying these articles it has been taken into account that they were addressed to the European scholarly public, and the ideas and considerations in them have been clarified in the context of Azerbaijani folklore studies. The article also focuses attention on some mistakes Jafaroghlu’s inferences.

Key words: Jafaroghlu (Ahmed Caferoğlu, Ahmed Caferoglu), Azerbaijani folklore, bayati, “sayachi” songs

Ahmad Jafaroghlu (1899-1975) was one of the migrant Azerbaijani scholars who lived and worked in Turkey. In April of 1920, when the Russian Soviet Army occupied Azerbaijan, Jafaroghlu, a student of Baku State University, emigrated to Turkey and continued his studies there. He was afraid of repression because in September of 1918 he had fought in the ranks of the Caucasian Islamic Army under the command of the Turkish general Nuru in the liberation of Baku from the Dashnak-Bolshevik occupation; therefore he was obliged to migrate to Turkey.

After Turkey he left for Germany, completed his studies there and gained experience as a Turkologist. He wrote his works in German, French, Italian, and Polish and soon became recognized in Europe and in the world as a highly-qualified Turkologist. He is the only scholar who tried his hand in all spheres of Turkic studies. He represented Turkey in a number of international institutions and was elected an honorary member of many foreign academies. His works have not lost their significance and relevance today, either. They are still re-published in Turkey, Iran and Europe.

The works of Jafaroghlu on Azerbaijani folklore and literature published in Europe in German and Italian as well as his articles in the newspaper “Ankara” in French form the most important part of his literary heritage in the sphere of literary criticism. After the publication of his voluminous article “Die moderne aserbaidtschanische Literatur” (Modern Azerbaijani Literature (1; 2; 3;)) and his thorough

review entitled “Die Aserbeidschanische Literatur” (Azerbaijani Literature (4)), the European literary public and literary critics had the opportunity for the first time to obtain objective and systematic information on Azerbaijani literature and its sources.

In this article we shall speak about two articles by Jafaroghlu: “75 Aserbaidshische Lieder 'Bayaty' in der Mundart von Gandscha nebst einer sprachlichen Erklärung” (5; 6) and “La Canzone del 'Sayagi' nella letteratura popolare dell' Azerbaigian” (7).

His work “75 Aserbaidshische Lieder 'Bayaty' in der Mundart von Gandscha nebst einer sprachlichen Erklärung” was his doctoral thesis and his first research work published in Europe.

Jafaroghlu went to Europe for studies on a scholarship from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Germany. For one semester he studied in Berlin University, where he was taught by Bang Kaup, A. Von Le Jog, Vasmer and Vestermann. Then he spent five semesters in Breslau at Friedrich Vilhelm University, where he was taught by Friedrich Giese, Brockelmann, Diels, Koschmieder and Schaefer. On May 15, 1929, he earned his PhD under the supervision of Friedrich Giese, a well-known Turkologist.

The topic of his dissertation was the Azerbaijani *bayatis* which he loved and listened to in Ganja, his home town, the second biggest town of Azerbaijan. He left Ganja in the early years of his childhood, lived in Samarkand for some time, then migrated to Turkey, which perhaps made him homesick. In general, the choice of this topic for his doctoral thesis was not incidental, but rather the manifestation of some internal demand. Later in his creative activity he appealed to many sources, ranging from the epos of “Kitabi-Dede Korkut” (The Book of my Grandfather Korkut) to the love epos of “Ashug Garib,” and various topics of Azerbaijani folklore. This is confirmed by his recognition as a scholar in the field of folklore studies.

In his work “75 Azerbaycaniçe Lieder 'Bayaty' in der Mundart von Gence nebst einer sprachlichen Erklärung” Jafaroghlu published Azerbaijani *bayatis* in the original and his own literal (line by line) translation in German for the first time. The title of the work indicates that the author will focus on the linguistic features of *bayatis*; nevertheless, in the foreword and introduction of the work he speaks of the *bayati* as a poetic genre in folklore and its characteristic features, giving a thorough analysis of *bayatis* from the point of view of literary criticism. Translation of 75 Azerbaijani *bayatis* into German and introduction of them to European readers was a monumental literary event.

In his voluminous work “Study of the Azeri dialect in the East and West” written in 1934, he speaks of his own work and writes, “in the last ten years among the studies dedicated to the investigation of the Azerbaijani dialect in the West, my own study was also included. In 1930, that research paper was published as a separate booklet and also in the collections of Berlin Oriental Institute in the form of “75 Azerbaycaniçe Lieder 'Bayaty' in der Mundart von Gence nebst einer sprachlichen Erklärung”, in which I speak of my native Ganja dialect (8, p.37).

This work was highly appraised by Turkologists. The German Turkologist G. Yaeschke in his “Works about Azerbaijan in German” calls “75 Azerbaycaniçe Lieder 'Bayaty' in der Mundart von Gence nebst einer sprachlichen Erklärung” an important work and writes, “The associate professor of the chair of History of the Turkish language of Istanbul University and editor of the collection *Azerbaijani Studies*, Jafaroghlu, who publishes in Istanbul in English, has published an important study in the collection of “Mitteilungen des Seminars für Orientalische Sprachen”, which is titled “75 Azerbaycaniçe Lieder 'Bayaty' in der Mundart von Gence nebst einer sprachlichen Erklärung.” The fact that the author is from Ganja by origin further adds to the importance of that study” (9, p.30).

This work by Jafaroghlu was not the first work devoted to the Azerbaijani *bayatis* published in Europe. The French scholar O. Chatskaya, who was in Ganja in 1926, collected the *bayatis* in Ganja and in the neighboring villages as she heard them from the mouths of native speakers. She even mentioned the names of those native speakers. Jafaroghlu learned about this fact approximately four years later from “Quatraine populaires de L'Azerbaïdjan” (10) published by Chatskaya in Paris in 1928 in “Journal Asiatique” with a preface by N.K. Dimitriev, and issued a review of it in English in “Azerbaycan yurt bilgisi” (“Knowledge concerning Azerbaijan”) in its 11th (November) issue.

Though the name of the country, Azerbaijan, is mentioned in Chatskaya's article, the nationality was introduced as Tatar, as in “Chansons populaires Tatares” (“Tatar folk songs”). Jafaroghlu seriously protested against the use of *Tatar* instead of *Azerbaijani* and wrote: “Such a serious journal as “Journal Asiatique,” which has studied the Orient including the Turks, for a century, attempts to present the Azerbaijani Turks as Tatars in the article titled “Chansons populaires Tatares.” Unfortunately, this is an attempt to force the old Russian approach on the Azerbaijanis. To separate them from their brothers living in Anadolu, this word has been forced into the Azerbaijani environment. The word “Azerbaijani” is

pronounced with great difficulty by the Russians; there is no need to remind persons like Chatskaya and Dimitriev, who call themselves scholars” (11, p.48). Then, speaking about the philological aspects of that article, Jafaroghlu writes: “Chatskaya's article consists of 76 bayatis describing the Ganja dialect. Transcribed based on her own pronunciation, she has ascribed some of them to Ganja, and the rest to the villages around the town. Therefore the same word has been written in different forms, which causes misunderstandings. Nevertheless, the article is fit to be read and used. The real phonetic study of bayatis belongs to Dimitriev. He has tried to explain the basic elements of the Ganja dialect from a phonetic point of view. Unfortunately, the explanations are superficial” (12, p. 48).

Though Jafaroghlu writes that he has described and studied the phonetic peculiarities of bayatis, he has also given a good deal of space to their study from the point of view of literary criticism. Therefore it is necessary to describe the structure of that work for readers. The third page of the work is entitled “Vorwort” (Foreword), then comes “Einleitung” (Introduction, p.4-9), followed by “Vokalismus” (Phonetics, pp. 10-37) and “Texte in Transkription mit Übersetzung” which consists of transcriptions of the texts in Azerbaijani and of their translations in German (pp.38-49). The bayatis have been classified into five groups: “Liebeslieder” (Bayatis of love), no.1-46; “Trauerlieder” (bayatis of mourning), no. 47-60; “Wahrsagelieder” (fortune-telling bayatis), no. 61-67; “Heimatlieder” (bayatis about the motherland), no. 68-70; and “Lieder verschiedenen Inhalts” (bayatis on various topics), no. 71-75. It may be observed that love bayatis are given more space than those in other categories. Though the main part of the work was devoted to the linguistic issues of Turkology, the foreword and introduction were dedicated to the analysis of bayatis from the point of view of literary criticism.

In the foreword of the work, Jafaroghlu notes that materials concerning the languages used in various territories populated by Turkic tribes had been collected since the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, and some of them had been analyzed by European scholars, but the languages and literatures of some Turkic peoples (such as those of the Caucasian and Iranian Azeri Turks) had not been investigated in the real sense of the word. The author makes the inference that it would be necessary to continue studies in this field.

The universal research methodology inherent to Jafaroghlu's creative activity on the whole catches readers' attention. Here the young research fellow speaks of the etymology of the word bayati and its

being the name of a melody; about the metric and genre peculiarities of the bayati; about its usage in different ceremonies; and about completely different peculiarities of the genre, even entering into polemics with authors who had previously written about bayatis, including the prominent Azerbaijani intellectual and composer, Uzeyir Hajibeyli.

In investigating the etymology of the word bayati, Jafaroghlu states that this word denotes the name of God (Tanrı) in Yusif Balasagunlu's “Kitadgu-bilig” (Road to Knowledge), in Alishir Navoi, and in Radlov's dictionary. However, in Mahmud Kashghari's dictionary “Divani-lughat-it-turk” (Turkish Dictionary Collection), it is cited as the name of an Oghuz Turkic tribe. Jafaroghlu notes that the word bayati is simply explained as the name of a genre of songs of the Azerbaijani Turks as it was noted in Huseyn Kazim's “Turk lughati” (Turkic Dictionary). He comes to the conclusion that the word bayati was taken from the name of the tribe of Bayat as were the names of folk poetry genres Varsaghi (from Varsag), Turkmeni (from Turkmen), Afshari (from Afshar), and Gazakhi (from Gazakh). He also mentions the use of this word in the names of melodies like Bayati-Kurd, Bayati-Shahnaz, Bayati-Shiraz, and Bayati-Gajar. He writes that from the point of view of melodiousness, bayatis are not connected to certain melodies. Thus, one bayati may be sung to different melodies. Bayatis are sung by common folk and are often combined with *shikasta* by folk ashugs. “If Hajibeyli claims that these bayatis are not sung in various ceremonies (wedding-parties, funerals, etc.), but rather outside of homes, the cases which I have seen tell quite a different story. I have witnessed that bayatis are sung in such ceremonies as well” (13, p.5). Jafaroghlu declares that he disagrees with Hajibeyli, who in his article “A view on Azerbaijani music” says that “shikasta and bayati are sung in fields or in the woods; in one word, not at home” (14, p.2; 15, p.219).

Jafaroghlu explains the metric and syllabic features of bayati (which include a single quatrain with seven poetic feet in each line and an a-a-b-a rhyme scheme in the stanza) and draws attention to the fact that this poetic genre of Azerbaijani folklore is rich in content: “From the point of view of their content, bayatis are very rich and variegated. There is no topic left untouched by bayatis. Any event, political view, new tradition or fashion, season of the year, love, death, beauty of nature, etc., may be glorified in bayatis. In the majority of cases, bayatis are didactic in content and consist of proverbs aimed at educating youth. No other genre of folk literature is as rich in content as the bayati. They may also be called the mirror of the life of the folk” (16, p.4).

Jafaroghlu draws attention to the popularity of bayatis among the people and writes that “bayatis are passed from generation to generation and are alive among the common people as well as among the intelligentsia. They have won the love of the whole nation; new bayatis emerge by imitating the old ones” (17, p.4).

Another noteworthy aspect of the introduction of this work is that the author has described the minute details of bayatis in their use in funerals, ceremonies, weddings, and holidays, including the Novruz holiday. For instance, let us look at a type of fortune-telling bayati called *vesfi-hal* (praise, description of one's beauty or state): “In the early days of spring at twilight, young ladies assemble in the yard, and a bowl full of water covered with a veil is put in the middle of the circle of ladies. Each lady desiring to learn her fortune drops a ring or an article of jewelry into the bowl as collateral. The leader of the ceremony, who is an aged woman, pulls out the articles from the bowl one by one in a manner that nobody sees them. Each of her actions is followed by singing a bayati, then she returns the article hidden in her palm to its owner. From the bayati which the leader of the ceremony sings, the young lady learns her fortune. This kind of fortune-telling is popularly known as *vesfi-hal* (18, p.9).

The Introduction describes a number of other ceremonies in detail as well. Jafaroghlu points out that bayatis occupy a wide and important place in the life of the Azerbaijani people. He also gives information on a number of other customs and traditions of the Azerbaijani people.

Jafaroghlu's article “La Canzone del 'Sayagi' nella letteratura popolare dell' Azerbaigian” published in Italy in 1936 speaks comprehensively about the *sayachi songs* unknown in Europe until that time. He had written about the bayatis himself and was aware of Chatskaya's work on them. Concerning the *sayachi songs*, at the beginning of the article he particularly notes that the great literary critic of Azerbaijan, Firudin bey Kocharli, published these songs in 1910 and in 1912 (19, p.20). He also published them in Russian for the first time, and as examples of literature for children for the second time; nevertheless, as he notes, “they did not attract the attention of European researchers” (21, p.4). Thus, with this article he took on the mission of conveying information to European readers about *sayachi songs* for the first time.

In his article entitled “La Canzone del 'Sayagi' nella letteratura popolare dell' Azerbaigian,” Jafaroghlu gives comprehensive information about the *sayachi* words, and he tries to particularly draw attention to three elements and clarify them: the

relation of *sayachi* words with the epos of “Kitabi-Dede Korkut”; identification of the personality of the *sayachi* (the singer of *sayachi songs*); and etymology of the word *sayachi*.

He compares some *sayachi* words with the words used in the epos of “Kitabi-Dede Korkut” and notes that there are similarities between them. He comes to the conclusion that these words are either derivations from “Kitabi-Dede Korkut”, that is, “substratum” as he writes, or that they belong to the pre-“Kitabi-Dede Korkut” period.

When he comes to the identification of the personality of the *sayachi*, he first draws attention to the definition of this word by Kocharli: *sayachi* is a common nomad, who in the late months of autumn and winter travels from village to village, sings his *sayachi songs*, praises the animals of nomads and pleases their owners, and collects solely food products in compensation. We must note that Kocharli himself published an article in September 1909 in the newspaper “Terekki” (“Progress”) from the cycle of “The Lifestyle of the Nomads” entitled “On Our Daily Life.” He wrote that cattle-breeders sang songs in which they praised and soothed their animals. “As a mother sweetly sings a lullaby for her baby, the cattle-breeders and the breeders of sheep glorified and praised the animals with their sweet songs” (22, p.229). However, this simple and clear definition of the personality of the *sayachi* singer does not satisfy Jafaroghlu. He continues his studies and comes to the conclusion that *sayachi*, that is, the singer of the *sayachi* song, is an official who counts the sheep to impose taxes on their owner. This tax is called “sayim vergisi”, that is, “counting and imposing taxes.” He also says that this type of tax was not encountered in Azerbaijan; it appeared after the conquest of Azerbaijan by the Ottoman Empire.

The scholar attempted to explain the etymology of “sayachi” and logically came to the conclusion that it derived from “sayim vergisi” (counting taxes), which is also connected with the word “sayan”, that is, the man who counts.

But in 1941, Jafaroghlu, in his work in French entitled “Vestiges de mœurs nationales et linguistiques dans notre folklore” (23) and in his article entitled “La Canzone del 'Sayagi' nella letteratura popolare dell' Azerbaigian,” rejects his own view concerning the origin of the person of the *sayachi*. He comes to the conclusion that *sayachi* is not an official who counts the sheep in order to impose taxes, but “a god who protects the flocks of livestock and the property of nomads.” He is the only scholar defending this suggestion. The considerations of Kocharli concerning the personality of *sayachi* were studied by the later generations of folklorists and in

literary criticism and were confirmed. Though they are not unanimous in the etymology of this word, they think that there is no need to seek a heavenly force in the personality of the *sayachi*; he is just a person who sings folk songs on the topic of cattle-breeding.

We must note that our critical approach to Jafaroghlu's definition of the person of the *sayachi* does not damage the importance of his articles, because, first of all, folklore-mythology as a sphere of scientific study leaves room for the hypotheses of scholars, and secondly, the aim of publication of articles in French and Italian was to draw the attention of the European Turkologists to this topic, which he achieved successfully.

Jafaroghlu's articles on Azerbaijani folklore published in foreign languages were of great importance then, because, on the one hand, they contributed to the propagation of the oral branch of Azerbaijani literature, and on the other hand, they were a means to introduce the Azerbaijani people to the world. He knew that the folklore of any nation contains matchless information about the sociological, psychological and spiritual values of the nation; therefore he attached special importance to this sphere in his creative activity as a lover of his nation. In his article entitled "Vestiges de moeurs nationales et linguistiques dans notre folklore" he wrote, "If we define folklore briefly, we can say that it is just the nation and nothing else. This type of literature, which has developed together with the life of the nation and passed from generation to generation orally to reach us, must always be connected with the cultural level and the spiritual life of that nation" (24).

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