

Braveman¹ Koroghlu and Translation of Epic as a Factor of Cross-lingual and Cross-cultural Transfers

Hamlet Isaxanli

Khazar University, Baku, Azerbaijan

hamlet@khazar.org

Abstract

Koroghlu Dastani (*The Epic of Koroghlu*), common heroic epic of the Turkic peoples, was firstly recorded and then translated into English by Alexander Chodźko in 1834. It became popular in Europe and during short time translated into different languages, such as French, German and Russian. Romantic Koroghlu character inspired writers, such as George Sand and Henry Longfellow. *Koroghlu Dastani* travelled through the languages and cultures, and following the USA after Europe, Longfellow wrote the poem named *The Leap of Roushan Beg* based on the motives of *Koroghlu Dastani*. Two American composers wrote music (ballads) to this poem. Firstly, this poem of Longfellow, then in modern time *Koroghlu Dastani* itself published by Chodźko in English were translated back into Azerbaijani language. This article put under close scrutiny the *Koroghlu Dastani*, studying thoroughly how this epic turned to be the source of inspiration in Europe and North America for writers and composers; and triggered translation activities into English, French, Russian, and Azerbaijani languages and further considers its contribution to cultural transfers.

Keywords: Epic of Koroghlu, H.W. Longfellow, Cefer Cabbarli, H.W.Parker, Translation Studies, Cross-Cultural Transfers

Introduction

Inspired by an episode of *Koroghlu Dastani*² (*The Epic of Koroghlu*), the nineteenth century American national literary figure Henry Wadsworth Longfellow created the lyrical poem “The Leap of Roushan Beg” in 1878. Two American composers, James Dear and Horatio Parker, set the poem to music in 1907 and 1913 respectively – composed choral and orchestral ballads. *Koroghlu Dastani*, a shared epic story of Turkic peoples and a much loved, much read, much narrated and much listened to

epic of Azerbaijani people, was revisited by the great Azerbaijani composer Üzeyir Hacıbəyov³; in 1937, he completed an opera based on the epic, his chef-d'oeuvre, which was staged in the same year. It came as a complete surprise to me to learn about the fact that Koroghlu had become a theme in music in the United States long before Üzeyir Hacıbəyov's opera premiered. Thoughts about the Azerbaijani translation of the Longfellow's poem by the outstanding Azerbaijani playwright and poet Cəfər Cabbarlı and the way he translated the poem excited my interest – I went to consider further some circumstances and rich multi-cultural transfers.

In this paper, I would like to share my thoughts and findings with the reader about Longfellow's literary activity, his use of Koroghlu; problems of collecting and recording oral literature products; the Azerbaijani and Russian translations of "*The Leap of Roushan Beg*"; translations of *Koroghlu Dastani* into European languages, particularly, English and French as well as its translation back to original-Azerbaijani language; some problems and challenges of translation, particularly poetic translation; finally, the short story of two ballads by the above-mentioned composers based on "*The Leap of Roushan Beg*".

Koroghlu Dastani, a well-known epic in the Caucasus, Anatolia, Central Asia and Iran, is positioned between lyric and epic, verse and prose; and is usually retold and sung by national singer-actors, often with instrumental accompaniment. The epic was translated into English and other major European languages, and made its way to Europe and America, becoming a source of inspiration to some European and American poets and writers, first, George Sand and then Henry Longfellow, as well as musicians.

Koroghlu Dastani eventually returned to its country of origin in a "European-American garment", both the epic and Longfellow's poem having been translated into Azerbaijani (the poem preceded the epic in translation). We can now add music to this East-West and then West-East folklore-poem translation-transfer. In order to investigate the details of this transfer, I need to delve into some facts about folklore and the process of collecting folkloric forms, problems of translation, etc.

Collecting and writing of the folklore investigated in the article, the multilingual translations, poetical and musical works cover the Caucasus, especially Azerbaijan, Iran, Ottomans, Russia, Europe and the North America; and from the view point of oral translation, Azerbaijani, Persian, English, French and Russian languages were involved to this activity.

What have Azerbaijanis thought about the North America throughout the history? I did research around this interesting question (Isaxanlı 2014a). In this presented article thoughts of western people about the East are covered, though it's random; the article is about the European and North America poets, writers, translators and musicians creatively inspired by Azerbaijani and Turkic peoples' epos.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and “The Leap of Roushan Beg”

Henry Longfellow (1807-1882) was regarded as one of the prominent figures of nineteenth-century American literature; he became the first national poet of America. Longfellow composed long and lyrical epic poems, combining European heritage with American memory, and translated many poetic texts (including Dante's *Divine Comedy*), gaining international fame in the later phase of his life. He attended Bowdoin College (1821-1825) and made his first trip to Europe in 1826, settling there for around three years whilst attempting to fulfil his passion for learning languages. He made his second trip to Europe in 1835, during which time his wife passed away in Rotterdam following a miscarriage. After some time, he fell in love and proposed to a woman named Fanny; seven years later, in 1843, she accepted (Calhoun 2004).

Longfellow was then the head of the Department of Modern Languages at Harvard University, a post which he took up in 1836; he mastered many languages and was teaching French, Italian and Spanish. At the time he also was a much-loved poet. In general, the Harvard years (1836-1854) are considered to be the most productive and prosperous phase in Longfellow's career (he completed and published his famous *The Song of Hiawatha* in 1855, which was translated into Russian by Ivan Bunin in 1898). After retiring from his teaching post at Harvard University, Longfellow dedicated himself entirely to creative writing. Longfellow was the second of eight siblings in his family; he also had many children – two sons and four daughters from his second marriage (Calhoun 2004).

The poem “*The Leap of Roushan Beg*” was first published in *The Atlantic Monthly* in 1878 (Longfellow 1878: 30-31) and was included in Longfellow's *Keramos and Other Poems*, in a chapter entitled “*Birds of Passage. Flight the Fifth*”, published in the same year of 1878. Longfellow also included the poem in his 8000-page anthology, *Poems of Places: An Anthology* in 31 volumes (Longfellow 1876-79).

The book contained collections from different geographical areas, and “*The Leap of Roushan Beg*” was included under the category “*Mesopotamia: Orfah*” (Nowadays city of Şanlıurfa, simply called *Urfa* in south-eastern Turkey).

“*The Leap of Roushan Beg*” was written in hexameter – a metre used chiefly in Greek and Roman classics (its ancient uses include Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Virgil’s *Aeneid*, and Ovid’s *Metamorphosis*). It is an 84-line poem divided into 14 stanzas of six lines each with the rhyme scheme *aabccb*.

But how did Longfellow learn about Koroghlu? Before attempting to find possible answers to this question, I will share some knowledge on collecting and recording epic and oral literature materials in general.

Problems of Collecting and Recording Oral Literature

Due to its wide ethnic and geographical distribution, *Koroghlu Dastani* is a precious work of world folklore; peoples of the Caucasus, Iran, Anatolia and Central Asia have their own versions of Koroghlu – some of them share contextual similarities and harmonies in form, but there are also considerable differences. Elements of geographical and ethnic differences manifest themselves in the main character Roushan’s nickname, the way he appears in the story, his journeys and raids, brave deeds and stories about his senility in different versions of the epic. Non-Turkic and non-Muslim populations of the same regions also have versions of *Koroghlu Dastani*. Living among Turkic peoples and integrating with their cultures, these relatively small nations entered this cultural sphere, enriched it, partially appropriated and customized it. For instance, Armenian *ashiq* bards⁴ in the Caucasus, Iran and Eastern Anatolia composed poems mainly in Azerbaijani and Turkish and performed with *saz* accompaniment.⁵

Similarities among names, music, musical instruments, food, clothing, marriage traditions and other customs between Turkic and non-Turkic, Muslim and non-Muslim peoples living in one country or neighboring areas no doubt resulted from intensive inter-cultural exchanges. In this process, minorities’ cultures were essentially influenced by that of majorities or ruling nations. However, a role reversal in this process is not unexceptional (for instance, Turkish rulers in Iran accepted Persian culture).

Epic is a product of folk literature. *Ashiq*, *ozan* and other bards attended gatherings and retold epic stories they heard from their masters with *saz* accompaniment, adding new colors to it. Passed on orally from person to person, the epics were enriched and became culturally and geographically diverse.

Master *ashiqs*’ important role in recreating epics is quite undeniable. The storyteller *ashiq* is an actor, capable of grabbing the attention of his audience and generating interest through his witty delivery, dropping hints and engaging in humorous

repartee; the *ashiq* is an instrumental musician, capable of reciting poems to the accompaniment of the *saz*; the *ashiq* is a vocalist who sings lyrical poems, increasing the effectiveness of the story. The *ashiq* is the master of word, *saz* and voice.

The fate of oral literature works in strange ways – it does not need to be documented in writing; it survives through the act of telling. This mode of storytelling had appeared before writing was invented; existed simultaneously with written literature; endured and was transmitted orally from generation to generation over several centuries or millennia. Through this transmission, oral literature forms underwent changes, additions, curtailments and merging. Some of them were recorded and preserved in a written medium. It is, however, difficult to say how well-timed those recordings were. Sumerians inscribed *The Epic of Gilgamesh* on clay tablets and gave humankind the opportunity to read, admire and enjoy the epic (chiefly in the translated, extended and revised Akkadian version).

The Greeks recorded *Iliad* and *Odyssey* (attributing them to Homer), ensuring that they would not be subject to change and could endure over a long period of time. But of course, oral literature cannot be recorded by the average person, but by a narrator, a poet, a writer, a person or a group of people. Turkic peoples also recorded *Kitabi Dede-Qorqud* (*The Book of Dede Gorgud*). It was forgotten, before being rediscovered in Drezden, Germany in 1814, and later, in Vatican City (Schmiede, Aliyarli, *et al.* 2002).

The language of the recorded *Kitabi Dede-Qorqud* is believed to be Azerbaijani. Thinking back to my childhood now, my generation was not familiar with *Kitabi Dede-Qorqud*; Dede Gorgud was never then discussed in *ashiq* gatherings. Only very few academicians and folklorists knew about the epic; it was not public property yet. Afterwards, it was studied, promoted and widely spread, and made its way to books, radio, film and television.

The fate of *Koroghlu Dastani* was, however, different from that of *Kitabi Dede-Qorqud*. Even nowadays *Kitabi Dede-Qorqud* is not performed by *ashiq* bards. First, its creation preceded the formation of the *ashiq* tradition. *Kitabi Dede-Qorqud* is an epic of the elite Oguz traditions, whereas *Koroghlu Dastani* is a story of a simple hero who touches people's hearts. For the past 400 years, *Koroghlu Dastani* has been enjoyed by Azerbaijani people.

The father of the main character of the epos – Rovshan, was the groom of the Khan. Khan ordered him to show his best horses to guests. But Khan and the guests didn't like two horses shown by the groom. In anger, claiming that he disgraced him in

front of the guests, the Khan put the groom's eyes out and leave the two horses to him. Consequently, Roushan was nicknamed Koroghlu (the son of a blind person). The horses that were chosen by the groom were very unique. One of the horses – Gytrat became the closest friend and fellow of Koroghlu. Heroism of Koroghlu is unimaginable without Gytrat and *Misry* sword (made of meteoroid). Koroghlu gathers around brave men like himself, settles in mountains, marches, and pillages caravans.

Koroghlu in Europe or how did Longfellow learn about Koroghlu?

I cannot afford to overlook Longfellow's strong interest in Koroghlu, which prompted him to create a beautiful ballad. Polish poet and philologist Alexander Chodźko (1804-1891), whom George Sand called “[...] Honneur et grâce soient donc rendues à M. Alexandre Chodzko, l'Homère de Kourroglou”⁶, had the honor of recording *Koroghlu Dastani* first, thus he prepared the ground for further translations and studies of the epic.

Chodźko's kin nurtured eminent figures and personalities. Alexander Chodźko attended Vilnius University and was a close friend of Adam Mickiewicz, a popular poet of the day. In 1829, he graduated from the Institute of Oriental Studies (Saint-Petersburg) attached to the department of Asia of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Empire and served as a Russian diplomat between 1830 and 1844 (mainly in Iran). As a diplomat, he travelled within Iran and on the Russian coast of the Caspian Sea and quenched his thirst for culture and folklore by collecting and publishing folklore specimens of the people living in those areas (Lalkoŭ, 2003).

Afterwards, he lived in Paris and worked in the Oriental Studies Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of France (1852-55); worked as an instructor at Collège de France between 1857 and 1883, where he chaired the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures. In this period of time, he published the folklore samples he had previously collected and wrote extensive reviews on them in English and French. Chodźko was deeply interested in Azerbaijani culture he wrote insightful essays on Azerbaijani culture and Baku. Mirza Cefer Topchubashov (1790 – 1869), one of his Azerbaijani teachers at Saint Petersburg who taught him Persian, may have played an important role in exciting his interest (Pзаев [Rzayev] 1969). As a folklorist, the copy of *Koroghlu Dastani* and its translation are regarded as his masterpieces – a thirteen-chapter⁷ epic written during his time in Iranian Azerbaijan. The epic was recorded by Mirza Abdulvahab based on a retelling by Ashiq Sadig in the presence of Chodźko and three other witnesses in the summer of 1834. The narrative of the epic was recorded in Persian, while the poems were given in

Azerbaijani. The poems were written in prose form and called “Improvisation” in English. (Lalkoň, 2003)

The epic and other collected works were translated into English by Chodźko and published in 1842 on Chodźko’s initiative and with the support of the Oriental Translation Fund; the book was given a very long title, *Specimens of the Popular Poetry of Persia, as Found in the Adventures and Improvisations of Kurroglou, the bandit-minstrel of Northern Persia; and in the Songs of the People Inhabiting the Shores of the Caspian Sea*. The section on Koroghlu was titled “The Adventures and Improvisations of Kurroglou, the Bandit-Minstrel of Northern Persia (Translated from the Perso-Turkish Dialect)”. He intended to distinguish the Azerbaijani language from Turkish by calling it “Perso-Turkish Dialect.”

In the introduction, Chodźko asserts that *Koroghlu Dastani* is more popular than *Shahnameh* by the Persian poet Ferdowsi. He discusses its passion and sublime harmony and the difficulty of expressing this greatness in translation – “wild and bold harmony, inimitable in any translation”. At the third meeting’s end, Chodźko discusses the beautifying powers of the participle in the Turkish language,⁸ arguing that “the force of the Turkish participle [...] cannot be equaled in any European language.” (Yektatalab, Karimnia 2013: 36-52)

Koroghlu Dastani gained fame in Europe quickly; the whole of the work was translated into German in 1843 and, during the same year, it was also partially translated into French and published. Afterwards, the well-known French writer George Sand produced a version of Koroghlu in French, seriously abridging the text. Sand’s admiration about the epic was expressed through a passionately written introduction titled “Quoi, vous n’avez pas lu Kourroglou!”. Here some excerpts from this introduction: “une des plus riches et une des plus belles du monde” (Bezombes 2014: 215); “[c]’est toute une histoire de mœurs, c’est tout un génie national que Kourroglou” (Sand 1843 : 8); “[l]a dernière improvisation que je cite du dit Kourroglou. Pour moi, ces trois lignes, valent tout Victor Hugo” (Bezombes 2014: 213); “[s]a guitare faisait presque autant de miracles que son cimenterre” (Sand 1843 : 6); “Mais le véritable héros de la vie de Kourroglou, ce n’est point Kourroglou, ..., c’est le divin Kyrat, près duquel les coursiers d’Achille et tous les palefrois renommés de la chevalerie ne sont que de pauvres poneys ” (Sand 1843 : 9).⁹

The Russian translation of the epic by S. A. Penn overshadowed the previous distorted versions. This translation was published in *Kavkaz*, in Tbilisi in 1856.¹⁰ Although there is not enough space here to discuss the translations of the epic, a critic has considered these translations in great detail. (Ismayılova, 2016: 150-165).

However, I want to add that a sloppy style, intentional and unintentional distortions, even confusing errors can be found in the Azerbaijani translations of the epic (unfortunately, such flaws are persistent in modern translations here). In Chodźko's version, Rovshan's father Mirza Sarraf's last wish for his son is to retire to the province of Azerbaijan. "The Shah of Persia is its sovereign" was translated into Azerbaijani as "retire to the Province of Azerbaijan, which is independent from Iran."¹¹ (Abbasli, Abdulla 2005:7)

Although the nations of Central Asia and surrounding areas have their own versions of *Koroghlu Dastani*, the internationally popular *Koroghlu Dastani* was an Azerbaijani epic, or more precisely, the Azerbaijani version of the epic. For this reason, the Europeanized and Americanized 19th century *Koroghlu Dastani* returned exclusively to Azerbaijan from Europe and America in the 20th and 21st centuries; it was translated into Azerbaijani mainly from English.

The sonority of *Koroghlu Dastani* in English and in other European languages, as well as its rapid rise to fame, surely attracted the attention of Longfellow, a fond fan and great interpreter of mythology and legend.

Given that Longfellow lived in Europe and was very well familiar with the literary and cultural climate, that he himself was well-known in Europe and had close ties there, he could easily obtain the book one way or another. One of his friends could have sent the book to him; for instance, his elderly contemporary Washington Irving, who had a special interest in mythology and history and who encouraged creativity in Longfellow, served as the ambassador of the United States to Spain between 1842 and 1846. The 19th century American author Nathaniel Hawthorne, one of Longfellow's friends, was also a frequent visitor of Europe. Longfellow could have received the book from Chodźko (perhaps George Sand, or the well-known poet Adam Mickiewicz who had introduced Chodźko to George Sand?!). To cut a long story short, Longfellow, a folklore lover and great storyteller, could not remain unaware of the existence of an oriental tale well-known in Europe – it inevitably had to reach and inspire him.

Longfellow derived the theme of "The Leap of Roushan Beg" from the third meeting of the epic written and translated by Chodźko. In a nutshell, Khoja Yagub meets Belli Eyvaz, a son of butcher Mir Ibrahim, in Urfa. Deeply impressed by Eyvaz's nobility, Khoja Yagub thinks Eyvaz would be a good son for Koroghlu. On hearing about Khoja Yagub's intentions, Koroghlu immediately rides his Kyrat to Urfa. Disguised as a sheep trader, he manages to kidnap Eyvaz. He then leaves, or more specifically, escapes Urfa. Eyvaz's father expresses his resentment to Reyhan the

Arab, the braveman of the region, who immediately starts chasing Koroghlu. Reyhan the Arab, who knows the area well, blocks Koroghlu's way by invading the bridge over the ravine. Left with no other alternatives, Koroghlu climbs up the mountain with Eyvaz and Kyrat. He extolls the horse; he begs the horse to save them. Kyrat demonstrates his might – he jumps over the ravine.

Longfellow chose Koroghlu's glorification of Kyrat ("shoes of pure gold," "soft thy skin as silken skein," "wrapped in velvet trapping")¹² and his leap over the ravine, which according to Longfellow's poem is admired even by the enemy ("Roushan's tasselled cap of red/ Trembled not upon his head"), as a theme and created a beautiful lyrical poem. He modified the scene by focusing on Koroghlu and Kyrat – in Longfellow's poem, Eyvaz is absent and Koroghlu sits alone on the back of Kyrat while seeking refuge from the gang of Reyhan the Arab.

"The Leap of Roushan Beg" and Cefer Cabbarli

Some of Longfellow's works were translated into many languages, including Russian, in his lifetime. Cefer Cabbarli (1899 – 31.12.1934) translated "*The Leap of Roushan Beg*" into Azerbaijani, and it was published in 1928 in the journal *İnqilab və Mədəniyyət (Revolution and Culture)* (Cabbarli, 1928).

Cabbarli, who completed and published his first drama in 1915-16, became a famous national playwright during his short life time, wrote in different genres of literature – lyrical and satirical poems, proses, literary criticism and non-fiction works, as well as literary translations (plays, prose and poetry works), engaged in theatre-cinema activity (author of scenarios and librettos, director). Expressions in his dramas and stories were loved by everyone, tendency of naming new-born children with the names of main characters of his works were widely spread.

In various publications and articles on the subject, it is usually claimed "Cabbarli translated the poem into Azerbaijani from English", "from English, from Longfellow's original text". Cefer Cabbarli, outstanding Azerbaijani poet and playwright, was a master in literary translation – he translated some works by English, German, French and Russian authors into Azerbaijani not from original languages, but all from Russian, the language he had mastered. It is believed that he did not master any Western European languages, otherwise there would be a sign of it – it was not mentioned in any biographical source that he knew a foreign language, additionally, surely, he would have translated Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and *Othello*, Schiller's *Die Räuber*, or Beaumarchais's *Le Mariage de Figaro* from the original

languages, not from Russian if he had. On the other hand, Longfellow's "*The Leap of Roushan Beg*" was not, to my knowledge, translated into Russian in Cefer Cabbarli's lifetime.

Daniel M. Garfinkel (1889-1966) enthusiastically translated many of Longfellow's poems into Russian, one of which was "*The Leap of Roushan Beg*" ("Прыжок Рушан-Бека"). According to the information provided by Garfinkel, he started translating Longfellow's poems in 1937, Cabbarli passed away in 1934).¹³

Garfinkel kept the original rhyme scheme (*aabccb*) of Longfellow's poem. He managed to preserve the form, meaning and playfulness of the poem in translation, including shades of expression peculiar to poetic translation. Garfinkel increased the degree of freedom on several occasions. He used "On the way to Koordistan" ("По дороге в Курдистан") instead of "journeying north from Koordistan" (the third stanza). I will try to look at this problem from another perspective and will briefly discuss the potential misunderstanding it causes.

The name of the man who chases Koroghlu in Longfellow's poem is Reyhan the Arab of Urfa (in many versions of the epic, his name was mentioned simply as Reyhan the Arab), whereas Garfinkel named him "Sheikh Reyhan of Urfa". The last stanza of Longfellow's poem demonstrates for the reader Reyhan the Arab's admiration of Koroghlu's leap: "In all Koordistan/Lives there not so brave a man/As this Robber Kurroglou!". Cabbarli translated it into Azerbaijani as "there is none like Koroghlu in Koordistan" (Kürdüstanda Koroğluya tay olmaz).

Asif Rustamli, a biographer and scholar of Cabbarli, in his article on the translation of the poem, posed a challenge to Longfellow's use of Koordistan, in particular, in Koroghlu's connection with Koordistan; he reminded us that Koroghlu had Teke-Turkmen ancestry (Rustamli 2013: 17-18).

It may well be – according to the original version of the epic, it is undeniable that Koroghlu had Teke-Turkmen ancestry (in Chodźko's version – "true-born Turkman Tuka"). However, in Longfellow's version, the words voiced by Reyhan the Arab may mean that in the land around Urfa, in the place named Koordistan, in the place where Reyhan the Arab lives and demonstrates bravery, there is no man as brave as Koroghlu. The surrounding areas of Urfa are called Koordistan, no doubt because, besides Turks, the area is still inhabited by Kurds (as well as some Arabs). On the other hand, Longfellow, as I mentioned above, informs the reader that Koroghlu is heading north, on his way back from Koordistan. This translation choice, therefore,

causes a misunderstanding of location (see below for a similar misunderstanding in Cefer Cabbarli's translation).

Given that Cabbarli did not know English and the poem was not translated into Russian in his lifetime, the question now is how Cabbarli learned about the poem and how he was able to translate it. Someone (one of the Russian writers or literary critics who was familiar with Longfellow's legacy?) may have informed him about the poem, Cabbarli may have had it as if somebody translated word-for-word (into Russian or Azerbaijani). Since the poem was not translated into Russian in Cabbarli's lifetime, it is claimed that he translated it from the original language. Cabbarli added Koroghlu to the title of the poem-translation – Roushan Beg Koroghlu. Jabbarli gave himself absolute freedom while translating the poem by using different forms and expressions; however, he attempted to preserve the spirit of the original work while adding some Azerbaijani folkloric spirit to it.

Rhyme, Stanza, and Simple Arithmetic in Translation

Cefer Cabbarli did not respect the formal principles of the original poem; while translating it, he organized 109 lines into 27 stanzas (one stanza of five lines and 26 of four lines/all of four lines, but one of five) each instead of the fourteen-stanza scheme of eighty-four lines of the original.

In general, scholars and translators usually debate over whether it is better to preserve the rhyme scheme and other dimensions of a poem in poetic translation or to recompose it entirely. Samad Vurghun, one of the outstanding masters of poetical translation in Azerbaijan, placed a great deal of emphasis on maintaining the formal dimensions of a poem. Famous Russian poet Pushkin used a complex sonnet rhyme system to compose *Eugene Onegin*. Then Mammad Rahim recomposed the structural scheme while trying to translate the work. Having taken on the task of translating the whole work, Samad Vurghun maintained the original style and structural scheme of Pushkin's poem. The same thing can be said about Georgian poet of 12th century Shota Rustaveli's *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*. The poem is written in quatrains where the all lines rhyme with one another (*aaaa*). While translating the poem, Ahmad Cavad used the classical system of *rubai* (*aaba*) leaving out the original structural scheme of the poem (obviously, making the problem easier). However, the collaborative translation by Samad Vurgun, Suleyman Rustam and Mammad Rahim managed to preserve the original rhyming scheme (Isaxanli 2014b: 310-329).

Cabbarli translated Longfellow's 6-line stanza poem into an 8-line scheme with *abcddde* type of rhyme. The second and fourth lines of the first quatrain rhyme with each other – the first and the third lines are free. The subsequent quatrain has three rhyming lines and the fourth line rhymes with the fourth lines of similar stanzas of the poem-translation (it is in harmony with versions of the epic of Koroghlu written in Azerbaijani), such as for instance “aman, hey!”, “kaman, hey!”, “duman, hey!”, “cavan, hey!” within “e”. Yet there is an exception – having been passionately inspired while glorifying Kyrat, the poet-translator included three successive “hey” quatrains.

Cabbarli omitted “[j]ourneying north from Koordistan” and instead inserted an uncertain expression – “those who felt the Khazry of the province Koordistan.”¹⁴ This may have occurred due to a distortion in the word-for-word translation. Cabbarli did not consider it important to preserve the constant caesura of the poem in his translation – the structures of some of the lines are 6+5 and some others are 4+4+3.¹⁵

The numeration and measurement in the epic are noteworthy. In *Koroghlu Dastani*, the number of Koroghlu's men usually includes the mysterious 7; either 777 (in Chodzko's version as well) and/or 7777. Longfellow rounded off this “strange” number to 780 (“seven hundred and fourscore”). More courageously, Garfinkel rounded off this number to 800. In Cabbarli's translation the number is 7700 (Baghirova, 2013: 483).

The size of the ravine also changes from version to version. In Chodźko's translation, Kyrat jumps over a ravine 12 yards in width (“twelve yards broad”) and lands 2 yards away from it. Given that 1yard equals 3 feet and 91.44 cm, 12 yards is equal to 11 (10.9728) meters. In the Azerbaijani translation, meter replaced yard; however, I assume that in the *ashiq* language human steps may be used instead of meters as a medium of measurement. In Longfellow's version, the width of the ravine is 30 feet (“thirty feet from side to side”): approximately 9 meters. Cabbarli used footsteps as a unit of measurement (fourteen footsteps). It is possible that the replacement of 12 with 14 resulted from the 12+2 explanation above.

“The Leap of Roushan Beg” and Music

Longfellow's poems as well as his translations of poetry also achieved success in the world of music. He focused on the listenability of a poem – “what a writer asks of his reader is not so much to *like*, as to *listen*” (Wagenknecht 1966, 145). The musicality of his poems no doubt attracted the attention of musicians, and of course his own fame had an impact on their reception. One of Longfellow's poems, which

opens with “[s]tay, stay at home, my hearth, and rest” has been set to music by different composers 25 times (!) in various years. He has written dozens of poems and translations, and each was set to music at least 10 times.¹⁶

The original German text of a melodic poem by German poet Siegfried August Mahlmann (1771-1826) was adapted for a musical score; Longfellow translated this poem from German into English using the first line, “Allah gives light in darkness.” This poem-translation was set to music 12 times (particularly by Whitefield Chadwick mentioned below).

The American composer James Richard Dear (1870-?) produced a ballad based on “*The Leap of Roushan Beg*” entitled “*The Leap of Kurroglou*,” replacing Roushan with Kurroglu.¹⁷ As a songwriter, Dear composed songs using lyrics by Burns, Kipling, Kingsley and others (for piano, solo and choir). The choral ballad “The Leap of Kurroglou” which he wrote for baritone, solo voice and orchestra was published in 1907; this is a four-part harmony written for soprano, alto, tenor and bass to pianoforte accompaniment. Perhaps the work can be sung by male as well as mixed choir ensembles. The harmony created by one note in the melody and three notes in the choral arrangement (human voice and instrumental sound) is an oft-used formal device in American music, particularly in Jazz compositions. The original of the text (34 pages in length) belongs to the University of Michigan. There is, however, no evidence of the production history of this ballad, so it is unclear whether it has ever been performed.

The well-known American composer and organist Horatio William Parker (1863-1919) also revisited “The Leap of Roushan Beg.” He studied music in Boston and George Whitefield Chadwick was one of his tutors (1854-1931) (Faucett, 1998).

Both Parker and his tutor Chadwick were New England Classicists (the Second New England School, sometimes referred to as the Boston Six). First Chadwick, then Parker studied music and broadened the horizons of creativity in Germany.

At the Royal Conservatory in Munich, Parker had close ties with Josef Gabriel Rheinberger (1839-1901), one of his teachers (this is also true of Chadwick and some other American composers). Parker was mainly influenced by Mendelssohn, Brahms and Wagner, as well as his contemporary Debussy. Between 1888 and 1901, Parker worked as an organist at Long Island and Boston, became a lecturer on music theory in 1893, before gaining the position of the dean of music from 1904 until the end of his life. Parker was considered one of the best composers of his time. His oratorio *Hora Novissima* (1893) became very popular in America and Europe. Being a

productive composer, Parker created many works for choir and orchestra, cantatas, songs, organ music and two award-winning operas, *Mona* (1912) and *Fairyland* (1914/15). Having outlived his student, Chadwick wrote a book on Parker (Chadwick 1922).

In 1913, Parker composed a romantic ballad based on “*The Leap of Roushan Beg*” for men’s choir, tenor solo and orchestral accompaniment.¹⁸ The work was first performed at the Orpheus Club in Philadelphia in 1914. Written for two tenors and two basses, the work is a four-part harmony accompanied by pianoforte (TTBB chorus and orchestra). The text of this ballad’s is 27 pages in length. (Chadwick 1922). J.R. Dear used the whole text of Longfellow’s poem, whilst Parker used 13 stanzas, excluding the 11th.

I do hope that the music based on the Koroghlu poem by the 19th century American poet Longfellow, especially Horatio Parker’s composition, will be performed again, preferably in Azerbaijan.

Conclusion

The well-known Turkic epic *Koroghlu Dastani* attracted the attention of westerners, who travelled to the East and who lived and worked there for a certain period of time. Polish poet, philologist and diplomat for the Russian Embassy Alexander Chodźko successfully penned the epic in Persian and in Azerbaijani with the help of an Azerbaijani *ashiq* and linguist. The previously unrecorded epic was translated into English by Chodźko and published in book form in 1842. The epic soon attracted poets’, writers’, translators’ and publishers’ attention and was translated into many languages. Its partial translation into French and subsequent publication took place with George Sand’s direct involvement. Thus, the oriental epic made its way to the West.

The epic excited Longfellow’s inspiration, and he published a poem titled “*The Leap of Roushan Beg*” in 1878. Many songs and other musical works were adapted from Longfellow’s poems. Two American composers, J. Dear and H. Parker, set “*The Leap of Roushan Beg*” to music in ballad form for choir, fortepiano and orchestra, in 1907 and 1913 respectively.

“*The Leap of Roushan Beg*” was translated into Azerbaijani by Cefer Cabbarli, Azerbaijani poet and playwright, in 1928. Scholars who worked on this poem’s translation neglected certain aspects and accused Longfellow of being biased.

However, an analysis of Chodźko's translation, the original version of "*The Leap of Roushan Beg*" and its Russian and Azerbaijani translations helps shed light on many ambiguities and misunderstandings. I hope to have shown that almost all concerns and difficulties with the texts were a result of an improper study of the translations and incompleteness of analysis.

To conclude, I have touched upon folklore, looking in particular at the problems of collecting oral literature products; I reviewed the epic in its Azerbaijani, Russian, Turkish, English and French translations; I then spoke about the relationship between poetry, translation and music. I also attempted to discuss translations, publications and criticism of Azerbaijani (as well as Turkic) folklore in the West. The return of *Koroghlu Dastani* from the Western World to the East in its new manifestation cannot be overlooked. Finally, this paper considered "*The Leap of Roushan Beg*" by Longfellow, which has ensured the further transmission of this powerful epic for many years to come.

Notes

1. *Qoç*, also *koç* in Turkish – the word *qoç* literally means "ram – a male sheep." However, in a figurative sense, it means "very brave."
2. Also, *destan* in Turkish, *dastan* is "a story of bravery or heroism," which can be likened to sagas and retold in verse, prose or both.
3. In Soviet times certain rules have been developed to transliterate names from Cyrillic into Latin. The same were applied to Azerbaijani names (after forced transition from Latin into Cyrillic in 1939), such as Uzeyir Hajibekov for Üzeyir Hacıbəyov or Jafar Jabbarlı (or Djafar Djabbarlı) for Cəfər Cabbarlı. After gaining independence in 1991, Azerbaijan soon returned into Latin-based alphabet. But the problem arises with the three Azerbaijani letters: "ə", "ı", and "x". The letters "e", "i", and "kh" accordingly can be used looking for simplicity. (İsaxanlı, Nəsirova, *et al.* (1997): *The Azerbaijani language*. Baku, Khazar University Publishing House.
4. *Ashiq* bards – in Azerbaijani and Turkish culture, *ashiq* is a singer who plays the *saz* and retells stories
5. A stringed instrument widely used in Azerbaijan, Turkey, and other places. According to *Oxford English Dictionary*, *saz* is "[a] long-necked stringed instrument of the lute family, originating in the Ottoman Empire." In fact, it is originated in Central Asia and moved from

there to other regions with the spread of Turkic people in the Caucasus, Iran and Central Asia as well.

6. Genevray Françoise (January, 2007): *Quoi, vous n'avez pas lu Kourroglou ! Une Traduction de George Sand, Présentation et Choix d'Extraits*. La Revue des Ressources.

<<https://www.larevuedesressources.org/quoi-vous-n-avez-pas-lu-kourroglou,663.html>>

7. Chapters are called “meetings.”

8. The Azerbaijani language.

9. “[o]ne of the richest and most beautiful pieces in the world”; “[i]t is a whole history of manners, Kourroglou is quite a national genius”; “this three-line improvisation (song) I have taken from Koroghlu is equal to Victor Hugo’s entire literary career”; “his saz could create miracles as his sword”; “[b]ut the true hero of Kourroglou's life is not Kourroglou [...]: it is a horse, it is the divine Kurat, near which the Achilles steeds and all the famous palfrey of chivalry are only poor ponies. [...].

10. “Кёр-оглу, восточный поэт-наездник. Полное собрание его импровизаций с присовокуплением его биографии” [Koroghlu-vostochniy poet naezdник. Polnoe sobranie ego improvizastiy s prisovkupleniem ego bioqrafii] (translated from Eng), *Кавказ* 8 vols. (1856).

11. “İranın hökmdarı oranın hökmdarıdır” in the original. It was translated into Azerbaijani as “İrandan asılı olmayan Azərbaycan vilayətinə keç.”

12. “Satin housings shall be thine” in the Longfellow poem.

13. Горфинкель, Данииль Михайлович. Visited on March 22, 2017, <http://acdoyle.ru/perevod/gorfinkel_dm.html>

14. The Khazry is a strong northern wind in Absheron, Baku.

15. For instance, in the quatrain given in the text (page 14), the first and fourth lines are 6+5, the third line is 4+4+3. The second line can be read in both ways.

16. *Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882) – Vocal Texts and Translations* Visited on March 24, 2017, <http://www.lieder.net/lieder/get_author_texts.html?AuthorId=1680>.

17. James Dear, *Ballad for Baritone Solo, Chorus & Orchestra*, (London: Chappel & co., 1907).

18. Horatio Parker “The Leap of Roushan Bek”. Ballad for Men`s Chorus, Tenor Solo and Orchestral Accompaniment. Op.75.

References

- Abbasli, Israfil; Abdulla, Behlul (2005): *Koroğlu (Paris nüsxəsi) [Koroghlu (Paris copy)]*. Baku: Sherg-Gerb. pg.7
- Baghirova, Gamar (ed.) (2013): *Cəfər Cabbarlının tərcümələri [Translations by Cefer Cabbarli]*. Baku: Sherg-Gerb.
- Cabbarli, Cefer (1928): Rövşən bəy Koroğlunun atlanışı [The Leap of Roushan Beg Koroghlu], *İnqilab ve Medeniyyət* Vol. 6-7. 54-55.

- Calhoun, Charles (2004): *Longfellow: A Rediscovered Life*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Chadwick, George (1922): *Commemorative Tribute to Horatio Parker*. New York: American Academy of Arts and Letters.
- Chodźko, Alexander (1842): *Specimens of the Popular Poetry of Persia, as Found in the Adventures and Improvisations of Kurroglou, the bandit-minstrel of Northern Persia; and in the Songs of the People Inhabiting the Shores of the Caspian Sea*. London: Printed for the Oriental Translation Fund of Great Britain and Ireland.
- Faucett, Bill (1998): *George Whitefield Chadwick: a Bio-Bibliography*. Wesport Con.: Greenwood Press.
- Isaxanlı, Hamlet (2014a): *Wavering Azerbaijani Literature Views of America: From the Russian Tsarist through the Modern Periods*. Journal of American Studies, Cambridge University Press.
- Isaxanlı, Hamlet (2014b): *History and Policy of Translating Poetry*. META, Journal Des Traducteurs/Translators' Journal Vol. 59. 310-329.
- Ismayılova, Elza (2016): *Köroğlu Destanı'nın Avrupa Dillerine Çevirisi ve Yayını: Yabancı Araştırmacılar Gözüyle İncelenmesi* [Translations and Publications of The Epic of Koroghlu in European Languages: through the Eyes of Foreign Researchers]. *Akademik Bakış Dergisi* Vol. 57. 150-165.
- Lalkoŭ, Ihar (2013): Varlıq yazıları (April, 2013):
<<http://www.achiq.org/anadil/VarliqYazilar1.pdf>>
- Longfellow, Henry (1878): *The Leap of Roushan Beg*. The Atlantic Monthly, Vol.41. No.1. 30-31.
- Longfellow, Henry (1876-79): (trans. and ed.). *Poems of Places*. Boston: James R. Osgood & Co.
- Rustamli, Asif (2013): *Cəfər Cabbarlının bədii tərcümələri* [Literary Translations by Cəfər Cabbarli]. G. Baghirova (ed.). Baki: Sherg-Gerb.
- Рзаев, Агабаба (1969): Очерки об ученых и мыслителях Азербайджана XIX века [Essays on the scientists and thinkers of Azerbaijan of the XIX century]. Baku: Издательство “Маариф” [“Maarif” Publishing House]
- Sand, George (1843): *Kourroglou. Épopée Persane*. Bibliothèque Numérique Romande. Consulted on March, 2018, < https://ebooks-bnr.com/ebooks/pdf4/sand_kourroglou.pdf>
- Schmiede, Hanspeter; Aliyarlı, Suleyman; Arazova, Roza, Isaxanlı, Hamlet (eds.). (2002): *Kitabi Dədəm Qorqud aşiqi* [The Man Enamoured of the Book of Dede-Gorgud]. Baki: Xazar Universiteti Neshriyyati.
- Wagenknecht, Edward (1966): *Henry Wadsworth Longfellow: Portrait of an American Humanist*. New York: Oxford University Press. 145.
- Walczak-Bezombes, Inga (2014): *Korrouglou on l'histoire de l'impossible traduction en français de l'épopée du bandit Persien*. Annales / Académie Polonaise des Sciences - Centre Scientifique à Paris Vol. 18. 205-221.
- Wilks, Judith (1995): *Aspects of the Köroğlu Destani: Chodźko and Beyond*, Chicago: University of Chicago, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Vol. 2.
- Wilks, Judith (2001): *Personization of Köroğlu: Bandit and Royalty in three versions of Köroğlu Destani*. Asian Folklore Studies Vol. 60. 305–318.
- Yektatalab, Hourieh; Karimnia, Amin (2016). *Translations of Shahnameh of Firdausi in the West*. Khazar Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Vol.16. No.3. 36-52.