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Historical Traditions of Ganja Literary Environment

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***Abstract:** One of the oldest cultural centers of Azerbaijan is Ganja. Historians have proved that Ganja existed even before our era and spoke about its material and cultural monuments. Ganja is one of the regions that represent the material and spiritual existence of Azerbaijan, where brave men and heroes showed their skills and became martyrs in the struggle for the freedom and independence of our country. It is no coincidence that the declaration of Azerbaijan as an independent state is rooted in the name of this city, the National Council and government of Azerbaijan were moved from Tbilisi to Ganja in 1918 and operated here for some time.*

Ganja is a land reflecting the beauty of Azerbaijan's nature. The Divine did not spare anything from Ganja. Plane trees, a city of greenery, parks, alleys, beautiful, pretty buildings, its appearance reflecting the unity of the past and modernity, eye-catching gardens are the natural appearance of Ganja.

Ganja has played an exceptional role in the development of Azerbaijani art and culture, as well as in the formation of literary and cultural life for centuries. The genius of Nizami Ganjavi stands out among the many personalities who came to mind when this magnificent city was mentioned. He is one of the most powerful poets and philosophers not only of Ganja, but also of Azerbaijan, the whole East and the world. The creation of the Azerbaijani renaissance is connected precisely with Nizami's works. Nizami traditions have opened new pages in Azerbaijani and Eastern literature for centuries, great artists of the East, such as Amir Khosrov Dahlavi, Alishir Navai, Abdurrahman Jami, influenced by his "Khamsa" and created their "Khamsa". The German poet Goethe talked about Nizami's literary fame and the power of his art in the "West-East Divan" and considered him one of the great artists of Eastern literature. Years and centuries pass, the candle of poetry, lit by the great Nizami in the XII century, never went out, but flared up more luxuriantly. Visitors to Ganja - this ancient and modern city - first come across his mausoleum. The decision of the great leader Heydar Aliyev on the 840th anniversary of Nizami's birth and the assessment of 2021 as the "Year of Nizami" according to the

decree of the president of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev once again shows that the art of Nizami is immortal and evergreen.

Key words: Azerbaijan, Ganja, historical, ancient, tradition, culture, territory

Introduction

One of the oldest cultural centers of Azerbaijan is Ganja. Historians have proved that Ganja existed even before our era and spoke about its material and cultural monuments. Ganja is one of the regions that represent the material and spiritual existence of Azerbaijan, where brave men and heroes showed their skills and became martyrs in the struggle for the freedom and independence of our country. It is no coincidence that the declaration of Azerbaijan as an independent state is rooted in the name of this city, the National Council and government of Azerbaijan were moved from Tbilisi to Ganja in 1918 and operated here for some time.

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The 12th century Azerbaijani literature was also produced by powerful artists such as Abulula Ganjavi, Mahsati Ganjavi, and Givami Mutarerizi, who lived in Ganja and were Nizami's contemporaries.

The main part

The history of the city of Ganja is very ancient, and historians and other writers wrote articles and published books about it. Russian scientist M.M.Altman *introduces us to very valuable historical and archaeological information about Ganja in his scientific essay "History of the city of Ganja". Based on this information, he writes that many graves and barrows confirm the existence of people here in ancient times. During the archaeological excavations, items made of black clay, bronze swords, arrows, bracelets, beads, etc. belonging to the Bronze Age (1st millennium BC) were found. The discovery of burials dating back to the Bronze Age in this area proves once again that cultural life*

developed here later. The city was formed as a result of historical conditions in this ancient area. Later, M.M. Altman writes that Ganja is spread as “Janja” in Arabic, Ganja in Persian and Azerbaijani” [1, p. 5-6].

Doctor of philological sciences Ali Saladdin introduces Ganja to the readers in his monograph dedicated to Ahmad Javad: *“Ganja was the birthplace of ozan-ashig, the creator of the most ancient epos of Azerbaijan, such as “Dede Gorgud”, “Koroglu”, “Gurbani”, “Asli-Karam”, the cradle of hundreds of asatirs, legends, myths and legends, Mahsati, Abul Ula, Nizami, Dede Yedyar, Dede Karam, Shamama Beyim, Mirza Shafi and dozens of other poets and masters of saz. Ganja is surrounded by Goshgar, Kepaz and Murov mountains, between the Shamkir, Goshgar and Kurek rivers, on the Ganja river. Ganja is called the city of Imam Hussein because it stood in front of the invading armies and gave martyrs. Jomard Qassab, Imamzadeh, Shah Abbas Mosque, etc., are also many old historical monuments in Ganja. The heroes of our time like Bandar, Javad Khan, Israfil were brought to Ganja” [2, p. 26].*

The book “Ganja and the people of Ganja” by well-known publicist Ahmad Isayev about the history and modern life of Ganja attracts attention with interesting and rich facts. We will talk about this in the relevant chapter of our dissertation, but let's turn to the opinions of the scientists cited by him about the history of ganja. A.Isayev writes: *“Regarding the date of construction of the city, the Iranian historian Mirkhond connects it with the name of Gubad I, the Sasanian ruler who lived in the 5th century. Hamdullah Qazvini, who lived in the 14th century, writes that Ganja was built in 659-60. There are other possibilities. “Darbandname” reports: “Ganja existed at the end of the 7th century and at the beginning of the 8th century. Remember the tomb of the Jomard Qassab: A relic of the 7th century! A silver dirham is kept in the St. Petersburg Hermitage, with the inscription: Minted in Janza in 712-13. What about Imamzadeh mausoleum? According to those in the know, this is a relic of 739. So, there was a decent city where money was cut, a burial ground was laid, a tomb and a mausoleum were erected, which have survived to this day” [3, p. 19].*

Ganja is a land reflecting the beauty of Azerbaijan's nature. God spared nothing from Ganja. Plane trees, a city of greenery, parks, alleys, beautiful, pretty buildings, its appearance reflecting the unity of the past and modernity, eye-catching gardens are the natural appearance of Ganja. Hundreds of poems and dozens of songs are dedicated to Ganja. The presentation in the poem “Ganja” by the folk poet Rasul Rza is proud:

Your name is in history, my Ganja, my Ganja!

From year to year you have grown up, oh my Ganja!

You have never bowed your head

To a stranger in your life, young man! [4, p. 289].

Ganja has played an exceptional role in the development of Azerbaijani art and culture, as well as in the formation of literary and cultural life for centuries. The genius of Nizami Ganjavi stands out among the many personalities who came to mind when this magnificent city was mentioned. He is one of the most powerful poets and philosophers not only of Ganja, but also of Azerbaijan, the whole East and the world. The creation of the Azerbaijani renaissance is connected precisely with Nizami's works. Prominent critic Yashar Garayev writes that: *“We find the victories of the Renaissance method of thinking in Nizami before Shakespeare. The “social utopia” in Nizami Ganjavi's poem “Iskandarnameh” can be considered an expression of the Renaissance ideal rising to the level of a*

real “Public beauty” idea” [5, p. 28-29]. People's poet Mammad Araz evaluates Nizami as a great thinker:

*If I reach a direction with every wind,
The golden morning of my poem would not open.
If there is a Nizami on earth,
It is the tension of thoughts that spins the place* [6, p. 309].

Nizami traditions have opened new pages in Azerbaijani and Eastern literature for centuries, great artists of the East, such as Amir Khosrov Dahlavi, Alishir Navai, Abdurrahman Jami, influenced by his “Khamasa” and created their “Khamasa”. The German poet Goethe talked about Nizami's literary fame and the power of his art in the “West-East Divan” and considered him one of the great artists of Eastern literature. The great Russian Orientalist Yevgeny Bertels concludes his monograph “The Great Azerbaijani Poet Nizami” about his work with these words: “Nizami's Alexander The Great sought the water of life in the world of darkness, but did not find it. But the great poet himself found this water of life, giving life and eternal youth to his heroes through the magic of his mighty artistic sayings” [7, p. 165].

Professor Akbar Aghayev writes in his monograph “Nizami and world literature” that: “A. O'Leary, William Jones, Scott Wapping, John Malcolm, Joseph Hammer, J. Atkinson, J. Mol, L. Dube, A. Russo, G. Flukel, A. Schrenker, Maurice Carrier, Wilhelm Bacher, W. Pertsch, I. Pitsy, Paul Hori, E. Brown, Georg Frilley, Ruben Levy, E. Wilson and many other European scientists wrote about Nizami and worked on the translation of his works into European languages” [8, p. 18].

Years and centuries pass, the candle of poetry, lit by the great Nizami in the 12th century, never went out, but flared up more luxuriantly. Visitors to Ganja - this ancient and modern city - first come across his mausoleum. The decision of the great leader Heydar Aliyev on the 840th anniversary of Nizami's birth and the assessment of 2021 as the “Year of Nizami” according to the decree of the president of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev once again shows that the art of Nizami is immortal and evergreen.

The 12th century Azerbaijani literature was also produced by powerful artists such as Abulula Ganjavi, Mahsati Ganjavi, Qivami Mutarrizi, who lived in Ganja and were Nizami's contemporaries. Abdulla Ganjavi lived 64 years and spent 45 years in Ganja and 20 years in Shirvan – Shamakhi. He was the teacher of the great Azerbaijani poet Khagani Shirvani and, according to some researchers, his father-in-law. Later, there was a conflict between them. In addition to his native language, he was also deeply familiar with Arabic and Persian. However, in accordance with the requirements of that time, his works that have come down to us are in Persian. Abulullah is mainly known as the author of odes. In these odes, he proves to be a powerful poet and artist. In his ode “Qasamnama”, not only the praise of shahs, but also his ideas about the word attract attention.

Another great poet of the 12th century was Mahsati Ganjavi. Literary historians spoke extensively about Mahsati Ganjavi's life and work, wrote monographs and articles. Literary historians spoke extensively about Mahsati Ganjavi's life and work, wrote monographs and articles.

These rubai's with their philosophical and intellectual content have lived as precious pearls of our literature for centuries. Let's pay attention to one rubai of Mahsati in Nigar Rafibeyli's translation:

*Don't touch the heart of the poor flower,
Don't hurt the heart of a stray rose;
It was with Saba's love, my friend,
That bloody shirt of the torn rose [9, p. 203-204].*

In this beautiful rubai, the image of the Ganja tulip is written with great artistry.

The literary environment in ganja entered a new stage in the 19th century. In that century, a hot period of literary life of Azerbaijan began. If it is possible to say so, an important branch of the 19th century Azerbaijani literature emerged from the intense activity of literary assemblies organized in individual cities. These literary meetings (“Divani-Hikmat” (Ganja), “Gulustan” (Guba), “Anjumenush-shuera” (Nakhchivan), “Fovjul-Fusaha” (Lankaran), “Beytus-Safa” (Shamakhi), “Majlisi- Uns” and “Majlisi-Faramushan” (Shusha), “Majmeush-Shuara” (Baku) and etc. were of great importance in a situation where the art of printing and the press had not yet been created, and roads and means of communication were not developed. At the mentioned literary gatherings, poets read poems they had just written, reviews about these poems were told. Selections from classic literary examples, including Fuzuli's ghazals, were also read in the assemblies, their interpretations and explanations of individual verses were given. Then the mugham performances of the singers invited there sounded.

The first literary meeting in Azerbaijan – “Divani-Hikmat” was organized in Ganja in 1820-1830, its creator was Mirza Shafi Vazeh (1794-1852), who was famous in Ganja with his poems. Later, Mirza Shafi moved to Tbilisi, where the same assembly continued. During the Ganja and Tbilisi periods of his activity, the assembly participants mainly consisted of: *Mirza Shafi Vazeh, Abbasgulu agha Bakikhanov, Mirza Mehdi Naji, Mirza Fatali Akhundov, Sheikh Ibrahim Qudsi (Naseh), Agha Ismayil Zabih, Mirza Yusif Vidadi, Fazilkhan Sheyda, Haji Yusif Gane, I.I.Grigoryev, G.Rosen, L.Z.Budagov, F.Bodenstedt. “Divani-Hikmat” was active in Tbilisi until the death of Mirza Shafi (1852) and in Ganja until the death of Mirza Mehdi Naji (1882) [10, p. 9-30].*

It is a historical fact that Mirza Shafi Vazeh wrote oriental poems in “Divani-Hikmat” in Tbilisi, his German student F.Bodenstedt read them, and this German student published those poems in Berlin as a book. The indisputable facts that F.Bodenstedt saw the great fame of these orientals and later took them to his name are well known to the literary community. Like the fate of this wise poet of Ganja, most of his poems have been lost. That is why there are very few examples of his original works left. “Susani” radifi mukhammas shows that Mirza Shafi Vazeh created classical pearls of poetry during his lifetime:

*Gunki, her gunki, çixar, dergahine secde eder,
Serv reftara gelir, qilsa qedin бага guzer,
Qonche ger agzin ile qarshidura, boynu neyer,
Kufri-zulfun yetishib bir yere kim, ey kafer,
Deseler Vazehe, bohtandi, muselman Suseni [9, p. 10-11].*

The poems of Sheikh Ibrahim Qudsi, Agha Ismayil Zabih, Mirza Mehdi Naji, and Molla Abbas Shola, among the members of “Divani-Hikmat”, reflect the traditional content of classical poetry (mainly love lyrics) and artistic means of expression. Molla Abbas Şölənin Molla Abbas Shola's (this poet was born in Isfahan, came to Ganja in about 1860, married and lived there forever. Very few of his poems

written in the classical style have survived) ghazal with radif “Ganjanin” is one of the first poems dedicated to the praise of Ganja in our literature:

*Spring has come, it's a beautiful age of Ganja,
Ganja's milk and cream came to the market.
There was a time when there were many complications in that city,
When the plane tree garden of Ganja opens its leaves [9, p. 29].*

Conclusion

It is not without reason that we start talking about the historical landscape of the Ganja literary environment with the genius Nizami of the 12th century and Mirza Shafi Vazeh of the 19th century. The picture over this long distance clearly shows that the Ganja literary environment has preserved its historical roots and primary literary and aesthetic sources in the 20th century.

Literary life in Ganja attracts attention with its hotness in the 20th century as well as historically. This is a literary region where talented poets and prose writers, playwrights, publicists and critics-literary critics work together. Of course, the concept of “literary region” cannot be equated with the concepts of “province” or “region”, which are partially synonymous with it. Since this literary region is connected to great historical traditions, it is more correct to call it “Ganja literary environment”. In the twenties and thirties of the 20th century, the literary environment in Ganja was very rich. Later, the Ganja literary environment of that period became the impetus for a number of prominent poets, writers and scholars of Azerbaijan to come to great art.

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