

AN OVERVIEW OF THE HISTORY OF LANKARAN LITERARY ENVIRONMENT

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Summary

One of the largest cities of the Southern region of the Republic of Azerbaijan is Lankaran, whose name is repeatedly mentioned in various forms (Lankerkunan, Lancon, Langaran, Langaran, Lankan, etc.) in the sources of ancient and medieval works.

The literary environment in Lankaran, which had a certain weight in the social and political life of Azerbaijan from the middle of the 18th century, from the period of the khanates, was mainly formed from the middle of the 19th century and continued and developed in its own way until the 1960s. The article provides an overview of the history of the Lankaran literary environment, and provides information about one of the first literary gatherings in Azerbaijan, "Fovcul-fusaha" and its members. At this time, it was considered necessary to provide brief information about other literary assemblies operating in Azerbaijan in the XIX work next to "Fovcul-fusaha". In addition to these, information about the Lankaran literary environment up to the 60s of the 20th century was also given, and the literature created in this environment was valued as an integral part of Azerbaijani culture.

Key words: Southern region, literary environment, literary gatherings, historical circumstances, poetry.

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1. Introduction

As is known, after the death of Nadir Shah (1747), several independent khanates were established in Azerbaijan. One of them was Talish or Lankaran khanate. By the official decree of Nadir Shah, Jamaledin Khan, the son of Seyid Abbas from the Safavi dynasty, whose great ancestor was declared the ruler of Talish (he was called Kara Khan because of his black color), moved the capital of the khanate from Astara to Lankaran (1747). Then the city, then known as a port, gradually began to change its face and grow significantly due to new administrative buildings. Although Talysh khanate tried to preserve its independence during the reign of Mir Mustafa Khan, who came to power after the death of Kara Khan in 1786, as a result of known historical events, it was annexed to Russia according to the Treaty of Gulistan signed between Iran and Russia on September 12, 1813. After the death of Mir Mustafa Khan (1814), he was succeeded by his son Mir Hasan Khan. In 1926, the Talysh Khanate was abolished and unilaterally became a province of Tsarist Russia.

The most reliable sources about the history of the khanate are the works of Saidali Kazimbay oglu Lankarani "Javahirnamei-Lenkoran" (1869) and Mirza Ahmad Mirza Khudaverdi oglu "Akhbarnama" (1882–1883). These works, written in Persian, were translated and published under the names "Saidiyya" (2004) and "Akhbarnama" (2009) (*Saidiyya, 2004*).

Since our goal is not to review history, to make an excursion into history, the article will inform our opinions about the specific issue: the literary environment in Lankaran, and we will be content with providing systematic information about the literary environment of Lankaran, not the region.

2. Main text

Lankaran has historically been the cradle of science, art and culture, and a large number of world-renowned personalities came out of this region, which was once the Talysh Khanate and is now called the Southern region, who represented Azerbaijan with dignity in the world, and are still representing it now. We believe that it would be more appropriate to start the history of the formation of the literary environment in Lankaran from the middle of the 19th century – from the date of the establishment of the "Fawcul-Fusaha" literary assembly.

Before moving on to the interpretation of the issue, since it is related to the essence of the topic, we consider it necessary to provide at least brief information about the literary assemblies that operated in Azerbaijan in the 19th century. The history of literary gatherings in Azerbaijani literature is ancient. The formation of literary assemblies as an organized creative organization, which played an important role in the history of literature and had important services in the development of poetry, coincides with the 19th century. In these assemblies, which were independent compared to the palace assemblies of the previous times, regardless of the class he belonged to, every poet, lover of poetry and art could be a member of the assembly he liked and participate in its meetings. "This was related to the fact that the nineteenth-century literary gatherings had the characteristics of a kind of democratic, mass creative unions" (*Strange Islam. Literary assemblies, 2021, p. 695*).

Although there were small literary gatherings in Shaki, Gazakh, and Darband in the middle of the 19th century, the first systematic literary gathering in Azerbaijan was "Divani-Hikmet", which was organized by Mirza Shafi Vazeh in Ganja around 1820–1825. Mirza Shafi Vazeh continued his work in 1840-1846 and the last two years of his life (1850–1852) in this meeting which participated Mirza Mahammadtag, Mirza Mehdi Naji, Sheikh Ibrahim Naseh (Qudsi), Agha Ismayil Zabih, Haji Seyid Ziyadkhanzade and other poets participated when he lived in Tbilisi. "Thus, "Divani-Hikmet" operated both in Ganja and Tbilisi. During the years when Mirza Shafi lived in Tbilisi, the activity of "Divani-Hikmat" in Ganja was led by his close friend Mirza Mehdi Naji" (*Strange Islam. Literary assemblies, 2021, p. 697*).

One of the first literary gatherings organized in the first half of the 19th century is "Gulistan". The foundation of this assembly was laid by Abbasgulu agha Bakikhanov Qudsi, and Bakikhanov, who compared the beautiful Guba to Gulistan, called the literary assembly organized by him "Gulistan".

According to F. Kocharli's writing, A. Bakikhanov's friend Gubali Akhund Abdulla helped A. Bakikhanov in organizing this meeting. However, F. Kocherli did not write anything about when "Gulistan" was organized and its members (*Kocherli, 1978, p. 292*).

F.Gasimzadeh and K.Mirbagirov show that "Gulistan" was organized in 1835 (*Gasimzadeh.2009, p. 138; Mirbagirov, 1958*). In the book "History of Azerbaijan" it is mentioned that the assembly was established in the 1830s (*History of Azerbaijan, 1960, p. 120*).

One of the literary assemblies operating in the 19th century was "Anjuman-shuera". Academician Feyzulla Gasimzade writes: "According to Mammad Said Ordubadi (1872–1950), "Anjumanush-shuera" was organized by Shikhali Naib in Ordubad in 1838, and its active years were during the time of Hajiaga Faqir Ordubadi and Muhammadtaghi Sidgi" (*Gasimzadeh, 2009, p. 438*). In the early days of its organization, the activity of the assembly was not very strong, in 1860–70, Hacıağa Faqir revived the assembly by gathering Ordubad poets around him. After the death of H. Fakir, M. T. Sidgi managed to restore and continue the activities of "Anjumanush-shuara", which was about to collapse.

M. T. Sidqi, H. Faqir, Jani Ordubadi, Haji Mirza Agaraim Qudsi Ordubadi (Vanendi), Mehtaram Ordubadi (Vanendi), Molla Muhammad Ordubadi, Ahmadaga Shami, Usta Zeynal Naqgash, who wrote and created in Nakhchivan and Ordubad during the period of "Anjumanush-shuara" , Molla Huseyn Bikas, Mashadi Hasan Dabbagh, Salik Ordubadi, Nadim Nakhchivani, Mirza Mehdi Nakhchivani and others were participants of "Anjumenush-shuara".

The assembly led by Sayyid Azim in Shamakhi was called "Beytus-Safa".

Previously, the number of councilors was not large. From the letters S.A. Shirvani sent later to Shusha and Abdulla Bey Asi, it can be seen that the number of participants increased, and for this reason, the poet mentioned the names of Zovi, Raghیب, Gafil, Zuhuri, Dida, Safa, Bikhud in his letters (*Shirvani, 1960, p.152-156*).

F. Gasimzade notes that "Molla Agha Bikhud was the head of the assembly when Sayyid Azim Shirvani was not in Shamakhi" (*Gasimzadeh, 2009, p. 438*).

N. Garayev notes in his well-known research that the following poets worked in "Beytus-Safa": Seyyid Azim Shirvani (1835–1888), Bahar Mirza Nasrullah (1834–1883), Alakbar Gafil (1828–1891), Gafar Raghیب (1818–1892), Muhammad Safa (1851–1876), Molla Agha Bikhud (1830–1892), Aghababa Zuhuri (1848–1895), Mirza Mahmud Zovi (1843–?), Naseh (1856–1914), Salik, Mirza Nasrullah Dida (1797–1870), Ziya, Furugi, Najaf Bey, Mirza Muhammad Hasan Nala (1850–1917) and others (*Garayev, 2012, p. 112*).

After the death of S.A. Shirvani, "Beytus-Safa" continued its activities for four years, i.e. until 1892, under the leadership of M. Bikhud. Among the literary gatherings organized in the second half of the 19th century, "Majlisi-uns", which has a special place both in terms of the number of participants and in relation to other literary gatherings, was organized in the city of Shusha at a time when Shamakhi and Lankaran literary gatherings were active.

From 1864 to 1872, the council, which operated anonymously and had a small number of members, moved from Agah's apartment to his palace and began to continue its activities there. As the activities of "Majlisi-uns" became regular and the number of its members increased, its voice spread to Shamakhi, Sheki, Baku, Nakhchivan, Lankaran, Ganja and other cities. S.Azim from Shamakhi, M.A.Bikhud, A.Zuhuri, I.Nakam from Shaki, A.Muniri from Baku, M.T.Sidqi from Nakhchivan, M.I.Gasir from Lankaran, wrote a letter to Shusha in the name of "Majlisi-uns" and praised this new literary assembly and they congratulate.

Although new poets came to "Majlisi-uns" over time, of course, not all of them were active at the same level. "From the discussions in the books and non-manuscripts compiled by the members of "Majlisi-uns", it appears that Natavan, Agah, Novres, Hasan, Mamai, Mirza Sadiq Piran, M.H. Safa, I. Rustambayov were the main representatives of the council" (*Garayev, 2012, p. 156*).

The activity of "Majlisi-uns" continued until 1897, until Nateva's death. Its members had already written with regret that "the flowers of the poetry market have withered", "the nightingales have fallen silent", "the leader of the friendship meeting has passed away" – the meeting was disbanded.

In 1872, Karabakh poets who were not represented in "Majlisi-uns" decided to create a literary meeting in Shusha called "Majlisi-faramushan" ("forgotten ones" – forgotten ones). Thus, Abdulla Bey Asi, Abulhasan Shahid, Mirza Abdul Shahin, Fatma Khanum Kamina, Hasanali Khan Garadaghi and others gathered in the cell of Mir Mohsen Nawab (*AYI*) and started working under his leadership.

In the "Daishmandani-Azerbaijan" tazkira, M. Tarbiyat, while talking about S.A. Shirvani, mentioned "Majlisi-faramushan" along with "Beytus-Safa" and showed that there is a correspondence between these meetings (*Breastfeeding Education, p. 301*). About the name

of "Majlisi-Faramushan" the Nawab wrote in his autograph tazkira: "Faramushan" is the name of the Nawab's apartment where poets and elegant people gathered" (*AYI*) From this, it can be seen that the meetings of the council were mostly held in the Nawab's apartment. It is also clear from the mention of "gathering of the refined" that, along with poets, Shusha's intellectuals with refined tastes also participated. From the names we find in the poems of Nawab and other members of the council, it is known that such people were mainly musicians and singers.

In the second half of the 19th century, the poets of Baku, under the influence of the famous literary gatherings in Azerbaijan, created their own special gatherings – "Majmaush-shuara" ("Poets' gathering") in the apartment of Muhammad Agha Jurmi, directly under his leadership. In an unknown manuscript, it was mentioned that the assembly was organized in 1860, in the "Assembly of Poets" published in Tabriz, in 1860–1870 (*AYI*), academician F. Gasimzadeh indicated that "Majmaush-shuara" was created in the 1880s (*Gasimzadeh, 2018, p. 438*).

Living in the center of Baku city created an opportunity for the poets of "Majmaush-shuara" to have closer contact with the periodical press. At the beginning of the 20th century, "Majmaush-shuara" poets A. Jannati, S. Zarger, M. Seydi, M. Azer, M.H. Qudsi and others appeared in periodicals such as "Dirilik", "Babayi-Amir", "Zanbur", "Art". Among them, A. Jannati stood out with his progressive and enlightened ideas.

"Majmaush-shuara" lasted longer than all the literary gatherings created in the 19th century. It was active until the fifteenth years of the XX century.

The first literary assembly formed in the second half of the 19th century was "Fovcul-fusaha", which represented poets, scientists and lovers of poetry and art living in the city of Lankaran and its surroundings.

There are different opinions about the history of the organization of "Fawcul-Fusaha". Some sources state that the assembly was established in the 1850s, and others between 1855 and 1860.

In addition to the well-known research of N. Garayev, about the "Fawcul-fusaha" literary assembly, its sphere of activity and members, Mir Hashim Talishli's monograph "19th century Lankaran literary environment" (15, pp. 13–174) provides extensive information. In addition to the poems of the head of the assembly M. I. Ghasir, the book "Poetic Assemblies" includes the works of Molla Fattah Sahban, Alakbar Ajiz, Mirza Alakbar Muhaggir, Molla Muhammad Mujirim, Mirza Isa Khayali, Muhammadhasan Najjar, Huseyngulu Shuri and Mirza Alakbar Saburi, members of the assembly. (8, pp. 83–108).

In addition to the poets, in the meetings of "Fovzul-fusaha", Mirza Saidali bey Kazimbayov, the author of "Javahirnamei-Lankaran", who talks about the history and ethnography of Talysh district, and the lives of prominent people, Mirza Saidali bey Kazimbayov, the author of "Tarihi-Lankaran and Talysh", Mirza Ahmad Mirza Khudaverdi oglu, and a number of others Scholars and open-minded intellectuals such as Mirza Alakbar Akhundov, the author of moral-educational works and the astronomy-related book "Heyet", and Mirza Sadıg bey Mehmandarov, the first initiator of a new type of school in Lankaran district, participated.

In addition to these, the master tarzan, S.Azim's friend Shirali bey Nasirbeyov, Molla Muhammad Hakim, who knows folk medicine very well, singer and charikist Mammadgulu, Molla Muhammad Aczachi who prepares medicine from plants, Mirza Ismayil Tabrizi, intellectuals Mir Gasim Talishinski, Teymur bey Bayramalibeyov and others spent their free time in that party.

The composition of the "Fawcul-Fusaha" literary assembly consisted of people of various backgrounds, education, and professions. In general, the following poets, scientists and lovers of poetry and art took part in "Fovcul-fusaha": Mirza Ismayil Gasir (1805–1900), Molla

Fattah Sahban (1813–1898), Aghababa Bikhud (1815–1898), Usta Muhammadhasan Najjar (1819–1912), Mirza Isa Khayali (1850–1917), Huseyngulu (Dubandiduz) Shuri (1826–1934), Mirza Mutalib Archivani (1838–1936), Molla Alakbar Aziz (1835–1899), Molla Muhammad Mujrum, Mirza Aziz Aliyev (1830–1910), Kabla Bakhishali Akhundov, Mirza Ahmed Kamin (Talib), Mirza Israfil Hamid oglu Mahir, Sarvi, Pünhan, Tahirli, Muhibb, Mirza Alakbar Muhaggir (1867–1919), Mir Hasan Sayyad Seyidzadeh, Ibrahim bey Talish, Mirza bey Talishinski, Mir Sadiq Talishinski, Mirza Ismayil Sururi, Mirza Abdulahed Novras, Sadiq bey Mehmandarov, Mirza Saidali Kazimbayov, Mirza Ahmad Khudaverdi oglu (1802–1894), Mirza Alakbar Akhundov, Shireli bey Nasirbeyov, Molla Muhammad Hakim, Charigci Mammadgulu, Mir Gasim Talishinski, Teymur Bey Bayramalibeyov, Molla Muhammad Aczachi, Haji Mohsun and others.

Mirza Ismayil Gasir, the head of "Fawcul-fuseha" S.A. Shirvani, called him the "sardaftar" of "Fawcul-fuseha" poets in a letter.

Since the participants of "Fawcul-Fusaha" with different professions were engaged in business, they could not gather together during the day, nor was it possible to gather every evening. Therefore, because they mostly gathered on Fridays, the sessions of the council were also held on those days.

"Fawcul-Fusaha" had regular contact with literary gatherings in other cities. In this connection, Mirza Ismayil Qasir was particularly distinguished. Thus, he often came to Baku, took part in "Majmaush-shuara" and corresponded with Shamakhi poets. The members of "Fawcul-Fusaha" corresponded with the poets of Darband, which is confirmed by the verse letters written by Molla Fazil Darbandi, one of the Darband poets, to M.I.Gasir.

There was regular contact between the poets of "Fawcul-Fusaha" and the poets of Ardabil, and they participated in each other's gatherings. Even Mujrum, Ajiz and Khayali, among the poets of "Fawcul-Fusaha", were originally from Ardabili and moved to Lankaran in the 70s of the 19th century. Mirza Ahmad Taib was a close friend of one of the Ardabil poets, Ashiq, and they corresponded with each other (*Garayev, 2012, p. 82*).

"Fawcul-fusaha" literary assembly continued its activity until the death of M. I. Gasir, i.e. until 1900. Literary gatherings known under poetic names, as well as small literary associations, were related to the socio-political and cultural development of the 19th century, in other words, they were created by the requirements of the time, and at the same time, they had a beneficial effect on the development of Azerbaijani literary thought to a certain extent.

None of these assemblies had a ceremony or program. Their main goal was to learn the craft of the great wordsmiths of the East, to continue the good traditions of classical poetry, to improve their craft by reciting impromptu poetry in literary competitions through discussion, and to promote education among the people as the leading intellectuals of the time.

Most of the poets of the literary assembly of Azerbaijan spoke about the nation and the education of the nation. They saw the solution of creating a fair law and order in the country in the education of the people. They were Azerbaijani educators. Besides continuing the traditions of the classical literary heritage, Majlis poets also created artistically interesting and new forms of poetry.

In connection with the madrasa education they received in Arabic-Persian languages, the national spirit and the tendency towards the mother tongue became stronger in the poems of majlis poets who wrote in two languages – Azerbaijani and Persian. Especially in the second half of the century, the advantage was completely on the side of the mother tongue.

Literary gatherings organized in the 19th century played the role of a creative school in the development of a group of Azerbaijani national intellectuals. Literary gatherings of the

19th century, which were organized for the first time at schools and madrasas, played an important role in instilling love for the mother tongue in young people, enthusiasm for Azerbaijani poetry, and in the development of a number of young Azerbaijani poets.

Mir Hashim Talishli, the author of a very valuable study on the 19th century Lankaran literary environment, writes that "the Lankaran "Fawcul-fusaha" literary heritage continued in the beginning of the 20th century with its stylistic features, form, meaning and content" (*Talishli, 2007, p. 157*). Although there was no special literary association in Lankaran until the forties of the 20th century, Mirza Agali Aliyev, Teymur Shahverdiyev, Teymur Bey Bayramelibayov, Zulfugar Ahmadzade, Ibrahimkhalil Isazade, Iskander Samadzade Sahin, Gudrat Ulvi Khalilov, Idris Agayev, Abdul Akhundzade and others from the region were "pen they continued and developed their creativity by appearing in periodicals with their experiences" (*Talishli, 2007, p. 157*).

In the first decade of the Soviet rule in Azerbaijan, a revival is felt in the development of poetry as well as dramaturgy in Lankaran. In 1928, Teymur Shahverdiyev's "Six Deaths" and "True Vision", Mirza Isag Mohsunzade's "Jamshidabad" plays were staged in the Lankaran People's Theater (*Chronicle of the Azerbaijani theater, 1983, p. 139*).

In 1940, under the leadership of Idris Aghayev, a literary association of young writers was established in Lanharan, with the participation of Habib Habibov, Mirzaaga Mirzayev, Abdul Aliyev, Mutallib Abdulov and others (*Talishli, 2007, p. 160*). However, this literary association cannot be widely published due to the well-known prohibitions of the totalitarian Soviet era.

The revitalization of the literary environment in Leneran began in the sixties of the 20th century. It is from these years that literary associations, and later a branch of the Azerbaijan Writing Union, were established in Lankaran, and a lively literary environment was formed in Lankaran.

Starting from the 20s of the 20th century, as in most regions of Azerbaijan, certain innovations began to manifest themselves in the literary-cultural and socio-political environment in Lankaran. It is mentioned in the sources that "as early as 1912, a four-page newspaper called "Rybnoye delo" in Russian was published in Lankaran, in 1917 "Hurriyyat khaliketisi" in Azerbaijani, and in 1919 "Rahbar" newspapers were published (*Huseynbalaoglu, Talishli, 1990, p. 324*).

One of the first newspapers published in Lankaran was "Izvestia", the organ of the Mughan Executive Committee, "the only copy of which dated July 3, 1919 is kept in the Lankaran history and local history museum" (*Huseynbalaoglu, Talishli, 1990, p. 322*).

Another newspaper published in Lankaran was "Siya Toluş" ("Gold Talish"), published in Talish and Azerbaijani languages. The first issue of the newspaper was published on January 21, 1931 (*Sia tolish, 1931*).

Zulfugar Ahmadzade, Muzaffar Nasirli, Aliasgar Asgarov and others were the most active writers of the newspaper "Molla Nasreddinchi" published for several months under the editorship of poet and journalist Ali Razi Shamchizade, which devoted space to literary writings along with various topics. In 1937, this newspaper was renamed and published in the Azerbaijani language under the name "Socialist Subtropical", its first editor was Muzaffar Nasirli" (*Huseynbalaoglu, Talishli, 1990, p. 323*).

The newspaper, which later came out under the name "Lenkoran", was published under the name "Leninchi" from 1957 and was published under this name until the restoration of our independence. The most active and productive period of the newspaper was, without a doubt, the years when the poet Shekar Aslan was the editor of the newspaper (1970–1991) (*Huseynbalaoglu, Talishli, 1990, p. 323*).

3. Conclusion

As can be seen from what we have mentioned above, the "Fawcul-Fusaha" literary assembly, which began to operate in the second half of the 19th century, played an important role in the formation of the literary environment in Lankaran, and like other literary assemblies in Azerbaijan, had important services in the development of poetry. In the first decades of the 20th century, the atmosphere of the "Fawcul-Fusaha" era was not so noticeable in Lankaran, but starting from the 20s, a revival began to be felt in the literary environment, but until the 60s of the 20th century, the literary associations that were formed in Lankaran were the known characteristics of the totalitarian Soviet era. due to the bans, and on the other hand, due to the influx of literary forces growing in Lankaran to the center – Baku city, there was no noticeable improvement in the literary environment of the provincial city. Observations suggest that the revival of the literary environment in Lankaran did not start from the sixties of the 20th century, since these years, a literary association was established in Lankaran under the "Leninchi" newspaper, and then a branch of the Azerbaijan Writers' Union was established, and a lively literary environment was formed in Lankaran.

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