

PATH OF FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF EPIC POEM IN THE SOUTHERN AZERBAIJANI LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

A word, an embodiment of feelings and emotions of a human kind, developing inside separate form and content as per the requirements of the time in the various stages of development of the history has formed the oral culture - the fiction. With the time, the fiction was divided into lyrical, epic and dramatic kinds, each possessing the unique and specific features. So, the first epic poems were formed based on songs created about the various social and political events and their participants, having great vital importance and the folk heroes, gaining the people's love and sang in chorus. The known social and political events contained and contemplating the marching of Hellenes to Troy (the Greek epic), the great migration of people (German epic), beating off Arabs who had conquered Spain and risking to conquer France (French epic) were first of all expressed in the songs and then epos reflecting experiences of the aforementioned people. The various epic works belonging for example to Sumerians ("Enmerkar and Aratta Ruler", "Uruk and Aratta", "Luganbanda and Enmerkar", "Bilgamus"), to the ancient Turks ("Oghuz Kaghan", "Alp er Tonga", "Erganakon"), to the Greek people ("Iliad", "Odyssey"), to the Azerbaijani Turks ("Book of Dada Gorgud"), to the German people ("epic on Nibelung"), to the French people ("Chanson sur Roland"), to the Spanish people ("Poem about Sir"), to the Russian people "Saga about Igor regiment") and so on were considered epic samples created namely by this way.

KEYWORDS: Southern Azerbaijan, Epic Poem, Epos, Proto-TURKS, Sumerian Culture

INTRODUCTION

The place where the first epic poems were created was considered Greece and "in ancient Greece, the epic works created by the people were named epic poems where there were touched upon the life and prowess of people and the God. These personages, being products of the folk imagination have reflected the important features of the people life in the ancient Greece" (1, p. 139) Whenever, we have to note that in comparison with the ancient Greek epic, the age of the Turkic epos is also old. As it was affirmed by professor Nizami Jafarov, the associate member of ANAS, "the ancient Turkic epos, being a result of a few several thousand years' mythological-epic thought's researches was formed in the middle of the first millennium BC and we know that the proto-Turkic mythology served as a basis for the ancient Turkic epos" (2, p. 5).

The formation and development of the epic poem as a genre, providing both the epic and lyric description of the life, shaped based on the combination of narration and singing, "defined as a narrative verse, verse story with a plot" were more likely related to the written literature, and "in connection with changing of the historical circumstances, the content and form of the epic poem have been exposed to some modifications", thereby it passed the known historical way from epos to the syncretic form – the special genre (3, p. 370).

The "epic poem" means in the Greek language "build, create" and there would be more accurate to name these

kinds of works as lyric-epic works (6. p. 91) for such a reason that in the epic poem being a kind of verse with the plot (5, p. 119) both, the epic description and the lyric attitude of the poet as regards the described events were intermingled.

In general, this genre is explained in the “theory of literature” as follows: “” the epic poem is one of the lyric and epic narrative forms of the literature, i.e. the topical narration with a verse. It is a story written with a plot. The matter is that the poet describes the adventures joined by his hero and anxiety exposed by him and at the same time, as in the lyrical works and expresses his attitude, joy and sorrow towards life events described in the epic poem. The poet sings of these attitudes with the same emotional scope with the story in the lyrical returning passages of the epic poem that provides the epic poem with lyrical wording. So, side by side the heroes and the described events the poet also participates in the structure of the work (7, p. 109).

Sometimes, the poems are defined as works devoted to the life of heroes. The poets, in order to praise the personalities and the world-wide events whose traces are known in the history with a figurative language have applied to the genre of epic poem and by this way they created original poetic samples in the various themes. We know that the epic poem, the most voluminous work amongst the works in verse by its form and content is divided into lyrical-epic, epical-lyric and historical-dramatic kinds. These kinds are more widespread. According to the opinion of the researchers, the epic poem, as a finished literary genre was finally shaped with the “Iliad” written in honor of the Troy city and “Odyssey” by Homer dedicated to the prowess of the commander Odyssey. As it was confirmed by the academician Aziz Mirahmadov, “the main hero of the works “Iliad” and” Odyssey” is the people; the content of such works expressed in mythological and legendary form includes mainly the people’s life and struggle (8, p. 139).

The epic poem was turned into one of the most widespread lyrical-epic description kinds after formation of the written literature, was one of the leading genres in Azerbaijani, oriental and the world literature and as it was noted above it was exposed to significant modification in the content and the form. The leading genre position of the epic poem, formed in the ancient periods of the history and preserved its existence up to the date has been weakened in the capitalism period and with forming of this social-political structure, the epic poem has lost its genre status in the literature and as far as the position of the novel was strengthened there were taken place some setbacks in the development of this genre. But despite all ups and downs, there were created the perfect samples of epic poems reflecting the concrete historical features specific or each period, the social conditions and the life of the people and this process is not stopped.

The development of the epic poem with ancient history, taking a back seat or turning to the leading genre was always related to some social and political, as well as historical processes.

Many Russian literary critics, as well as N.A. Gulyayev relates the new development stage of the epic poem to the gradual fail of the church ideology and the revival period of the bourgeois relations and notes that in this period the human kind and his spiritual world were exposed to the intense interest. In such a case, the heroes of the epic poem were the personalities distinguished by their human qualities than the representatives of the rulers and commanders of the previous period (9, pp. 123-124).

According to an idea widespread in the literary critics, “the development of the epic poem is related to the period of romanticism; and in such a case the subjective-lyrical features in the epic poem were perfectly expressed, whereby the image of the lyric hero was created” (8, p. 139)

The typical feature distinguishing the epic, characterized by the predominance of the lyric-epical praising of the

life poem from the poetry was not related to the volume, but is determined by the plot and the characters gallery inherent hereto. Alike the lyric poetry, the epic poem has some plot. In fact, the epic poem in its classical terms, means the description and praising of the great hero and rare event with the luxurious poetry language. Namely for this reason, the epic poem is also called the “gahramanname”, i.e. a work dedicated completely to the hero.

There are serious opinions in the Azerbaijani literary critics in connection with the history of the development of the epic poem. Elmaddin Alizade, the Doctor in Philology claims that the first epic poems were not created by the Greeks, but by the Sumerians people, our ancient ancestors and to prove his idea he refers to the arguments of the experts on the Turkic studies all over the world in connection with the above specified matter. According to his idea, “The epic creative activity in the ancient Sumer was very strong. The various sources provide comprehensive information about 9 legends. These epic works were considerable first of all by the fact that they embraced many human qualities, they set lots of problems and matters, which were necessary for the human life.” (10, p. 72). Taking into account that today the Turks from the Southern Azerbaijan call the epic poem as “dastan”, i.e. the epic and S.N. Kramer, the famous turkologist speaks about the Sumerian epos “Enmerkar and Aratta” in the section of his well known work “History begins at Sumer” (“International Relations”) as the epic poem, then there will not be any argument to distrust the idea forwarded by E. Alibayzade. Samuel Noah Kramer writes: “I see a clay tablet on the table in front of me. Approximately 4000 years ago, UN unknown Sumerian clerk has scribbled here on the cuneiform symbols. The tablet’s volume is 23x23sm in a quadrangular form, i.e. smaller than the ordinary typewriter paper. The tablet was divided into twelve columns. But the clerk has divided this tablet into 12 columns and placed on it more than 600 lines of the heroic poem with the very little symbols. This epic poem may be called “Enmerkar and Aratta ruler” (11, p.73.). This attitude has been reflected in the serious researches by Professor Gazanfar Kazimov in connection with the history of the Azerbaijani language. The author writes: “We know nine heroic eposes created by the ancient Sumerian people. Many legends are associated with the ancient Azerbaijani state Aratta. Some of the legend’s heroes, i.e. En-Merkar, Luganbanda and Bilgamis are historical personalities. The epic “Bilgamis” is closely related to the Turkic legends created later. The name of the hero of the legend is of the same structure with the names of the next Turkic epics. Y.V. Yusifov proved that Aratta was located in the territory of the present Southern Azerbaijan and was the Azerbaijani state (12. P. 154). And according to the idea expressed in the researches by Ismayil Valiyev, Doctor in philology, “in the ancient Sumerian epos and songs there are lots of plots, idea, artistic expression, similarities and so on, which are of the same spirit with the Azerbaijani folklore, tales and legends. There are considerable connections between the epic “Bilgamis”, the stories of the “Book of Dada Gorgud” and the epic “Koroglu” (13, p.13). To my mind, it would be better to look at the content of the epic “Bilgamis. The main hero of the epic is Gilgamesh / Bilgamis, possessing endless power as the God and supporting any trials for gaining immortality. And the power and the source of inspiration of Gilgamesh was Shamkhat. If there was not any Shamkhat, Enkidu, living alone in mountains, forests and deserts as bears, will not be able hunting any wild animal with paws would turned from animal into human kind nor Gilgamesh will follow immortality... You know well Enkidu, he had a flock of wild animals and was the first and the last shepherd of the world without any human kind.

The first half of the story discusses Gilgamesh, king of Uruk, and Enkidu, a wild man created by the gods to stop Gilgamesh from oppressing the people of Uruk. After an initial fight, Gilgamesh and Enkidu become close friends. Together, they journey to the Cedar Mountain and defeat Humbaba, its monstrous guardian. Later they kill the Bull of Heaven, which the goddess Ishtar sends to punish Gilgamesh for spurning her advances. As a punishment for these actions, the gods sentence Enkidu to death.

In the second half of the epic, distress about Enkidu's death causes Gilgamesh to undertake a long and perilous journey to discover the secret of eternal life. He eventually learns that "Life, which you look for, you will never find. For when the gods created man, they let death be his share, and life withheld in their own hands". However, because of his great building projects, his account of Siduri's advice, and what the immortal man Utnapishtim told him about the Great Flood, Gilgamesh's fame survived his death. His story has been translated into many languages, and in recent years has featured in works of popular fiction.

The epic begins with Enkidu. He lives with the animals, suckling at their breasts, grazing in the meadows, and drinking at their watering places. A hunter discovers him and sends a temple prostitute into the wilderness to tame him. In that time, people considered women and sex calming forces that could domesticate wild men like Enkidu and bring them into the civilized world. When Enkidu sleeps with the woman, the animals reject him since he is no longer one of them. Now, he is part of the human world. Then the harlot teaches him everything he needs to know to be a man. Enkidu is outraged by what he hears about Gilgamesh's excesses, so he travels to Uruk to challenge him. When he arrives, Gilgamesh is about to force his way into a bride's wedding chamber. Enkidu steps into the doorway and blocks his passage. The two men wrestle fiercely for a long time, and Gilgamesh finally prevails. After that, they become friends and set about looking for an adventure to share.

Gilgamesh and Enkidu decide to steal trees from a distant cedar forest forbidden to mortals. A terrifying demon named Humbaba, the devoted servant of Enlil, the god of earth, wind, and air, guards it. The two heroes make the perilous journey to the forest, and, standing side by side, fight with the monster. With assistance from Shamash the sun god, they kill him. Then they cut down the forbidden trees, fashion the tallest into an enormous gate, make the rest into a raft, and float on it back to Uruk. Upon their return, Ishtar, the goddess of love, is overcome with lust for Gilgamesh. Gilgamesh spurns her. Enraged, the goddess asks her father, Anu, the god of the sky, to send the Bull of Heaven to punish him. The bull comes down from the sky, bringing with him seven years of famine. Gilgamesh and Enkidu wrestle with the bull and kill it. The gods meet in council and agree that one of the two friends must be punished for their transgression, and they decide Enkidu is going to die. He takes ill, suffers immensely, and shares his visions of the underworld with Gilgamesh. When he finally dies, Gilgamesh is heartbroken.

Gilgamesh can't stop grieving for Enkidu, and he can't stop brooding about the prospect of his own death. Exchanging his kingly garments for animal skins as a way of mourning Enkidu, he sets off into the wilderness, determined to find Utnapishtim, the Mesopotamian Noah. After the flood, the gods had granted Utnapishtim eternal life, and Gilgamesh hopes that Utnapishtim can tell him how he might avoid death too. Gilgamesh's journey takes him to the twin-peaked mountain called Mashu, where the sun sets into one side of the mountain at night and rises out of the other side in the morning. Utnapishtim lives beyond the mountain, but the two scorpion monsters that guard its entrance refuse to allow Gilgamesh into the tunnel that passes through it. Gilgamesh pleads with them, and they relent.

After a harrowing passage through total darkness, Gilgamesh emerges into a beautiful garden by the sea. There he meets Siduri, a veiled tavern keeper, and tells her about his quest. She warns him that seeking immortality is futile and that he should be satisfied with the pleasures of this world. However, when she can't turn him away from his purpose, she directs him to Urshanabi, the ferryman. Urshanabi takes Gilgamesh on the boat journey across the sea and through the Waters of Death to Utnapishtim. Utnapishtim tells Gilgamesh the story of the flood—how the gods met in council and decided to destroy humankind. Ea, the god of wisdom, warned Utnapishtim about the gods' plans and told him how to

fashion a gigantic boat in which his family and the seed of every living creature might escape. When the waters finally receded, the gods regretted what they'd done and agreed that they would never try to destroy humankind again. Utnapishtim was rewarded with eternal life. Men would die, but humankind would continue.

When Gilgamesh insists that he be allowed to live forever, Utnapishtim gives him a test. If you think you can stay alive for eternity, he says, surely you can stay awake for a week. Gilgamesh tries and immediately fails. So Utnapishtim orders him to clean himself up, put on his royal garments again, and return to Uruk where he belongs. Just as Gilgamesh is departing, however, Utnapishtim's wife convinces him to tell Gilgamesh about a miraculous plant that restores youth. Gilgamesh finds the plant and takes it with him, planning to share it with the elders of Uruk. But a snake steals the plant one night while they are camping. As the serpent slithers away, it sheds its skin and becomes young again.

When Gilgamesh returns to Uruk, he is empty-handed but reconciled at last to his mortality. He knows that he can't live forever but that humankind will. Now he sees that the city he had repudiated in his grief and terror is a magnificent, enduring achievement—the closest thing to immortality to which a mortal can aspire.

At this moment we consider important to express our attitude to a matter. The matter is that L.Sh. Timofeyev and S.V. Turayev, the well-known Russian literary critics considered the "Book of Dada Gorgud" a narrative poem or the epic poem, existing in the Turkic people's literature by its genre typology in their book "Dictionary of terms of literary critic" (15, p.6). We agree with this opinion, as, in the Southern Azerbaijan the epic poem is called as "dastan" (epos) presently.

It means that "from this point of view, the development of the motives contained in the Book of Dada Gorgud" towards the genre of epic poem may be considered natural (16, p. 181). It has to be noted that Bulud Garachorlu, referring to the epos of "Book of Dada Gorgud" where the Oghuz heroes had been praised analyzed the heroic spirit contemplated in the epic poems "Word of my saz", "Book of my Grandfather" and "Bother's oath" by Sahand in the modern literary context and to express his endless thought selected the genre of epic poem, which may be considered the most successful aesthetic form and the narrative strategy. Each of the ancient images of the Azerbaijani national thought created by Sahand being closely related to the history of spirituality of the Azerbaijani people and the world of beliefs expresses the good, future, victory and eternity. Namely for these peculiarities, the epic poems by Bulud Garachorlu Sahand have the special position amongst the epic poems written "based on the Book of Dada Gorgud" in the modern Azerbaijan literature " (17).

The first sample of the epic poem in the Azerbaijani literature, possessing ancient and rich historical traditions was written by Afzaladdin Khagani (1126-1199), the well-known poet of the 12-th century. This work was mistakenly called as the tour round the world in verse, the authors of this idea considered that this epic poem was written based on impressions of the journey of the poet to Iraq. We know that the work was named later as "Tohfetul-Iraqeyn".

Beginning from the 12-th century the epic poem lived its flowering period despite it was written in Persian language in the Azerbaijani literature. The series of epic poems, possessing the traditional beginning, i.e. "the minajat", "net" (curse), "madhiyya" (panegyric) and fakhriyya- "Treasury of Mysteries"(1174-1175), "Khosrow and Shirin" (1181), "Leyli and Majnun"(1188), "Seven beauties"(1196) and "Isgandarnama"(1209) by Nizami Ganjavi were created. Beginning from the 13-th century the epic poems written in the Persian language were gradually replaced with those in the mother tongue. There were created "Dastani-Ahmad Harami", written by unknown author, organized based on the struggle between the Good and Evil, the motive of "Avesta" under the influence of the epic poems of Nizami Ganjavi and "Gisseyi-Yusif" by Gul Ali under the influence of the Quran verses. The tradition to write poems in the mother language was later

widely spread and the influence of Nizami Ganjavi traditions in the field of epic poems' was considerably clear.

Beginning from the 16-th century the genre of epic poem passed once again its period of development in the Azerbaijani literature.

During 17-th century there were written several epic poems in the Azerbaijani literature, which draw attention from the standpoint of mastery that include "Bakhtiyarname" by Fadai Tabrizi, "Fethnameyi- Abbasi-namdar" by Sadig bay Efshar, "Varga and Gulsha" by Mesih and "Gandaharname" by Saib Tabrizi.

During the 18-th century, the themes worked out based on the traditions and national folklore was preferred and the subjects of "Khamasa" were gradually passed into the background. (18, p. 340).

In 19-th century, the epic poem was one of the leading genres and there were written epic poems of social and allegoric content ("Gisseyi Leyli and Majnun" by Andalib Garajadagi) written under the influence of M.Fizuli in the same rhythm and style (22, p. 77).

CONCLUSIONS

The short information provided herein by us and the samples referred above are of specific importance from the standpoint to study the position of this genre in the literature, its literary possibilities. The volume of these works, the art of solving issues, the narration and praising style confirms once again the fact that epic poems were closely connected with the epos. As it was noted above, the poems in the classical period were called as a rule "epos".

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APENDICES

SUMMARY

The path of formation and development of the poem in South Azerbaijani literature

Creation and development of the poem - the genre of epic and lyrical content, which is described as narrative poetry or story poem, linked to writing literature. In connection with the change of historical conditions is changed the content and form of this genre, it has come a long historical path of development, and there were different kinds of the poem. Despite the fact that the first species of the poem were created by the ancient Greeks, Ph.D. E.Alibeyzade, the well known turkologist S.N. Kramer, prof. G. Kazimov, Ph.D. I.Veliev and other scientists recognize the primacy of the creation of a poem by Sumerians - Turks. In science is known nine heroic epics - poems - "Enmerkar and the lord of Aratta", "Gilgamesh and the lord", "Uruk and Aratta", "Lugalbanda and Enmerkar", "Lugalbanda and Khurram", "Gilgamesh" and others, created by Sumerian. The epos "Gilgamesh" is closely related with the Turkic eposes of later times, and the name of the hero of the epos has the same structure with the names in other Turkic epics. Aratta was the ancient city-state that existed in South Azerbaijan. Therefore, the first types of poems created not by the Greeks, but by Shumerians. Despite these facts, the famous poet of the twelfth century Afzaladdin Khagani is accepted as the creator of the first poem in the Azerbaijan literature

