

THE *TAKBEYT* GENRE IN THE AZERBAIJANI TURKISH LITERATURE OF THE 17TH CENTURY

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ABSTRACT

As a result of researches conducted in the Institute of Manuscripts named after Mahammad Fizuli of the Azerbaijani National Academy of Sciences and in various libraries of the world, it has been found that a number of poems of the Azerbaijani poets of the 17th century were written in the *takbeyt* genre. The poets such as Saib Tabrizi, Vahid Gazvini, Majzub Tabrizi, Safigulu bey Safi, Murtazagulu Sultan Shamlu, Tasir Tabrizi brilliantly expressed their lyrical feelings, social and philosophical thoughts in these verses consisting of only two hemistiches – one *beyt*.

As it is known, the *beyt* is a main unit of the poetical speech consisting of two hemistiches in the Oriental literature, including the Azerbaijani one. The first hemistich is called “sadr”, the second one is “ajuz”. For converging on one *beyt*, both of two hemistiches must be in the same metre. The *beyt* expressing one idea in the classical Azerbaijani poetry is considered equal to the poem in the European poetry (6, p.89). Even in the old Oriental books, the *beyt* was used in the same meaning with the word “poem”. In the classical literature the *takbeyts* are a separate genre dividing into two parts for their forms: the *takbeyts* calling “muqaffa”, “musarra” or “matla” of which two hemistiches are rhymed; the *takbeyts* calling “mufraad” or “fard” of which hemistiches are not rhymed.

In the Azerbaijani literature of the 17th century were used not only the classical genres written in Aruz metre such as *ghazal*, *qasida*, *mulamma*, *murabbeh*, *mukhammas*, *musaddas*, *tarjibband*, *tarkibband*, *masnavi*, *saqinameh*, *rubai*, *qitah*, but also the *takbeyt* genre.

KEYWORDS: Ghazal, Gasida, Mulamma, Murabbeh & MukhammasTekbeyt

INTRODUCTION

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We know about the *takbeyts* written in the native language by the Azerbaijani poets Saib Tabrizi, Vahid Qazvini, Majzub Tabrizi, Safigulu bey Safi, Murtazagulu Sultan Shamlu and Tasir Tabrizi lived in the 17th century.

THE TAKBEYT GENRE IN THE AZERBAIJANI TURKISH LITERATURE OF THE 17TH CENTURY

The scientific-critical text compiled by Mahammadali Huseyni of the great Azerbaijani poet of the 17th century – Saib Tabrizi's Turkish poem, (1601-1677) who wrote works consisting of 120 000 *beyts* in the Persian language, include 18 *ghazals*, 1 *takbeyt*. This poem refers to the manuscript (№ 16474) preserved in the Astaneh-Qudse-Razavi Library of Mashhad. The Iranian scholar Mahammad Gahraman, who compiled Saib Tabrizi's collection, included this *takbeyt* in it (8, s.3673). The title and the poem itself is below:

It is said about the defeat of Nadir Mahammad khan, sovereign of India,

Khosrovi-Turan suddenly became zabuni-Hind,

Those who fall asleep, they have a nightmare soon (2, p.26).

As it is known, during the years 1625-1633, Saib lived in India and was aware of the social-political situation in this country. In our opinion, talking about the defeat of Nadir Mahammad khan, the poet does not promiscuously speak about the nightmare had by the slept man. Nadir Mahammad khan might be insensible of the attack organized against himself and in Saib's opinion, due to this reason he sustained a defeat, that is to say, he had a nightmare.

Using the idea not in the literal sense, but in a figurative one in the poetical text is a sign of the poetic figurative expression. Besides, the rhetoric of *telmih* is also used in this unrhymed genre.

As it is well known, the reference to historical events, myths and legends, ayats and hadiths and to the works of eminent scholars is a sign of the poetical figure of *talmih*. According to the Oriental imaginations, the Turk, Turan represents the white colour, the Indian represents the black one.

The defeat of the Turkish origin (during 16th-17th centuries the Turks were dominating in India) Nadir Mahammad khan in India was compared in the poem with the nightmare of the slept man and thereby the victory of the black colour over the white colour. Probably, Saib had respect for Nadir Mahammad khan.

The eminent state man, poet and historian of the 17th century Mirza Mahammad Tahir Vahid Qazvini's manuscript preserved in the Berlin State Library under the number Ms.orient fol.3314, includes a Turkish *divan* consisting of 1842 *beyts* in which are collected *masnavis*, *qasidas*, *ghazals*, *qitas*, *nazms* and *takbeyts*. Among 102 *takbeyts* written in love and didactic theme are found 64 *matlas*, 38 *fards*. Vahid's *takbeyts* are remarkable for their beautiful poetic findings and artfully description of the momentary mood of the human or lover.

Let us look through the poet's *matla*:

She came, saw, waited, did, swindled me,

Cried, hurt, melted, bent, pained me (4, p.217).

As it is seen, this poem does not draw the attention for the abundance of expressions. The ability of the author who touchingly presents only with the help of the verbs the story of the lover suffering the pangs of his love, proves his poetical talent and his deep knowledge of the nicety of the native language. Here, the most interesting feature is that, all the

words in this *matla* are the words of Turkic origin. Distinguishing from the poets, writing in the classical style, in his poems Vahid could achieve the emotionalism based upon Turkish words. It is known that Mahammad Fuzuli, who was considered a master by the poets of the 17th century, used to prefer in his poetry expressivity, not emotionalism. Professor Musa Adilov justifiably noted that “Fuzuli’s poetry is not emotional, it is expressive featured. In Fuzuli’s poetry there is no place to emotionalism, but strong logic, deep rationalism is essential here” (1, p.152).

We see that Vahid Qazvini wanted to broaden the resources of the language, to raise the emotionalism in many poems, including *takbeys*.

In another *matla* he expresses his feelings and enthusiasm only with the help of verbs:

She came, embraced, showed herself, quelled me (4, s.219).

In his poems, also in *takbeys*, the poet with his poetic talent repeatedly uses separate images, wants to express to readers his thoughts and feelings through these images as much as possible. Repeating the word “eye”, addressing lady-love as “light of my eyes”, the poet created these poetic samples in his two *takbeys*:

Light of my eyes, my eyes’re fascinated with yours,

This wretch’s running from its place, because of adoration (4, s.156).

Relent me, please, don’t go far away,

Light of my eyes, the light of eyes must be in eyes (4, p.156).

The second *takbeyt* is more remarkable for its plainness, mutual completion of form and content, and the skill of usage of the language opportunities. The Azerbaijani people address to their dear people as “light of my eyes”. Using this folk expression, the poet says to his beloved that relent me, don’t go far away, because you are light of my eyes and the light of eyes must be in eyes. In most cases, the poet uses folk sayings and the polysemy of Turkish words for the expression of his poetic thoughts:

To hear about your lips is not enough,

For God’s sake, a blind knows square pilave (4, s.157)

Using skilfully the proverb “A blind knows square pilave” and prompting the physiological hunger in this *pard*, Vahid means the mental need of lady-love or love.

The self devotion of the lover is one of the significant themes that the poet touches upon. His lyrical hero is ready for giving his life as a bottle of wine:

If sweetheart wants my life, smiling,

I’ll give it as a bottle of wine, smiling (4, p.194)

The language of Vahid Qazvini’s poems is simpler than the poems of his contemporaries, that’s to say the number of Turkish lexical units is more in Qazvini’s works. The simplicity in most of his *takbeys* specially draw attention. In one of his *matla* he writes about his mood while remembering and seeing his beloved:

When I dream of you, the ember of the mountain moves,

When you come to me, my heart celebrates it (4, p.152).

Even when the lover remembers his beloved, his mood changes, the ember of the mountain on his breast moves with enthusiasm. But when his lady-love visits him, his heart celebrates it playing, dancing by itself. The poet seems like he observes his emotional state as a lover and to witness to the magical power of love on the human.

In Vahid's *beyts* are enlivened a whole poetical view. In one of his *matlas*, the poet says right to his indifferent beloved's face:

Don't blossom like a rose, if mountains within me burn up,

Lights will never go out, if the moth burns (4, p.148).

That's to say, if the mountains in my body burn me up, do not blossom like a rose, don't rejoice. I am a moth revolving around my beloved. If the moth burns (actually, the light or candle must stick, and the moth must revolve around it), the light, candle will never go out. So, the visual image envisages reminding the surrealistic pictures. May be the burnt moths are brighter than the light they revolved around!

In general, there is a similarity between the poetical researches conducted by Vahid and his contemporaries and the researches on images, sayings and word creativity done by the poets during the second half of the 20th century. Unfortunately, the Azerbaijani poets of the 20th century were not acquainted with these samples because of the late appearance.

The description of the lover's psychological state is one of the most remarkable features in Vahid's *takbeyts*. In one *matla* the poets says:

I fell from your grace, my colour says my mood,

The painter will hardly ever draw my image (4, s.220).

The lover, who fell from his beloved grace, has so weakened, the painter's drawing get hard.

Here is masterly used the diminutive type of the poetical figure of hyperbolism.

In one *matla*, the poet's lyrical hero takes offence at his beloved for not replying his words, but later he understands that he did it vainly, his beloved has not got a mouth, that's why she has not replied to him. The hyperbolic expression "has not got a mouth" is a sign of its smallness which was considered beauty in the medieval poetry and miniatures:

She has not got a mouth, I am vainly offended at her,

She is innocent, I have been offended for nothing (4, p. 177).

Combining the abstract conceptions with the concrete ones, Vahid created original poetic images in his poems:

Lady-love is never unaware of my mood,

Because of my weakness I cannot leave her mind (4, s.182).

The lady-love is always aware of the lover's mood. Because, the lover is exhausted from the weakness, so he cannot leave his beloved's mind. This *beyt* or *matla* completely became a metaphor.

In the classical literature, the black hair of the beauty is likened to the night. Vahid used this image in an original form:

Seeing me at the farewell night,
Short-haired didn't feel sorry for me (4, s.16).

Seeing the mood of the lover at the farewell night, the beloved did not show mercy. In the second hemistich the author suddenly leads readers to confusion saying "short-haired didn't feel sorry for me". "Short-haired" expression concerns to night or beauty becomes undistinguishable. In our opinion, the ambiguous saying of this thought is the literary device making this poem more remarkable.

Vahid dedicated the *matlas* written below to the coming of spring:

Spring has come, the weather is getting warmer, flowers should blossom from yesterday,
As flowers blossomed yesterday, bulbuls should leave the nests (4, s.199).
As spring has just come, the enamourment by me is beginning,
Seeing the children, the glass of my heart is stoned (4, s.221).

The second poem deals with the resumption of the lover's enamourment with the coming of spring. In the classical poetry were written a lot about the stoning the mad lover, Majnun by children. Vahid's lyrical hero is so sensitive, when he sees children, the glass of his heart become sad, "stoning".

The poet writes about the senselessness of counting on the destiny about the remedy to his grief:

Oh sufferer, don't ask for the remedy of the weakness of your fate, to the destiny,
Because, your cure is on this blue paper (4, s.166).

That's to say, oh sufferer, don't ask for the cure for the weakness, misfortune of your fate to the destiny, because the special remedy of your weakness is written on this blue paper. The remedy of your weakness is just this weakness. In the classical literature, it is a popular tendency that the remedy for the lover's grief is just the same grief itself. Because, he is happy just with these torments of love. The poet used the poetic figure of metaphor likening the blue sky to the blue paper where was written the remedy (or sorcery) for the weakness.

Vahid wrote these *takbeys* criticizing the hypocritical religious men, hermits:

If the reclusion of a hermet makes him popular as light,
Then it might make a deadwood or loneliness popular, too (4, s.156).

If a hermet becomes famous living in seclusion, then lone trees must become famous, too.

Don't look askance at our sheikh, appreciate him,
Outward he is a sheikh, inward he is a brahman (4, s.109).

Do not look askance at our sheikh, he is only outward sheikh, but inward he is a brahman. In a word, he is not a muslim sheikh being accused of hypocrisy.

Who don't see the hermet, certainly, he won't see malice,
Who don't ask the preacher, he'll never hear bad words (4, s.164).

Those who do not see the hermet, they will not see malice, those who do not hear the preacher, they will not hear bad words.

Such *bayts* are found more than enough in the Azerbaijani classical literature, including in Fuzuli's creativity – who was considered a master of the poets living in the 17th century.

Vahid wrote a *matla* in the wise-didactic theme where he always advises being on the alert and not paying attention to the enemy:

A brave man won't sure give a handle to the enemy,
A man having sharp mouth won't avoid the enemy (4, s.194).

In his social contented *takbeyt*, the poet writes in the name of the intelligentsia about their dissatisfactions:

Science is more harmful, don't study,
An educated has no home like a honeybee (4, s.194).

Science, education, intelligence is more harmful, that's why do not try to have an expansive intellect. As honeybee's beehive is riddled, though its beneficial work, the knowledgeable man's home also looks like ruins.

On the basis of the manuscript copy of the Azerbaijani poet Sharafaddin Mirza Mahammad Majzub Tabrizi's (?-1682) *divan* preserved in the Leiden University Library and National Library of Cairo, it is possible to express an opinion about his heritage written in the native language. The Leiden copy of his *divan* includes not only 15 religious *qasidas*, 95 *ghazals* and *qasidas*, 1 *tarjibband*, 50 *rubais*, but also 30 *takbeyts*. The hemistiches of these *takbeyts* are called *matlas*.

The titles of the verses are also called "Metaleh" ("Matlas"). The outlook and poetical mastership of the poet is completely expressed in these *takbeyts*.

Generally, in his poems Majzub stands up for the official state organs of the Sefevid dynasty and the intransigent Shiahs, who fought for their ideas and has a bad attitude against the progressive-minded intellectuals who propagandize the religious ideas of "vusateh-mashrab" or "vusateh-khulq" ("the amplitude of a character") and the "sulheh-koll" ("general peace"). This is the most conspicuous feature in Majzub's creativity (these ideas are the ideological bases of the creativities of the poets writing in "indian style", including Saib Tabrizi). Being against the idea of making general peace of all religions, believes, sects, the poet writes:

Sulheh-koll is a big failure in religion,
Estimate good as good, bad as bad (7, s.147).

One of the authors who was acutely criticized by Majzub was Bayazid Bastami (?-874), a well-known Sufi scholar of the 9th century. In one of his *matla* Majzub expresses his deep hate to Bayazid Bastami, who said "subhan" ("applause") addressing God. Saying this word to the zindigue (pagan, unbeliever), Majzub likens him as he nutated to the satan:

Nutating to zindigue as a satan,
Bayazid begins his subhan (7, s.176).

Majzub in his *matlas* also emphasizes that he is a fanatic Shiah:

The namaz for the dignity in two worlds,
Shiahs perform it regularly (7, s.177).

The poet also wrote *matlas* where he called the authority for justice. He wrote, to mercify the oppressor is just an oppression:

To mercify the oppressor is an oppression,
Don't tyrannise the people, they're Muslims (7, s.176).

Majzub has also didactic *takbeyts*. He writes, a poor cannot become rich with pipe dreams, for rising he must labor:

The high rank is nothing without laboring,
The pipe dream cannot transform the poor into rich (7, s.176).

Majzub was a talented poet who perfectly knew his mother tongue, masterly used proverbs like “**The dogs bark, but the caravan goes on**”, “As the head is big, the shit is serious”, “People never abandon their deceased”, “As the rope is longer, it passes through the ringer, yet”, “Like father like son”, “Less is nothing for more” and words, expressions in the spoken language.

Safigulu bey Safi, a governor of Mashhad in 1070 hijri year (c.e.1659-1660) and a *baylarbay* of Herat in 1088 hijri year (c.e.1677-1678) wrote a divan which includes 11 *ghazals*, *qitas* and *rubais* and 6 *matlas*. This divan is preserved in the Tehran University Library. These are the Irical-love verses expressing the sad mood of the poet. Looking at his lover with wistful views, the poet says:

My lover's imbibing her lips as halva in front of me,
I'm crying like a dark blue narcissus looking at her (5, s.300).

In another *matla*, the poet curses his beloved who transformed him to Majnun:

Let that beauty suffer torments like this lover,
The eyes disgraced me, God, make them the same,
Not more than my eyes, I say, let her being disgraced in eyes like
mine (5, s.298).

According to Safi, even the trees canoodle and cry for his beloved's figure. There is an interesting visual image in one *bayt*:

Trees cry bitterly canoodling apart your figure,
They whimper like peris, cry again (5, s.297).

The poet's ladylove is so beautiful that she can hire Leyli as a guard. His enamourment is so exalted, his heartbird lurked on Majnun's head:

Showing coyness, my beloved just can hire Leyli,

My heartbird lurks on Majnun's head (5, s.298).

Murtazagulu Sultan Shamlu, who was appointed a royal bodyguard when Shah Suleyman Safavi came to the throne in 1666, later the ruler of Qom and died approximately in 1105 hijri year (1693-1694) left us 3 *mufrats* he wrote in the Azerbaijani Turkish. He dedicated these *mufrats* to the criticism of injustices in the society.

In one of his *takbeyts* is said that those who want to have riches, must be ashamed like a keystone. That's to say, honest men cannot possess riches:

If you're a claimant to riches,

You must be ashamed like a keystone (5, s.306).

In another *takbeyt* is written:

As the namaz could be abridged according to some circumstances,

Dignified people's lives are also shortened by daily life concerns (5, s.306).

One of the eminent personalities and government during the reign of the Sefevid sovereigns – Shah Suleyman (1666-1694) and Shah Sultan Husein (1696-1722) Mirza Mohsun Tasir Tabrizi (1655-1719) has a collection containing 447 *beyts* of Turkish verses. The collection (only 433 bayts are readable) which is preserved in the Sipahsalar High Madrasah Library in Tehran, includes 5 lyrical-love *takbeyts*. Three of these are *matlas*, two of them are *fards*. One of the *fards* were dedicated to the popular topic – small mouth which was a sign of beauty in the classical Oriental poetry:

She said, I boast of my nice mouth,

I said: What can I do, I can't see it (9, s.54).

The lady-love is proud of her mouth. The lover confirms the beauty of her mouth saying that he could not see it. Here, the poet used the diminutive type of the poetical figure of hyperbolism.

In his one *matla*, the poet says to his beloved that the candle wants to be distinguished in your presence, but can this pan-eyed be equal to you?:

The candle wants to be estimable in your party,

This pan-eyes wants to be equal to you (9, s.54).

The candle used to be beauty of parties, was always glorified in the classical poetry. But comparing its beauty with the poet's beloved, the ugliness of the candle appears. The author with humour calls it "pan-eyed". The assimilation of the candle to the pan-eyed is a sign of the poetic figure of allegory.

The verses written in the *takbeyt* genre in the classical Azerbaijani Turkish poetry of the 17th century have been recently discovered as a result of researches we conducted in the Institute of Manuscripts named after Mahammad Fuzuli of Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences (ANAS) and in the world libraries. It is important to note that neither during

previous nor succeeding periods were written such a lot of *takbeyts* in the Azerbaijani Turkish poetry (more precisely, they have not been discovered yet). Undoubtedly, the more copiousness of the *takbeyts* in our poetry of the 17th century has its reasons.

All the poets – Saib Tabrizi, Vahid Gazwini, Majzub Tabrizi, Safigulu bey Safi, Murtazagulu Sultan Shamlu, Tasir Tabrizi, whose works we searched, were the representatives of “the indian stlye” in the literature. The representatives of “the indian style” were widely using *takbeyts* for propagating their ideas, styles both in the Persian written literature and the Turkish one. It is known that “indian style” poets were based on fantasy, imagination, images that might seem strange to readers and unexpected artistic findings. So, it was possible to create such seemingly strange, unexpected artistic findings in one *beyt*. The whole *ghazal* might distract the readers from those ones. In our opinion, in comparison with the previous times, it is just the cause of the wider usage of *takbeyts* by the mentioned poets. They wanted to draw attentions mainly to the artistic achievements. Some *takbeyts* were presenting by selecting from separate verses. We can give samples of *takbeyts* by selecting from separate verses in the Azerbaijani Turkish poetry.

The *beyt* below is selected from the *ghazal* of Murtazagulu Sultan Shamlu which begins with the hemistich “The wretch is that who doesn’t possess a joining” and presented as a *takbeyt*:

Time bothers perfect humans,
If the moon doesn’t get full, it doesn’t eclipse (5, s.306).

CONCLUSIONS

In the Azerbaijani literature of the 17th century were used not only the classical genres written in Aruz metre such as *ghazal*, *qasida*, *mulamma*, *murabbeh*, *mukhammas*, *musaddas*, *tarjibband*, *tarkibband*, *masnavi*, *saqinameh*, *rubai*, *qitah*, but also the *takbeyt* genre.

As it is known, the *beyt* is a main unit of the poetical speech consisting of two hemistiches in the Oriental literature, including the Azerbaijani one. The first hemistich is called “sadr”, the second one is “ajuz”. For converging on one *beyt*, both of two hemistiches must be in the same metre. The *beyt* expressing one idea in the classical Azerbaijani poetry is considered equal to the poem in the European poetry (6, p.89). Even in the old Oriental books, the *beyt* was used in the same meaning with the word “poem”. In the classical literature the *takbeyts* are a separate genre dividing into two parts for their forms: the *takbeyts* calling “muqaffa”, “musarra” or “matla” of which two hemistiches are rhymed; the *takbeyts* calling “mufрад” or “fard” of which hemistiches are not rhymed. The first rhymed *beyts* of *qasidas* and *ghazals*, also the rhymed *beyts* within the *qasidas* are called “matla” (3, p.13).

The time always bothers perfect humans as the only full moon may eclipse. Here is used the poetic figure of allegory. The idea expressed in the first hemistich, is explained with the samples about the life, celestial bodies.

With the help of *takbeyts*, which are considered a small genre in our literature, it is possible to follow some processes flowing in the Azerbaijani poetry of the 17th century.

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