

HISTORICAL HERITAGE OF GANJA CITY BASED ON CULTURAL-LITERARY MATERIALS

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Abstract. In this research work on the basis of historical and written scientific sources, archival documents have been studied the features of development of science and education of the Renaissance period. In scientific work were also studied the teaching of social, humanitarian and natural sciences in Ganja during this historical period, the services of prominent scientists, thinkers and teachers of that period, who worked in madrasa and used rich libraries. In particular, given the importance of the city as a socio-political, economic, scientific and cultural center, the research involved scientific arguments that, along with local scholars in the Middle Ages. By the way, during this historical period Ganja as an important political and cultural center was visited by famous scholars of the Muslim East, as well as important historical information about their teaching and scientific activities have been studied for many years. In scientific article on the basis of available scientific sources, historical documents, written sources, are considered the merits and patronage of the Azerbaijani state of Atabey, which played an exceptional role in the development of the traditions of our national statehood, in the formation of prominent figures in science and culture. Also in this study, based on historical and ethnographic sources, have been determined the significance of the scientific, literary and cultural development of Ganja in the revival of the characteristic features of the Renaissance period not only of the country, but also in the development of the Islamic world as a whole. It also examines the propaganda in the works of the predecessors and successors of Sheikh Nizami, along with national traditions, universal human values and calls for a culture of coexistence.

Keywords: *Ganja, Azerbaijan, urban culture, historical research, cultural traditions.*

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1. Introduction

Ganja city is one the ancient historic-cultural centers in the Caucasus region. During centuries in this city lived such famous persons, thinkers as Nizami Ganjavi, Mahsati Ganjavi, Siti Ganjavi, Raziya Ganjavi, Mirza Shafi Vazeh and others. Nizami Ganjavi influenced the expansion and defense of the ideology of akhili with his works. After going through the difficult and turbulent moments of his youth, gaining experience and enlightenment raised him to the rank of Sheikh. The genius poet considered accepting injustice as a sign of weakness and criticized those who put their heads under the yoke. His humanism that has been derived from the ideology of Akhilik, is reflected in all his works.

In the stories "Solomon and the Farmer", "The Epic of the Bricklayer", Nizami creates an astonishing image of ordinary people who earn their living by their selfless labor and who dedicate themselves to their work. In his works, Nizami always speaks of hard-working people with deep love and respect, sets them against other people in all respects, especially the unfair ruling class, which despises labor. In the poet's work, his

attitude to labor and working people is the brightest expression of democracy and humanism promoted by Akhili.

Due to his character inspired by Akhilik, Nizami did not seek imperfection on somebody; on the contrary, he was always in search of courage and harmony in everywhere. The unique poetry of the great poet not only exposes the ugliness of his time, but also reflects its bright and admirable features. The great cognitive significance of Nizami's work lies in the fact that it depicts life in a contradictory way (Ethnography of Azerbaijan, 2007).

Prophets, kings, caliphs, clergy, peasants, bricklayers, helpless old people, vagrants, city youth with rifles, teenagers, thugs, thieves, pilgrims, court officials, Jews, fire worshipers, Muslims, Christians, Sufis, palace servants and wealthy citizens images in Nizami Ganjavi's works serve to eliminate the general rock-solid ugliness of the Akhili society.

It is important to note why Nizami did not live in the palaces of Shirvanshahs and Eldegizs like Abul-Ula Ganjavi, Falaki Shirvani, Mujiraddin Beylagani and other poets of the Ganjavi period?

Unlike the court poets, who called the people to obedience and spoke about the generosity and power of the ruling feudal lords or courtiers, Nizami Ganjavi called on the people to be open-minded, emphasizing the existence of justice and their right to taste this blessing. Nizami Ganjavi did not experience the bitter fate of Afzaladdin Khagani because he foresaw the injustice of some shahs and the treachery of the courtiers (Alizade, 1956).

Studies show that, unlike other Sufi sects, the Akhilis are not hermetic, on the contrary they use the blessings of the world to help others in this activity. It is no coincidence that Nizami, in his *Iqbalnameh*, addresses God and says about this world:

Indeed, only a generous and courageous man could say these words. The "Akhil" organization, which European orientalists call a "sect", was not really a religious-ascetic sect, but an association of people who defended the city artisans, the poor, and the fighters against the violence of oppressors.

Of course, the militant alliance had to have people who were appropriate in terms of age and physical capabilities. It is no coincidence that the main slogan of the Akhils, who preached unity, equality and brotherhood among the people, was to curb the oppressors and distribute the wealth of the usurpers equally among the hungry masses.

Undoubtedly, if the akhilik movement had not been widespread in Ganja at that time, Nizami Ganjavi would not have been able to convey the peculiarities of the akhilik thoroughly and openly. If he had not been a member of the organization, if he had not lived so close to artists, it is questionable how he could have exalted people of art in his works (Hasanov, 2012).

Thus, it is clear that the reason why the next representatives of Nizami Ganjavi's descendants were called Sheikhzamanli was due to the rise of the genius thinker to the rank of Sheikh of Sheikhs, the highest level of the "Akhilik" sect, and this generation became famous throughout the East under that surname.

2. Materials and research methods

Ganja Imamzadeh shrine is one of the important historical sources proving that the genealogy of the great thinker belongs to the Sheikhzamanli lineage.

There is a very strong and eternal spiritual connection between the monument of Ganja Imamzade and the personality of the great poet and invaluable thinker of his time. First of all, there was a time gap between the death of Movlana Ibrahim and the initial construction of the Imamzadeh shrine on his tomb (mid-8th century -739/740) during the life of the great Nizami (Hasanov, 2015).

Nizami Ganjavi lived in 1139-1204 and at that time the Ganja Imamzadeh shrine already existed. This, in turn, led the people of Ganja to cultivate the same respect and reverence for Ibrahim, the son of the pure imam, as well as for Sheikh Nizami as a saint. In fact, Nizami Ganjavi was an extraordinary person who was loved and chosen by the Almighty God, and for this reason he was endowed with a special talent.

In addition, along with secular sciences, Nizami Ganjavi was a skilled connoisseur of religious (jurisprudence) sciences, and most importantly, he was recognized as a true saint-sheikh and a ulema whom people respected. Much of the evidence for this fact is contained in separate sources. Even today a clear indicator of the sanctity of Sheikh Nizami's personality is reflected in the tradition of endless respect and love of the people of Ganja for him. The tradition of newlyweds visiting the mausoleum of Nizami Ganjavi for the first time shows that despite the fact that centuries have passed since the death of this genius, he lives in the memory of people as a valuable poet and thinker. This is undeniable fact that the belief in the purity of Sheikh Nizami's personality and the place where he rests eternally. Because the custom of giving a successful and pure beginning to a new family, hearth, and receiving a blessing from Sheikh Nizami is also a visual proof of devotion to ancient, rich, true spiritual values in Ganja. One of the most important reasons that connected the genius of Nizami Ganjavi with the Ganja Imamzadeh shrine with unbreakable spiritual cords was the eternal historical connection of his genealogy with this sacred place. More precisely, as noted in a number of historical sources, the Imamzadeh shrine and the surrounding areas belonged to Nizami Ganjavi (Azerbaijani art, 1959).

It is known that the lands mentioned in 1186 were presented to the great erudite Nizami Ganjavi by Mohammad Jahan Pahlavan the ruler of the Azerbaijan-Atabeylar (or Eldeniz) state for his invaluable pearl of art, the famous poem "Khosrov and Shirin".

On behalf of his brother Mohammad Jahan Pahlava, Gizil Arslan, who later ruled the Atabey state presented valuable gifts to the great poet, along with a village called Hamdunyan, located 200 kilometers from Ganja. It is said that this village (territory) covers the current Imamzade complex and the surrounding lands. Meanwhile, it is a historical fact that Sheikh Nizami Ganjavi was not a palace poet, and he did not write works by any order (Hasanov, 2022).

It is generally wrong for him to own a certain territory based on his material interests. Therefore, Nizami Ganjavi endless respect for the Imamzadeh shrine, this sacred place, prompted him to take possession of these lands. Despite the information contained in various sources, the Imamzadeh shrine has always been the territory of Ganja and has a direct connection with the city since ancient times.

The genius Nizami Ganjavi considered Ganja as his one and only place until the end of his life, that is why the pure traditions that have lived here for centuries in area of the Imamzadeh shrine and the surrounding areas have been preserved. Among these traditions, it is especially important to provide free assistance to those in need, infants and the elderly (Ahmadov, 2007).

Despite the passage of centuries, the material funds collected at the Ganja Imamzadeh shrine have always been used only for charitable purposes. Subsequent

representatives of the great Sheikh Nizami's dynasty also became the owners of this holy place. It is necessary to touch on a historical point in this regard. An important historical fact on this issue is reflected in one of the official documents of the Georgian Tsar Irakli II.

This document states that the arable lands of the Imamzadeh shrine, as well as the lands suitable for crops, belonged to the Sheykhzamanovs (Sheykhzamanli) of the Nizami dynasty. Meanwhile, it is very important to present this genealogy in the person of Sheikh Ibrahim Qudsi Sheykhzamanli, to reflect the historical facts about the use of these lands by this generation. Firudin bey Kocharli, a prominent representative of Azerbaijani literature, also noted essential information about one of Nizami Ganjavi's successors, Sheikh Ibrahim Sheikh Hasan oglu Sheykhzamanov (or Sheykhzamanli). He wrote about this person in the book "Azerbaijani literature":

"Sheikh Ibrahim Sheikh Hasan oglu Sheykhzamanov lived on his own on the area of Imamzadeh-Ibrahim tomb ... According to the legend, he was related to Sheikh Nizami ... He was born in Ganja in 1816 and was buried in Imamzadeh in 1865".

Furthermore, sources say that Sheikh Ibrahim, a member of the Sheykhzaman dynasty, was also a professional calligrapher. Additionally, in modern times in the Imamzade complex it is possible to come across the examples of headstones that Sheikh Ibrahim Sheykhzamanov prepared for himself and other people during his lifetime (Hasanov, 2021).

The activities of these two prominent artists - Mirza Mehdi (or Naji) and Sheikh Zaman, whose valuable works have been preserved in the Ganja Imamzadeh complex to this day, are not limited to this place, although they are mainly related to this sacred place.

Thus, the discovery of a tombstone inscription written by Mirza Mehdi, a well-known representative of the 19th century calligraphy and painting, in the village of Rahimli, which is part of the Goranboy region, can be considered a clear proof of this.

Another important fact related to the personality of Sheikh Zaman is related to the holy shrine of Imamzadeh in Ganja. Thus, there is an inscription in Arabic on one of the tombstones here:

"It was written by Sheikh Zaman".

In the above-mentioned epitaphic example, it is assumed that the text part of the tombstone was written (engraved) by Sheikh Zaman.

On another tombstone, at first glance, there is an inscription about another person: "Hakkak Zaman".

The following conclusions can be drawn from the comparison of these examples:

1) The features of the mentioned tombstones, especially the materials used in their preparation show that they belong to the same period in chronological order;

2) The main epitaphic features of both tombs strongly refute the idea that they were made by sculptors with different styles of craftsmanship;

Thus, it indicates that Sheikh Zaman, a prominent artist and a notable representative of the Sheykhzaman dynasty, was not only a master of the art of engraving. He was also the author of epitaphic texts and inscriptions engraved on tombstones. The existence of his title "Sheikh" indicates his erudition (Hasanov, 2021b; Mustafayev, 2001).

It should be noted that his generosity and high level of craftsmanship, like his predecessors, attracted the attention of the people, including the ruling circles. As a result, this artist was entrusted with the work of preparing tombstones of the generation represented by prominent personalities as Ganjali Javad khan.

Evidence of the connection of Ganja Imamzadeh shrine with the genealogy of Sheikh Nizami and the indication of this generation as the spiritual guardians of the shrine can be attributed to the burial of representatives of that generation in the territory of Ganja Imamzade. In addition, the existence of the tomb of the descendants also led to the revival of their memory in this sacred place.

Sheikh Ibrahim Qudsi Sheikhzaman (or Sheikhzamanli), who is one of the well-known representatives of this generation, was found in a number of sources to have arable land in Imamzadeh and the surrounding areas (Hasanov, 2022).

Among these sources, one of the notes (taliqs) of Irakli II, the Georgian tsar, reflects the fact that the mentioned territory belongs to the descendants of Sheikh Nizami. To be more precise, the name of Sheikh Ibrahim Qudsi Sheikhzaman had been mentioned here as a representative of the Sheikhzaman family line (Hasanov, 2018).

In general, there is evidence of a connection between the identity of Nizami Ganjavi and his successors, who are historically known as the Sheykhzamanli (Sheykhzamanovs). The most convincing evidences of this is one of the main symbol of the city of Ganja in modern times is the hearth (burial) that every Azerbaijani has a special respect for, known as the mausoleum of Sheikh Nizami which is a pearl of material culture. Another symbol is the Imamzadeh complex, which is considered a sacred shrine and an ancient historical monument. In addition, the Ganja Imamzadeh shrine has not lost its sanctity and purity over a very long historical period, thanks to its stubborn protection by the local people from all negative forces and aggression. This, in turn, created the conditions for the genealogy of Sheikh Nizami to live in history (Memorial book of the Elisavetpol province for 1914, 1910).

It is no coincidence that, despite all the unjust accusations and repressions, people like Mohammadbagir and Nagy Bey Sheykhzamanli, who held high positions in the first democratic state of the Muslim East and served as the head of the counter-intelligence department (or Ministry of National Security) in the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, as well as the People's Artist Mammadrza Sheykhzamanov were the representatives of this generation.

At first glance, it may seem strange to make Nizami's birth date a topic of scientific discussion today. Because it is clear to everyone that Nizami Ganjavi was born in 1141 in Ganja. This fact was established in 1871 by the Hungarian scientist Wilhelm Baxter, who wrote the first research work on Nizami's life and work, and this date has been widely accepted in European countries, as well as in Azerbaijan. However, there are well-known scholars in both Iran and Azerbaijan who do not agree with this date and suggest different dates of birth for the poet. For example, Rustam Aliyev, one of the prominent legal scholars, writes that Nizami was born on August 7-22, 1140. Azadeh Rustamova, who made important contributions to the study of Nizami's legacy, tries to prove that Nizami was born in either 1148 or in 1149 and so on (Guliyeva & Hasanov, 2013).

Barat Zanjani, a well-known scholar of South Azerbaijan and a former professor at Tehran University, claims that Nizami was born in 526 AH (1131-1132), taking into account the opinions of various scholars. In Barat Zanjani's presentation, Baxer, Ripka, Bertels, Minavi Nizami's 535 AH (1140-1141), Dastgirdi 533-540 AH (1138-1145), Minorski 541-551 AH (1146-1156), Darab 540 AH (1145), Müin 542-543 AH (1147-1148), Safa 530 AH (1135-1136), Shahabi 530-540 AH (1135-1145), Mirbagirzade 520 AH (1126) thought in this way (Hasanov, 2015; 2021; Mustafayev, 1998; Häsänow, 2014; Archeology of Azerbaijan, 2008).

B.Zanjani considers only M. Mirbagirzadeh's opinion to be true from these authors and made some corrections to it. He thinks he was born in 526, 1131/32. Given all this chaos and diversity of opinion, we need to clarify the date of Nizami's birth. In this case, the various facts in the poet's works and all the notes of Nizami, which are likely to clarify this issue, must be taken into account.

Medieval sources do not contain any information about the date of birth of the great poet. Authors who usually lived in the Middle Ages gave the date of the poet's death. It should be noted that there is no common ground between them. For example, a respected commentator such as Dovletshah Samarkand stated the date of his death as 1180, but Taqiaddin Kashani wrote that he died in 1209. This last date is also present in the stamp of the poet's tombstone. Today, however, researchers are still relying on contradictory opinions. This is because various facts in the poet's works are interpreted by scholars in different ways. On the one hand, the passage depicting Nizami's death at the end of the *Iqbalnameh*, on the other hand, at the end of the same work, the signs that it was presented to the Mosul ruler Izzeddin Masud, who came to power in 1211, confuse scholars. At the end of *Iqbalname*, after describing the deaths of Alexander and seven Greek scholars, Nizami writes that he joins them after 63 years and six months later. Taking into account the importance of this passage in determining the date of the poet's death, it is essential to analyse its original and translated versions (Tabeikyna *et al.*, 2021).

A number of foreign scholars who did not like our nation claimed that Sheikh Nizami's father came to Ganja from Gum and that is why it should be underlined that his father was Persian. In this case, Nizami's connection with Akhili is also questioned. Because Ganja was one of the centers of Akhillis and at that time, the carriers of this ideology were Turks.

Therefore, it would be appropriate to look at the scientific research and studies conducted by the prominent scholar Khalil Yusifli in this direction:

In fact, there is no serious debate about where Nizami was born and lived. Numerous notes in Nizami's works, as well as information provided by ancient and reliable sources, as well as the conclusions of the distinguished researchers of modern times, show that Nizami Ganjavi was born in a Turkish family in Ganja, lived and died in this city. His tomb is still in Ganja and a magnificent monument stands on his grave. Muhammad Ovfi, the author of the first *tazkira* in the East, in his *tazkira Lubabul-albab*, written between 1203 and 1228, begins his discussion about Nizami with these words "Al-Hakim al-Kamil Nizami al-Ganjavi", and notes that "Apart from these Masnavis, they recite less poetry of the great poet. But I heard these poems recited by a great man in Nishapur. "

Although M. Ovfi did not give detailed information about Nizami's life, he remembered him as a native of Ganja and leaved no room for doubt. Zakariyya Qazvini, who lived and created shortly after him, spoke about Ganja in his geographical work "Asarul-bilad and akhbarul-ibad". While talking about this city he indicates a great poet and erudite Nizami Ganjavi as a citizen of this city, as well as his poems and the "Divan" that many have not seen and a brief description of the poems in the "Divan". It is clear that Z. Qazvini had seen both the poet's poems and "Divan". It is noteworthy that he does not doubt that Nizami is from Ganja.

Hamdullah Mustovfi Qazvini, one of the 14th century historians, does not doubt that Nizami was from Ganja and writes in his own "Tarihe-gozi" that "Nizami Ganjavi was a contemporary of Sultan Togrul ben Arslan Seljuk". Abdurrahman Jami (15th

century) writes in his masterpiece "Baharistan": "The late Nizami is from Ganja, his wisdom and virtues are clear and there is no need to comment."

The great Turkish poet Alishir Navai, while praising Nizami as a master in all the poems of his own "Khamsa", repeatedly mentions him as the Sun of Ganja (Hasanov, 2021).

3. Conclusion

As we have already noted, Nizami mentions in various forms that he is from Ganja, both in his poems and in lyrical poems. He does not express any opinion that allows us to say that he is coming to Ganja. There are no indications in this direction in his works. On the contrary, the poet declares that he is a deep-rooted Ganjali in various ways.

However, as in the above examples from his poems, he says that in Ganja he is not appreciated, that he is the treasurer of sins, but that he gained fame in other places, and that he needs to escape from thirst in his own land, says that he wants to quit being a hermit and go on a journey and that he has long wanted to be in the service of the Kaaba, and writes that he wants to visit the Kaaba. In a funeral speech dedicated to Nusrat ad-Din, who came to power after 1191, written much later than this ode, the poet praises the Kaaba in the language of fire and expresses a desire to see this place. However, this does not and cannot give any reason to say that he is from Mecca (Hasanov, 2021a).

In particular, the fact that the poet praises Iraq and wants to see it does not give any reason to say that Nizami is from Iraq. Nizami did not aspire to Iraq, because this is allegedly his homeland, on the contrary, Nizami aspired to Iraq, because he could not get a decent price in his homeland, in Ganja, "so that like a treasure that came out of its source, i.e. go beyond the borders of the motherland and get a worthy assessment", "how silver comes out of the stone and becomes famous" gain fame with its skill and genius, be recognized, get rid of envious people, visit the great cultural center of the East, see, read books that he could not get, meet, talk, study and teach the people he wanted to but couldn't see.

So, once again it must be safely said that Nizami is from Ganja, he was born in Ganja, was born in a prosperous Ganja family, lived and worked in Ganja. Neither the verses added to the composition of Nizami, nor the opinions of the authors of the tazkire, who, on the basis of these verses, claimed that Nizami was from Qum, Tafrish, Farakhan, nor the senseless reasoning of Vahid Dastgirdi are capable of casting doubt on this clear truth ((Tabeikyna *et al.*, 2021).

The notion that Nizami was originally from the Iraqi side of Iran is more forcefully defended by Aliakbar Shahabi, author of *Nezami Shaere Das Ansara*. A. Shahabi is of the opinion that the majority of Iranian and non-Iranian historians and tazkirs write that Nizami's homeland is Ganja, one of the cities of Azerbaijan, but these authors also generally remind that Nizami's origin comes from the land of pure Iraq (Gum and Tafrish regions). His father moved to Ganja from Iraq (Hasanov, 2012).

The idea that Nizami was originally from the Iraqi part of Iran is more strongly defended by Aliakbar Shahabi, the author of the book "*Nezami shaere-das-ansara*". A. Shahabi is of the opinion that most Iranian and non-Iranian historians and tazkiras write that Nizami's birthplace is Ganja, one of the cities of Azerbaijan, but those authors also generally remind that Nizami's origin is from the land of pure Iraq (Gum and Tafrish districts). His father moved to Ganja from Iraq.

Right there an example is given from the tazkire "Majmaul-fusakh" by R. Hidayat: "Although Dr. Nizami is a native of Qum, he is known as he is from Ganja." According to A. Shahabi, allegedly G. Darab established that Nizami was born in 1145 AD near the city of Gum and emigrated to Ganja. Allegedly, contrary to the opinion of historians and researchers, Mirza Muhammadali Tarbiyat considered Nizami with an Azerbaijani prejudice an Azerbaijani poet and considered it wrong to consider him from Gum. This strict Persian chauvinist, instead of facing the truth and paying attention to the fact that older and more reliable sources say that Nizami is from Ganja, regards with regret the statement of M. Tarbiyat that Nizami is from Ganja, founded on Zakaria Kazvini and Abdurrashid Bakuvi as fanaticism.

He turns to Abdalnabi Ghazvini, the founder of the tazkir, who consider Nizami to be from Qom, and reminds him of his opinion that Nizami was from Farakhan of Qum. A. Shahabi is of the opinion that all the authors, except for M. Tarbiyat, considered Nizami to be an original Iraqi (Hasanov, 2021a).

It is interesting what explains the fact that if A. Shahabi Muhammad Ovfi (XII-XIII centuries), Zakaria Ghazvini (XIII century), Abdurrashid Bakuvi (XV century), Dowlatshah Samarkandi (XV century), Abdurrahman Jami (XV century.), Alishir Navai (XV century), Hamdulla Mustovfi Kazvini (XIV century) and others do not consider Nizami is from Ganja, how can they explain the non-mentioning of Qum, Tafrish, Iraq? No, Mr. Shahabi, M. Tarbiyat does not consider Nizami is from Ganjali, not out of prejudice, but out of a sense of truth. The Turks do not have national chauvinism, just like the great Nizami grown by them.

A. Shahabi's defense of V. Dasthirdi's opinion "But there is no doubt that he is from Iraq" is not a prejudice, but the words "Nizami Abu Muhammad Nizamuddin Ilyas bin Yusif bin Zaki Muayyad Ganjavi" by M. Tarbiyat who was the most famous of Iranian poets and the most eloquent among Azerbaijani masters of the word" is the result of prejudice! Strange logic! (Hasanov, 2021b).

A. Shahabi also expresses his attitude to the verses added by later periods, in which it is stated that Nizami is from Qum, and writes: "According to the author of these pages, the phenomenon of a poem with such a historical basis cannot be added on purpose. It is difficult to imagine what benefits and interests the one who made this addition expected. It is possible that the location was confused by the rewriters.

Said Nafisi, a well-known scientist, writer, who has done a remarkable job in the field of collecting and publishing lyrical verses of Nizami, takes the right position and writes: "In any case, it is reliably known that, with the exception of one or two trips (he made a pilgrimage), Nizami spent his entire life in Ganja and its surroundings.

...For this reason, he is always known as Nizami Ganjavi in Persian literature and is considered one of the poets of Azerbaijan. But on the other hand, I heard that some of the contemporaries even think that there is a descendant of Nizami and say that his son still lives in Tafrish.

At the end, it is clear that, historical-literary heritage of Ganja city also belongings to such thinkers of Azerbaijan as Nizami Ganjavi, Mahsati Ganjavi, Mirza Shafi Vazeh and other scientists, poets, philosophers (Hasanov, 2012).

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