

Mammadova Ilaha Salahaddin

Baku Engineering University

MAHSATI GANJAVI IN THE STUDIES OF BRITISH ORIENTALISTS

*The article deals with the research of British orientalists about Mahsati Ganjavi. It is noted that Mahsati Ganjavi is a great Azerbaijani poetess of the XII century. She wrote her works mainly in Persian, was known among creative people as the author of rubai. The **purpose of the article** is to bring together all the studies about Mahsati Ganjavi, carried out by British orientalists from the early XX century to the present, and to provide the main details mentioned in these researches.*

*The article uses **methods** of analysis of manuscript data, as well as a method of comparison.*

*The **novelty** of the article is to study all the researches about Mahsati Ganjavi made in the UK, and to provide important information about the manuscript of the novel "Mahsati and Amir Ahmad", which is stored in the British Library, as well as a ceramic bowl decorated with Mahsati Ganjavi's rubai in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.*

Results. *In 2013, UNESCO decided to celebrate the 900th anniversary of Mahsati Ganjavi in the world. Mahsati Ganjavi's bold poetry has been translated into many languages, including English, and is studied by British orientalists. Professor Edward Brown wrote about Mahsati Ganja in his book "A Literary History of Persia". In turn, Meredith Owens in 1969 published an article on the manuscript of the novel "Mahseti and Amir Ahmad", which is in the British Library. Another recent study by Marley Hammond provides information on Mahsati Ganjavi, as well as a ceramic bowl decorated with the Mahsati Ganjavi rubai, which is housed in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. Mahsati Ganjavi's biography and some of her rubai were translated in the book *Borrowed ware*, written by orientalist Dick Davis. In 2013, the BBC aired a program about Mahsati Ganjavi, presented by Nargez Farzad.*

Conclusions. *Thus, all these studies are very important for the recognition of Mahsati Ganjavi in the world and consideration of her life and work. The translation of such bold poetry into English plays an important role in the recognition and study of Azerbaijani classical literature not only in Great Britain but also in the world.*

Key words: *Mahsati Ganjavi, Azerbaijani literature, rubai, language of poetry, free-thinking, feminist ideas, intimate poetry.*

Introduction. Mahsati Ganjavi is the most prominent poetess of the 12th century Azerbaijani literature. She was born in Ganja, the second largest city of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Mahsati is famous for her Rubaiyat. Rubaiyat is the plural form of rubai, a poem consisting of four lines with the rhyme of aaaa, aaba [3, p. 34]. According to the previous and latest researches, more than 300 Rubaiyat are ascribed to Mahsati Ganjavi [17, p. 157].

Mahsati Ganjavi wrote in Persian. In the 12th century, a lot of works were written in Persian not only in Azerbaijan, but also in the East, because that time Persian was the language of poetry. Such facts occurred throughout the history of literature of the world countries. Although the poets wrote in other languages, they benefited from the words, proverbs, expressions, oral folk literature of that nation [6, p. 446].

The purpose of the article is to bring together all the studies about Mahsati Ganjavi made by British orientalists from the beginning of the 20th century to

the present time and to provide the essential details mentioned in these researches.

The article uses the **methods** of manuscript and data analysis and comparative methods.

The novelty of the article is to study all the researches about Mahsati Ganjavi made in the UK and give important information about the manuscript of the novel "Mahsati and Amir Ahmad" preserved in the British Library, as well as a bowl decorated with Mahsati Ganjavi's rubai in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.

Review of recent related publications. British studies about Mahsati Ganjavi. In British Orientalism, her name was first mentioned in the book, written by Edward Brown, the professor of Cambridge University. Edward Brown published a book "A Literary History of Persia" in 4 volumes. The book covers four periods of Persian literature.

There is an information about Mahsati Ganjavi in the second volume of the book [3, p. 344]. It was told

that the correct spelling of Mahsati's name is unknown. He noted that her name was pronounced like Mihisti, Mahasti and Mihasti and she wrote poems in the rubai genre. He described her famous story with Sultan Sanjar and added her rubai in English.

For thee hath Heaven saddled Fortune's steed,
O king and chosen thee from all who lead
Now o'er the earth it spreads a silver sheet
To guard from mud thy gold-shod charger's feet
[3, p. 344].

He also noted that he was a mistress of Tajeddin Ahmad, the son of preacher of Ganja.

In this book, Edward Brown mentioned that in "Tarikhi-Guzide" the following rubai attributed to Bintun Najjariya belonged to Mahsati Ganjavi [3, p. 345].

One cannot restrain me by hard words:
one cannot keep me in the cheerless house:
Her whose tresses are like chains
one cannot keep at home [even'] with chains
[4, p. 32].

I would like to note that the book written by Edward Brown is one of the most perfect works about the history of Persian literature.

Edward Brown translated into English the 6th section of the 5th chapter which dealt with the lives of Persian poets in "Tarikhi Guzida" written by Hamdullah Qazvini in 1330 and published it in London in 1901. There is not much information about the poets here. Very brief information about Mahsati Ganjavi can be found in the "Biography of Prominent Women" (Itimadus Saltanas Khayrat Hisan) section. It was noted that the poetess had very beautiful quatrains. The etymology of the name Mahsati is also given (Mah means "big" and sati is "lady") and there are variants such as Mah-asti, Mih-asti.

It was also noted that the literary exchange between Mahsati Ganjavi and Tajeddin Ahmad was amazing and he was married to Mahsati Ganjavi. The following rubai is given both in Persian and English.

O idol mine, I will not suffer abasement at thy hands,
Nor even at the hands of one who is superior to thee.
I will not precipitately entangle my tresses in
the noose

I will lie at ease on the water and get not yet wet.

In addition, two quatrains dedicated to the butcher boy were given in both Persian and English. It has been suggested that Mahsati fell in love with the butcher boy [4, p. 30].

Every knife which he withdraws from the victim
he hath slain,
and takes in his sugar-sweet lips and teeth.

Were he to place it once again on the throat
of the slain,

it would renew its life for desire of its lips.

The butcher, as is his custom, overthrew me,
slew me, and said, "Such is my habit!"

Again he treacherously lays his head on my feet,
Breathing on me that he may flay me! [4, p. 30–31].

Mahsati's love poems to different boys made confusion and it was considered that she was in love with these boys. Among these young boys were butcher, cobbler, baker, a son of tailor, weaver, carpenter and so on. But actually all these poems dedicated to different craftsmen, men are shahrashubs, a genre in the poetry.

The professor Rafael Huseynov, the author of the one of the prominent research dedicated to Mahsati Ganjavi, a prominent orientalist gave information about shahrashub genre in his book "Shahrashubs are poems or series of poems expressing cities, craftsmen and professionals" [15, p. 97]. He also mentioned that the terms shahrashub and shehrensiz are used in parallel in the literature [15, p. 92].

Information about the life and work of Mahsati Ganjavi is reflected in "Mahsati and Amir Ahmad", the romance of the 15th–16th centuries. The manuscript contains 4 copies. One of them is kept in the British Library, one in Istanbul University and the other two in the Institute of Manuscripts in Azerbaijan. The most complete version of this epos is a copy from the British Library.

There is an article by Meredith Owens about the manuscript of the romance "Mahsati and Amir Ahmad" kept in the British Library. The article is called "A rare illustrated persian manuscript".

Professor, turkologist, orientalist Glyn Munro Meredith Owens worked as a bibliographer at the British Library, and in the later years of his career he began working at the Department of Islamic Studies at the University of Toronto. Meredith Owens researched a collection of Persian and Turkish manuscripts collected at the British Museum. Among these manuscripts, he especially appreciated the manuscript of the romance "Mahsati and Amir Ahmad" which was about love affairs between Amir Ahmad, the son of the preacher and Mahsati Ganjavi the poetess in Ganja. The article describes in detail the 12 miniatures in the manuscript or 8755. The manuscript was presented to the British Museum in 1917 by Darea Baroness Zouche. Previously, the manuscript is thought to have been in Turkey for a long time. The author came to this conclusion by analyzing the poems of Turkish origin in the manuscript, the explanations in the first folio

and the names of its previous owners. Preserved in the British Library or. 8755, this manuscript consists of 111 folios and was copied by the Nasta'liq line in 867/1462–1463, but it is not specified by whom it was copied.

Another study of Mahsati Ganjavi in modern British oriental studies was conducted by Marle Hammond. In 2003, the first volume of the *Encyclopedia of Women and Islamic Cultures* featured an article by orientalist Marle Hammond entitled “Women Literature: 9th to 15th Century”. Marle Hammond works in the Department of Near and Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures at the University of London and lectures on Arabic Literature and Culture.

This article provides information on female writers who lived and created between the 9th and 15th centuries. The article also gives information about the history of that time. It is noted that the literature created by women has expanded in many places during this period of Islamic history. However, the literature created by women was not isolated from men's literature. Thus, most of the literary works were mainly included into the collections of male poets. This period of Islamic history is characterized by political centralization and ethnic, linguistic and cultural pluralism. Thus, the period falls between the Abbasid Caliphate's coming to the power in 132/750 overthrowing the Umayyads and conquering Constantinople by the Ottoman Empire in 857/1453. The gradual weakening of the central government in Baghdad has led to the emergence of more localised seat of power, many of them competing each other in their patronage of art. As a result, the period was characterized by the development of the Arabian prose, the rise of Persian poetry, the golden age of Hebrew literature and the emergence of Romance.

At the beginning of this period, Arabic was the leading vehicle for Islamic literary culture. However, in the middle of this period, during the rule of the Samanids (819–1005) and Ghaznavids (977–1186), Persian became the favorite language in the palaces. During this period, it was written only in these two languages, but it is assumed that there are examples of women's literature in other languages that existed in the Islamic Empire in this period.

After a brief commentary on the history of Islamic literature, it is shown that some women writers, as well as Mahsati Ganjavi, are being talked about. It is further noted that Mahsati Ganjavi ranks among the pioneers of Persian rubai. It is also shown that Mahsati wrote poems in the genre of shahrashub and Farid ad-din Attar (1220) in his “*Ilahiname*” referred to Mahsati as “*Debir*” (the scribe). It is also

stated in the article that Attar's “*Ilahiname*” contains information about two legendary women, Mahsati Ganjavi and Rabia al-Adawiyya.

Then there is another interesting issue about carving women's poems on some objects. Of course, these items has played an important role in studying women poetry, as well as their social, political and cultural positions in history. It is mentioned that there is a ceramic bowl kept in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London whose exterior was decorated with a rubai which ascribes to Mahsati. Of course, the text may be short and of limited value to researchers, but they can tell us much about female poetry patterns, their history, location and status.

In the article “*Mahsati Ganjavi et les potiers de Rey*”, Firuz Bagirzadeh investigated archaeological, textual, historical, artistic and religious-political evidences to identify the possible source of rubai on the aforementioned ceramic bowl. Bagirzade noted that this poem might belong to both Mahsati and Seljuk panegyrist Anwari (1190). Taking into account the history of the bowl and the variation in color, the author stated that the origin of the bowl dated back to 1155 and 1223, as well as its location is Iraq. Then, taking into account the geopolitical and social history of the region, Bagirzadeh came to the conclusion that the poem belongs more to Mahsati than to Anwari. Anwari could not gain popularity in Iraqi-Ajam at that time because of the fact that Anwari belonged to the Sunni sect and Iraqi-Ajam was dominated by Shi'i sects when sectarianism prevailed in that region during that period. Also, Mahsati's relationship with masters and artists can be assumed that the poetess was a favorite for Haft-color artists. This bowl is no small indication for a poetess whose career has been overshadowed by the legends. It also emphasizes the importance of Mahsati Ganjavi not only for aristocratic society, but also as a poetess among the merchantile classes.

One of the studies made by British Orientalists was in the book of “*Borrowed ware*” written by Dick Davis. In this book, there is some information about Mahsati Ganjavi. He mentioned that Mahsati Ganjavi was born in Ganja and was a scribe at the court of the Seljuk monarch Sanjar (1119–1157). The author is also told that the Safavid poets of the 16th century particularly admired her and added the translation of some her quatrains.

Dear, dry your pointless tears, tears don't suit you –

I'm sad enough, you needn't be sad too;

Look, you're the loved one, crying's not your role –

Let me do what the lover has to do [2].

In 2013, the BBC Radio broadcasted a program called “The Golden Age of Islam”. Topics about prominent thinkers and their achievements were heard here. The program covered the period from the eighth to the thirteenth centuries, and featured 20 programs about invention, medicine, mathematics, literature and philosophy. One of these programs was about two outstanding women poets – Rabiah Balkhi and Mahsati Ganjavi. This section was presented by Nargiz Ferzad, the Persian Speaker of SOAS (School of African and Oriental Studies).

First, information was given about the tragic life of Rabia Balkhi. The beautiful Rabia Balkhi, who came out of the palace, lived in Afghanistan and wrote poems about love and beauty from her youth.

As for Mahsati Ganjavi, Nargez Ferzad told about her life. She was born in Ganja, and wrote rubai. She was a poetess in the palace of Sultan Mahmud (1118–1131) and his uncle Sultan Sanjar (1131–1157). Mahsati Ganjavi was famous in the Seljuk palace. In addition, that Mahsati was reportedly imprisoned for insulting the king twice.

It was mentioned that little is known about Mahsati’s early life. It was also noted that her father gave her a good education, and at the age of 19, Mahsati was a good musician and played well on lute and harp. It is said that Mahsati was married to the son of preacher of Ganjai, and Amir Ahmad was also a poet.

Mahsati Ganjavi’s quatrains expressed the love and optimism. Nargiz Farzad recited some of Mahsati Ganjavi’s rubaiyat in Persian and English.

Those nights when I slept softly in your arms, have gone,

All the pearls I polished by my lashes, have gone.

You were born for my soul, a loved companion, you left me and all that I shared with you, have gone.

Conclusions. It is an important event for comparative literature studies to translate the works of Azerbaijani literature into English. First of all, translating such kind of courageous poetry into English plays a great role in recognition and studying Azerbaijan Classical literature not only in the UK but also in the world.

The studies by the British Orientalists led to the recognition of Mahsati Ganjavi, as well as her involvement in scientific analysis. First of all, her gender makes Mahsati Ganjavi an extraordinary figure in the world literature. Because that time only male poets wrote about love. That’s why Mahsati Ganjavi’s poetry caused a lot debates. The Preservation of Mahsati Ganjavi’s manuscript in the British Library, as well as the discovery of a bowl decorated with Mahsati Ganjavi’s rubai in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, are very important to study Mahsati Ganjavi’s heritage deeply.

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Маммедова Ілаха Салахаддін гизи. МАХСАТІ ГЯНДЖЕВІ В ДОСЛІДЖЕННІ БРИТАНСЬКИХ ОРІЕНТАЛІСТІВ

У статті розглядаються роботи британських сходознавців про Махсаті Гянджеві. Зазначається, що Махсаті Гянджеві – велика азербайджанська поетеса XII століття. Вона писала свої твори переважно перською мовою, була відома в середовищі творчих осіб як автор рубаї. **Мета статті** – зібрати воедино всі дослідження про Махсаті Гянджеві, здійснені британськими сходознавцями з початку XX століття до теперішнього часу, і розкрити основні деталі, згадані в цих роботах.

У статті використовуються **методи** аналізу рукописних даних, а також метод порівняння.

Новизна статті полягає в тому, щоб вивчити всі дослідження про Махсаті Гянджеві, зроблені у Великобританії, і надати важливу інформацію про рукопис роману «Mahsati and Amir Ahmad», який зберігається в Британській бібліотеці, а також про керамічну чашу, прикрашену рубаї Махсаті Гянджеві, яка зберігається в Музеї Вікторії та Альберта в Лондоні.

Результати. У 2013 році в ЮНЕСКО було прийнято рішення відзначити 900-річчя Махсаті Гянджеві у світі. Смілива поезія Махсаті Гянджеві була перекладена багатьма мовами, зокрема й англійською, і вивчається британськими сходознавцями. Професор Едвард Браун написав про Махсаті Гянджеві у своїй книзі «A literary History of Persia». Своєю чергою Мередіт Оуенс у 1969 році опублікував статтю про рукопис роману «Mahseti and Amir Ahmad», що знаходиться у Британській бібліотеці. В іншому недавньому дослідженні, зробленому Марлі Хеммонд, надано інформацію про Махсаті Гянджеві, а також про керамічну чашу, прикрашену рубаї Махсаті Гянджеві, яка зберігається в Музеї Вікторії та Альберта в Лондоні. Життєпис Махсаті Гянджеві та переклад деяких її рубаї здійснено в книзі «Borrowed ware», написаній сходознавцем Діком Девісом. У 2013 році BBC транслювала програму про Махсаті Гянджеві, що була представлена Наргезом Фарзад.

Висновки. Таким чином, усі згадані дослідження дуже важливі для визнання Махсаті Гянджеві у світі та розгляду її життя й творчості. Переклад такої сміливої поезії англійською мовою відіграє важливу роль у визнанні та вивченні азербайджанської класичної літератури не лише у Великобританії, а й у світі.

Ключові слова: Махсаті Гянджеві, азербайджанська література, рубаї, мова поезії, вільнодумство, феміністські ідеї, інтимна поезія.