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A Kashkay folktale

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The purpose of this contribution is to present a complete Kashkay folktale told by a woman from the Jāme-bozorgī subtribe of the Amaleh tribe of the Kashkay Tribal Confederation. The tale is transcribed in Turcological notation and translated into English. Some information about Kashkay verbal arts is added.

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Introduction

The Kashkay folktale presented here was recorded from Belqeys Jahāngīrī, a more than 90-year-old woman from the Jāme-bozorgī subtribe of the Amaleh tribe. The recording was made in the house of her elder son, Imamqulu, in January 2007, during one of my field trips to the Kashkay region. Popular legend says that the core family of the Jāme-bozorgī ‘those with big garment’ originated from the Lur of Boir-Ahmad, fled from its khan and was given sanctuary on the territory of the Amaleh tribe. Then many other families, mostly of Turkic origin from different tribes like the Nafar, Bahārlu and others, joined them. They became a subtribe of the Amaleh tribe and shared the same seasonal pastures and migration routes. They have been settling their winter quarters, since the 1970s, in the Khurde-dare, ‘the little valley’, in the Lāristān district, where they have built a village with the same name. The population of the Jāme-bozorgī subtribe is around 800, of which more than 500 settle in their village, while the rest is dispersed over other villages and urban zones of Fars province, e.g. Jahrom.

Čoyānnār¹ bāy. A Kashkay folktale

Transcription

1. Xob, kišiniñ birisi bičarāymış; āvdān čiχmeyrmiş; tāmālīmış, hāyā tāmāl. Arvad gedār bir qonšu āvinā, deyār mān niñ edām, belā odun-modun sānnān onnān alirām čerāg edirām yeyir, ālā burā oturir, iś germeyr. Deyār: “gedārāñ, ālā bu unu apar kemmāj ed, gātī(r) dār dāminā, yāñi serkāleyrāñ kī kilī tekilā, to”ala dārdān oyzā, de āviñ yāñi ruzumuz geddi tut gātī(r), kiši kī čiχdi yāzzīyā kemmāj

¹ Čoyānnār (< Persian čoyondār) means ‘red beet’. Here, since the main character of this folktale has a red face, he is dubbed čoyānnār.

qulunjunä, sän däri içärdän qulf ed, daha däri açmä tä varä gedä zırın olä, älä o tappı dä tuşası, gedä gumm olä”.

2. Kişi qowzanär gedär kemmäji tutä; tutär o gäler dār dāmınä, deyär arvad däri aç. Dedi: adın nädı? Dedi: bilmiräm. Dedi: ged här vax adını bullın gäl.

3. Geddi gerdi tä bir yerdä ikki Imamqulu² läyin tefän älinnä şikal vārayinnä. Hay huy eddi, şikallär qäçdi. Geddi tutdu beläşini hereft vurdu. Dedi: “xob, bir beläyi zad gerdiñ berkinı geti(r) dārynnän dārynnän dārynnän var ged, sän mänim şikalimı hirkiddiñ?”

4. Geddi gerdi bir du^wardı, berkinı getirdi dārynnän dārynnän dārynnän... tutdulär. Tutdu beläşini hereft vurdulär. Deyär: “oyuruyāñ sän? ko^w ko^w edirāñ du^wardän oyurlāyāñ? Sän beläyi zad gerdiñ de: o^w! ginnä bir ginnä ikki; bārākāt gätirä işä, çox olä”.

5. Geddi o^wantär, gerdi bir mänim täyin qārri elmiş; şivāñjādi, āzadarligdi, dedi: “o^w! ginnä bir, ginnä ikki”. Burdä dä tox vurdulär. Tox vurullär o, deyär: “geddiñ bir beläki zad gerdiñ, de: germāyāñiz āvväl axır älä bu ossun”.

6. Geddi gerdi bir toydi(r), dedi: “germāyāñiz āvväl axır älä bu ossun. Ordä dä ketäyi yedi”.

7. Geddi geddi geddi gerdi tä... bir āşrāfi itirmişlär gāzillär, bāçčā-mādrāsā gāzir. Birisi, bu bāçčā-mādrāsāniñ, dedi: “bağ bağ, inçer çoyānnārdi(r)”. Hārākāt eddi; dedi: “āy bullum!” Gāzdilär, tekişdiñdilər; dedi: “xub, sän āşrāfiyi bulmuşāñ ver”. Dedi: “yo^w, adımı bullum. “Adın nädı?”. Dedi: “adım lāttā içinnä”. “Soyan dāyıl, kālām dāyıl, turub dāyıl?” Çoyonnāri demellārdi. Dedi: “yo^w, heç birisi dāyıl.” İnni burdä dä vill eddilər.

8. Vardi geddi geddi geddi gerdi bir... daha inni burdä bāxti gätirir... geddi gerdi bir āvli keçmiş bir erkāni qalmış, bir āvli keçmiş uş-derd yumurtası qalmış, birisiniñ bir yayuy ayrıni qalmış, birisiniñ bir saz-o-nayārāsi qalmış, xob, birı torbāsi qalmış. İydi içinä o allı dalınä o geddi.

9. Geddi geddi gerdi bir div mānzeliñdi; bilmerdi divdi, gerir bir kohnä qāhlādi, hāyā qāhlādi. Gedär qāhlāyā gerir yeddi qazan qātar qomuşlär, altisiniñ altini odlär, altı div gäler baş qoyār içär altisi dä sāqqāt olur. Birı dä dār dāmınnä gezçiymiş bahisab. Deyär: “adam madam issi gälir, yaylı badam issi gälir, mänim şāhrımnä inçer adamızad issi gälir”. Deyär: “bu mänim buwam şāhrıdır”. Deyär: “yow, mänim buwam şāhrıdır”. Deyär: “gä(l) şart vuräg, gäl(l) burä, hār käs daş qoydu älinä sexdı su ollu, o aparmış”. Div daş qoydu älinä sexdı un ollu, o qermizi kişi yumurtāyi ukaladi su ollu. Dedi: “gäl tifiñäg”. O tifiñdi yarım ārşin yol geddi, bu yayuyun ayzini açānnä ikki ārşin geddi, ayrıni vill eddi. Dedi: “inni dä ki apardiñ”. Dedi: “xob, gäl başımız tikini atäg”. O bir çārāk baş tiki addi, bu erkāni vill eddi. Dedi: “xob, gäl... daha niñ edäg? Hār käs dän yel çixdi sāsi çoxtār ollu, älä o aparmış”. Geddi bir āv içinä, bu div bir şaqquładānnä... divdän bir yel çixdi munu getirdi o dālig bu dāligä atä; munu atār ottay buttayä. Deyär: “sän ordä çoyānnär nā iş geyrāñ?”. Deyär: “män

² *Imamqulu* is the name of the elder son of the storyteller, and this folktale was told at his home and in his presence.

bu dälīg-duşugu tutırām yel verännä sänı yel aparmeyä”. Täpiginän vurännä dări qerrär, dări qerrär, bu dä gedär nayaräy qoyär bun issinä, här nä vurä. Älä geri qäçirmış deyrmiş: “ävi yanmışın ossurayı säsänir belä”.

10. Gedär gerir bir tilki julu^wnnän gälir. Deyär: “hara gedirän? iner çox owqatın tälχdi(r)”, deyär: “qurbanın ollum, adamızad bulunmuş ävimi almiş älimnän”. Deyär: “gäl bir talä tikiñnän qaz baylä boynumä, baylä quyruquñä tä gedäm alam veräm”.

11. Baydı gerdı gälir. Dedi: “çob, tilki kaka, sänin bu^wan mänim bu^wamä yeddi alabärzäñi veräsi, bu birsi hanı altisi daha?”. Div eziynän dedi: “axçey, bu mänı apayır verä bua^wsı bedehinä”; qäşdi, ipinän tilkiyi çäkdı o qäşdi; tilki dä onın qulunñunnän burä owlannı, orä owlannı, daşa owlannı, dayıllı geddi.

12. Kişi geddi oturdu ämlakın issinä; gerdı belä ruzigarı çub olir; gälli etişdi ävinä; dedi: “arvad, dări aç tä gäläm”. Dedi: “adın nädı(r)”. Dedi: “adım çoyännär, arvad, dăr izimjā açılmış”. Gälli arvadı getirdi geddi orä oturdu; yedi, işdi, xoş eddi.

13. Bu dä tāmam ollu. Bu dä çoyännär ämi, çoyännär bāy qessäsi.

Mr. Beet's tale

Translation

1. Well, there was a man who was poor. He would not leave home [to go after work]; he was lazy, yes: lazy. His wife went to a neighbor. She said: “What can I do with him? I borrow wood from you and others to make fire and I bake bread and he eats some, but he sits here and does not go out looking for work”. [The neighbor] replied: “I will give you some flour, so make a kemmä³ and take it out of the house and shake it pretending you want to clean off the ashes. Then roll it away and call your husband and tell him: our daily food is gone, go and retrieve it. As soon as your husband is outside, lock the door after him. Don't open it to him, so that he must start looking for work, [necessity is the mother of invention]; let him take this bread as his only grubstake”.

2. The man stood up to go after the bread. He retrieved it and came back to the door and said: “My wife, open the door!” His wife asked: “What's your name?” “I don't know”, he answered. She said: “Go! Don't come back unless you have found your name”.

3. He went away, and eventually he met two men like Imamqulu⁴. Rifles in hand, they were lying in wait of game. He made a noise and the game fled. The peeved hunters caught him and beat him terribly. They said: “Well, if you see this situation again, take your hat (off) and retreat through the low grounds. You startled our quarry”.

³ *Kemmä*, is a kind of thick bread, often made from barley flour, and is known as the food of poor people.

⁴ Here, the tale-teller refers to her elder son, *Imamqulu*, and this tale was told at his home and in his presence.

4. He distanced himself from the hunters. [There], he saw a herd [of sheep and goats]. He took his hat off and moved away while crawling through the low ground. He was caught [again] and again was horribly beaten. They told him: "You must be a thief, aren't you? You are sneaking around in order to steal from the herd? If you see this kind of thing you must say: [It is] today one, [may it be] tomorrow two [may God give you abundance!]. Maybe this [benediction] could bless our business and make it thrive".

5. He went a little further where he saw that an old woman like me⁵ had died and there was mourning and they were moaning. He said: "[It is] today one, [may it be] tomorrow two [may God give you abundance!]" Here again, he was beaten severely. As they were hitting him they said: "If you see this kind of thing, you must say: May you not face (this) any more, may this be the first and last [sorrow] you ever have".

6. He went on after this and, there, he saw a wedding ceremony. He said: "May you not face (this) any more, may this be the first and last [sorrow] you ever have". There again, he was thrashed.

7. He went, went, went [much further], and he noticed that a gold coin had been lost and they were looking for it; the school children were looking for it. One of them, one of the pupils said: "Look! Look! He looks like a beet". He ran and shouted: "I found it!" They [caught him and] examined him. "Well, you've found the gold coin, give it to us", they said. He answered: "No, I've found my name". "What's your name?" they asked. "My name has to do with farming", he replied. "Is it onion? Is it cabbage? Is it radish?" They didn't mention 'beet'. He answered: "No, these aren't my name". So, he was released.

8. He then travelled further... and his luck turned... he arrived at a place where a family while moving had forgotten a rope; another family while moving had forgotten some eggs; another had forgotten a butter-churn full of buttermilk; of another had remained a kettle-drum and a trumpet; and a family had forgotten a bag. He collected everything in the bag, put it on his back and went on his way.

9. He went much further and arrived at the house of a demon; he did not know it was the domain of a demon; he noticed only that it was an old castle. "Err, yes, a castle". He entered and saw that there were seven cauldrons; he put six of them on the fire. Six demons arrived and started to drink; all of them died (perished); while the seventh was keeping watch over the door. This demon said: "It smells of human being, it smells of oily almonds; in my domain, seems to me, it smells of a human being". He asserted: "This is the domain of my father". The demon answered: "No, it is that of my father!" He said: "So, come here, let's wager; he who is able to transform a stone into water by pressing it in his hands will win". The demon pressed a stone in his hands and transformed it to flour. And that red man, he rubbed an egg in his hands and broke it, [showing that he converted it to water]. "Now, let's spit". The demon spit about a half meter, and the man, he opened his leather-bottle and squirted buttermilk over two meters. The demon said: "This time too, you have

⁵ Here, the tale-teller refers to herself.

won". "Well, let's throw our hair". The demon threw around a kilogram of his hair; as for the man, he threw the rope. The demon said: "Well, then, what else can we do? "Let's break wind. He who can fart the strongest will win". They went into a room. When the demon broke wind, the man was blown everywhere, and ended hanging from the ceiling. The demon, then demanded of him: "Beet, what are you doing up there?" He said: "I am sealing off all these holes [and windows] so that the wind does not take you when I break wind". The demon kicked down the door and fled. As for the man, he jumped onto the roof and started striking the kettle-drum with all his force. The demon distanced himself from the castle saying: "May his house burn down, he who farts so noisily!"

10. The demon retreated until it met a fox. The fox asked him: "Where are you going? You look miserable". The demon replied: "May I die for you, the man came and took my house by force". The fox said: "Come and make a cord from your hair and attach my neck to your tail, [we will return and] I will retake your house".

11. The man saw they were coming. He said: "Well, my brother fox, your father owes my father seven *Alabärzäni*⁶, here is one of them, where are the other six?" The demon told itself: "Alas! This fox takes me to exchange me against the debts of its father". It fled with the fox in tow. The fox was struck by stones everywhere and perished.

12. The man settled in the property. He noticed that his life had changed for the better. He returned home and said: "My wife, open the door, I want to return". She asked: "What's your name?". "My name is Beet, darling! The door is opened to us", he answered. Then, he took his wife and led her to the castle; they ate there, they drank there, and there they enjoyed life.

13. It is finished. That was the history of uncle Beet, Mr. Beet.

Notes on the transcription

The transcription not only represents phonemes, but also major allophones, thus conveying an idea of the actual pronunciation. For example, front *g* and *k* sounds will, irrespective of their phonemic status, be rendered as *g* and *k* and their back equivalents as *ɣ* and *q*. The transcription is thus relatively broad. For the vowel system the following additional details can be given:

i denotes [i], which is almost always syllable-initial and in word-initial position substitutes for [j]. This sign also denotes a modified front rounded high vowel [y] /ü/, in certain words.

ɨ denotes a retracted and lowered *i* or a [ɪ] vowel, which is never word-initial except in Arabic loan words. It is present almost always in non-first-syllables and especially in case markers and conjugation suffixes. This sign also denotes a modified front rounded high vowel [ɥ] /ü/, in certain words.

⁶ *Alabärzäni*, in Kashkay folklore, is a demon whose skin is striped with white and black.

ĩ denotes [i], which is a centralized vowel corresponding to the back unrounded high vowel [ɯ] in other Oghuz Turkic.

e denotes [e], a higher e phoneme, the so-called ‘closed é’, present in many native words and certain loan words in initial position.

ä denotes the low vowel [ɛ] with all its variants. It should be pronounced [æ], where it follows a front or back unrounded low vowel, i.e. [a] and [ɑ], in the previous syllable.

a denotes the back unrounded low vowel [ɑ], which can alternate with [ɐ], [ɒ], [a] and, in rare cases, can be labialized.

u denotes a back rounded high vowel.

o denotes a semi-closed back rounded vowel [o], and [ɔ] as well, both of them quite frequent in all positions.

Kashkay verbal arts

Folk poetry, proverbs, legendary stories, musical narratives⁷, and folktales are among the genres of Kashkay verbal arts⁸, which are locally documented in Persian translation.⁹ In western publications, this documentation is limited to sporadic efforts made by some anthropologists and linguists. Thus, one would not find more than a few folk poems or some short narrative texts which are, even in this small scale, not well distributed.¹⁰

We know that the Kashkay share a common history with other Turkic-speaking peoples, especially Azerbaijanian, from whom they have detached geographically. The oral traditions, such as folksongs, musical narratives and legends are very similar.

We know, as well, that the Kashkay people not only originated from heterogeneous ethno-linguistic backgrounds, but also coexisted for a long time with other Iranian peoples in southern Iran. Such heterogeneity and long-term multicultural coexistence are well reflected in Kashkay folklore. Thus, one can find motifs, images, concepts and other narrative elements, as well as poetic features common to the Kashkay verbal arts and those of other surrounding non-Turkic peoples like the Persians, Lurs, etc. Though all of these verbal arts are produced in the Kashkay lan-

⁷ The stories narrated by *aşıqlar* ‘folk musicians’ in combination with musical performances.

⁸ Instead of oral literature, I prefer to use the term *verbal arts* proposed by Finnegan (1992).

⁹ However, they have not been published in Kashkay.

¹⁰ The Russian folklorist A. A. Romaskevič collected and published in 1925, for the first time, some Kashkay folk poems. As for narrative texts, some were collected by Gunnar Jarring in the 1940s, later handed over to Éva Á. Csátó and partially published by her in 2006. Doerfer et al. (1990) published a Kashkay corpus, which is mostly composed of literary poems. Concerning folktales, the amplest and most recent corpus was compiled by the author of this article in his master’s thesis at the École pratique des hautes études in 2007.

guage, one finds, especially in folktales, some degree of 'language alternation' in which characters, often marginal ones, switch to speak in one of the local non-Turkic languages.

Generally speaking, Kashkay verbal art is the output of both a common Turkic heritage and the influence of some non-Turkic cultures. This multiculturalism has resulted in the development of the Kashkay verbal arts with easily distinguishable characteristics.

Further documentation of the Kashkay oral traditions is of great importance.

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