

# Northern Caucasus Poetry

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## ANCIENT PERIOD

From the beginning of recorded history, the Caucasus has been situated at the crossroads of empires. The name itself is an exonym, applied by outsiders. Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Persians, and many other peoples have all represented the Caucasus in various ways: as the land where Prometheus was enchained, according to the ancient Greeks, where Noah's ark landed, according to the Book of Genesis (8:4), to which Jason and the Argonauts travelled, and where Medea murdered her children in revenge for his betrayal. Early literary sources on the northern Caucasus are mostly exogeneous: composed by outsiders and written in Greek, Latin, and other languages of antiquity. Yet there is also an indigenous and multilingual northern Caucasus literature of antiquity, explored throughout this study guide.

In the present context, antiquity refers to the period before Islamicization radically altered the Caucasus' literary landscape by introducing a new language of literary culture as well as a unifying religion. Prior to Islamicization, Christianity was widespread but it co-existed with other religions such as Zoroastrianism and pagan belief systems. Long before Islamicization, however, there is ample evidence of writing among northern Caucasus peoples, especially those who had converted to Christianity as a result of contacts with Christian Georgians to the south. While the best known ancient written cultures of the Caucasus are Georgian and Armenian, Chechen and Ingush inscriptions that used the Georgian script have been found on churches near the Georgian-Ingush border. An inscription in Georgian has also survived from Tkhaba-Yerdy Church in Ingushetia's Assin Gorge, which dates back to the 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> century. Ingush communities formed part of the Christian Kingdom of Queen Tamar (1184-1213).

### *Epic Poetry*

Poetry in the ancient northern Caucasus is comprised primarily of oral ballads and other folkloric genres. Among the oral epics of Caucasus peoples, the Nart sagas and the Chechen *illi* are the most significant. These sagas span the languages of the peoples of the northern Caucasus (Adyghe, Ossetians, Chechens, Balkars, Ingush) as well as certain peoples of Daghestan and Georgia. They exist both in the form of prose tales and epic songs in verse, as well as in hybrid prosimetric (combining prose and poetic) forms. In the latter case, as noted by David Hunt in his collection of these stories, "prose is used to move the action along" with "poetry (song) providing descriptions of scenes and of people's thoughts and feelings." The sagas have also been compared with Norse Vikings epics, which deal with historical and mythical subjects. Just as these tales served as the basis for modern iterations of the German *Nibelungenlied*, including Wagner's famous opera, so were the Nart sagas used and transformed by modern North Caucasus authors to revitalize their local literatures. The discussion here focuses on the Nart sagas as poetry, while a discussion of their prosaic dimensions and their narrative content is reserved for the section on prose fiction. However, the significant overlap in terms of theme, character, and plot between the poetic and prosaic aspects of the Nart sagas should not be forgotten.

Like other ancient verse epics, including Homer's *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, the Nart sagas abound in similes. Nart sagas also share in common with other ancient epics a reliance on epithets, such as "Nart's evil genius" and "indomitable." Epithets are used to form similes, involving comparisons to iron or

gold, such as “golden hair” and “golden sun.” Color symbology is also significant, and the literary devices of parable and allegory are frequently used. Hyperbole is another literary device that permeates the sagas. Rhythms are innovative and variable, and a variety of techniques are used to bring balance to asymmetric stanzas. Mixed rhythm, in which the final syllable of a line recurs in the next line, also features in these works. Many of these rhythms are built on consonants patterns, since Caucasus languages abound in consonants.

One feature of the Nart sagas that makes them particularly relevant to the study of northern Caucasus literatures is that they span multiple languages and have been integrated into the oral and literary heritage of numerous Caucasus peoples. It is impossible to claim the Nart sagas as uniquely Vainakh (Chechen, Ingush), Circassian, or Ossetian, for example, since they are found in each of these cultures. Different heroes arise in each group’s version of the Nart sagas but they share in common the same origin, identities, and often also names. Importantly, the Nart sagas also testify to the lifeworlds of peoples who are currently extinct, such as the Ubykh. The Ubykh’s Nart sagas were recorded by French linguist Georges Dumézil during his visits to Turkey during the 1930s, where the Ubykh people had been exiled following the Russian conquest of the 1860s.

Another major corpus of texts that belong to the repertoire of ancient north Caucasus literatures is *illi* (plural *illesh*), ballads that are extant only in the Chechen and Ingush languages. Although *illesh* appear to be as ancient as the Nart Chechen, they are distinguished from the Nart sagas by virtue of their close relationship to historical events. Among the most ancient of these ballads are the ones dedicated to Pkharmat, the Chechen-Ingush version of Prometheus, and the ones bearing the (modern) titles ‘Regarding the Earth’s Cataclysm’ and ‘How God Punished Mankind.’ *Illesh* continued to be composed throughout the postclassical and modern Chechnya and Ingushetia; these will be discussed in the next sections.

#### Further Reading

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Walter May, John Colarusso, and Tamirlan Salbiev, *Tales of the Narts: ancient myths and legends of the Ossetians* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016)

David Hunt, *Legends of the Caucasus* (London: Saqi Books, 2012).

#### Discussion Question:

What are the major genres of poetry in the ancient North Caucasus? How are they different and similar from each other?

## POSTCLASSICAL PERIOD (ISLAMIC)

### *Alphabets*

The composition of poetry in the postclassical northern Caucasus is inextricable from the region's Islamicization. As a result, much of this literature operated under the shadow of Arabic and was set to writing in the vernacular variation on Arabic script called *ajami*, a term derived from the Arabic root denoting "mute" (and later used to refer to Persian). *Ajami* scripts (which were also widely used in Islamic Africa) adapted the Arabic alphabet to the phonetic specificities of north Caucasus vernaculars, in order to produce vernacular literatures that paralleled and intersected with works produced in Arabic, Persian, and Turkic, often by the same writers. Although, as noted above, written culture in the northern Caucasus dates back to antiquity, it was in the postclassical period that the vernacular literatures of the northern Caucasus were first given written form, thanks to the development of *ajami* scripts and their adaptation to Caucasus vernaculars.

### *Islam*

The northern Caucasus was Islamicized unevenly and in different stages, but the process well was underway by the Umayyad period (661–750). Since Islamicization was central to the development of postclassical literary culture in the northern Caucasus, it is not surprising that Daghestan, which was Islamicized before other parts of the northern Caucasus, became the center of north Caucasus literary production. Specifically, Derbent in southern Daghestan was an early center of Arabic literary culture, until Arabic culture began to spread elsewhere throughout Daghestan during the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Arab communities were established in the region of Derbent as early as the 7<sup>th</sup> century, concurrently with the Arab conquest of Iran. From the 13<sup>th</sup> century onward, the names of Daghestani Arabic writers begin to appear in other parts of Daghestan.

### *Social Structures*

Further north in Daghestan in the 8<sup>th</sup> century, a group of Qumyqs named themselves the first Shamkhals, a title denoting ruler. The Shamkhals initially ruled from the town of Tarku to the Caspian Sea. Later, the Shamkhal capital was moved to Ghaziqumuq, a town inhabited by the Lak people (who were called *ghazi*, meaning "warrior," in recognition of their early conversion to Islam) as well as the Qumyq. Originally Christian and pagan, the people of Ghaziqumuq came under the influence of Islam in the 10<sup>th</sup> century. The Shamkhals were patrons of Arabic as well as indigenous literatures towards the end of the postclassical period. One interesting feature of their mode of governance is that they ruled by election rather than purely by descent, meaning that there would have been a forum for deliberation over who was the most qualified ruler. This method of governance was also practiced among the Chechens, who were governed by a council of elders called the *mexk-kxel*.

As the borders of the Islamic world expanded, Arab ruled-dynasties began to emerge across the northeastern Caucasus, in the Shirvan region which borders Daghestan and what is now Azerbaijan. The Arab ruler Haytham ibn Khalid broke with the Abbasid Caliphate in 861, thereby establishing the Mazyadid dynasty in Shirvan, which ruled as an Arab dynasty until the Kasranids initiated the Persianization of Shirvan in 1028, and the founding of the Shirvanshah dynasty, which presided over a renaissance of Persian poetry.

Although the early Arab rulers of Daghestan did not patronize literary languages in the vernacular, their reigns greatly contributed to the spread of Arabic and subsequently Persian across the northern Caucasus. As a result of Arab migrations, Islamicization, and the overall proximity of the Caucasus to the Arab and Persianate world, both Arabic and later Persian became literary *lingua francas* throughout the region, often co-existing with Turkic dialects that were used in everyday discourse. Poetry during this period tended to be religious and didactic in orientation, and concerned with mystical themes. Ali of Qumuq (d. 1448) was a Daghestani poet of this period who wrote in Arabic.

### *Epic Poetry*

Chechen *illesh* were widely performed during the postclassical period. Ballads from this period documented conflicts between everyday people and their rulers, and their performance helped to consolidate communities facing foreign invasions. The performances were highly public events, and *illesh* were recited to the accompaniment of the *dechig pondar*, one of the national instruments of the Chechen people. According to an anecdote, while traveling through Chechnya, the Turco-Mongol conqueror

Tamerlane, founder of the Timurid Empire in 1370 CE, once asked his soldiers whether they had managed to wrest the *dechig ponder* from the Chechens they had conquered. On receiving a negative answer, Tamerlane concluded: "We defeated them, but we did not subdue them."

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#### Discussion Question:

What impact did Islamicization exert on poetry in the postclassical northern Caucasus?

#### EARLY MODERN PERIOD

##### *Poetry and War*

The poetry composed during the early modern period is dominated by the invasions of Qajar and other empires. In particular Nadir Shah's invasion of Daghestan, which was most intensive during the years 1741-1743, served as a subject for epic poetry in vernacular languages. The invasions during these years represented the culmination of over a decade of skirmishes between Nadir Shah's troops, which included Tatars and Uzbeks who fought on his side alongside Iranians, and the Daghestani people. Although Nadir Shah captured numerous fortresses and outposts in the Caucasus during his campaigns, he was ultimately defeated by Lezghi warriors. Epic poems about the defeat of Nadir Shah's army were composed in Avar and Lak. The Avar epic poem tells of a battle that is not recorded in any of the standard Persian historiographic sources for Nadir Shah's campaigns in the Caucasus. Just as local historical sources and epigraphic inscriptions tell a story of the Abbasid Caliph Harun al-Rashid and his family's relationship to the Caucasus that differs from that available in better known historical sources (as discussed in the next section), so does local Avar-language poetry and prose report in detail the battle between Nadir Shah and the Avars of Andalal in 1841 that sealed the fate of Nadir Shah's attempts at conquests. This epic poem records in verse a speech by Muhammad Nutsal IV (1730-1774), who is celebrated for defeating Nadir Shah even though he was still a young boy at the time of this battle. As the poem records:

Nutsal Khunzakh was the head of the army.  
He wears a coat of chain mail.  
Nutsal ordered the army to stop for instruction.  
If the enemy takes Andalal, he said,  
we'll never wash away the shameful stain.  
If he reaches [the towns of] Chokh or Sogratl,  
He'll be in Khunzakh tomorrow.  
Young men, repent!  
Anyone who dies today [in this battle]  
will become a martyr.  
Anyone who remains alive [after fighting in this battle]  
will be glorified forever!

Muhammad Nutsal later came to be known for his role in bringing Chechnya within the fold of the Avar Khanate over which he ruled. Lak epic poetry strikes a similar note. One poem is dedicated to the Lak Mortaza 'Ali (Murtazali), son of Ghaziqumuq ruler Surkhai Khan I, who was also instrumental in stopping Nadir Shah's conquest of the northern Caucasus.

Because they were located to the northwest of Daghestan, Chechnya and Ingushetia were not as profoundly affected by Nadir Shah's invasions as was Daghestan. But Chechen-Ingush epic poems (*illi*) tell of other historical battles, in which brave young men, such as Adin Surkho and Aldaman Gheza resist foreign invaders. Aldaman Gheza, whose father was killed by enemies when he was a nine-year-old boy, is particularly celebrated in Chechen poetry for the alliances he formed with other Caucasus peoples during the 17<sup>th</sup> century, including powerful local rulers in Daghestan.

### *Poetry and Language Study*

Alongside oral epics that circulated among performers often without the attribution of specific authorship, individual authors began to appear in Daghestani literary culture in the early modern period. This was also a period marked by a shift away from Arabic as the exclusive language of learning and an increasing engagement with Persian and Turkic, as well as the transformation of the indigenous languages of Daghestan into literary vernaculars. Among the early modern Daghestani authors who played an instrumental role in these transformations, arguably none is more important than Dibir-kadi (1742-1817), an Avar linguist, poet, and intellectual who famously compiled Daghestan's first Persian-Turkic dictionary, *Collection of Two Languages (Jami al-lughatayn)*. The dictionary, which included four languages—Arabic, Persian, Turkic, and Avar—was compiled at the request of the Avar ruler Umma-khan in order to prepare translators to serve the khan using their knowledge of the Persian and Turkic languages.

Born just a year after the Nadir Shah's defeat at Andalal, in Khunzakh, the same Avar town from which Muhammad Nutsal IV who defeated the Nadir Shah was originally from, Dibir-kadi is not known primarily for his poetry. However, his Persian-Turkic dictionary, as well as his Arabic-language textbook for the study of Persian, greatly facilitated the accessibility of Persian poetry within the northern Caucasus, since it includes extensive citations from major Persian poets such as Hafez of Shiraz, Mas'ud Sa'd Salman of Lahore, in order to illustrate the meanings of Persian words. In the preface to his dictionary Dibir-kadi recognized the pre-eminence of Arabic as a learned language within this triad, but emphasized the delicacy, subtlety, and beauty of Persian.

### *Poetry in the Vernacular*

Dibir-kadi belonged to a period that has been referred to by scholars as part of Daghestan's literary renaissance. Classical Arabic poetry was much in vogue at the time. In particular the poetry of Abu Tammam and his anthology of early Arabic poems, *Hamasa*, inspired numerous imitators. During the same period that Dibir Qadi was occupied with making Persian, Turkic, and Arabic literary heritage accessible to his fellow Avars, Daghestani poets such as Abu Bakr al-Aymaki (b. 1711) and Hassan al-Kudali were occupied with integrating their knowledge of Arabic, Persian, and Turkic with their native Avar. Abu Bakr al-Aymaki's composition entitled *Turks*, which consisted of thirteen Avar poems in the *ajami* script on topics such as belief in Allah, the appearance of heaven and hell, and what acts were condemned and which approved by Islam, was composed in the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Literature in Avar using the Arabic *ajami* script is attested as early as the fifteenth century, but Avar poetry flourished in particular during this period. The poetry of al-Aymaki and Hassan al-Kudali in the *ajami* script mark a new stage in Daghestan's vernacular literary traditions. Al-Aymaki in turn inspired a lengthy commentary by the Daghestani scholar-poet Sa'id al-Harakani, which compared al-Aymaki's poetry collection *Turks* with his philosophical ode, composed in classical Arabic with an end rhyme on the letter m (*qasida al-mimiyya*).

### Further Reading:

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Khalil Khalilov, ed. *Lakskie épicheskie pesni* (Makhachkala, 1969).

#### Discussion Question:

How did scholars and critics from the northern Caucasus promote the study of poetry during the early modern period?

#### 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY : Russian Empire

Poetry written during the period after the annexation of the North Caucasus to the Russian empire greatly enriched literary production and added an entirely new set of repertoires and genres, while also facilitating access to a new range of European authors, whom North Caucasus writers read in Russian translation. And yet, for many writers in the 19<sup>th</sup> century North Caucasus, Arabic and vernacular literary production continued to determine their literary output. Tsarist and Soviet narratives often locate the beginnings of written culture in the northern Caucasus in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century with contact with Russian and European modernity, but, as the preceding sections have shown this narrative is false.

#### *Poetry of Forced Migration*

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the literatures of the Caucasus in the *ajami* script attained the widest circulation that they ever received. Poets such as the migrant (*muhajir*) Temirbolat Mamsurov (1845-1998) and Kosta Khetagurov (1859-1906), produced new and original work in Ossetian, and in a variety of scripts, including *ajami* and Cyrillic. Although Khetagrov achieved fame during his own lifetime, Mamsurov's work only became widely known in 1920, when the Turkish diplomat Bekirbey Sami, who was the son of tsarist official Musa Kundukhov, gave the Ossetian Historical Society in Vladikavkaz a typescript entitled *Ossetian Songs. Written by Temirbolat Mansurov. Turkey. Anatolia. Batmantash. 1868-1898*. In 1922, it was discovered that Miller had included one his poems, called "Thoughts," in his pioneering study, *Ossetian Etudes (Ossetinskie Etiudi, 1881)*. Similarly, the German author Arthur Leist translated part of a poem by Mamsurov and published it in the newspaper *Kaukasische Post*, without however naming the author, whose identity he was ignored of. Ten further of Mamsurov's poems have subsequently have been identified. Based on the typescript discovered in 1920, Mamsurov is widely considered to be the first Ossetian poet.

Ossetians are often remembered in the annals of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Caucasus as a group that worked alongside Russian colonial officials to facilitate the deportation of northern Caucasus peoples. Musa Kundukhov, an Ossetian who helped to engineer the deportation of the Chechens to Ottoman lands, is a case in points. Yet, many Muslim Ossetians were subjected to the same forced deportations to which their fellow Muslims of other Caucasus backgrounds—Chechens, Ingush, Ubykhs, Abaza, Adyghe—were subjected. Like his fellow Muslims of the North Caucasus, Temirbolat Mamsurov was forcibly deported, and belonged to the category of *muhajirs*, Muslims from the Caucasus who were compelled by Russian colonial forces to abandon their homeland and relocate to Ottoman lands.

Mamsurov wrote extensively about the years of his exile to Ottoman lands in his poetry. He died in the Ottoman empire and never had the opportunity to return to his homeland following his expulsion from it.

Although the connection may have been indirect, the motif of the *muhajir* poet was later picked up in Georgian during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in a poem by Galaktion Tabidze called “Muhajir [*maxajiri*].” This poem, which was completed during the Soviet period, is given in the first-person voice, from the vantage point of an imaginary *muhajir*. The *muhajir*’s probing monologue is dominated by memory as a kind of ritual practice, through which the speaker comes to terms with his own sense of being forsaken. In “Muhajir,” Galaktion states:

I breathe the dryness of your silence.  
I rub a fist of your flesh against my brow.

The peoples of the northwest Caucasus as well as the Vainakhs (Chechen and Ingush) further east were most severely affected by the forced deportations of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Relative to these groups, the peoples of Daghestan were more able to remain in their homeland for a longer period, although many Daghestani were also eventually compelled to leave Daghestan following the surrender of Imam Shamil in 1859. These Daghestanis migrated to Syria, Jordan, and other parts of the Arab world which were then under Ottoman rule.

### *Daghestani Poetry*

Even amid forced migrations and other turmoil, Daghestan witnessed the flourishing of poetry alongside other literary genres during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Among the key figures in this literary revival are the poet and scholar Abusufyan Akaev (1872–1931), born in the town of al-Gazanishi. Like many of his fellow North Caucasus writers, Akaev was fluent in his native Qumyq, Arabic, Persian, Azeri Turkish, Tatar, and Crimean Tatar. Akaev also knew Avar, Lak, Dargi, Chechen, and Russian. In 1903, Akaev compiled the first anthology of Qumyq poetry, which he published in the Crimean city of Simferopol. He produced a second, much revised, edition of this work in 1912 and published it in Temir Khan Shura in Daghestan.

Alongside his poetic activities, in 1908, Akaev compiled a dictionary, called *The Staircase of Languages (Sullam an-Lissan)*, comprising many of the languages with which he was familiar. Akaev also translated a great deal of classical Persian and Turkic poetry into the indigenous languages of Daghestan. His literary activities were greeted with some resistance by conservative local scholars. In his memoirs (discussed below in the article on lifewriting during the Soviet period), Akaev recounts this resistance as well as his response: “At that time, a certain category of scholars opposed us, claiming that the production of books in an *ajami* language was forbidden by Islam, and that the composition of poetry and such was, in their opinion, a great sin [...] we regarded such words with relative indifference.”

In 1907, Akaev worked together with his close friend and collaborator Magomed Mirza Mavraev to found the first and most important Arabic-script publisher of the North Caucasus, known as the Mavraev publishing house. Mavraev appointed Akaev as editor in chief. At first, all of the books published by the Mavraev publishing house was produced for schools and mosques. Their circulation raised the level of knowledge within Daghestan in both the religious and secular sciences.

In addition to his own writings and publishing activities, Akaev made an important contribution to Daghestani literary history through his editing of major Arabic works such as the *Diwan al-Mamnun* of Hasan al-Alqadari (1834–1910), a work discussed in the next article. Akaev edited this work during the course of his work at the Mavraev publishing house. Like Akaev, al-Alqadari operated in a multilingual environment and produced original work in several different languages. These developments in Arabic Daghestani literature were accompanied by the emergence of poets such as the Qumyq poet Yirchi Kazak (spelled Irçi Qazaq in Azeri, 1830-1879), who is regarded as a founder of modern Qumyq literature.

Alongside the flourishing of vernacular literatures in *ajami* and Cyrillic scripts, the 19<sup>th</sup> century also saw the earliest fruit of the encounter between indigenous Caucasus literatures and Russian and European literatures that introduced new literary genres into the Caucasus literary landscape. While Arabic, Persian, and Turkic retained significance throughout this period, as they did well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this was a period when indigenous literatures flourished alongside Russophone literature.

### Further Reading:

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#### Discussion Question:

Many poets began writing in their native languages during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. What similarities and differences did these writers exhibit from each other?

#### 20 TH CENTURY : Soviet Period

The 20<sup>th</sup> century witnessed the waning years of tsarist rule, which were among the most productive in literary terms, and the beginning of a new, Soviet period, which inaugurated a radical shift in the modes, languages, and genres of literary production. This shift however did not entail the cessation of writing in Arabic or in vernacular languages that use the Arabic *ajami* script. Daghestani Arabist Saidov regards 1905 as a turning point, which "opened a new period in the Arabian-language literature in Daghestan." According to Saidov, this period was marked by a deeper and more extensive acquaintance with the Arabic-language writings of Muslims throughout the Russian empire, such as in Tatarstan, as well as with modern Muslim writers, such as Rashid Rida and Muhammad Abduh in Egypt.

#### *Alphabets and Scripts*

Soviet poetry in the Caucasus, like all branches of literary production, was overwhelmingly shaped by the Soviet experience as well as by government-driven ideologies that limited the scope of what could and could not be written. Soviet sources often stress that many of the literatures of the Caucasus only acquired written form following their incorporation into the Soviet Union; this prevalent assumption is in most case wrong. The narrative that identifies the Soviet period with a wholesale turn to literary production in Russian ignores the substantial literature written in Arabic (*ajami*) script throughout this century.

Alongside the cultural shifts necessitated by the Bolshevik Revolution, the dominant script for vernacular literatures shifted dramatically over the course of a few decades. Until 1928, Avar was written in the Arabic *ajami* script and occasionally in the Cyrillic alphabet created for it by P.K. Uslar in 1861. At that point, the Soviet state decided that Avar, like many languages of the Caucasus and Central Asia, should be written in the Latin script. This phase only lasted for a decade, however, at which point, in 1938, Soviet leaders decided to shift the alphabet again, to Cyrillic. The same complex story could be told for nearly all the languages of the North Caucasus.

#### *Soviet Multilingualism*

Major Avar poets include Zagid Gadjevich Gajiev (1898-1971), who was also a translator and dramatist, bilingual (Russian-Avar) poet Faza Gamzatovna Alieva (1932-2016), whose husband Musa Abdulaevich Magomedov (1926-1997), was also a well-known poet, Mahmud from Kabab-Rosso (c. 1870—1919), and Gamzat Tsadasa (1877-1951), the father of Rasul Gamzatov (1923-2003), who was

regarded as Daghestan's national poet for much of his professional life. Other outstanding Soviet-era poets of the northern Caucasus include in Chechen, Magomet Mamakaev (1910–1973) and Raisa Akhmatova (1928-1992) and Hasan Israilov (1910-1944), leader of the Chechen resistance against the Soviet Union from 1940-1944, Effendi Kapiev (1909-1944) in Lak, Suleiman Stalsky (1869-1937) in Lezghi, and Yakov Khozijev (1916 –1938) in Ossetian. The Ossetian author and journalist Dzakho Gatuev played an important role in cultivating North Caucasus poetry through his anthology *The Poetry of Caucasus Mountaineers (Poeziia gortsev Kavkaza, 1934)*. These authors developed new idioms and ways of writing within their respective literatures while also remaining attentive to the literary traditions within which they worked.

Whereas Bakikhanov may be seen as the paradigmatic multilingual author of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Caucasus, Hasan al-Alqadari (1834-1910) can be regarded as the paradigmatic multilingual author Caucasus in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Like his predecessor, al-Alqadari worked in three languages: Azeri, Arabic, Persian. Whereas the polymath Abbas Qoli Aqa Bakikhanov (discussed below) wrote his masterpiece, *Heavenly Garden*, in Persian, al-Alqadari wrote masterpieces in both Azeri Turkic and Arabic. Al-Alqadari's Turkic masterpiece is, *Vestiges of Daghestan*, is a priceless historical source that also includes the author's poetic compositions. For the purposes of understanding his contribution to the poetry of the Northern Caucasus, al-Alqadari's *Poetry of the Thankful One (Diwan al-Mamnun)* is the key text. It was composed in Arabic and published in Temir Khan Shura in 1912 by the well-known publishing house of Mohammad Mirza Mavraev, which contributed greatly to the growth and development of Daghestani literary culture in indigenous Daghestani languages in the *ajami* Arabic script as well as in Arabic.

The outstanding poet of Chechen literary modernity is Magomet Mamakaev (1910-1973). Born in the Chechen village Achkoi-Martan to a peasant family, Mamakaev was educated at the Communist University of the Toilers of the East. Among his major poems are and the epic poem "Bloody mountains" (1928), "Conversation with mother" (1934), and "Morning over Argun" (1958). Before Mamakaev began transforming Chechen literature, Abkhaz poet and playwright Samson Kuagu-ipa Chanba (1886–1937) was making his mark on Abkhaz literature. Chanba's book-length poem, *Daughter of the Mountains*, appeared in 1919; his work as a playwright is discussed elsewhere in this study guide. Mention should also be made of Abuzar Aidamirov (1929–2005), who, although primarily a novelist, composed in verse the Chechen national anthem.

#### Further Reading:

Kemper, Michael. "Daghestani Shaykhs and Scholars in Russian Exile: Networks of Sufism, Fatwas and Poetry," *Daghestan and the World of Islam*, eds. Moshe Gammer and David J. Wasserstein. *Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae*, 2006. 95-107.

Rebecca Ruth Gould, "Topographies of Anticolonialism: The Ecopoetical Sublime in the Caucasus from Tolstoy to Mamakaev," *Comparative Literature Studies* 50.1 (2013): 87-107.

Dzakho Gatuev, *Poeziia gortsev Kavkaza: sbornik* (Moscow: Gosliizdat, 1934).

M. S. Saidov, "The Daghestan Arabic literature of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries," *Papers Presented by the USSR Delegation, XXV Congress of Orientalists* (Moscow: Oriental Literature Publishing House, 1960), 1-13, esp. p. 12 (cited above).

#### Discussion Question:

How did the Soviet state respond to writing in native languages?