

Friedrich Bodenstedt on the Ethnic and Cultural Diversity of the Caucasus

Hamlet Isaxanli

Khazar University, Baku, Azerbaijan

Introduction

Many geographic names that have been passed down to us through history do not carry just one simple, clear meaning. The word “Caucasus” is one of the terms which needs a commentary. Initially the mountain range extending from the shores of the Black Sea to the Caspian Sea was called the Caucasus or the Greater Caucasus mountains (whatever the word “Caucasus” really means). Then the land to the north and south of these mountains (between the Black and Caspian Seas) also became known as the Caucasus.

The Caucasus region is made up of the autonomous provinces of Russia, located in the northern part of the Greater Caucasus mountains (the North Caucasus), as well as of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia that are located in the south of the Greater Caucasus and that are collectively known as the South Caucasus. There is another name for this region that is anything but neutral, Transcaucasus, a name reflecting a Russian bias from the Russian word “Zaqafqaziya”. The mountain ranges in the South Caucasus are known as the Lesser Caucasus. Some authors refer to the South Caucasus as the Central Caucasus, stating that it would be more appropriate to assign the name South Caucasus to provinces of Turkey and Iran, which border on the Central Caucasus; from this perspective, the region called the Greater Caucasus includes Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia as well as neighboring provinces of Russia, Turkey and Iran.

The border between Europe and Asia also passes through the Caucasus, although its exact location is not clearly defined. Is this the Greater Caucasus Range, or perhaps the Kuma-Manych Depression to the North? New agreements still leave the question unanswered whether the South Caucasus (the Republics of Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia) count as Europe. (This brings to mind the Europe-Asia comparison in Kurban Said’s book “Ali and Nino”). Even though there was something of a Caucasian Union at times, it didn’t last long. Instead, the Caucasus has always been

a hot spot where neighboring powers collided: most notably, the Roman Empire, then the Byzantine Empire (from the West) and Ancient Iran (from the South). They were followed by the Turks (from the North) and the Islamic Caliphate (from the South). Later came the Ottomans (from the West), Iran (from the South) and Russia (from the North). Many empires had the goal of conquering and maintaining power over the Caucasus. The Caucasus also appears in the mythology of the Ancient Greeks, Iranians, Turks and the Caucasian people. In reality, Caucasians have covered the globe. Caucasian is the name of a race, which is the same as Europid. This term was invented in Germany in the late 18th century to denote a South Caucasus or Caucasian which then served as European archetype. In the USA, "Caucasian" is generally used to refer to white people. Caucasus, this multiethnic, multicultural and multilingual region is one of the richest areas in the world in terms of diversity both in human cultures and in nature, and it is a paradise for researchers in these fields. The Caucasus has an abundant history that includes periods of a harmonious coexistence of nations living peacefully side by side and cooperating economically, politically, humanistically and culturally, but that is also characterized by internal contradictions, conflicts and wars (including the current internationalized ethnic conflicts) and, of course, by long-lasting wars throughout history aimed at conquering the Caucasus.

First and foremost, the contact between cultures takes place via travelers, who learn about regions, compare what they see with their own home cultures, and write down memories (observations) of their journeys. By this means, impressions and many different perspectives on regions, countries and people are spread, including praise, expressions of amazement and surprise, prejudices and criticisms.

There were many European travelers who visited the Caucasus and wrote memoirs of their experiences. Their number began to increase especially in the 17th century, and many of these travelers were German. Some of these travelers were well educated (including historians, archeologists, philologists, writers, literary translators, etc.); some were diplomats or missionaries, and there were also businessmen and merchants. All of their notes shed light on the history and geography, people and traditions, language and literature, domestic life and culture of the Caucasus, and they are valued as significant sources of Caucasian Studies. Many articles, books and dissertations have been written about these travelers' memoirs. In general, the Caucasus offered opportunities to creative people from different countries and cultures to express themselves, and this was the reason for the emergence of certain famous belles-lettres and memoirs.

Some of the European travelers traversed the Caucasus with the objective of reaching Iran, and they wrote about the Caucasus on their way. Others (mainly in the 19th

century and later) went to visit Russia and included the Caucasus in their work and travel itineraries. Russian scholars and people of arts came to the Caucasus not only on business but also as exiles of the government (to “Warm Siberia”), to live, work and perform their creative activities. Alongside the government’s Russification policy of the Caucasus, Russians were also “Caucasianized” to a certain extent. Europeans and Russians visiting the Caucasus in the 19th century-built relationships with Caucasian intellectuals and people of art and consequently, those relations played an important role in cultural transfers.



Portrait of Friedrich Bodenstedt

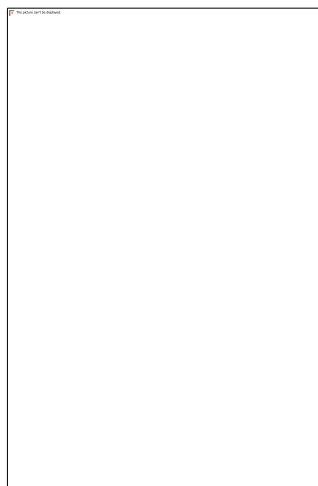
Friedrich Bodenstedt (1819-1892), a young German intellectual, was one of the Europeans who had been invited to Russia for teaching and who, after living there for a while, moved on to the Caucasus. In the Caucasus, he learnt Azerbaijani Turkic and partly Persian, worked as a teacher and was involved in diverse creative activities. After returning to Germany, he wrote many works about the Caucasus. About 14-15 years after Bodenstedt had left the Caucasus, famous French writer Alexander Dumas (1802-1870) also arrived there from Russia and afterwards published his artistic memoirs (1858-59); those memoirs have been published in full translation into Azerbaijani Turkic in 2010.

From the works of Bodenstedt on the Caucasus, only the part about his mentor, Azerbaijani educator and poet Mirza Shafi Vazeh, has been in the limelight so far (although contradictory views have been expressed regarding the identity of Mirza Shafi). Yet all of his works can ultimately be considered as the most rigorous and valuable source of information on the Caucasus, notwithstanding the fact that they have not received much critical attention.

Friedrich Martin von Bodenstedt: A Brief Vita

Friedrich Martin von Bodenstedt (1819-1892) was a German poet, writer, translator, scholar of literature and culture, ethnographer and historian (see, [1] – [8]). He was

born in Peine near Hannover, and he traveled to many different countries but always returned to Germany. After completing his education at university where he studied literature, languages, philosophy and history, he traveled to Russia in the fall of 1840 and lived there for around three years. He visited St. Petersburg and went from there to Moscow (and later to other cities of Russia). In Moscow, he taught private lessons to two sons of the Prince (Knyaz) Mikhail Galitsin (other forms: Golitsyn or Galitzine), cousin of Moscow's general-governor. He became proficient in Russian, got acquainted with Gertsen and Lermontov (he left valuable memoirs of meetings with Lermontov [9]) and corresponded with well-known Russian writers such as Fyodor Tyutchev, Leo Tolstoy, Ivan Turgenev and Nikolay Nekrasov.



Statue of Bodenstedt in
Peine

Bodenstedt accepted an invitation to work as director of Tbilisi Teachers' Institute (Tiflisskaya Aleksandriyskaya Gimnaziya) and to teach Western languages and literatures at the Institute (he set off to the Caucasus between mid-October and mid-November of 1843. Yet, after some time he resigned from the post of director, apparently in order to have more opportunities for traveling, learning, and writing. He was patronized by the then chief or superintendent (главнокомандующий or главноуправляющий in Russian, сардар in Persian) of the Caucasus, Alexander Neidhardt (their close relationship can be traced back to Bodenstedt's stay in Moscow). Bodenstedt lived in the Caucasus for about a year and a half, where he also participated in the ceremonial welcome of Neidhardt's successor Viceroy Vorontsov in Tbilisi (in March of 1845). In April 1845, Bodenstedt left Tiflis ("where he had spent the most impressive time" [1]) to return to Leipzig, passing along the Black Sea coast and through Crimea, Istanbul (where he spent "several pleasant weeks"), the Aegean Sea coast, and Italy.

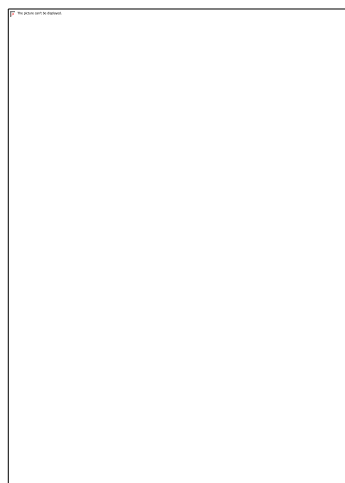
After having lived abroad for a comparatively long time and after having returned to his native country, Bodenstedt began to write profusely and enthusiastically, mainly producing literary translations from Russian, English and Persian, as well as composing poems, stories, plays, academic works in history and literary studies, travelogues and memoirs. Bodenstedt was given the authority to represent the Germans at international meetings. At the International Free Trade Congress held in Paris in 1849, when Victor Hugo asked for a speech, Bodenstedt replied that the lack of a German flag among all participating countries made him feel disinclined, an objection that Hugo in turn refuted by stating: "Monsieur, vous êtes le drapeau vivant de l'Allemagne!" [1].

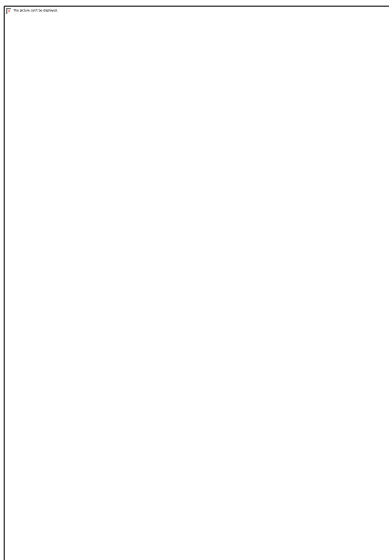
Bodenstedt worked as professor of Slavic languages and literature, later also of English literature (at the University of Bavaria, Munich), as theatre director and newspaper editor. According to his biographers, he was a tall blond man, humble, slightly naïve, but with solid self-esteem and an occasional tendency towards self-praise [1] - [8].

Works of Bodenstedt on the Caucasus and on Caucasians

Bodenstedt began his creative activity by publishing translations of Russian and Ukrainian (malorus) poetry (1843 and 1845). This article discusses only Bodenstedt's activities in the Caucasus. Bodenstedt's first book written in this context, "Die Völker des Kaukasus und ihre Freiheitskämpfe gegen die Russen" (The Peoples of the Caucasus and their Struggle Against the Russians), published in 1848 in Frankfurt on the Main, is a large work of two volumes that consists of 572 pages with a 16-page introduction and technical publishing information ([10]). As indicated by the title, the book covers the history, modern lives and struggle for freedom of the peoples of the Caucasus (mainly focusing on the North Caucasus). There is detailed information about Sheikh Shamil (1797-1871) and the first part of the resistance movement he led (in 1834-1859), as well as about the movement's beginning, which took place before Shamil's time. There are also separate sections on Sufism, which Bodenstedt explains and comments as a movement of humanistic thought. The book furthermore contains a certain number of interesting pictures of Caucasian people and the Caucasus. Qualitative and quantitative analysis is carried out on various cities and regions of the Caucasus. There is also a chapter on "Caucasus Tatars who descended from the Turkish Race" (pages 122-147). "Tatars" was the common name of people speaking in Turkic languages in Russia (Kazan, Crimea, Astrakhan, Siberia, etc.). In Russian sources of that time, it was also applied to people living in the Caucasus who had only recently been subdued by Russia (Caucasian Tatars) and who are currently called Azerbaijani people or Azerbaijani Turks.

According to Bodenstedt's book, the vast majority of the 28 thousand-strong population of Derbend consisted of Shia Tatars. The Karabakh population was 60 thousand, of which 2/3 were Tatars and 1/3 were Armenians. The population of Ganja (the Elizavetpol province) was 55 thousand, of which 9 thousand were Armenians.





This significant work was expanded and re-published in 1855, and its translation into French was printed in Paris in 1859 [11]. Only a few chapters of Bodenstedt's interesting book were translated into Russian, and unfortunately, the majority of the work was never translated into major languages (except French) or into the languages of the Caucasus.

Bodenstedt's second book on the Caucasus was entitled "Tausend und ein Tag im Orient" (Thousand and One Days in the Orient), and it was published in 1950 in Berlin [12]. It revolved around its main character, the Azerbaijani poet, calligrapher and teacher Mirza Shafi. This book ("his most successful prose work" [1]) of three

volumes and 53 chapters was a subject of great interest, even more so than his previous book. The personage of the wise Mirza won the favor of readers because of his sincere and beautiful speech, poetry, agreeable sense of humor, character and life philosophy. A translation of "Thousand and One Days in the Orient" into English was almost immediately published in London in 1851 [13]; Bodenstedt read and made corrections to the most difficult parts of the English translation himself. Those memoirs were also incorporated into the first three volumes of a 12-volume collection of selected works published in 1865-1869 [14].

Rudolf von Decker, director of the press where the book was published, suggested printing a separate book of Mirza Shafi's poems translated by Bodenstedt, and soon this was published under the title "Die Lieder des Mirza Shaffy" (Songs of Mirza Shafi) in 1851 [15]. Bodenstedt claims that "I have translated the songs of Mirza Shafi into German without damaging the originals," and "I have repeated the songs I heard" (Was ich erlauschte, sang ich wieder; 1851: 54). This book of songs was the top-selling book in Germany during that period (the late 19th and early 20th century). It was printed 142 times before Bodenstedt's death in 1892, and the 168th edition with rich illustrations was published in 1921! It earned extraordinary fame. Drawing on the poems ("songs" in Bodenstedt's translation) of Mirza Shafi, famous (German and Russian) composers wrote numerous songs as well as music belonging to other genres. The German *Songs of Mirza Shafi* and the English translation *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* by FitzGerald lead to an enormous popularity and eventually even to a cult of Mirza Shafi and Omar that bordered on mania [16, pp. 316-317]. *The Songs* was translated into many European and other languages; in 1880, it was translated into English by the writer, translator and educator Elsa D'Esterre-Keeling

[17]. By contrast, the book “Thousand and One Days in the Orient” was printed only 5 times during the author’s life (in 1850, 1853, 1859, 1865, and 1891).

After this introduction to Bodenstedt and his three books, I would like to spend some time on “Thousand and One Days in the Orient”. This book is interesting for at least two reasons: first of all, due to the colorful persona of Mirza Shafi that Bodenstedt created (“...the badly arranged book would have long since been forgotten if not ... Mirza Shafi” [1]) and, secondly, from the perspective of Caucasus Studies (it also somehow represents Russian Studies). This two-volume book has not been translated into any other language in its entirety (the translation closest to the original is the translation into English). The parts of the work dealing with Mirza Shafi were translated into Azerbaijani with some abridgements and errors [18], but the long and interesting descriptions of the Caucasus have never been translated.

Bodenstedt, who used the terms “Land of Morning” as a symbol of the East and “Land of Evening” to connote Northern countries, notes that his previous book was more academic but that the new book would include brief descriptions and summaries as well as lively and poetic additions. I believe this book is just as important for Caucasus Studies as his previous one. His “Die Völker des Kaukasus und ihre Freiheitskämpfe gegen die Russen” (The Peoples of the Caucasus and their Struggle Against the Russians) consists of historical and geographical studies which mostly draw on pre-existing sources, but “Thousand and One Days in the Orient” is mainly based on his own observations and on his ethnographic research of people, nations, regions, and cultures during his travels; it thus contains more original thoughts.

In 1861, he published the book “Aus Ost und West” (From the East and West) which contains six lectures [19]. The third lecture is named “Die Stellung der Frauen im Orient und Occident” (The Status of Women in the Orient and Occident). Here he cites an example from the play “Monsieur Jordan and Dervish Mastali Shah” by M.F. Akhundov that compares women in Azerbaijan and Paris. Bodenstedt also translated poems by A. Bakikhanov, an Azerbaijani polymath of the first half of 19th century whom he referred to as “another great poet” [20], and they were published under the title “Aus dem Divan des Abbas-Kuli-Khan von Baku” (From the Divan of Abbasgulu Khan of Baku). One famous poem from this work (“Fatma Plays the Tar”) has not survived in the original language, but its translations into Russian and German are available.

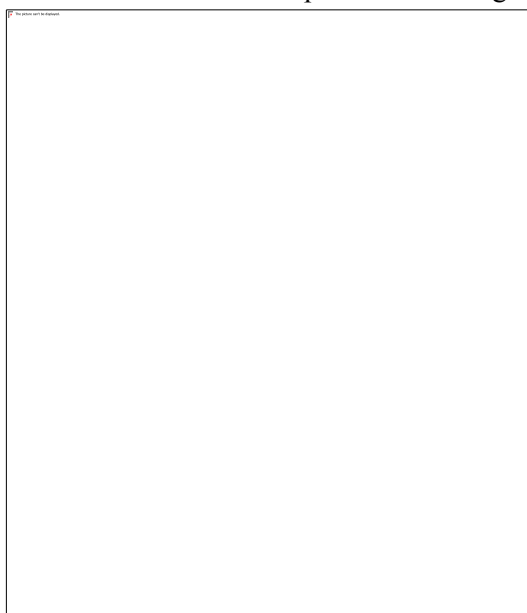
In 1882, Bodenstedt published another book of poetic translations from Eastern literature, “Aus Morgenland und Abendland. Neue Gedichte und Sprüche” (From East and West. New Poems and Aphorisms), in which he included translations of

poets like Saadi, Rumi, and Jami as well as aphorisms of Mirza Shafi [21]. In general, Bodenstedt, who was a remarkably productive translator of foreign literature and “who is the same for Germans what was Vasily Zhukovsky for Russians” ([2], p. 409), translated and published selections of classic works from Russian, English and Persian literatures (among them Pushkin, Lermontov, Turgenev, Shakespeare, Khayyam, Saadi, Rumi, Hafiz, Jami) as well as from Azerbaijani literature into German. He also carried out research and taught classes on these topics.

In 1874, he published a book entitled “Aus dem Nachlasse Mirza Schaffy’s” (From the Papers of Mirza Shafi) that was considerably larger in volume than “The Songs of Mirza Shafi” [22]. In this book’s long epilogue, entitled “Erläuternder Nachtrag” (“Illuminating Supplement”), he wrote that Mirza Shafi was not a poet and the songs were not a translation of Mirza Shafi’s songs, but that they were in fact Bodenstedt’s own original works. On the front page of the next edition of “Die Lieder des Mirza Schaffy”, published in Berlin in 1875, he introduced himself as an author (Bodenstedt) that used Mirza Shafi as a pseudonym. In reality, Mirza Shafi, who wrote his poems in Persian and Azerbaijani Turkic (see, for instance, [23], [24]), was a gifted poet but not that famous.

Before Bodenstedt’s surprising announcement, Russian Caucasus scholar Adolf Bergé (1828-1886; his father was French, and his mother was German) had written an article on

Mirza Shafi (1870, [25]) which played a crucial role in promoting the idea of Bodenstedt’s authorship (if Bodenstedt had been famous as a poet himself, he would probably not have denied Shafi’s authorship). The great friendship between Mirza Shafi and Friedrich Bodenstedt, described and praised by Bodenstedt himself, had been turned into a great separation, and Bodenstedt’s claim to authorship caused confusion in German and Azerbaijani literatures, and has even developed into a topic of debate and a mystery of literature studies. The scope of this paper does not allow me to delve further into the relationship between Mirza Shafi and Friedrich Bodenstedt, as interesting as this might be. Research on this problem, done by both German and Azerbaijani scholars, is not free from prejudice and bias ([7], [24], [26]).

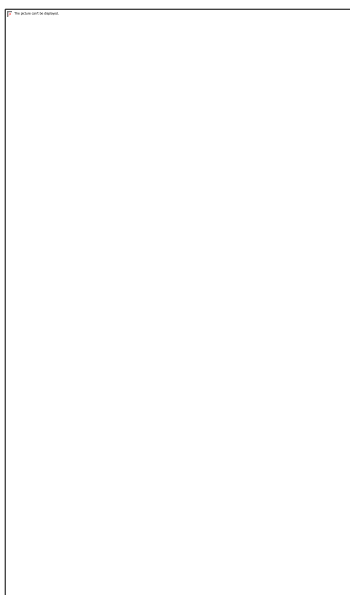


Fredrich Bodensdedt and Mirza Shafi

Here, it is necessary to abandon the thought about giving brief information on numerous works of F. Bodenstedt which are not related to the Caucasus.

Bodenstedt on the Ethnic and Cultural Diversity of the Caucasus

Bodenstedt's book "Tausend und ein Tag im Orient" that will be discussed now can be considered to be one of the most valuable sources of Caucasian Studies. This work, which was written in the mid-19th century, offers not only descriptions of historical processes in that period and of previous centuries, but also comprehensive information on cultural and social life as well as on historical persons whose names have not (or only in passing) been mentioned in other sources. In the following, I will describe and analyze the ethnic and cultural diversity and colorfulness of the Caucasus predominantly based on this book that has (as mentioned above) not been studied with this aim in view.



1.Ubykh 2. Jiget 3.Abasech
4.Greek 5. Turk in colonial
trade on the Circassian coast

I would like to scrutinize the book from the viewpoint of attitude towards different issues related to the subject rather turning over the pages of the book from the beginning to the end. In this case, it probably will be very exhausting to show repeatedly each page of quotes. The reader himself can see the pages of quotes easily by looking through the original of the book in German language or its translation into English.

In my analysis, I will from time to time also refer to other appropriate works of Bodenstedt that are related to this issue.

Bodenstedt was an accurate and careful observer. "I could have written a novel, softened some of the unpleasant elements, filled in the gaps with interesting episodes, created sentimental and virtuous protagonists, made the situations more complex and said beautiful expressions through the tongues of the characters. But I, on the contrary,

bring reality in its nakedness before the eyes of the reader and turn a deaf ear to the calls of fantasy." While Bodenstedt was living in Tbilisi, socializing with Mirza Shafi and other people, and while traveling the Caucasus, he recorded thoughts and observations about issues as diverse as history and geography; myth and religion; language, literature and music; traditions and lifestyles; material culture; women; and he also frequently drew comparisons between Europe and the Caucasus.

On Languages

“My first object in Georgia was to secure an instructor in Tartar (another spelling of the word “Tatar”- H.I.) that I might learn as quickly as possible a language so indispensably necessary in the countries of the Caucasus” (1850), “the lingua franca of the East” (1874). He also learned Persian from Mirza Shafi. Some authors, as for example Kurt Sundermeyer [7], erroneously assumed in the 1930s that Mirza Shafi taught Bodenstedt Tatar and Persian as well as Georgian and Armenian languages, and even before that, in 1887, the same mistake was made by “Russkaya starina” [2]. However, in 1874, Bodenstedt personally noted that he learnt only Tatar and some Persian from Shafi (in 1850 and 1874), which becomes obvious in his following statement: “On the road (in Western Georgia – H.I.) I met a Georgian priest riding a donkey (I didn’t see horses in Akhalkalaki; everyone was riding donkeys) and I said a few words in Georgian but didn’t know the language, and then we switched to Russian”. In addition, it is acknowledged that Mirza Shafi knew only Tatar, Persian and Arabic languages.

- 1.Shapsug 2. Chechen 3.Imeretian
4. Leader of Adyghs 5.His daughter 6.A Persian in Baku

Bodenstedt observed that Armenians spoke Tatar as well as their native language. Their popular songs were in the Tatar language, and while speaking, Georgians and Armenians used many Tatar expressions. He writes down the Azerbaijani (Tatar) words exactly based on their pronunciation (this was before Akhundov’s plays, where some literary prose writing style was established). Some examples taken from Bodenstedt’s notes are “axşamınız xeyir olsun” (good evening), “vallah, elədir” (wallah, it’s like this), “yaxşı yol” (have a nice trip), “yaxşı oldu” (it was good...), “çox” (many), “çörək” (bread), “atlar hazırdır”/“atlar haserler” (the horses are ready), “Allah verdi” (The God gave/granted; Caucasians used to say it after the toast in the sense of “have a nice trip”?), “kef eləmək/keef elimäkj” (to have fun), “dilbilir” (philologist; Bodenstedt claims that he and Budagov invented this word together with Budagov in order to explain the word ‘philologist’), “eşşək” [ischekj] (donkey), “çubuq” (stick for cigarettes), “qəlyan” (hookah), “qələmdan” (pencil-box), “saləm alekem – alekem saləm” (hello-hello), “bülbul” (nightingale), “qızılbaşı” (“redhead”; name of supporters of Shan Ismail I, founder of the Safavid ruling

dynasty - H.I.), “Gürcüstan” (Georgia), Göyçə gölü (Goycha lake), Alagöz dağı (Alagoz mountain), “Asslan-Bey, or Arzlan-Bey” (he notes that the pronunciation is “Asslan bey” whilst the correct spelling is “Arzlan bey”).

Bodenstedt and Mirza Shafi spoke with each other in Tatar (in Azerbaijani Turkic) – this can be inferred from many expressions of “Tausend und ein Tag im Orient”. At the same time, both Persian and Tatar languages were used for poetry at Mirza Shafi’s poetry meetings “Divani-hikmet” (Assembly/Circle of Wisdom). “When we had trouble with languages, our friend L. Budagov helped us (he, an ethnic

Armenian, was a philologist - H.I.). He was a Persian language teacher in the gymnasium, and he spoke German, English and French well. He especially enjoyed interpreting the songs of these languages in an Eastern style. This was when I realized how many intelligent men like Mirza Shafi were missing out on the pleasures of other nations’ literatures because they didn’t know foreign languages.” It is interesting to note that in this quote, Bodenstedt seems to refer to European languages when he uses the term “foreign languages”.

At this point, I want to draw attention to some simple mistakes made by Johann Christoph Bürgel both in his lecture delivered during the conference at the State Hermitage Museum (St. Petersburg) in 2004 and in his corresponding

Friedrich Bodenstedt and Mirza Shafi

article [27]. In general, Bürgel’s article is biased and far from being saturated with critical thought. In the end, he only repeats assumptions and statements from previous publications, including thoughts taken from Bodenstedt’s attachment written in 1874. A good example is when he falls back on old claims that the poems of Mirza Shafi (Bodenstedt, as Bürgel claims) were a reaction against Prussian political processes of his period (p.4). Ludwig Fränkel [1], however, decidedly opposes (with well-grounded arguments) the idea that the songs of Mirza Shafi were meant to be a covert criticism of the political environment in Prussia. He claims that

one of the main reasons why these songs had been admired was that they were not political. Here, I will restrict myself to expand only on language inaccuracies. Bürgel's unfamiliarity with Turkic languages and his confusion of Azerbaijani Turkic with Ottoman Turkic seems obvious. Bürgel made a blunder by stating that the Tatar language in the Caucasus was Ottoman Turkic rather than Azerbaijani Turkic. In order to confirm his thesis, he draws on the expression "axşamınız xeyir olsun" ("axschaminiz cheir olssun", that is "good evening"), claiming that it is irrelevant to Azerbaijani Turkic and instead related to Ottoman Turkic. What he did not seem to know is that "axşamınız xeyir olsun" is a purely Azerbaijani ("tatar") expression; the same expression in Ottoman Turkic would be "iyi akşamlar".

On Literature, Poetry and Music

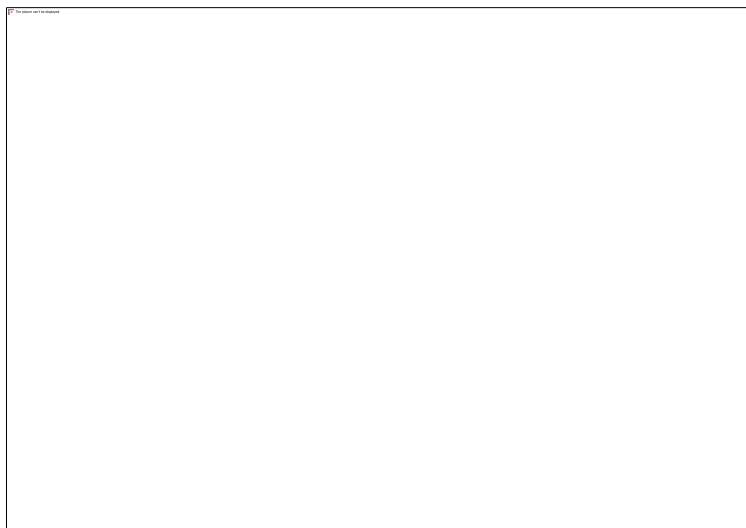
Bodenstedt reiterated that the main language classes he took from Mirza Shafi were contingent on poetry. Mirza Shafi was reciting and analyzing his own verses as well as poems of Persian literature classics and of Fuzuli, one of the classics of Turkic-language literature. Bodenstedt always presented Mirza Shafi's recitations as if "he was singing a song". It seems as if the tradition of reciting poems (in Arabic, Persian, and Turkic languages) with special intonation and pathos that is so widespread in the Orient evoked the impression of listening to music. "Mirza Shafi recited the poem with special expression. When I poorly read poems, I have translated from foreign languages, Mirza Shafi gets angry."

Later, in 1874, he described Mirza Shafi and Tatar literature as follows ([22]): Mirza Shafi was born a Tatar but received a Persian education. The Tatars do not have the rich and colorful literature of the Persians, but their language is the French of the East; it was moreover heavily influenced by Persian.

Bodenstedt was right about the richness of Persian Poetry. As far back as the 11th and 12th centuries, not only Persian but also Turkish-speaking poets (and even some writers from the Indian subcontinent) had been writing wholly in Persian. Others wrote both in Persian and in their native languages, and a gradually increasing part of them wrote only in their native languages. Mahammad Fuzuli wrote in three languages: mostly in Azerbaijani Turkic, but also in Persian and Arabic. 19th-century poets Abbasgulu agha Bakikhanov and Mirza Shafi, despite the fact that they had written some beautiful pieces of poetry in Azerbaijani Turkic, mainly wrote poems in Persian.

Works of Hafiz and other Persian writers as well as of Fuzuli from Turkic-language literature were quoted to Bodenstedt by Mirza Shafi. As other prominent Turkic-

speaking poets (Imadaddin Nasimi, Alishir Navai, Molla Panah Vagif and others) were not represented in Mirza Shafi's program, Bodenstedt was not aware of them. Bodenstedt and numerous other travelers and creative people visiting the Caucasus expressed similar thoughts about the fact that the Tatar language was widely used. Bodenstedt was also right about the idea that the Tatar language was subject to Persian influence. In addition, it is worth mentioning that both Tatar (Turkic) and Persian languages had previously been influenced by Arabic.



ANAPA: The famous Turkish slave market

Bodenstedt repeatedly expressed his admiration for Eastern poetry both in his book "Tausend und ein Tag im Orient" and in his other works. While meeting Omar Afandi, one of Mirza Shafi's friends, Bodenstedt paid a compliment to Afandi with a quote from Fuzuli: "I came to you as a hungry outcast, like a drop of water mixing into the ocean." Bodenstedt discusses the literary issues related to gazals, quatrain/rubais, the rhyme system, and translation, giving some patterns for each of them in the attachment of his work "Aus dem Nachlasse Mirza Schaffy's" [22].

Bodenstedt touched upon Mirza Shafi's emphatically negative attitude and his long and impassioned speech against printing books: "He didn't have many books in his house. Printed books really irritated and angered M. Shafi." At this point, it is necessary to comment on the emergence of and the reason for this negative attitude towards printing books. Mirza Shafi and numerous other mirzas (clerks) earned their living by copying books, demonstrating beautiful handwriting and mastery in calligraphy. Their economic status and their creative achievements were closely related to this occupation. Writers like Abbashgulu agha, on the other hand, were not

hampered by issues of that kind; on the contrary, he tried to publish his works as soon as possible. He knew the importance of book printing.

Bodenstedt in passing also wrote about Georgian and Armenian literature: “Georgian literature is rich in theology, history and geography (my knowledge is weak; I don’t speak Georgian) with its rich poetic traditions; it is significantly different from Armenian literature. I read Rustaveli in a Russian translation but didn’t really like it, but, little songs (of Georgians) are very nice...”

Starting with his first day in the Caucasus, the colorfulness and diversity of the region amazed Bodenstedt. Referring to a welcome banquet, he remarked: “Georgians, Armenians, Tatars, smart and beautiful-faced musician singing from Hafiz ... everything was new – like Thousand and One Nights!” So, it was this idea that gave the name to Bodenstedt’s book. While visiting Yerevan, Bodenstedt met with Khachatur Abovyan (Bodenstedt: Obovyan):” Khachatur Obovyan gave me Tatar, Kurdish and Armenian songs.” Later on, Bodenstedt brought some of these songs to discussions at the Divani-Hikmat of Mirza Shafi: “Together we learned Tatar songs of blind Keshishoglu and the competition between Keshishoglu and Allahverdi (Obovyan spoke a little bit about Keshishoghlu)”. Bodenstedt also provided information on poetry and music events. He refers to the singer Gayitmaz in Yerevan and an Armenian merchant’s son Yusif that, in the merchant’s house in Akhalkalaki, sang beautiful songs and accompanied themselves on the ‘saz’ or ‘tengir’.

On Intellectual culture, Lifestyle, and Traditions

Above all, Bodenstedt talks about his favorite teacher Mirza Shafi and about his personality, thoughts, life-style, attitude toward colleagues and women, and he also touches upon other interesting issues.

Mirza Shafi praised Abbasgulu khan and Omar efendi; it becomes obvious that he did not envy them. He maintained good relationships with people and scholars, both Sunnis and Shias. Shafi briefly answers the Bodenstedt’s question about being tolerant to such an extent by stating that everyone should mind his own business. On the other hand, however, and according to Bodenstedt, Mirza Shafi offended religious people, particularly by stating that “the cry of an innocent baby sounds nicer to me than the call to prayer of an old religious person..., and they in turn called Mirza immoral.” The words of Omar Afandi, who was presented by Mirza Shafi as “the wisest man after me”, are also interesting: “There is no intelligence in the head of a fool just like a tree can’t grow on top of a rock. There is nothing more difficult than to teach intelligence to a fool or to take away the intelligence of a smart person”.

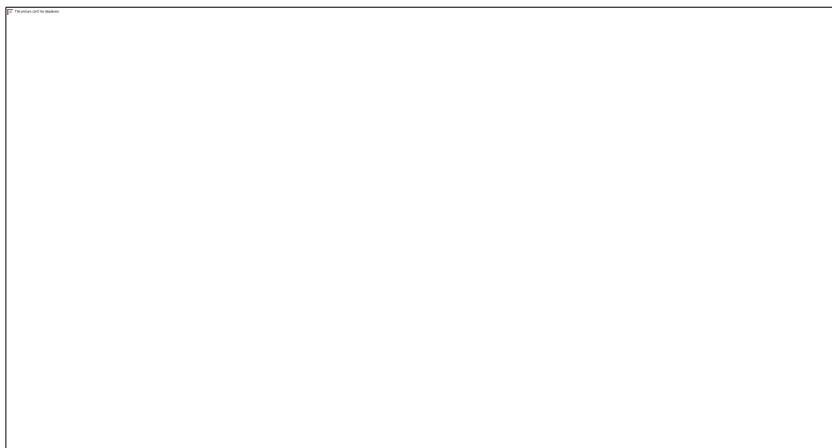
Bodenstedt also wrote about Tbilisi's elite society, its images and events: "Russian functionaries and officers are in central positions in Tbilisi and were surrounded by rich Georgian and Armenian families (Eristaf, Tumanov, Chavchavadze, Karganov, Andronikov, Orbelian, etc) ... Daniel, Sultan of Jelussui (now "Ilisu" in Azerbaijan-H.I.), was dancing lazginka with the princess Orbelian in the big Sardar Palace. All women were looking on and deriving pleasure from his beautiful posture and pleasing movements. Notwithstanding the hatred that faithful Muslims felt, this dance was worth of his country and his crown. Later, I heard that his fellows killed Russians and expelled him. Daniel went under the patronage of Shamil, and since that time became his first regent." Let me add to the words of Bodenstedt: The name of Daniel was frequently mentioned in a letter of Vorontsov to Ermolov, and it was stated in that letter that Daniel's daughter was engaged to Shamil's son.

Bodenstedt also reflected upon his observations of the lives of Russians and Europeans as well as of local people living in Tbilisi and in the Caucasus as a whole. He remembered a remark made by a Russian officer serving in Gagra city about war and dangerous life in the Caucasus, and especially about the inhospitable shores of Abkhazia:

"Siberia is much nicer than here. There you can make a living without fear of death, and you don't have to worry about any danger except natural death. Here, the sun rises over the shores of the Black Sea and brings with its death and corruption; if Destiny takes pity on us and we remain alive, we end up missing an arm or leg..."

Bodenstedt's praise is, mixed with some irony when he comments on the Russian soldier: "Russian soldiers can learn quickly, and they work like slaves to do whatever you tell them..." He also states the Russian officer's reply to a German officer who participated in the Russian-Turkish war and who was convinced that it is impossible to move forward and meaningless to attack: "What do you mean, not possible?! The emperor gave an order!"

Bodenstedt divided the doctors working in Tbilisi into two groups: Germans, whom he supposed to be extraordinarily conscientious (which he at the same time considered to be their largest drawback), and allegedly cunning and irresponsible Russians and Poles. Without any reference to the source of his information, he classified nations residing in Tbilisi into groups, and this according to the degree of cunning that he claims to perceive in them. According to him, the Greeks are the craftiest, slightly craftier than the Jews (Tatars were not mentioned for some reason, maybe he did not see them as being crafty?). In Bodenstedt's enumeration, two Jews are equal to one Russian, two Russians to one Persian, two Persians to one Armenian, and two Armenians to one Greek.



Temple Derbis in Pitzunda

The temple built under Emperor Justinian, shortly after the introduction of Christianity into Abkhazia

Bodenstedt made an attempt to account for the issue of migration and its aftereffects which was caused by the wars to conquer the Caucasus. He for examples states that “after Paskevitch conquered Achalzich, the majority of the wealthy Turks went to Anatolia, and many Armenians in Turkey moved to the Caucasus (the ones who wanted to be subjects of Russia) and filled more spaces than that the Turks left empty.” He also observes that “Greek and Turkish ships carry slaves between Cherkessia and Turkey; they trade slaves”.

Bodenstedt, who had traveled to Georgia and lived in Tbilisi, was obviously very familiar with the life of Georgians and openly expressed his thoughts:

“Georgians don’t have European-style cleanliness (“with some exceptions” - this is implied in some of his own words – H.I.). In street sports and games, including tightrope walking, it seems that Georgians forget their inborn laziness, and they participate enthusiastically. Georgian dances look like Greek dances; they sing as they dance... They don’t want baby girls to be born, especially not for the first baby and not in a row (the same was true for other Caucasians – H.I.) ... People of Imereti live for the moment like most Eastern peoples; they don’t worry about the future. There is almost no theft or robbery here. They are peaceful at home and brave in a battle... The Georgian people are made up of thavads (lords), aznavurs (nobles), vadshars (merchants), mtshaxurs (bond-servants), olexis (masses), and monas (slaves) ...”

In his first book, Bodenstedt paid particular attention to the life and struggle of nations living on foothills of the Greater Caucasus mountains, especially in the

northern part of it. "Tausend und ein Tag im Orient" is no exception in this matter. Yet, most of the information provided here was written as if it was not based on first-hand observation but rather on hearsay. Here are some fragments from the writings about Derbend and about Kaytakh or Kara-Kaytakh to its northwest: "In this wild region of the Caucasus they have not read Werther yet; their love is not as sentimental as ours. Asians don't sacrifice themselves for love; they just kill whomever hinders them." In this context, I would like to point out that the stereotypes of Eastern romanticism and Western rationality are deeply ingrained in both the East and the West. Here, Bodenstedt promotes a different concept and allegedly seems to back it up well. Bodenstedt also wrote about "intrigues upon intrigues, betrayals upon betrayals, weddings and more weddings..., blood feuds ..., marriage processes" that he claims were typical for this region.

On Women

Women are among the favorite topics of Bodenstedt – in general as well as related to the Caucasus. He wrote a special work on Shakespeare's female characters (1874). Heart-to-heart talks with Mirza Shafi about women and love and about the latter's amorous adventures play an important role in Bodenstedt's book. It is very difficult to determine which of the related adventures are real, which are invented. In the following, I am not going to discuss the love stories of Mirza Shafi. It is his thoughts on women that are very interesting.

Bodenstedt, who had just come back from a trip to Yerevan, narrated the following to Mirza Shafi: "In Armenia, I passed through dirty villages; there the Armenian women's hands were really dirty. It's good that they don't have the tradition of kissing ladies' hands in this country." M. Shafi answered in a proper manner by highlighting the dignity of women: "Shame on the men whose wives have dirty hands. Teach a woman that men kiss her hands, then she will always keep her hands clean. If you kiss her feet, then she would keep her feet clean".

Mirza Shafi talks about the wisdom and strength of woman. By drawing a remarkable comparison, he puts forward the idea that women deserve the highest love. He compares it to the singing of an anthem: "Sunnis consider the Sultan to be God's shadow on earth, while Shias feel the same way about the Shah. Actually, it's women who are God's essence on earth".

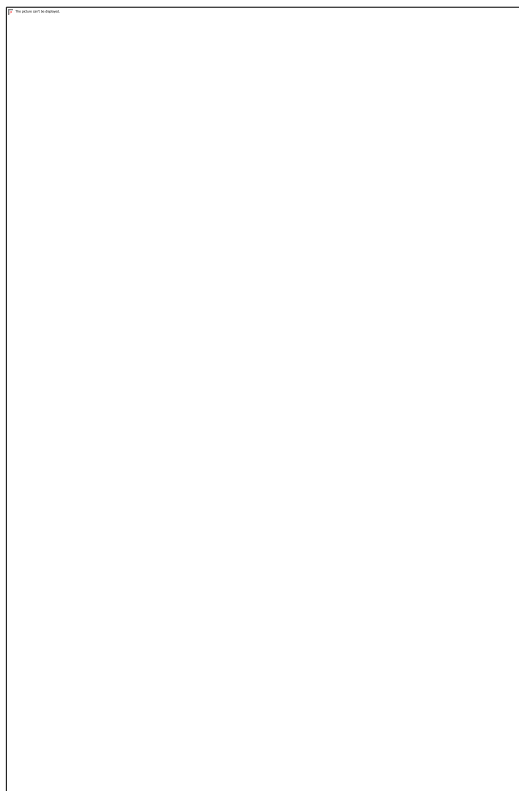
The thoughts of Bodenstedt on women's beauty are fairly few. Bodenstedt considered the women of Novochoerkassk to be the most beautiful women in Russia ("good wine and good women" ..., "there aren't women like that in any city of Russia"). When it comes to Georgian girls and women, he states different ideas and uses various expressions, and he claims that "Georgian girls are beautiful, but they

get uglier as they get older”. Emphasizing the difference between the women he encountered in David church and on the marketplace, he considered the women in the church to be beautiful throughout, but he also remarked that in the marketplace, Georgian and Armenian girls expressed their dislike of the women in the church. Women without children come to pray for children in the David church. Mirza Shafi comments on this scene: “I’m amazed that David can still gather so many beautiful women together even after his death. Is it possible to see so many naked and beautiful women’s legs anywhere else in the world?”

Bodenstedt talks about meeting with a girl that belonged to the Georgian elite in Gori, a Russian garrison, and he reflects on images of Georgian

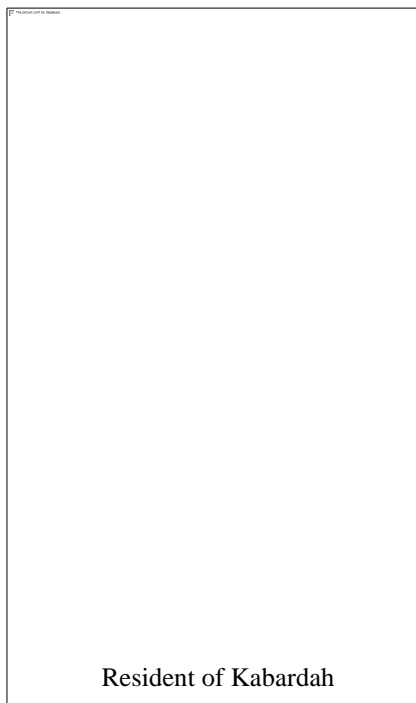
women that were common to Europeans: “I met Martha Eristaff, the young princess with an attractive face and thick hair, who was the main talking point in Georgia. In Europe, they imagine Georgian women as tall, thin creatures with attractive figures, long hair, broad noble foreheads, and mysterious black eyes. It is as if they bring joy and delight with them when they come, and they leave behind longing and fascination when they walk away. Most people who come here from Europe are disappointed; some of them see everything as quite the opposite (and ugly). The truth is somewhere between these two. Georgians, as a whole, are one of the most beautiful races in the world. But I prefer the Georgian men. I still haven’t been smitten by a Georgian woman’s face (when they cover their heads, their narrow foreheads can’t be seen, and they don’t look good). But Georgian women have charm. Their noses are very long.” He continues by stating that “the girls lift their veils so skillfully that onlookers can see them” (as is the case in modern Iran - H.I.).

Bodenstedt paid special attention to the issue of women in his book “Aus Ost und West” ([19]), and he entered into a polemic debate with the great Azerbaijani thinker and writer Mirza Fatali Akhundov (1812-1878). He took seriously the view



Eastern Woman

Akhundov had on female and male relations in Paris and the East and which was voiced half-jestingly, half-seriously in one of his comedies. Trying to answer him, Bodenstedt came to an interesting conclusion: “Famous Tatar comedy poet M.F. Akhundov said freely through the words of his character (Hatamkhan agha from “Monsieur Jordan and Dervish Mastali Shah” – H.I.): “Our polygamy is not left



behind by French polyandry in any way. Polygamy means that one wife is not enough for a man; polyandry means that one man is not enough for a woman. The first tradition is popular here (in the Muslim East – H.I.); the second in Paris. There is a truth to this that is impossible to deny (even outside the city of Paris). But it is also possible to add, that for us polyandry is impermissible, illegal and punishable. Its opposite is based on Eastern religion and traditions and for this reason it continues to have destructive results, because it fears no law and it goes unpunished. But that doesn't mean that women in the East wouldn't like to engage in polyandry! They have the desire and a high level of talent – the only thing missing for them is opportunity! Even if there were an offer, it would be hard to take advantage of it.”

On Material Culture

While travelling the Caucasus, Bodenstedt described natural scenery, different seasons, monuments of material culture, agrarian and agricultural work, daily life and the welfare of people. He refers to Marie-Felicite Brosset (1802-1880) and the Swiss French archaeologist and ethnographer Frédéric Dubois de Montpéroux (1798-1850) to specify his descriptions and the geographical terminologies used in his book. Brosset, who was mostly engaged in creative activities in Russia, travelled to the Caucasus in 1847-1848 and compiled a Georgian history ([28]) in seven volumes (1849-1858). Frédéric Dubois de Montpéroux had been to the Caucasus and the Crimea in 1831-1834 and he afterwards wrote a valuable work in six volumes on this topic ([29]), which was published in 1839-1949. He enriched it with visual tools, maps, schemes and pictures, gave images and descriptions of numerous monuments (including those that did not survive into the modern age). In this context, the personal observations of Bodenstedt are also of a great interest.

Bodenstedt gives descriptions of houses everywhere in the Caucasus and does not refrain from going into detail. In general, his book “Tausend und ein Tag im Orient” is a rich source of interesting ethnographic information. He classifies and describes houses in Tbilisi as “large and modern Russian houses built by the government, comfortable Armenian houses, and crude, half-finished Georgian, Persian and Tatar houses.” He wrote on the famous Tatar assembly (which includes the mosque) and the former Sardar Palace in Yerevan, situated at the highest point of the city. He was particularly impressed by the latter building: “There were paintings depicting the Shah and his subjects, mythological scenes, Catherine II and her son, and the later emperor Pavel. Inside there were eye-catching fountains and beautifully decorated glass.”

Bodenstedt describes a number of castles, mosques and churches as well as simple houses, and he also made observations on the architecture of Akhale-Tsikhe: “Turks called it Akhiska Fortress, while Georgians called it Akhale-Tsikhe (new fortress); it is a mixture of Georgian and Turkish architecture, and Turks added some adornments to it.” Bodenstedt evaluates the surroundings of Kutaisi in terms of its agrarian culture: pleasant weather, good water, fertile soil, but weak agriculture and a poor population. He gives detailed information about farming methods, fruits, berries, and animal husbandry, and this alongside of elaborate descriptions of buildings in Akhalkalaki: “Similar to other Georgian areas, houses in Akhalkalaki are windowless, flat-roofed, with a hole in the roof for light.”

Bodenstedt makes a particular point of the fact that, according to his observations, European visions of Eastern luxury misrepresented the realities of the Caucasus. He mentions that he saw only very few really valuable objects in the houses: “I didn’t see what is referred to as “Oriental luxury” in books and travelogues about Persians, Tatars and Georgians. They live in their houses like in stables. The houses of the richest people don’t compare to middle-class houses in Europe. There are only three valuable things in their houses: carpets, weapons, and clothing.” Bodenstedt also notes that “there are no coffee houses in Tbilisi like in Istanbul and Izmir”.

On Beverages - Wine

While traveling from Russia to the Caucasus, Bodenstedt was interested in everything he saw languages, women, architecture, music, lifestyle, but also wine. From his observations of the steppes in the South of Russia he draws the following conclusion: Don Cossacs get drunk, they are lazy, their wives work. Novocherkassk is a land of good women and wine.

Bodenstedt writes that in the very first days when he crossed the Caucasus Mountains and moved toward Tbilisi, he felt as he was in the fairy land of One Thousand and

One Nights, being a guest at wine and music assemblies and surrounded by beautiful nature and interesting people: “Kakhet wine, dark red as blood, doesn’t give headaches”. About Mirza Shafi he writes: “When he wanted me to write (at his dictation – H.I.) a poem or anything he wishes, at first, he used to drink of Kakhet wine slowly, sink in thoughts after drawing smoke from a pipe filled with fine tobacco. Then, he used to read a poem.”

Bodenstedt comes to the conclusion that Christians in Russia and the Caucasus consume too much alcohol: “They drink more than a camel drinks water.” He observes that “Christians in the Caucasus say ‘he drinks water like wine’, while we say it vice versa.” He asks his mentor Mirza Shafi who knew the taste and limits of wine: Why is it that if drinking brings wisdom Georgians and Russians are not wise? (It is worthwhile noting that in a Soviet translation into Azerbaijani in 1961, it was translated as “people living here” instead of “Georgians and Russians” [18]). As always, Mirza Shafi’s answer was unique: Russians are not so stupid – if they were, they would not be able to subdue and rule over so many nations. Then again, when it comes to Georgians, there is a poem about wine and smart people drinking wine (you have to have a knack for drinking wine - H.I.).

One of the most interesting passages in the memoirs of Bodenstedt is the one about Abbasgulu khan (the son of the last khan of Baku and a prominent Azerbaijani polymath - poet, philologist, historian, theologist and philosopher; his full name was Abbasgulu Agha Bakikhanov) who was visiting Mirza Shafi at his Divani-hikmat. From this meeting, Bodenstedt remembers the battle of poems (the participants were reciting poems to each other) between Abbasgulu khan, who was “one of the prominent people for his knowledge and erudition, had a passion for the Russian country, knew Russian well, wrote about the history of Dagestan (actually, the Eastern part of the Caucasus, otherwise the history of the Eastern parts of the Caucasian Azerbaijan – H.I.)”, and Mirza Shafi. Bodenstedt also refers to their citations from the Quran, their recitation of poems by Saadi, Hafiz and Fuzuli, and finally, to the conversation between himself and Abbasgulu khan. After Abbasgulu khan’s leave, Bodenstedt asks Mirza Shafi: “Why didn’t you drink in front of Khan?” The answer of Mirza Shafi was simple: “Abbasgulu khan is a religious man, he is older and more powerful than me, he is a big man; I had to respect the guest, thus I didn’t drink.”

On a Comparison of Europe and the Caucasus

As we can see from the above, Bodenstedt draws comparisons with Europe when writing about the lifestyle of the Caucasians, and he in particular comments on matters like Georgian and Dagestanian love and marriage customs and ceremonies (since nobody read Wherter, no Wherteresque concept of love existed in the

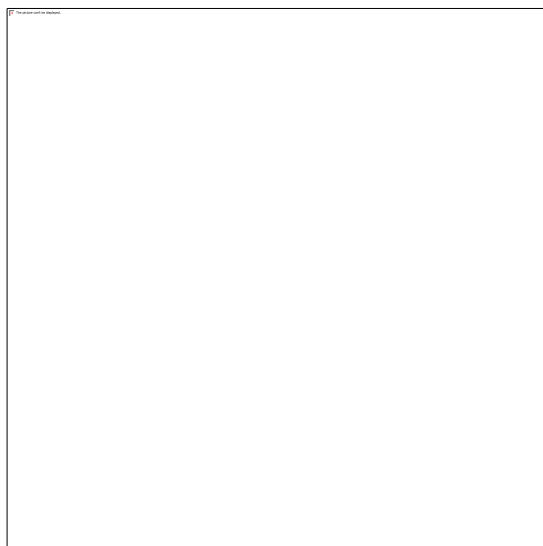
Caucasus). In his book, we also discover polemics about women, agrarian culture, welfare, luxury and wine. Despite his distinct interest in the Caucasus, Caucasian history and culture, Bodenstedt was purely eurocentric. In his writings, he maintained that the East is backward and expressed this thought in various ways. During his next journey to Tbilisi, where he came across a gymnasium, he remarks: "This gymnasium reminds us of Europeans among troglodytes." In the tradition of European orientalist of the 19th century, Bodenstedt did not refrain from using bold expressions. He also claims that, compared to Europe, Russia is far behind, and this despite its culture and the positive and negative effects of Russians in the Caucasus that he takes notes of.

He analyzed and criticized what the East had selected and imported from Western culture (including Russia). "What have Georgians learned from Russians, whose own civilisation is not so well-known?! Not much, the clothing which is not inherent to the country, forks and knives usage instead of fingers, sitting on chairs, etc. Despite the schools that Russians have opened, it would take a whole century before Georgians actually begin to participate in real culture. Nations on the lower levels of civilization are like children; they learn everything from the nation ruling over them, whether it is necessary or not."

On the verge of returning to his homeland (Germany) from the Caucasus, Bodenstedt observed the ceremonial welcome of the governor of the Caucasus (Mikhail Vorontsov) in Tbilisi. Assigned on 27th December 1844, the new governor

("namestnik") of the Caucasus came to Tbilisi on 25th March 1845; Bodenstedt left Tiflis in April of 1845. Bodenstedt depicted this welcome ceremony as flamboyant and unprecedented in Europe: "Some fountains had been filled with the blood-red wine, the town was covered with light and fire... Bengal fireworks, the environs were like a sea of flames, it looked as if a volcano was erupting on the surrounding mountains".

Altogether, Bodenstedt contributed to a cultural transfer that went both ways. He did not only distribute information about the East in the West (in written form, beginning from 1848, and during the rest of his



Memorial to Friedrich von Bodenstedt in
Wiesbaden by sculptor Hugo Berwald

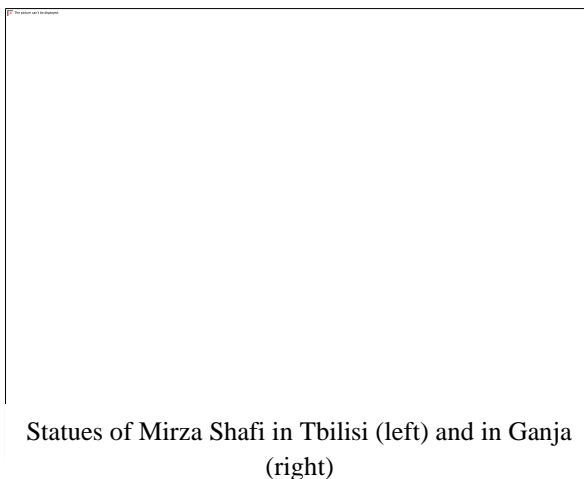
life). He also told his Eastern friends about Western culture and attempted to help them understand the history, literature, education, religion, and everyday issues of the West.

Conclusion

The Caucasus is one of the richest and most colorful and diverse regions of the world, and this due to its nature, languages and religions. In the course of their history, the Caucasian nations were in continual cultural contact and exchange with the surrounding Persian, Turkic and Russian people – in ancient times with the Assyrians, Greeks and Romans, later with the Arabs. At the time when Europe became a world power, Caucasian interest for Europe increased, as did European interest for the Caucasus. After the Russian conquest and a long Russian dominance in the Caucasus, the collapse of the Soviet Union resulted in the formation of three independent states in Southern Caucasus. Both of these geopolitical events were turning points in the political, economic and cultural development of the Caucasus. Unexpected encounters and cultural exchanges created new patterns and left traces in the colorful life of the Caucasus.

Members of the military, diplomats, missionaries, businessmen, scientists and people of art, teachers, travelers with different professions and areas of interests came to the Caucasus and wrote substantial memoirs about the region and their experiences and observations. They thus contributed valuable information to the historiography of the Caucasus that, in many cases, can hardly be found in other sources. A 24-year-old German, the admirer of literature Friedrich Bodenstedt, was among them. He came to Tbilisi in the autumn of 1843, lived there until April of 1845, learned Azerbaijani Turkic (the “Tatar” language) as well as Persian from Mirza Shafi, himself a poet, educator and calligrapher from Ganja. Bodenstedt furthermore traveled to many regions of the Caucasus.

After his return to Germany, Bodenstedt immediately began to work creatively, and he received considerable attention with his book “Die Lieder des Mirza Shaffy” (Songs of Mirza Shafi) that he published in 1851. Mirza Shafi, the book, and Bodenstedt as its translator – all three became famous. Later, the idea emerged that “the real author of this book” might be Bodenstedt himself,



Statues of Mirza Shafi in Tbilisi (left) and in Ganja (right)

and this idea complicated matters and led to controversies and disputes about authorship and identity.

Probably the most important legacy of Bodenstedt are his interesting historical, ethnographic and literary works that he wrote on the theme of the Caucasus. His first book, written in 1848 (*“Die Völker des Kaukasus und ihre Freiheitskämpfe gegen die Russen”* – The People of the Caucasus and their Struggle Against the Russians) and the second book, written in 1850 – (*“Tausend und ein Tag im Orient”* – Thousand and One Days in the Orient) can be considered to be immense contributions to Caucasian studies. The Caucasus remained his favorite topic in later years, and he published several further works on the region.

As Bodenstedt had not been drawn into research as an expert on Caucasian studies, it is of paramount importance to systematize and analyze the information which he provided on the Caucasus, and this applies especially to his personal observations. He was sometimes critical of information he gained, yet he occasionally also just repeated it. This becomes obvious particularly in episodes where he lacked personal experience. He compared the “Land of Morning” (as he called the East), most notably the Caucasus, to the “Land of Evening” (which alluded to Europe). Notwithstanding the fact that both regions were involved in a bilateral cultural transfer (which mostly introduced the East to the West), Bodenstedt ultimately represented a Eurocentric position.

He reflected on European stereotypes about the East and on Eastern stereotypes about Europe (even though he himself was not entirely free of these stereotypes). Based on his observations, he came up with conclusions about the existence of phenomena among the Caucasians such as, on the one hand, a tradition of wisdom and tolerance (Mirza Shafi and others) and, on the other hand, the dominance of “intrigues, betrayals in ... the wild regions of the Caucasus”.

There can be no doubt that the works of Bodenstedt are very valuable sources for studying history. They present the ethnic and cultural colorfulness of the Caucasus; its geography, languages, literature and music; its material culture, customs, lifestyle and welfare; its myths and religions; its women and wine; but also, its wars, the topic of migration and other many other issues.

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Friedrich Bodenstedt und Mirza Schaffy.

Signature: inscribed (underneath: Friedrich Bodenstedt and Mirza Schaffy, after a sketch by F. Bodenstedt.). Image rights: Collection of theatrical history and Hebbel collection Museums Schleswig - Holstein & Hamburg.

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Summary

Friedrich Bodenstedt on the Ethnic and Cultural Diversity of the Caucasus

Hamlet Isaxanli

Khazar University, Baku, Azerbaijan

Caucasus, one of the most multiethnic, multicultural, and multilingual regions of the world, has been influenced by different cultures and has, in turn, affected distinct cultures. People from different cultural backgrounds came to live in the region. Their experiences and observations played an important role in these cultural transfers.

Friedrich Bodenstedt, a young German philologist arrived in Tbilisi in the autumn of 1843 and left again in April of 1845. Bodenstedt wrote a number of works on the Caucasus, and he made interesting observations in the fields of history, literature, languages, music, lifestyles and traditions, women, and material culture of the Caucasus.

This article aims to draw attention to the remarks made by Bodenstedt on the Caucasus and to retrace the explorational journey that he took through the region.

Keywords: Caucasus, Friedrich Bodenstedt, Mirza Shafi, Cultural diversity, Caucasian languages, Caucasian literature, Caucasian women.