

theoretical and empirical material, should ensure that it is of interest to both IR scholars and area specialists, and it may be read with profit by advanced undergraduate and postgraduate students.

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**Mamed Emin Rasulzade. *On foreign shores. 1922-1943***, by Aydin Balaev. Moscow: MASKA, 2013; 264pp.; ISBN 978-5-91146-875-0

Political emigration has become a topic of increasing attention in Azerbaijan, and the number of works devoted to the lives of Azerbaijani leaders living in exile has increased. This is not the first time that Aydin Balaev, one of the most productive historians of our time, has addressed the colourful and outstanding life of Mamed Emin Rasulzade. Balaev is the author of such unique works as *The Azerbaijan Turks*, *The Azerbaijani Nation*, *The Azerbaijani Democratic Republic*, *The events of March 1918 in Azerbaijan* and others. The current volume is a continuation of the 2009 monograph *Mamed Emin Rasulzade. 1884-1955*, dedicated to the 130<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Rasulzade, and as such is new in its problems, discourse and theoretical orientation.

Based on a comprehensive and rigorous study of Rasulzade's own works, his correspondence with A. Topchibashi and archival materials from Russia, France, Turkey and Poland, Balaev provides a rich overview of the whole period of Rasulzade's activities in exile based on previously unsurveyed materials. In particular Balaev draws attention to Rasulzade's role in the formation of the first organizational structures of Azerbaijani political emigration 1922-1924. Rasulzade played a seminal role in the struggle for unity among Azerbaijani exiles, and in the creation of the National Centre of Azerbaijan in 1927. Of further particular interest to Balaev is the European period of Rasulzade's activities in exile, after his deportation from Turkey in 1931, and his position during the Second World War. Unlike the experience of Georgian political exiles, the government of the Azerbaijani Democratic Republic was never re-created in exile, having suffered serious losses in its struggles with Bolshevik and Dashnak adversaries.

Rasulzade remained committed to the need for the independent existence and development of Azerbaijan and the whole Caucasus. His status as the leader of Azerbaijanis in exile grew after the death of A.M. Topchibashi, father of Azerbaijani diplomacy and one of the founders of Azerbaijani statehood, on November 1934 in Paris. Balaev shows how Rasulzade consistently advocated for European recognition of Azerbaijan, and that he was an advocate of the development of relations with all countries without regard for religious differences. This book sheds new and interesting light on the specific character of Azerbaijani political emigration.

Balaev also emphasizes how Rasulzade, in his role as founder of the Azerbaijani Democratic Republic, "was several years ahead of the founder of modern Turkey, Ataturk". He suggests that the idea of nationhood which Ataturk followed in creating the modern Turkish republic in the mid-1920s had already been formulated and implemented by Rasulzade and his supporters in Azerbaijan in 1918-1920. This is not a reproach to Azerbaijan's friend and ally Turkey, but a reflection on what could have been, but for the Bolsheviks' occupation of Azerbaijan in 1920, and the consequent eclipse of Azerbaijani statehood for 70 years.

Balaev's account gives us another valuable book to meet the challenges of our times, one more word about the wonderful and colourful personality of Mamed Rasulzade. It remains crucial to understand and defend Azerbaijan's civic maturity and identity – values that Rasulzade exemplified and always defended. All of this must be remembered and kept carefully.

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***Paroles mélodisées: récits épiques et lamentations chez les Yézidis d'Arménie***, by Estelle Amy de la Bretèque, Paris, Classiques Garnier, 2013; 230pp., tables, index, bibliography, ISBN 978-2-8124-0787-1

*Paroles mélodisées* is based on fieldwork conducted between 2005 and 2010 in the Kurdish (Kurmanji-speaking) Yezidi villages of Armenia. Written by an anthropologist, ethnomusicologist and a musician,

the book offers two contributions: one originating in its linguistic and anthropological approach, the other is its relevance to wider Caucasus studies.

Linguists and anthropologists will find here transcripts, translations (into French) and analyses of samples of what Yezidis call “*kilamê ser*” (“words about”; pl. *kilamen ser*) – a specific form of melodized speech used to express mourning at funerals, as well as in daily life. They will also be able to listen to, and view on-line, the 62 relevant documents that are presented and analysed in the book, on the site of the Société Française d’Ethnomusicologie, (SFE): [www.ethnomusicologie.fr/parolesmelodisees](http://www.ethnomusicologie.fr/parolesmelodisees)

*Kilamen ser*, although often performed with one or two *duduk*, a wind instrument, are not considered “music”. For Yezidis, music, or *stran*, (pl. *stranen*), is always linked to dance and the celebration of feelings of joy and happiness. *Stran* is played with a small oboe (a *zurna*) and a drum (*tubul*). A few *stranen* performed at weddings and other ceremonial celebrations (*Xidirnebi*) are also documented here. The opposition of *kilamê ser* to *stran*, common among all the Kurds, raises the broader issue of the relation between speech and song, and this book makes a significant contribution to this long-standing question in ethnomusicology.

But those interested in wider Caucasian studies will also find many insights as to the fate of this religious and ethnic minority in Armenia in the post-Soviet era. Their religion, Yezidism, is usually said to be syncretistic, incorporating, in the main, elements from Zoroastrianism, Christianity, Gnosticism and Islam. But Yezidis themselves prefer to say that their religion is the oldest, and the original source of all these other religions.

According to experts, of the 300-500,000 global Yezidi population today, most live in Iraq; in 2005, some 40,000 were living in Armenia (and another 20,000 in Georgia). The latter figures could be over-estimates, at least in Georgia, as waves of migration to Russia and Germany in particular have continued over the last decade. But what is certain is that the ancestors of these 60,000 Caucasian Yezidis fled originally from Anatolia to the South Caucasus in two big waves. The first happened during the Russo-Ottoman War of 1828–29; most of those in this wave settled in the 12 mono-ethnic Yezidi villages of Aparan region in Armenia, a high plateau along the road to Georgia. Many of these Yezidi migrated to neighbouring Georgia in the 1930s in search of work in industry and state enterprises.

The second wave came with the massacres of 1915–16 that victimized Armenians as well as Yezidis, considered “devil worshippers” by Muslims. Yezidis settled together with Armenians in mixed villages, mostly in two other region to the south-east: in the plain of Talin, together with Armenians from Sassoun, and in the plain of Ararat, together with Armenians from Kars, Van or Igdir. Their shared memory of persecution makes this second group feel closer to Armenians than to Muslim Kurds, who were among their persecutors in Anatolia, along with Turks. This identity tied to history and memory appears to be stronger than the language and other cultural features that they share with Muslim Kurds.

Under Soviet rule, when religion was not a relevant category, all these Yezidis were designated as Kurds, alongside Muslim Kurds already living in Armenia. But with the upsurge of Armenian nationalism in the late 1980s and early 1990s, linked to the Karabakh conflict (1988–94), the situation was reversed: the word “Kurd” became synonymous with “Muslim”. Kurdish Muslims, considered allies of the Azeris and enemies of Armenia, had to flee to Azerbaijan. Yezidi Kurds could stay, but in this anti-Muslim climate, a schism developed among them, between those who still considered themselves to be Kurds and those who wished to claim for Yezidis a separate ethnicity, calling their language not Kurmanji but *Ezdîkî* – although linguistically it is the same language.

The first population census after the fall of the USSR, in 2001, emphasized the dilemma as it was only possible to tick one answer: “Kurd” or “Yezidi”. This crucial identity debate, dividing most of the community into two groups and carrying political implications, has been studied before. But de la Bretèque adds a geographical description to this divide, having stayed in villages of both groups. Although she admits that this issue is not relevant to the core of her study, as both sides perform their *kilamen ser* in the same way, the author deals with these issues in the first third of the book.

In the mono-ethnic Yezidi villages of Aparan, Kurdish is still the language of teaching in schools, along with Russian. People call themselves Kurds, listen to the pro-PKK (the party behind the Kurdish rebellion in Turkey) *Roj TV*, give shelter to PKK guerrillas and “sing” *kilamen ser* to honour imprisoned PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan. Yet, de la Bretèque reports that young people from these villages no longer join the guerrilla movement in Turkey. In the mixed Yezidi-Armenian villages of the plains of Talin and Ararat, where teaching is mostly in Armenian, the population speaks Armenian and Russian as well as “*Ezdîkî*”, and watches more Russian or Armenian television, and “sings” *kilamen ser* to the memory of soldiers who died in the Karabakh conflict, or for Armenian and Yezidi heroes who died during the battle with the Ottomans in 1918.

But this divide sometimes fades. To become the hero of a *kilamê ser*, a Yezidi man needs to have both suffered a tragic demise and a big family or social network, able to widely disseminate his *kilamê*

*ser*. Ordinary Yezidis film their funerals themselves; wealthier families now have their *kilamen ser* recorded in studios by professional musicians and distributed through MP3 or video clips sold in street markets in Yerevan, Tbilisi and Russia. This is the case with mafia leaders, for example, killed in Moscow or even in far-eastern Siberia. As for instance the famous Ceko Xidir, killed in 1996 at the age of 26 and whose imposing funeral in Yerevan gathered thousands of people. This accelerates the elevation of melodized speech out of its local context, and inscription into regional political and cultural processes, concludes the study.

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