



ĀḲŪNDZĀDA

ĀḲŪNDZĀDA (in Soviet usage, AKHUNDOV), MĪRZĀ FATH-‘ALĪ (1812-78), Azerbaijani playwright and propagator of alphabet reform; also, one of the earliest and most outspoken atheists to appear in the Islamic world. According to his own autobiographical account (first published in *Kaškūl*, Baku, 1887, nos. 43-45, and reprinted in M. F. Akhundov, *Alefbā-ye jadīd va maktūbāt*, ed. H. Moḥammadzāda and Ḥ. Ārāsli, Baku, 1963, pp. 349-55), ĀḲūndzāda was born in 1812 (other documents give 1811 and 1814) in the town of Nūḳa, in the part of Azerbaijan that was annexed by Russia in 1828. His father, Mīrzā Moḥammad-Taqī, had been *kadkodā* of Kāmena, a small town about fifty kilometers to the west of Tabrīz, but he later turned to trade and, crossing the Aras river, settled in Nūḳa, where in 1811 he took a second wife. One year later, she gave birth to Mīrzā Fath-‘Alī. ĀḲūndzāda’s mother was descended from an African who had been in the service of Nāder Shah, and consciousness of this African element in his ancestry served to give ĀḲūndzāda a feeling of affinity with his great Russian contemporary, Pushkin.

In 1814, ĀḲūndzāda accompanied his parents to Kāmena, but friction between Mīrzā Moḥammad-Taqī’s first and second wives caused ĀḲūndzāda’s mother to leave the family home, taking her son with her to the house of her uncle, ĀḲūnd Ḥājjī ‘Askar, in Horand. ĀḲūndzāda now became in effect the adopted son of ĀḲūnd Ḥājjī ‘Askar, who supervised his early education, first in various towns of the Qarājadāg region, and then in Ganja and Nūḳa. His education began in traditional fashion with memorization of the Qur’ān and the study of *feqh*, as well as Arabic and Persian grammar, and he showed such talent that



his guardian began to hope he would become a *mollā*. He was deflected from this career by an encounter in Ganja with the celebrated Azarbaijani poet, Mīrzā Šafī' Wāžeḥ, who not only taught him calligraphy but also dissuaded him from pursuing his religious studies and introduced him instead to modern learning. His new interests were opposed by his uncle, who removed him from Ganja to Nūka, but nonetheless consented to his enrolling there in the newly-opened Russian school. Soon after, he moved to Tiflis, accompanied by his uncle, where he continued studying Russian privately and swiftly gained such competence in the language that in November 1834 he was appointed apprentice translator in the office of the Russian viceroy of the Caucasus.

With the exception of a mission to Tehran in 1848 and a journey to Istanbul in 1863, as well as several trips on official business within the Caucasus, Ākūndzāda was to spend the rest of his life in Tiflis. His subsequent intellectual development was determined by the various contacts he made in that cosmopolitan city. In the mid-nineteenth century, Tiflis was not only the seat of the viceroy of the Caucasus, but also a lively cultural center, with its own theater, schools and academies, and printing houses that published works in Russian, Armenian and Georgian. Among Ākūndzāda's acquaintances in Tiflis were the Georgian litterateurs Aleksandr Chavchavadze, Grigoriy Orbeliani, and Georgiy Tsereteli (see D. Alieva, *Iz istorii azerbaïdzhansko-gruzinskikh literaturnykh svyazeï*, Baku, 1958, pp. 84-85). In 1836, he began teaching Azeri Turkish at the Tiflis *gimnaziya*, the director of which was the Armenian writer and publicist, Khachatur Abovian. Abovian's views on the need for a simplification of the Armenian literary language and the cultural as well as political subordination of the Caucasian peoples to Russia exercised a strong influence on Ākūndzāda. Following Abovian's example, he strove to create a new literary idiom in Azeri Turkish with his celebrated comedies written in the simple language of everyday speech, and like him he unreservedly espoused imitation by the subject peoples of the more vital and advanced culture of Russia.

Ākūndzāda's chief Russian acquaintance during his early years in Tiflis was the Dekabrist exile, A. A. Bestuzhev (Marlinskiï), who taught him Russian literature in exchange for lessons in Azeri Turkish. Through the instruction of Bestuzhev, Ākūndzāda conceived a particular admiration for Pushkin, and when the poet was killed in a duel in January, 1837, he composed an elegy in Persian that was his first published work—*Poema-ye šarq dar wafāt-e Pūškīn*. Ākūndzāda prepared a Russian prose translation of his poem, and his friend



Bestuzhev a versified one, which through the good offices of I. I. Klement'ev, a Russian writer living in Tiflis, was published in the journal *Moskovskii Nablyudatel'*, with an editorial note welcoming the poem as a tribute not merely to Pushkin but to Russian culture as a whole.

Ākūndzāda's loyalty was, indeed, not only to Russian culture, but also to the Russian state. He had, it is true, contacts with Bestuzhev and other Dekabrist, and translated parts of Chernyshevskii's celebrated *Chto Delat'?* into Azeri Turkish, but he appears to have taken no active interest in Russian revolutionary politics. He not only served faithfully as translator in the viceroy's office until his death, but also acquired military rank in 1864, and was promoted to colonel in 1873. His loyal concern with the destinies of Russia is strikingly expressed in a Persian poem written in 1854 in which he celebrates the feats of Russian arms during the Crimean War. His reformist energies were devoted entirely to the assimilation of Western, primarily Russian, culture by his countrymen in the Caucasus, and to the extirpation of traditional beliefs in the Islamic world beyond, particularly Iran.

His first and in many ways most important effort in this direction came with the composition in Azeri Turkish of six satirical comedies, written between 1850 and 1855. In a number of letters to close friends, as well as his preface to the plays, Ākūndzāda made it clear that his purpose as a playwright was social and didactic: Through exposing corrupt, ignorant, and superstitious figures to ridicule on the stage, he hoped that his audience would draw the obvious conclusions and gradually acquire what he regarded as a progressive and enlightened outlook. Each comedy has a number of easily identifiable villains, contrasted with one or more positive figures; their conflicts represent the clash of backwardness and progress personified. The technique and structure of the comedies is of course derived from European models; Ākūndzāda is known to have been acquainted with the plays of Griboyedov and Gogol, as well as those of Shakespeare and Molière in Russian translation. But he successfully applied the methods he had borrowed to the creation of vivid and original characters drawn from the local milieu, and he may be regarded as not only the first but also one of the most successful playwrights of the Islamic world in the nineteenth century.

Ākūndzāda's first play was *Hekāyat-e Mollā Ebrāhīm Kalīl kīmīāgar*, ridiculing not only the practice of alchemy but also the credulity and ignorance of those who allowed themselves to be exploited by the alchemist. Secondary targets of satire are a dervish and a *mollā*, and Ākūndzāda makes it plain in this play



that he regards religion as equivalent to superstition. Struggling in isolation against these three figures of darkness is a single hero, the poet Ḥājjī Nūrī, whose character may have been partially modeled on that of Mīrzā Šafī' Wāzeḥ. The second play, *Ḥekāyat-e Mosyū Žūrdān ḥakīm-e nabātāt va Darviš Mast-'Alīšāh jādūkon-e mašhūr*, is similar in content and purpose to the first. Here the target is magic and the superstitious women that have recourse to it. Personifying enlightenment and progress are Monsieur Jourdain, a French botanist impelled by scientific curiosity to travel to the Caucasus for the study of its flora, and a young nobleman, Šahbāz Bey, whose dream of going to Paris and learning French is frustrated by the joint opposition of his fiancée and his uncle. The third comedy, *Sargodašt-e wazīr-e Lankarān*, written in 1851, satirizes corrupt and tyrannical rulers, and is set in the period of the Azarbaijani khanates, on the eve of Russian rule. Mīrzā Ḥabīb, the vizier of the title, a tyrant to all outside his home, except the ruler in front of whom he abases himself, is humiliated and deceived by his own womenfolk; he is not merely odious, but despicable. In the same year, Ākūndzāda wrote his fourth play, *Ḥekāyat-e kers-e qoldorbāšān*, which is distinguished from his other dramatic works through the subordination of socio-critical themes to a romantic tale—the love of Bayrām for Parzād. The two young lovers defeat the intrigues of Parzād's villainous cousin, Tarverdī, and are united in marriage through the intervention of the *dīvānbēgī*, benevolent representative of Russian power. Ākūndzāda's next play, *Sargodašt-e mard-e kasīs*, written in 1852, is regarded by some critics as his best. Drawing on personal reminiscences of a journey to the Russo-Iranian frontier to investigate smuggling, Ākūndzāda tells of a miserly tradesman, Ḥājjī Qara, who turns to smuggling to increase his already considerable wealth, in collaboration with Ḥaydar Bey, an impoverished nobleman. The contrasting figures of honesty and good sense are Ḥājjī Qara's wife and Karam-'Alī, Ḥaydar Bey's servant. Ākūndzāda's productivity as playwright was interrupted by the Crimean War and the increased official duties it brought him, and it was not until 1855 that he wrote his sixth and last play, *Mūrafā'ā Vākillārinin Hikayāti*. Set in Tabrīz, it describes the efforts of Āgā Ḥasan to marry a rich orphan, Sakīna Kānom, and, when rebuffed by her, to cheat her of her inheritance. The main villain in the piece is not so much Āgā Ḥasan as the corrupt judges and advocates that lend themselves to his purposes.

After 1855, Ākūndzāda abandoned the drama for other genres, possibly because of the rarity of theaters in the Caucasus, especially Azarbaijan. Two of his plays were, however, performed in his lifetime: *Ḥekāyat-e kers-e*



qoldorbāṣān in Tiflis in January 1852, in Āḳūndzāda's own Russian version, revised by N. A. Sollogub, and *Sargodašt-e mard-e ḳasīs* in Baku in 1873, in Azeri Turkish, under the auspices of Ḥasan Zardābī, editor of the newspaper *Ākinji*, to which Āḳūndzāda occasionally contributed under the sobriquet of *wakīl-e mellat-e nāma'lūm*. The plays exercised, moreover, an important influence on the Azarbaijani theater in the two decades following Āḳūndzāda's death; playwrights such as 'Abd-al-Raḥīm Haqqverdiev, Solaymān Ṭānī Akhundov and Naḳaf Vazirov all wrote in imitation of him. The predominance of social criticism and satire in other genres of Azarbaijani literature in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century is also to be traced to the impact of Āḳūndzāda's example.

The renown of his plays was not restricted to the Caucasus. Certain of his plays, including *Ḥekāyat-e ḳers-e qoldorbāṣān*, were first published in Russian in the Tiflis newspaper *Kavkaz* and then, in 1853, in book form; the first Azeri Turkish edition, dedicated to Marshal Baratynskiī, did not appear until 1859. They thus achieved a certain fame in Russia, and were even noticed in Germany as early as 1852 (see the passage from *Archiv für wissenschaftliche Kunde von Russland* quoted by A. Sharif in his introduction to *Izbrannoe*, Moscow, 1956, p. 9). It was, however, the Persian translation of the plays that achieved the widest renown, eclipsing even the Azeri Turkish original. The Persian version was of great importance in the genesis of the modern Iranian theater, and furnished also the basis for a whole series of translations in western languages (for a partial list see Rypka, *Iran. Lit.*, p. 593).

Āḳūndzāda himself found the Persian translator for his plays with the help of one of his correspondents in Tehran, Jalāl-al-dīn Mīrzā. In 1870 he wrote to him asking him to find an appropriate translator, who could thus render "a great service to his people" (*Alefbā*, p. 182); the translator was found in Mīrzā Ja'far Qarājadāgī, Jalāl-al-dīn Mīrzā's secretary. He completed the task within a year, to the full satisfaction of Āḳūndzāda, as is evident from a letter dated 12 Moḥarram 1287/25 March 1871 (*ibid.*, pp. 204-10). Three plays were published separately: *Ḥekāyat-e Mollā Ebrāhīm kīmīāgar* in 1288/1871, *Ḥekāyat-e Mosyū Žūrdān* in 1289/1872, and *Ḳers-e qoldorbāṣān* in 1290/1873. In 1291/1874, the entire collection appeared under the title of *Tamṭīlāt*, together with the Persian version of Āḳūndzāda's historical novelette, *Aldanmīš kāvakib*. The book contained two prefaces, one by Qarājadāgī and the other by Āḳūndzāda. Qarājadāgī was well aware of the novelty of the genre he was presenting to the Persian reader, and he began his preface by describing the structure and



appearance of a theater. The purpose of drama, he wrote, following the example of Ākūndzāda, was the improvement of morals (*tahdīb-e aklāq*), not mere entertainment, and if fictitious characters were exposed to ridicule, this was for the sake of a lofty purpose. The vivid and immediate presentation of corrupt types in mocking fashion was more effective than homilies on vice in the abstract. The plays were intended in addition to contribute to the simplification of the language, and the reduction of the vast difference existing between its spoken and literary forms. Qarājadāgī gave, in fact, explicit instructions that certain words were to be given their colloquial, not their written value: *vardār* instead of *bardār*, *vāsa* instead of *vāseṭa*, etc. Ākūndzāda restricts himself in his preface to emphasizing again the didactic purpose of the theater, and to criticizing the dramaturgical shortcomings of the *ta'zīa*—the Shi'ite “passion play”—in which the actors read their parts instead of memorizing them (see new edition of *Tamṭīlāt*, ed. 'A. R. Ḥaydarī, Tehran, 1349 Š./1970, pp. 21-30).

Histories of the Persian theater give no indication that Ākūndzāda's plays were performed in Iran during the nineteenth century, but there can be little doubt that they were widely read and, together with other examples of simple and realistic writing, contributed to the emergence of a new prose style in Persian (see the estimate of B. Alavi, *Moderne persische Literatur*, Berlin, 1964, pp. 29-30). It is established, moreover, that the first plays written in Persian—other than *ta'zīa* scripts and early translations from Molière—were composed in conscious imitation of Ākūndzāda's work. These are the four plays long erroneously attributed to Mīrzā Malkom Khan but in fact written by Mīrzā Āqā Tabrīzī (see A. E. Ibrahimov and H. Māmmādzadā, “Mīrzā Malkom Khana Aid Hesab Ādilān Pyeslarin Āsl Müällifi Haggında,” *Nizami Ađına Ādābiyat vā Dil Institutunun Āsārlāri (Ādābiyat Seriyası)* 19, 1956, pp. 161-69; H. Algar, *Mīrzā Malkom Khān: A Study in the History of Iranian Modernism*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1973, pp. 264-77; and M. B. Mo'menī, introduction to Mīrzā Āqā Tabrīzī, *Ĉahār te'ātr*, Tabrīz, n.d., pp. vi-xxvii). In a letter accompanying a copy of the plays he sent to Ākūndzāda in Rabī II, 1288/June, 1871, Mīrzā Āqā writes that he chanced to hear Ākūndzāda's plays read in a gathering at a friend's house, and judging them to be “a means for the education of the people and for guiding them on the path of progress,” he decided to “imitate their style” (*Alefba*, p. 168). The plays of Mīrzā Āqā Tabrīzī—*Sargodašt-e Ašraf Kān*, *Hokūmat-e Zamān Kān*, *Karbalā raftan-e Šāh-qolī Kān* and *Ēšqbāzī-e Āqā-ye Hāšem Kalkālī*—are decidedly inferior to those of Ākūndzāda. Ākūndzāda wrote satire, and his imitator wrote farce. Mīrzā



Āqā Tabrīzī's plays contain numerous crude episodes and events impossible to depict on stage. He seems to have had no acquaintance with the structure of a theater, and to have conceived of the drama as another genre of written literature. Ākūndzāda read the plays with care, and sent Mīrzā Āqā Tabrīzī a frank critique, even advising him to burn *Sargodašt-e Šāh-qolī Mīrzā*, since it was “bad from start to finish.” He also thought it useful to describe the appearance of a theater, and to stress the noble and didactic function of serious playwrighting (Persian original of his critique in Akhundov, *Āsārlāri*, Baku, 1961, II, pp. 356-73; Russian translation in Akhundov, *Izbrannoe*, pp. 254-65).

Ākūndzāda's second major literary venture was undertaken in 1865. It consisted of a series of fictitious letters exchanged between two imaginary princes, in which he set out his materialist view of the world and subjected Islam to harsh and hostile criticism. To protect himself against the indignation this work was liable to arouse, he claimed that he was not its author, but merely the translator from Persian to Turkish of the correspondence of “the Indian prince, Kamāl-al-dawla, with the Persian prince, Jalāl-al-dawla,” and that his purpose in making the translation was to expose and refute their heretical views (see Ākūndzāda's letter to Mīrzā 'Abd-al-Wahhāb in *Alefbā*, pp. 88-91). In reality, the work was entirely Ākūndzāda's, and the materialist views he sets forth in it are adumbrated in correspondence with trusted friends (see, for example, his letter to the Šayḡ-al-Eslām of Tiflis dated 8 July 1876, in which he grotesquely depicts Rūmī as a fellow believer in the eternity of matter and the nullity of all teachings of an afterlife [*Āsārlāri* II, pp. 204-09]).

Ākūndzāda declares through his fictitious prince, Kamāl-al-dawla, that “The world exists of itself, according to its own laws and within itself” (*Kamāl-al-dawle Maktublarī in Āsārlāri* II, p. 65). What is not perceptible to the senses is of necessity non-existent; subtle beings such as jinn and angels are products of the imagination (*ibid.*, II, p. 73). In addition to this declaration of materialism, the letters also contain bitter criticism of Islam and its Prophet. Ākūndzāda made his own many of the objections traditional in the Western view of Islam; he criticizes, for example, the Prophet's practice of polygamy, Koranic legislation concerning women, and the institution of *ḡehād*. He pours particular scorn on the texts he had been required to study in his youth—the *Ḥaqq al-yaqīn* and *Mašā'eb al-abrār* of Moḡammad-Bāqer Maḡlesī—and makes the Šayḡī school of thought a target of venomous denunciation.



Ākūndzāda regarded himself as the heir to a hidden tradition of materialism in the Islamic world. He saw predecessors not only in Rūmī, but also in the Ismaʿīli Imam Ḥasan ʿAlā-ḍekreheʿl-salām, who allegedly imbibed materialism from Hindu sources, and all the Hellenizing philosophers. His predecessors had not dared to speak out, but now Ākūndzāda had produced, in his own estimation, “a work the like of which has not yet been written in the clarity of its proofs against Islam” (quoted in F. Gasīmzadā, *XIX Äsr Azärbayjan Ädäbiyati Tarikhi*, Baku, 1966, p. 331), and which, once disseminated, would be “more effective than an army of a hundred thousand men in shaking the foundations of Islam” (*Äsärleri* III, p. 297).

Just as Ākūndzāda arranged for the translation of his plays into Persian, so too he attempted the more delicate task of providing for the distribution of the letters of Kamāl-al-dawla, both in their Azeri Turkish original and in a Persian translation made in cooperation with the Iranian diplomat and writer, Mīrzā Yūsof Khan Mostašār-al-dawla. His intention was to have the letters published in both languages in Paris, with the help of Mīrzā Yūsof Khan; the Turkish edition was to be distributed in Turkey and Egypt, and the Persian, in Iran, Central Asia and India. The plan was never executed, and the Russian translation of the letters, made in 1874 by the Orientalist Adolf Berge, was rejected by all the publishers to whom it was sent in St. Petersburg. The fame of the letters seems to have been restricted in the lifetime of their author to those individuals, chiefly in Iran, to whom he sent handwritten copies.

Closely associated in Ākūndzāda’s mind with the dissemination of the letters was a project that occupied him for more than a decade—the reform of the Arabic alphabet in its application to Turkish and Persian. Although the arguments he advanced publicly in favor of reform were mostly linguistic in nature, his chief purpose seems to have been the expunging of a major sign of Muslim cultural identity. Writing to a trusted correspondent, Mīrzā Malkom Khan, Ākūndzāda predicted that the cause of Islam would be lost after the printing and diffusion of the letters of Kamāl-al-dawla, and that his reformed alphabet would then automatically be accepted (letter dated 2 June 1871, in *Alefba*, pp. 234-35). In 1863, Ākūndzāda wrote a treatise in which he attributed the high rate of illiteracy prevailing in Muslim countries to deficiencies in the Arabic script—the customary omission of vowel signs, the lack of signs to convey certain Turkish vowel sounds, the ambiguity of the letter *kāf* in Turkish, and the inconvenience of using dots—and set forth a number of proposals for change, including the substitution of additional strokes for dots



serving to differentiate letters of identical formation, and the invention of letters for short vowels (“Alefbā-ye jadīd,” *Alefbā*, pp. 3-39). In July of the same year, Āḳūndzāda traveled to Istanbul to present his proposals, which were considered at two meetings of the Ottoman Scientific Society under the chairmanship of Mūnif Paşa, himself the author of a similar project. Āḳūndzāda’s plans received a polite hearing, but not the immediate and unqualified support he had evidently hoped for. His plea for even partial and experimental use of the modified script was rejected. Attributing this failure to the hostility of the Iranian minister in Istanbul, Mīrzā Ḥosayn Khan, Āḳūndzāda returned to Tiflis, where he continued to propagate the cause of alphabet reform by means of correspondence with a wide variety of persons—members of the Russian administration in the Caucasus, Orientalists in St. Petersburg and Paris, and a number of prominent figures in Iran. Although no sign of official interest in alphabet reform was forthcoming from either Istanbul or Tehran, Āḳūndzāda persisted in refining his proposals, and ultimately suggested a total replacement of the Arabic script by a mixture of Roman and Cyrillic, thus anticipating the measures that were to be taken in the twentieth century in both Turkey and the Muslim lands ruled by Russia.

In all his literary activity, Āḳūndzāda showed a special interest in Iran, and he corresponded with several prominent Iranians by means of whom he hoped to influence the cultural and intellectual life of the country. Indeed, despite his loyalty to Russia and the fact that he wrote all his major works first in Azeri Turkish, not in Persian, he claimed on occasion to regard himself as an Iranian, for his father’s ancestors had been Persian, not Turkish, the family’s connection with Azarbaijan beginning only with his grandfather’s migration there from Rašt (autobiography, *Alefbā*, p. 349). This sense of Iranian identity along with his hostility to Islam produced in him a hatred for the Arabs and a nostalgia for pre-Islamic Iran that led him to exclude Zoroastrianism from his general strictures on religion. Among his correspondents in Tehran was Manak Limji Antaria, emissary to Iran of the Persian Zoroastrian Amelioration Fund of Bombay. In his letters to him, Āḳūndzāda enquired about various points of Zoroastrian teaching, urged the Zoroastrians to stand firm in the face of pressures for conversion, and expressed the hope that “our homeland will be purged of the followers of the alien faith [= Islam] and again become a rosegarden, with the justice of yore prevailing anew” (letter dated January 1876, *Alefbā*, pp. 336-38). Similar themes dominated his correspondence with Jalāl-al-dīn Mīrzā, a Qajar prince who had written a versified history of his family in “pure” Persian, i.e., emptied of all Arabic loanwords. Āḳūndzāda



congratulated him on his achievement and referred to his own efforts in alphabet reform. “Would that someone else might join us to free our people from the bondage of the disgusting customs of those Arabs who destroyed our thousand-year-old monarchy of justice and high renown” (letter dated 15 June 1870, *Alefbā*, p. 172).

Chief among Ākūndzāda’s Iranian correspondents was the Perso-Armenian diplomat, essayist, and journalist, Mīrzā Malkom Khan, whom he first met on his journey to Istanbul in 1863. They corresponded for a decade on a variety of matters of common interest, above all alphabet reform and the subversion of religion in the Islamic world. The two men differed in their choice of tactics for the attainment of these aims. While not totally averse to dissimulation, Ākūndzāda was generally explicit in his hostility to religion; Malkom, by contrast, believed in the manipulation of religious sentiment as a cover for westernization (see Ākūndzāda’s record of their discussions in Tiflis in 1872, *Alefbā*, pp. 286-95). Similar differences of outlook existed between Ākūndzāda and Mīrzā Yūsof Khan Mostašār-al-dawla. When the latter wrote his treatise *Yak kalema* asserting the compatibility of European legal concepts with the law of Islam, Ākūndzāda attacked him with some vehemence, repeating many of the objections to the *šarī’a* he had voiced in the letters of Kamāl-al-dawla (letter to Mīrzā Yūsof Khan, dated November 1875; printed in *Āsārlāri* II, pp. 308-16; Russian translation in *Izbrannoe*, pp. 266-71).

Ākūndzāda died of heart disease on 10 March 1878. Despite his atheism, he was buried in the Muslim cemetery of Tiflis, next to his first mentor in irreligion, Mīrzā Šafi’ Wāžeḥ. His influence on thought and letters in Azarbaijan was considerable, and he played some role, too, in the evolution of Iranian modernism, directly through his famous plays, and indirectly through correspondence with persons of more immediate significance in Iranian affairs.

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This edition contains not only the major works mentioned above, but also Āḳūndzāda's essays on literary and philosophical topics, as well as the occasional verse in Azeri Turkish and Persian he composed throughout his life.

There are in addition numerous editions of his separate works, above all the plays, in both Arabic and Cyrillic script.

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M. M. Kasumov, “Bor’ba M. F. Akhundova protiv religii Islama,” *Trudy Instituta Istorii i Filosofii Akademii Nauk Azerbaydzhanskoï SSR* 3, 1953, pp. 70-101.

Idem, *M. F. Akhundov i russkaya revolyutsionno-demokraticeskaya estetika XIX veka*, Baku, 1954 (draws parallels between the thought of Ākūndzāda and that of Belinskiï, Chernyshevskiï and Dobrolyubov).

Idem, “Mirovozzrenie M. F. Akhundova,” *Trudy Instituta Istorii i Filosofii Akademii Nauk Azerbaydzhanskoï SSR*, 7, 1955, pp. 70-101.

M. Rafili, *M. F. Akhundov, zhizn’ i tvorchestvo*, Baku, 1957.

A. M. Shoitov, “Rol’ M. F. Akhundova v razvitii persidskoï progressivnoï literatury,” *Kratkie Soobshcheniya Instituta Vostokovedeniya* 9, 1953, pp. 58-65.