# Historiography of life and creative work of Ya.N. Baiburtly, a notable Crimean Tatar man of letters and educator

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## Tair Kirimov

Fevzi Yakubov Crimean Engineering and Pedagogical University

Abstract. The article is devoted to a brief review of the creative heritage of Yahya-Naji Baiburtly – the prominent figure of the Crimean Tatar literature and enlightener at the beginning of the 20th century. Some little-studied biographical and bibliographic materials are introduced into scientific circulation. Most of which are pre-war literary and historiographic texts, transliterated from Arabic script to Cyrillic one. The work uses memoirs of the relatives and contemporaries of Ya.N. Baiburtly, which were published by them in the national press. As a methodological basis for the research of the topic, the author used biographical, comparative typological and metacritical analysis. The theoretical basis of the research is the works of A. Krichinsky, J. Kermenchikli, Sh. Alyadinov, I. Kerimov, D. Ursu, N. Yablonovskaya, M. Khairuddinov, E. Abibullaeva. Thus, an overview of the life and literary and educational activities of Ya.N. Baiburtly helped to more clearly outline his creative personality, to determine the prospects for the aspectual study of the biography of the figure as a writer and playwright, literary translator, public figure and educator of the designated period.

**Keywords:** Crimean Tatars, Ya.N. Bayburtly, literary and artistic heritage, educational activities, cultural awakening, national press, review of creativity, book publishing, literary translation, intercultural relations

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Despite of the outstanding achievements in the field of national education, language and literature, as well as the prize, awarded by the Imperial Russian Geographical Society in 1913, the life and creative activity of Yahya-Naji Baiburtly still remain little studied.

In the works covering the cultural life of the Crimea in the early XX century, one can find only fragmentary data about him.

Moreover, along with contemporaries, educators like U. Bodaninsky, O. Akchokrakly, U. Arbatly, J. Meinov, A. Odabash, U. Balich, J. Kermenchikli, A. Ozenbashly Ya.N. Baiburtly occupies an equally important place in the formation of both ethno-pedagogical and literary traditions.

Among the most notable publications where the name of the figure is mentioned in one way or another, one can mention the "Bibliographic index of printed books, articles and works in the Crimean Tatar language". The compiler of the index introduces readers to the bibliographic list of printed publications in the Crimean Tatar language from 1618 to 1944, gives extensive comments on the work of authors of the pre-war period. Here, we find an alphabetical list of literary-critical and educational-methodical works published by Ya.N. Baiburtly in the Crimea.

There are also works of Russian and foreign classics translated by him into the Crimean Tatar language. For example, these are "Carılğaç" /"Jarylgach"/, "Emceçigim" /"My dear uncle"/ (Zhitkov B., 1929); "Hindistannıñ keçilmez ormanlarında" /"In the impenetrable jungles of India"/ (Dmitriyev S., 1930); "Tavşan" /"Hare"/ (Perelygin, 1909); "Tarihten evvelki bala" /"The adventures of a prehistoric boy"/ (D'Ervili E., 1930). The reference edition called "Figures of the Crimean Tatar culture (1921–1944)" seems interesting as well.

Here, one can get acquainted with the main milestones of the creative work of Ya.N. Baiburtly. The list of references mentioning the cultural figure includes a newspaper article by Niyara Baiburtly, the daughter of the writer "Babam aqqında bir qaç söz" ("A few words about my father", 1990) [4; 11; 14; 18]. Others, however, sometimes overlapping factual data can be found in the works of N. Yablonovskaya, G. Yuksel, E. Abibullaeva [1; 20; 21].

Born in 1876 in the narrow streets of the ancient Crimean town of Bakhchisaray, Ya.N. Baiburtly received his primary education at a local school. After that he studied at the prestigious educational institutions of Istanbul and Odessa. Upon his return to the Crimea during 1902–1908 he consolidated the acquired knowledge of teaching at the Alupka school. Here, according to the documentary materials of the newspaper "Terjiman" ("Translator") dated March 6, 1906, together with the Crimean Tatar intellectuals A. Aivazov, A. Ibraimov founded a new school of skills for Muslim girls [15]. Later he moved to Bakhchisaray and continued to teach at the municipal school.

In 1917, Baiburtly was elected as a delegate to the First Crimean Tatar Kurultay from the Simferopol community of teachers, women and artisans. Other well-known educators are worth mentioning among the delegates from the community. For example, Kerim Jemaleddinov, representing the Simferopol school (ruşdiye) and the Department of Education; Emine Shabarova, Director of the Women's Crafts School; Ismail Nomanov, member of the Crimean Tatar

Education Department of Municipal Schools; employee of the Crimean Central Bureau of Education Abdulla Latif-zadeh [2].

Realizing the importance of education in the life of the nation, the Teacher of teachers, as Ya.N. Baiburtly was called by the people, he puts his heart and soul into his favorite work. The educator, having extensive teaching experience at the national school, produced a galaxy of talented cultural workers in the Crimea. Among them we meet the linguist, teacher Usein Kurkchi (1905–1996), the major master of Crimean Tatar imaginative writing, novelist Shamil Aladinov (1912–1996). Baiburtly, along with teaching, focuses on writing and designing textbooks for the elementary Crimean Tatar schools. During the period from 1913 to the 1930s, he published a number of textbooks and translated literary and educational publications: "Elifba" ("Primer", Bakhchisaray, 1913); "Yeñi qıraet" ("New book for reading", Simferopol, 1917, 1923); "Tatar sarfı" ("Tatar grammar", Bakhchisaray, 1918); "Sarf kitabı" ("Grammar", Simferopol, 1919) [14].

The aforementioned "Primer" ("Elifba") was reprinted several times with additions in 1913, 1916, 1926 and 1927. In this way, the author of the educational publication, analyzing the content of old textbooks, tried to avoid typical errors and omissions made by colleagues. He built educational material, focusing first on the specifics of local Crimean Tatar schools. Then, Baiburtly's alphabet had great success in national schools and was equivalent to Ismail Gasprinsky's textbook "hovacayı sübyan" ("Teacher of children").

Thoroughness and discretion in the choice of educational material could not be ignored by the Office of the Odessa educational district for the Crimean Tatar primary schools. Of great interest in this regard is the appeal of the Director of the Public Schools of the Tauride province S. Margaritov to the governor of Tauride on June 21, 1914, in which it is said, in particular, that the meeting of inspectors of public schools came to a decision to leave such subjects as part of the curriculum of Crimean Tatar schools as: "Reading the Koran", "Tejvit" (a guide to correct reading and pronunciation of *suras* from the Quran), "Ilmihal" (the science of Muslim doctrine and morality) and the Tatar alphabet in the volume of the 1<sup>st</sup> part of Gasprinsky's textbook "Hocayı sübyan" or in the volume of Baiburtly's alphabet "Elifba" [17].

The development and formation of the Crimean Tatar westernized education system, judging by this set of subjects, was slowed down both by their own clerical theological schools and by the policy of the authorities.

Covering the costs of numerous reprints of textbooks fell entirely on the author. For example, from a short note published in the government newspaper "Millet" ("Nation") for August 12, 1917, it is known that the book for reading "Yeñi qıraet" was issued on credit. We offer the original text of the ad with a translation into Russian under the heading "Yeñi qıraet kitabı" ("New book for reading"):

"Muallim Yahya Naci efendi Bayburtlı tertip ettigi qıraet kitabını bastırmaq içün Mahkemeyi şeriyesin Maarif Komissiyasına muracaat iderek, borc olaraq eki biñ beş yüz ruble yardım istedi. Mumaileyh efendinin bu ricasının bir qaç şartle isaf idilmesine qarar virildi" [12].

("The teacher Yakhya Naji effendi Baiburtly, with the aim of publishing a book he had compiled for reading, applied to the State Commission on Education to borrow two thousand five hundred rubles. The request was granted only under certain conditions..."). [The translation is ours. – T.K.].

Sometime later, in October of the same year, new announcements are being issued where readers are notified of the earliest possible release of the first part of the mentioned book, as well as the "Primer" with corrections [13]. The book could be purchased personally from the compiler.

Only a few copies of the "Primer" printed in 1927 have survived to this day. The thin cover of the book is framed by national printing ornaments and Arabic ligature, adapted for easy reading by Crimean Tatar native speakers. On the back of the cover there is information about the circulation of 8,000 copies and the place of publication – the printing house of the Art and Industry College in Bakhchisarai. In the foreword, the author presents the following textbook concept:

"This ABC book, compiled at the suggestion of the Crimean Commissariat, is based not only on personal experience. I have studied about 20 new Turkic Tatar and Russian alphabets from the funds of the Commissariat's Academic Council for education. In particular, among the alphabets of various Turkic Tatar national republics, such as Crimea, Caucasus, Kazan, Turkestan and Turkey, I was lucky to find an ABC "Qızıl yol" ("Red Way"), impeccable in terms of methodology and like-minded to us, compiled and published in Kazan by the Tatar book publishing house. Despite of the fact that the Tatars of the Volga region did not have any particular difficulties in compiling the book, in our case the work in this regard turned out to be rather difficult. Limiting themselves to using the simplest forms, they had to resort to unnecessary repetitions of words and sentences.

When preparing our alphabet, we had to experience many difficulties, primarily related to the need to use each letter in two forms of writing. Only thanks to the assistance of the commission created by the Academic Council, the alphabet took on its present form. Taking into account the proposals made during the last academic year by young and experienced teachers, local pedagogical collectives, I made all possible corrections and additions" [5]. [The translation is ours. – T.K.].

Discussing the question of the adaptation of Arabic writing to the Turkic languages, it is worth mentioning the article "Bizde elifba kitabı" ("Our alphabet") of the well-known educator in the Crimea Jemil Kermenchikli reviewing

the "Primer" by Baiburtly. This analytical material was published in the newspaper "Terjiman" ("Translator") in 1916 and continued the discussion begun by Ismail Gasprinsky in 1894 in his article "What is maktab and the new method?" [10: 16]. In it, the enlightener examines issues related to the introduction of the sound method of teaching in Crimean Tatar schools, as well as educational institutions of other Turkic-Muslim peoples of the Russian Empire. Noting that old schools do not meet educational standards in westernized society, Gasprinsky reveals four main shortcomings in their activities. First, this was the scholastic way of conducting classes in schools, where the proponents of the traditional method used the so-called syllabic teaching system, when individual letters merged into syllables, and the last ones into words. The problem was that the Arabic alphabet produced a lot of spelling difficulties. First of all, this was due to the fact that the child could not always correctly determine the phonemic series corresponding to specific letters in the Turkic words. In addition, the Turkic Alphabet also has a number of letters that do not have an equivalent in Arabic, these are the consonants "p", "g", "zh". Secondly, in maktabs (theological schools) they taught only mechanical reading of Arabic religious texts. Third, students were forced to read the complex Our'an after an elementary study of the alphabet. And, finally, there was completely no control over the level of academic performance of students [19]. Baiburtly tried to solve some of the above problems for new-method Muslim schools.

In the foreword, Ya.N. Baiburtly also describes the methodology for classical distribution of material in the training book:

"Practical writing assignments, which are customarily placed at the end of the book on the advice of teachers, have been moved to the end of each lesson as an appendix. Given the 'paucity' of the children's illustrations, some drawings were added after the respective lessons. Following the recommendations of colleagues who found that there were insufficient arithmetic lessons, I developed additional appendices and included small excerpts from poems related to the lessons and topics. Instead of large articles about winter, I placed small stories, simple poems and proverbs" [6]. [The translation is ours. – T.K.].

According to the newspaper "Terjiman" ("Translator") for 1913, the first issue of the "Primer" by Baiburtly was very thoughtful and original. The textbook consisted of 60 lessons, which were distributed on the "simple-to-complex" basis.

High qualification in Russian philology allowed Baiburtly to give lectures on Russian language and literature at teacher training courses for village teachers

His in-depth and informative scientific and journalistic articles, for example: "Tatarlarda usul-1 cedit" ("The new sound method for the Tatars") [8], "Mektepler ve halq" ("Schools and nation") [7], "Evvelki ve şimdiki gençlik" ("Young

People Today and Yesterday") [9], "Bağçasaray tatar ekinci basamaq mektebi" ("Bakhchisaray Tatar Secondary School") [6], as well as translations of works of fiction of the classics of world literature adapted to the traditional perception of the Crimean Tatar children, are still interesting from a scientific point of view. His psychological plays "Zavallı Ayşe" ("Poor Aishe") and "Yusufçıq" ("Little Yusuf") proved a great success in the theaters of Crimea. Apparently, the first dramatic work was an author's rethinking of the story "Zavallı qız" ("Poor Girl"), published in 1907 on the pages of the first Crimean Tatar children's educational magazine "Alem-i nisvan" ("World of Children"). Notable is Baiburtly's story "Eski medrese" ("Old Madrassah"), which describes the life of outdated theological educational institutions.

It is known that in 1925, as part of the Crimean delegation, Ya.N. Baiburtly took part in the First All-Union Teachers' Congress in Moscow, as evidenced by his article "Birinci Bütünşuralar Birligi hocalar syezdi" ("The First All-Union Teachers' Congress") in the magazine "Oquv işleri" ("Educational affairs") [6].

Like many representatives of the Crimean Tatar intelligentsia, Yahya Naji Baiburtly was repressed for political reasons in the 1930 s. In 1935, when he was suspected by the NKVD of promoting Pan-Turkic ideas, he was dismissed from his job. According to D.P. Ursu, Baiburtly continued to teach literacy courses in Bakhchisarai [11]. In the memoirs of his contemporaries, the writer also worked at the Women's college of obstetrics, which was located at the foot of Chufut Kale in the "Cevizlik" ("Hazel-wood") area. [3]. In 1938, at the visiting session of the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR, he was sentenced to 10 years of imprisonment in the Arkhangelsk labour camp, where he died. In 1957 he was rehabilitated.

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**About the author:** Tair N. Kirimov – Cand. Sci. (Philology), Leading Research Fellow of the Scientific Research Institute of the Crimean philology, history and culture of the Crimean ethnos, Fevzi Yakubov Crimean Engineering and Pedagogical University (295015, Uchednyy lane, 8, Simferopol, Russian Federation); tairkerimoff@gmail.com

# Историография жизни и творчества подвижника крымскотатарской литературы и просвещения Я.Н. Байбуртлы

# Таир Киримов

Крымский инженерно-педагогический университет имени Февзи Якубова

Аннотация. Статья посвящена краткому обзору жизни и творческого наследия деятеля крымскотатарской литературы и просвещения в начале XX века Яхъйи-Наджи Байбуртлы (1876–1943). В научный оборот вводятся доселе малоизученные биографические и библиографические архивные материалы. Большую часть из них составляют довоенные литературные и историографические тексты, транслитерированные нами с арабской письменности на латинскую графику. В работе также используются мемуарные воспоминания родных и современников Я.Н. Байбуртлы, которые были опубликованы ими в современной национальной печати. Например, газетная статья дочери писателя – Нияры Байбуртлы, автобиографические произведения видного крымскотатарского писателя-публициста Шамиля Алядинова помогают более подробно ознакомиться с судьбой и творческим окружением Байбуртлы. В качестве методологической основы исследования темы, автором статьи применялись биографический, сравнительно-типологический и метакритический анализ. Теоретическую базу исследования составляют труды А. Кричинского, Дж. Керменчикли, И. Керимова, Д. Урсу, Н. Яблоновской, М. Хайруддинова, Э. Абибуллаевой. Таким образом, обзор жизни и литературнопросветительской деятельности Я.Н. Байбуртлы помог более отчетливо описать его творческую личность, определить перспективы аспектного изучения биографии деятеля как писателя и драматурга, литературного переводчика, общественного деятеля и просветителя обозначенного выше периода.

**Ключевые слова:** крымские татары, Я.Н. Байбуртлы, литературно-художественное наследие, просветительская деятельность, культурное пробуждение, национальная печать, обзор творчества, книгоиздательство, литературный перевод, межкультурные связи

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Сведения об авторе: Киримов Таир Нуридинович – кандидат филологических наук, ведущий научный сотрудник Научно-исследовательского института крымскотатарского языка, литературы, истории и культуры этносов Крыма, Крымский инженерно-педагогический университет имени Февзи Якубова (295015, Учебный пер., 8, Симферополь, Российская Федерация); tairkerimoff@gmail.com