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**Medieval Sexualities, Transmission and Productive Censorship:**

**A Study of Azerbaijani Translations of the *Thousand and One Nights* during the Soviet period**

As one of the most celebrated world literatures, the *Thousand and One Nights* through its complex translational journey has exercised an undisputed influence on the storytelling practices with which medievality and beyond amused itself again and again. The prodigiously sensual text of the *Nights* is particularly renowned for its depictions of sexualities which is beyond what is perceived to be normative. As follows, while the narrative is about medieval sexual life, many of the themes and motifs addressed are astonishingly pertinent to our modern society. A close reading of the Azerbaijani translations – a relay translation published in eight volumes between the years 1973 – 1978 and based on the intermediate Russian text of 1959 “Khudojestvennaya Literatura” edition of the *Nights* translated by Mikhail Alexandrovich Salye – has revealed that the text harbors many interesting translation strategies in the transmission of sexually suggestive elements, including non – heteronormative and queer sexualities. Since the Azerbaijani translation was published during the period when homosexuality was still declared a crime in the Soviet Union makes our present observation all the more intriguing. By applying the concept of “productive censorship” which Brian James Baer defined as “artful evasion of censorship restrictions” (21) to the translated text, this study aims to focus on the transmission of “obscene” elements and erotic references with particular attention to the same – sex desire and queer sexual relationships to demonstrate how the Azerbaijani translators managed to get over the powerful censorship mechanisms actively employed by the Soviet state.