

Chapter 54: Turkish Literature

[A. Development of Turkish Prose and Poetry](#)

The earliest surviving written documents of Turkish literature date from the first/seventh century. They consist of short inscriptions in the so-called “Runic” letters in the Upper Yenisei Valley in Siberia. Lengthier documents of the same linguistic type and in the same script survive in the valley of the Orkhon in Outer Ungolia and date from the second/eighth century. These consist of inscriptions in two steles in honour of two princes of the Turkish dynasty of the Eastern Kok Turk State, and a third erected in honour of its old minister. The history of the Eastern Kok Turk is here related in a semi-legendary and artistic way. Other inscriptions in the same script, large and small, are known in Mongolia, Siberia, and Western Turkestan. Manuscripts too, belonging probably to the third/ninth century, have been found. The language of the Turkish runes is characterized by a certain archaism in its phonetics, morphology, and vocabulary.

From the second/eighth century onwards the Uygur Turks became acquainted with Manichaeism, Buddhism, and Syrian (especially Nestorian) Christianity in Northern China and East Turkestan and developed a high culture within the framework of Far Eastern civilization which lasted until the seventh/13th century. The surviving Uygur manuscript and xylographic literature is very extensive and proves a high cultural activity in the fields of religion, philosophy, and other sciences. The script used for these literary works was mainly the Uygur alphabet, derived from the Soghdian script. In addition to the Uygur alphabet, however, these Turks used, besides the ancient Turkish runes, the Manichaen, Syraic, and Brahmi runes.

The Uygur alphabet remained in use until the 12th/18th century among the Turks of China who did not adopt Islam. The conversion to Islam (from the fourth/tenth century onwards) of the Turks of Central Asia was followed by the adoption of the Arabic alphabet. However, the Uygur alphabet remained in use as the Court script. It was given a new lease of life in the Muslim territories by the Mongol conquest, and was used in the seventh/13th to the ninth/15th centuries among the Golden Horde and the Timurids for the Kipchak and Chaghata’i languages. As late as the early tenth/16th century there were still in the

Imperial Chancellery in the Istanbul scribes skilled in writing the Uygur script.

The Uygur Turkish or, to use a more suitable term, the old Turkish literary language (for the civilization that used it was wider than the geographical or historical limits of the Uygur State) shows, broadly speaking, the same dialectical peculiarities as the Kot Turkish monuments. The few dialectical divergences are obviously in the main due to the passage of time and to influence from the outside.¹

The conversion to Islam of the Turks of Central Asia began in the fourth/tenth century. Throughout history the Turks proved to be devoted Muslims and zealous defenders and promoters of Islam. Founded on the literary Uygur of the pre-Islamic period, there developed in the fifth/11th century under the Karakhanids, converts to Islam, the Muslim Turkish literary language of East Turkestan written probably from the first in the Arabic alphabet. The best known documents in this language are two didactic poems, the *Qutadhghu Bilig* (The Science of Happiness), composed by Yusuf Khas Hajib, and the *'Atabat al-Haqa'iq* (The Threshold of Facts), composed by Adib Ahmad. There is, further, a translation of the Qur'an. Besides these works there is another dating from the same century, the *Diwan-o Lughat al-Turk* of Mahmud al-Kashghari composed in Baghdad in Arabic in order to acquaint the Arabs with the Turkish world. It is a very valuable source for the investigation of the various Turkish tribes, dialects, folk literature, customs, culture, etc. of this time.²

Islam was established in the fourth/tenth century in the Bulghar kingdom of Kama also. But data are lacking to enable us to decide if there also existed any literature. In any case Bughar elements are found in the sepulchral inscriptions of the eighth/14th century in the Volga region.³

The development of literary Turkish in central Asia went on without interruption, but its centres changed from time to time.

The absence of early manuscripts prevents us from giving a definite name to the language of the *Hikmats* (theological didactic poems) of Ahmad Yasavi, the founder of Turkish mysticism, who lived in the sixth/12th century in West Turkestan.

In the seventh/13th century the various literary dialects of the Muslim Turkish world were not yet clearly differentiated from one another. The formation of the Mongol Empire, which embraced almost the whole Arabic world of the period, created for a time an atmosphere favourable to the development of uniform language for a considerable section of the Muslim Turkish peoples. At first Turkish literary activity under the Saljuqs in Asia Minor was to some degree bound up with that of Central Asia and Eastern Europe. The seventh/13th century, however, is an epoch of political agitations in Asia Minor and Eastern Europe. It is, therefore, only in the next century that literary works are mainly to be found.⁴

Literary activity on the northern shores of the Black Sea, in Khwarizm which included the mouth of the Sir Darya, in the Capital Saray, and in the Crimea attained a considerable development by the beginning of the eighth/14th century but no uniform literary language developed. The elements of the literary language of the Karakhanid period were combined with those of the local spoken dialects. In Syria,

Egypt, and Persia under Turkish or Turkicized rulers there grew an interest in Turkish. Thus, we find a series of grammar books and lexicons in Arabic from the sixth/13th century until the beginning the tenth/16th century. They all deal with the Kipchak but contain elements from other Turkish dialects in varying degrees.

The prose work *Qisas al-Anbiya'* (Stories of the Prophets), with passages in verse written by N. Rabghuzi, finished in 710/1310, although lacking aesthetic value, is of great literary importance. Another religious work in verse is the *Mu'in al-Murid* of Sheikh Sharif Khuwaja (713/1313). The very attractive romance in verse, *Khusraw wa Shirin* of the poet Qutb (742 – 743/1341 – 1342), although based on the corresponding Persian work of Nizami, has nevertheless many original passages. Khwarizimi's poem *Mahabbatnamah* (The Book of Love), composed in 754/1353, is another work of high literary merit. Seif-i Saray's translation of *Gulistan* (The Rose Garden) that appeared in 782/1380 is another prose and verse book of high literary value. The religious work *Nahj al-Faradis* (Way to the Paradise) of Mahmud b. 'Ali (716/1316) is, properly speaking, a "40-Hadith" book in simple prose with no aesthetic aims. Finally, it may be mentioned the religious prose work of *Mi'rajnamah* (Book of the Ascension) composed for didactic purposes.

Further, there are other works written in Egypt and Syria which are: a *Siyar* book composed in 784/1382, *Irshad al-Muluk w-al-Salatin* composed by Barka Faqih in 789/1387, *Kitab fi al-Fiqh bi al-Lisan al-Turki*, originating probably from the ninth/15th century, *Kitab fi 'Ilm al-Nashshab wa Kitab fi Riyadat al-Khail*, a book on the art of horsemanship translated from Arabic for soldiers in about 808/1405, *Kitab al-Da'wa*, another book on the art of horsemanship also translated from Arabic in 844/1440.⁵

We may date to the eighth/14th and ninth/15th centuries the beginning of the development of the different literary languages in different parts of the Muslim Turkish world.

The Chaghata'i language and literature which developed under the Timurids, the descendants of the second son of Chingiz Khan, represent the most brilliant phase of the development of Central Asiatic Turkish literature. Names are known of a few Turkish poets who lived to the first half of the ninth/14th century. Sakkaki was a panegyrist. Another famous poet was Lutfi. To the same period belong the panegyrist Mir Haidar Majdhub (Turkish Tilbe), Amiri, Sayyid, Ahmad Mirza, Gada'i, Yaqini, and 'Ata'i.

In the second half of the century Chaghata'i literature reached its zenith in Mir 'Ali Shir Nawa'i. In his *Diwan* (Book of Poems) as well as in his numerous other verse and prose works he does not merely imitate the Persian poets, as was the case with his predecessors, but knows how to suit the taste of his contemporaries. He has, therefore, enjoyed great popularity right down to the present day all over the Turkish world. Of importance is his *Muhakamat al-Lughatain* (The Contest of Two Languages) in which he endeavours to show that the Turkish language is no less suitable than the Persian for poetical works and intellectual purposes. He is also the first composer of Turkish collection of the biographies of poets. Nawa'i is considered to be one of the greatest personalities and intellectuals in Turkish literature. The prince and patron of Nawa'i, Sultan Hussain Baiqara, was also a poet.

The founder of the Timurid empire in India in the first half of the tenth/16th century, Babur Shah, was also the author of a number of poems, but he is most celebrated for his *Khatirat-i Babuir* (Memoirs of Babur) or *Buburnamah* (Babur Book) very vividly relating his life and expeditions as well as describing the life and topography of India. He is considered the second great personality of Chaghata'i literature.

Minor personalities of the classical period are Hamidi, Muhammad Salih, Shabani, etc.

Under the Uzbeks, who drove the Timurids out of Central Asia and eastern Persia in the second half of the tenth/16th century, Turkish poets and writers stuck to old Chaghata'i models without producing anything new or original. The historian Abu al-Ghazi Bahadur Khan in the 12th/18th century probably stands alone in endeavouring to avoid in his work Persian and Arabic as well as Chaghata'i Turkish words.

Of importance in Mirza Mehdi Khan's *Sanglakh* (Stony Place), a Turkish Persian dictionary composed in 1174/1760 with its extensive preface on classical Chaghata'i Turkish grammar containing comparisons with Anatolian Turkish.

The same Turkish literary language as was written in the land of the Uzbeks is written to the present day in Chinese Turkestan. Here also Turkish culture has been influenced by Persian.

In the 14th/20th century a new Turkish literature based on the local dialects has been founded under Russian and Kazan Turkish influences. It includes dramatic works among its productions. In accordance with the State policy of the new regime, a special alphabet in Cyrillic letters has been created for the Uzbek language.⁶

From the fifth/11th century onwards Turkish tribal and military units began to make raids into Asia Minor, so that Anatolia lay totally open to the Turks. Thus, the colonization of Asia Minor and Eastern Europe went on with great success. Thanks to the ability of these Turks to adapt themselves in course of time to the changing circumstances of life, they succeeded in founding on very firm bases a strong and lasting State.

Parallel to the political and social development, Anatolian Turkish literature has had an uninterrupted development from the time of the Saljuqs down to the present day. It has, therefore, become the most important and richest branch of all the Turkish literatures and has exercised an influence on the literature of other dialects.

Seventh/13th Century

Already in the seventh/13th century there developed in Anatolia a Turkish literature based mainly on the Oghuz dialect. The well-known Persian mystic Jalal al-Din Rumi and his son Sultan Walad produced some Turkish verses, Ahmad Faqih wrote a fairly long mystic poem, and Shayyad Hamzah left poems of different *genres*.

Yunus Emre was the greatest figure in this century. He is regarded as the best Turkish popular mystic poet. His art is essentially one of the people, i.e. it is Turkish. It was through his mystical verses that there developed a tradition of writing poems in the language of the people and in the popular syllabic metre, which did not lose its power even in the period when Persian influence was at its highest.

Classical profane literature had its first representative in Dahhani. His poems were in an elaborate style and attained a high degree of perfection from the technical point of view.

Another poem of this century was 'Ali's *Qassah-i Yusuf* (Story of Joseph), representing linguistically a mixture of Central Asian literary Turkish and the vernacular Oghuz dialect. Moreover, other works of this and even next century had more or less the same peculiar features, and the rather pure Oghuz dialectical features in the manuscripts of works of these centuries are probably to be ascribed to the later copyists.⁷

Eighth/14th Century

The literary development followed the same line in the eighth/14th century. A certain number of feudal princes in Asia Minor lacked Persian or Arabic culture, and this was the reason why the language of the people became important, why books were written in Turkish, and also why a number of Muslim works were translated from Arabic and Persian into Turkish. During this century there developed in Anatolia several cultural centres, such as Qunyah, Nigde, Ladik, Kastamonu, Sinop, Sivas, Kirsehir, Bursa, and Iznik.

Among the leading poets Ahmad Gulshahri should be mentioned for his artistic merit. He put into Turkish the *Mantiq al-Tair* (Speech of Birds) of the Persian poet 'Attar, expanding it with stories from various sources. We also possess a number of isolated poems of his. Although a mystic, his literary aims were purely artistic.

The great mystic of this century is, however, 'Ashiq Pasha with his long poem *Gharibnamama* (Book of the Stranger). He is a mere imitator of Jalal al-Din Rumi and Sultan Walad. There also exist a number of detached mystical poems from the pen of 'Ashiq Pasha, but all are far from showing the lyrical merit of Yunus Emre.

In the second half of the century we find classical mystic poetry attaining high perfection in Nasimi. He is a great poet whose mystic lyrics are most expressive. His style is simple but full of power and harmony. In his *Diwan* we find *tuyughs* a verse-form peculiar to Turkish classical poetry and foreign to Persian literature.

Romantic tales and fables were also taken from Persian literature. Among them is to be mentioned Mas'ud's love story in verse, *Suhail wa Naubahar* (two proper names), a translation or rather an expanded adaptation from an unknown Persian work. This story has considerable literary value.

But, with the exception of Nasimi, Ahmadi is the greatest poet of this period. He is the author of the *Iskandarnamah* (Book of Alexander). The subject is taken from Persian sources, but he adds a long section dealing with world history including the Ottoman dynasty. His *Diwan* is more interesting from the artistic point of view. Among his poems there are some which are of local interest.

Further, we must mention Qadi Burhan al-Din who has left a *Diwan* also containing *tuyughs*. His poems have a note of sincerity and passion of their own. He is the first to have attained perfection by the standards of classical rhetoric.

Of the prose works are to be mentioned an anonymous translation of *Kalilah wa Dimnah* and the legendary tales of *Dede Qorqut* mainly about the Muslim-Christian struggle during the Turkish invasion of Anatolia and its vicinity, reflecting vividly the life, customs, and ideals of the Turks of the fifth/11th and sixth/12th centuries.⁸

Ninth/15th Century

In the ninth/15th century Turkish increased in importance as a literary and official language. In the first half of the century there were three great princely families who were patrons of scholars and poets: Karamanoghli at Auniyah, the Jandaroghli at Kastamonu, and the Ottoman Princes in Edirne and Bursa. As in the preceding centuries, the literary activity under them was not confined merely to the translation of Muslim works of a classical character.

In popular religious literature we may mention the *Maulid* (Birth of the Prophet) poem of Sulaiman Chalabi and Ahmad. This fine work has all the qualities of a masterpiece. It has been read by the people, for centuries particularly on the occasion of the religious commemoration of a dead person. In every century many similar poems have been written in imitation of it.

The most important classical poet of this period is Sheikhi. His version of *Khusrau wa Shirin* of the Persian poet Nizami is more than a mere translation. The *Kharnamah* (Story of the Donkey) is a masterpiece of satire. He is also the author of a *Diwan* which contains a considerable amount of panegyrics and love poems. His part in the establishment of classical poetry is great. His influence continued down to the tenth/16th century.

Another great classical poet of the period is Ahmad Pasha. He surpassed his contemporaries in panegyrics and love poems exercising, thus, a great influence on the poets of his time. Next to him in this field is Najati.

A certain number of chronicles in verse belong to this period.

Prose also developed considerably. In this connection we may mention the anonymous commentary on the Qur'an, *Jawahir al-Asdaf* (Gems of Mothers of Pearls), and the more popular book *Qirq Vezir Hikayalari* (The Tales of the Forty Viziers).

But it was mainly artistic prose that was cultivated, its most brilliant representative being Sinan Pasha with his *Tadarru‘ Namah* (Book of Supplication). His style is artistically elaborated, yet natural and sincere. Other representatives of artistic prose are Sari Kamal, Ahi, Masihi, and Ja‘far Chalabi.

As a reaction to this ornate language the first representative of the *turki-i basit* (simple Turkish), Wisali who wrote in ‘*arud* metres but used exclusively Turkish words deserves to be noted. However, only one couplet of his has come to us.

The writing of history in prose also began to develop. We have many anonymous specimens of Ottoman history. They show us that there existed in the ninth–15th century among the people and especially among the soldiers chronicles which were almost of the nature of epics. The historical works of ‘Ashiq Pashazadah, Oruch Beg, and others do not differ much in point of style from these anonymous chronicles. The works of Tursan Beg, Bayati, and some others, on the other hand, were written rather with the object of displaying a particular style and an extensive literary ability.

A fine specimen of unaffected prose of this period is the treatise by Deli Lutfi, which is one of the oldest works of humour in Turkish literature.[9](#)

Tenth/16th Century

In the tenth/16th century the apogee of Ottoman political power is also reflected in the sphere of literature. Literary activity flourished not only in Istanbul, but also in Baghdad, Diyar–i Bakr, Qunyah, Kastamonu, Bursa, Edirne, Yenije–u Vardar, and Uskup. Philological commentaries and lexicographical and grammatical works were produced. Books without number were translated from Arabic and Persian.

The greatest figures in poetry in chronological order are: Dhati, Khayali, Fuduli, and Baqi. Dhati wrote a large number of works in poetry and prose which are unequal in merit. His imagination and new ideas made him very popular. Khayali surpasses Dhati as a poet. His *Diwan* contains all his works. His most original poems are his love poems. Fuduli must be regarded as the greatest lyrical poet of Turkish literature. Although he used the dialect of Adharbaijan, he exercised such an influence in Anatolia that literary historians regard him belonging to the realm of Anatolian literature.

His love poems and love romance *Laila wa Majnun* have secured him a special place in literary history. Love in his works is never entirely profane in character, thanks to mystic inspiration. No other poet except Nawa‘i has acquired a like reputation throughout the whole Turkish world. He exercised an influence even on the musician poets of the lover classes. Baqi was undoubtedly the most reputed poet of his time, has fame stretching as far as India. In the expression of sentiment he is below Fuduli, but the musical charm and faultless ease of his poems have given him the reputation of an inimitable master of classicism. His elegy on the death of Sulaiman the Magnificent is a masterpiece of deep sentiment and grief.

At this period Anatolian Turkish poetry attained the highest point in artistic elaboration and rhetoric. It is

true that this was in the main an imitation of Persian poetry. But the Anatolian Turkish poets imitated rather the Indo-Persian poetry and went even further in fineness and abstraction. In the next centuries we see this refinement perfected on its own lines.

Poets belonging to different dervish orders composed didactic works, mystic poems and collections of legends of saints, along with translations of Arabic and Persian mystical works.

Prose in this century assumed a heavier and more artificial form. Outdoing the Persian models, the simplest ideas were expressed by the most complicated images to the detriment of the subject. This lack of taste is found in the greatest stylists of the period: Lami'i, Kamal Pashazadah, Jalalzadah, Faridun Beg, 'Azmi, Qinalizadah, Khuwaja Sa'd al-Din and others. This tendency to artificiality had a much more disastrous effect on prose than on poetry. In very long works, however, it was only the preface that was written in this turgid and clumsy style.

Many literary, historical, religious or moralizing works of the period were in fact written in a simpler language. The same applies to official correspondence and other State documents. In religious works intended for the people every endeavour was made to write as simply as possible. The examples which we possess of the prose of Fuduli and Baqi show an elegant and relatively simple language.

As a reaction to the ornate language, the movement called *turki-i basit* (simple Turkish) has its second well-known exponent in Nazmi of Edirne whose Diwan, though, again, in 'arud verse, contains only Turkish words. But he has no artistic abilities.

In the field of historical works great progress was made. Besides rhymed chronicles, we find historical works in prose in continuation of the Saljuq tradition. A number of historical works were written in verse. With the exception of the Ottoman history by Hadidi they always deal with a single event or the victories of a single emperor or commander. General histories were composed by ibn Kamal, Jalalzadah, Mustafa Chalabi, Muhi al-Din Jamali, Lutfi Pasha, Khuwaja Sa'd al-Din, and 'Ali. Some of these works are the sources for our knowledge of the social history of this period.

Among historical works those which deal with literary history occupy an important place. The first Ottoman collection of biographies of poets was produced by Shahi Beg on the model of Nawa'i's work. This was followed by the works of Latifi, 'Ashiq Chalabi, 'Ahdi, and Hassan Chalabi. 'Ali also gives important notices of poets in his historical work.

It is in this century that there appeared geographical works and accounts of travels. Some are mere translations. The celebrated *Bahriyyan* (Maritime Work) of Piri Ra'is and *Muhit* (Ocean) and *Mir'at al-Mamalik* (Mirror of lands) of Saidi 'Ali Ra'is are the best works of this type. We have further records of voyages both in verse and in prose.

The first grammar of Anatolian Turkish, planned on the model of Arabic grammars, by Qadri of Pergamon, was also written in this century.

Alongside classical literature we find popular literature increasing in every form. Wondering musician-poets were to be found wherever people congregated, and love songs, heroic tales, elegies, and folk-songs were recited. [10](#)

11th/17th Century

In the 11th/17th century knowledge of the Ottoman literary language spread among the Muslim lower classes generally and also through districts to the non-Turkish population or Turks of speaking a non-Ottoman Turkish dialect. The influence of Turkish literature and culture is found as early as the tenth/16th century in the use of Arabic script by the Muslim Hungarians and Croats. There are also found dictionaries of Turkish-Serbian, Turkish-Bosnian, and Turkish-Greek in verse. Istanbul was always the centre to which men of letters and learning flocked from all parts of the Ottoman Empire and from beyond its frontiers.

The classical Turkish poetry of the 11th/17th century was in no respect below the level of the Persian models. The Turkish poets by this time were working on original themes, though the influence of the Persian and Indo-Persian poets was still felt.

Naf'i may be regarded as the greatest master of eulogies (*qasidas*), on account of the power of his imagination, the richness of his language, and the elevation and harmony of his style. His love poems and his satires (*hajwiyyat*), on the other hand, are less successful.

Another very important classical poet was Nabi who is renowned for his refined didactical poems and descriptions. His verses are still quoted as proverbs. He was also the one who protested against artificial language, saying, "The *ghazal* book is a dictionary."

The greatest figure in romance poems (*mathnawi*) is Nav'izada 'Ata'i who takes his subjects from the life of his time.

The number of religious and mystical works, lives of saints, and didactic works connected with different orders is very great in this century. Poetical forms were often used for them.

Literary prose follows the same lines as in the preceding century. The great stylists like Vaisi, Narkisi Qochizadah, and others carried affectation of language to still greater lengths. Yet works which were in their days considered to have no literary value are now being greatly appreciated.

As an encyclopaedist, Katib Chalabi's name must be mentioned.

Histories in this century also took the first place among prose works. There are several which have the character of semi-official chronicles. Mainly, though they are translations of general histories of Islam, there are also original works on the same subject, and general and special works and monographs on Ottoman history. The best historians are Katib Chalabi, Pachavi, Na'ima, and Qochi Beg. The verse

chronicles are much below the level of those of the tenth/16th century. The most notable are those of Riyadi and Qafzadh Fa'idi.

In the field of geography the most important works are those of Katib Chalabi and Abu Bakr Dimashqi. They use European as well as Muslim sources. The *Sayathatnamah* (Voyage Book) of Avliya Chalabi is important as history of all aspect of social life.

The great popularity of the literature of the people continued in this century in all classes of society. The musician-poets became very numerous. We find them in the military classes and in the religious orders. The most important of them are Karaja Oghlan Gavhari and 'Ashiq 'Umar. The influence of this popular literature is felt even among the upper classes. [11](#)

12th/18th Century

Literature and culture continued in the 12th/18th century to follow the same lines as in the preceding centuries. There was a fast output in prose and poetry, while the cultural links with Persia and Transoxiana continued. But the tendency to a more individual development gained in strength. Endeavour was made to simplify the language.

Among the poets Nadim in particular acquired a great reputation. By his original themes, rich imagination, sparkling wit, and the harmonious language he surpassed his predecessors and contemporaries. He was the poet who brought much local colour to Turkish literature. He was famous with his *sharqis*, another verse-form peculiar to Turkish classical poetry and foreign to Persian literature. One of his poems he composed in the Turkish syllabic metre and the national form *turku*.

Among the great poets of this century special mention must be made of Raghib Pasha, the last great poet of the classical period.

The poets of this century practiced all forms of poetry, but special attention was devoted to *genres* characteristic of an epoch of decadence. On the other hand, true religious inspiration still contained. The last masterpiece of romantic poetry was Sheikh Ghalib's *Husn-o 'Ishq* (Beauty and Love) with its mystical inspiration and very fine style.

Literary prose tended to become gradually simpler, although imitations of the old artificial style were still found. A well-known stylist, 'Uthmanzadah Ta'ib openly denounced exaggerated artificiality in prose. Historical works occupied the first place, but they could not be compared to those of the preceding century.

The political and military decline of the Ottoman Empire stimulated the writing of a large number of memoirs investigating its causes. The most remarkable of these is that of Qoja Segban Bashi.

From the point of view of geography we may note a number of important descriptions by ambassadors of

which that of France by Yirmi Sekiz Muhammad Chalabi is a typical and very interesting example. We may also notice a number of translations of European works on geography.

The writings celebrating the splendid festivals held by the Sultans are important sources for sociological research.

The collections of biographies of poets are even more numerous than in the preceding century.

Popular literature continued to enjoy the same popularity among all classes of society. The works of the musician poets were also well known. Taste for such literature penetrated more into the upper classes.

In this century Ibrahim Mutafarriqah inaugurated printing in Turkish script, but for several reasons printing remained confined to a very restricted sphere throughout the century and did not exercise any particular influence on intellectual and artistic life.¹²

13th/19th Century

At the beginning of the 13th/19th century Ottoman literature sank to a very low level which continued until the period of political reform. It was only natural that the old literary tradition could not disappear at one stroke.

The prose of the period before the political reforms was not of much value, although its production was not less in quantity than that of the preceding centuries. The historical work by Mutarcim 'Asim was remarkable for its style and critical analysis. He used even simpler language in his translation of *Burhan-i Qafi'* (The Definite Proof) and the *Qamus* (Lexicon). Lastly, mention must be made of the celebrated poet and stylist 'Akif Pasha who, on account of several poems written in the popular metre and some works in simple prose, could be regarded as the first to have spread literary innovations.

We also had representatives of popular literature. The best known musician-poets were Dertli, Dhihni and Amrah.

B. Development of Turkish Grammar and Lexicography

1. Turkish is an agglutinative language. The *root* which is either verbal or nominal and which (except in the case of certain pronouns) is never inflected always appears at the beginning of the word. Verbal forms are built from the verb-stem, which may be a simple *root* or a root modified by formative suffixes. The verb-stem is followed by suffixes indicating aspect and tense ("voice" and "negation" being shown by aspect suffixes), to produce the tense-stem which, without further suffixation, expresses the third person singular; other persons are indicated by the addition of a personal suffix. The resultant word is a unit as regards stress, intonation, and sound harmony, i.e. assimilation of sounds tending to conform the sounds to the suffixes to the root in general. Phonetic changes in the root or suffixes do not imply semantic modifications.

Nominal forms again are built out of the noun–stem, which may be a simple root or a root modified by formative suffixes.

Prefixes and infixes do not exist in Turkish.

The syntax of the language is based essentially on the following principle. The governing parts of grammatical statement or of a group of statements follow the parts governed. Hence the principal part of the statement or of a group of statements, i.e. the finite verb or predicate, is usually placed at the end, the completed parts follow the complement, the qualified elements (nominal or verbal) are put after their qualifiers (adjectival or adverbial), and the principal statement follows the sub–ordinate.

Turkish in its original form did not include conjunctions. The only sub–ordinate clause which is attested from the earliest documents onwards is the conditional.

The characteristics of the Turkish language outlined above are to be found in the earliest surviving Turkish documents, which date from the first/seventh century.

2. This “pure” language, however, underwent a considerable change when pagan Turks came into contact with the Far Eastern civilizations and religions. The Turkish literary output of the period before the adoption of Islam was mainly translations of the scriptures of various religions. Such translations of sacred texts had to be as literal as possible. Of course, it is no wonder that under the influence of the non–Turkish structures of the languages so translated, this literary dialect, while preserving its native participial and gerundial constructions, acquired new types of sub–ordinate clauses, partly with defective constructions and developed conjunctions formed from Turkish roots. In the field of vocabulary also we find technical expressions, borrowed from the more developed languages of the Far East. This does not, however, mean that such borrowings were numerous. On the contrary, a great number of expressions were mere Turkish translations from these languages.

3. As to linguistic peculiarities of the first Islamic literary dialect in Central Asia, it differed but slightly from Old Turkish. Religious terms markedly connected with the Far Eastern religions were no more to be found. In their place, we find Islamic terminology. But this latter was not as widespread as one would expect or find in later literary works. Instead Far Eastern terms or Turkish calques from them were still common. The development in the direction of one analytical sentence structure was less pronounced. Though sub–ordinate clauses of the Indo–European and Semitic types began to develop in general, the Turkish sentence with its participial and gerundial forms still prevailed. Nevertheless, new conjunctions were created out of Turkish words or borrowed from Arabic and Persian, and these to a great extent encouraged the development of new Turkish sub–ordinate clauses.

On the other hand, popular words of the Karakhanidian period show very little foreign influence. Both in syntax and lexicography, this influence was restricted to the minimum. In this respect the popular literary products of the earliest Turkish Islamic literature resembled the runic inscriptions.

4. In Khwarizmain period, Arabic and Persian exercised an increasing influence on Turkish syntax. Both in verse and in prose, the basically fixed Turkish word-order became more flexible and the rich stock of terminations that henceforth developed in the language prevented ambiguity and gave it greater clarity. The borrowings from the two main Islamic culture languages, Arabic and Persian, increased. Vocabulary was further enriched by the use of Arabic and Persian loan-words, though the Far Eastern loan-words were still common, and inversion, particularly in verse, was now used to a greater extent. Until the ninth/15th century, Anatolian Turkish also reveals the same characteristics.

5. During the classical period of Ottoman literature, the syntactical influence of Persian in the construction of sentences did not increase. Rather, it diminished in the course of time.

The old Turkish type of sentence with only a single finite verb, but using many participial and gerundial forms was particularly in use in Ottoman prose. This made the formation of very long sentences possible. Inversion, however, particularly in verse, was greatly practiced. Persian and Arabic loan words and grammatical forms became more numerous and Far Eastern loan words were totally forgotten.

6. In modern Turkish, the syntactical influence of Persian in sentence constructions has left few traces. On the other hand, modern writers have drawn fully on the resources of popular speech; the language has thus been greatly enriched and rendered much more expressive, thanks to the harmonious combination of the synthetic structure of the old language with the freer construction and more vivid turns of expression of everyday spoken Turkish.

New constructions of sub-ordinate clauses with conditional or temporal force, formed from a finite verb followed by the interrogative ending, have become meaningless.

In the Turkish vocabulary, Persian and Arabic loan words have become much less numerous, giving place to Turkish words, some of which have even been invented. Loan words from the European languages, mainly at first from Italian then from French, are to be noticed.

7. Thus, we see that in the process of evolution, owing partly at least to the influence of languages of other structural types, both Eastern and Western, Turkish has developed conjunctions, other types of sub-ordinate clauses, and a freer word order in the sentence.

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