

# ИСТОРИЧЕСКАЯ СПРАВКА ТУРЕЦКОЙ ЛИТЕРАТУРЫ

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**Аннотация:** В статье рассматриваются этапы возникновения и развития литературы тюркских народов. В дополнение к этому сведения о жанрах, существующих в литературе тюркских народов и известных представителях, создавших их.

**Ключевые слова:** тюркская литература, Кутудгу билиг, Османская империя, героический эпос, нарративные рамки, рукописи, поэт-музыкант, полупрофессиональный исполнитель.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF TURKISH LITERATURE

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**Abstract:** The article focuses the stages of the emergence and development of the literature of the Turkic peoples. In addition to this, information about the genres that exist in the literature of the Turkic peoples and the famous representatives who created them.

**Key words:** *Turkic literature, Kutudgu bilig, Ottoman Empire, heroic epic, narrative framework, manuscripts, poet-musician, semiprofessional performer.*

Turkish literature comprises oral compositions and written texts in Turkic languages. The Ottoman and Azerbaijani forms of Turkish, which forms the basis of much of the written corpus, were highly influenced by Persian and Arabic literature and used the Ottoman Turkish alphabet. The history of the broader Turkic literature spans a period of nearly 1,300 years. The oldest extant records of written Turkic are the Orhon inscriptions, found in the Orhon River valley in central Mongolia and dating to the 7th century. Subsequent to this period, between the 9th and 11th centuries, there arose among the nomadic Turkic peoples of Central Asia a tradition of oral epics, such as the Book of Dede Korkut of the Oghuz Turks—ancestors of the modern Turkish people—and the Manas epic of the Kyrgyz people. Turkish literature, the body of written works in the Turkish language[1]. The Orhon inscriptions represent some of the earliest extant writing in Turkish. These inscriptions appear on two monuments built in the early 8th century CE in northern Mongolia. Other early Turkish writing includes poetry in an 11th-century Turkish-Arabic dictionary by Mahmud Kashgari and Kutudgu bilig (“Knowledge Which Leads to Happiness”) by Yusuf Khass Hajib, which uses poetic forms from the Arabic and Persian literary traditions. During the later 13th century, what came to be known as Turkish literature was produced primarily in Mongol-controlled Anatolia.

Among the numerous Turkic dynasties of Central Asia, South Asia, the Middle East, and the Caucasus, only the post-Mongol Anatolian states and then the Ottoman Empire maintained Turkish as a literary language. From the 14th through the early 20th century, writing in Turkish flourished in the Ottoman Empire, and it subsequently continued in the Turkish republic. Despite changes in language and culture from the Mongol and Ottoman periods to the emergence of modern-day Turkey, Turkish literature has remained an important means of expression for the Turkish-speaking peoples of Anatolia and the adjacent areas of the Balkans. Much of this region’s literary activity has centred on Istanbul, its central urban metropolis since the mid-15th century[2].

The oldest genre of Turkish literature is the heroic epic, of which the prime example is the *Kitab-i Dede Korkut* (“The Book of My Grandfather Korkut”; Eng. trans. *The Book of Dede Korkut*), which has survived in two 16th-century manuscripts. The actual date of the work is unknown. At least one of the tales was already circulating in written form in the early 14th century, and Central Asian sources suggest that the shaman-bard Korkut and his tales date from the 9th and 10th centuries. The style of the epic—which consists of prose narrative mixed with verse speeches—suggests oral composition. The language of the text is Oghuz Turkish, containing both Anatolian and Azerbaijani elements. There is no overall narrative framework, but most of the 12 tales revolve around legendary Oghuz heroes. The original poem (if not the 16th-century manuscripts) was evidently created by an oral bard, or ozan, the heir to a partly shamanic tradition, although the circumstances of the epic’s transformation to written literature are unknown, and the work as such had no influence on the subsequent development of Turkish literature[3]. Both manuscripts known at the turn of the 21st century were discovered in Europe, the larger one in Germany in the early 19th century. Yet Turkish interest in the Book of Dede Korkut emerged nearly a century after significant German and Russian work. In the 20th century major studies of the text were undertaken in Turkey, Russia, and Azerbaijan as well as in Europe.

Much of the style of the Book of Dede Korkut predates the heroic tradition of the Oghuz Turkish poet-musician known as the asik, who emerged in the 16th century in Anatolia, Iran, and the southern Caucasus and eventually supplanted the ozan. The âşik (ashoog in Azerbaijani; from the Arabic ‘ashiq, “lover” or “novice Sufi”) was a professional or semiprofessional performer, singing a variety of epic, didactic, mystical, and lyrical songs to the accompaniment of a long-necked lute (saz). The classical âşik of the Anatolian Turkmen tribes was Karacaođlan, who flourished in the later 16th century or possibly the mid-17th century (his date of death is sometimes given as 1679). He is mentioned in several biographical dictionaries (tezkires) of the period. In its formal qualities his poetry

is closely related to folk verse, and he generally treats lyrical themes without the mystical subtext that was common in courtly verse of the period. His style influenced such 17th-century âşiks as Âşık Ömer of Aydın and Gevherî, as well as the âşiks of the 18th century.

During the 17th century the popular urban song (şarkı) was taken up by court poets and musicians, and it became fashionable for courtiers to entertain themselves by performing these songs with the folkloric bağlama. The great 17th-century poet Nâ'ilî was the first to include such songs in his divan (collected works), a practice that reached its culmination in the following century with Ahmed Nedim. The outstanding âşık of the later 17th century was Âşık Ömer, who wrote both folkloric qoşma poems and courtly lyrics, or gazels (Persian: ghazals)[4]. Thus, during the 17th century the âşiq became a bridge between the literary taste of the court and the people of the towns. The interplay between this popular poetry and the courtly gazel continued into the 19th century, when it was exemplified by the work of İbrahim Dertli. Poetry's place within Turkish society prior to the second half of the 15th century is relatively unknown, but the 16th century saw the composition of seven biographical dictionaries (tezkires) by Ottoman poets that make clear the high esteem in which poets and their poetry were held. Of these, five—by Sehî Bey (1538), Latifî (1546), Âşık Çelebi (1568), Hasan Çelebi (1585), and Ali Efendi (1599)—may be considered major examples of the genre. All five are large-scale works that include much biographical material as well as many anecdotes and some aesthetic judgments. Early in the 17th century, three more tezkires were written, of which one covers the entire 16th century in detail.

Patronage for Ottoman poets in the classical age took a variety of forms. The location of this patronage varied as well: poets were attached to the imperial household in Bursa or, later, Istanbul, or they were supported at the provincial Anatolian courts of the Ottoman princes. These princes also sometimes took poets along on military campaigns. Aside from the sultan, the leading ministers of state

might also contribute toward the upkeep of poets. The simplest form of patronage was the annual stipend. During the 15th and 16th centuries the sultan Bayezid II granted an annual stipend to each of more than 30 poets.

Throughout the Ottoman Empire's early history, either official patronage or a good position in the bureaucracy—or both—were available (and often attained) by poets who were from provincial cities or otherwise outside the inner circles of Ottoman rulers. During the second reign of the sultan Mehmed II, the poet İsa Necati, who was of obscure origins, was able to attract the attention of the sultan, who read and admired one of his gazels and immediately had him enrolled as a chancery secretary. Hayali Bey, the most influential poet of the first half of the 16th century, was the son of a timar sipahî (feudal cavalryman) from Rumeli, in the Balkans. He began his career with a troupe of wandering dervishes and eventually came under the protection of the vizier İbrahim Paşa. Through the vizier he became a favourite of Sultan Süleyman I, who granted him a yearly stipend and the income of several fiefs.

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