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ISLAM AND TURKISH LITERATURE *

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ABSTRACT

Traditionally Turkish literature is divided into three main periods: 1. The period before the impact of Islamic literatures, 2. Islamic period, 3. Modern period.

During the Islamic period which covers nearly 8 centuries (From the 11th to the middle of the 19th century) the Koran, the Hadith, stories of the prophets, legendary biographies of saints and sufism have been the principal sources of the classical Turkish literature as it is the case with other Islamic literatures. Most Turkish *dîvâns* start with *tevhîd* and *münâcâts* and some Turkish poets excell in *na'its*.

Several *mesnevis* have been written on Islamic themes, some of them peculiar to Turkish literature, e.g. the famous *Mevlid* of the early 15th century poet Süleyman Çelebi.

The classical *sirâ* (*Siyer* in Turkish) literature, both in prose and in verse found its echo in Turkish literature.

This religious trend was not interrupted with the beginning, in the 1850's, of modern literature, under the influence of Western (mainly French) literature. The first generation of Westernists, the so-called *Tanzîmât* writers (*Şinasi*, *Ziya Paşa*, *Namık Kemal*, *Abdülhak Hâmid*, etc.) continued to be inspired by the Islamic past and made great efforts to compromise Islamic ideals with western concepts.

After 1890's, the second generation of Westernists, the so-called *Servet-i Fünûn* writers, whose motto was *Art for Art's* sake, represent a break in the religious tradition

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although the government of their time under the Sultan Abdülhamid II, followed a strongly Islamic even at times Pan-Islamic policy.

Soon after the Restoration of the Constitution, in 1908, various rival ideologies such as Ottomanism, Turkism, Islamism and Westernism began to develop, and they all found their echo in literature. The enthusiastic representative of Islamism (Pan-Islamism) was the poet Mehmed Akif and some minor poets followed him. Nationalist poets Mehmed Emin Yurdakul and Ziya Gökalp and the neo-Classical Yahya Kemal wrote occasionally poems inspired by Islam.

The recent revival of Islam in Turkey has not yet found a striking echo in literature.

Traditionally Turkish literature is divided into three main periods: 1. The period before the impact of Islamic literatures, 2. The Islamic period, 3. The Modern period.

The Islamic period, virtually the longest, covers about eight centuries: From the 11th to the middle of the 19th century.

Islam reached Central Asia in the early 8th century A.D. and by the middle of the 10th, it had become the religion of the majority of Turkish speaking peoples who were then distinctly divided into two categories: First, city dwellers, possessed, for several centuries of a written language and literature which they had developed, within their different religious communities, namely Buddhist, Manichean, Nestorian, Brahmi, etc.¹

The second category belonged to nomadic elements the majority of which was composed of Oghuz Turks, who, as far as we know, had only an oral literature.

The majority of city dwelling Turks were Buddhists and they used the Uyghur alphabet to write their dialect. When they accepted Islam and decided to change to the Arabic Alphabet, they naturally continued the tradition of the Uyghur spelling system in transcribing Turkish texts into the new script they had adopted.

The origins of Islamic Turkish literature go back to the period of the first Muslim Turkish dynasty in Central Asia, the Karakhanids.²

Mahmûd Kasgharî's famous work *Divânü Lughât it-Türk* written in this period (1074), contains specimens of the Turkish poetry of the transition period. Many forms of poetry, epic, romantic, pastoral, elegiac, etc. of the pre-Islamic and early Islamic era are represented in this work.

The Turks spread to many countries of Central and Western Asia, the Near East and Western Europe. Within this vast geographic area, various dialects of the Turkish language developed.

The written literature developed mainly in two major dialects: Eastern Turkish which can be considered as the continuation of one kind of Uyghur and Western Turkish which comprises Ottoman Turkish, Azeri and Türk dialects deriving from the Oghuz Turkish.³

Eastern Turkish was used as the literary language, from the tenth century until the end of the 19th century in all the countries where Turkish was spoken or where Turks ruled except the Ottoman Empire, Western Persia and South Crimea. Later on, it gave way to the written languages now developed from local spoken languages.

Eastern Turkish literature has passed through three stages of development. The first is the already mentioned Karakhanid period. The written language of this period, generally called Middle Turkish (and *Khâkâniyye* by Kashgharî) developed in the 11-12th centuries from the Uyghur of the East and West Turkistan, Kashghar being the centre, and became the first literary dialect of Muslim Turks.⁴ The first known work is an interlinear Koran translation which survives in a 14th century copy now preserved in the Turkish and Islamic Art Museum in Istanbul (MS no. 73). What is particularly interesting about this work is that the translator continued the tradition of the Buddhist Uyghur Turks, i.e. instead of borrowing freely, as later authors did, Arabic and Persian terminology, he made great efforts to find Turkish equivalents for every Arabic term of the Koran. The very word *Kur'ân* is translated and rendered by the Turkish word *okıgu* from the verb *Okumak*, to read.

The first original literary work of this period is the *Kutadgu Bilig* ("Knowledge which gives Happiness"), written in 1069 by Yûsuf of Balasghun who presented his work to the Sultan of Kashghar (Tabghaç Bughra Kara Khan), and was made first chamberlain (*Hâs Hâcib*) in recompense. This is an allegorical poem, of more than 6,000 couplets, on the art of government and consists of a series of conversations between the Prince, his vizier, his son and a friend who symbolise Justice, Good Fortune, Reason and Contentment.

In this early work Muslim (Arabo-Persian) influence is limited and shows mainly in the form. Pre-Islamic traditions continue both in quatrains interspersed in the poem and in many ideas and customs mentioned. Furthermore the language is far from being drowned in Arabic and Persian loan words as is the case with some later works. The impact of Islamic culture and ethics is far more apparent in Edib Ahmed's *Atabat* (or *Aybat*) ul *Hakâ'ik* of the 12th century: a little

book of moral rules in verse.

The second stage in Eastern Turkish literature is the Khwarezm-Golden Horde period, in the 13th century.⁵ A written language which was the continuation of the Karakhanid Turkish developed in Khwarezm, in the Sir Darya delta, and from here it passed on to the Golden Horde. Unlike Karakhanid, this written language was mixed with some Oghuz and kipchak elements.

Many works of religious inspiration were written during this period, but few survived. Among these Nâsir Rabghuzî's *Kıyas ul-Enbiyâ* and Mahmûd of Kerder's *Nehc ul-Ferâdis*, written in 1310 and 1360 respectively are worth mentioning. The first belongs to the category of works recording the lives of prophets and the second belongs to the popular genre of Forty Hadiths. Both works are written in a simple style and in the language of the people.

In this period parallels (*nazîre*) to the works of classical Persian literature for the élite also began to appear. For instance, Kutb of Khwarezm wrote *Khusrew u Şîrîn* (1341) for the ruler of the Golden Horde, in parallel to Nizami's well known *Mathnawî*.

The third and the most important stage in the development of Eastern Turkish literature is the Chaghatay period. This literature which began in the 15th century, during the Timurid period in Central Asia, developed in cultural centres such as Samarkand, Herât Bukhârâ, Khîvâ, Farghana and Kashghar and spread to the whole of Eastern Turkish world of India.⁶

The second half of the 15th century witnessed the Golden age of Chaghatay Turkish literature at Herât. The Sultan of Herât, Huseyn Baykara (d. 1506), was himself a poet. His court became a sort of academy where poets scholars and artists gathered. The most brilliant was Ali Shîr Nevâ'î, the prolific poet of genius and one of the most original of Eastern Turkish writers. He thoroughly assimilated the Arabo-Persian literary technique writing in the manner of Persian Classics, but brilliantly succeeded in creating a very personal style in Turkish.

Among a host of outstanding writers of the classical Chaghatay period two names must be mentioned: Zahir ed-Din Muhammed Babur, the founder of the Mughal Empire in India and Abul Ghâzi Bahâdur Khan, the ruler of Khiva in mid-17th century. Babur Shâh, who was also a remarkable poet, owes his outstanding place in the history of literature to his unusually outspoken and fascinating memoirs which are considered the masterpiece of Chaghatay Turkish prose. Bahadur Khan collected historical documents and popular legends and wrote two works of great literary value in the spoken language of his time.

As mentioned above, classical Chaghatay was gradually replaced in the Eastern Turkish world by local dialects which developed, towards the end of the 19th century, into separate languages.

The emergence and the development of Western Turkish literature are substantially different from that of Eastern Turkish.⁷

The bulk of the nomadic Oghuz element in Central Asia left their homeland and began to migrate to South West, early in the 11th century. By the end of the 11th and 12th century, the Oghuz Turks had settled in Anatolia and made it their new home.

The Oghuz Turks who founded the Great Seljuk and later the Anatolian Seljuk states, did not use their own language in government affairs, in law-courts and in educational institutions. They used instead Arabic and particularly Persian.

Turkish which was the language of the masses, only became a written language in Anatolia, towards the end of Seljuk rule, and, particularly after the emergence of the Türkmen principalities. This new written Turkish which began to flourish from the first half of the 13th century onwards, does not seem to be a continuation of the central Asian literary tradition as its spelling system is entirely different.

Although we see sporadic signs of Anatolian Turkish verse and prose during the early decades of the 13th century, the expansion of Turkish as the official language in Anatolia starts at the time of Karamanoglu Mehmed Bey (1261-1278). There is thus a two century time lag between the emergence of Eastern and Western Turkish literatures.

Western Turkish literature, comprising the Ottoman and Azeri areas, developed in three separate branches: *divân* literature which was inspired by the Persian classics and intended for an élite with a classical medrese or Palace-school education, mystical-folk or *Tekke* literature that developed as a result of the expansion of sufism among the people and the increased impact of the religious orders; and finally, secular folk literature.

The *divân* literature meant for the higher social classes followed the pattern of other Islamic literatures, particularly Persian, from the 13th to the middle of the 19th century with the adoption of some local elements after the 17th century. However the trend of this literature, especially in language and style until the mid-15th century and its development after this date, shows an important difference.

In the 13th and 14th centuries the capitals of the principalities in Anatolia, e.g. Kütahya, Kastamonu, Aydın, etc. were small centres of culture. Although the literary and artistic life was concentrated around the prince's court, poets and writers in these small towns were also part of the daily lives of the people. They were in contact with them in their homes, in the market-place, in the bazaar or in the mosque. Therefore, even though they had accepted the forms and content common to Islamic literatures, the language they used did not widely differ from the spoken language of the people. To a certain extent, the very same thing can be said for the first century and a half of the Ottoman Empire. The first capital Bursa, and the second capital, Edirne, were both medium-sized provincial towns and life of the courts of the first Ottoman Sultans did not completely divorce the poets and the writers whom they patronized, from the people.

But all this changed after the conquest of Istanbul and the establishment of this metropolitan city as the capital of a great empire. From the second half of the 15th century onwards, the court poets gradually became divorced from the people, and Arabic and Persian terms superseded Turkish even for simple everyday words.⁸

The *mathnawi* form was the first to develop in Western Turkish as an independent genre. We see the products of this form as early as the mid-13th century. These *mathnawis* took as subject well known legendary love stories or mystic allegories or moral counsels. Hundreds of poets whose names are mentioned in the Turkish biographies of poets have worked upon similar limited *Mathnawi* subjects. The most favoured theme in Western Turkish literature is the story of Yusuf and Zuleykha taken from the Koran and from the classical Koran commentaries. Some of these *mathnawis* are based on the simple koranic story, but the majority of them have been embroidered in detail from those extent in Persian literature. The theme of Leylâ and Mejnun was used by some thirty poets, but the presentation by Fuzulî (who died in 1556) much surpassed any written before or since, except, perhaps, Nevâî's, and in Turkish literature this theme is inseparable from Fuzulî's name.

Besides the common subject of classical tradition, hundreds of *mathnawis* were written on religious, mystical, ethical, didactic and other subjects.⁹

The most original and popular of them is the celebrated *mathnawi* Mevlid of Süleyman Çelebi of Bursa who composed it in 1409. It is an unrivalled masterpiece of religious literature in Turkish. It relates the birth of the Prophet, his miracles, heavenly journey and his death. Written in simple language of the people and in a sincere style, permeated with strong religious emotion, it became a classic and is recited upon ritual occasions, especially to commemorate the

dead. Several poets have attempted pangyrics of the Prophet, inspired by Süleyman Çelebi's Mevlid, but without success. He is inimitable. However, another popular mathnawî is Yazıcıoğlu Bican's Muhammediye (Mid-Fifteenth century) which differs from the Mevlid which represents a strictly orthodox approach, both by its' mystic leanings and in its rather learned language.

An unusual late 16th century mathnawî is also worth mentioning: Hilyet ün-Nebeviyye better known as Hilye-i Hakani written in 1599 by Hakani (Khâkani).¹⁰ This is a didactic poem of original conception and based on a traditional account of the Prophet's personal features. Each feature or virtue is elaborately described in 10-12 bayts. This little poem became immensely popular and was often compared, rather unfairly, with Süleyman Çelebi's Mevlit. A calligraphically written version of Hakani's Hilye was hung, as a "portrait" on the wall in many Turkish homes, until recently.

A classical Turkish dîvân follows the same pattern as in other Islamic literatures. Apart from the usual quotations from or allusions to koranic verses and saying of the Prophet, religious literature is represented in a dîvân by special poems. The introductory kasîda section of most Turkish dîvâns opens up with a tawhîd or Munâjât in praise of God followed by one or several na'ts in praise of the Prophet. Some poets specialized in the na't, e.g. the late 16th century poet Nazım who devoted the whole of his poetical talent to hymns in praise of the Prophet. Apart from his many tawhîds and Munâjâts, one third of his voluminous dîvân is devoted to na't in the form of 60 kasîdas.

Nesîmî of the late 14th century and Fuzulî of the 16th are two leading names who excelled in mystical religious verse.

In the Indian courts of Babur's descendants there developed a new style of Persian poetry (Sebk-i Hindî)¹¹ in the 16th and 17th centuries, which, abandoning the tradition of the great classics, made fashionable the exaggerated use of conceits, allegory and ornate expressions, and laid emphasis on symbolic and obscure style and unusual words with over-elaborate and far-fetched lively imagery. This "Indian School" began to influence 17th century Ottoman Turkish poets like Nefî and more particularly Na'îf and a host other minor writers. Towards the end of the 17th century, particularly from the beginning of the 18th century onwards, the Persian influence, always uneven, began to diminish and was gradually replaced partly by native Turkish elements.

The appearance of Thâbit¹² (d. 1712) who introduced a strong sense of humour with Turkish idioms and proverbs in poetry, and particularly of a poet of genius like Nedîm¹³ (d. 1730) seemed to announce a radical change in the Persian inspired tradition of Ottoman Turkish poetry. Nedîm, although not

daring to do away with traditional themes, forms and clichés altogether, made a supreme effort to "depersianize" Ottoman poetry, introducing many themes and motifs from his own time and surroundings and using unconventional and often colloquial language.

Sheykh Ghâlib ¹⁴ (or Ghâlib Dede, d. 1799), the last of the great classics, with his poetical genius, unusual power of imagination and mastery of form, might have achieved what Nedîm had started: to create a thoroughly Turkish *divân* poetry in the classical tradition had he chosen to follow his example. Instead, although he admired Nedîm and owes much to him in some of his early poems, he decided to revert to the past and picked up again the Indian School tradition where Nâ'îfî had left off. But as he was a greater poet with more vision and imagination and imbued with mysticism, he created, at the close of the classical period, his very original blend of both sources. This reaction, however, brought the Turkish *divân* literature into a dead-end, and in a way prepared the decline that took place in the 19th century.

There is an extremely rich, original and varied prose literature in Ottoman Turkish which has been totally neglected until modern times, because until recently only verse and artistic rhymed prose were considered to be literature. The majority of literary products in plain straightforward Turkish were simply ignored. A classical example: The author of the famous 10-volume *Seyâhatnâme* of the 17th century, Evliyâ Çelebi, is not even mentioned in the sources and his work which is considered today a masterpiece of Turkish prose, was noticed only in the 19th century and used as a historical source. ¹⁵

But as we are concerned here mainly with religious literature, I shall not dwell on the very rich historical literature of great literary value, and similar works of secular nature.

From the 13th century onwards there is a vast literature of koran translations accompanied by detailed commentaries enriched with a variety of narratives. Some of these commentaries are based on classical works like al-Tabarî, al-Zamakhsharî al-Samarkandî, etc. There is also an equally rich and continuing Hadith literature.

Sîra literature ¹⁶ in Turkish started in the 14th century with Mustafa Darîr's famous *Sîret ün-Nebî* based partly on İbn İshak's known work. It is a brilliant example of early prose in pure Turkish. The biography of the Prophet developed gradually into a very popular genre and many writers, including celebrated poets like Bâkî and Nâbî tried their hand at a prose *sîra* book. Following Darîr's example, most biographers of the Prophet wrote in the spoken Turkish of their time. There are however a few exceptions like Veysi's *sîra* completed

by Nâbî (17th century) which is in artistic rhymed prose.

The vast panorama of prose literature of religious or religio-epic character from the 13th to early 19th centuries includes a great number of works on the lives of prophets, saints, holy men, founders of various sects, warrior-dervishes, etc. A great part of these works was intended for vast audiences and is written in straightforward Turkish.

Parallel to the *dīvân* literature two other movements in poetry developed during the classical period: Popular mystical or Tekke poetry and folk or *âşhık* poetry.

The mystic movement in Anatolia created a new kind of poetry which was purely Turkish and original, in the language of the people, in syllabic metre and in traditional forms.

Yunus Emre ¹⁷ was the greatest representative of this genre. It was through the mystical verses of Yunus Emre that there developed a tradition of writing poems in the language of the people and in popular syllabic metre which did not lose its power even in the periods when Persian influence on the classical literature was at its height. The mystics of the different orthodox and heterodox sects which arose in Anatolia in the following centuries wrote popular poetry in the style of Yunus Emre in order to exert an influence on the masses. For many centuries he was held in veneration all over Turkey. His hymns were sung in extasies and he was the great source of inspiration for the young poets during the period of literary revival at the beginning of the 20th century.

Among the outstanding followers of Yunus Emre, Kayghusuz Abdal, Eshrefoghlu (who was also a great prose writer) and Pir Sultan Abdal are particularly worth mentioning.

Folk or *âşhık* poetry also developed parallel to *dīvân* poetry. ¹⁸ In many ways the folk poets, the *âşhıks* continued, during the Ottoman period, the pre-Islamic and early Islamic tradition of Turkish musician poets (*ozan*), who often improvised their poems, singing them to the accompaniment of a musical instrument, especially the *kopuz*. *Âşhık*, a term originally applied to popular mystic poets of various dervish orders, was later taken over by wandering minstrels (*saz şairleri*), who gave up the old secular term of *ozan*.

The influence of sufism on the *âşhıks* was only superficial and did not substantially alter their realism. The impact of medrese and Palace School - trained court poets was greater, growing increasingly from the 16th century onwards and they adopted many classical verse forms, particularly *ghazel* and

'murabba' and introduced many patterns of arud, preferably those reminiscent of syllabic metre. Many common themes, motifs and stereotyped concepts found their way into folk poetry. The continued impact of the hackneyed forms and concepts of court poetry eventually caused folk poetry to degenerate into a sterile cliché of the former, and many *âşuks* to become unskilled imitators of classical poets.

There are however many outstanding names who remained highly original and continued the early tradition of folk poetry. *Köröghlü* of the 16th century, *Karajaoghlan* of the 17th who is the greatest of them all and *Dadaloghlu* of 19th are particularly worth mentioning.

Köröghlü and *Dadaloghlu* excelled in epic folk poetry whereas *Karajaoghlan* is a lyric poet par excellence. Except for a few motifs and expressions common to Muslim Culture, *Karajaoghlan* completely ignored the art poétique both of court poetry and popular mystic poetry of the dervish orders, and wrote all his poems in the traditional Turkish syllabic metre, and in the unsopisticated spoken Turkish of his time, coloured with occasional provincial words. He dealt with nomadic life and the natural beauties of Taurus Mountains environment. The poet's own exuberant feeling of love and *joie de vivre* are also described in unparalleled *koşmas*, *semâ'îs*, *türküs* and *destans*. In the "National Literature" (*Millî Edebiyat*) movement of the post-1908 Constitution period, and again during the early Republican era up to the late-1930's *Karajaoghlan* was the most loved folk poet, inspiring many young poets in their endeavours to renew and make more indigenous the form and content of Turkish poetry.

This brings us to the period of modern literature.

The first suggestion of reform in Ottoman Empire, as far back as the mid-16th century, *Lutfî Pasha*, a Grand Vezir of *Süleyman the Magnificent*, wrote a little treatise, *Âsafnâme*, where he points to various signs of decline in the State and proposes methods of encountering them. He was followed in the 17th century by *Koçi Bey* and the famous scholar *Kâtib Çelebi*, who, in their various works diagnosed the decline in the army, in the corps of *ulamâ* and in other institutions.¹⁹

But serious attempts at comprehensive reforms were only made much later in the late 18th and early 19th centuries under *Selîm III* and *Mahmud II*, culminating in the systematic reform movement of the *Tanzîmât* period, in mid-19th century.

Parallel to these ideas and attempts of reform, there emerged two conflicting groups among the ruling and educated classes: Traditionalists who main-

tained that the divine law was being tempered with by all these new-fangled ideas and their applications, and reformists who claimed that the reforms were necessary for the survival of the Empire and that they were not against Islam. These two factions waged an incessant war altering in power in the ideological arena.

Hardly a decade after the proclamation, in 1839, of the Tanzîmât Charter, known as the Imperial Rescript of the Rose Garden, as it was read out in the Garden of Topkapı Palace, a modernist school of literature emerged, led by İbrahim Şinasi²⁰ (1824-1871), who had returned to Istanbul after five years of study in Paris (1849-1854). He returned with a completely new literary understanding. He made translations of poems from a Western language, French, for the first time. He introduced new concepts in poems, he discussed the fatherland, the people and the State, instead of the age-old clichés. He established the first private newspaper. He wrote the first Turkish play, and greatly influenced his environment by his articles and conversations. The modernist spirit that he established, with Namık Kemal²¹ and Ziya Paşa,²² developed a literature under the influence of the 18th century French writers and the 19th century romantic poets who were close to the public and opposed to despotism. Abdülhak Hâmid²³ (1851-1937), the youngest of this first generation of Westernists, joined this group, the taste for Dîvân literature was almost completely eliminated, inspite of intense resistance by a group of neo-classicist, and the form and concepts of modern literatures were gradually applied to Turkish. Şinasi who introduced most of the new ideas and concepts, was himself a quiet man. But his many disciples, the so-called Young Ottomans, soon began to fight against despotism, fanaticism, corruption and for liberty, constitutionalism and reforms wherever the could: In Istanbul, in London, in Paris, in Geneva with newspapers, pamphlets and books.

The most brilliant and audacious of these disciples was the famous poet, patriot and writer Namık Kemal (1840-1888), a member of the secret Young Ottoman society, who in the late 1860's and early '70's formulated the following general principles and elaborated them in his writings before any Muslim Westernist, including the famous Jemal ad-Din al-Afgânî:

1. In view of the decline of the Muslims and the continuous ascendancy of the West, Muslims need to change and to develop a new sense of solidarity.
2. Islam should be the basis of this solidarity.
3. Reforms can succeed only if they are carried out in accordance with Islam rather than by imitating European institutions.
4. Islam is essentially compatible with modern civilization and with a constitutional form of government.²⁴

Namık Kemal's ideology of patriotism was pan-Ottoman with Islamist "nationalism" as its base.

"The realization and continuation of the Ottoman internationality depended upon the utilization of the new means of progress. Modern education and the modern sciences. The realization of three objectives: The unification of the Muslim (İttihad-ı İslam), the fusion of the *Millet*s (imtizâc-ı akvâm) and modernization would create Ottoman unity, a power that would be the answer to the challenge of the European political and economic supremacy."²⁵

Namık Kemal also asserted that Islam was not incompatible with the republican form of government, and that in terms of the *shari'a* "the right of government was transferred to the House of Osman by the act of legitimate *bi'a*". Constitutional government was not therefore a *bid'a* for Muslims. It was implemented by the consensus (*ijma'*) of the community (*umma*). The decision of the community were not innovations but parts of the *shari'a*.

"Namık Kemal's answer to the question on the restoration of Islamic forms of government and possible Western influences was, that the provisions (*ahkâm*) of the *shari'a* were capable of alteration in accordance with the requirements of the time. "As we are commanded to receive all products of progress from any part of the world, there is no need to return to the past, or to come to a halt in the present."²⁶

Namık Kemal laid down the outline of a Constitution and the institutions needed to implement it. His project became the basis for framing Turkey's first constitution (1876).

However the constitutional régime did not last long. By the end of 1878 the Sultan, Abdülhamid II, had dissolved Parliament, sent all the leading liberals, including Namık Kemal, into provincial exile and introduced the most strict censorship for all publications, which was to last for thirty years.

An increasing religiosity, even Pan-Islamism was favoured by the Sultan and there were groups of writers, *ulama* or civilian, who professed an extreme brand of conservatism and violently attacked any sign of diversion from this policy.

In this atmosphere, three young men, the poet Tevfik Fikret,²⁷ the novelist Halid Ziya²⁸ and the poet and essayist Cenab Şehabeddin²⁹ came together and founded a literary periodical, *Servet-i Fünûn* which became the name of the "New Literature" movement they started.

The three and their associates believed in the principle of Art for Art's Sake. . They preferred to be read and understood by a very small number of intellectuals rather than come to the public. By carrying out a complete reaction in the language, they created a sort of literary jargon consisting of rarely used words from Arabic and Persian.

However many outstanding writers of the period, such as the journalist and publicist Ahmet Midhat, the essayist Ahmed Rasim, the novelist Hüseyin Rahmi and poets Mehmed Emin and Rıza Tevfik, remained in contact with the masses by using simple Turkish and writing on subjects of general interest, although, of course carefully avoiding any reference to politics or to topics on which the Sultan was sensitive.³⁰

A few years after the restoration of the Constitution in 1908, several rival political and ideological movements appeared such as Ottomanism, Turkism, Islamism and Westernism which claimed to have found the solution of Turkey's many problems. All these movements had their organs and their representatives in the publishing World.

The Committee of Union and Progress, the party in power favoured first Ottomanism, which meant the fusion of all ethnic elements of the empire within the Ottoman system. But after the Balkan Wars (1912 - 1913), the Committee swang to Turkism, even³¹ for a time, to Pan-Turkism. The leader of this movement was the sociologist Ziya Gökalp who became the ideologist of the Committee (Party). His motto was: We belong to the Turkish Nation, to the Muslim Community and Western Civilization.

In the early 1920's, inspired by the Kemalist movement, he revised his Pan Turkish ideas and adapted them to a more realistic type of nationalism, based on the National Pact.³²

The secular Westernists, were led by Dr. Abdullah Cevdet (1869-1932), the publisher of the famous review *İctihad*, who waged a relentless war for 27 years, in exile and in Turkey, against fanatic and obscurantist elements.

The writings of Ziya Gökalp and Abdullah Cevdet had considerable influence on the Kemalist reforms of the 1920's.

The Islamic and at times Pan-Islamic movement was represented by the outstanding poet and patriot Mehmed Akif³³ (1873-1936). Akif joined ideological controversies in the post-1908 period and regularly contributed to organs of the Islamist movement *Sırât-ı Müstakîm* and later *Sebil ü-Reşad* where he published some of his poems which exclusively deal with social topics with an —

Islamic approach.

He believed that all social evils could be cured with a return to Islamic principles and way of life, aided by modern technology. He rejected radical westernism and nationalism as leading to decadence and disintegration. Some of his best poems are devoted to the disastrous Balkan War, the defense of the Dardanelles and the War of Liberation in Anatolia. He joined the Nationalists in Ankara where he was elected a Member of Parliament. He toured the country where he lectured and preached in mosques to summon the people to the national struggle. His "Independence March" which he wrote at that time was adopted as the Turkish National Anthem.

The Republic which was proclaimed in 1923 developed into a fully secular regime and religion was left mainly as a personal matter in Turkey.³⁴

The revival of Islam in Turkey since the Second World War has not, as yet, produced any work of considerable literary merit. What has been published has tended to be merely political or apologetic. However a new trend in research of a scholarly nature can be observed in many universities and institutions.

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İSLAMİYET VE TÜRK EDEBİYATI

ÖZET

Geleneğe göre Türk edebiyatı: 1. İslam öncesi, 2. İslam-Türk edebiyatı ve 3. Yeni edebiyat olmak üzere üç döneme ayrılır.

Bunların en uzununu olan ve sekiz yüzyıl süren İslam döneminde, öteki İslam edebiyatlarında olduğu gibi kaynaklar ortaktır. Bunlar Kur'an, hadis, ilk dört halife devri, peygamber hikâyeleri, evliya menkabeleri ve tasavvuftan ibarettir. Mesnevi türünde öteki İslam edebiyatları, özellikle İran edebiyatı örnekleri izlenir. Fakat Süleyman Çelebi'nin Mevlid'i orjinaldir. Türkçede Siyer (Arapça sîra) adı verilen Muhammed peygamberin hayat hikayesi de ayrı bir tür olarak gelişmiştir. Türkçe divanlarda tevhdler, münacatlar ve özellikle na'atler zengin bir dini edebiyat vücutte getirir.

Tanzimat devri yazarları, Fransız etkisinde olmakla birlikte, İslam dini ile, batıdan gelen yeni kavramları ve fikirleri mezotmege çalışmışlardır.

Servet-i Fünün devrinde edebiyatta "San'at san'at içindir" ilkesi hakim olmuş, sosyal ve politik konuları değinilmemiştir.

İkinci Meşrutiyetten sonra İslamcılık, Osmanlılık, Batıcılık, Türkçülük gibi türlü ideolojiler çarpışmış, Balkan savaşından sonra Türkçülük üstün gelmiştir. Mehmed Akif İslamcılık, Ziya Gökalp da Türkçülük akımının temsilcisi olmuşlardır.

İkinci Dünya Savaşından sonraki dini gelişmeler edebiyata önemli ölçüde yansımamıştır.