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CITY DWELLERS AND NOMADS: THE BEGINNINGS OF TURKISH LITERATURE *

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ABSTRACT

City dwelling Turks in Central Asia who were mostly Buddhists and used the Uyghur alphabet to write their dialect, continued to use the same spelling system when they changed to the Arabic alphabet after their conversion to Islam. This system which consisted of using a vowel letter with each consonant is the basis of Eastern Turkish and later Chaghatay written languages.

The nomadic Oghuz Turks who migrated South West in the 11th century, eventually settling in Anatolia, had no such tradition. When, in the 13th century, they began to write down their language, they were inspired by Arabic texts which do not use vowel letters for short vowels. This distinct difference between the spelling systems of the two written languages seems to prove that Eastern and Western Turkish literatures began separately and independently from one another with a time lag of almost two hundred years.

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 who possessed, for several centuries, a written language which they had developed within their different religious communities, namely Buddhist, Manichean, Nes-

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torian, Brahmi, etc.

City dwelling Central Asian Turks who belonged to these various faiths wrote their language in the alphabet of their respective communities which is evidenced by the considerable amount of texts and documents discovered, from 1890's onward, in East Turkistan.

The majority of the city dwelling Turks were Buddhists and used the Uyghur alphabet to write their dialect. When they accepted Islam and decided to change to the Arabic alphabet, it is only natural that they would continue the tradition of the Uyghur spelling system – the only system they knew – in transcribing Turkish texts in the new script they adopted. This meant the use of a vowel letter for almost every consonant.

In fact the earliest examples of the Central Asian or Eastern Turkish in Arabic script make ample use of *elif*, *vâw*, *yâ*, a tradition which was continued in the classical and post-classical Chaghatay period. Most principal Eastern Turkish texts such as: the earliest interlinear Koran translation, the *Kutadgu Bilig*, the works of Alishir Nevâ'i, Babur and Abu'l Ghazi Bahadur Khan and many others follow this tradition. Only Mahmûd Kashgharî in his *Divânü Lughat it Türk* uses vowel letters comparatively sparingly, obviously under the influence of the Arabic text and the system of classification he adopted for his dictionary.

Examples:

Spelling system in Eastern Turkish

يگیتلىك	يگیتلىك	تیرىگلىك	تیرىگلىك	تیرىگلىك	تیرىگلىك
yiğitlik,	yiğitlik,	tiriglik,	tiriglik,	tilese	tilese
سىنامىش كىشى	سىنامىش كىشى	اۆتكۈنۈر	اۆتكۈنۈر	بىلىگىسىز	بىلىگىسىز
sınamış kişi,	sınamış kişi,	ötkünür,	ötkünür,	biligsiz	biligsiz

(Kutadgu Bilig, Fergana)

كىلكەندە	كىلكەندە	يۈكۈندۈم	يۈكۈندۈم	كۆرسەتتەر	كۆرسەتتەر
kilkende,	kilkende,	yükündüm,	yükündüm,	körsettiler	körsettiler
قىلدیم	قىلدیم	اورۇشتىلار	اورۇشتىلار	كىلدیم	كىلدیم
kıldım,	kıldım,	uruştılar,	uruştılar,	kıldım	kıldım

(Baburname, faximile edition)

اۆلتۈردىلار	اۆلتۈردىلار	اتلانېب	اتلانېب	باقماسلار	باقماسلار
olturdılar,	olturdılar,	atlanıb,	atlanıb,	bakmaslar	bakmaslar

Bahadur Khan, Şecere-i Türk)

To the second category of the population in Central Asia belonged the nomadic elements the majority of which was composed of Oghuz tribes.

The bulk of this nomadic Oghuz element in Central Asia left their homeland and began to migrate South-West early in the 11th century. By the end of the 11th and early 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 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 became only a written language in Anatolia towards the end of the Seljuk rule and particularly after the emergence of Turkmen 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. As we have mentioned, the Eastern Turks had their Uyghur texts as model. The Western Turks in Anatolia who lacked this tradition, had Arabic texts, particularly the Koran to be inspired by when they decided to write down their spoken language. In fact, the earliest examples of Turkish texts written or copied in Anatolia, whether they use vowel signs (hareke) or not, transcribe, as a rule, mostly consonants, using vowels only occasionally.

Spelling system of Western Turkish

الدر aldı, اد idi, كلد geldi, طقز tokuz, اچند içinde,
الدر دلدردلر öldürdiler, ایلد eyledi سيلمك söylemek, دشر düşdi,

(Erzurumlu Darir, Terceme-i suret ün-Nebi,
Fahir İz, Eski Türk Edebiyatında Nesir, İstanbul,
1964, p. 167.

ايت eyitti اول ulu اللع ululuğa ائرد ineridi
الکنجیدی ekinciyidi دغد doğdı ديلمشید depelemişidi دورل davarlu
گوزدج gözedici

Translation of sa'lebi' Kısas ül Enbiyâ,
Fahir İz, ibid, pp. 196-198

There are however exceptions to this rule. A limited number of manuscripts, written or copied in Anatolia, show a mixed spelling with varying degrees of Central Anatolian influence. I think personally that this discrepancy could be explained by the existence of scribes and copyists of Central Asian origin or background, as we know that in the 13th and early 14th centuries quite a few educated people migrated from Central Asia and settled in Anatolia. (See for instance the text of Sultan Veled's poems: Fahir İz, *Türk Edebiyatında Nazım*, Cilt I, Bölüm I, İstanbul, 1966, pp. 133-137, and Aşık Paşa's *Garibname*, Fahir İz, *Eski Türk Edebiyatında Nazım*, Cilt I, Bölüm II.)

The influence of scribes and copyists of different regions and background can further be illustrated by comparing various manuscript copies of the *divân*s of Fuzulî, the 16th century classical poet.

Fuzulî, a native of northern Iraq, wrote in Azeri dialect with its characteristic spelling. Now, extant manuscripts of his *divân* copied locally in Iraq or in other parts of the Empire present a considerable degree of inconsistencies both dialectwise and spelling wise.

Fuzulî himself who was born and educated in Northern Iraq, but came, after the Ottoman conquest, under the influence of Ottoman (Western Turkish) speech, ended up, perhaps, by writing himself in a mixed dialect and spelling.:

The following characteristic examples are taken from the MS no. A 140 in the Milli Kütüphane, Ankara. The text was copied in 1545, i.e. during Fuzulî's lifetime:

بانا bana مانا mana خانسی hansı خانقی hankı قانقی kankı
 یوهو yahu یوقو yuku سالدی saldı صالدم saldım سو su صو su
 قولاغ kulağ قولاق kulak اوح oh اوق ok چوخ çoh چوق çok
 خاندە handa کاندە kanda آخیدور ahıdur آقیدور akıdur

(Fahir İz, *Eski Türk Edebiyatında Nazım*, Cilt I, Bölüm I, İstanbul, 1976, pp. 249-271).

In the comparative study of the spelling system of Eastern and Western Turkish there is an important point which must be raised at this juncture. This is the spelling of words with an imâle, the reading as a long vowel of an originally short vowel. İmale is shown, in early Anatolian texts, occasionally much later, with a vowel letter where the usual spelling would not require one. This spelling

technique of Western Turkish should not be confused with the spelling system of Eastern Turkish:

Kıyamet kopcağız bil hakikat

قیامت قوپچاغیز بیل حقیقت

kelebek bigi tağıla bu insan

کلابک بیلی طاغیله بو انسان

Diriga yatarsuz sin içinde

دیریغا یاتسارز سین اچنده

Geçiser üstimizden nice ezman

گچیسر اوستمز دن نیچه ازمان

Ölüm şerbetin içüb virdiler can

اولوم شرباتین ایچوب وردلر جان

Ayırma son nefesümüz imandan

ایرما صک نفا سز ایماندن

(Ahmed Fakih, *Çarhname*, 13. Yüzyıl, Fahir İz, *Ibid*, pp. 109-112.)

Sun ey saki güle güle bize ol ruh-ı reyhanı

صون ای ساقی گلا گوله بزه اول روح ریحانی

Ki gül yine bezemişdür bugün sahn-ı gülistanı

که گل یینه بزمیشدر برکون صحن کطستانی

(Dehhani, *Kaside*, 13. Yüzyıl, Fahir İz, *Ibid*, p. 30)

Her kulun başına yazılan gelür devrandur.

هرقولک باشنه یازیلن گلور دوراندور

(Cem Sultan, *Kaside*, 15th Century, Fahir İz, *Ibid*., p. 112)

Conclusion: The distinct difference between the spelling system of the two written languages seems to prove that Eastern and Western Turkish literatures began separately and independently from one another with a time lag of almost two hundred years.

YERLEŞİKLERLE GÖÇEBELER TÜRK EDEBİYATININ BAŞLANGICI

ÖZET

Orta Asya'da yerleşik hayat süren Türklerin çoğu Budistli ve lehçelerini yazmak için Uygur harflerini kullanıyorlardı. Uygur imlasında her sessiz harfle bir sesli harf yazılıyordu. Yerleşik Türkler Müslüman olup Arap harflerini kabul edince aynı imlâ sistemini bu alfabede

sürdürdüler.

Orta Asya'daki göçebe Oğuzlar 11. yüzyılda Güney Batıya doğru göç ettiler ve 13. yüzyılın ilk yarısında Anadolu'da yerleştiler. Büyük Selçuk ve Anadolu Selçuk devletlerini kuran Oğuzlar yazı dili olarak Arapça ve Farsçayı kullandılar.

Oğuz Türkleri (Batı Türkleri) kendi dillerini yazıya geçirmek isteyince, yazı dili gelenekleri olmadığı için, Arapçanın imlâ kurallarını uyguladılar.

Doğu ve Batı Türkçelerinin imlâ sistemlerindeki bu temel ayrım iki yazı dilinin, birbirinden bağımsız olarak, ikiyüz yıl ara ile, başlayıp geliştiklerini kanıtlar görmektedir.