

КУЛЬТУРА И ПИСЬМЕННОСТЬ

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TO THE PERCEPTION OF TIME IN "THE BOOK OF DEDE KORKUT"

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Abstract: *Kitab-i dedem Korkut*, or *The Book of Dede Korkut*, is the only medieval epic of the Turkic people that has come down to us in a written form. The stories that comprise *The Book of Dede Korkut* display a clear connection with both the common Turkic literary and folk tradition and more recent strata.

Most vividly in this epic appears the idea of "the age of the Oghuz" – the time when, on the one hand, the action of the legends of the epic appears as a whole, and on the other – this time is characterized as a kind of "idyllic". Most likely, the idea of "the age of the Oghuz" dates back to the traditional epic specific to the Turkic and Mongolian oral and written epics, traditionally referring to cosmogony, "prehistoric", the initial state of the world. The concept of "the age of the Oghuz" in "Kitab-i dedem Korkut" also correlates in spatial relation to the idea of "the land of the Oghuz", opposed to the hostile world of the infidels.

The traditional way of nomadic life and the change of seasons is practically not reflected in the epic. The action of the stories takes place "on the green meadows", in the steppes, probably during the summer; winter is mentioned in the epic several times. But at the same time the idea of the juxtaposition of winter and summer in "Kitab-i dedem Korkut" can be the echo of the "Dispute of Summer and Winter" reflected in the Turkic literature tradition of the 11th century. Differentiation by time of a day is the most clearly expressed in the epic. The morning time is the time when the Oghuz heroes go to the war campaigns, or exploits, the time, when important decisions are made.

Thus, "Kitab-i dedem Korkut" reflected the ideas of time that existed among the Oghuz Turks for a long period during their migration to the West through the Transcaucasia, Iran and Asia Minor and the cyclization of the legends of this book epic.

Keywords: written epic, Turkey, the Oghuz, *Dīwān Luyāt at-Turk*, *Kutadgu Bilig*.

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ПРЕДСТАВЛЕНИЯ О ВРЕМЕНИ В ОГУЗСКОМ КНИЖНОМ ЭПОСЕ
«КИТАБ-И ДЕДЕМ КОРКУТ»

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Резюме: «Китаб-и дедем Коркут» («Книга моего деда Коркута», полное название – «Книга моего деда Коркута на языке племени огузов») является единственным сохранившимся памятником книжного эпоса у тюркских огузских народов, сложение сказаний которого возводят к X–XI вв.

Наиболее ярко в эпосе предстает идея «века огузов» (это отмечено многими исследователями «Книги моего деда Коркута») – времени, когда, с одной стороны, происходит действие сказаний эпоса в целом, а с другой – это время характеризуется как своего рода «идиллическое». Скорее всего, представление о «веке огузов» восходит к традиционным эпическим зачинам, свойственным тюркскому и монгольскому устному и книжному эпосам, традиционно отсылающим к космо-

гонии, «доисторическому», начальному состоянию мира. Представление о «веке огузов» также соотносится в пространственном соотношении с представлением о «земле огузов», противопоставленной окружающему враждебному миру неверных.

В эпосе практически не отражена традиционная для образа жизни кочевников смена сезонов. Действие сказаний происходит «на зеленых лугах», в степях, вероятно, летом; зимнее время упоминается в эпосе лишь несколько раз. Наиболее четко выражена в эпосе дифференциация по времени суток. Утреннее время является временем, когда огузские богатыри отправляются на подвиги, в походы, когда принимаются важные решения.

Таким образом, в «Китаб-и дедем Коркут» нашли отражение представления о времени, бытовавшие у тюрков-огузов в течение долгого периода их продвижения на Запад через Закавказье, Иран и Малую Азию и циклизации сказаний данного книжного эпоса.

Ключевые слова: книжный эпос, Турция, огузы, «Словарь тюркских наречий», «Кутадгу билик».

WRITTEN EPIC OF THE OGHUZ

The Turkic medieval written epic “The Book of Dede Korkut” (“Kitab-i dedem Korkut”) is undoubtedly the most important source on social and cultural life of the Oghuz Turks of the early Medieval Ages. Customarily the formation of stories of which “The Book of Dede Korkut” consists of refers to the 11th century, but the stories were fixed in the written form later, approximately in the 15th century.

“The Book of Dede Korkut” (according to the Dresden manuscript¹) consists of twelve songs-legends, which speak about the exploits of the Oghuz heroes. The main plot – the core of which is framed by these stories – is the struggle of the Oghuz tribes against the infidels, non-Muslims (*kafir*) in the lands of Asia Minor, as well as constant internecine strife among the Oghuz themselves. This text reflects both the events of early Turkic semi-legendary history (not only historical facts, but also a set of mythological beliefs) and later events connected with the spread of their power in Asia Minor and with their contacts with Byzantium. The stories that comprise “The Book of Dede Korkut” display a clear connection with both common Turkic literary and folk traditions as well as more recent strata.

“Kitab-i dedem Korkut” is a monument of a written epos which is found on the border between oral and literary tradition and between folk narrative and historical chronicle.

“THE DAYS OF THE OGHUZ”

Most clearly in this epic appears the idea of “the age of the Oghuz”, or “the days of the Oghuz [tribe]” (this was noticed by many researchers of the “Book of Dede Korkut” – see, for example, [Zhirmunski, 1962]) – a time when the action of all the tales of the epic takes place in general. This period is characterized as a kind of the “idyllic time”:

Ol zamanda beğlerin alkışı, karkışı karkış idi. Dıaları müstecab olurıdı [Gökyay, 2000, p. 31] // “In those days the nobles’ blessings were blessings and their curses were curses, and their prayers used to be answered” [Lewis, 1974, p. 59]².

Oğuz zamanında Uşun Koca derler bir kişi varıdı [Gökyay, 2000, p. 125] // “In the days of the Oghuz there was a man called Ushun Koca...” [Lewis, 1974, p. 161].

¹ In 2018 the new manuscript concerning “The Book of Dede Korkut” epic cycle was found in Iran (the so-called “Gonbad manuscript”); its brief research as well as the manuscript itself was just published recently in June 2019 [Shangoli, Yaghoobi, Aghatabai, Behzad, 2019].

² English translation of the “Kitab-i dedem Korkut” cited from the translation of Geoffrey Lewis [Lewis, 1974], which is noted specifically.

Ol zamanda Oğuz beylerine ne kaza gelse uyhudan gelüridi [Gökyay, 2000, p. 92] // “*In those days* whatever disaster befell the Oghuz warriors befell them because of sleep” [Lewis, 1974, p. 127].

Probably the concept of “the days of the Oghuz” may be related to “the enhanced interest of the Ottomans in their historical past”, as Zhirmunski wrote [Zhirmunski, 1962]. However, most likely, this idea goes back to the traditional epic introduction, which is characteristic of the Turkic and Mongolian oral and written epics, referring to cosmogony, “prehistoric”, the initial state of the world (see, for example in the Buryat and Mongol “Geser” written epic: [Neklyudov, 2019, p. 131 and further])³.

The concept of the “age of the Oghuz Turks” is also correlated in spatial relation to the representation of “the land of the Oghuz” (tur. *Oğuz eli*), which is antagonistic to the surrounding hostile world of the infidels. The dwelling place of the ruler of Trapezund in “The Book of Dede Korkut”, despite being described in geographically precise terms, is presented as a kind of otherworldly space, one of several “evil places” (tur. *yavuz yerler*). For example, Kanlı-koja tells his son Kan-Turali, who is going on a journey: “Thereupon Kanli Koja declaimed; let us see, my Khan, what he declaimed

‘Son, in the place where you would go,
Twisted and tortuous will the roads be;
Swamps there will be, where the horseman will sink and never emerge;
Forests there will be, where the red serpent can find no path;
Fortresses there will be, that rub shoulders with the sky;

A beautiful one there will be who puts out eyes and snatches souls; ...To a terrible place have you set your foot; Stay!” [Lewis, 1974, p. 119] (“Kanlı Koca burada soylamış, görelüm Hanum ne soylamış, aydur: Oğul, sen varacak yerün Dolamaç dolamaç yolları olur Atlu batup çıkamaz Anun balçığı olur Ala yılan sökemez Anun ormanı olur Gökile pehlu uran Anun kalası olur Göz kakuban gönül alan Anun görklüsü olur Hay demedin baş getüren Anun celladı olur... Yavuz yerlere yeltendün” [Gökyay, 2000, p. 85]) (for more details see: [Anikeeva, 2019]).

SEASONS IN “THE BOOK OF DEDE KORKUT”

It should be noted that the traditional nomadic way of life of the Oghuz Turkic tribes and the change of seasons connected with that (for example, cattle overtaking to summer / winter pastures) are practically not reflected in the epic. The action of the stories takes place “on the green meadows”, in the steppes, probably, in the summer or spring; winter season is mentioned in the epic several times only. Particularly interesting is the fragment in the beginning of the epics where it is mentioned among other proverbs and didactic maxims:

Yapa yapa karlar yağsa yağsa kalmaz; yapağılu gökçe çemen güze kalmaz [Gökyay, 2000, p. 1] / “No matter how thick the snow fell, it won’t stay until spring; blooming green meadow won’t remain until autumn”.

It is possible to suggest that the idea of the juxtaposition of winter and summer in this proverb may be the echo of the “Dispute of Summer and Winter” reflected in the Turkic literature tradition of the 11th century: we can find it in “Compendium of Turkic dialects”

³ “Such an introduction can be open by the formula “In the early time when...”, and further to form a homogeneous grammatical syntagma; there is the registry the initial (nascent, emerging) world: the whole universe (that is to say, eon), the earth and the water, the sky, the sun and the moon, the world mountain and the world tree, the first living beings, etc. The appearance of a hero on earth coincides with this epoch. The most archaic form is represented in the Buryat (West-Buryat) tradition” [Neklyudov, 2019, p. 137].

(“Dīwān Luyāt at-Turk”) by Mahmud Kashgari⁴ and also in “Kutadgu Bilig” by Yusuf Balasaguni⁵.

There are many Turkic verses with the explanations of Kashgari in the text of the “Compendium” and among them we can find these ones:

“öl qar qamuy q̄ışın enār
ašliq tariy anin önār
jawlaq yayı mändä tinār
sän kälübän täbräšūr

Describing the debate of Summer and Winter; Winter says to Summer: ‘Snow and damp descend in winter; because of it the grain grows in summer; in me the hostile foe rests (from his raids); when you come (O Summer, then in you) he moves’” (MK 369 in: [Dankov, Kelly, 1984, p. 64].

There are also the verses⁶ that describe a spring and the spring awakening of nature in the didactical poem “Kutadgu Bilig” dated back by the same 11th c. and among them one can see that spring season is counterposed to a winter:

“togardin ese keldi ongduñ yili
ajun itgüke açtı ustmah yolu
yagız yir yıpar toldı kafur kitip
bezenmek tiler dünya körkin itip
irinçig kısıg sürdi yazkı esin
yaruk yaz yana kurdı devlet yasın... ” (QB 63–65, see at: [Arat, 1947, p. 23–24]⁷ / “The spring wind blew from the East and opened the Paradise way; The brown earth was filled with

⁴ “Dīwān Luyāt at-Turk” (“Compendium of Turkic words”, or, more precisely, “Collection of Turkic dialects”) – the first dictionary in the Turkic lexicography. It appeared in Baghdad between 1072 and 1083; the dictionary is written in the Arabic language. The full name of its author is Mahmoud b. Hussein b. Mohammad al-Kashgari. It is known that his father came from the town of Barsgan near the lake Issyk-Kul but other biographical information about the author did not survive. Some remarks in his work and other historical data suggest that he belonged to the Qarakhanid dynasty. Escaping from political persecution, he eventually found himself in Baghdad, where he wrote his work and presented it to the Arab Abbasid caliph Muktadi (1075–1094), who had the highest spiritual authority in the eyes of Muslims. In addition to the interest that “Divan lugat al-Turk” represents as a linguistic, historical and ethnographic source, it is valuable because it contains a significant number of poetic passages from Turkic-language works, quatrains and couplets, which Mahmud al-Kashgari gave as examples to individual words.

⁵ In 1069–1070 the didactic poem “Kutadgu Bilig” (“The Lesson of How to Be Happy”) of Yusuf who was originally from Balasagun appeared in Kashgar. The poem is dedicated to the governor of Qashgar Boghra-khan and is considered to be the oldest Uyghur literary monument of Muslim content. The poem was extremely popular and came to be known as the “Ethics of rule” and even “Turkic Shakh-name.” As a didactic treatise, “Kutadgu Bilig” deals with various aspects of the life of an ideal ruler and his officials, and gives an account of “the qualities of the ambassador,” “the qualities of a military leader,” “the necessary qualities of the court,” and so on. At the same time, its ideas apply to more general issues. Its sermons are accompanied by information from various fields of science such as mathematics, astronomy, and medicine. The poem’s “role models” are given through characters from Iranian mythology – legendary Iranian kings and heroes (e.g., Afrasiab). But at the same time “Kutadgu Bilig” retains both mythological images connected with Islam and especially its mythological, geographical tradition (countries *Çin* and *Maçin*, the mount *Kâf*) and images deriving from ancient Turkic cosmology. Some of the last ones we can see in the author’s traditional preface to his treatise where he appeals to the one God, who created “brown earth and blue sky, the Sun, the Moon and night” (see: [Malov, 1951, p. 235]; this is the usual way to represent the mythological past of the Turks, for example, in runic Orkhon inscriptions like the large inscription of Kultegin).

⁶ As S. Ye. Malov noticed, “Description of spring” in “Kutadgu Bilig” is a rare poetic place among the very boring and tedious content of the entire work of Yusuf Has Hajib” [Malov, 1951, p. 240].

⁷ Turkish translation was also made by Resit Arat later: “Şarktan bahar rüzgarı eserek geldi dünyayı süslemek için cennet yolunu açtı / Kafur gitti kara toprak misk ile doldu dünya kendisini süsleyerek, bezenmek istiyor / Bahar rüzgarı eziyetli kışı sürüp, götürdü; parlak yaz tekrar saadet yayını kurdu” [Arat, 1959, p. 16].

musks, and the camphor was gone, the world wants to be adorned by itself; the spring wind drove the tormented winter and took it away; the bright summer again set up a bow of bliss”.

TIME OF THE DAY

The differentiation by time of day seems to be the most clearly expressed in “The Book of Dede Korkut”. Morning time is the time when the Oghuz heroes go to feats, to campaigns, and when important decisions are made (and at the same time night (evening) is not only time for sleep but also the time to attack enemies (infidels)); it is emphasized by the special formula phrase⁸ *Alar sabah kalkubanı yerinden uru-durup* // “at break of the day rose up from his place”. For example:

Salkım salkum tan yelleri esdüğünde,

Sakallu bozaç turgay sayradukda[...]

Aklı karalı seçilen çağda,

Gögsü-güzel kaba dağlara gün degende... *Alar sabah Dirse Han kalkubanı yerinden uru-durup* [...] Bayındır Hanun sohbetine gelüridi [Gökyay, 2000, s. 4, 8 and fwd.] // “When the winds of dawn blow cold,

When the bearded grey lark is singing...

When white begins to be distinguishable from black, When the sun touches the great mountains with their lovely folds... *at break of day Dirse Khan rose up from his place*” [Lewis, 1974, p. 27, 32–33].

The same idea about morning as the start for any military campaign can be seen at the Turkic folk verses included in Mahmud Kashgari’s “Compendium of the Turkic Dialects” (mentioned above):

“... Verse:

tañ ata yortalım

buğraç qanın irtälüm

basmil begin örtälüm

amdi yigit yewilsün

‘We’ll set out at the break of dawn, and seek the blood (and the blood-price) of Buğraç (a man from Yabaqu), and burn the emir of Basmil; now let the young men gather in their squadrons” (MK 600, in: [Dankov, Kelly, 1984, p. 330]. It should be noticed that the early morning in “The Book of Dede Korkut” is also once named by the same word *kuşluk* (“*kuşluk uyhudan uyanur kalkar...*” [Gökyay, 2000, p. 3]: “[she] gets up early in morning”), which is mentioned in Mahmud Kashgari’s treatise (*quşluq*) as “forenoon (Oyuz dialect)” (MK 238, in: [Dankov, Kelly, 1982, p. 354]).

Both the importance of military campaign and the time of performance in it are emphasized by the following saying at the epic:

“Kanlı Koca aydur: Oğul, sabah varup öylen gelmek olmaz; öylen varup ahiam gelmek olmaz” [Gökyay, 2000, p. 83] // “Said Kanli Koja, ‘My son, it’s no use leaving in the morning

⁸ The text of the tales of “the Book of Dede Korkut” is mainly prosaic, but it contains many different stylistic clichés, repetitions, proverbs, sayings and rhythmized passages, and the problem of the their formula nature is solved by researchers in different ways [Korogly, 1976, p. 201; Anikeeva, 2018, p. 52–57]. Formula in a prose narrative is understood as steady, repetitive phrase that conveys the basic idea (“formula-thought”) in one or more phrases; according to I. Başgöz, formula is a combination of formal and semantic elements; it is characterized by brevity and memorability, like a proverb or saying, sometimes it has rhythmic organization [Başgöz 1998, p. 131, 141]. The use of formal phrases in such a text (usually epic) is quite common in the literary traditions of the Turkic peoples.

and coming home at noon; it's no use leaving at noon and coming home in evening..." [Lewis, 1974, p. 117].

CONCLUSION

There are many archaic elements of traditional Turkic world outlook that can be found in the epic folklore of the Oghuz Turks (such as "Kitab-i dedem Korkut"). Those elements were not introduced into *Kitab-i Korkut* in Asia Minor proper, where the completion of its stories took place, but had been existing in Turkic literary traditions even before part of the Oghuz tribes came to Asia Minor; they had been undergoing a fairly long evolution during the whole period of migration of part of the Oghuz tribes to the West, ca. in the 8th–13th centuries.

Perception of time in different aspects (time of a day, season of the year, the idea of the "the age of the Oghuz") in the tales of "The Book of Korkut" is obviously connected both with the oral Turkic epic and early medieval literary Turkic tradition which is represented by the monument of 11th century – "Dīwān Luḡāt at-Turk" (and in lesser degree "Kutadgu Bilig").

"Kitab-i dedem Korkut" reflected the ideas of time that existed among the Oghuz Turks for a long period of their migration to the West through the Transcaucasia, Iran and Asia Minor, and the cyclization of the legends of this written epic. Undoubtedly "The Book of Dede Korkut" as a monument of Turkish folklore and literature requires further research of various area – historical, anthropological, and linguistic.

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