



Article

Literature of the Golden Horde Period and its Role in the Development of Turkic Literature

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Abstract: This article explores the development of literature during the period of Golden Horde in 13th–14th centuries and its place in the history of Turkic literature. Abstract: The study examines the socio-political, cultural and religious facets of life that facilitated developments in literature during this time. Particular attention is given to religious-didactic works, narrative prose, epic poetry and translation literature. The article analyzes works of Nosiriddin Rabgʻuziy, Mahmud Kardariy, Qutb Khorezmi, Sayfi Sarayi and Husam Katib. It is also examined the impact of Golden Horde literature on subsequent Turkish literary development.

Keywords: Golden Horde, Turkic literature, narrative prose, epic poetry, translation literature.

1. Introduction

The 13th-14th centuries were a crucial time of political, economic, and cultural changes in the history of Central Asia and Turkic peoples that is called the Golden Horde period. Batu Khan is the founder of this state. The lands that the Golden Horde spread over included the Volga region, Crimea, Kazakh steppes and parts of Central Asia. Its principal urban centers, Sarai-Batu and Sarai-Berke, turned into hubs of trade, craftsmanship and culture. These cities were important hubs on trade routes from East to West. The processes of a political consolidation of Turkic peoples, significant expansion of trade relations and intensification of cultural exchange were accelerated with the establishment of Golden Horde. These progressions made a huge difference in the improvement of writing also [1].

Currently the study of cultural heritage Turkic peoples is one of actual scientific problems. The Golden Horde period literature is an important part of the common cultural heritage of Turkic nations. Thus a far-reaching scholarly study on this literary period should be great relevance [2].

The Golden Horde period literature as a separate part of the cultural heritage produced by Turkic tribes has attracted close attention of scholars. These studies have led to important historical, philological and cultural conclusions [3].

The works of academician Vasily Bartold are included in such sources in Turkic literary history. His vast research on the political and cultural history of Golden Horde, provide an encyclopedic study of Turkic language and literature development within historical context [4].

Likewise, the Russian Turkologist Alexander Samoylovich considered that the Golden Horde period was a crucial stage of writing in the formation of Turkic written

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literature. His research offers a scientific insight into the formation of genres and the development of language in Turkic literary traditions.

Qutb, as one of the most representative writers during Golden Horde period, wrote multiple works that have an important place in Turkic literary history, including but not limited to “Khusraw and Shirin.” This work is a bright representative of the adaptation of traditions of Persian-Tajik literature within the Turkic world [5].

Another was Sayfi Sarayi, whose “Gulistan bit-Turki” shattered certain artificial limits to the usefulness of the Turkic language and represented a noteworthy milestone in the evolution of translation literature.

In contemporary Uzbek literary studies, the literature of the Golden Horde period has been a research topic in the works of B. Valikhodjaev, A. Hayitmetov, N. Komilov and other scholars. They systematize the history of Turkic literature development phases and assess the cultural-artistic importance of this period, making a significant contribution to both literature studies in general and Turkology [6].

Thus, The analysis of existing scholarly literature indicates that the literature of the Golden Horde period is an important stage in the formation of Turkic written literature, development of translation literature, construction of literary language and complication of genre systems. This period of literary heritage had a huge impact on the formation of Uzbek and other Turkic literatures in future centuries [7].

2. Research Methodology

The integrated application of modern literary, historical, and philological studies is needed in research on the study of the topic “Literature of the Golden Horde Period and Its Role in Turkic Literature Development.” The methodological basis of this study involves historicism, systematization, comparative-typological analysis and linguopoetic approaches.

The first aspect of this approach lies in the ability to study of the political, social and cultural setting during the Golden Horde period allowing one to outline those factors which affected literary processes therein. This approach contributes to bringing out cultural life during the 14th–15th centuries within the Golden Horde, establishment of Turkic language as an official and literary language, and interaction between literature, courts and religious environments.

The comparative-typological method allows consideration of the Golden Horde literature not in isolation, but as part of a continuum on the realization of Turkic literary centers including Movarounnahr, Khorezm, Anatolia, and Crimea. Such comparative studies are instrumental in determining the common and individual attributes of Turkic literature, its genre systems, artistic imagery, stylistic features etc.

The study also draws on textological (manuscript based) analysis. This method allows an examination, on the scientific basis of: manuscripts of the Golden Horde period, their variants, linguistic features and structural elements. This method works particularly well for religious-didactic and historical texts.

The linguistic features of metaphors, similes, repetitions and other stylistic elements characteristic of literary works of the Golden Horde period are investigated using the linguopoetic practice. This methodology allows to understand the state of development of literary language and its impact on subsequent periods of Turkic literature.

A system-comparative approach is also used, viewing literature of the Golden Horde as a symbiotic cultural phenomenon. This permits the analysis of genre composition, thematic scope, ideological orientation and aesthetic principles in a connected fashion.

3. Results

To explain the work (or text) of the Golden Horde period in a simple and understandable way for grades 6-9. Religious-didactic and hagiographic works “a tradition already well-established by this period” continued to be produced. Pamphlets, hagiographic epics, translation literature and historical works flourished. This period of literary works promoted and focused on topics of Islamic worldview, morality, human perfection, society and governance [8, 9]. More often than not, Golden Horde literature can be analysed as a phenomena resulting from the intermingling of Arabic, Persian and Turkic literary traditions. Literature developed considerably throughout this period, and works created in this era had a significant impact on the later development of Turkic literature in general, especially Uzbek literature [10]. The Turkic literature of the Golden Horde period, characterized by diversity of genres, richness of artistic style and strong religious and moral content. Through the 13th–14th centuries Turkic written literature underwent great maturation, and new genres started to generate. This process was inseparably connected with the political stability of the Golden Horde, the formation of trading routes and the increase in cultural contacts [11, 12].

Main Literary Genres of the Period

The following major genres developed during the Golden Horde period:

- Narrative prose (qissa)
- Epic poems
- Translation literature
- Historical works
- Lyric poetry

These genres played a crucial role in the evolution of Turkic literature.

Religious-Didactic Literature

The religious-didactic works were at the core of literature in this era. It is primarily based on the teachings of Islam and aims at the moral growth of individuals. Their primary objective was to reinforce ethical next-gen values in society, direct individuals towards righteousness and propagate religious knowledge. Key themes included [13]:

- Spiritual perfection of the individual
- Honesty and justice
- Patience and perseverance
- The importance of knowledge and enlightenment
- Fulfillment of religious duties

These works were written in a plain and clear language, which made them understandable by the masses. They would often intersperse verses from the Qur’an, hadiths and stories of the lives of prophets in ways that enhanced their emotional and moral power. Religion-didactic literature is a part of Turkic peoples spiritual life.

Development of the Qissa Genre

This period witnessed the dissemination of this form — the qissa genre, which reflects religious, historical and moral themes. This genre narrated stories about prophets, historical events and legendary figures. Qissa is a genre of literature that tells events in a narrative style, especially in the context of religious or historical figures. It was usually composed using plain language for a wide readership. The qissa genre served a number of useful purposes [14]:

- Promoting religious knowledge
- Providing moral education
- Preserving historical and religious narratives
- Encouraging enlightenment among the people

Many qissa works are written in Turkic language instead of Arabic or Persian which makes these more accessible to the people thus playing a huge role in development of this language.

Nasiruddin Rabghuzi and "Qissasi Rabghuziy"

Nasiruddin Rabghuzi is one of the most prominent representatives of Golden Horde literature. His "Qissasi Rabghuziy" is one of the renowned collection of prophetic stories in Turkic literature. It mirrors religious, moral and educational ideas and is considered to be an important literary monument of the time. This piece occupies an important place in the history of Turkic literature for the following reasons [15]:

- It made a major contribution to the development of Turkic literature
- It helped disseminate religious knowledge among the people
- It contributed to the development of the qissa genre
- It demonstrated the artistic potential of the Turkic language

The piece principally deals with the lives of prophets referred to in the Qur'an – Adam, Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad. Rabghuzi himself also took care to preserve simple and accessible style of these narratives, making his work widely understandable.

Other Important Works

Another influential text that helped establish qissa as a genre is Mahmud Kardari's "Nahjul Farodis" ("The Path to Paradise"). This work, written in a spirit of religious-educational purpose, informs Islamic terminology, the lives and deeds of prophets as well as moral precepts. It was popular among the people and but also played a tremendous role in moral education and spiritual guidance.

Epic Traditions

The written Turkic literature was influenced greatly by the ancient oral epic traditions of Turkic peoples during Golden Horde period. Written down and infused with new ideological meaning were epics, legends and myths. As a consequence, religious motifs were intertwined with folkloric symbolism, theatrical storytelling and artistic expression.

One of the main characteristics of Turkic written literature was religious-didactic epics. Notable amongst those are Sheikh Shari's "Muin ul-murid" and Husam Katib's "Jumjuma Sultan." These compositions are distinguished by their religious and moral content, relationship to Qur'anic stories, and consonance with oral traditions. These epics are characterized by:

- Broad epic narration
- Dominance of religious and moral ideas
- Use of folk style, imagery, and narrative elements
- Strong didactic orientation

"Muin ul-murid"

Epic "Muin ul-murid" is one of the significant examples of religious-didactic literature of Golden Horde period. It was established to follow Islamic moral values, guide them towards the path of righteousness, and focus on disseminating religious education And the knowledge of law among the Muslim people. Its title means "Helper of the disciple," representing guidance for truth-seekers.

Its thrust is on spiritual perfection, god-worship, patience, justice and piety. One of its features is the predominance of religious-didactic content based on Qur'anic verses and Islamic narratives. The language is simple and fluent which makes it easy for most part of the population to read.

Sufi ideas, especially those relating to spiritual purgation and moral growth also make important contributions to the work. Such literary elements render “Muin ul-murid” not merely a religious treatise but also an important body of literature that describes the spiritual ethos of its time.

One other important epic piece produced during the Golden Horde time was Husam Katib’s poem “Jumjuma Sultan”. The subject matter of this work is a religious-legendary сюжет, which reflects philosophical attitudes towards human life, death and the afterlife. The poem's plot is constructed over an old Islamic story concerning a skull (jumjuma). There was once a powerful and wealthy sultan proud of his status and treasures, yet when the unbearable weight of human vanity finally crushes him to dust, the tale of his skull demonstrates in stark detail that nothing is permanent except for death.

The work advocates the temporal nature of worldly possessions and kingship, human accountability for what lies ahead in the afterlife, the need for repentance and returning to a straight path.

Artistically, the poem also stood out. It integrates dramatic conversations, narrative features and imagery of oral folk traditions. Thus, the work serves to impart religious and moral lessons while also serving to provide aesthetic pleasure for the reader. Neither “Muin ul-murid” nor “Jumjuma Sultan ” constitute retellings of religious texts; instead, they are literary works in which religious сюжетlar are transcreated into easy artistic mediums that cater to broad audience.

A very important facet of literary character in the Golden Horde period is formation of literary translation. This was also a period of prolific translation into Turkic, or reworking into new artistic forms, of many canonical works in Arabic and Persian. Translation activity arose for a number of reasons: the prestige of Arabic and Persian literature in medieval Eastern culture, the rising demand among Turkic peoples for written literature, as well as growing interest in literature and scholarship at court.

The works were not translated word-for-word. Rather, authors retained the basic content of the original works but translated them into a Turkic milieu. And so such works are usually considered artistic or free translations. It significantly contributed to the formation and enrichment of Turkic written literature:

- **Genre diversity** – romantic, didactic, and philosophical epics developed significantly;
- **Improvement of artistic style** – the system of imagery and poetic expression became richer;
- **Development of literary language** – the Turkic language evolved into a fully capable medium for scientific and literary expression;
- **Strengthening of cultural connections** – Turkic literature became more closely connected with other Eastern literary traditions.

Examples of such literary translation – particularly a poem entitled “Khusraw and Shirin” by Qutb Khwarazmi, one of the most prominent writers during the Golden Horde period – provide remarkable insight into not only cultural but also linguistic exchanges that took place. Qutb Khwarazmi, one of the greatest Turkic poets in the 14th century. His work draws on the famous poem of the same name by great Persian poet Nizami Ganjavi.

Nizami Ganjavi’s “Khusraw and Shirin” is one of the most famous romantic epics in Eastern literature. Qutb has translated this into Turkic and prepared it in an artistic version. Some of the features of Qutb’s poem bear special note:

- a profound artistic interpretation of the theme of love;
- depiction of the psychological experiences of the characters;
- artistic perfection of the literary images;
- effective use of the rich poetic potential of the Turkic language.

Qutb's work holds an important place in the history of Turkic literature and is recognized as one of the earliest major romantic epics written in the Turkic language.

4. Conclusion

The Golden Horde period also served as an important stage in the evolution of Turkic literature. The translation of many works into the Turkic language from Arabic and Persian during this period, also greatly contributed to the growth of Turkic written literature. Notable scientific translations include Qutb Khwarazmi's "Khusraw and Shirin" and Sayfi Sarayi's "Gulistan bit-Turki." These works contributed to the enrichment of Turkic literature both in terms of content and form, formation of new literary traditions and played an important role in development of the Turkic as a literary language. Thus, we should consider the translation traditions of the Golden Horde period to be a phenomenon of immense cultural and thus scholarly importance. The Golden Horde period literature also played a significant role in the formation of Timurid era literature. The pieces written during this period became templates for subsequent authors regarding language, style and genre. The works of writers such as Nasiruddin Rabghuzi, Mahmud Kardari, Husam Katib, Qutb Khwarazmi and Sayfi Sarayi had a place in the literary heritage of Turkic peoples. Literature of this period was a strong basis for formation of Uzbek literature in the following centuries.

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