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The Effects of Ornamented Prose Style on Ottoman Historiography: the *Târih-i Ebü'l-Feth* [History of the Father of Conquest] by Tursun Bey

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Osmanlı Sarayı on dördüncü yüzyıldan itibaren İran ve Anadolu'da yetişmiş protokol, vergi sistemleri ve yargı alanında bilgi sahibi bir çok ilim adamına ev sahipliği yapmıştır. Bursa'da Farsça olarak kaleme alınmış erken tarihli eserler, Osmanlılar'ın devlet yönetimi açısından Selçuklular ve İlhanlıları taklit ettiklerini göstermektedir. Tursun Bey, süslü nesir yazıcılığını Osmanlı Sarayındaki vazifesi sırasında öğrenmiştir. Eseri Tarih-i Ebü'l-Feth, 1444-1488 yılları arasındaki hadisleri sistematik olarak anlatan bir kronik olmaktan ziyade, II. Mehmed ve ithaf edildiği II. Bayezid'in ilk sekiz yıllık hakimiyet dönemini anlatan bir medhiyedir. Tursun Bey'in tarih yazma tarzının kökleri Cüveynî'nin Tarih-i Cihangüşa'sına kadar gider. Eserin girişi siyasetname literatürü özelliklerini taşımaktadır. Tursun Bey, bir tarihçi olarak katib-i tebdir diye bilinen devlet adamları zümresine dahil edilebilir. Bu kişiler, mevkileri gereği Osmanlı Devleti'nin siyasetini belirleyen devlet adamlarıyla birlikte çalışmış ve tecrübelerini kaleme alarak devlet yönetiminde başkalarına örnek olmayı hedeflemişlerdir. Tursun Bey eserinin girişinde yer verdiği ideal toplum anlayışını İranlı meşhur filozof Tusi'den almış ve bu şekilde sultanların toplum içindeki üstünlüklerini haklı göstermeye çalışmıştır. Tursun Bey'in bu yaklaşımına onun hayatında bizzat tecrübe ettiği bir takım hadiseler de sebep olmuş olabilir. O, gençliğinde, 1443-1448 yılları arasında Osmanlı-Macar savaşlarına, 1463-1479 yılları arasında doğu ve batıdan Osmanlı Devleti'ne yöneltilen tehlikelere ve II. Mehmed'in vefatından sonra meydana gelen karışıklıklara şahit olmuştur. Tursun Bey'in medhiyye tarzı II. Mehmed'in siyasi, askeri faaliyetleri ve başarılarıyla daha iyi örtüşürken, oğlu II. Bayezid'in siyasi ve askeri faaliyetlerine uygun düşmemektedir. II. Mehmed'in hayatı boyunca karşı karşıya kaldığı birkaç başarısızlık Tursun Bey tarafından zafer veya kader olarak nitelenirken, II. Bayezid'in sefer yapmadaki isteksizliği ve zaferlerinin azlığı Tursun Bey'i sıkıntıya sokmuştur. Yazarın sultanı haklı gösterme çabası bu hadiselerin daha fazla dikkat çekmesini sağlamıştır. Tursun Bey'in medhiyyesindeki kararsızlığı ve zayıflıkları Tarih-i Ebü'l-Feth'i edebi açıdan bir başarısızlık olarak nitelemeyi güçleştirmektedir. Eser kaleme alındıktan sonra geçen yüzyıldan önce ilk defa Kemalpaşazade tarafından kullanılmıştır. Ancak bu tarzın Türkçedeki ilk misali olması eserdeki bir takım aksaklıkları tabii kılmaktadır. Tursun Bey edebi tarzından uzaklaştıkça ayrıntıya girmekte ve bizlere gerçek tarihi bilgiyi vermektedir.

INTRODUCTION

It is well known that many of the general histories of the Ottoman house were composed in Bayezid II's time. Aşıkpaşazade, Ruhi, Neşri, Mehmed Konevi, Kivami, Sarıca Kemal and Tursun Bey were all historians who concluded their works with the events of 1484-85. The first and foremost reason for this unusually intense activity was no doubt Sultan Bayezid II's desire to see such works written, and the *ulema* [learned men] of his time responded to it. It is also known that, unsatisfied with the current histories of his house, Bayezid II gave orders for two great *münşis* [prose composers] of his time, Idris in Persian, Ibn Kemal in Turkish, to write this history again¹. The first demonstrated that Ottoman history could be recorded in Persian as elegantly and grandiloquently as the history of other dynasties had been, the second showed that the Turkish language was now an adequate vehicle for the same rhetorical devices². Bayezid represented a reactionary policy in all political, social, and legal fields in contrast to the Mehmed the Conqueror. In all the above-mentioned works, Bayezid is depicted primarily as a just and law-abiding ruler with the mission of consolidating the large conquests effected by his predecessor. Not only did reaction to the Conqueror's policies characterize the compilations made under Bayezid II, but also the consciousness of having established a universal Muslim empire in competition for supremacy with the Mamluk and Persian states in the East required a new evaluation of Ottoman history at that time³.

It is clear that Sasanian Iran substantially influenced the governmental foundations of Islam. For that reason, it would be reasonable to suppose that the earliest Islamic manuals for chancery officials were modelled on Iranian versions. The activity of Iranian secretaries in the early Islamic chanceries led to the development of Persian *inşâ* [art of letter writing] literature. With the development of the classical Persian literary language in the 10th century, Persian manuals for letter writing must also have been produced.

The Ottomans in the 14th century must have had in their palace many learned men who were well acquainted with the protocol, chancery practice, and taxation systems of the Mongol period in Islamic Iran and Anatolia. This was formulated in several manuals written in Persian. A good example is the famous Persian Saâdetname [work of happiness] written around 707/1307 by 'Alâ' al-Dîn-i Tabrîzî, showing the governmental and fiscal arrangement of the Ilkhanids, and available in a copy completed in Bursa in 815/1412-3. It is clear from the early date of this guide that the Ottomans were imitating the administrative foundations of the Seljuqs and Ilkhanids. At about the same time the Ottoman writer Ahmed-i Dâ-i was writing his Teressül [calmness and gentleness] (before 820/1417), the first guide to letter writing in the Turkish language. The next known manual is Menâhicü'l-İnşâ [methods of letter writing] (before 884/1479). Later, in about 893/1487, Hüsanzâde Efendi wrote his Mecmua-i İnşâ [assembled book of letter writing]. During the reign of Selim I (d. 1520), Mahmud bin Edhem Amasya'vi wrote his Gülşen-i İnşâ [the rose garden of letter writing]⁴.

THE *TARİH-İ EBÜ'L-FETH* [HISTORY OF THE FATHER OF CONQUEST]
BY TURSUN BEY

Tursun Bey, like the 16th century Ottoman historians Selaniki⁵ and Ali⁶, was an expert in financial and chancery affairs. He maintained that during his forty years of serving in government he acted as *Divan Katibi*⁷ [Secretary in the Imperial Council], *Anadolu Defterdarı* [Financial Secretary in Anatolia], *Anadolu Defter Kethüdalığı* [Keeper of the Timar Registers in Anatolia], *Defterdar*⁸ [Secretary of Finance], and that he also served as *Yazıcı* [Registrar] in the registrations of houses, fields, and vineyards of Constantinople after its conquest⁹.

Whereas the language of the three contemporary 'popular' historians (Aşıkpaşazâde, Neşri, and Oruç) is simple Turkish¹⁰, Tursun Bey's syntax and vocabulary are heavily influenced by Arabic and Persian, and the entire work composed in an elaborate *inşâ* prose interspersed with Turkish, Arabic, and Persian verses, and verses of the Quran. Another characteristic of Tursun Bey's History is that he frequently uses sentences compounded from Arabic and Persian syntax and vocabulary, which he then translates into plain Turkish, after the word *yani* [that is to say]. In terms of these peculiarities, Tursun Bey's History is close to the slightly later *Tevârih-i Âl-i Osman* [The Histories of Exalted Ottomans] by Kemal Paşazâde, which was also written in Bayezid II's time.

Tursun Bey's *Târîh-i Ebü'l-Feth*¹¹ is not a systematic chronicle of events but essentially a panegyric on the reigns of Mehmed II¹² and of its dedicatee Bâyezid II.¹³ It belongs to a genre of history writing with a literary pedigree that goes back to Cüveynî's *Târîh-i Cihângüşâ* [History of the World Conqueror] and is the first example of this type in Turkish. The Introduction can be placed in the tradition of the 'Mirrors for Princes' literature, in which an imperial servant – in our case Tursun Bey – offers advice on rulership to the reigning Sultan¹⁴. Tursun Bey evidently learned to write in this *inşâ* style as a result of his employment in the Ottoman chancery. Indeed, he includes one example of his official epistolary style – the letter to İsfendiyaroğlu İsmail¹⁵ – in the body of his History. This chancery style, exemplified in the *inşâ* manuals, was one in which Ottoman men of letters aspired to write¹⁶, and Tursun Bey's History is an early example of this genre¹⁷.

The main section of the *History* conforms to its Persian models in that the events which Tursun describes are usually exemplary, or occasions for eulogising the Sultan, hence his tendency to omit or gloss over events which, to the modern mind, might seem important, and to emphasise incidents which might appear trivial. For example, the most prominent incident in his account of the first Karaman Campaign is Mehmed's refusal to accede to the demands of the Janissaries. Tursun evidently selected this incident because it was exemplary: an instance of the Sultanic *siyaset* [policy] necessary for the preservation of order. In other places, he highlights events – notably the defeat of the Moldavians in the Campaign of 1462¹⁸ – because they are exemplary illustrations of divine intervention in human affairs.

The most prominent element is panegyric. The specific models, which Tursun seems to have had in mind, were the panegyric histories of Timur¹⁹. This emerges not simply from the literary style, which emulates Nizamüddin Şami and Şerafüddin Yazdi, but also from Tursun's direct reference to Şerafüddin Yazdi²⁰, and from his comment in his section on the Bosnian Campaign of 1463, that Mehmed had waged more Holy Wars than Timur²¹. This favourable comparison with Timur is above all a panegyric device, but Tursun perhaps also intended to hint that the Ottomans had thrown off the ignominy of the defeat of 1402²². The panegyric mode frequently determines the way in which Tursun presents events. Most obviously perhaps, the failed siege of Belgrade in 1456²³ is presented as a victory. In this case, Tursun entirely glosses over the scale of the Ottoman defeat and he is able to use the death of *Yanko* [Janos Hunyadi] as evidence that the Sultan had achieved his end²⁴.

The primary purpose of Tursun Bey's History was to use the events described, officially to praise the sultans Mehmed II and Bâyezid II and, unofficially but more sincerely, to praise his master, Mahmûd Pasha²⁵. There are, however, inconsistencies in the panegyric pattern. In the largest section of the book, on Mehmed II, this Sultan is consistently praised, whereas in the Introduction and in the shorter section on Bâyezid II, he also becomes the subject of criticism, especially for his confiscation of wakfs or *awqāf* [pious foundations]²⁶. The reason for this may be that when Tursun began writing the work he intended it for presentation to Mehmed II. When the Sultan's death prevented this, his successor, Bâyezid II, became the focus of praise and Tursun was able to use the latter's return of the confiscated wakfs as an example of his royal munificence.

In his record of Mehmed II's first Karaman campaign, for example, Tursun does not seem to be interested in giving a historical account, but seeks rather to give an example of the Sultan's use of punishment, as adumbrated in the introduction. Despite the fact that the Sultan imposed heavy punishment on the Janissaries, Tursun is very careful to say that the Sultan's generosity was universal. In short, Tursun presents the Sultan as a person exemplifying the virtue of generosity and yet capable of imposing punishment²⁷. When he mentions the building of the castle of *Boğazkesen*²⁸ he says that no Muslim king was able to conquer the city of Constantinople, perhaps in order to augment the prestige of the Sultan's conquest²⁹.

In addition to these, as Tursun Bey recorded before the story of the conquest of Morea, some Ottoman commanders and Janissary Agas expressed discontent with Sultan Mehmed's making so many expeditions. Here Tursun makes Mahmud Pasha defend the Sultan's action, saying that anyone whom God has made *halife* [ruler] has the duty of waging holy war against the infidels so that his sultanate may be strong and receive God's blessing. This idea, if a ruler makes an expedition and wages a holy war only to gain the approval of God, then he will be helped by God in his deeds in this world and will also have happy life in the next world, is also repeated before the Bosnian expedition of 1463 where Tursun Bey explains that this was one of the expeditions motivated by a desire to obtain God's approval. In the story Tursun next makes the Sultan piously summon the King of Bosnia to Islam. This presents him as a ruler who clearly follows

the rules for holy war. In the story it is also claimed that the Sultan had waged more holy wars than Tamerlane³⁰.

In a eulogistic passage comparing Mehmed to Alexander the Great, Tursun again diverts the reader's attention from the Sultan's failure to subdue all the country during the first Albanian Campaign of 1466. However, to conceal the failure of the campaign Tursun explains that Albania was famous for its difficulty of access and even Alexander the Great was unable to enter it. The comparison between the Sultan and Alexander the Great was clearly made in order to justify the failure of the first campaign to take Albania completely³¹.

The story of the battle of Otlukbeli has a different character in narrating the doings of Mehmed II and Bayezid II since two of them were present in the battle and Bayezid was the ruling sultan as Tursun was writing his work. Tursun begins this section with a *medhiyye* [eulogy] in which he enumerates Sultan Mehmed's conquests. He then places his material in an apocalyptic framework, by stating that God created Uzun Hasan in order to create a rival whose defeat would exalt Mehmed's greatness. To this he adds an account of Uzun Hasan's conquests against which to offset Mehmed's.

In his narrative Tursun Bey continues to show Sultan Mehmed as a ruler who wages holy war. One case is the story of the Holy War of Moldovia. Here he stresses that the ruler's duty is to conduct holy wars. With these introductory words, he clearly wished to represent the Sultan as one who fought religious battles and sought God's approval for his deeds. However, his main motive for including this passage must be to introduce a major theme in the account of the campaign, which follows. This is the theme of divine intervention on behalf of the Sultan's army, bringing it unknowingly to the *voyvoda's* [vaivoda] hiding place and allowing his defeat; and then freezing the moats of the Hungarian castles, allowing them to be captured in the following expedition³².

Tursun Bey also recorded as victories two expeditions that were not under the direct command of Sultan Mehmed and that resulted in defeat. In the stories of Rhodes and the Italian expedition Tursun Bey probably used Neşri as a written source. There are however major differences between the two historians. Tursun's account is less detailed and most important of all, unlike Neşri, he does not admit that both of these campaigns ended in an Ottoman defeat. As we have seen, Tursun Bey either omits or glosses over the defeats that the Sultan or his commanders suffered, for example at Belgrade in 1456. What Tursun seems to have done is to rewrite by selectively combining some details from Neşri while omitting others. Tursun's aim in altering Neşri's material is obvious. He wishes to show Gedik Ahmed's success as coming as a divine gift from God and, more importantly, from the divine influence of the Sultan, the Shadow of God. This aim is made even clearer when he describes Otranto as being "like the fortress of Constantinople; with the *himmet* [help] of the Sultan, Gedik Ahmet had conquered a fortress as great as Constantinople. Tursun Bey seems also to have used Neşri in his account of Mesih Pasha's Rhodes expedition. Neşri records that Mesih Pasha returned defeated, but Tursun again omits this, to relate misleadingly that Mesih Pasha returned

successful and laden with much booty. It should be noted that, in reality, Mesih Pasha was dismissed from office as a result of the failed campaign³³.

Tursun Bey's last story of Sultan Mehmed is his Anatolian campaign and also his death. Tursun begins the first section with a passage of poetry, which acts as an overture to the story that he goes on to tell. In it he states that sultans may not be able to achieve all their ends since God exists and they can only achieve those that find acceptance with God. Tursun's narrative of the Sultan's death is of a different character, consisting solely of admonitory and moralistic clichés. The theme of this section concerns the unfaithfulness of the world in which no man may stay. The world is viewed as a place of testing since whatever a man does in this world decides his situation in the hereafter. Towards the end of the story Tursun adds a moralistic-theological passage on the fate of the soul after death, which he attributes to a famous sheikh. Tursun's aim in composing this paragraph might have been to underline the good and also the bad that the Sultan had done in the world. Most likely, however, the passage was an admonition aimed at the new ruler, Bayezid II³⁴.

After the above story Tursun Bey gives an account of the interregnum which followed the death of Sultan Mehmed³⁵. Here Tursun again repeats the idea quoted from Tusi³⁶ that the existence of a sultan is necessary in society, since without a sultan order cannot be maintained³⁷. According to Tursun Bey the Sultan died; yet this was the cause of the succession of Sultan Bayezid that was a happy event. Tursun describes the event according to its natural progress. He also says that the most important thing is to be a good believer, which indeed Sultan Bayezid was. Tursun Bey lends his weight to the forces seeking to establish the new Sultan on the throne. In this section Tursun presents Sultan Bayezid as an exemplar of the true believer who has God's support. Here Tursun also records that his real aim in composing the works of Sultan Mehmed was to prepare for his narration of the works of Sultan Bayezid. This, apart from flattering Bayezid, suggests that Tursun was thinking of writing a complete history of the time of Sultan Bayezid. It would appear, however, that, as an old man, he did not find time to accomplish that work, or some unknown event prevented him fulfilling his ambition.

Tursun also presents the new Sultan as a generous and just ruler who brings order to the world. He is, as Tursun depicts him, endowed with the virtue of justice and in all virtues he surpasses all those who before him had been famed for their good qualities. In one of the *mesnevis*³⁸ he also claims rhetorically that the Sultan had doubled the amount of the previous Sultan's soldiers and property. He then recites the new Sultan's favours shown to his people, but fails to give a specific account of the matter. In his continuing eulogy of Sultan Bayezid, Tursun Bey uses two linked themes. The first of these is the prosperity of trade under the aegis of the Sultan, and the second is the renewal of justice, and the suppression of *bidat* [illegalities]. This reflects the concept, which is commonplace in Islamic political theory, that prosperity flows from the ruler's justice. However, Tursun may also have intended it as a specific reference to the codification of *kanun* [law] that received its initial impetus under Bayezid³⁹ at precisely the same time as Tursun

was composing his History. In this respect this passage on the Sultan's justice may be linked to Tursun's justification of Sultanic *siyaset* in the introduction⁴⁰.

Bâyezid's conquest of Kilia and Akkerman serves primarily as a eulogy of the reigning Sultan to whom the work was presented, and depicts the campaign as a success greater even than the victories of Mehmed the Conqueror. The section opens with a poem declaiming that sovereignty was given to the Sultan by God to enable him to defeat his enemies, rhetorically adding that Sultan Bayezid's soldiers were greater in number than those of his father, thereby clearly seeking to represent Bayezid as a person more powerful and more popular than his father. Tursun presents the Sultan's wish to conduct a holy war and gain victory in order to render praise for the blessing and help granted him by God. Tursun thus establishes his argument that in return for God's help, the ruler's duty is to conduct holy wars and conquer new lands. With this as his theme, he adduces reasons why Kara Boğdan was chosen and deserving of this punishment. The way in which Tursun relates how the Sultan decided to undertake the expedition, suggests that in reality the Sultan was perhaps reluctant to go and that he was compelled into action in order to dispel any suspicion that he fell short either as a leader or as an example. As he sets forth this argument, Tursun seems to be aware of the Sultan's reluctance and tries to introduce reasons why the Sultan should make the expedition to obtain God's approval. In the story, Tursun interprets the ensuing events – such as the army's progress to the Danube, the river crossing, and the conquest of Kilia – as a particular success for the Sultan, since his father had not attacked the castle despite his great might. Clearly, in every possible point, Tursun is comparing Bayezid with his father and representing Bayezid as superior, and giving literary substance to his earlier statement that his description of the Conqueror's reign was merely a prelude to his description of Bayezid's⁴¹. The narrative continues with the conquest of Akkerman, but this account too is bereft of concrete detail. The narratives of each of the conquests end with Tursun's customary statement of the appointment of a *kâdi* [judge], a *sancak beyi* [chief of subdivision of a province], and a *dizdâr* [warden of a castle]. The story of the two conquests ends with a prayer for the Sultan's victory and a statement that after *Yıldırım Bayezid* [Bayezid the Thunderbolt], the Sultan was the second one who succeeded in making calls to prayer on the other side of the river Danube. The reference to Bayezid the Thunderbolt – i.e. Bayezid I – is obviously included in order to present Bayezid II as a conqueror as great as his namesake⁴².

Tursun next relates how the Sultan ordered raids into other lands, but does not specify their names, mentioning merely the capture of many strongholds and castles, but again without attaching names to the places referred to. In fact, Tursun was clearly not interested in such details, since his purpose in mentioning the raids was simply to establish the Sultan's credentials as a Holy Warrior. In the story of the expedition to Kilia and Akkerman there is also an invention of a dialogue in an assembly between a wise old man who praises the Sultan as a Holy Warrior, and an impudent young man who criticises the Sultan for no longer continuing with the Holy War. In the debate the old man silences the young man's criticisms. Coming as it does immediately after a section

that proves that Bayezid was a greater Holy Warrior even than his father, it is clearly intended to silence critics who wished Bayezid to continue with his father's wars in Europe (especially perhaps his assault on Otranto). Tursun must, in fact, have known that war in the West was not a possibility while the Sultan's brother Cem was still alive. However, Tursun presents the debate not in terms of real politic, but in literary/theological terms.

After the above information Tursun Bey mentions Karagöz Pasha's Arabian expedition and Ali Pasha's Moldovian and Arabian expedition. Tursun seems to have used a written source for composing his accounts of Karagöz Pasha's Arabian and Ali Pasha's Moldovian expeditions. The account of Ali Pasha's Arabian expedition seems to be related from Tursun Bey's own experiences. The written source might have been Neşri, but Tursun appears to have made some modifications to Neşri's account and to have supplemented it with further information. For example, each historian presents different reasons for the expedition. Tursun refers to the confiscation of the Indian ruler's gift by the Egyptian ruler, while Neşri, in stereotypical language suggesting that this is no more than a *topos*, refers to attacks on pilgrims from the Sultan's territory. Like Neşri, Tursun names the expedition's commander as Karagöz Pasha, but adds that he was the tutor to the Sultan's son Şehinşah who was in Karaman. Like Neşri, Tursun goes on to say that Karagöz went first to Adana and that he then captured Tarsus and Gülek. However, to Neşri's list of conquests, Tursun adds the castle of Annakşan. According to Neşri the garrison came voluntarily to do obeisance to the Pasha, while Tursun strongly implies the use of force. Tursun gives the names of tribes in exactly the same order as Neşri, but claims that the tribes were 'devastated and destroyed' by Karagöz Pasha, while Neşri again implies that they submitted voluntarily⁴³. Thus the substance of the two accounts is almost identical. What differences there are seem largely to reflect the different literary purposes of the authors. Neşri wished to present Bayezid as the 'just Sultan' who removes oppression from the Muslims, while Tursun wished to present him as the Sultan who utterly destroys his enemies. These are both standard themes in panegyric.

At the end of the final section of his work Tursun Bey describes Ali Pasha's Cilician expedition against the Mamluks. At the beginning of the story he justifies the campaign, but, more interesting than this, is his need to justify the Sultan's failure to lead the expedition in person. He does this by presenting it as a matter of honour. The Mamluks were slaves and for Bayezid to confront them in person would have been beneath his dignity. So he sent a slave – Ali Pasha -- against the slaves. The need to justify for a second time the Sultan's refusal to go war in person, suggests that this was the subject of severe criticism and perhaps seen as the cause of the failure of the Ottoman army against the Mamluks. In his account of the battle with the Mamluks, Tursun also does his best to conceal the scale of the Ottoman defeat. He admits to the rout of the two wings of the army, but counterbalances this with a description of Ali Pasha's defeat of the Mamluk's centre. He presents the Ottoman defeat effectively as a planned and orderly withdrawal, and fails to mention that the Mamluks took Hersekzade Ahmed and other important Ottoman

commanders prisoner. He does, however, present two reasons for the Ottoman failure to secure victory: the exhaustion of the troops after they had been employed in fortress building, and the Varsak's plundering of the Ottoman camp⁴⁴.

THE ORIGINS OF TURSUM BEY'S LITERARY STYLE

Persian influence was not, however, confined to the 'official' style of the Ottoman chancery, and to the literary work of those who, like Tursun, were trained in this tradition. With royal patronage, Persian influence became all-pervasive in the literature of the Ottoman *elite* during the second half of the 15th century. Poets and prose-writers imitated Persian models, and Mehmed II commissioned a certain Şehdi to compose an *Ottoman Shâhnâme* [poetical history] in Persian; and Bayezîd II commissioned İdrîs-i Bitlisi to write an Ottoman History in Persian. Poets and *litterateurs* came to the Ottoman palace from Azerbaijan, Iran, and Khorasan and, as the following anecdote shows, were more highly prized there than native writers. The Turkish Poet Lâ'li introduced himself to the Ottoman palace in Persian and received a *tekke* [dervish lodge] and many gifts from Mehmed II. However, when it was later discovered that he was a Turk from the city of Tokat, his *tekke* was taken back and he was discredited⁴⁵. To summarize, we may cite the words of Prof. V.L. Menage:

By the beginning of the 16th century nearly all kinds of Ottoman literature had fallen under into Persian influence: the models had been studied and the language developed to the point where writers could aspire to producing works which in elaboration and would vie with those of the poets and prose-writers of Persia⁴⁶.

This then was the literary environment in which Tursun Bey was writing. He had learned the craft of composition in the Chancery, and no doubt many Persian manuals of *inşâ* and the models which he used specially for the composition of a prose history were again Persian. The prototype for this style of historiography was Juvaini's *History of the World Conqueror* (composed between 1252 and 1280).

E.G. Browne has characterized the style of this work as follows:

It is a style which disposes of all rhetorical devices known to the Euphuists. Word-plays are indulged in, whenever possible, and these are not merely puns as we understand them but what might be called visual puns, which appeal to the eye only, two words being identical in shape though perhaps entirely dissimilar in pronunciation. The text is interlarded with quotations from the Arabic and Persian poets, with verses of the author's own composition and with passages from the Kor'an; and the chapters begin and end or are interrupted in the middle with reflections on such subject as the vanity of human wishes or the inexorability of Fate. However, Juvaini was a man of taste; he had his rhetoric under some measure of control and could, when the occasion demanded it, tell his tale in the plainest and most straightforward language. In this he differed from his admirer and continuator Vassaf, who has been described as being 'so ornate in style that one cannot see the wood for the trees'⁴⁷.

Vassâf's *History* (composed about A.D.1328), as Charles Rieu pointed out,

contains an authentic contemporary record of an important period, but its undoubted value is in some degree diminished by the want of method in its arrangement, and still more by the highly artificial character and tedious redundancy of its style. In one occasion the author was called upon to read aloud and proved utterly unintelligible to his Majesty (Uljaitu) until explained by Rashidud-Din and other courtiers. He was nevertheless rewarded with a robe of honour and the title of Vassâf ul-Hazrat, "His Majesty's Panegyrist"⁴⁸.

This heavy, ornamented prose style continued to be the way of history writing in Persian and in the Near East many years after the Mongol conquest. As Jan Schmidt explains:

The historian Vassâf, with his famous 'History', contributed in particular to an increasing tendency among later Persian prose-writers towards an 'exuberant embellishment and affectation' to the point even of 'monstrous bombast'. Vassâf was widely imitated by Ottoman historians who wrote in Turkish. From the late 15th century onwards, the Turkish language, borrowing copiously from the treasury of the Arabo-Persian vocabulary, developed its most prestigious and sophisticated variant⁴⁹.

Tursun Bey's *Târîh-i Ebül-Feth* and Sinan Pasha's *Tazarru'name* in the 15th century and Kemalpaşazâde's *Tevârih-i Al-i Osman* and Gelibolulu Mustafa Ali's *Künh'ül-Abbar*⁵⁰ in the 16th century exemplify this style. It reached a high point in the 17th century with the works of Nergisi and Veysi⁵¹.

It is possible to place Tursun Bey's literary pedigree not simply within the general scheme of Perso-Turkish literature, but within a particular line of historical writing which had begun with Juvaini's celebration of the conquests of Chingiz Khan and with the history of his continuator, Vassâf. The following extracts exemplify their style.

In Juvaini's *History* we read the following:

And the battle continued all that day, and the fighting lasted till the evening prayer, when by the disappearance of the greater luminary the face of the world became as black as the face of evildoers and the back of the earth as dark as the belly of a well.

Last night, at the time when the shadow of the earth lay in ambush for the steed of light, I beheld the whole of the inhabitable globe in blackness like a miserable hovel.

Thou mightest truly have said that it was a black pavilion raising its head unto the highest heaven.

Thereupon they shouted the sword of combat, and each army rested in its own quarters...⁵²

...whilst he himself pursued Jalal-ad-Din like the wind, which drives the clouds until he came up with him on the banks of the Indus...

The Sultan, for his part, seeing that the day of action was arrived and the time of battle, set his face to combat with the few men that were still left to him. He hastened from right to left and from the left charged the Mongol centre. He attacked again and again, but the Mongol armies advanced little by little leaving him less space to manoeuvre and less room to do battle, but still he continued to fight like an angry lion.

Whithersoever he spurred on his charger, he mingled dust with blood.

...He was brought a fresh horse, and mounting it he attacked them again and returned from the charge at the gallop.

Like the lightning he struck upon the water and like the wind he departed...⁵³

A similar passage in Vassâf's *History* reads:

...With the same quill and on the same white sheet of paper. Begins the sketch (outline) of a drawing of historical masses and the inscription of the talisman of the stories as follows:

When Mengü Kaan in the year 655-1257 called up armies from the furthest reaches of the East to free his empire and sent his brother Kubilai with a mighty army and much equipment to near the Chinese border the succession of Khanship finished for him at the same time, and in accordance with the custom of the lot, which is untouched by the plea: 'it provides luck (happiness) and demands back its gifts.' The charter of his rule was reclaimed by sending the envoy that destroys all joy, and by execution of the message of the Qur'an verse: 'When their hour of death arrives, they will neither delay it even for an hour nor speed it up.'

(Arabic couplet)

'The world always takes (claims) back what it has given;
Oh may it never be mean in giving.'

Such rule and such armed strength, such power and riches were not to deter death and instead of being in his triumphal processions he was breathing his last breath. 'Such days are in turn given to human beings.'

This happened in the last months of the year 656/1258. When his brother Anghbuka had received this message at Karakorum, which was the centre point of empire and the assembly point of the army, mad vanity and craving for the Khanship overcame him. Kotoghtai, Baltu's mother, the greatest of Mengü Kaan's wives, agreed with him. The sons, Usfai, Jurultash and Sirege and some grandchildren of Chaghatai and Arkadai, Aghul, Kulkan's son, supported his plan and helped him to become ruler.

(Persian couplet)

'Now one, now another will arise.
The world does not remain without an administrator.'

The Ilkhanid period in Persia, which Juvaini and Vassaf had celebrated, ended with the death of Abu Sa'id in 736/1335. Timur was born in the same year, and his career of conquest, like those of Chingiz Khan and his successors, was to be the subject of panegyric historiography, in the style of their Ilkhanid predecessors. These were the *Histories* of Nizam al-Din Shami and Sharif al-Din 'Ali Yazdi.

A link between the Ilkhanid and Timurid histories is provided by Maulana Mu'in al-Din Yazdi known as Mu'allim Yazdi⁵⁴. He was a resident of the Muzaffarid capital of Yazd, and began compiling his history, the *Tarikh-i Mu'mi Muzaffari*, in 757/1356 in Isfahan. It took ten years to complete⁵⁵ and came to be regarded as a model of elegance⁵⁶.

The first Timurid chronicler, Nizam al-Din Shami, is famous as the writer of the only known history of Timur composed in his lifetime. This book has the same title as the later and more famous history by Sharaf al-Din Ali Yazdi: *Zafarnâme*. He was a resident of Baghdad when Timur occupied it in 795/1392-3. Timur bestowed his patronage on him and in 804/1401-2 invited him to his court and instructed him to compose the history of his sovereignty and his victories, and also ordered him particularly to particularly abstain from bombast and rhetoric, and to record events in a clear and understandable way so that ordinary people could comprehend. His *History* ends with the year 806/1404, the year before Timur's death⁵⁷.

The following passage is an example of Nizam al-Din's style:

On the Death of Yıldırım Bayezid

In the meantime, although Bayezid was suffering from a chronic illness, certain mental states accompanied it, causing it to be augmented. The bondman of His Highness, the auspicious emir, presented the case to him out of compassion, upon which the Prince ordered renowned physicians to attend to him and made every effort to make sure that Bayezid persevered in taking wholesome draughts and agreeable nourishments. The Prince had it in his noble and enlightened mind to honour and revere Bayezid and reinstate him after the former had dealt with the affairs relating to Constantinople so that the world might realize his comprehensive amnesty and perfect mercy, and that they might know that His Highness would conquer countries at the point of his sharp sword and at the same time would invest people with authority by a mere nod of the head. But, as the poet points out,

(Couplet)

'I try my best, yet fate says to me, "There is something going on which is beyond your competence to control".

Contrivance does not tally with predestination and thus fated death seized Bayezid by the collar, illness overpowered him, the state of disease became victorious, and his strength began to ebb away, his brief space of time expired, and the period of respite came to an end. The demander of souls entrusted to humans (the angel of death) proclaimed the mandate. There is recorded time] for every [instant of] death,' and the reckoner, according to the verse, 'everything [or action] counts,' brought the account of his life to an end.

(Couplet)

'Whether you stay in this world a hundred years or even a thousand, all things will end in death.'

The above quotation shows that despite Timur's order, the style of Nizam-i Shami's writing is still bombastic and rhetorical, and carries many traces of the Persian ornamented prose-writing style: decorated paragraphs, couplets, poems, and *ayat* from the Qur'an.

Of the historians of the Timurid age, Sharaf al-Din Yazdi's reputation rests principally on his work, the *Zafarnâme*. The book has an unbearably bombastic and grandiose style. Its writer argues that he used first-hand sources while he was composing the book.

However, it is known that his information and material, including the quotations from the Qur'an and from the poets⁵⁸, is taken mainly from his precursor Nizam al-Din Shami. The following is an example of Yazdi's style:

Hadji Barlas no sooner had advice of their march, than he put himself in a posture of defence; and when he was near Kerch, the two armies came in view at a place called Akiar. They gave the signal for battle by the sound of kettle-drums, and presently there were heard on all sides the cries of soldiers who were encouraged to smite their enemies: there was so great a dust that one could not see a person at four paces' distance; yet the soldiers of both armies did not mix together. Blood flowed from all sides, and everyone gave the best proofs of his valor. The fight was so bloody, that the authors, who have mentioned the battles of Rustam and Esfendiyar, have described them as less terrible than this. At length the victory fell to the side of the brave Timur, by the death of the principal officers of the army of Barlas who was obliged to fly to Samarqand to join Mir Bayezid⁵⁹.

These Ilkhanid and Timurid histories were to be Tursun Bey's model. Although Tursun Bey was the first Ottoman historian to adopt the ornamented style of the Ilkhanid and Timurid histories, Ottoman writers in other branches of literature had already assimilated Persian influences. Examples are the poets Ahmed-i Da'i, Niyazi⁶⁰, and Ahmedi who were writing before the Battle of Ankara (1402). In the 15th century, under royal patronage, the trend continued, exemplified by the work of Ahmed Pasha and Necati at the court of Mehmed II. Prose writing showed a similar development, becoming progressively more ornate and culminating perhaps in the *Tazarru'nâme* of Sinan Pasha between 889 and 890/1484 and 1485, a mystical work written in prose interspersed with verses⁶¹.

Sinan Pasha's style, which was clearly much admired, is characterized by the use of parallel rhyming sentences, as the following extracts demonstrate. They provide a kind of *tafsir* on the Names of God. *Tazarru'nâme* reads:

It was said in the science of the white jewelled tooth of the ocean fishes and in the dark kohled eye of the desert gazelle that 'He knew whatever there is on the earth and in the sea' and it was written in the book of every orchard and garden's flower and the autumn's dignified leaf that 'Not a leaf doth fall hut with His knowledge: There is not a grain in the darkness(or depths) of the earth, nor anything fresh or dry (green or withered), but is (inscribed) in a Record Clear (to those who can read)

My God! You are the All-Compassionate that the rose garden of Paradise is reality of your forgiveness's rose garden, and you are the Overwhelming One so that the levels of hell are the lowest sparks of your anger's fire."

(Couplet)

'The Eight Paradises are his brilliance's flash.
The Seven Hells are the power of his fire's light'

You are the Omniscient One, so that, in order to obtain one point from your knowledge's library, the nine heavens, all together, become twisted and bewildered: and you are the Beneficent One so that the conditions of all intelligence's tongues, in the highest scattering (resurrection) and in the expanding of names become mute and dumb..."

The following passage from Tursun Bey's *History* shows the similarity of his style both with that of the Persian *Histories* quoted earlier and with the *Tazarru'nâme*. Tursun Bey writes:

(Couplet)

'Before him good fortune, behind him prosperity,
On the right of him victory (with God's help), on the left of him attack.'

Prose - He attacked the fortress, and the drummer played and by the grace of God, he commanded 'plunder'. God is most great.

The envoys of death and the messengers of destruction – that is to say, the artillery – which they had prepared before, were brought forward and, before the stunned infidels had time to recover from the blow of the cannon, the songs of war were played on all sides, the ghazis attacked, shoulder to shoulder, like the roaring lion, calling Allah Allah. At this very time, from the clouds of bows, a rain of arrows began to fall and the arrow-bird flew from the curved tower and on the branch of whoever's body it met, it gathered the fruit of his life and rolled up the page (scroll) of his deeds.

(Line of poetry)

'Like the smoke of naphtha fire and like the hard-hearted Christian princelet (*tekfur*)
'As if it had been a shadow.'

It descended on the fortress; as if the good fortune of the pious Sultan made the meaning of the *ayah* 'When we shook the mount over them' to the People of Polytheism and Destruction. In short, from within and without the cannon and musket, falconet and small arrow, arrow and sharp-headed arrows were more abundant than the April raindrops, coming out and ascending like the messengers of the prayers of night and dropping like calamities of fate from heaven. And in the breaches, demolished by the cannon, soldiers were doing battle and pushing one another down and up, and up and down with noisy swords, hooked bayonets, and javelins⁶².

It is clear that Kemal Paşa-zâde used Tursun's *History* when he wrote the part of his own *History* dealing with the reign of Mehmed II. However, it is worth adding that Tursun's *History* contains many anomalies, which were not well incorporated into the structure of the Turkish language nor firmly established in their usage. It is perhaps for this reason that the *Tarih-i Ebü'l-Feth* was somewhat lacking in popularity among later generations of Ottoman historians⁶³.

CONCLUSION

Tursun Bey, like many other Ottoman historians such as İdris-i Bitlisi, Celalzade Mustafa, Selaniki and Ali, was an historian belonging to the government secretarial class. Most of these historians also belonged to that category of bureaucrats known as the *kâtib-i tebdîr* who, as members of the highest rank in the secretarial profession, were in close relations with all the statesmen responsible for the formulation of policy. They considered it part of their duty as historians to record their experiences as an aid to others in the good management of government affairs. Tursun Bey believed that his work would be a guide and aid to administrators and statesmen and thus follows the general line of the 'Advice to Kings' literary genre and subscribes to that approach to political theory. He puts great emphasis on the need for the king's justice and protection of the *reaya* masses as the foundation of political stability⁶⁴.

Tursun Bey derived the notion of an ideal society directly from Tusi and used it to justify the supremacy of the Sultan. However, it is also possible that the desire for order, which the ideal embodies, may reflect practical experience. Throughout his life Tursun Bey had witnessed many disorders in the Ottoman Empire. When he was young, he had seen the panic caused by the Hungarian expeditions of 1443-4 and 1448 and he had later witnessed sixteen long years of war against the Venetians and the war against Uzun Hasan. He also witnessed the anarchy which followed the death of Sultan Mehmed and Ottoman-Mamluk conflict⁶⁵. It is likely that it was within the ambiance of these disturbing events that Tursun Bey conceived the idea of writing a history of Mehmed's reign, with which he was so intimately familiar, and presenting it to the new Sultan Bayezid⁶⁶.

It is clear, however, that Tursun found Mehmed an easier subject for panegyric than his son Bâyezid. With his almost continuous campaigns and victories, Mehmed came close

to exemplifying the ideal ruler. On the few occasions when he or his commanders were unsuccessful, Tursun either presents the defeat as a victory or, as when Mehmed failed the capture a castle during the Albanian Campaign, presents this as the will of God and not as a sign of weakness or of the superiority of the enemy. Bâyezid, on the other hand, was not a warrior in the mould of his father, hence he was more difficult to fit into the required literary pattern. On many occasions, Tursun Bey is clearly trying to make amends for Bâyezid's shortcomings. It is quite possible that in his eulogy on Sultan Bâyezid, Tursun was attempting to rebut current criticisms of the Sultan's military incapacity, but in doing so he succeeds only in giving them further emphasis, and his eulogy is therefore unsuccessful.

Tursun's *History* finishes abruptly with a *mesnevi* in which he prays for the ruling Sultan and for the Ottoman dynasty, an expression of thanks to God for granting him the facility to expound on the Sultan's Holy Wars, and finally a statement of intent to continue his history if his health and life allow it⁶⁷. This suggests that Tursun unwillingly abandoned the composition of his *History*. Perhaps he was too unwell to continue writing it or perhaps some unknown event forced him to abandon his work. If we compare Tursun's introduction with his last words, we see that he anticipated writing a rather long and ornamented conclusion to his work⁶⁸.

NOTES

- ¹ H. İnalçık, *The Rise of Ottoman Historiography*, in *Historians of the Middle East*, edited by B. Lewis - P.M.Holt, London 1962, pp. 164-167.
- ² V.L. Menage, *The Beginnings of Ottoman Historiography*, in Lewis - Holt (eds.), *Historians of the Middle East* cit., p. 168.
- ³ İnalçık, *The Rise of Ottoman* cit., pp. 165-166.
- ⁴ Yahyâ bin Mehmed el Kâtib, *Menahicü'l-İnşa: the Earliest Otoman Chancery Manual*, edited by Ş. Tekin, Massachusetts 1971, pp. 9-12.
- ⁵ For detailed information on Selaniki's life and works, see S.M. Efendi, *Tarih-i Selaniki*, edited by M. İpşirli, Istanbul 1989.
- ⁶ For detailed information on Ali's life and works, see C. Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire*, Princeton 1986.
- ⁷ Tursun Bey, *Tarih-i Ebül-Feth*, edited by M. Tulum, Istanbul 1977, p. 106.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 6.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 68.
- ¹⁰ For detailed information on these works see N. Atsız Çiftçiöğlü, *Osmanlı Tarihleri, Aşıkpaşaoğlu Ahmed Aşık Tevarih-i Al-i Osman*, Istanbul 1949; F. Reşit Unat, M. Altay Köymen, *Mehmed Neşri, Kitab-i Cihan-nüma Neşri Tarihi*, Vol. I, Ankara 1949. Oruç B. Adil El-Kazzaz, *Tevarih-i Al-i Osman*, ed. N. Atsız Çiftçiöğlü, Istanbul 1972.
- ¹¹ For information on Tursun Bey's life see H. İnalçık, *Tursun Beg, Historian of Mehmed the Conqueror's Time*, "Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes", LXIX, 1977, pp. 55-71.
- ¹² For detailed information on Mehmed II's reign and his life see, H. İnalçık, *The Policy of Mehmed II toward the Greek Population of İstanbul and the Byzantine Buildings of the City*, in *The Ottoman Empire, Conquest, Organization, and Economy Collected Studies*, Variorum Reprints, London 1978, pp. 231-249; S. Tansel, *Osmanlı Kaynaklarına Göre Fatih Sultan Mehmed'in Siyasi ve Askeri Faaliyeti*, Ankara 1999.

- ¹³ For detailed information on Bâyezid II's life see S. Tansel, *Sultan II. Bâyezid'in Siyasi Hayatı*, İstanbul 1966.
- ¹⁴ So far as their influence on Ottoman writers is concerned, the most important "mirrors for princes" are perhaps the three composed during the Seljuk period: the *Kabusnâme* written in 375/1082 by Keykavus bin İskender; the *Siyasetnâme* of Nizamü'l-mülk (408-485/1018-1092); and the *Nasihatu'l-mülk* of Ebu Hamid Muhammad Gazali (450-505/1058-1111). See *Ghazali's Book of Counsel for Kings (Nasihatu'l-muluk)*, ed. H.D. Isaacs, London 1964, p. IX.
- ¹⁵ Tursun Bey, *Tarih* cit., p. 106.
- ¹⁶ 'Hilye-i inşâ ile mütezeyyin bir suret tasvir ü takrir idem [I will describe and report (the history) in an ornamented letter writing style]; *ibid.*, p. 7.
- ¹⁷ H. İnalçık - R. Murphey, *The History of Mehmed the Conqueror by Tursun Bey*, Chicago 1978, p. 20.
- ¹⁸ Tursun Bey, *Tarih* cit., pp. 170-173.
- ¹⁹ For detailed information on Timurid historiography see J.E. Woods, *The Rise of Timurid Historiography*, "Journal of Near Eastern Studies", XLVI, 1987, pp. 81-108; C. Rieu, *Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts in the British Museum*, Vol. I, London 1879; E.G. Browne, *A History of Persian Literature under Tartar Dominion (A.D. 1265-1502)*, Cambridge 1920.
- ²⁰ Tursun Bey, *Tarih* cit., p. 125.
- ²¹ For detailed information on Timur's reign and his life, see Nizamüddin Şami, *Zafernâme*, transl. N. Lugal, Ankara 1987; Sharaf al-din Ali Yazdi, *Zafarnâme: the History of Timur Bec*, transl. J. Darby, London 1723; İ. Aka, *Timur ve Devleti*, Ankara 1991; B.F. Manz, *The Rise and Rule of Tamerlane*, Cambridge, 1991; D. Morgan, *Medieval Persia 1040-1797*, London, 1990; I.M. Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies*, Cambridge 1991, pp. 276-302.
- ²² For early Ottoman Chroniclers approach to Tamerlane see F. Emecen, *İlk Osmanlı Kroniklerinde Timur İmajı, İlk Osmanlılar ve Batı Anadolu Beylikler Dünyası*, İstanbul, 2001, pp. 161-173.
- ²³ Tursun Bey, *Tarih* cit., pp. 78-84.
- ²⁴ *Çün matlûb-ı pâdişâh katl-i rakib idi ve bi-hamdi'llah müyesser oldu, pes vasl-ı habib – ki nev-arûs-ı pür-nâz-ı memleket-i Lâz'dur – tahsilünün esbâbi ve tarîkı mübâşeretü için* [since the wish of the sultan was to kill his opponent and it was granted, his other aim was to conquer Serbia. For this end he had the preparations begun]; *ibid.*, p. 83. For detailed information on Janos Hunyadi's life see J. Held, *Hunyadi: Legend and Reality*, Boulder 1985.
- ²⁵ For a detailed account of Mahmud Pasha's life, see M.S. Tekindağ, *Mahmud Paşa, İA*, Vol. 7, İstanbul 1957, pp. 183-188; T. Stavrides, *The Sultan of Vezirs The Life and Times of the Ottoman Grand Vizir Mahmud Pasha Angeloviç (1453- 1474)*, Leiden 2001.
- ²⁶ Tursun Bey, *Tarih* cit., pp. 25-26, 195-198.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 39.
- ²⁸ The castle of Rumeli Hisarı on the Bosphorus.
- ²⁹ Tursun Bey, *Tarih* cit., pp. 42-43.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 101-102, 121-122.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 140-142. For more information on the annexation of Albania to the Ottoman Empire see. H. İnalçık, *Arnawutluk (Albania)*, "EI (new edition)", Vol. I, pp. 650-658; It is normally accepted by Muslim and Western academics that Dhû al-Qarnayn, 'the Two-Horned One', referred to in *Qur'an*, XVIII/83-98, is to be identified with Alexander the Great. He was given strength on earth and went to the West and East. He built a wall to protect suppressed people from the attacks of Yâjûj and Mâjûj. Since he talked to the people of the West about God's punishment of sinners and his reward for the honest, he was recognised as a believer or Muslim, although it was debated whether he was a prophet. See W.M. Watt, *Dhu al-Karnayn*, "EI (new edition)", IV, p. 127. For further information on Alexander the Great's role in Muslim historical tradition, see Isaacs, *Ghazali's Book of Counsel* cit., pp. XXI-XXIII.

- ³² Tursun Bey, *Tarih* cit., pp. 170-176.
- ³³ *Ibid.*, pp.179-180; İbn Kemal, *Tevârih-i Âl-i Osmân VIII. Defter*, Ankara 1997, p. 221.
- ³⁴ Tursun Bey, *Tarih* cit., pp. 180-190.
- ³⁵ For more information on the unrest which followed the death of Mehmed II, see T. Menzel - F. Taeschner - I. Band (eds.), *Gihannümâ, Die Altosmanische Chronik Des Mevlânâ Mehemed Neschri*, Leipzig 1951, pp. 219-220.
- ³⁶ The famous philosopher and astronomer was born in Tus in A.H. 507 and died in Baghdad in A.H. 692. Tusi mentioned in the introduction of his book *Ahlak-ı Nasrî* that he wrote it at the wish of the ruler of Kuhistân, Nasıriddin Abdurrahim b. Ebu Mansur. He entitled it after the name of his sponsor. See Rieu, *Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts* cit., p. 441. For detailed information about Tusi's life see Nasır al-Din Tusi, *The Nasirean Ethics*, transl. G.M. Wickens, London 1964.
- ³⁷ Tursun Bey, *Tarih* cit., pp. 10-14.
- ³⁸ Poetry composed in rhymed couplets, each couplet being of a different rhyme but the whole of one meter.
- ³⁹ See H. İnalçık - R. Anhegger, (eds.), *Kanunname-i Sultani Ber Muceb-i Örf-i Osmani, II. Mehmed ve II. Bayezid Devirlerine ait Yasakname ve Kanunnameler*, Ankara 1956.
- ⁴⁰ Tursun Bey, *Tarih* cit., pp. 188-198.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.
- ⁴² For detailed information on the life and doings of Bayezid I, see H. İnalçık, *Bâyazid I*, "EI (new edition)", 1959, pp. 1117-1119.
- ⁴³ For Neşri's account on the mentioned expedition see T. Menzel - F. Taeschner (eds.), *Gihannüma: Die Altosmanische Chronik Des Mevlânâ Mehemed Neschri*, vol. II, Leipzig 1955, p. 272
- ⁴⁴ Tursun Bey, *Tarih* cit., pp. 207-215. For information on the Ottoman – Mamluk wars, see Tansel, *Sultan II. Bayezit* cit., pp. 93-116; Hoca Sadettin Efendi, *Tacü't-Tevârih*, transl. İ. Parmaksızoğlu, III, Istanbul 1979, pp. 246-262.
- ⁴⁵ F. Köprülü, *Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi*, Istanbul 1986, p. 374.
- ⁴⁶ Menage, *The Beginnings of Ottoman* cit., p.168.
- ⁴⁷ 'Ala-ad-Din 'Ata-Malik Juvaini, *The History of the World Conqueror*, transl. J.A. Boyle, Vol. I. Manchester 1958, p. xxviii.
- ⁴⁸ Rieu, *Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts* cit., p. 162.
- ⁴⁹ J. Schmidt, *Mustafa Ali's Kunhül Abbar and its Preface according to the Leiden Manuscript*, Istanbul 1987, p. 9.
- ⁵⁰ For further information, see A. Tietze, *Mustafa 'Ali of Gallipoli's Prose Style*, "Archivum Ottomanicum", V, 1973, pp. 297-319.
- ⁵¹ E.G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia from Firdawsî to Sa'dî*, II, London 1906, p. 17; For detailed information about Nergisi's life and writings, see J.R. Walsh, *The Esâlibü'l-Mekâtib (Münşe'ât) of Mehmed Nergisi Efendi*, "Archivum Ottomanicum", I, 1969, pp. 213-302.
- ⁵² Boyle, *The History of the World Conqueror* cit., p. 69.
- ⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 134.
- ⁵⁴ E.G. Browne, *A History of Persian Literature under Tartar Dominion (A.D. 1265-1502)*, Cambridge 1920, p. 159.
- ⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 360.
- ⁵⁶ Rieu, *Catalogue of Persian Manuscripts* cit., p. 168.
- ⁵⁷ Browne, *History of Persian Literature* cit., p. 361; See Rieu, *Catalogue of Persian Manuscripts* cit., I. 170.

- ⁵⁸ Browne, *History of Persian Literature* cit., p. 363. See Rieu, *Catologue of the Persian Manuscripts* cit., p.173.
- ⁵⁹ Sharaf Al-Din Ali Yazdi, *Zafarname: The History of Timur Bec*, tr. J. Darby, London 1723, p. 25.
- ⁶⁰ E.J.W. Gibb, *A History of Ottoman Poetry*. Vol. I, London 1958, pp. 253-5.
- ⁶¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 25.
- ⁶² Tursun Bey, *Tarih* cit., p. 55.
- ⁶³ H. İnalçık - R. Murphey, *The History of Mehmed the Conqueror by Tursun Bey*, Minneapolis 1978, p. 20.
- ⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 17.
- ⁶⁵ K. İnan, *A Summary and Analysis of the Tarih-i Ebü'l-Feth (History of The Conqueror) of Tursun Bey (1488)*, unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Manchester 1993, p. 89.
- ⁶⁶ İnalçık - Murphey, *The History of Mehmed the Conqueror* cit., pp. 17-18.
- ⁶⁷ Tursun Bey, *Tarih* cit., p. 214-215.
- ⁶⁸ On the reasons for Tursun Bey's sudden breaking off from his work, see V.L. Menage, *H. İnalçık and R. Murphey: The History of Mehmed the Conqueror by Tursun Bey* [a review], "BSOAS", XLIII, 1980, pp. 144-145.

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