

## ISTANBUL AND TURKIC REALITY IN TATAR LITERATURE (THE LATE 19<sup>th</sup> AND THE EARLY 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURIES)

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### Abstract

The Tatar-Turkish literary and cultural ties, as well as economic ones, despite the geographical distance, go deep into history. The documents survived until today state the relations between the Golden Horde – later the Kazan Khanate – and the Ottoman Empire at the state and diplomatic level and in the field of trade and economy at the beginning of the XV century. As for the ties in the field of culture, education and literature between the peoples of Turkey and Tatarstan, the authors of scientific research mostly mention the XIX and early XX centuries, when Istanbul attracted the attention as a cultural and educational center where publicistic, scientific and fictional literary works were published. This paper presents travel notes, journalistic and artistic works of Tatar famous people, journalists and writers, whose records describe the image of the Turkish capital Istanbul and reflects the life of the Turkish people. The relevance of the work is explained by the lack of knowledge of the topic chosen for discussion: reflection of the Turkish reality in the fiction and publicistic works written by Tatar scientists and writers of the early 20th century. The materials of the study are the records of the famous Tatar theologian and historian and enlightener Shigabutdin Mardzhani, the famous writer Gayaz Iskhaki, as well as the novel of Mahmut Galau “Muhajirs”, and Kasim Bikkulov’s “Haji”. In the literary- publicistic and travel records of Sh. Mardzhani, G. Iskhaki, M. Galau, and K. Bikkulov, the authors of the article found materials proving the close ties of two related peoples – the Tatars and the Turks at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. The comparative method was applied in the research with the aim to identify common and specific, traditional and innovative works of the researchers. The results of the study are proved by the examples. The materials of the study may be useful for the educators and researchers involved in professional linguistic research and training.

**Keywords:** Tatar literature, Tatars, Turkey, travel notes, culture and literature of the early twentieth century

### 1. INTRODUCTION

General issues concerning the formation and development of literature and literary criticism are examined by both Russian and foreign scientists. The issues of evaluating the literary process and determining its further development, as well as literary interactions remain topical problems of literary criticism up to the present time (Bloom, 2002:560; Thorpe, 1990:216; Barthes, 2007; Culler, 2002; Frye, 2000; Eagleton, 2002). It should be noted that «European scientists have been interested in Tatar culture, folklore, and ethnography

since the 19<sup>th</sup> century» (Sayfulina et al., 2014: 116-119). As noted by modern literary critics «National literatures considered in the context of global literary processes are unique mental and practical formations» (Yusupova et al., 2016: 213-222). «In the 20th century, a similar attitude towards the age of industrialization began to take shape in Europe» (Zakirov et al, 2017).

At present, one of the important tasks of Tatar Literary Studies is the issue of interrelationships and a literary dialogue among the Turkic people, existing at the beginning of the last century. The topic is especially timely in connection with the possibility of restoring relations lost in the Soviet period in the post-Soviet space.

It should be noted that the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century was characterized by the active development of the Enlightenment movement of the Tatar people, who belonged to one of the nationalities that made up tsarist Russia.

During that period, the Tatars began to intensively develop their education, reforming the system of education for children, it was the time of a large-scale renewal process of the entire Tatar society.

It was at the beginning of the twentieth century that conditions were created for the publication of books, newspapers and magazines, new educational establishments were opening everywhere: schools and madrassas. There emerged a whole galaxy of the Tatar national intellectuals, such as writers, publishers, translators, journalists, teachers of new-method schools and madrassas, who made great contributions to the course of educating the Tatars and other Turkic peoples.

The scientists note that «The beginning of the 20th century is defined as a period of emerging Tatar scientific thought, theory of literature, serious discourse about the literary terminology and concepts, as well as the time of achievements in this area» (Gilazov et al, 2015: 508-517).

At the beginning of the 20th century, the advanced part of the Tatar youth, who sought to replenish the knowledge gained in local madrassas, had the opportunity to get education in the cultural capital of Turkey - Istanbul. Here they received religious education, got acquainted with Turkish literature and culture, and also had the opportunity to get acquainted with European, especially French and Italian literature, which at that time influenced the Turkish creative youth (Sayfulina, 2014: 323).

It was Turkish literature, one of the first of the Turkic literatures, that turned its attention to the culture and literature of Western Europe, enriching itself with new genres and themes.

The development of Tatar literature of the last quarter of the nineteenth century is determined, among other things, by the fruitful influence of Turkish literature.

«Then we were the shakirds of Ottoman literature» (shakird means a student in a Muslim college), G. Ibrahimov wrote about this influence later (Ibragimov, 1978: 366).

The beginning of the 20th century, in connection with certain political changes in Russia, was marked by migration processes, when the Tatars of Russia emigrated to the Ottoman state, where their ancestors still live, partly preserving their way of life and cultural traditions (Sayfulina, 2013, 124-126).

The activity of the numerous Tatar advanced intellectuals - writers, scholars, Turkologists, historians, theologians, political figures who emigrated for various reasons in the first years of Soviet power to Turkey, such as Yusuf Akchura (1876-1935), Sadri Maksudi (1879-1957), Musa Jarullah Bigiyev (1875-1949), Gayaz Iskhaki (1878-1954), Fatih Karimi (1870-1937), Gabdrasit Ibragimov (1857-1944), Akdes Nigmati Kurat (1903-1971) rendered an invaluable service in the development of political, social, scientific and cultural spheres of the Ottoman state, and in the future, of the republican Turkey.

The well-known Tatar poet of the early twentieth century G. Tukay proudly speaks of Yusuf Akchur and Fatiye Karimi, who reliably covered the creative and political life of the Turkish state in the periodical press (Tukay, 1985, 351). It is important to note that in the work of G.Tukay, the reality of the contemporary Turkish world is reflected on an equal footing with the Tatar and Russian realities.

If the development of Turkish literature and culture of that time was facilitated by political and economic ties with European countries, the relationship between Tatar and Turkish culture and literature was mainly influenced by the unity of traditions, religion, and world views.

Groups of scientists from Tatarstan and Azerbaijan study the common roots of folklore and literature of the Turkic peoples in the article «General Roots, General Spirituality: Literary Interrelations of Literatures in the Aspect of Cultural Dialogue» (Gimadieva et al., 2017:1175-1180).

The main objective of this study is to explore the ways of reflecting the realities of Turkish life in the early

twentieth century in the literary, journalistic and travel notes of Tatar literary and religious figures such as Sh. Mardzhani, G. Iskhaki, M. Galiau, and K. Bikkulov, and to identify the interconnections of the two kindred peoples - Tatars and Turks in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The comparative method is used in the paper, which makes it possible to identify common and different, traditional and innovative features in the works of the authors.

## **2. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The Biography Studies of Tatar intellectuals of the early 20th century, draw our attention to the fact that their fates was to a different extent connected with Turkey, with its capital – Istanbul. An example of this is the biographies of historian-theologian Shigabudin Mardzhani, writer-journalist Fatih Karimi, writer-public figure Gayaz Iskhaki, poet Dardemand, prose writer Sharif Kamal and many others.

The reasons for their arrival in Turkey are different, but many of them left behind travel notes, journalistic articles or works of art, where they expressed their attitude to this country and to its capital.

Turkey, as an independent Muslim state, attracted the attention of the Tatar intellectuals living in Russia.

According to some historical documents "before the 1917 revolution, there were few people among the Tatar intellectuals, scientists and writers who did not know the Turkish language" (Galimullin et. al., 2016 : 3940).

As M. Magdiev, a the well-known Tatar writer of the second half of the 20th century, writes, "Istanbul is a city well-known to our literature. Here lived the first Tatar prose writer M. Akegetzade. Here there were Dardeman, Sh. Kamal used to come here. Here lived the editor of the newspaper "Vremya" F. Karimi during the Balkan War. G. Kamal came here as an editor of the newspaper Zvezda. Thus, Istanbul was the focus of attention of the Tatar intellectuals in the early twentieth century. However after the revolutionary coup these relations were severed for many years. Since the 30s, any contacts with Turkey were considered a crime (Galimullin et. al., 2016: 3942).

The object of our interest in this article is S.Mardzhani's travel notes "Marjani's Records", G.Iskhaki's letter "Let it Remain My Will", F.Karimi's journalistic articles "Letters from Istanbul", the story "Haji" by K.Bikkulov and M.Galyau's novel "Mukhajirs" (Emigrants), which reflect the realities of the life in the Turkish capital, recreating individual images of historical personalities, and the authors' attitude towards them.

On his way to Mecca, for the pilgrimage (Hajj), S.Mardzhani, a well-known historian, theologian, and philosopher kept interesting travel notes during his stay in Istanbul in 1880 (when he was 62 years old). His diaries contain records about the views of the city, about its famous and ordinary people, about its everyday realities. "Mardzhani's Notes" (1880) are rightly believed to be a document, reflecting the life of the kindred Turkish people and fixing many details from the life of that period.

It should also be noted that the arrival of the famous theologian Sh.Mardzhani in Istanbul, was perceived as a historic, significant event for the Turkish intellectuals. Local newspapers informed the city about his arrival. Later, his student Rizautdin Fahrutdin writes about his teacher's travel of in the book "The Türks of Bolgar and Kazan": "Having been invited by Sheikh Suleiman, the venerable Shigabudin ahund, one of the famous Kazan muftis, had stopped in Istanbul and had done the honour of meeting him. The muftis were on his way to Mecca, where he departed with the aim of sanctification his sins ..." (Fahreiddin 1993: 172).

It is noted here that the Tatar scholar was received in Istanbul at the highest level: Jaudat Pasha, the Minister of Justice in Istanbul, Munif Pasha, the Minister of Education, Gasim Pasha, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and others.

The text of the scholar's travel notes makes it possible to draw attention to one detail: he received an offer to meet the Turkish sultan Abdulhamid (ruled the country in 1876-1909), but the learned historian, who was familiar with the Sultan's policy, turned down the offer (Fahreiddin, 1993: 79).

This fact proves the fame of the Tatar historian-theologian among Turkish intellectuals and the respect he enjoyed as well as Mardzhani's interest in the life of Turkey, his close contacts with well-known personalities of the country of that time.

Karimi's literary and publicistic works "Letters from Istanbul" (Karimi, 1913) can also be attributed to documentary records, as the author wrote them in 1891, when he went to Turkey to get an education.

In this work the author describes life in Istanbul, makes notes about public and political figures of the country, its writers and scientists. Karimi's life in the Turkish capital expands his horizons, helps to assess the situation in the country from inside. "Letters from Istanbul" by F.Karimi is interesting material that represents

certain aspects of Turkish life at the beginning of the 20th century.

G. Ishaki, a famous Tatar writer, who emigrated abroad after the October Revolution, arrived in Turkey in the autumn of 1939 and stayed there until the end of his days. Of particular significance is his letter, written on April 12, 1954 (in the year of his death) and addressed to the future generation "Let It Remain My Will". Here attention is paid to the description of the Turkish reality. At the same time, the writer appeals to all Turkic peoples, and raises the issues perturbing the Istanbul intellectuals.

In this series of works, M. Galiau's novel "Mukhajirs," (1886-1938), is the focus of attention. The fate of the writer himself is also tragic. During the Stalinist repressions of 1937-1938 the writer was arrested: his life ends tragically. The analyzed work reflects the tragic historical events of 1877-1897, known in the history of the Russian state as the years of famine and the population census, perceived by the Tatar population as the second wave of Muslims' forced conversion. The novel reflects the difficult history, describing the resettlement undertaken by the population of the whole village to Turkey. The novel also presents interest as a reflection of people's life in the Turkish land. In the novel, the fate of the protagonists develops over the decades, it describes the difficult fate of the Tatar people, their long road to Turkey, and no less tragic life in the new land at the end of the nineteenth century.

According to literary critic R. Yarullina, "The novel" Muhajirs" is a historical reality of that time. The events described in the novel are historical facts" (Ganieva, Yarullina, 2007:63).

There are many opinions about the emigration of Muslims from Russia to Turkey. Ali Arslan, a teacher at the University of Istanbul, writes that the wave of migration of Kazan Tatars to Turkey can be traced back to the end of the nineteenth century. "During the resettlement, difficulties were created in Turkey both by Russian authorities and by the careless attitude on the part of the Ottoman Empire governing bodies, let alone the tense Russian-Turkish relations" (Arslan, 2002: 77).

The characters of M. Galiau's novel also encounter these obstacles during their resettlement, on a long hard road to new places to stay. People leave their native places in the hope of a better life. "We need to move to Turkey!" In these holy lands life should be easier and better! " – the characters of the novel decide (Galau, 1968: 296). With their hopes for a better life, the inhabitants of the village of Maula Kola set off on a long journey towards Turkey. The author describes their anticipation of meeting with Istanbul through the psychological state of the travelers who are already tired but are still full of hope: "After a long, frightening dullness, today the steamer must reach Istanbul! The wind has subsided, the clouds have dispersed, the bright sun has risen in a bright blue sky". The hopes of travelers correlate with the mood of nature

"- Istanbul! Sajida shouted, without her joy. Her words made the tired people give a start. The country of last hopes and happiness, the long-awaited land - here it is" (Galau, 1968: 373-374).

The author extensively reveals the enthusiastic attitude of the Tatar peasants to the fabulous beauty of the ancient eastern city, whose magnificence enchants the travelers. "Further on comes the mosque of Sultan Ahmed, even further is the mosques of Suleymaniya, Bayazidiya, Fatihiya. The peasants from the village of Maula Kola stand as if enchanted, by the magnificent fairy tale picture that appeared in front of them (Galau, 1968: 375). When depicting Istanbul, the author uses a more exalted intonation: "Tatar peasants, who strove to step on the holy land of Istanbul..." "...Here it is, the long-awaited holy land!" (Galau, 1968:376; 380) and others.

Thus, different shades of feelings and experiences of the characters are brightly manifested in the plot of the novel: from aspirations, beliefs in happiness to deep disappointment, from joy - to sadness and nostalgia. The author recreates a holistic psychological picture of human destiny, expressed through the inner world of the characters.

To create a real picture of a large city, the author includes the correspondence of Gabdrakhman Khazrat, one of the characters from the novel (the Muslims' religious order). He writes to his son - Suleiman, who studies in Istanbul: "In Istanbul, you can often meet agents or representatives of major European or American firms". At the same time, people with a dark past gathered here from all corners of the world - criminals expelled from their countries and refugees. The people, patiently living under the oppression of the Sultan under the frequent onslaught of the European states, came to the end of one's tether. They suffered from persecution, injustice, numerous taxes were a heavy burden on their shoulders. But the state perceived the expression of discontent as a crime (Galau, 1968: 386). The author emphasizes that such a situation worries the advanced Turkish intellectuals. In his letter to his father Suleiman, writes about the movement of "young Turks", who are fighting against the rule of the Sultan. He notes that in addition to this association there are several other political organizations. The young man expresses the hope that while studying here

he will expand his horizons and will be useful to society: "... I do not regret that I have come here to study. Even if the state of Turkey is not in a very favorable condition, it is ours, our own It is an independent state ... Turkey enables people to improve their culture and education. At home, I wouldn't have achieved this ... Istanbul, 1897 (Galau 1968: 388).

In such conditions, of course, the inhabitants of the village of Maula Kola, who moved from their native place to the Turkish lands, quickly realized that they could not achieve the desired happiness on the Sultan's lands. They left Istanbul, heading deep into the country and establish their village there – Kadyn-koy (Women's Village), in honor of the main heroine of the novel – Sajida ..

To depict the state of mind of his characters, bored and yearning for their small homeland, the author makes extensive use of folk songs, in which yearnings for the motherland are replaced with the hope for a better future. We considered the writer's oeuvre and his description of the realities of Turkic life in the previous article. We note that «K. Bikkulov is the author of a number of realistic prose, such as "Turkestan" (1908), "Uncle Altynbai" (1908), "Badelche" (1909), "Uncle Sabirjan" (1910), "Horse stealers" (1912), "Hadji" (1912), which are the part of the national literary heritage of the early twentieth century. The works in which historical events are reflected, the realities of life and Tatar village life of the beginning of the last century await a serious study and a critical evaluation. In the same work, the material of the study is the novel "Turkestan" and the novels "Haji" and "Bedelche", where a realistic material on the Turkic reality of the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is widely represented» (Nurieva, et al., 2017: 1175-1180).

The events of this story also take place in one of the main cities of Turkey - Istanbul, where the shakird, the protagonist and the narrator of the story arrives to continue his education. Here the author recreates the realities of Turkish life at the beginning of the twentieth century. The presentation of the material, which in part resembles the genre of travel notes, originally aimed to fix realistic events taking place in Russia and outside its borders and familiarization of the reader with new lands, countries, their nature, living conditions, etc. Here the author describes in detail the appearance, attire and behavior of people belonging to different nationalities - representatives of different countries gathered at one of the Istanbul mosques, to greet the Turkish Sultan. A thorough description of this even ethnographic details help to create a picture of the Turkish reality in the beginning of the century. The novel contains the writer's critical reflections of about gilded tombstones, expensive buildings in cemeteries erected during the reign of Sultan Abdulhamit. Critical pathos of the work is strengthened by the author's statements, about the fact that with the money spent educational institutions such as the University of the Sorbonne could be built or a fleet like the Japanese flotilla.

Of interest are the author's statements about the fact that travel and wanderings enrich people, enabling them to gain new knowledge. Descriptions of landscapes and the land of Turkey washed by the sea - is also a novelty for Tatar realistic literature of this period. It is with respect that he author describes the life and work of the common people: their diligence, openness, respectful and friendly attitude to all guests visiting their land.

### **3. CONCLUSION**

The study of diary, journey notes, letters of famous personalities, works of Tatar writers of the early 20th century, such as Sh. Mardzhani, G. Iskhaki, M. Galiau, K. Bikkulov, analyzed in the framework of this study, allow to draw conclusions that in their creativity, written in a single channel of development of the Tatar realistic prose of this period, reflects the real picture of the life of the population of Turkey and its capital. They enrich the national literature with realistic plots, images, everyday details, as well as introducing the life of the Turkish people to the reader, restoring the picture of the life of the Turkish capital - Istanbul, introducing the nature of this country, the geographical conditions of life and life, the way of life; gives a description of the activities of individual historical personalities, and describes the life and work of the common people. Thus, in the Tatar literature at the beginning of the 20th century, a diverse picture of the world of Turkish society is recreated, which expands the horizon of the Tatar reader, develops interest in real acquaintance with the life of the related Turkish people, with Turkey and its capital Istanbul.

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