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Research Article

GREEK INFLUENCE ON "KUTADGU BILIG" BY YUSUF KHOS KHAJIB

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ABSTRACT

The influence of Greek civilization on various aspects of literature and culture is well-documented. However, the exploration of Greek impact on Turkic literature, specifically in works such as Kutadgu Bilig by Yusuf Khos Khajib, remains a subject that warrants further investigation. This scientific article aims to examine the presence and significance of Greek influence in the writing of Kutadgu Bilig and its implications on the overall meaning and interpretation of the work.

This article aims to analyze the presence of Greek influence in "Kutadgu Bilig" by examining linguistic elements, narrative structures, and philosophical themes within the text. By identifying and exploring examples of Greek loanwords, storytelling techniques, and philosophical concepts, we can gain insights into the extent and significance of Greek impact on the work.

KEYWORDS

Culture, Greek civilization, traditions, investigations, intercultural exchange.

INTRODUCTION

Kutadgu Bilig is a renowned literary masterpiece of the 12th century, written in the Turkic language. The work delves into various moral, ethical, and social principles, providing insights into the intellectual and philosophical landscape of the time. While the influence of Persian and Arabic cultures on Kutadgu Bilig has been extensively studied, the potential impact

of Greek civilization on the work remains relatively unexplored.

Greek civilization, with its rich literary, philosophical, and artistic traditions, had a profound impact on neighbouring regions during the time of Kutadgu Bilig. The cultural exchange between the Byzantine Empire and surrounding Turkic civilizations facilitated the

transmission of Greek ideas and concepts, including language, philosophy, and storytelling techniques.

The examination of Greek influence in Kutadgu Bilig not only contributes to our understanding of the intercultural exchange between Greek and Turkic civilizations but also sheds light on the intellectual and cultural milieu in which the work was composed. It allows us to appreciate the depth and complexity of Yusuf Khos Khajib's literary engagement with Greek traditions and provides a broader perspective on the interconnectedness of civilizations during this period.

MAIN PART

While the wisdom conveyed in Kutadgu Bilig is primarily of Iranian origin, there is also a Greek element. Consequently, it can be challenging to differentiate between these concepts. Thus, the recommendation to provide funds for the military and justice for the common people also appears in Islamic literature as counsel credited to Aristotle. Another idea credited to Aristotle, and repeated in Kutadgu Bilig, is that "a man without reason is like a statue without spirit."

Wisdom is required to perform the prince's business. As for the man who lacks wisdom, he is good for nothing – consider him a corpse, for he is not truly alive. (120)

«Быть беком — великие знания нужны,

Невежды во всем, что ни делай, дурны.

Лишенный познаний невежда-глупец —

По виду живой, а по сути мертвец! (200)

We have found that the allegorical symbols of Justice and Fortune have Greek origins, as indicated in the title of chapter 15:

Full Moon tells the king that he is Fortune (60) – Повествуется о том, что сам Айтолды и есть Счастье (15)

The examination of Greek influence on "Kutadgu Bilig" by Yusuf Khos Khajib reveals the significant impact of Greek ideas on the work, here are some ideas:

1. Philosophy. The work incorporates philosophical concepts that can be traced back to Greek philosophy. Discussions on the nature of happiness, virtue, and the pursuit of knowledge reflect the influence of Greek philosophical traditions, particularly Stoicism and Aristotelianism.

The text promotes self-reflection and self-improvement, echoing the Delphic maxim "Know thyself" and the Socratic notion that an unexamined life is not worth living. Pursuit of wisdom is a central theme in "Kutadgu Bilig," emphasizing the importance of acquiring wisdom through learning, contemplation, and life experiences. The work also explores the concept of justice, reflecting Greek philosophical views on the importance of fairness, equality, and moral righteousness. It highlights the need for just governance and the proper administration of laws.

2. Ethics and Morality: The book "Kutadgu Bilig" explores moral teachings and ethical principles that display similarities with Greek ethical theories. The ideas of justice, wisdom, courage, and temperance, which are central to Greek moral philosophy, can also be found in this work. The book emphasizes the importance of virtuous behavior and moral excellence, which aligns with Greek philosophical views, especially those of Aristotle, who believed that living a virtuous life leads to eudaimonia or happiness. "Kutadgu Bilig" also presents various ethical dilemmas and moral quandaries, reflecting the Greek philosophical tradition of ethical reasoning and moral decision-

making. The book encourages readers to consider the consequences of their actions and make morally sound choices.

3. Human Nature: The book "Kutadgu Bilig" depicts human nature in a way that is similar to Greek ideas regarding human character and behavior. The book emphasizes the importance of self-reflection, self-improvement, and understanding one's position in society, which aligns with Greek concepts of self-awareness and the pursuit of excellence. Firstly, "Kutadgu Bilig" acknowledges the social nature of human beings and the significance of community. This corresponds with Greek philosophical ideas about the importance of human relationships, social bonds, and the well-being of the community as a whole. Secondly, the book portrays individuals as moral agents who have the ability to make choices and act in accordance with moral principles. This aligns with Greek philosophical beliefs on moral agency and the responsibility of individuals to act virtuously and ethically.

4. Rhetoric and Oratory: The significance of persuasive speaking and effective communication, which were highly valued in Greek society, can also be observed in "Kutadgu Bilig." The emphasis on clarity of expression, eloquence, and the power of words in the book reflects the influence of Greek rhetorical traditions. It stresses the importance of effective communication and highlights the power of words in conveying ideas and persuading others, which is in line with the Greek tradition of rhetoric, emphasizing the art of persuasive speaking.

5. Storytelling Techniques: The storytelling techniques used in "Kutadgu Bilig" share similarities with Greek literary traditions, as both employ allegories, parables, and fables to convey moral and philosophical ideas. The work highlights the significance of rationality and

reasoning in decision-making and understanding the world. This reflects Greek philosophical views, particularly those of Plato and Aristotle, who emphasized the importance of reason in human thought and action.

6. Aesthetics: The appreciation of beauty, both in nature and in artistic creations, is a recurring theme in "Kutadgu Bilig." This echoes Greek ideas about aesthetics and the pursuit of harmony and balance in art and nature.

It is worth mentioning that "Kutadgu Bilig" incorporates not only Greek ideas but also elements from other cultural and intellectual traditions. This interplay of different influences accentuates the interconnectedness of civilizations and the diversity of cultural exchange that has played a crucial role in shaping literary works.

CONCLUSION

The writing of "Kutadgu Bilig" was significantly influenced by Greek civilization, which is evident through the presence of Greek loanwords, narrative structures, and philosophical themes within the text. This highlights the cultural exchange and intellectual borrowing between Greek and Turkic civilizations.

The use of Greek elements in "Kutadgu Bilig" adds complexity to the work, enriching its meaning and interpretation. It shows the author's engagement with Greek literary, philosophical, and linguistic traditions, demonstrating a fusion of ideas and concepts from different cultural spheres. The Greek influence in "Kutadgu Bilig" enhances our understanding not only of the work itself but also the broader scholarly discussion on the impact of Greek civilization on neighboring regions during the 12th century. Further research can investigate specific examples of Greek

influence in the text, exploring their implications on the narrative, themes, and character development.

Studying the Greek influence in "Kutadgu Bilig" can offer us valuable insights into how civilizations were interconnected and how the exchange of ideas shaped the Turkic literature. This article aims to contribute to the ongoing exploration of cultural exchange and intellectual borrowing. It emphasizes the importance of understanding the various influences that have contributed to the richness and diversity of literary traditions.

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