

## H.F. FON DITS – THE FOUNDER OF KORKUD SCIENCE IN THE WEST

(Dedicated to the 200-th anniversary of H.F. fon Dits)

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### Abstract

*The epos “Kitabi – Dede Korkud” takes a special place in the development of the Azerbaijanian literary – aesthetic thinking. This epos is a concrete stage of the national literary thinking on the one hand and a source reflecting all original archetypes of the national thinking on the other hand. The epos “Kitabi – Dede Korkud” that contains the ideas of unity of the Oghuz people helped the Azerbaijanian intelligentsia held out during the hardest moments of history of the XX century and preserves the mentality. In 1815 the orientalist F. Dits took a copy of the manuscript, brought it to the Berlin library and published it together with the boi Tepegez (boi – is the chapter of the epos – Ye. I) translated into German. In “Foreword” written by F. Dits the orientalist compared the boi “Tepegoz” with “Odyssey” by Homer. The outstanding scientist – orientalist H.F. fon Dits raised the oriental languages, customs, traditions, created “ the oriental spirit” in the West and deserved eternal memory and thankfulness of the Orient.*

**Key words:** *The epos “Kitabi – Dede Korkud”, Azerbaijanian literary*

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## Introduction

The epos “Kitabi – Dede Korkud” takes a special place in the development of the Azerbaijanian literary – aesthetic thinking. The first scientific research of the epos “Kitabi – Dede Korkud” was carried out by H.F. Dits. In the second part of his book “Denkwürdigkeiten von Asien” published in 1815 H.F. fon Dits appreciated the epos “Kitabi – Dede Korkud” at its true value from the standpoint of history, geography, textology, gave the valuable information about it and thus laid the foundation of Korkud study. In his scientific work “Memoirs from Asia” the scientist analysed the way of life, customs, traditions, belief, and heroism of the Oghuz people.

The epos “Kitabi – Dede Korkud” takes a special place in the development of the Azerbaijanian literary – aesthetic thinking. This epos is a concrete stage of the national literary thinking on the one hand and a source reflecting all original archetypes of the national thinking on the other. The Azerbaijanian literary – aesthetic thinking and national essence are connected with this source. “Kitabi – Dede Korkud” – the outstanding work of the Oghuz is the only monumental source of the Turkic world and encyclopedia of knowledge. This epos reflects morality, culture of behaviour, understanding of beauty, humanism, patriotism, mercy of the Azerbaijanian people.

The ancient source of the Azerbaijanian culture and literature “Kitabi – Dede Korkud” is very actual and significant today and it is also the ideologic basis of the national culture, literature and art. It

is impossible to imagine the modern national mentality and history of culture without this source. The epos “Kitabi – Dede Korkud” that contains the ideas of unity of the Oghuz people helped the Azerbaijanian intelligentsia held out during the hardest moments of history of the XX century and preserves the mentality. *The manuscript of the epos “Kitabi – Dede Korkud” was found in Germany in the Dresden library.* The famous German orientalist Reyski found the manuscript in the XVIII century. He didn’t know the language well enough, so he wasn’t able to examine it. Later the manuscript attracted attention of Fleysher who composed the catalogue of this library. There was a date of death of Osman Pasha (1585) on the manuscript, so Fleysher included it in the catalogue of manuscripts of the XVI century.

In 1815 the orientalist F. Dits took a copy of the manuscript, brought it to the Berlin library and published it together with the boi Tepegez (boi – is the chapter of the epos – Ye. I) translated into German. In “Foreword” written by F. Dits the orientalist compared the boi “Tepegoz” with “Odyssey” by Homer.

Heinrih Fridrih fon Dits was born on September, 2 in 1751 in Bemburg in the merchant’s family. After graduating from the University (low faculty) in Halle he worked as the counsellor on juridical affairs of Prussia in Magdeburg. From 1784 he was the ambassador of Germany in Istanbul and got the aristocratic rank.

In 1791 he was recalled and then worked as a secret councilor. In the same year he was appointed the prelate of the Kolberg church.

The scientific work by H.F. fon Dits (in two volumes) published in Berlin and Halle in 1811 – 1815 was called “Memoirs from Asia about art, science, customs, traditions, relic of the past, religion, political system”. The first scientific research of the epos “Kitabi – Dede Korkud” was carried out by *H.F. Dits*. In the second part of his book “*Denkwürdigkeiten von Asien*” published in 1815 H.F. fon Dits appreciated the epos “Kitabi – Dede Korkud” at its true value from the standpoint of history, geography, textology, gave the valuable information about it and thus laid the foundation of Korkud study. In his scientific work “Memoirs from Asia” the scientist analysed the way of life, customs, traditions, belief and heroism of the Oghuz people. The book that contained the detailed information about the epos was called “Lately discovered Tepegez of Oghuz in comparison with the Cyclop of Homer”; then he gave the title “Tepegez or Oghuz Cyclop from “the Turkic – Tatar language”. Certainly, “the Turkic – Tatar language” means the Azerbaijanian language. There is the following sentence on the first page: “Kitabi – Dede Korkud” was written in the language of the Oghuz people and then the scientist compares Tepegez with Cyclop of Homer. The scientist asserts that the Oghuz myth about Tepegez is more ancient and perfect and gives 51 reasons to prove the following fact: the Greek borrowed this myth from the Oghuz people.

Both writers, poets and linguists, historians, ethnographers, psychologists are interested in this epos. This great interest is due to the process of national thinking in the Azerbaijanian Society in

the XX century and appeal of the epos. The whole Azerbaijanian society admired the epos as the brilliant sample of the national culture and history.

From this moment the impetuous period of “Kitabi – Dede Korkud” began in all the spheres of the national thinking especially in literature. The publication of the manuscript redoubled everybody’s attention to the epos the sprit of which existed in Azerbaijanian literature for the space of many centuries.

The themes of “Kitabi – Dede Korkud” are still actual and significant and the epos inspired many Azerbaijanian writers and poets of the XX century to creation. *The outstanding scientist – orientalist H.F. fon Dits raised the oriental languages, customs, traditions, created “the oriental spirit” in the West and deserved eternal memory and thankfulness of the Orient.*

### **Conclusion**

This great interest is due to the process of national thinking in the Azerbaijanian Society in the XX century and appeal of the epos. The whole Azerbaijanian society admired the epos as the brilliant sample of the national culture and history. From this moment the impetuous period of “Kitabi – Dede Korkud” began in all the spheres of the national thinking especially in literature. The publication of the manuscript redoubled everybody’s attention to the epos the sprit of which existed in Azerbaijanian literature for the space of many centuries.

### **Reference:**

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